

MY BALKY MUSE.

BY WM. HAUGHTON.

'Twas long ago, in summer time,
I caught my muse and sought to climb
Parnassus' hill.
She balked! and then, with careless ease
I said, "Good lass, go as you please
And where you will."

"The higher heights I longed to try—
To reach the stars, to float and fly
O'er Helicon—
I found you and your aid I sought,
But here you are, you good-for-naught,
You won't go on!"

She laughed a merry laugh, and then
She lured me to a quiet glen
Amongst the trees.
"See yonder where the hawthorn blows,
The daisy and the mountain rose—
Let's sing of these."

"Let poets used to loftier flight
Sing of the realms beyond our sight,
In strains sublime,
We'll hymn the haunted leafy dell,
The vale where love delights to dwell,
In humbler rhyme."

The wild rose blushed a rosier red,
And sweeter balm and bloom were shed
From thorn and tree.
The daisy turned its modest face,
And smiled with such enchanting grace
It vanquished me.

And ever since that summer day,
Whenever by flowery vale I stray,
Or meadow sweet,
The throb of nature's heart I hear,
And faintly echoes soft and clear
Fall at my feet.

THE SPY.

BY CAPTAIN JAMES MONTFORD.

"I have been looking over an old diary to-day," said the Colonel, "which I commenced the day I joined the forces at Washington.

"It was my firm intention at that time to keep an exact and minute account of every event that occurred within my knowledge. "If I had continued it, the book would be of considerable interest to-day; but, for a variety of reasons, the idea was not carried out.

"The last time I wrote in it was the evening on which quite a remarkable character appeared in camp.

"I was then in Missouri. Our duties had for some time lately consisted merely in guarding the loyal inhabitants and preventing the gathering of re-enforcements. This last was, of course, not possible in a strict sense. There were many bands of Confederates, who constantly harassed us, and skirmishes were the occurrence of every day.

"One day, just at sundown, a man rode into camp. He was a very short man; his legs strangely short and bowed. His face was red, with a short stub nose, glittering black eyes. Long, brown hair fell in a tangled mass upon his shoulders, and his clothes were greasy and worn.

"Notwithstanding his queer appearance he was a personage of considerable importance, and bore despatches from General Pope.

"After he had discharged his commands he seemed to have had liberty given him to mix with the troops, for he was soon making merry with men of his own cheerful disposition.

"Many knew him imperfectly or had heard stories concerning him and his exploits.

"He was a noted spy, said to be in the confidence of the commanders, and had received the name of Billy Black, no one seemed to know exactly why.

"I was a listener while he told a funny story or two, and was so pleased with his character that I wrote an account of it and him in my diary.

"The day following we had a skirmish in which my horse was killed under me, and so I lost the diary.

"But this was not the most important loss of that day.

"Billy Black had been trusted with an answer to the dispatches he had brought, and had left camp in the early morning.

"At night he returned on foot, with a quite serious wound in the hand. He had been waylaid by a party of marauders, captured, and his papers taken from him. He had managed to escape during the skirmish with our troops, his party having been our combatants, and had now returned to report his loss.

"The papers were of considerable importance, and the spy determined to recover them. He knew into whose possession they had fallen, and this made his task more possible.

"His wound having been cared for, he started out that same night, at about twelve o'clock, toward the encampment of the skirmishers.

"They had their headquarters in a little village called Cordon, distant about seven miles.

"Black made such good progress that he reached the outskirts of the town several hours before daylight.

"He had taken care to disguise himself as a countryman, and he walked boldly into the town.

"He had not gone far when the sentinel brought him to a halt. Black made such simple answers, and his manner was so in keeping with his appearance, that he passed the soldier without encountering even his suspicions.

"The spy's papers had fallen into the hands of the captain of the troop—a young fellow new to the arts of warfare, but who was a gallant soldier nevertheless, and had made us feel the effects of it that afternoon.

"This gentleman had quarters at the little inn, and when the spy approached the door he saw a light, although the curtains were drawn.

"Some persons were making merry in the house, for Black could hear the sounds of laughter and clink of glasses.

"The rest of the little village seemed fast asleep; not even a dog came out to bark at the nocturnal visitor.

"Black considered deeply within himself for a moment, and then endeavored to open the door.

"It was locked; but the party inside had evidently heard his attempt, for the noises ceased, as though they were listening.

"The spy rapped loudly for admittance, and an instant later the door was unbarred, and then opened a couple of inches, while a face pressed up to the opening.

"Let me in," said Black.

"The man refused; but our adventurer knew well how to plead, and, after considerable talk, and with more than one of the merry-makers, he was admitted.

"Walking inside, Black looked around upon the company and their situation as closely as he dared.

"There were four men in the room—three attired in Confederate uniforms—the other was the proprietor of the house.

"Black saw with delight that the young Captain was one of the party, and immediately upon his entrance the officer began to question him as to his condition and business.

"The spy told a long, rambling story to account for his presence there that night, and used his powers of entertainment so well that he not only warded off suspicion, but the gentlemen, who had drunk enough to make any merry comer agreeable to them, admitted him to their table and ordered more liquor.

"That afternoon had been the first time the young officer had distinguished himself, and he was in an excellent humor with himself and all the world.

"He bragged a little about his skirmish, and the find he had made, something valuable, and that must be kept a strict secret, he said, and boasted how he would serve the Yankees if he ever had another opportunity to try conclusions with them.

"Black suspected that this 'find' referred to the papers, and he managed to elicit a confirmation of this idea by a few deftly put questions.

"After the spy had been over an hour in their company the officer proposed to break up.

"The most sober one of the party left the house, the other two retired up stairs, the inn-keeper and Black assisting them.

"He saw the Captain ushered into a room at the rear of the building; the windows opened out upon the veranda, and Black seized the opportunity that offered to make a closer survey of the apartment and its connections.

"It was nearly bare of furniture, a poor bed, a table, and a couple of chairs being all it contained.

"There was no place to conceal the papers, had the Captain been in condition to think of reserving them.

"When Black returned to the bar-room with the innkeeper, the latter yawned and intimated that his uninvited guest would do well to leave.

"This suited the spy very well, and after finding that he could not be kept in the house he went out, and the door was fastened behind him.

"He did not go far from the house, however, but waiting about until the light was removed and the innkeeper retired, he approached the veranda.

"Moving silently to the window of the Captain's room, he listened. All was still. Black tried to raise the window; but it was fastened.

"Drawing a knife from his pocket, he began to cut the sash from about the pane nearest the catch.

"He soon broke out the light, and with considerable difficulty found and threw back the catch.

"Then he paused and looked about him. Nothing was stirring, the night was dark, and the sentinels seemed to be sleeping.

"Slowly and cautiously Black raised the window and slipped into the room. He could hear the labored breathing of the Captain, and moved toward the bed with the stillness of a cat.

"He searched around in the dark for several moments, trying in vain to find the clothing the Captain had thrown off.

"He was forced to light a match at last, and by its light searched the pockets of the clothes, which were thrown over the head of the bed.

"But his search met with no reward. What had become of the papers? As a last resort Black felt under the pillow. His hand touched some articles; he was certain the papers were within his grasp, although he could not see.

"But the spy was not to accomplish his hazardous work without trouble. The sleeping officer had been aroused by the presence near his bed. Several times he had changed positions uneasily, and as Black drew out the papers, he gave a gurgling cry and started up in bed.

"Black darted toward the window, at the instant the Captain leaped from the bed.

"Springing out upon the veranda, with the spoils clasped close to his heart, the spy ran down the street, followed by a bullet from the Captain's pistol, which cut woundfully close to his head.

"Every one was awake in a moment and a search was instituted for the spy, who now lay close concealed in the stable at the back of the hotel.

"The search was given up before morning and much to the disgust of the Captain. He was a few days later informed of the spy's identity and in what manner he escaped.

"When Black reached the camp, which he did during the following day, having escaped past the pickets, he handed me the lost diary.

"It had been with the papers which he had lost, and the spy had brought away all. "This Black was a strange man. I never learned where he was from or anything personally relating to him.

"He lost his life soon after the adventure I have been relating, but the story is too long to tell to-night."

LIPS.

Lips were made for smiles and kisses. Birds cannot smile, flowers cannot kiss, nothing on the earth can smile and kiss but man. A smile is the color love wears, a kiss is a demonstrative expression of affection. A smile is the light in the window of the face, a kiss is the snapping of love's fire in the heart.

A smile has come to be in these degenerate days often a meaningless thing; a kiss, through the custom of its indiscriminate use, is frequently but little more.

This vulgarization of the kiss is a profanation. It should be one of the holiest demonstrations of the soul, but among some people—not all—and especially between bubbling over, demonstrative femininity, a kiss pops a good-morning, whizzes a good-evening, splutters here and fizzes there, until a sensitive refinement causes us to set our teeth, brace our lips, and abide the shock as best we can.

Indeed, it has come to such a pass that even Miss Prim is obliged to look sharply to the dew on her lips, or ten to one it is spirited away on some graceless mustache.

All of which is high-handed sacrilege, and we herewith enter our protest and leave the further discussion of its propriety to the sages.

In seeking more light upon this tantalizing subject, we are convinced we cannot do better than consult the poets. It would seem from the exuberant fashion in which they gush over "intoxicating kisses," "dewy lips," and "heaven-born smiles," that they have boomed the market and made a corner in the commodity.

The bards, so far as we have been able to find, have neglected to sing of masculine smiles and kisses. What, however, is more soul-inspiring than a man's smile, not to mention a man's kiss?

The faint flutter of the mustached corners

of his mouth, the gentle parting of the full lips, and then the loud, hearty laugh, accompanied by the sly twinkle of the bright eye.

That is one kind of a masculine smile. There is yet another, a description of which we will have to omit—he generally goes out between acts to indulge in it.

When you come to investigate a masculine kiss you will find that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing in nature—it is always a mixed matter.

But to return to the poets. It was Shakespeare who told us what a woman's lip was for. He says:

"Teach not thy lip such scorn; for it was made For kissing, lady, not for such contempt."

Commenting upon this quotation, not long since, a gentleman presumably well up in the science remarked that, judging from these words, Shakespeare was in the habit of kissing only one lip of his sweet-heart, and if that were so he had lost half the delights of the operation. When any kissing was done it should be spread all over the mouth. Perhaps some inexperienced youth may profit by this hint.

If old Shakespeare was priggish in his ideas of kissing, it would seem Byron was possessed of the opposite qualities, expressed by the same word, with the letter R omitted—piggyish. In speaking of lovely woman, he says:

"I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse The tyrant's wish that all mankind but had One neck, which he with one fell stroke might pierce."

My wish is quite as wide, but not as bad; That woman-kind had but one rosy mouth. To kiss them all at once from north to south."

Byron certainly lived before his time—he would have made such a dear, delightful "Later-Day Saint."

We do not recall any exact quotation, but there has been a great deal of nonsense written about lips so bedaubed with nectar that bees would leave the dewy rose to sip their sweets. If there ever was such an idiotic bee it must have been a long time ago—none are ever discovered at that business nowadays. Men differ from bees in that respect.

A kiss is an unfailing barometer. The initiated can tell "the signs of the times" invariably. It is a sure indication of a cold wave if the young lady's best friend tells her her kisses are ever so much sweeter than the girl's across the way.

There is sure to be a storm if the young woman's father catches him in the act.

There will be heavy clouds in the sky if when he is just about to kiss her, he stops short and asks her "how's her mother?" The rule is just as sure when the girl has been eating onions.

If he puts his arms around her like a bear and almost smothers her when he kisses her, they are not married. If he comes up with his hands in his pockets and gives her a tasteless smack, the probabilities are that they are.

After all, what would a girl be without lips? She might be blind, and yet be beautiful. She might be bald, and yet wear some other woman's hair. But if she had no lips life would be a desert dear.

Ah, it is woman's lips that try men's souls!—Annie E. Myers, in *Chicago Ledger*.

Dead Soul.

An old physician remarked lately: "There is no study in human nature so difficult to me as a certain class of young girls. I spent a part of this summer with two specimens of this class. They had the usual amount of capacity for observing, and understanding, and feeling. They had been educated at much cost to their parents; both were constant attendants at church.

"I saw nothing in their faces, manners, or bearing to argue that they were imbecile. Their mother was an invalid, nearing the grave. Nothing could be more touching than the patient, appealing gaze with which her eyes followed them, watching for some signal of affection. But they had eyes and thought for nothing but a gown they were making. They were used to her love, her illness, even to the thought of her death.

"I walked out with them through a great forest, under the solemn stars. They saw no beauty, no sublimity in them. They chattered incessantly of the new trimming of their bonnets. They were used to the meaning of the trees and stars. The only thing apparently to which they were not used were the changes in ribbons, puffs, and flounces.

"I went to church with them, and listened to the great 'Te Deum' which has come down to us through many ages, and filled the hearts of countless worshippers of God. They nudged each other while they sang it to look at a beaded cloak in the next pew.

"We physicians now test the temperature of a patient's body, and if we find it below a certain degree, know that death is already in the heart. When I find so low a degree of temperature in the words, actions, and thoughts of a human body, I begin to fear that the soul within is cold and dead beyond recall."

Old John Bunyan taught us the same lesson in his picture of the man with the muck-rake, who incessantly scraped together the foul, perishable stuff, and kept his eye bent on it, while the great world opened around him, and the wind blew, and the sun shone, and God waited for him behind them all.

Do we, too, use this rake, and what is it that we gather?—*Youth's Companion*.

Thousands Like Him.

She (in the morning)—Tom, dear, I wish you'd stop at Johnson's on your way to the office and pay my bill for plants and seeds. It's just \$5.

He—Five dollars! Strikes me that's a good deal to lay out for that sort of thing. I should think half as much would have been amply sufficient.

She (in the evening)—Well, Tom, did you pay that bill?

He—No, I didn't. Fact is, going down town I met Bob Bar, and bet him a V that his head was smaller than mine. I lost—his hat came down to my ears—and when I paid him I found myself dead-broke. I'll have to save the money out of your next month's allowance for housekeeping.—*Harper's Bazar*.

She Found Her Mamma.

The north-bound train had left Austin, Tex., and Conductor Hughes was making his usual round collecting tickets. He stopped in front of a little girl who was crouched in a corner near the stove. Notwithstanding that a cold northwester was blowing, she was thinly clad in a torn calico dress, and her feet were destitute of shoes and stockings.

As she appeared to be alone, the conductor asked:

"Have you got a ticket, little girl?"

"What is that?"

"Didn't whoever but you on the cars give you a ticket?"

"Nobody put us on the car. We came all by ourselves, didn't we, dolly?" she said, hugging a dilapidated doll.

"Didn't your papa put you on the cars?"

"No; we didn't tell him we were coming, did we, dolly?"

The conductor took the little girl's hand in his. It was burning hot. Her thin features were flushed, and her eyes were glistening with fever.

"Your clothes are thin. Don't you feel cold sometimes?"

"Yes, we feel so cold, but we hug up close together, don't we, dolly? When I find mamma she'll give us some new clothes and some shoes."

"Where is your mamma?"

"I don't know, but I'll find her. She told me to come to her. She came into my room last night and put her hands on me and kissed me—just as she used to before she went to sleep in a long box and went off on the railroad."

The conductor was puzzled. Had the fever affected the child's head?

"I think you are lost, little girl. What is your name?"

"My name is Fanny, but mamma used to call me 'little pet.'"

"I'll send you back to your papa. You have got a papa, haven't you, in Austin?"

A look of terror was frozen on the little pinched features. Two thin arms were thrown around the conductor's neck.

"Please don't send me back to pa," she said in piteous accents. "My new mamma will whip me and lock me in the dark closet. Oh, please don't send me back! I'll be so good. I'll give you dolly. No; I can't give you dolly. Mamma gave me dolly, but I'll let you play with her. Please, let me stay with you till I find mamma."

"This is a bad case of stepmother," said the conductor to himself. "This is some poor, neglected little creature. I've a notion to take her home and leave her with my kids. One more won't make much difference."

"I'll not send you home. Just lie down here," he said, fixing her up a place to lie on one of the seats.

The little waif was contented and happy. She laid down and the conductor covered her up with his overcoat. Once or twice, as he passed by, he heard the little deadhead passenger talking to her dolly about what they would do when they found mamma.

At Taylor the north-bound and south-bound trains met, and the passengers got supper. As soon as Conductor Hughes stepped on the platform the operator called to him:

"Here, Bill, here is a telegram for you."

He opened the envelope and read: "Put runaway child in charge of conductor of south-bound train for Austin."

"Poor little creature," he muttered, "she has a hard time of it in this world, but I'll wake her up and give her some supper before I send her home to her folks."

He turned back into the car and threw back the overcoat from the sleeping child. She was hugging her dolly to her breast. There were tears on her pale, thin cheeks, but a happy smile on her little pinched features.

"Little pet" had found her mamma.—*Alex. Sweet, in New York Mercury*.

Bad Lawyers Good Judges.

"Yes," said the old fellow who had been beaten for Superior Court Judge at the last election; "yes, bad lawyers always make good Judges. Most bad lawyers are given to conscience and honesty."

"Well—Judge—"

"That's all right. I'm a bad lawyer. That's why I wanted to be a Judge. It saves you a lot of trouble and teaches you your business when other lawyers fill you up with facts and figures of the law. A good lawyer can never be trusted on the bench. He's always liable to give a decision against the cleverest lawyer in the case, just to show his smartness. A bad lawyer on the bench doesn't take law so much as justice into consideration, and no defendant or plaintiff ever yet was injured by a common-sense decision. It is a fallacy of our great republican form of government that the voice of the people spoken through the ballot-box purifies the men elected, and that the election of a lawyer to the bench destroys all the weakness of human nature that he may have had before. In the divine government purification precedes election. In the human government election precedes purification. I don't believe a lawyer's any more honest when they make him a Judge than he was before. They call him a lawyer until he becomes a Judge, then he is spoken of as a distinguished jurist."—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

"Nothing should be done hastily," cries one who wants to be considered a philosopher; but a man has only to get hold of a hot poker to realize that the philosopher is wrong.

HE—"And now, Sarah, what kind of an engagement ring shall I get you?" She—"old gold, I guess, Henry. I'm so tired of wearing imitation gold for engagements."

RUMOR.

A HOTEL should never advertise that "it stands without arrival."

WHEN does a man impose upon himself? When he taxes his memory.

A MAN may be ashamed of the fashion of his nose, although he follows it.

THERE is a time for all things. The time to leave is when a young lady asks you how the walking is.

KISSES are the right kind of smacks to sail down the stream of life with, although taking a buss is not bad.

IT is a bad idea to make one enemy in order to secure two friends, for, long after the friends have forgotten you, the enemy holds you in active recollection.—*Arkansas Traveler*.

A CORRESPONDENT who signs herself "Nervous Girl" writes to ask us if we can tell her of any remedy to cure a tickling sensation about the face. Certainly; ask him to cut his mustache off.—*Lynn Union*.

THEY were parting at the door; the rain was falling, and she was afraid that he would get wet and take cold. "I think you should ride home," she said; "take a car or a bus." "I'm just going to take a bus," he said, and he did, as bold as brass.—*Boston Courier*.

THE most industrious letters are the Bees. The most extensive letters—the Seas. The most fond of comfort—the Ease. The most egotistical letters—the I's. The noisiest letters—the J's. The poorest letters—the O's. The greatest bores—the Teas. The sensible letters—the Wise.

A MONTANA paper speaks of the lightning striking a prominent citizen just as he was coming out of a saloon. "That thunderbolt may have been waiting for years to get at him; the only way the electric fluid will ever get a smite at many Montana men will be to go right in and mow them down in front of the bar."—*Estelle Bell*.

A WARNING.
That Boston Blueboard pinched his wife,
And in a room did jam her,
Because—O, what an awful crime!—
She sometimes used bad grammar.
Now, maidens dear, before you wed
A man who might pinch whacks,
Be sure that you are posted well
On prosody and syntax.
—*New York Morning Journal*.

THREE-YEAR-OLD MAGGIE had never seen anyone who was quite bald except her grandfather, whom she had once or twice visited. A gentleman called one day to see her father, and, taking off his hat, showed a very bald head. Maggie regarded him wonderingly for a while, and, finally, venturing nearer, asked curiously: "Is that your head?"—*Harper's Bazar*.

"LOTTA money!" remarked Schoeppenstedt, sententiously, when Mrs. Schoeppenstedt informed him that Miss Crabtree is worth a million. But he was sorry afterward that he said it, for Mrs. Schoeppenstedt went into hysterics and did not recover until after he had repentantly hung out the washing and cleaned out all the ashes in the kitchen stove.—*Somerville Journal*.

"Did you say your husband was a poet, Mrs. Dolt?" "Yes'm, and a very eccentric one indeed." "How so, Mrs. Dolt?" "Why, he had a passion for posthumous poetry, and he would 't write anything else." "Indeed! Then his works have not been published yet?" "Bless you, yes! He was very prompt about such things, and always attended to them himself."—*Yonkers Gazette*.

SHE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE TALKING.
He stood beneath her window there,
While gazed upon him from above
The eyes of her he deemed most fair
In the bright brilliancy of love.
"Oh, speak to me!" the young man cried,
"Oh, speak to me! Why art thou still?"
She only answered with a sigh,
And leaned upon the window-sill.
"By all the vows of fondest love,
By all our pledged hopes and fears,
Oh, speak to me, my dear! My dove!"
She only answered with her tears.
Why stood she silent? What the cause
To leave her lover in his doubt?
She did not dare to move her jaws,
Her new false teeth had fallen out!
—*Lynn Union*.

A FABLE: An estimable old groundhog, wishing to ascertain the opinions of the neighbors about himself, had a bogus congestive chill, and falling on the ground, pretended to be dead. He was buried on the following day, but scratched his way out of the grave and went in disguise to hear his own funeral sermon preached. The discourse was so complimentary that the ground hog was puffed up with vanity, and having bought a cane and an eye-glass, he became a dude. Moral—This fable teaches the dangers of flattery.—*Life*.

Survival of the Fittest.

"No, Parson," said Farmer Thistlepod, resolutely shaking his head, "good and evil ain't equally distributed in this world, not by a long chalk. See, here I drop into the ground one gain of good wheat. Now, straight away after that one wee little atom of good come the chinch bugs, cut worms, weevil bugs, army worms, wire worms, blight, rust, drought, mildew, freshets, late frosts, hard winters, short summers, grub worms, rain, heat, cold, and dry, and wet, prairie fires, the neighbors' cattle, people from town, weeds—why, it's a livin' miracle that any good survives in the world at all, when we see what it has to struggle agin. But then," added the old man, stopping to pluck up a cheery red poppy and hurl it over into the highway, "reckon if 'twasn't so good as it is we wouldn't take the interest in helpin' it along an' fightin' for its life as we do." And with a shout that scared the very guinea hens into silence, he started the dog across the field to warn away a party of young people who were swarming over the fence to gather a few armfuls of wheat to make winter baskets.—*Brooklyn Eagle*.