

#### AN EVENING PRAYER.

To-night I lay the burden by,  
As one who rests beside the road,  
And from his weary back unbinds  
The whelming load.

I kneel by hidden pools of prayer—  
Still waters fraught with healing  
power;  
In God's green pastures I abide  
This longed-for hour.

I know that day must bid me face—  
Courageously my task again,  
Serving with steady hand and heart,  
My fellow-men.

To hold my sorrow in the dark,  
To fight my fear, to hide my pain,  
And never for one hour to dream  
The toll is vain—

This be to-morrow; now, to-night,  
Great, pitying Father, I would be  
Forgiven, uplifted, loved, renewed,  
Alone with thee.

—Grace Duffield Goodwin.

#### When the General Was Afraid

Laughter and protests were heard from their retired excellencies, who were sitting round a table in Wiesbaden. But the white-headed little general, who had been speaking, remained grave and said: "Yes \* \* \* it is true; in 1870 I was afraid \* \* \*

"Of whom?"

"To this day I know not! \* \* \* And seeing their interested faces he added:

"If you like I will tell you about it. It was in the winter, and near Orleans. The exact name of the little place in which we dragons were quartered has escaped my memory. Bavarians had been in the village before us. In the night skirmishes which had preceded the taking of the village a troop of Franc-tireurs who were cut off from the main army had been established there. Our men desired to avoid unnecessary bloodshed through a direct attack, so they fired the back of the building, and finally the Franc-tireurs withdrew. Ultimately all became quiet, only the flames still crackled—and the greater part of the little castle was burnt down on that cold winter's night.

Only the front of the mansion remained standing. The place awakened gloomy memories. Blood was everywhere—tufts of hair on the walls, doors forced open in hand-to-hand fights. It had all come to pass as they themselves had chosen—they had resisted us by force of arms—therefore \* \* \* but, at any rate, the desolate house with broken window panes was standing empty when we arrived.

In the stillness of the night—so many people asserted—mysterious sounds had been heard \* \* \* numerous voices, hushed laughter, steps, banging of doors, will-o'-the-wisp lights in the windows. And just this mystery excited a young lieutenant of the Bavarian Light cavalry. He declared that for once he would spend a night in the haunted house; and toward evening he moved over there with a mattress and a revolver. But the others had not yet gone to bed when—at about 10 o'clock—he reappeared in their midst and quietly sat down among them. Why he had not remained over there could not be discovered. He submitted calmly to being chafed, but kept a scrupulous secrecy, and ultimately rode away with his regiment.

And we, their successors, were already full of the legends about the castle. The troops were telling the most foolish stories, and this annoyed our adjutant. He wished to prove that they were false. On the third morning after our arrival, he said to us quite coolly:

"Well, boys, \* \* \* I passed the whole of last night over there!" A couple of witnesses testified to it. Everyone asked:

"Well—and \* \* \*?"

"I slept and dreamt of my mother. \* \* \* Nothing else at all. \* \* \*"

He laughed and was in good spirits, although he looked rather pale. Toward evening he rode to the brigade quarters—three villages off—to receive orders. He has never again been seen.

Some time afterward we were sitting together one evening in thoughtful mood and talking about our missing comrade, and how, just the night before his death, he had been in that house of which the dark window frames were distinctly yawning across the snow in the moonshine. Now it so happened that I had taken a good deal of wine that evening, for I had not been well during the last few days. But now the wine inclined me to be as venturesome as I usually was when a young lieutenant of 26, and I called out:

"I shall establish my headquarters over there for to-night."

"You will not go there." So spoke one of my best friends beside me; and I replied:

"What will you bet?"

"My white Arab. She is anyway too light for my weight! Early to-morrow she will be yours!"

"Done!"

So at about 10 o'clock I strolled across the crunching snow to the silent house, my servant with me. He carried the bedding, which he laid down by the fireplace in the great hall. He had already lit a fire, and, pushing forward a few more logs of wood for replenishing it, he faced about at my "All right—now be off!" and was scarcely outside the door than I heard him running as fast as he could. And then all was still and I was alone.

I gradually fell asleep—at least, it was a restless half sleep, in which reality was ever taking part—now with a few strokes from the tower of the little church, now with a few voices of dragons in the street; then the watchguard sounded the hour, and in between came confused dreams about home; perhaps peace would soon be declared—and now it was all silent—so deadly silent. \* \* \*

And cold, too. I was shivering under the thick woolen covering which I had put over me, and I drowsily looked at the fireplace near me. I raised myself upon my elbow and with the other hand pushed a few logs on to the fire. Then I lay down again. I was now quite awake, and looked about the room so brightly lit up by the moon. And with amazement I observed that someone was standing by the window—a young officer.

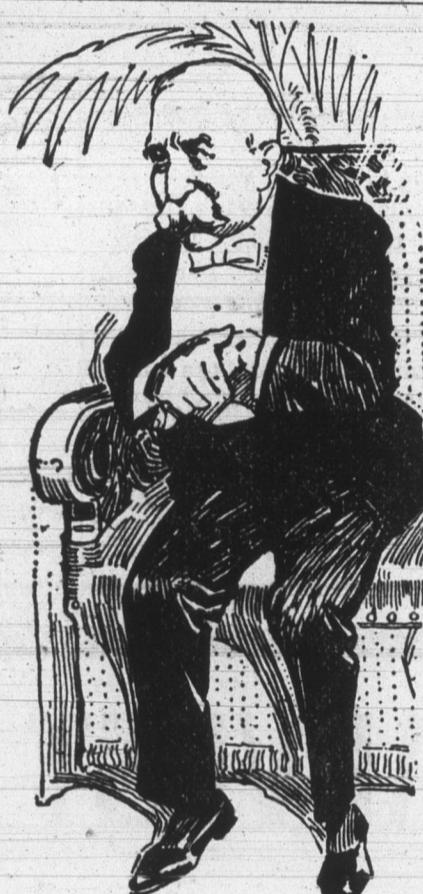
It was quite simple; while I had been asleep a comrade had come to see how I was getting on, and above all if I really were in the house. Naturally—for no one likes losing a bet, and such a mare in addition!

I said quite pleasantly and in a low tone from under the covering:

"Well—which of you is it?" and in the silence exactly like an echo resounded from the empty walls of the great hall, "which of you is it?"—but no answer came. I repeated the question louder a second time and angrily and impatiently a third time \* \* \* but the only sound I heard was my own voice \* \* \* strange in the still night. The form at the window took no notice.

And suddenly it became clear to me, that is our adjutant? Then I thought again: if it is the adjutant—well, he is my comrade, my good friend. The adjutant had been a dark man of medium size. The lieutenant here, however, had fair hair. That struck me, for it did not correspond. It must then be another man. But who else would be wearing the uniform of my regiment?

When was it then? Two days ago?—no, three days ago. I had been shaving myself that morning and had cut myself—at the back of my cheek—



under the right ear. The military surgeon who happened to be there, put on it a little pad of wadding. It was still adhering. I could feel it with my hand. But over there at the window he, too, had it on exactly the same spot. And if that were so, then apparently that strange officer in the moonshine was me—and I must be duplicated in this room. Everything was in accord—height, size—everything about the shadowy phantom over there—and in my foolishness I thought when he turns round to me, that I shall know!

And a morbid curiosity seized me. He must turn round—you must see yourself once again!—and immediately he did it, and I noticed whatever I, at the fireside, was thinking, that one over at the window immediately did. My will acted both here and there \* \* \* through it we were united—and we looked at each other—and now I fully recognized myself \* \* \* and tremblingly thought: If only that other one does not begin to laugh! And already he was laughing so that I could see his white teeth under the mustache. Thank God—we are ten paces apart! \* \* \* I must not let him come nearer—he must not come any nearer! And in this same moment the one at the window put himself in motion and came with quick long strides toward the mattress on which I lay. I sprang up and rushed like a terrified hare out of the room to the open hall door, and behind me were hasty, buoyant steps and a soft clanging of spurs, and I ran faster and ever faster, and lost my footing on the slippery outside steps and fell headlong into the snow.

That cooled me, and gradually my senses returned. I lay there in clear cool air and saw over me the stars—nothing else. Slowly I rose up and strode away through the snow—anything to get away from that house—and I kept nervously turning round to look back. I did not wish to return to my quarters. My comrades would have noticed me and laughed at me. But nearby was the stable where my horses and those of the other lieutenants were kept. There, with a constant cold shiver down my back, although it was warm among the horses of it!—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Snow was already breaking. From the distance I heard a hollow sound—once, twice \* \* \* then at regular intervals \* \* \* cannon shots \* \* \*

I was convinced that I should not live through the next day. To die so young—to leave this beautiful world. I heard clanging outside. The trumpeters were riding through the snowy streets sounding the alarm. In the hurry of mounting no one observed my appearance. Only my friend called out:

"Well—I congratulate you \* \* \* the Arab is yours!" And I waved my hand energetically.

"Keep it! \* \* \* Keep it! \* \* \* and without noticing his air of amazement I trotted to my squadron as cover. On that day we got into the thick of the fire. I was not hit \* \* \* and I asked myself again, when will it finally come. \* \* \* But toward midday the firing ceased—the skirmish was over. \* \* \*

We had dismounted and I was crouching down by a milestone holding my head in my hands, staring before me, when the surgeon riding by called out to me:

"I say—why do you look like that?" I answered quite mechanically, "I am doomed to die! \* \* \*

"H'm \* \* \* Since when have you been feeling so ill, Herr Lieutenant?"

"For about a week \* \* \* and last night \* \* \* I broke off. He was not listening—but quickly unfastened my coat. My whole chest was covered with red spots. I had not seen this—and he said:

"Now we know what it is! What do you mean by running about the world with fully developed typhus on you? Why the devil didn't you give notice that you were ill?"

I was silent. \* \* \* The doctor called his hospital assistants, who packed me up and carried me off.

It was a severe attack—and it brought me to the very brink of the grave, but, nevertheless—when I look back—I prefer this end to a terror than a terror without an end. \* \* \*

—Country Life.

#### COFFINS THAT ARE RENTED.

##### Temporary Resting Places of the Poor in Mexican Cemeteries.

The average Mexican cemetery is a grooms spot. The one at Matamoras is no exception to the rule, says a letter from that city. The bones of the dead are treated with little respect by the municipalities or men in control of the different burial grounds. The poorer the person is in worldly goods, the more ignoble will be the treatment accorded his bones when he has passed the way of all flesh. Of course the people of wealth or even moderate means are able to have their bodies cared for in a more or less luxurious manner after death. It is the lower class whose crumbling remains are shifted about from place to place, and finally fall into dust, and are scattered to the four winds.

The bones of the dead are usually piled in big heaps in the cemeteries of the larger towns. The bodies are given room in regular graves at annual rentals. When the rent lapses the body is moved from its resting place to give room for some other bodies. The bones of these dispossessed tenants are cast into the refuse pile, where they remain until carted away and scattered over the land as if they were so much garbage. It is rare that a body of the poorer class is kept in a grave more than two years.

Until recently the bone pile in the cemetery at Matamoras was large. It was carted away to give room for a fresh accumulation of non-paying tenants of the graves. In one corner of the cemetery are several cheap caskets which are used from time to time for temporary resting places of those who can afford to pay the stipulated rental.

In some of the cemeteries of Mexico are interesting catacombs that have been in use for two or three centuries. Guanajuato is widely noted for its catacombs. A large underground chamber in the cemetery in that city is filled with solemn rows of standing skeletons. Some of these bodies are mummified and are of lifelike appearance. This chamber of horrors was formerly a favorite visiting place for curious-minded American tourists. The grinning skeletons occupied a variety of poses, the keeper of the cemetery deriving no little amusement in exercising his ingenuity in making the silent occupants of the cavern as terrifying as possible to the visitors. When Guanajuato became the scene of great mining activity a few years ago, caused by the advent of many Americans, the newcomers made protest to the government authorities of the horrifying spectacle in the underground chamber. In response to this protest the authorities issued an order that these skeletons must be clothed so as to hide their shivering bones from the eyes of the visitors to the place. The effect of this order is to make the occupants of the chamber more grotesque and terrifying than when their nakedness was exposed. Each grinning skeleton now wears a full suit of clothes, which hang limply upon the bones. Some wear hats that are tilted at rakish angles.

The big pile of bones that formerly occupied one of the Guanajuato chamber of horrors has been removed and an effort is now being made to keep the place in fit condition for the reception of American and other visitors.

#### STILL IN THE RING.

"Billinger used to be one of the biggest fish lars I ever met."

"Has he quit?"

"He quit lying about fish some time ago. But he's more than making up for it by the lies he tells about the smartness of that 4-year-old kid of his!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Lot's wife may have looked back—and then again she may have talked back.

## Smiles of the Day

#### Why He Wanted More.

A suburban chemist has been advertising his patent insect powder far and wide. One day a man rushed into his shop and said excitedly:

"Give me another half pound of your powder, quick, please."

"Oh!" remarked the chemist as he proceeded to fill the order, "I'm glad you like the powder. Good, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied the customer. "I have one cockroach very ill; if I give him another half pound he'll die."

Ladies' Home Journal.

#### Craving for Variety.

The Professor—I want you children to go to my lecture to-night.

Robert—Couldn't you whip us instead, just this once, papa?—Tit-Bits.

Crusel.

She—You look badly this morning. He—I have a cold or something in my head.

She—It must be a cold.—Harvard Lampoon.

#### The Philosopher of Folly.

"Pay as you go" is a good motto," says the Philosopher of Folly. "The more you are willing to pay the further you are likely to go."—Cleveland Leader.

#### A Shell Game in the Choir.

Under which hat is the soprano?

#### Unaccomplished.

Please give my friend a job in your law office."

"Is he honest?"

"He never deceived anybody in his life."

"What? And you expect me to take the time to teach him the rudiments of the business?"—Cleveland Leader.

#### Told in Court.

Magistrate—You say the prisoner turned round and stealthily whistled. What followed?

Intelligent Witness—Please, your worship, his dog.—Sketch.

#### Unnecessary Question.

Politician—Congratulations, Sarah; I've been elected.

Sarah (with delight)—Honestly?

Politician—What difference does that make?—St. Louis Times.

#### Speaking Scientifically.

"Do you have well water on your place?"

"I shouldn't say it was exactly well water," replied the man who is obsessed by the germ theory, "but the latest analysis shows that it is on the road to recovery."—Washington Star.

#### Justified.

"Mr. Bliggins says he is awfully bored."

"After talking with him for five minutes and discovering what he thinks about," replied Miss Cayenne, "you can't blame him."—Washington Star.

#### Sweet Revenge.

"I suppose you will be too rich to take in summer boarders this year?"

"Well," answered Farmer Corntassel, "we'll take 'em jes' the same. Mandy an' the two gals want somebody to show off their good clothes and jewelry to."—Washington Star.

#### A Gastronomic Favorite.

"She is quite a popular, entertaining hostess, isn't she?"

"Yes; what you might call a regular dinner belle."—Baltimore American.

#### A Doubtful Recommendation.

Employer—You have an excellent chance to grow up with the business, young man, and make something of yourself; it's all up to you.

A few days afterward it turned out that he was still alive, and the honest sergeant made the following entry:

"Died by mistake."

At length there came a letter from the minister of war announcing the death of the man at the hospital, when the sergeant recorded the fact as follows:

"Re-died by order of the ministry."—Louisville Herald.

#### The Place of Danger.

Employer—You have an excellent chance to grow up with the business, young man, and make something of yourself; it's all up to you.

"Of course," she continued, "the whole affair is much more awe-inspiring than the State Supreme Court, because the judges come in dressed in their imposing silk gowns, having been cried out by an impressive bailiff, who closes his remarks with 'God save the United States'."

Mrs. Buell spoke of the extreme formality observed and said she was asked to remove her hat before proceeding to the council table to take the oath.

"The first thing I said when they asked me to do that was: 'But I don't see any mirror here.' It seemed the natural observation to make until I heard Senator Clapp, who was my sponsor, chuckle and murmur, 'The eternal feminine!' Then, after a formal address had been made to me, I took oath on the same Bible that Clay and Calhoun swore upon, that I would defend the Constitution and conduct myself in every way as befitted my office."

#### The Ideal House