

Deacon Brown.

A DIALECTIC EXCUSE FOR A GOOD MAN.
It's Deacon Brown you're askin' about?
He hain't been round for a year;
They planted him last kabbage time.
Which is why he isn't here.
For p'raps you've observed as a g'in'ral thing
That this is in' under ground.
For a year or two don't have one feel
Pretty much like shosbin' round.

His terrier, eh? What old Deac. Brown?
Well, I'm rather 'shamed to say
That he wasn't much the sort o' saint
Sot up by Harts and Hay.
He never cussed in his nat'r'l life—
I mention this with consternation—
He didn't know how, though he might a know'd
Ef he'd a cared to learn.

But it makes it rough for the chap that gets
The writin' of his biog.
To hev ter confess he's slyin' ink
Over sich a bump on a log.
Who didn't amount to shucks in a row.
Who never was out on a tear.
And for takin' the nat'r'l little game of "draw."
Couldn't tell a full from a pair.

For the Deac. just war a common cuss
O' the most ornarient kind.
Who never looked out o' the window o'sin'.
And durstn't raise a blind.
T'was hev'ly idear, parvaise he was,
I've hev'ly him remark—this limb—
That though he war raised in a Christian land,
One wife war enough for him.

His canal boat onc't—it was years ago—
When drivers both druv and steerd—
Run agin the bank jest above Penn Yan.
An' some o' the help got skeered.
The pilot set in the engin-room.
And felt his nozzle and swore.
But the Deac. spread hisself at the gang-plank
A handin' the ladies ashore.

Traps the Deac., ef he'd had the rearin' of some.
Would a panned out better that trip?
But considerin' of his broughthens up.
He didn't quite lose his grip.
Unfortunet-like for the Deac. an' me.
He'd careful raisin' to hum:
An' yer can't speck much o' a chap, yer know,
Unless he sprouts from a slug.

Ef he'd been a high-toned gambolier,
Or the rough of a mining camp,
With a bushel o' grain in his kerricker,
An' a load o' Sorey Camp.
Or an engineer or an injun that—
Any kind of a rum-bustin' lout—
Peaps he'd a done some pretty big thing.
For me to be spurlin' about.

But he jest pluggerd on in a no' count way.
A leadin' a good squar life.
Till the war kem on—then he pulled up stakes.
And said good-bye to his wife.
I've hev'ly tell a grittier man nor him
In battle never tred.
An' he didn't let down in the face of Death.
Although he believed in a God.

It's queer how he foun' at Fredericksburg—
The Deac. jest went in wet:
A prayin' an' shootin' an' every time
A fechin' his man, you bet.
Yet he wasn't sustained by the soothin' thought
When he fell—October 'leventh—
That he'd knock'd spots out the commandments,
An' been special rough on the seventh.

Jest over beyond the turnip patch.
Some twenty holes you can see.
That air flied by chaps who went from here
To fightin' General Lee.
They kem back when corn was ripe.
An' we buried 'em by that walnut tree—
All chaps of the Deacon's stripe.

We'll cross over thar to the old man's grave.
And I guess I'll be gettin' them—
Yet pardin, stranger, I allers unroof
At the grave o' that sort o' men.
I've been gassin' away promisic-like.
But now I make bold ter say.
It don't foller on a man's a sneak.
'Cause he lives in a decent way.

I know some folks reck on contrary wise.
An' sing their ink quite free.
But they hain't got hold the right end on it.
Accordin' to my idee.
An' that's why I've sort o' been chippin' in.
A pleadin' the Deacon's excuse.
For you know we all can't be gamblers and
thieves.
An' all women needn't be loose.

WASHED ASHORE.

"Bayside," as its owner somewhat ambitiously christened the incongruous aggregation of discomforts and wooden balconies at the head of the little cove, was one of those numberless salt-water summer refuges with which the shore of Long Island Sound is studded.

It was a quiet sort of place, and the neighborhood was good; but the most remarkable feature of Bayside that summer was the presence of Nellie Martin. Of course, there were other girls enough, that came and went; but the steady possession, week after week, of even one undeniable beauty, is a windfall for a small watering-place. Old Bowers and his managing wife frankly admitted to each other that they could have afforded to board Nellie for nothing.

"But not her mother," added the good lady; "those tall, thin people are awful eaters."

"But I rather like the old gentleman," responded her spouse. "He's a good fisherman, and he brings home his fish; but I don't believe he's rich."

"If they ain't pretty well off," said his wife, "they've no business to have spoiled Nellie to that degree."

And beyond all doubt, the willful beauty had been spoiled "to that degree," so that she frankly accepted all male attention and devotion as no more than her due, without the least apparent idea that it could rightfully demand repayment in more serious coin than her own smiling approval.

To do her justice, however, her fault extended to her dealings with even the children; and she seemed as happy among the veriest babies that came to Bayside as with the most of her grown-up admirers.

Even when her pale-faced mother chided Nellie on her behavior, she could obtain no more than a kiss of peace, and,

"Nonsense, mamma; I'm sure it won't hurt either of them."

And Mrs. Martin shook her head lovingly, and held her peace, for when, among so many young gentlemen as appeared and disappeared at Bayside, a young lady like Nellie could say "either of them," it was very clear that there were two in particular.

Both of them knew very well which two, for Nellie's other worshippers were undecided whether Jack Loutrel or Murray Nesbitt were most deserving their bitterest resentment. One at least of the more favored or skillful pair was sure to be in the way of anybody else who dreamed of aspiring to a *tele-a-tete* with Nellie Martin's blue eyes and golden hair.

Fine, presentable fellows were they both, and old Mr. Martin knew all about them, and their fathers before them.

"Either would do," he had said to his wife more than once.

"Yes; but, husband—"

"Oh, now, Nellie must choose for herself; and I ain't at all sure she fancies either of them."

No more was Nellie; but they both amused her in just such a way she liked to be amused.

Jack and Murray gallantly maintained an outward semblance of personal good-will to each other, through all the ups and downs of their doubtful rivalry; but who shall blame Jack if he experienced a keen sensation of triumph at finding Nellie Martin actually in his boat, one splendid July morning, when he felt sure he was bearing her away from a responding devices on land? Alas! for Jack's triumph! If he could only have known that the feeling uppermost in the heart of his companion was one of merry anticipation of the disgust of Murray Nesbitt, when he should drive up to Bayside with his new turn-out, and find that she and Jack had "gone to sea."

Nevertheless, for she was fond of boating, she fully appreciated the skill and vigor of Jack's rowing, as the gay little craft darted forward over the glassy water. Nellie herself could pull very well, but Jack Loutrel was an athlete of no mean order.

"It's a splendid morning for a row," she said; "but we must not stay out too long. The sun will be very hot by and-by."

"Not too long, indeed," said Jack; "but I've a notion there's a storm brewing."

Perhaps there was; but Jack had made up his mind that some things should be attended to that morning, storm or shine.

"There's that desolate-looking little island, at the mouth of the cove," said Nellie. "Did you ever go ashore there?"

"Island?" replied he. "Yes, desolate enough. It's dry now, at low water, but the waves go clean over it when the tides up. Shall we land, and take possession, and make believe there's a chance of finding something?"

"I don't care," said Nellie, and in a few minutes more they were seated cozily on the low ledge in the center, and Jack was silent for a little space, as he looked dreamily out to sea, with his great brown eyes.

When he turned them again at Nellie, they had a look in them that almost frightened her, and she could have wished herself in the boat again.

"What is the matter, Jack?" she asked, with an attempt at banter. "Are you—?"

"Hush, Nelly; don't laugh at me just now," interrupted Jack, in a voice that was deep, even for him; but very low and sweet; "I've something I want to say to you."

And so he had, and he said it all before Nellie could muster courage to stop him. It was hardly a fair advantage for Jack to take, away out there on the half-sunken rock, so far from Bayside, and a good quarter of a mile from either shore. Perhaps Nellie herself had some such idea, or it may be she was startled and bewildered.

At all events, when her eloquent companion pleaded for an immediate answer, she sprang to her feet with a laugh that expressed a world of willful meaning.

"Do you mean to mock me, Nellie Martin? Do you not know—can you not feel that I am in earnest? It is a matter of life and death with me! Answer me!—oh, Nelly!"

"Mr. Jack Loutrel, will you have the goodness to pull ashore, or shall I take the boat, and go alone?"

"I want to be your oarsman for life, Nellie, but not just now."

Nellie was already standing by the boat, as it rocked gently at the edge of the little islet.

"Shall I wait for you?" she said, and there was a half tremor in her voice.

Jack Loutrel could not have spoken at that moment to have saved his life, and he sank back upon his seat, from which he had partly risen, but with his back toward the boat. He justly felt that he had said something which was worthy of more serious dealing, coming from a man in earnest.

Perhaps if he had spoken, or had turned his great brown eyes upon her for a moment, the result might have been different; but he sat, without voice or motion, more like a human barnacle than anything else.

A moment more Nellie waited. She would have given something for an answer, for any sign of yielding; but none came, and her proud will carried her into the boat, and seated her at the oars.

She pulled very slowly, and it was half a mile to the beach in front of the Bayside Hotel, but a curve in the land at last hid the rock from her sight, without her constant gaze discerning the slightest change of posture in the figure she had left sitting on the ledge.

It was a tremendous experience for Nellie, altogether unlike any she had ever had before; and it may have been the tumult and excitement of her feelings, even more than carelessness, that led her to accept so eagerly the offer of a drive with Murray Nesbitt, which waited for her acceptance as she stepped on shore. Little change was required in her simple seaside costume, and in a few minutes she was whirled away behind the new team.

Meanwhile, Jack Loutrel had remained, in almost sullen sadness of musing, for a much longer time than those who knew him would have dreamed of, for he had risked much on one cast, and he had failed to win.

He was not physically uncomfortable, for the fast rising clouds had now eclipsed the summer sun, and with a good provision of fishing-tackle, perhaps the rock would not have been so bad a place.

He was not physically uncomfortable,

for now the sore-hearted watcher was suddenly aroused by theplash of little waves that were breaking at his very feet, and he felt the fresh wind of the sea upon his face.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, "the tide coming in? Of course it is; and what am I to do, now Nellie has carried off the boat?"

Black and heavy the clouds were gathering overhead, and a sort of mist had settled on the water away to windward.

"Looks like something rough was coming. Drown, sure, if I stay here. This is an awkward piece of business; but I've swam twice as far as that, and carried my clothes, too. They got wretchedly wet, though. Well, here goes!"

Jack Loutrel was a man of action, and his outer clothing were quickly enough rolled into a neat, compact bundle, and fastened at the back of his neck. Then, as he stood and watched the swift current of the tide sweeping into the cove, a thought seemed to strike him, and he suddenly snatched off his tight chip hat, and sent it spinning out upon the water.

"It's one of those varnished things, and I'm sure it'll float. I've got an awful pull to get ashore, and I'll see which'll be at Bayside first—I or my hat."

If he had any deeper thought he did not put it into words, but dashed gallantly into the fast roughening water.

And now the wind was beginning to be something more than a breeze, and Jack's work was all cut out for him, for he did not care to be carried too far into the cove by the tide.

Still, there was nothing so impossible in thefeat, for a man like Jack, but what, in due time, though pale, and dripping, and exhausted, he dragged himself out on dry land. And then he found it no contemptible job to coax himself once more inside of his water-soaked clothing.

Beyond him, at a little distance, rose the bald, weather-beaten knob that they called "The View," and which formed a stock attraction of the Bayside "drive." The road itself passed near where Jack had landed, and he waited a moment in the thick bushes at its edge, for his ears had caught the sound of coming wheels, and he hesitated about making an exhibition of himself. It was a rising tide he had braved, but within his own heart things were at a terrible low ebb.

Nearer and faster came the rattle of the wheels, and then they swept past him at their best gait, the new team of Murray Nesbitt, and Nellie Martin herself was sitting beside the handsome driver. She seemed to be looking up at him, too, with more of earnestness and emotion in her face than Jack Loutrel had ever seen there. True, it was but a glimpse he caught as they flashed past him; but he cared no longer who might see him in his forlorn predicament, and sprung over into the road to make the best of his way to the hotel.

That had been an eventful morning for Nellie Martin. It was a long drive that Murray Nesbitt had planned for her, and that, too, not without a purpose of his own. The swift motion was a good thing for Nellie, and aided amazingly in restoring the tone of her somewhat ruffled spirit; but, for all that, she was more silent, and in a manner more subdued than Murray had ever known her before. How could he have given up so good and so hopeful an opportunity? At all events, he did not, and Nellie heard him to the end in such a half-humble quietude, that Murray's heart throbbed quick and fast, with a glow of coming triumph.

They were not driving very fast just then, but were coming out upon the seaward slope of "The View." Nellie's face had been half-averted, and there was a half tremor in her voice. Jack Loutrel could not have spoken at that moment to have saved his life, and he sank back upon his seat, from which he had partly risen, but with his back toward the boat. He justly felt that he had said something which was worthy of more serious dealing, coming from a man in earnest.

Murray Nesbitt looked, with puzzled amazement, in the direction in which Nellie pointed.

"Oh, that rock," he said, coolly. "Why, that's nothing. The water has been over it this half-hour."

"Home! home! Drive back to the hotel, instantly!" gasped Nellie. "Oh! if anything has happened to him! I left him on the rock without a boat!"

Even Murray's disappointment did not prevent his obeying so serious an injunction, and on they sped, past Jack Loutrel's ambush, little dreaming that he would come striding on behind them.

It was a short drive, long as it seemed to Nellie's conscience-stricken haste; and she ran breathlessly from the carriage to the beach.

Careful hands had hauled the boats up high and dry, for the waves were chasing one another in a rough and tumble that was momentarily becoming more boisterous.

No one seemed at hand to help, and Nellie's own fair hands were quickly tugging vainly at one of the gaily-painted wherries.

"Wait a moment, miss!" shouted behind her the rough voice of the boat-keeper. "Why, yer into the water yerself. You don't want to row out in all that sea?"

"Oh! but we must save him! I left him on the rocks!"

Just then, a long, crested, splashing wave died away from around her feet, and left behind it, on the sand, a round, water-soaked chip hat. Nellie saw it, and covered her face with her hands, for now she knew that Jack Loutrel was not upon the rock.

As for Murray Nesbitt, by this time he measurably comprehended the situation, or thought he did, and insisted

in doing his uttermost to get one or more of the boats into the water, having it in mind to row all over the cove in search of any hope of aiding his unfortunate rival; while poor Nellie, after a few moments, mechanically picked up the wave-tossed wreck of a hat, and turned back toward the hotel, without vouchsafing a word of explanation to the curious and anxious inquirers, who were now rapidly hurrying down to the water-side. So general, in fact, was the exodus, that when Nellie entered the veranda, she found it altogether deserted.

On she walked, like one in a dream; but at the further end, toward the road, a tall form, clad in garments that clung forlornly close to their wearer, passed stiffly by her, as if it had been one who goes!

"Oh, Jack!" exclaimed Nellie, and she grasped him hard by the arm as she spoke. "Jack Loutrel, is it you? Jack, here's your hat."

Jack had turned upon her a pale, reproachful, almost a stormy face; but Nellie's blue eyes were streaming with tears, and her lips, that had been so willful, were quivering as they never had before.

"Oh, Jack! if you had not come ashore, I should have died!"

"Nellie!—Nellie Martin!"

"Yes, Jack; I found it out all at once, when I saw there was nobody on the rock. And, then—oh! when I thought nothing but your hat—Please forgive me, dear Jack!"

Alas! for Murray Nesbitt! The glory of his new team had departed, for Jack Loutrel had got his answer.

Snails.

BY JOSH BILLINGS.

The striped snail is one of the slipperyest jobs that nature ever turned loose.

They travel on the lower side of themselves, and can slip out of sight like blowing out a candle. They were made for some good purpose, but I never have been informed for what, unless it was to have their heads smashed.

They are sed tew be innocent, but they hav got a bad reputashun, and all the innocence in the world won't kure a bad reputashun.