

The Ligonier Banner.

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AT NIGHTFALL.

Coming along by the meadows,
Just after the sun went down,
Watching the gathering shadows
Creep over the hillside brown;

Coming along in the gloaming,
With never a star in the sky,
My thoughts went a-roaming,
Through days that are long gone by.

Days when desire said, "To-morrow,
To-morrow, heart, we'll be gay!"
Days when the heart heard the sorrow
Which echoes through yesterday.

Life was a goblet brimmed,
That with love for wine was filled;
The cup is bruised and tarnished,
And the precious wine is spilled.

But to the traveler weary,
Just coming in sight of home,
What does it matter how dreary
The way whereby he has come?

Coming along by the meadows,
And watching the fading day,
Dusky than night's dusky shadows
Fell shadows of yesterday.

In the northern sunset's glimmer
The Great Bear opened his eyes;
Low in the east a shimmer
Showed where the full moon would rise.

Lights in a window were gleaming,
And some one stood at the gate,
Said: "Why do you stand there dreaming?
And why are you home so late?"

Yesterday's shadow and sorrow
That moment all vanished away!
Here were to-day and to-morrow—
What matter for yesterday?

—Good Words.

UP THE RIVER WITH A LUNATIC.

ALF DIXON, Tom Giffard and I had gone up the river camping out; we had done our second day's work. It was early morning on the third day, glorious weather. I was in the boat, getting the steering lines in order; Giffard and Dixon were on the bank, talking to Dr. Rawle. As I understood it, the doctor was at the head of a private asylum for lunatics. He was Giffard's friend, not mine. He had been taking a constitutional when he happened to fall in with us just as we were sitting down to our open-air breakfast; the chance meeting led to Giffard inviting him to share our gypsy meal. He did.

He was a pleasant fellow, not too old and not too young. I liked him exceedingly. We talked of things in general, and of lunatics in particular. Something led to his mentioning—I think it was speaking of the cunning of a certain class of lunatics, and the difficulty of keeping them within four walls—the fact that one of his inmates had escaped a day or two previously, and had not yet been retaken. This was the more singular as it was tolerably certain he had not gone far, and search had been made for him in every direction.

As Giffard and Dixon were saying good-by, preparatory to getting into the boat, the doctor laughingly said: "Should you happen to come across him, I shall consider you bound to bring him back safe and sound. He's a man of forty-four or forty-five, tall and bony, iron-gray hair, and has a curious habit of showing his teeth and winking his left eye. Don't look out for a raving lunatic; for on most points he's as right as you and I. He's wrong in two things. Whatever you do, don't let him lose his temper; for whenever he does, though ever so slightly, he invariably goes in for murder—he's all but done for two keepers already. And don't talk to him of England or Englishmen; for if he should get upon his native land, he'll favor you with some observations which will make you open your eyes."

We laughed. Alf and Tom shook hands with him, and got into the boat. We promised, if we should happen to meet him, we would certainly see him returned to safe custody. Alf stood up and shoved us from the shore; we sang out a last good-by, and left the doctor standing on the bank.

It was a beautiful morning. The river was delicious, clear as crystal; we could see the bottom, and every stone and pebble on it; just a gentle breeze fanning the surface of the waters into a little ripple. We lit our pipes and took it easily. I am a good bit of a traveler, know many lovely nooks and crannies in foreign lands; I have lived abroad as much as at home; but I will match the higher reaches of our own Father Thames for beauty and for charm against any scenery in Europe. And on an early morning morning, after a spell of glorious weather, it is in all its prime; the water so cool, so clear; the banks so green, so charming; the stately trees on either side; the mansions seen over the meadows, or peeping out among the trees. You may choose your Rhine, your Garda, or your Maggiore, or your golden Bay of Naples, but leave Cookham and old Father Thames to me.

Presumably we had come for river beauties and the camping-out—presumably; but as a matter of fact there was a young lady lived not so far ahead, a mutual friend, Lillian Travers. Separately and jointly we had a high opinion of Miss Travers, not only of her beauty, but of other things as well; and having come so far, we hoped we should not have to return until at least we had had a peep at her. Unfortunately, though we knew Miss Travers, we had no acquaintance with Mr.—there was no Mr. We had met the young lady at several dances and such like; but on each occasion she was under the chaperonage of old Mrs. Mackenzie. Apparently Mr. Travers was not a party man. But Lillian had promised to introduce us to him whenever she got a chance, and we were not unhopeful we would get that chance now. So you see that little excursion riverward had more in it than met the eye.

We went lazily on, just dipping the oars in and out; smoking, watching the smoke circling through the clear air. All thoughts of the doctor and his parting words had gone from our minds. We talked little, and that little was of Lillian and the chances of our meeting. We had gone some two or three hundred yards; we were close to the shore. Alf could almost reach it by stretching out his oar. We were dreaming and lazily, when suddenly some one stepped out from among the trees. He was close to us—not a dozen feet away.

He was a tall man, rather over than under six feet. He was dressed in a dark brown suit of Oxford mixture; he had a stick in his hand, wore a billy-

cock hat, and his coat was buttoned right up to his throat. He had light whiskers, a heavy, drooping mustache, hair unusually long, iron-gray in color. He might be a soldier retired from his profession, or an artist out painting; he certainly looked a gentleman.

We were passing on, when he raised his stick, and shouted out, "Stop!" It was a regular shout, as though we were half a mile from him. We stopped, although it was an unusual method of calling attention.

"Gentlemen," he said, still at the top of his voice, "I should be obliged if you could give me a seat. I have a long way to go, and I am tired."

We looked at him and at each other. It was a free-and-easy style of asking a favor; but he seemed a gentleman, and an elderly one, too. Common politeness dictated civility.

"I am afraid," said Alf, "we have hardly room; she's only built for three."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," he said; "you can put me anywhere, or I'll take an oar for one of you."

I was on the point of advising a point-blank refusal, not appreciating his off-hand manner; but Alf thought differently.

"All right," said he; "we don't mind, if you don't. Steer her in, Jack."

I steered her in. No sooner were we near the shore than, quite unexpectedly, he stepped almost on my toes, rocking the boat from side to side.

"Hang it!" I said; "take care, or you'll have us overboard."

"What if I do?" he returned. "I'll only be a swim; and who minds a swim in weather like this?"

We stared at him; the coolness, not to say impertinence, of the remark, was amazing. Begging a seat in our boat, knowing it was full, and then telling us he didn't care if he spilled us into the river! He seated himself by me, setting the boat seasawing again, crushing me into a corner; and without asking with your leave or by your leave, took the steering lines from my hands, and slipped them over his shoulders.

"Excuse me," I said, making a snatch at them; "but if you'll allow me."

"Not at all," he said; "I always like something to do, and I expect you've had enough of it."

His coolness was amusing; he was impenetrable. I know I for one regretted we were such mules as to have had anything to do with him. We waited in silence a second or two.

"Come," he said, "when are you going to start?"

"Perhaps," said Alf, a bit nettled, "as you're in our boat a bit invited guest, you'll let us choose our own time."

The stranger said nothing; he sat stolid and silent. Tom and Alf set off rowing; the stranger steered right across the stream.

"Where are you going?" said Alf.

"Keep us in."

"I'm going into the shade; the sun's too strong."

He had the lines; we could hardly insist on his keeping one side if he preferred the other. He took us right to the opposite bank, under the shadow of the willow-trees. For some minutes neither of us spoke. With him cramming me on my seat, and ramming his elbows into my side, my position was not pleasant. At last I let him know it.

"I don't know if you are aware you are occupying all my seat."

He turned on me short and sharp. All at once I noticed his left eye going up and down like a blinking owl; his mouth was wide open, disclosing as ugly a set of teeth as I should care to see. Like a flash Dr. Rawle's words crossed my mind: tall, strong, about forty-five, iron-gray hair; a habit of showing his teeth and winking his left eye. Gracious powers! was it possible we had a lunatic with us unawares? I know the possibility, nay, the probability, of such a thing made me feel more than queer. If there is anything in the world I instinctively fear, it is mad persons. I know little of them—have never been in their company. Possibly my ignorance explains my dread; but the idea of sitting in the same boat and on the same seat with a man who—

Dr. Rawle's warning, "Don't let him lose his temper, or murder will ensue," made me bound from my seat like Jack-in-the-box. The boat tipped right out of the water, but I didn't care. The man was glaring at me with cruel eyes; my muscles were strung, my fists clinched; every moment I expected him at my throat.

"What the dickens are you up to?" said Alf. "What's the matter with you?"

"Excitable temperament, hot-blooded youth," said the stranger.

I could have said something had I chosen, but I preferred discretion. I didn't like his eyes.

"No—nothing," I said. "I think I'll sit in the bow." I didn't wait to learn if anyone had any objection, but swinging round, I scrambled past Alf, and tripped full length on to Tom's knees. The boat went up and down like a swing; it was a miracle he wasn't over.

"Is the fellow mad?" roared Alf.

At the word "mad" the stranger rose up straight as a post. "Mad!" he said; "do you know, sir—" He checked himself and sat down. "Pooh! he's only a boy."

In passing Tom I whispered in his ear. "The lunatic," I said.

"What?" said Tom, right out loud. "Hold your row, you confounded donkey! It's the man from Dr. Rawle's."

"The—"

He was going to say something naughty—I know he was; but he stopped short, and stared at him with all his eyes. Either Alf overheard me, or else the same idea occurred to him at the same moment, for he stopped dead in the middle of a stroke, and inspected the man on the steering seat. Tom and Alf went on staring at him for a minute or more. I kept my head turned the other way to avoid his eyes. All at once I felt the boat give a great throb. I turned: there was the stranger leaning half out of his seat, looking at Alf in a way I shouldn't have cared to have had him look at me.

"What's the meaning of this insolence?" he said.

The question was not unwarranted; it could not have been pleasant to have been stared at as Alf and Tom were staring then.

"I beg your pardon," said Alf, cool as a cucumber. "To what insolence do you refer?"

Tom actually chuckled; I couldn't have chuckled for a good deal; it seemed to me not only impudent, but risky; I couldn't forget Dr. Rawle's words about his homicidal tendencies. He turned red as a lobster; I never saw such an expression come over a man's face before—perfectly demouical. To my surprise he sat down and spoke as calmly and deliberately as possible.

"Thank you," he said; "I shall not forget this."

There was a sound about his "I shall not forget this" I did not relish. Alf said nothing. Tom and he set off rowing as coolly as though nothing had happened. I extemporized a seat in the bow, and tried to make things as comfortable as possible.

I noticed, although Alf and Tom were so cool, they hardly took their eyes off him for more than a second at a time. His behavior before their furtive glances was peculiar; he saw he was being watched; he couldn't sit still; he looked first at one bank, then at the other; his eyes traveled everywhere, resting nowhere; his hands fidgeted and trembled; he seemed all of a quiver. I expected him to break into a paroxysm every second. If I hadn't called out he would have run us right into the shore; when I called he clutched the other string violently, jerking the boat almost round. I heartily wished him at Jericho before he had come near us.

No one spoke. We went slowly along, watching each other. At last he said something.

"I—I will get out," he said, in an odd, nervous way.

"With pleasure," said Alf; "in a minute."

"Why not now? Why not now, sir?" he said, seeming to shake from head to foot.

"Where are you going to get?—into the river?" I admired Alf's coolness; I envied him. I only hoped he wouldn't let it carry him too far.

The man glowered at him; for a moment he looked him full in the face. I never saw a look in a man's eyes like that in his. Alf returned look for look. Slightly, almost imperceptibly, he quickened his stroke. A little lower down was a little hamlet with a well-known inn and a capital landing-stage. When we came alongside, the stranger said, "This will do; I'll get out here."

He turned the boat inshore. No sooner were we near enough than he rose in his seat and sprang on to the beach. There were several people about, watermen and others. Alf was after him in an instant; he rose almost simultaneously and leaped on shore; he touched him on the shoulder.

"Now come," he said, "don't be foolish; we know all about it."

The other turned on him like a flash of lightning. "What do you mean?"

But Tom was too quick for him; he was on the other side, and took his arm. "Come," he said, "don't let's have a row."

The stranger raised himself to his full height and shook off Tom with ease. He then hit out right and left in splendid style. Tom and Alf went down like ninepins. But my blood was up. I scrambled on shore and ran into him, dodged his blows, and closed. I am pretty strong. He was old enough to be my father; but I found I had met my match, and more. I was like a baby in his arms; he lifted me clean off my feet and threw me straight into the river. It was a splendid exhibition of strength.

Tom and Alf, finding their feet, made for him together, and scrambling out as best I could, I followed suit. You never saw a set-out. We clung to him like leeches. The language he used was awful, his strength magnificent; though we were three to one, he was a match for all of us. Of course, the bystanders, seeing a row, came up; they interfered and pulled us off.

"Here's a pretty good!" said one.

"What's all this?"

"Stop him! lay hold of him!" said Alf; "he's a lunatic."

"A what?" said the man.

"He's a lunatic, escaped from Dr. Rawle's asylum."

Instead of lending a hand, the man went off into a roar of laughter, and the others joined. The stranger looked literally frantic with rage. A gentleman stepped out from the crowd.

"There's some mistake," he said; "this gentleman is Mr. Travers, of Tollhurst Hall."

You could have knocked us all three down with a feather, I do believe. Could it be possible? Could we have been such consummate idiots as to have mistaken a sane man for a lunatic? and that man Lillian Travers' father? I could have shrunk into my boots; I could have run away and hid myself in bed. To think that we should have dogged, and watched, and insulted, and assaulted the man of all others in whose good books we wished to stand—Lillian Travers' father! Never did three men look such fools as we did then. We were so confoundedly in earnest about it; that was the worst of all. I don't care what you say; you may think it a first-rate joke; but he must have been an eccentric sort of elderly gentleman. If he had behaved sensibly, if he had made one sensible remark, he would have blown our delusions to the winds.

We tendered our apologies as best we could to the man we had so insulted; but he treated us and them with loftiest scorn; and we got one after another into the boat amidst the gibes and jeers of an unsympathetic crowd. And as we rowed from the wretched place as fast as our oars would take us, we each of us in our secret heart declared we should never forget our adventure up the river with a lunatic. And we haven't. From that day to this I have never seen Lillian Travers, nor do I wish to. —*Harper's Weekly.*

"Some has had luck from the start," said Mr. O'Connell, "and some have to go anything else over come to 'em. Wid me, now, Oi was born a twin the same as me brother, and we never had but was birthday betune the two av us, until he doied, long loife to him!"

Youths' Department.

A BOY'S REMONSTRANCE.

I AM feeling very badly; everything is going to smash. All the things I have believed in are going with a crash. The folks are growing learned, and all their wretched lore is used to shake a fellow's faith in his best-beloved stories. The fairies have been scattered, and the genii they have gone. There are no enchanted castles; they have vanished, every one. Aladdin never lived, and the dear Scheherazade, though very entertaining, was a much mistaken lady. Of course I see through Santa Claus, I had to, long ago; and Christmas was the next thing that I know. For I heard, wasn't listening—I heard the parson say. He had really—yes had really—grave doubts about the day. And as for Master Washington, they say the goose should catch it. Who believed a single minute in that story of the hatchet. They've given a rap at Crusoe, and dear old Friday. Why! We'll all believe in Friday, we boys will, till we die. They may say it's not "authentic," and such like, if they dare! When we start a blow at Friday, they hit us boys. So there! And I've been reading in a book, writ by some college swell, that there was a genuine, a real live William Tell! That he was just a myth, or what we boys would call a sell. That he didn't shoot the apple, nor Gesler, not a bit. That all the other nations have a legend just like it. I think it's little business for a college man to fight. Against these dear old stories and send them out of sight. And all the boys are just mad! and so the girls are, too; and so we called a meeting to decide what we should do. And we passed some resolutions, because that is the only way for meetings, when it's all that I send you here a list: Resolved, that there was a William Tell; That by his bow and arrow the tyrant Gesler fell. Resolved, that he was not a myth, whatever that may be— But that he shot the apple, and Switzerland was free. Resolved, that Crusoe lived, and Friday, and the goat. Resolved, that little George's father's fruit-tree should be a hero. Resolved, that all the sciences Of all the learned professors shall not shake our firm reliance. In the parties we have mentioned; and we do hereby make known The fact that we boys feel that we have some rights of our own— And request that in the future these rights be let alone.

—St. Nicholas for November.

JIMMIE'S MESSAGE.

AUNT LIZZIE was papa's only sister, and when the telegram came, saying that she was very sick, he felt that he must go to her at once. This was very hard, as mamma was also very sick, and he could not bear to leave her. Pulled two ways, what was poor papa to do? Dear, unselfish mamma decided the question for him. "You must go, George," said she. "I am in the midst of friends, and shall want for nothing. Lizzie is all alone. She needs you most. You must go." Jimmie wondered why papa looked so funny when he bade him good-bye. He wasn't crying, of course, because *papas never cried*; still, the sight of his face filled his little son with a vague apprehension, and quite arrested the flow of certain briny drops which were all ready to fall from a pair of bright blue eyes.

"Are you sick, too, papa?"

"No, my son. Take good care of mamma." And he was off.

Jimmie was lonesome. He told Eddie Wheelock, privately, that he felt like "a orphan boy." He had one pleasure, however, to which he always looked forward with delight. It was the taking of a "letter" each day to the telegraph office. Every day, Jimmie, accompanied by his little friend, trotted off upon his important mission. Every day he ostentatiously handed his "letter" to the "operator," and every day his small brain was puzzled anew with wondering how the paper could get over the wires "without anybody seeing it go. How did the man make it stick on?" There was a delightful mystery about the whole proceeding, and it was no small gratification to the child to feel that he was "in it."

Jimmie didn't want it to rain until his father came home; but it did rain, nevertheless. Moreover, it rained so hard one morning that he couldn't even get over to "Eddie Wheelock's house." He was disconsolate, for Margaret didn't want him in the kitchen, and the other rooms were too still for little boys. Somehow he didn't like still rooms; they made him think of so many things. He went softly up stairs and peeped in at mamma's door. She was awake. "O mamma," said he, "I'm awful tired of you being up here."

"So am I, dear," she answered. "But we won't forget to be good, will we, Jimmie?" Then she stretched out her arms, and Jimmie crept into the bed beside her.

"I love you, love you, love you," he cried, ecstatically, with a succession of little hugs. "You're the nicest, goodest—"

But just here Nurse Grey made her appearance with a covered bowl in her hand. "Little scamp," she said, looking laughingly at Jimmie. "How did he get in there?"

"I crawled in," he answered, patting mamma's thin face.

"Then you must just crawl out again, sir. Mother must have her beef tea while it's hot."

"Oh, dear!" Jimmie crept out with a quivering lip, which of course did not escape mamma's pitying eyes.

"What do you suppose Margaret is doing?" she asked, with sudden animation.

"S'pose she's skinnin' rhubarb," replied Jimmie, dolefully. "I saw her skin the skin off. I don't like rhubarb."

"I do," said Nurse Grey, decidedly.

"You don't, do you, mamma?"

"Not much," answered mamma, wearily. "Run out now, darling, and let me see—couldn't you write a little letter to papa? Mrs. Grey will copy it for you by-and-by, and we'll send it through the office."

"What'll I write?"

"Anything you happen to think of. Go now, there's a good boy."

Jimmie hunted up his slate and pencil, and took his seat at the kitchen window. He felt keenly the importance of writing a letter, but what to say was the puzzling question. He looked up

and down, but sky and earth were alike uncommunicative. Margaret, seeing that he was quietly disposed, gave him an approving smile. She was still "skinnin' rhubarb."

"Sure he's the little man that can write a be-autiful letter," she said, encouragingly. "Is it to papa, just?"

"Yes," answered Jimmie. "It's to papa. I know how to write a letter very well, Margaret."

"To be sure."

"But I can't think what to put in it."

Margaret laughed. "I'm just that way meself, darlin'," she said. "Just that very self-same way, for all the world." It was evident that he must expect no help from Margaret. Poor Jimmie! His forehead was wrinkled, and his eyebrows "all scowled up," with the earnestness of his efforts.

"Do you like rhubarb, Margaret?" he asked, suddenly.

"I've no objection to it when the sugar's plenty."

"But do you like it? Say 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Yes, then."

Jimmie went to his work with renewed energy. "Nurse Grey and Margaret—there's two that does; and me and mamma—there's two that don't. Two does and two don't," he said, thoughtfully. And the stubby pencil traveled vigorously over the slate, the red tongue keeping time with the dimpled fingers.

It seemed to Jimmie that the longer he wrote, the more he loved his absent father. Before he had finished, his poor little heart was quite heavy with its weight of affection. He could not have papa staying "away off there" any longer. He really couldn't. So he added a few more words, and then took the letter up to Nurse Grey. His slate was covered with queer, straggling hieroglyphics which it would be impossible to transcribe. Nurse Grey couldn't make them out at all. Jimmie had to tell her every word. He did this very slowly and distinctly that there might be no mistake.

"For this is to go froo the office," he said, complacently. "Isn't it, mamma?"

"Yes," answered mamma, absently.

"I want it fixed like papa's letters are fixed," he continued, eagerly.

"So, to please the little fellow, Nurse Grey wrote the address, just as she had written it for the dispatches. "Take good care of it, Jimmie," said she, "and when we are ready to—" But Jimmie didn't wait to hear her last words. His delighted eyes had beheld from the window a tiny patch of blue sky. They had also seen Eddie Wheelock coming toward the house "as fast as ever he could." He ran quickly down stairs to meet his little favorite. Strangely enough, neither mamma nor Nurse Grey suspected for a moment that the "office" which Jimmie had in his mind was no other than the telegraph office, to which his small feet had taken him nearly every day for a fortnight; but so it was. Hand in hand the two children started upon their errand, chattering as they went along like a couple of young magpies.

Jimmie walked up to the "square hole," and boldly put his letter through.

"That's mine," he said, proudly, to the clerk.

But what made the "roperator" look at him so? He couldn't imagine.

"Is this to go?" asked the clerk, in what seemed a terrible voice.

Jimmie trembled a little, but he answered bravely: "Yes, sir; that's to go. That's my letter."

"Mother know it?"

"Yes, sir; she said—"

"All right. Helps the cause along. Pay at the other end, of course?"

"Jimmie looked puzzled, but as the "click-click," began to sound just then, the man turned away, and he had no chance to reply. He didn't see Nurse Grey again until dinner-time; but when Margaret brought in a crisp, flaky rhubarb pie for dessert, he suddenly remembered.

"I sent it, Nurse Grey," he cried, exultantly. "I sent it."

"Sent what?"

"My letter. The one you wrote off."

"But you didn't have any envelope, and it needed a stamp."

"No, it didn't need a stamp," said Jimmie, his bright face all aglow with excitement. "It's pay at the other end. The man said so."

Nurse Grey dropped her pie-knife and held up both her hands.

"You don't mean to say you've telegraphed that nonsense," she exclaimed, in amazement.

"'Twasn't nonsense. 'Twas my letter. I—I—"

Such a grievous little face! Such a sudden clouding of the sunshine in the blue eyes! Nurse Grey was not a hard-hearted woman. She remorsefully essayed to comfort him.

"Never mind, Jimmie. It can't be helped now. We'll—"

But Jimmie had left the table, and was half way up the stairs, crying as if his heart would break. It was not until he had breathed his story into mamma's pitying ear that he could be consoled.

"Papa will be very glad to hear from his little boy," she said, reassuringly; "but next time we'll put the letter in a nice envelope, and Jimmie shall stamp it himself. That will be better, won't it, dear?"

She wiped away his tears as she spoke, and Jimmie was comforted.

As papa had been informed that no more telegrams would be sent him while mamma continued to improve, he was not a little disturbed when Jimmie's message was put into his hand. He hastily tore open the envelope, and read with a puzzled countenance the following communication:

DEAR PAPA: Two likes rhubarb, two don't. Come home quick, please.

"Conscience itself," he thought, mechanically counting the words. "Jimmie does well for a beginner. But what can it mean?" he continued, anxiously.

"Has an epidemic broken out in the family that they are taking sides for and against this valuable drug?"

It was very perplexing certainly, until all at once the thought of the inoffensive pie-plant occurred to him as a partial solution of the mystery. This relieved him somewhat, and the next day came a short letter, written by mamma's own hand, which set his fear quite at rest, and over which he laughed heartily.

A week later papa held his little boy

in his arms; again, and was eagerly drinking in every word of his childish prattle, when suddenly the conversation turned upon the mysteries of the telegraph.

"A horse couldn't keep up with the 'click-click,' could he, papa?"

"No, my boy."

"A elephant couldn't neither, could it?"

"I should think not."

"D'you have to pay for my letter at the other end?"

"Yes, Jimmie."

"How much?"

"Fifty cents."

"Fifty cents!"