

THE IDOL NODS.

When a man forgets his ideals he may hope for happiness, but not till then—John Oliver Hobbes.
The tender, love-sick youth believes That lovely woman ne'er deceives
He curses cynic prods.
Alack for belief! alack for beau!
If one fine day he comes to know
The idol sometimes nods.

She may, indeed, be passing fair.
With sparkling eyes and golden hair
That charm him. What's the odds?
If he should ever get a hint
That lovely tresses change their tint?
Ah, me, the idol nods!

Again, the merry maiden's feet
Look very small, divinely sweet,
In glossy leather shod.
What praise he'll lavish, goodness knows;
But if he saw her tortured toes
The idol then would nod.

For him her face is wreathed in smiles—
Misogynists would call them wiles—
There's joy where she has trod;
But then one day he sees her frown,
His airy castles tumble down,
Why does the idol nod?

Ah, well for him who comes to think,
That life has drab as well as pink,
That man is not a god;
And happiness he'll only find
As soon as he makes up his mind
That idols always nod.
—Sketch.

A HUSBAND TAKEN BACK.

The bed stood in the middle of the room, its foot in the open window. From far beneath came the night hum of Chicago, but it was quieted by the distance to a mere lullaby. So high was the top of the great hotel that the garish blue-white of the electric lights, which so lavishly dotted the city, was toned down to a gentle luminous haze.

The man on the bed tossed from side to side uneasily, rolled on his back, lay with his mouth upon the pillow. In his right hand he held crunched a letter written in a woman's writing, and as certain waves of dream crept over him he rumpled the letter savagely and mumbled through his clenched teeth words of inarticulate fury. At last his dream seemed to culminate, and he broke into a paroxysm of coughing, which awoke him. His senses dim at first, drew rapidly to the alert. His eyes, so recently glued with sleep, opened quickly to their fullest stretch. His nostrils worked like the nostrils of a dog on a trail.

"Smoke! Tobacco smoke? I don't think so. It smells to me like the reek of burning wood."

His eyes were beginning to open wider, with the unnatural expansion of terror. George Carr had been in America before, and knew what these things portended. Quickly dropping his feet on to the boards of the floor, he walked across them, unlocked his door, and, opening it, looked into the passage. He had no doubt then as to what had occurred. Not far below him was the crisp crackling of flames, and with it came the cries of badly frightened women and men.

"My God! the hotel is on fire," he exclaimed. "It is built of wood from cellar to roof tree; it is crammed with people, and I am close under the shingles on the eleventh floor!"

He went out on the landing in his night gear as he was, and attempted to descend. Columns of gray vapor which stung the eyes and nostrils rolled up the shaft of the stairway, and, looking over the balusters, he saw through the smoke arms of tawny flame which shot greedily up toward him. The heat was terrific; it drove him back to his room even before the smoke forced a retreat. Baked by the continued heat of summer, the great wooden hotel was burning as though it had been anointed with tar.

Carr ran back to his bedroom and stood in the midst of the floor, trembling like a leaf. He still held in his fingers the crumpled letter in a woman's handwriting—his wife's, but, remembering it, broke out into new fury, and tore it into tiny squares, which fluttered like white butterflies before the rising draught.

"Grasping, heartless wretch that she is," he cried. "If it had not been for this letter, goading me to make more money and still more money, I should be catching this morning's home boat from New York harbor. As it is, I'm here to burn slowly to death unless I choose to make a quicker ending of it by jumping out on to the road 200 feet below." He gave a fierce snort of a laugh. "Suicide is wrong, we are told. I wonder if it would be sinful for me to end my miseries quickly, instead of remaining till life is tediously roasted out of me here. It is a nice point, but I shall not argue it out now. I'm going to shut my eyes and jump—into eternity."

He walked steadily across to the window, put one leg over the sill, and looked down from a dizzy height which no fire escape on earth could span. Flames were beginning to jet through many of the windows below. In the street two steam fire engines were already at work; others were coming up with teams at a furious gallop. The black carpet of people in the vacant space had a curious white motting of upturned faces. Carr threw the other leg over the sill, and, stooping over, wondered where he should drop. He wanted to fall clear, and—the gaudy thought would come—he did not want to splash anybody.

The booming roar of the flames in the shaft of the stairs drew nearer and nearer. It was of no use to wait. Of earthly hope none could come. He made up his mind that he would jump then without more torturing delay. But, when it came to the actual leap, his limbs somehow failed him. He seem-

ed physically unable to leave his seat on the ledge.

"Bah! what a coward I am!" he cried, "fearing to leap into necessary death with my face toward it. I suppose I have a woman's nerve just now; I must humor myself like a woman."

He turned about, breasting the sill and lowering himself steadily down till all his body hung down against the wooden wall suspended only by the finger tips. And, then he saw something which caused such a revelation of feeling that he was within an ace of relaxing his old and being dashed to rags in the street below.

Gradually, however, his muscles stiffened again, and he drew himself up and fell faint and trembling on the board floor of his bedroom. Screwed to the jamb of the window was a stout eyebolt; fastened to this was a long coil of rope. These things are the ordinary accompaniment of American hotel bed-rooms anywhere above the first floor, and Carr had seen them scores of times before. Still feeling sick and dizzy, Carr gathered himself up from the floor, and with trembling fingers set about casting the rope from its coil. The stuff tangled and in his hasty clumsiness he tied it into hard knots. Time was wasted.

At last, however, the long, snaky length of rope was hung out of the window; and gripping it with his hands and legs, the fugitive started his descent. He was no practiced climber, and the rough hemp ate the skin from his hands as it passed through them, but such an inconvenience was only of slight moment. A far greater danger encompassed him. During his delay the fire had gained in strength and fierceness, and torrents of yellow blaze were pouring from dozens of the windows.

He had to pass through two of these, and emerged at each lower end stiffer and blackened. But the rope remained, hanging like a thin, black snake in the heart of the licking tongues of fire, getting deeper and deeper charred every moment. How long would it continue to hold him?

Fully conscious of his new peril, he let the cord slip past him still more rapidly, till it felt as though his hands were being cut through to the very bone by a red-hot saw; and then—it broke.

He felt a numbing rush through the air, a jarring thud as of ten thousand earthquakes, suns shooting before his eyes—and that was all. Oblivion held him entirely.

Later on the doctor presented the patient, over whom there had been some controversy, with a paper which contained a lengthy account of the fire, and the patient marveled at the inventive powers of Chicago journalists. When, however, he came to the list of the killed, about which there could not well be any sentimental romancing, he put the paper down with a start. For awhile he lay still with his eyes on the ceiling. Then his glance descended again and roved round the ward rather guiltily. Finding that no one was noticing him, he once more picked up the paper.

Yes, there it was, in uncompromising black and white, described with gruesome adjectives and Carr of Wingford, England. Curiosity made him search further among the columns, and he found the method of his death described with gruesome adjectives and startling headlines. This last owned to being imaginative, as it mentioned that he had never been seen alive after retiring for the night.

Yet it was a bad conjecture of what might have occurred to a man who was slowly suffocated to death.

Again the paper fluttered to the floor, and again Carr's eyes sought the ceiling. He was thinking very hard indeed, and couldn't quite make up his mind to something. A course seemed open before him, a course which had some drawbacks, but a multitude of good points. For one thing, it would ease him forever of his wife, who has tormented his love into something akin to hatred; for another—

The doctor came and broke into his reverie.

"Say, friend, I want to know your name. The hotel registers are burned, and the papers wish to print a list of survivors, so that we may tot up with more accuracy how many poor wretches are missing. It's been a sad business, this, all around; a mighty sad business. Many deaths, and—what did you say your name was, sir?"

It was now or never. The choice had to be made or the chance missed.

"Carey."

The doctor noted it down on his cuff.

"Initials, please?"

"Henry G."

"Where of? You're English, I guess—

isn't that so?"

"Yes, a Londoner."

"Thanks. I won't ask you how you like our city, because, perhaps, you've got rather a bad first impression. But that'll wear off, sir. You'll like it before you've done."

"I hope so," said the patient, dreamily. "I'm here in America to stay. I hope I shall get on."

"Hope so, I'm sure," said the doctor, briskly. "Wish you every kind of luck."

An outcast, ragged, bent and prematurely aged, slouched along beside a high park wall. The slushy snow of an English spring ebbed and flowed across the soles of his bursting boots; the chill of the wind bit savagely through his rags of clothes. Presently the wall gave place to a sun fence, and the tramp stopped and gazed at the view.

"Is that your daughter?" interrupted the American, pointing to the young lady at the desk. "Yes, sir."

"All right; I'll marry her after lunch."

And, giving his valise to the speechless Boniface, he added, "Now, you can take my baggage up to our room."

Camels Cannot Swim.

Camels are perhaps the only animals that cannot swim.

A live man should not want the earth—he should be above it.

gazed at him for a moment in haughty impudence, and then trotted into cover.

The tramp, with a sigh, started wearily on his way. "It seems even grander than I was told of," he murmured to himself. "Wealth, comfort, happiness everywhere. And it might all have been mine. Every stick and every shrub left to the wife and me between us. It fell to us by will the day before I—died; the day before I was burned to ashes in the Chicago fire. Fancy the irony of that! The day before? Why didn't the news reach me? I'd a fine fund of selfishness about me.

"And Louise was right after all. It was her duty to urge me to business. I was as lazy as the day was long then, and she told me of it, and I hated her for speaking. I've thought since over that letter, and the pain it must have caused her to write.

"Eh, well, that's all past and done with. I died. I was full of conceit in myself, and thought an American fortune was easily made, even if it was sometimes lost with suddenness. Pah! I never reached the first rung of the ladder. I never rose above laboring with my hands at unskilled trades, and it was being constantly shown me how I was an indifferent laborer at that.

"No, I've missed it badly, and all through my own short-sighted fault. I might have had a wife, children and a stately home. What I do have is my share of the queen's wet highway and weary aches to lie down upon. Of myself I shall never be more than what I am—a broken waster. But there is one thing I won't do, and that's ask help from her. She'd give it, if I sought for it; she'd call me back as her husband if she knew me to be alive; she'd share with me willingly what is, perhaps, after all, legally mine to share. But no, I'm blamed if I do. She's a good woman, and I'm what they call in the States a mean man. Yes, mighty mean and down at the heel, not at all white; but I've made my bed, and I won't remake it even if I have the chance. Things are uncomfortable, but I guess they won't drag out much longer."

He sat heavily down on the wet way-side turf, his legs dangling over the ditch. "Ten years; ten terrors for me. Ten years of her thinking herself a widow. She's had the chance to marry again; I heard all about it. Leslie asked her, the only man I was jealous of before I won her for myself. She likes him, I know; she always did; and for him she's the only woman in the world. But she wouldn't marry him for all that, though he could have given her love, title, more wealth, yes, everything a woman could want."

A crunching noise made the tramp turn his glance. A smart carriage with a pair of ponies was coming up round a turn of the west road. A woman was driving; a man in Every sat behind. The tramp gazed for a minute with starting eyes, then turned away and, with bowed head, faced the ditch. "Oh, my God," he murmured, and clinched his hands till the nails drew blood.

The noise of the wheels ceased, and there was the sound of rustling skirts. The tramp also noticed the faint smell of sealskin, but he kept his back resolutely immovable.

"George."

The tramp did not stir. A trembling hand was placed on his wet shoulder.

"George, look up. I know it is you."

"Woman, go away. You are making a mistake."

"Look me in the face and repeat that."

"I—I will not. I can't."

She slipped down to a seat beside him on the sodden turf, and the groom at the ponies' heads felt his jaw drop down through wonder.

"Oh, Louise, why can't you pass me by? I only came for a peep. I didn't intend you to see me—God knows I didn't. It's all yours now, and I'll not take a fraction away from you. I have chosen my path like the scoundrel that I was, and I must keep along it. It isn't fit that I should turn back now."

"Yet you must stay, now that I have found you."

"I tell you I cannot. You would not ask me if you knew what I have been, how vilely I have sinned against you. Don't shake your head; it is true. If you won't credit that, listen."

She threw her arms around his shoulders, pressing him fiercely to her breast.

"Dear," she said, "you have come back to me. I know that; I do not want to know any more."

The tramp tried to pluck himself from the embrace without avail. Then he lay against her furs and shuddered, but made no more resistance.

Louise Carr had taken back her husband.—**Black and White.**

The Obstacle Overcome.

They are telling the story in London that the impossible American in Paris alighted at a hotel to find it absolutely full. "I have nothing," expostulated the host, almost tearfully, "nothing. The first floor is taken by the King of the Ostenders; the Queen of Montevideo occupies the second; the Duke of Cottonopolis is sharing the third floor with the Caliph of Port Said; and the Crown Prince of Nova Esperanza is sleeping on the billiard table. As for myself, I have to make up a bed in the office, and there only remains the chamber of my daughter. Of course—"

"Is that your daughter?" interrupted the American, pointing to the young lady at the desk. "Yes, sir."

"All right; I'll marry her after lunch." And, giving his valise to the speechless Boniface, he added, "Now, you can take my baggage up to our room."

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BLOW AT JOHN BULL

Message in Support of the Monroe Doctrine.

MAY MEAN RED WAR.

All Foreign Nations Must Keep Out of Americas.

Salisbury's Refusal to Submit the Dispute to Arbitration Leads to Strong Words—President Cleveland Tells Congress This Nation Should Use Force If Necessary—Proposes to Send a Commission to Fix a Line Which John Bull Will Cross at His Peril.

The message of President Cleveland to Congress transmitting the correspondence between Secretary Olney and Lord Salisbury relative to the Venezuela boundary dispute created a real sensation in Washington. Although the nature of Secretary Olney's vigorous communication and of Lord Salisbury's answers had been already accurately foretold in the Associated Press dispatches from Washington and London there was still a great popular craving to learn just how the President would deal with Lord Salisbury's refusal to submit the matter to arbitration, and the message was listened to with intense interest in Congress and was read with avidity on the streets. Nowhere was there a voice lifted in dissent from the doctrine so firmly laid down by the President, but on the contrary the President would deal with Lord Salisbury's refusal to submit the matter to arbitration, and the message was listened to with intense interest in Congress and was read with avidity on the streets. 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