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Belle Me.

Belle me, when I tell thee, darling,
That my heart is warm and true;
And the years have only brought up
Hope and love combined with you.

Bitter memory wakes the sorrow
That has slumbered many years;
But the daylight hour is nearing
When we meet in smiles and tears.

The world may scoff and turn coldly
On my track o'er land or sea,
Yet I'll bear the blow more bravely
If it leads to love and thee.

Lonely hours and fading pleasures
Fill the mind with days gone by,
When we kissed our little treasures,
Parting sadly, you and I.

Fate and fortune ever battling
In the ranks of bounding life.
Down-to-day and up-to-morrow,
Is the lesson of the strife.

Loving hearts must never falter;
Hoping onward to the last;
Breathe the storm without a murmur;
God will help when all is past.

MY FIRST HUNT.

A Boy's Story.

My name is Jasper Cooper. I was not a model boy. My share of original sin was a liberal one, and between the good and evil in me, the balance, I am sorry to say, very often bent the wrong way. For the benefit of others, I am going to make a particular confession in one instance, and show how my bad conduct brought me trouble and lasting repentance.

On my thirteenth birthday I received two presents that made me feel proud and rich. One was a small gun from my Uncle Philip, with plenty of powder and shot. It was accompanied with the timely caution, "that firearms were dangerous weapons unless very carefully handled." The other gift was a fine spaniel from my father.

The boy is a rare one whose happiness is not complete with a gun and a dog—and I was not one of the rare ones.

A week later, one bright, cool autumn morning, as I was standing by the gate just after breakfast, Nathan Bagley, an intimate friend of mine, though a little older than myself, came along and accosted me.

"Good morning, Jasper. So you are getting up in the world. They say that you've got a gun and a dog."

"I suppose that's so!" I answered, with pride and pleasure.

Nathan laughed at my very apparent satisfaction, and said: "Look here, I'm going hunting in Blake's woods this afternoon. Come, go with me. There's plenty of small game there. We'll have a bagful before night."

"I can't. I must go to school."

"Get excused. You can do that easy enough."

"No. Mr. Lowe won't excuse scholars without a note from one of their parents, and father is out of town."

"Your mother will write one for you."

"She's been sick two days and can't sit up."

Nathan looked disappointed. "Look here, Jasper," he said, after thinking a moment, "you're sharp enough. You can contrive a way to go, I know. I'll be ready just after dinner."

Nathan went home, and I went into the house. To be called "sharp" was a compliment that weighed more with me in my tempted state of mind than any years of doing wrong. I wanted to go hunting, and my whole thought was how I could contrive to go. It was impossible to get a note, requesting a release from school duties, from either of my parents, and what would do as a substitute?

Suddenly the thought came: Why not write a note yourself, and sign your father's name? I was an indifferent speller, but a good penman, and I was certain I could counterfeit my father's handwriting.

I searched his desk and found an account book that had been written by him. This I placed on the table before me in my room, and for full half an hour I was completely engrossed in attempts to imitate the chirography. I succeeded at last (as I thought) remarkably well, and produced a neat, carefully worded note, so complete a counterfeit that I was sure Mr. Lowe would never doubt its genuineness.

My chief difficulty, however, was in the signature. I was puzzled to decide exactly how father wrote his name at the bottom of his letters. I had brought him letters from the post-office directed "Mr. Asa Cooper," "Hon. Asa Cooper," and "Asa Cooper, Esq.," but whether he would put one of these titles to his own signature was a question I could not settle. I tried to find some of his old letters to guide me, but the three I had received from him while I was at Uncle Philip's had been mislaid or destroyed. After much deliberation, I wrote as follows:

"Mr. Lowe: Dear Sir,—Will you oblige me by excusing my son Jasper from school this P. M. His studies are wearing upon him, and I think he needs more open air and exercise.

"Very Truly Yours,
"HON. ASA COOPER."

I read this three times, to be sure there was no inaccuracy in it. The capitals and punctuation seemed to me to be correct, and on the whole, I was very well satisfied with my production. I took my hat and books and hurried to school.

Just after the morning session I presented my note to Mr. Lowe, and watched

him narrowly as he read it. I noticed that a faint smile stole over his face, but as he gave me without a question the permission I desired, I supposed he had no doubt of its genuineness. Home I went, jubilant enough; ate a hurried dinner; called my dog; and with my new gun on my shoulder, started to find my friend Nathan. He was expecting me.

"How did you get excused from school?" he earnestly inquired.

"Oh, easy enough. I wrote a note and signed father's name to it, and it took the master in completely."

"You're a sharp one," said Nathan again.

We soon reached the woods. The trees were just tinged with the gold and purple of autumn, and every now and then a bird or squirrel was seen hopping from branch to branch. Nathan fired at a bluejay, and though it did not drop to the ground, as he confidently expected, one of its tail feathers did, which convinced him that he had almost made "a good shot." His next was better. He killed a woodpecker, and considered it quite an achievement.

"Why don't you let drive at something?" said he. "There are plenty of birds."

"I'm not going to shoot pretty birds that do no harm," I said, proudly. "I'll kill partridges if I kill anything, for they are good to eat, and such birds as crows and henhawks, that do mischief."

Nathan laughed.

"It isn't best to be too particular," he said.

I stopped, and was upon the point of taking out the ramrod from my gun in order to put in powder and shot.

"What, isn't your gun loaded?" exclaimed Nathan, in surprise. "You're a queer hunter, anyhow!"

"What's the odds?" I answered, with spirit. "I guess there's time enough to load my gun."

"Look, there's game for you!" said Nathan, laughing.

My eye followed the direction to which he pointed, and, to my surprise, I saw about fifteen rods from us, a little shriveled old woman in a thin, faded dress and red hood. Her name was Lucy Robinson, and her eyes were fixed scowlingly upon me. A few weeks before she had reported to Mr. Lowe that I had broken her windows one day during a recess of school hours.

This was false. I had sometimes teased her by petty tricks; but had never in any way injured her property. I could not, however, show that the accusation was false, and was punished by Mr. Lowe for the supposed offense. Since then I had felt very angry with old Lucy Robinson, and the idea of retaliation at once occurred to me, and I determined to frighten her.

Without a moment's hesitation, I put my gun to my shoulder and leveled it at her.

"You told Mr. Lowe a wicked lie about me, and I'll shoot you!" I cried, in a loud voice.

Nathan, in the meantime, caught a glimpse of a woodchuck making for its hole. He had not yet finished charging his gun after firing at the woodpecker, and believing mine to be unloaded, he started to run; but, in doing so, he pushed me and jostled my arm, causing a sudden pressure upon the trigger, and to my horror, the gun, still pointed at Lucy Robinson, gave a loud report!

The old woman screamed and staggered, and blood appeared trickling from her sleeve! She stared a moment, pale and terror-stricken, and then, clasping a hand over the wound, fled towards her home, moaning and crying with pain.

Nathan and I gazed after her retreating figure, and then looked with horror into each other's eyes. "You hit her!" exclaimed Nathan, wildly.

"I only meant to frighten her! I didn't mean to kill her! I didn't know my gun was loaded!" I gasped.

"You'll be arrested for this! You'll have the sheriff after you! You'd better clear out!" said Nathan, greatly alarmed.

"Where can I go?" I asked, an icy tremor running through me.

"I don't know; but you've hurt old Lucy, and they'll think you meant to kill her. If she dies, you'll be tried for murder, and maybe get hung. You're in an awful fix, Jasper. I wouldn't stay round here, anyhow!"

Evidently Nathan was too much excited to be a wise counselor, and as we left the woods, I tried to look the calamity full in the face. I still had enough of my wits about me to know that if I fled from suspicion, I should only involve myself in greater difficulties, but I was quite uncertain what course to pursue.

For more than an hour we wandered about over the fields and down the road. I dared not go home, and a thousand forebodings tortured me. As we were going over the bridge, the clattering of hoofs was heard coming rapidly towards us, and in another moment Sheriff Clapp appeared. He leaped from his horse, and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Jasper Cooper, I arrest you," said he, "for intent to kill Lucy Robinson. Come with me."

The blood seemed to curdle in my veins. I made no attempt at explanation, but followed him in despairing silence. Nathan walked by my side.

"I know where he is taking me to," I said, in a hoarse voice. "I'm on my way to the lookup; and I want you, Nathan, to go to my house and tell Margaret Connor what has happened. Tell her to keep it from mother, by all means, for it will make her worse; but as soon as father gets back I want to see him."

"I will," responded Nathan, dolefully.

The "lookup" was a temporary prison

in the basement of a large public building. It had a barred window, and a strong iron door. Into this place I was conducted, and as the key was turned, and the shades of evening shut out the day, all light and hope seemed to leave me. I passed a dreadful night of solitude, suspense and forebodings.

Morning came at last. I knew that my father was expected in the early train, and that Nathan would at once inform him of all that had happened, and I listened with strained ears for his footsteps. But he did not come.

Early in the afternoon my prison door was opened, and I was conducted to Esquire Hammond's office. The room was full, and my eyes first rested on Lucy Robinson, waiting to accuse me. Her arm was in a sling, and her face was dark and wrathful. Her evidence against me was strong and conclusive, and visibly affected her hearers.

Nathan was next questioned, and testified stoutly to my innocence. He was certain that I supposed my gun was unloaded, for I was just making preparations to load it when the woman appeared. And he repeated the words that had passed between us about it before Lucy came in sight.

Dr. Hall then produced the ball he had extracted from the woman's arm, and they said that it fitted my gun exactly.

My turn came next. I felt the terrible weight of the evidence against me. I had to meet the grave charge of intent to murder. I well knew that Esquire Hammond was not my friend. In my earlier boyhood he once saw me on his fence picking a few pears from his tree, and had since then always regarded me with suspicion. I was indeed in a net of difficulties; but the very distress of the moment collected and strengthened my faculties, and gave me desperate fluency of speech.

My defence in substance, of course, was that I had not thought of injuring Lucy Robinson. My gun was not loaded when I pointed it at her. I had been punished once in consequence of her false accusation, and following a momentary impulse to tease, I had tried to frighten her, and my gun went off only when Nathan accidentally ran against me. I testified further that I possessed only powder and shot, and that I did not know where the ball came from, nor who had loaded my gun with it.

Esquire Hammond listened with marked attention, and I was hopeful that I had made a favorable impression. He then cross-examined me as follows:

"Where is your father?"

"He is in Rhode Island."

"When did he go?"

"Day before yesterday."

"Does he approve of boys of your age using firearms?"

"Yes, sir, if carefully handled," I boldly replied.

"How happened it that you were out hunting, instead of being in school?"

The judge's eyes were fixed penetratingly on me.

"Mr. Lowe excused me," I answered.

"At either of your parents' request?"

"My father's."

"Did your father see Mr. Lowe, and request a leave of absence for you?"

"No, sir."

"How did Mr. Lowe know of his wishes?"

"I took a note."

"From your father?"

"Yes—sir," hesitatingly.

"Did he write the note?"

"At this question my heart began to beat violently, and the blood mounted higher and higher, till I knew that my face must be a bright scarlet.

"Did your father write the note?" questioned Esquire Hammond, authoritatively.

"Yes—I believe so—yes—I saw him."

"Where were you when he wrote it?"

"In—in the library," I faltered out, hardly conscious of what I was saying.

Esquire Hammond put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a folded paper and opened it. I recognized it at once, and my knees began to knock one against the other, for it was the note I had presented to Mr. Lowe.

"Is this the note you gave to Mr. Lowe?" he continued, holding it out to me.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Lowe tells me," continued Esquire Hammond, "that he excused you from attending school because of this written request from your father. When did your father write it?"

"Just before I went to school yesterday morning," I faltered, beginning to forget what I was about.

"You say," said Esquire Hammond, sternly, "that he has been in Rhode Island since day before yesterday, and yet you saw him write this yesterday morning. Now which of these statements is true, and which is false?"

I made no reply. My wits completely deserted me. I had condemned myself.

Esquire Hammond read the note aloud, and a long and hearty laugh, as he ended with "Hon. Asa Cooper," burst from the people who were present. I burst into tears. The wrong act I had committed in counterfeiting father's writing, was a strong witness against me, and had destroyed all confidence in my statements. I read in Esquire Hammond's face that a hard verdict would come from his lips, and the horrors of jail life rose vividly before me. With a shuddering fear, I thought of my parents, and what dreadful distress my disgrace would cause them. Perhaps it would be the death of my sick mother. I stood overcome with grief and despair.

Just then a loud, prolonged whistle announced the approach of the incoming train. Father was doubtless a passenger

in it. I cast an imploring glance at Nathan. He hurried out, and I knew he would speedily return with him.

At that instant Jonathan Morris, one of our neighbors, entered the office. His face was flushed, and his breath came deep and quick, as if he had been running.

He fixed his eyes for a minute encouragingly upon me, and then asked permission of Esquire Hammond to speak. Then he said, in a loud voice:

"Nathan Bagley has just told me that Jasper Cooper's trial is going on, and I am here to testify that he did not know his gun was loaded."

How my heart bounded at these words of hope.

"I saw a fox," continued Jonathan, "prowling about my turkey pen. I ran over and borrowed Jasper's gun of Margaret Connor. Before I could get back and load it, the fox was gone, but when I carried the gun home, the ball was still in it."

Jonathan Morris was a highly respected man in the town, and his testimony saved me from being tried for a capital crime. The stern features of Mr. Hammond relaxed, and the opinions of all who had listened to him were perceptibly changed. I was undoubtedly a bad boy, but not so bad as I had seemed.

After a few more questions, and a little deliberation, Esquire Hammond gave his verdict as follows:

"For the crime of wantonly frightening Mrs. Lucy Robinson, Jasper Cooper is required to pay a fine of fifteen dollars and the costs of this trial."

Father and Nathan had come in while he was speaking, and in time to hear his concluding words. Father took out his pocketbook and promptly paid the fine. You may be sure that I was thoroughly punished and penitent.

As we walked home, I confessed, without the slightest concealment, all the wrong I had done in forging his writing to obtain a leave of absence from school, and then in a moment of resentful mischief, pointing my gun at an old woman, and threatening her with the disastrous result now so well known.

"My son," said he, very seriously, "you now see the value of a good name. You prejudiced old Lucy Robinson against you by teasing her. You forfeited Esquire Hammond's confidence by robbing his pear tree; and the note you counterfeited destroyed your character for truth. With only your own word to help you in this trial, you could not have escaped the heavy charge made against you. If a good name has been established, and the life record is right, you may defy suspicion and conquer false charges; but with a bad reputation, it is often impossible for even the innocent to get justice."

I have never forgotten the lesson of that day. It taught me to shun dissimulation and artifice, and since then I have never willfully told a lie. I sought by every means in my power to repair the wrong I had done Lucy Robinson. Her wound healed in time, and as father presented her with a handsome sum of money, besides fixing her house, her bitter feelings toward me quite died away. I carefully saved my pocket money, and when Christmas came purchased for her a nice woolen dress, which she received with the warmest thanks. From that time to the day of her death, I had a true and faithful friend in old Lucy Robinson.—*Youth's Companion.*

About a Battle.

After we had held the edge of the woods for two hours, says an old soldier, relating some incidents of battles, and when the space between our line and that of the enemy fairly smoked and flamed with the fury of the fight, the cry arose that we were getting out of cartridges. Some full wooden boxes were brought up, and such was the haste of the men to get them that they took up the boxes and dashed them bodily against the trees, splintering them to pieces, and making the cartridges at once available.

About the same time I saw one of our sergeants hit in the hip with a bullet. He had just finished loading his musket, and he declared he would not leave the field until he had returned the shot. Supported by two soldiers, he carefully sighted and fired, and then was helped to the rear. He died from the effects of his wound.

Much has been written of the "line of battle," and here again the popular idea is at fault. It would, no doubt, be much prettier for troops in action to preserve a regular formation, with ranks well aligned and each rear-rank man exactly behind his file leader, and I remember that in the early days of the war the illustrated papers were accustomed to represent battles in this way. But this is not in the least in accord with the truth. In the toil of the fight, with the rapid loading and firing, and the frequent dropping of men dead or wounded, the line is destroyed, the ranks often become mingled together, and the company becomes an irregular squad or knot of men, of whom half will be on the ground or firing from the knee.

Insanity Increasing.

Insanity is increasing in some of the United States, says an exchange, in a ratio greater than that of the population of nearly twelve per cent. The increase is also larger in the foreign element than in the native born. The causes assigned for this increase among the American born population are "the educational pressure upon the young to the neglect of physical exercise, artificial and unnatural habits of living, the excitement and competition of business, and whatever causes multiply nervous diseases, especially those by the brain, which result in mental derangement."

An Old Convict.

A Hartford correspondent of the New York *Sun* describes a visit to the Connecticut State prison, at Weathersfield, where he came across the remarkable convict, Andrew D. Wells, who has been a prisoner there from his sixteenth to his sixtieth year, and who now, though pardoned and released, still remains at work in the prison.

Wells is described as a man of strong natural build, but the impress of age is visible in his wrinkled and somewhat emaciated face, and in his stiffened bearing. His countenance told of a life of silence, of uncheered labor, solitude and imprisonment. In conversation, however, he is lively and chipper, and he told the story of his life with ease and animation. He was thrice sentenced for robbery, a business, he says, which his mother taught him when he was a mere boy. He never attended school but a month in his life, and when he entered the prison he could neither read nor write.

He managed to improve his mind gradually, however, learning to read in his cell at night with an old copy of the Bible and an almanac. A fellow prisoner taught him to write, and now he is a regular subscriber to several periodicals and papers. He has a son whom he never saw, and he has not seen his wife for seven years.

The warden describes Wells as "a sensible old chap" and a first-class mechanic. He exhibited a box full of his handiwork, consisting of small knives and hammers three-quarters of an inch long, to be attached as charms to watch chains. Wells feels the prison walls his home, and cannot bear to be at liberty, so he still works in the shop, and boards and lodges with the chaplain.

There is a similarity in this to the case of "the aged prisoner of the Bastille" and "the prisoner of Chillon." Both spent the best years of a lifetime in prison, and when released begged to be taken back again. What Byron puts into the mouth of the old man of Chillon might well express the probable feeling of all the three:

"At last men came to set me free,
I asked not why, I recked not when;
It was at length the same to me
Fettered or fetterless to be.

Those heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage and all my own.

And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me."

Bonnets.

A fashionable girl says: What are called poke-bonnets are most popular at present with young ladies. These are slender shapes worn on the back of the head, and extending high above it. Instead of having flaring brims, they are close on the sides, and the whole top of the head is left uncovered. These shapes in cream colored felt, or in velvet to match costumes, are used for dress hats. They are trimmed with soft silk and two nodding demi-plumes. An ornament of gold or of silver is seen on many handsome velvet hats, yet most milliners use such decorations with care. A bird's wing stuck in the face trimming is also a popular fancy with stylish young ladies.

The last importations are capote bonnets, shaped like babies' bonnets, without a frame, and with cape and soft crowns that can be crushed without injury. The front frames the face, and is tied under the chin, like the old-time cottage bonnets—a warm and comfortable fashion that we predict will become popular next winter after the poke-bonnets now worn have exposed the head of the wearer and brought on neuralgia and other ailments. A pretty capote of brown silk, with crown and cape in one piece, has a brown or rich russet face trimming, and a damask rose. A long scarf of ecrusse passes over the top, and serves for strings to tie under the chin.

The Italian Brigand is the name given to a new round hat of black velvet, or of velvet made with high pointed crown and wide brim turned down. A scarf of scarlet silk, with gold bands in the end, is twisted round the crown, and an odd little agrette of game feathers is stuck in the back.

A Strange Proposition.

A New York paper, the *Graphic*, in all sincerity puts forth the following strange settlement of the capital punishment problem. We publish it as a curiosity simply: As there is a prejudice against the putting to death of persons whose neurosis crops out in murder, a hint as to what should be done with them might well be taken from the insect world. When wasps have laid their eggs they confine beetles near them for food; but should they kill the beetles they would be a mass of corruption by the time the eggs were hatched, and should they leave them fully alive, they would sprawl about and kill the young larvae. So the wasps wisely sting the beetles in such a way as to paralyze and render them incapable of motion, though they still live and are incapable of doing harm. A man insane enough to commit a murder is always dangerous; but as it would be impossible to confine him as insane when he has become sane, would it not be well to render him permanently insane by processes well known to physicians—to paralyze or reduce him to imbecility—when he will feel no hardship in his confinement and humane persons will have no reason to complain? It is evident that some compromise must be brought about in the matter, and there seems to be none better than that suggested by the wasps.

Facts and Fancies.

King Alfonso's song—"I wish mamma were here."

He who complains of the shortness of life will get satisfaction in eternity.

"My dear sir," is the way to commence telling a man that his bill is too high.

Every cloud has a silver lining—except Red Cloud. His lining is copper colored.

It is not enough to remember the poor. A little help occasionally will be acceptable.

"Old-Man-Afraid-of-his-Wives" is the name by which Brigham Young is known among the Indians.

The supreme court of Iowa has just decided that heirship may be resident in an illegitimate child.

Reports show that the cotton crop of the United States for 1875 is between 4,050,000 and 4,150,000 bales.

A lunatic in the Norwich (England) hospital killed three children before he could be captured and taken care of.

The New Haven *Journal* suggests that the Centennial coffee pot will probably be exhibited on the "grounds."

New Jersey turned out 1,500,000 pounds of grapes last fall; 200,000 were kept for making wine, and the rest exported.

A widow informed a friend at the funeral that she couldn't tell whether she would wear mourning or not until her husband's will was read.

A Reading girl will insist on wearing boys' clothes, and her father advertises for a remedy. Dress up a young fellow in girls' clothes and marry her off.

"Put it and call it" may be properly defined thus: You put your money in the hands of a broker for the purpose of speculation and call for the profits in vain.

It is said that since the abolition of purchase in the British army many retired officers have entered the ranks in the expectation of working up to a commission.

"What! no more ammunition?" cried the captain of a military company on a field day. "No; no more," replied his men. "Then—ah—cease firing," replied the officer.

An officer who was shot, a grape shot passing through his body, is alive and holds the office of sheriff of Middlesex county, Conn., and is now enjoying good health and strength.

Bergh, the philanthropist, is trying to get agents appointed all along the New York canals so as to arrest all drivers using horses galloped or injured. The canal drivers do not like this.

Four wives in Virginia City celebrated New Year by christening their babes, and a fifth wife, being present, cried herself into hysterics, because she had no baby with which to celebrate.

A woman of Pekin, Ill., was asked by her minister if her husband feared the Lord. She replied: "Fear him! Bless you, he is so afraid of him that he never goes out of a Sunday without taking his gun along."

A Wisconsin editor illustrates the prevailing extravagance of the people nowadays by calling attention to the costly baby carriages in use, while when he was a baby they hauled him around by the hair of his head.

Leading poultrymen have put in a request for five acres of the Centennial grounds, and 5,000 pens, at the Philadelphia exhibition, for the display of chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, pigeons and poultry products.

The cost of governing Great Britain is about \$515,000,000; the cost of governing the United States is \$645,000,000—these sums including all the expenses of federal, State, county and municipal government.

A chinaman in California, whose life was insured for a large amount, was seriously hurt by falling from a wagon. There was some doubt of his ever getting better, and at length one of his friends wrote to the insurance company: "Charlie half dead, like half money."

Rev. Mr. Shipman, of Norwich, Conn., says that he was once called to marry a man who was to be united to his fourth wife. As he approached the couple he said, as usual: "Please rise." The man fidgeted about on his chair, and finally remarked: "We've usually sat."

The sight of a woman driving a cab attracted the notice of the police in Glasgow, and the regular driver was found inside the vehicle, dead. The woman had gone on a spree with a companion, and had given the man so much liquor that he had passed from insensibility to death.

Desperate Women.

Jennie Collins, in the Boston *Transcript*, tells the following story of the working girls of that city: On a Saturday night, not long ago, three girls came home with their week's pay, and, as the first one said, "Mother, hold your apron," all threw their money into it. I congratulated the mother, because they were so good. She answered: "I wish they were bad, then it would not break my heart to see them deny themselves every pleasure and work like slaves." * * * One girl, who was out of work and in debt last spring, could not bear the cross looks when she went to the table, so she in her despair wandered into a street car house, sleeping under a car three nights and sitting in an office in the daytime. This exposure to the cutting cold winds nearly cost her her life. When she found something to do she dropped on her knees and began to pray.