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MY VOW.

When I get rich, I'll quit the road for good
And stay on at home as each man
should,
Who has a home where the faithful wife
Through years of lonesome labor spends
her life;
I'll give some younger man my timeworn
And let him take my routine monthly trip,
When I get rich.

When I get rich, at home I'll gladly stay,
And give my wife some comfort every day,
I'll smooth away the wrinkles from her face
That time has all too soon begun to trace;
I'll lighten all her labors, great and small,
And if she would consent, I'll bear them all,
When I get rich.

When I get rich, I'll give with lavish hand
To help the fallen rise in every land,
I'll give to spread the gospel far and wide,
To feed and clothe the poor on every side;
I'll advertise that I have funds to spare
In doing good to others everywhere,
When I get rich.

When I get rich, Why make so rash a vow?
A voice within me whispers, even now,
Thou art already rich in resources grand—
A voice that now can cheer, a helping hand,
A heart that now should beat with love
Divine,
Give what thou hast, give freely what is thine,
For thou art rich.
—Charles W. Scarff, in Ram's Horn.

THE MITIGATION OF MISS NERVY.

How Miss Nervy Turned the Tables on Her Cow-Boy Lover, First
Stubbing Him, and then Falling in Love with Him.

By MAY BELLEVILLE BROWN.

It was mail-day at Waxhaw. The narrow street in front of the postoffice was full, and the hitching-posts each tethered its saddled horse. There were high-heeled boots with jingling spurs, reckless-looking sombreros, cartridge-belts and full holsters, as well as leather and befringed leggings, but the crowd about the gray and weather-beaten cottonwood building was a decorous one.

Even those who came and went through the swing doors of the Cow-boys' Rest down street did so in a subdued way. Had a stranger, expecting vegetation and reckless shooting, questioned the state of affairs, Limber Jack, the erstwhile Bad Man of Waxhaw, would have explained.

"Don't talk too loud, or Miss Nervy'll git after ye. She don't like a racket when she's sortin' the mail."

The men lounged and talked, exchanging tobacco, the news of the range and frequent libations. Suddenly the postoffice door opened, and there was a hush. An erect, well-built woman of about thirty-five stood there. The sun caught the ripples of her red hair, turning them to copper; her mouth was set in a grim line as she looked sternly across the crowd.

"You Samuel Smith!" Her voice drifted commandingly even into the interior of the Cow-boys' Rest. "Your broncho's scratching itself against the south wall of the great house over. If you men ain't more careful you can not hitch here at all."

A dozen men sprang with alacrity in answer to her complaint, and as many more reproved the owner of the offending animal, who was smiling Sam to all but Miss Nervy, and who meekly led the pony away.

Juno Minerva her father had named her, and he had fondly hoped that in his only daughter might be united the wisdom and the beauty of her goddess grandmother. These she came to possess only in a moderate degree; also from Minerva, perhaps—she inherited a temper.

Her father, early widowed, had taken himself and his young goddess to the plains of the setting sun, where in the heart of the great grazing country he established a small store at a trading point on one of the great stage-lines. He died while his daughter was yet young, the general opinion upon his taking off being epitomized by Si Merristack when he said, "How glad the old man must be to be good an' dead, an' whar Miss Nervy can't boss him fer a spell."

"Blamed as she don't try to reggelate every livin' one o' us," Limber Jack would complain. "Jaws us of we don't change our shirts, or ef we run our hosses or take a hand at a quiet little game. Always two kinds o' things is wrong—them we do, an' them we don't do—so anyway she's sure to skin us."

Despite their fault-finding, the men who frequented Waxhaw secretly admired and gloried in the possession of Miss Nervy. The very fearlessness and the high temper that rendered the contraction of her name a fitting one caused them to respect her. She was neat and businesslike; the goods in her little store were irreproachable; as postmistress she was accurate; her arrangements, if severe, were usually acknowledged to be well grounded, and, above all, she was a woman.

Today the crowd that awaited the sorting of the mail displayed, with all its decorum, a suppressed excitement. After much discussion of ways and means whereby Miss Nervy's severity might be lessened, some of the more daring ones had hit upon the scheme of furnishing their goddess with a suitor.

"Love," declared Limber Jack to the camp-fire circle—"not the philanthropin' flirin' that most o' us has done, but regular, squashy love, that means tyin' up to the same post—softens the hardest-hearted, which means Miss Nervy, to rids the whole world, which means us. We'll choose a likely duck to b'leige our fair postmistress, an' trust the rest to him an' Providence."

After much deliberation, Tom Ketchum, who had been Nervy Tom until Miss Nervy wrested away his laurels, was selected as the Horatius of Waxhaw.

"I s'pose it might as well be me as any one," he remarked, in tones of resignation. "I'll die some time, anyway, either by shootin' or broncho-bustin', an' ef it'll help the gang any to have it come by red-headed lightning, all right."

"He's never backed up a proposition yet, frim," he continued, "an' Limber Jack, exultantly, 'an' ef he causes Miss Nervy to s'nder, he'll be good to her. We don't want to s'press her, understandin', merely to—er—to mitigate her, so to speak."

Again the postoffice door opened, an' again she of the auburn hair issued an ultimatum.

"Such of you as expect any mail may come in now—single file, remember. No, Thomas Ketchum," holding up a warning hand, "you ain't had even a circular from a whiskey-house in a year. You stay out."

"But I want some terbacker," expostulated the man.

"Wait till the mail's distributed," she snapped. "I'm not a storekeeper now; I'm the govment's representative."

WEDDING CAKE MYSTERY

SUPERSTITIONS CLUSTER AROUND THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

They Cause Trouble Sometimes for the Proprietor of the Bake Shop and His Assistants—Some Cakes Are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.

All wedding cakes are fearfully and wonderfully made, but some are more wonderful than others. The bigger the cake the more mysteries it can contain, hence the seeker after novelties in wedding cakes would do well to make a tour of the bakeries in the foreign colonies, where a gigantic cake is an important accessory to every marriage. Or, if he has not time to go the rounds, he can concentrate his attention upon one rather small down-town bakeryshop and learn there everything there is to be learned on the subject.

The proprietor of that shop is chock-full of wedding cake lore. He divides his cakes into classes, first according to nationality. This it is not hard to do for while a wedding cake is a wedding cake the world over, it is run off in many different editions, and the architecture of the more pretentious ones is frequently modeled after famous edifices in the Fatherland and doctored up with ingredients that give the whole confection a decidedly national tang. For example, there are Russian towers, Turkish minarets, and Gothic facades and quadrangles done in sugar, and all flavored with a peculiar essence that tells the initiated to what land the bride's family belongs.

The largest wedding cakes turned out in that particular shop are those built in Russian style. The designs therein employed call for generous proportions, and by the time the various sections of the cake have been joined together the whole is a thing that will marvel.

"When you bake cakes of unusual size and shape, you are responsible for the designs," asked a visitor who had been admiring one such gigantic product of the baker's skill.

"Sometimes I study them out for myself, sometimes the wedding party offers suggestions. I prefer to do all the planning myself, however, for, if I do say it, I know how to put up an artistic cake, at least so far as external appearances go. On the other hand, my customers' ideas on the subject are often perfectly crazy, and if I try to follow their instructions I am sure to turn out a real freak in confectionery, and that is always painful to professional pride."

"It is at other people's suggestions, too, that I mix in all the sentimental smicracks with which I sometimes spoil an otherwise good cake. Being an old hand at the business, I know what the internal arrangements of a wedding cake, so of course I always attend to the rings and the china dolls and the other conventional superstitious; but if you ever get hold of a piece of cake baked at this shop and hear your teeth on an old coin or a queer charm or something of that kind, you may rest assured that I am not responsible for the accident. The customer ordered the thing put in. Those amulets and heirlooms are a part of his superstition."

"Just because a man has emigrated to New York and settled down in this matter-of-fact city is no sign that he has left his fourteenth century superstitions in the old country. The chances are that he did not, or even if he did his wife is pretty sure to hold on to them as well as a number of those absurd fancies are centered in a wedding cake, I am bound to humor their whims when mixing the batter. Many of that class have their queer beliefs so deeply ingrained that they make their own cakes. However, if they have not the facilities for baking they are obliged to intrust it to the sacrilegious hands of a mere baker, in which case they come down here in a bunch to superintend the mixing process. They do that because at a particular point in the proceedings it is desirable to perform certain curious incantations. Those outlandish signs and gibberish are supposed to bestow upon the cake certain virtues that will be imparted to all who eat it, and the bride would rather cheer than admit these queer observances. Naturally I don't approve of any such tawdry, and it gets dreadfully on the nerves of my men to have all those outsiders dawdling around, droning and whining while they are at work beating eggs and creaming butter and sugar; but since a wedding cake is quite an expensive luxury, I can afford to grant a few concessions to the weakness of the purchasers."

"How about recipes?" asked the visitor. "Do you use your own in these special cases or do the customers provide them, as well as the minor suggestions?"

"They generally leave that part of the business to me," said the proprietor. "While there are no hard and fast rules in regard to the composition of wedding cakes, they really do not differ much, except in the matter of flavoring and unimportant details, and I am able to satisfy all tastes. In cases where a cake of extraordinary size is required the customer gives me an idea of the dimensions and I apportion the ingredients accordingly. The recipes I frequently use in mixing these cakes call for such large quantities of provisions that they sound as if I was preparing rations for an army. Here is a sample of the kind and size I make every day of the year."

The proprietor tossed about a few letters on his desk and presently produced a scrap of paper, from which he read glibly: "Eighteen cups butter, 1 pints sugar, 8 quarts flour, 10 dozen eggs, 14 pounds currants, 7 pounds cut rind, 8 pounds shelled almonds, 1 pounds raisins, 3 pints brandy, ounces mace."

"To make a cake of that kind," he continued, "is an all-day job. It takes at least five hours to mix it properly, and about six hours to bake it. It will make a very good sized loaves and will keep from generation to generation, and if the girl who has matrimony on the brain ever intends to dream of her future husband she will dream about him when she goes to sleep with a slab of that concoction under her pillow."

"Oh, I never talk scandal," hastily remarked her hostess.—New York Sun.

STABLES OF THE WEALTHY.

Every Convenience and Comfort for the Horses.

A glimpse into the interior of one of the many handsome buildings in New York set apart for lodging and feeding horses would delight all lovers of the intelligent equine. The total cost of stables which embody up-to-date scientific fittings, sanitary flooring, perfect ventilation, and correct style, varies from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Instead of wooden flooring or earth, which is very injurious to the animals' feet, small bricks are now used, making a standing place that is easily cleaned, and insures perfect sanitation. The stalls belong of teakwood with a two-inch deal; the wood extends upward about four feet, or as high as a horse might be expected to kick under ordinary circumstances. The out and water mangers are on opposite sides, which is an advantage, as the animal does not slobber his dry food; the hay is put in a division of the manger with a wire screen over it, so that it can be got at easily, while undue waste does not result, as in the days when it was placed in a rack over the horse's head, where it could be pulled down and trodden under foot.

The doors of the stall are fitted with ingenious devices which necessitate the insertion of the finger and thumb to open, and the tricky horse is thus debarred from opening the door and going for a stroll without as much as "by your leave." There is a profusion of racks, with burnished brass fittings, for interchanging the name, brushes, brooms, shovels and forks, and telescopic suspensory racks to hold harnesscleaning tables, with drawers to hold polish, chemicals and everything needed to keep things bright and shining.

The New York millionaire takes as much pride in his stable as in any of the principal rooms in his own dwelling house. When any new specialty is put on the market whereby the stable can be improved or made more ornate he hastens to test its adequacy. He is particular about hiring a stable groom as he would be in engaging a secretary, and the men he picks out to care for his animals must be diligent, untiring, progressive and intelligent. There are at least 50 stables between West Fifty-eighth and One Hundred and Twenty-fifth streets which are marvels of comfort and convenience. On entering any of these the visitor is struck by the neatness, order and even elegance which pervades the place. Plenty of light, fresh air with no trace of the fumes usually associated with stables, lofty ceilings, and animals whose coats shine with satiny lustre are found in profusion.—New York Times.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

The highest speed which matter has been known to reach is that attained by the eruption of hydrogen and other gases from the sun, which is at times several hundred miles a second.

That "magic wand" which locates suitable places for wells has turned up again. This time it is in Germany that the little hazel twig is being used with success and much discussed.

The farmers of India, when fuel is scarce, cook an egg without fire. The egg is placed in a sling and whirled around for about five minutes, until the heat generated by the motion has cooked it.

The tail of a fish is his sculling organ. He moves it first on one side and then the other, using his fins as balances to guide his motion. If the fish is moving fast and wants to stop he straightens out his fins just as the rower of a boat does his oars.

A woman in Paris is said to be the largest specimen of her sex in the world. Being unable to enter the door of a railway carriage, she takes her train journeys in the luggage van. An infant in Missouri is said to be the smallest human atom, weighing only a pound.

A remarkable sea monster was recently caught in Port Fairy by some fishermen. It measured nine feet six inches in length, had a tail like that of the screw tail shaft, no teeth, a nose like a rhinoceros, a head like an elephant, two dorsal fins, four side fins and two steering fins. The skin was black and very soft. The most experienced fishermen say the specimen is new to them. They cannot hazard a guess as to the species. The fish has been sent on to the Melbourne museum.

In a certain office at an Australian railway station there may have been seen a very long list of names of women who have at various times begged the booking clerks to let them have, without payment, tickets to various places, or lost them, or spent their purses, or lost them, or spent their purses on a new pair of gloves and various reasons. They will call the money without fail. But there the money and addresses lie, with the amount of the borrowed money written opposite.

Unnecessary.

"And who is this Mrs. Smith that lives across the street?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, I never talk scandal," hastily remarked her hostess.—New York Sun.

WHAT IS BAD AIR?

Impurity of Air and the Frequent Catching of Cold.

The air which has been breathed is not fit to be breathed over again we all know from experience; yet it is not easy to give a satisfactory scientific reason for this fact. What is the vitiating constituent of the human breath?

Certain it is that the chief constituent added to the air by respiration—namely, carbonic acid gas—per se has little or no effect upon the health. Indeed, it has been stated that men can breathe for two or three hours without marked discomfort air which contains—with, of course, its full complement of oxygen—as much as 20 percent of carbonic acid, and the presence of 1 percent has not the slightest effect. But if the carbonic acid in the air be raised only to 1-10 percent by human respiration, the resulting air is most unwholesome and detrimental. There is no chemical difference, of course, between the carbonic acid gas of the human breath and the carbonic acid gas obtained from chalk or from the combustion of carbon or coal gas. The obvious deduction is that the carbonic acid gas of respiration has a poisonous companion, and this companion has so far eluded all attempts at isolation and recognition. This poisonous constituent may occur as a constant quantity in relation to the carbonic acid gas; possibly it does not. We do not know, although it is very important that this point should be determined.

We are content, however, to judge the impurity of air by measuring the amount of carbonic acid in it, and to some extent this measure is a valuable guide. It is not satisfactory that the evidence of impurity is not obtained more directly than this. Every one knows that air vitiated by human respiration is offensive and poisonous. In other words, bad ventilation—that is, a condition in which the products of human respiration are not removed—sooner or later produces toxic symptoms. There are usually less headache, appetite, discomfort, severe headache and malaise, which cannot be traced to infective organisms any more than the absence of such organisms can explain the curative effects of fresh air. Moreover, it is a common experience that a sojourn in a badly ventilated room occupied by a great number of people predisposes to disease. There seems little doubt that the impurity of the air has some connection with the "catching of a cold." The presence of respiratory products is declared by an offensive smell, and it seems odd that chemical analysis is unable to lay bare what actually the nose really detects. The effect of bad air upon the health cannot simply be that of an offensive smell, though that undoubtedly plays a part. * * * It is not only absolutely devoid of the vitalizing effect of fresh air, but it has almost a sickening smell, and sooner or later gives rise to a sense of oppression. What is the poison? It seems a much too hazy whole question needs a much more detailed inquiry than has hitherto been carried out, for surely chemistry and physiology in hand could eventually elucidate this matter.—The Lancet.

THE WORLD IS SMALL.

Two Men Who Kept Running Across Each Other Think So.

"The extreme diminitiveness of the world" is a thing that has often surprised me during the quarter of a century that I have been going up and down the world," said Frank M. Pancoast, a traveling man whose "territory" is the entire globe, for he sells bridges and trestles and structural steel. Chancing in many different parts of the earth upon people I never expected to see more than once in an experience I have had so often that it has served to shrivel my world into an exceedingly contracted affair.

"For example, four years ago I voyaged up the West Coast from La Libertad on a coffee freighter. The only other passenger on the steamer besides myself was a planter from Guatemala—a middle aged Central American and a very accomplished and entertaining man. We smoked, talked, played cards, and ate and drank in each other's company all the way up to San Francisco, and enjoyed the trip thoroughly. He told me that he was starting out on a little tour of pleasure, but did not mention where he was going. We parted at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco with mutual regret."

"I made a straight jump for New York. A week after I got there I went down to the beach one evening for some air and music. I was taking a bit alone on the hotel veranda when I should come strolling up to my table with a smile and his eternal yellow cigarette but my Guatemalan friend, I was glad to see him. He had me adios in New York in the morning, saying that he was going to take a steamer that same day. So was I. In the afternoon, when I went aboard the steamer, I bumped my head against a man in a duck suit and a pith helmet who was sitting at the starboard rail smoking a yellow cigarette. I turned to apologize, and my friend from Guatemala smiled at me in his beard."

"We had a pretty good time together on the eight-day run to Galveston, and I got up in adjoining rooms at the Beach Hotel, outside the city, which has since been destroyed by fire. I finished my business in Galveston in a day, and then, with the Central American, had a week of rest and run on the gulf sands and in the city. Then my concern summoned me back to New York, and once more, after a mutual exchange of regrets, we separated. A while after my return to New York a relative of mine, a young fellow from the western part of New York state, turned up, and I showed him about the town a bit."

"Among the restaurants we visited was a Chinese place in Mott street, where we had one of those weird chopstick feeds. We hadn't more than begun before my friend from Central America strolled in and greeted me just as if we had made an appointment to meet each other at the Chinese restaurant that evening. When I left him at his uptown hotel at midnight I figured that the chances of my running across him again were pretty slim, for I was booked for a trip to Japan, on a tristle-selling expedition, within a week or so, and the Guatemalan told me that he himself was off on a long journey, although he didn't mention whether that journey was going to take him. Again, it was adios. A month later I was writing my name on the register of the Grand Hotel in Yokohama when I felt a touch on the shoulder. I turned about and looked in the placid bearded phiz of my Guatemalan planter—he had taken another route for it, but was just getting in, nevertheless. I haven't run across him since I left Japan on the same trip, but I wouldn't be surprised to meet up with him on Pennsylvania avenue this evening. It is such coincidences as these that have caused me to lose my once profound impression of the vastness of the world."—Washington Post.

Wagner and the Return to Nature.

A Utopian society has established itself in Ascena, a little place on the borders of Italy and Switzerland. This little society, which numbers 38 individuals, seeks to solve the problem of how to live happily. The members are pledged to observe certain simple rules of living, which they have carried out now for three years. They eat no meat, but live principally on fruits and herbs, and they wear one simple garment only, and no hats. There are 16 women in the sect.

They know no laws save those of nature, and they amuse themselves with Wagnerian music. The founder of the colony is a Belgian. Each new member is initiated on his finding sufficient money to buy a plot of land, by the cultivation of which he is expected to support himself.—London Mail.

Her Bridal Voice.

She was a proud young mother, and she was telling the crusty old bachelor how talented her little girl was, and how the angel child ate sticky candy and pined the bachelor's immaculate shirt front and plied him with questions in a prophetic voice.

"She sings beautifully," said the mother. "Why, song flows at naturally from her as from a little birdy."

"From a parrot, I suppose," growled the brute.—New York Press.

CRUELTY IN REFINED FORM.

"Yes," said the critic to the aspiring young playwright, "there are great possibilities in this play of yours."

"Thank you. It is very kind of you to say so."

"But there will be greater possibilities in the fellow who is clever enough to find them and get them out."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Wagons. Buggies.

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BIRD'S PLANT TREES.

An old-time Arizona wood chopper says the blue jays have planted thousands of the trees now growing in Arizona. He says these birds have a habit of burying small seeds in the ground with their beaks, and that they frequent pine trees and bury large numbers of the small pine nuts in the ground, many of which sprout and grow. He was walking through the pines with an Eastern man a short time ago, when one of these birds flew from a tree to the ground, stuck its bill into the earth and dug up a new seed. When told what had happened the Eastern man was skeptical, but the two went to the spot and with a knife dug out a sound pine nut from a depth of about an inch and a half. This it will be seen that nature has her own plan for forest perpetuation.—Indianapolis News.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY IN FORESTS.

M. Maiche, a French inventor, has made some experiments with wireless telegraphy in the forests of St. Germain. The transmitter was placed on the top of a house, but connected to the ground in the manner of a lightning rod. A thousand yards distant two iron poles 90 feet apart were connected together by wire, and had a telephone receiver in circuit. Sounds from the transmitter were plainly heard in it. Receivers of the line of transmission do not catch the message.

A British parliamentary paper shows that as usual, nearly 20,000 more boys than girls were born in the British Isles last year. Where, then, the "superfluous woman"? The boys die, during the first weeks and months of life, at a far greater rate than the supposed "weaker vessels." In a few months they have sunk to an equality and soon woman takes the lead, numerically, and keeps it, numerically. The reason is not unconnected with the larger size of the baby boy's head, for which he either pays the penalty very early or reaps the reward—if woman will forgive the hint—later.

RECENT FOREST FIRES AND FLOODS RENEW PUBLIC DEMAND FOR MEASURES ON A LARGE SCALE TO PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF SUCH DISASTERS.

The average forest-fire loss is estimated at \$50,000,000 a year, most of which, it is claimed, could be saved by greater care on the part of campers and by the removal of underbrush kindling that starts these fires going. The prevention of floods is a much more difficult matter, but it is said that water storage at the sources of the great middle-western rivers and their tributaries would prevent floods in the future. If this can be demonstrated, remarks Public Opinion, congress will doubtless be as liberal in providing ways and means as it was in appropriating money for forest preservation and irrigation.