

MISCELLANEOUS

THE BRIDGE OF PRAYER

In troubled nights of sorrow and repining,
When joy and hope seem sunk in deep despair,
We still may see, above the shadows shining,
The gleaming archway of the bridge of prayer.

From that far height our souls may lean and listen
To sounds of music from the farther shore,
And through the vapors sometimes dear eyes glisten
Of loved ones who have hastened on before.

And angels come from the celestial city
And meet us half way on the bridge of prayer;
God sends them forth, full of divinest pity,
To strengthen us for burdens we must bear.

O, ye! whose feet walk in some shadowed by-way,
Far from the scenes of pleasure and delight,
Still free for you hangs this celestial highway,
Where heavenly glories dawn upon the sight.

And common paths glow with a grace supernal
And happiness walks hand in hand with care,
And faith becomes a knowledge fixed, eternal,
For those who often seek the bridge of prayer.

ANECDOTES OF PETER THE GREAT.

The extraordinary vicissitudes of the Czar Peter's career, and his habit of mixing familiarly with all classes of people, have attached to his name the same kind of legendary renown which gathers around the names of the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid and James V. of Scotland.

No European sovereign has been the hero of a greater number of popular anecdotes, many of which, slight as they are, convey a juster idea of the great reformer's habits and character, than whole volumes of history.

One of the most characteristic of these stories is that which relates how Peter answered the French Ambassador's petition for an audience by appointing the hour of four in the morning. The courtier, accustomed to the lordly indolence of Louis XIV., and never dreaming that any sovereign could disgrace himself by rising at such an unheard-of hour, thought it sufficient to make his appearance at seven, when he was petrified by the announcement that the Czar had gone down to the Admiralty dockyard more than an hour before.

The Ambassador hastened thither in a state of extreme bewilderment, which was considerably heightened when a passing sailor answered his inquiries by pointing up at the maintop-gallant yard of a half-completed frigate, astride of which Peter's gigantic form was to be seen, lightly attired in a pair of soiled fustian trowsers, and a shirt so tattered that it seemed to be held together only by the tar which besmeared it.

As the Frenchman stood gazing in silent dismay, the Czar's mighty voice came rolling down;

'Holloa! my friend, is that you? Why didn't you come at the time I told you?'

'I never thought your Majesty could be in earnest,' faltered the envoy.

'You didn't eh? Well, you'll know another time that when I say a thing, I mean it. Come along up here, if you won't speak to me; I haven't time to step down just now.'

The poor Frenchman began his ascension with the look of a condemned criminal, clinging convulsively to the rigging as it shook and swayed beneath his weight, and staining his rich dress frightfully with the tarred cordage, while the Czar above and the sailors below laughed boisterously at his dilemma.

It seemed an age to him before he got high enough to let Peter's outstretched hand grasp his collar, and drag him up by main force on to the precarious perch, where he sat gasping for several minutes before he could utter a word.

'Does your Majesty always get up at four?' stammered he at length.

'No; it's sometimes three,' answered Peter, coolly; 'but what of that? Each of my subjects, you see, has only himself to think of; but I have to think of them all!'

Another anecdote which the Czar was wont to relate with considerable humor, on his return from his travels in Holland, commemorates the 'smartness' of a Dutch innkeeper, who, have accidentally discovered his guest's rank, rated the latter's breakfast of a loaf and three eggs at the magnificent figure of one hundred guilders!

'Are eggs so rare in this country, then?' asked Peter in amazement.

'No,' replied the landlord, with a fat chuckle, but *emperors* are!

One of the great Czar's few weaknesses was a high opinion of his own skill in surgery, which was, indeed, by no means contemptible, though of a 'rough-and-ready' kind. Nothing pleased him so well as a chance of showing what he could do; and a servant of his, who knew this peculiarity, turned it to account in a very singular manner. He appeared before Peter one morning with a very doleful face, and stated that his wife was tormented by an aching tooth, which nothing could persuade her to have extracted.

'Is that all?' quoth the Czar. 'Go and bring her here at once.'

The command was promptly obeyed, and Peter, with his own hands, drew the tooth pointed out by the husband, despite the poor woman's vehement

protestations that there was nothing the matter with it.

But, a few days later, the Imperial dentist's self-satisfaction was considerably damped by the discovery that the whole affair was a trick of the servant, to punish his wife for a scolding which she had given him.

The culprit was at once called up, and Peter producing a heavy whip, remarked with an ominous grin:

'I've drawn your wife's tooth, my lad, and cured her; and now I'm going to give you a little blistering, and see if that'll cure you!'

And so saying, he administered to the luckless jester such a flogging as completely put a stop to his love of practical jokes.

During Peter's visit to London in the early part of his reign, he amazed his English friends by paying little or no attention to the sights which they expected to please him, and examining with the keenest interest things which they would have pronounced utterly unworthy of his notice.

'I expected,' said one of them afterward, 'to meet an emperor, and I found a ship-carpenter.'

On one occasion, a distinguished member of the English Bar offered, as he thought, a rare treat to the illustrious guest, by taking him through the law courts, and pointing out to him the legal celebrities of the day.

'What? are all those fellows lawyers?' cried the Czar. 'Why, I have only two lawyers in my whole empire, and I'm going to hang both as soon as I get back!'

The learned counsel waited to hear no more, but disappeared at once.

At the decisive battle of Poltava, in 1709, which broke forever the power of Sweden, Peter exposed himself with the most reckless gallantry, and had his clothes pierced by three bullets, though he himself remained unhurt.

When the fight was over, he invited several of the Swedish prisoners to be his guests at supper, and, bowing to the brave Colonel Lowenhaupt, who was of the number, drank to them as his 'teachers in the art of war.'

'We thank your Majesty,' said Lowenhaupt, bowing in return; 'but it scarcely according to rule for pupils to beat their teachers, as your Majesty has done.'

The ready reply so pleased the Czar that he at once gave the speaker his liberty.

While riding in the forest one day, Peter, having distanced his suite, as he often did, lost his way, and for some time looked in vain for any one to direct him.

At length he espied a peasant chopping wood, and begged the latter to be his guide. The woodman, with a Russian's carefulness of the main chance, objected that he would thereby lose his afternoon's work; but, on Peter's offer to make good the difference, he readily agreed to accompany him.

In the course of their talk by the way, it came out that this man of the woods had never yet seen the Czar, and that his great ambition was to have a chance of doing so.

'Well,' quoth Peter, 'that comes just pat to the purpose. The Czar and his attendants are somewhere in this wood to-day, and, if we go on a little further, I shouldn't wonder if we were to fall in with them.'

'But how shall I know which of them is the Czar when I do see them?' asked the peasant, eagerly.

'Nothing easier,' answered Peter. 'He will be the only man that keeps his cap on. All the rest will have theirs off.'

The overjoyed guide quickened his pace, and they speedily came in sight of a troop of richly dressed horsemen.

These were the Czar's attendants, who, recognizing their missing master, spurred forward to meet him, doffing their caps in salute, while the peasant looked around him in open-mouthed astonishment.

'Well brother,' asked Peter, with a smile, 'do you see anything of the Czar yet?'

'By the saints!' replied the woodman, staring, 'it must be either you or I, for all the rest have their caps off.'

(Singularly enough, the very same story is told of James V., of Scotland, who lived nearly two centuries earlier.)

Much has been said about the *cruelty* of Peter the Great, and there can be no doubt that the stormy scenes of his early reign, and the countless attempts made upon his life, goaded him to many acts which are a blot upon his otherwise splendid reputation.

Naturally cruel, however, he certainly was not, and he more than once showed mercy to those who little expected it.

During the terrible massacre which avenged the revolt of the Strelitz (Archer) Guard, a handsome young man of two-and twenty, with a peculiarly fearless and defiant bearing, stepped forward to the fatal-block, around which scores of headless trunks were lying, and, pushing aside with his foot one or the corpses which blocked his way, said, coolly:

'Make way for me now, brother. Every one must have his turn, you know.'

The Czar's iron heart was touched by

a courage—or, rather, recklessness—so closely akin to his own.

Set that man aside shouted he. I pardon him!

And when, the butchery was over, he enrolled the daring youth in his own body-guard, where the latter subsequently rose to a high command. On another occasion, a certain ready-witted courtier, to whom Peter was much attached, came to intercede for the life of a relative who had fallen under the Czar's displeasure.

The latter, seeing him enter the hall of judgment, at once guessed his errand, and called out to him:

'It's no use, my friend. I swear I won't grant what you're going to ask!'

I entreat your Majesty, then, said the cunning favorite, to punish that rascally cousin of mine severely!

There was a general laugh; and Peter thus caught in his own trap, had no choice but to pardon the delinquent.

BILL NYE ON BUTTER AND BUTTER-MAKING.—Butter is the mature fruit of a full blown cow. It is the greatest effort of her life. The cow toils not, neither does she spin; yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory could not beat her on hand-made, or rather milk-maid, butter. This subtle joke I have repaired and newly upholstered for use during the winter.

Butter comes from the cow in a liquid state. It is quite a trick to win her confidence so that she will yield it up to a total stranger. I once sought to woo the lacteal fluid from the milk retort of a large speckled cow to whom I was a comparative stranger. She wasn't one of those blooded cows that looked as though they had been cut out of a sheet of paper with a pair of scissors. She was a low cow with coarse instincts born in obscurity. Her brow was low but she wore her tail high, and she was haughty—oh, so haughty! The young man who had hitherto acquired the milk from this cow desired one evening to hie him away to a neighboring village, where he might trip the light fantastic 'till the 'wee sma' hours aye out the twa.' (Quotation from a poet who was a poor speller.) He wanted me to milk his large speckled, plebeian cow, and I said I would. The movement was certainly ill advised. I undertook to do as I agreed, but failed. From the moment I entered her stall and made a commonplace remark to her I knew our acquaintance would not lead to a warm attachment. Some how, I felt constrained and uneasy in her society from the moment we met until loving friends pulled me out through the stable window and brought me back to consciousness. I shall never attempt to milk a strange cow again until the sign is right. So far the sign has not been right.

THE THIRTY HOUSEKEEPER.—Cold biscuits left over from tea may be made better than when first baked by dipping them into hot water and placing them singly on the hot grate in the oven long enough to let them get well warmed through.

Lamp wicks should be changed often enough to insure having a good light. If they seem clogged they may be washed in strong suds and put into the lamps again.

A butter stamp should always be washed in cold salt water before it is used. If soaked in hot water the butter will stick to it, but never if soaked in cold brine. The salt absorbed by the wood keeps it moist while in use.

All soups are better made with fresh, uncooked meat, as that which has been cooked once has lost much of its flavor and nearly all of its juices.

Most people dry their umbrellas handle upward.

This concentrates the moisture at the top, where it is close, rusts the wire which secures the stretchers and rots the cloth. It is better, after the umbrella is drained to simply invert it and dry in that position.

To save stair carpets nail several thicknesses of old carpet or canvas over the edge of each stair. It is a good plan to buy more carpeting than is needed to cover the stairs and move it each season so that the whole will wear evenly. If stair carpets cannot be changed in this way they will not wear nearly as long.

A young man and a young woman lean over the front gate. They are lovers. It is moonlight. He is loth to leave, as the parting is the last. He is about to go away. She is reluctant to see him depart. They swing on the gate.

'I'll never forget you,' he says, 'and if death should claim me, my last thought will be of you.'

'I'll be true to you,' she sobs. 'I'll never see anybody else or love them as long as I live.'

They part.

Six years later he returns. His sweet-heart of former years has married. They meet at a party. Between the dances the recognition takes place.

'Let me see,' she muses, with her fan beating a tattoo on her pretty hand, 'was it you or your brother who was my old sweetheart?'

'Really I don't know,' he says. 'Probably my brother.'

The conversation ends.

SUBJECTS FOR THOUGHT.

Mental power grows in harmony with thought and study just as long as the proper limits are observed. With wise exercise, the reason grows clearer, the imagination richer, the insight quicker, the judgment more accurate. But, if these limits are overstepped, if the mind be overworked and overstrained, it loses what it has been at so much pains to gain. Our wisest educators have long since given up the notion that the more knowledge that can be crammed into the mind the stronger it will grow, and are now largely engaged in the task of selection and on the problem of gauging the limits beyond which knowledge ceases to be power.

A merry and contented spirit goes far toward the production of that happiness which is lasting and conducive to health. Where an absence of happiness exists, the physical and mental health of the individual must suffer. A want of happiness may be consequent upon various causes, some of which are beyond our control; but, except in cases of incurable physical or mental suffering, our happiness and the number of our healthful days are very much within our own grasp.

We do not believe that great stupidity is a common natural gift. Doubtless it sometimes is so; but as seen among grown up people, it is often artificial. The bad teacher complains of the pupil. There is a well known instance of a girl who, at fifteen, was thought so stupid that her father despairingly abandoned the attempt to educate her. The girl was Elizabeth Carter, who lived to be, perhaps, the most learned woman that England ever produced.

We must have a weak spot or two in a character before we can love it much. People who do not laugh or cry or take more of anything than is good for them, or use anything but dictionary words, are excellent subjects for biographers. But we don't care most for these fine pattern flowers that press best in the herbarium.

When in your last hour (think of this) all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and sink into inanity—imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment then will the flower or belief, which blossoms even in the night, remain to freshen you with its fragrance in the last darkness.

Make thy recreation servant to thy business, lest thou become a slave to thy recreation. When thou goest up into the mountain, leave this servant in the valley; when thou goest to the city, leave him in the suburbs; and remember the servant must not be greater than the master.

As there are some plants that flourish best in the shade, so there are some duties which are best perhaps formed in the quiet of silence, some subjects with respect to which words are an impertinence, some thoughts and feelings which will not bear utterance.

Every man must patiently bide his time. He must wait—not in listless idleness—but in constant, steady, cheerful endeavors, always willing and fulfilling and accomplishing his task, that, when the occasion comes, he may be equal to the occasion.

The time was when men could learn and study good things, not envy those that had them. Then men were had in price for leaning; now letters only make men vile. He is upbraidingly called a poet, as if it were a contemptuous nickname.

AN UNSOCIAL WOMAN.—About 10 o'clock the other evening a number of passengers at the Third street station were waiting for the train, out a woman about 45 years of age approached the special officer on duty in the passenger rooms and said she guessed she'd go out and take a view of the river by moonlight if he'd mind her satchel.

'Not alone?' he queried.

'Well, I guess I can take care of myself,' she replied.

'There may be rough men about.'

'Then it will be all the wuss for them.'

She had been gone about ten minutes when two of three voices were heard shouting. The officer ran out, and as he did so a man with a bloody ear passed him on one side, while on the other side he caught a fleeting glimpse of a chap with both hands on his jaw. The woman was coming up from the river with serene gait, and as she reached him she said:

'The view is just boss. Is that the Canada shore over there?'

'Those two men, madam—dilly you see 'em?'

'Kinder seen 'em.'

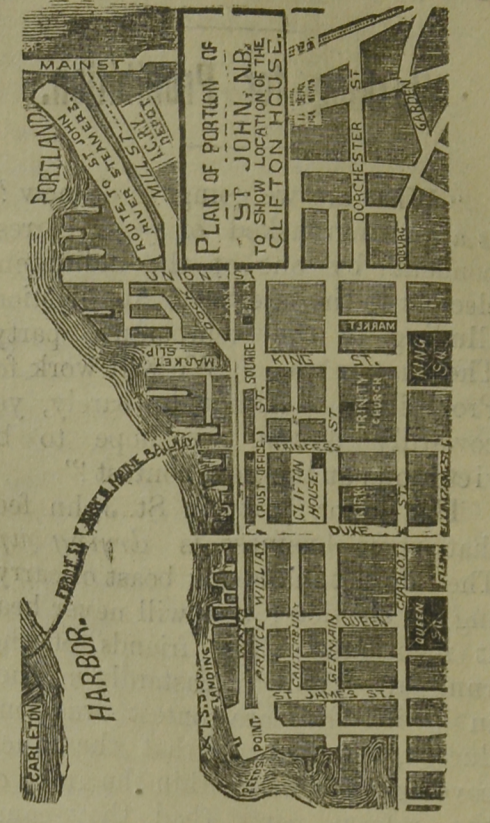
'And what happened?'

'They follered me down to the wharf and one of 'em called me his darling. They left pretty soon after that.'

'H-how?'

She extended her hand. In the palm rested an iron slug shot, weighing half a pound, which was made fast to her wrist by a string.

'I guess you needn't worry about me, she grimly observed, as he hefted the missile. 'Are there any other moonlight views around here wuth seein'?



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