

ON NARRAGANSETT SANDS.

Written for The Dispatch by "Broncton."

Above, the limpid blue of a summer sky; below, long stretches of sand beach, dotted here and there with the little cliques that, taken together, make up the gay and idle concourse of the fashionable watering place; and in the perspective, as far as the eye can reach stretches the broad expanse of the Atlantic. This is what Guy Temple saw as he looked from the window of his bedroom on the second morning of his sojourn at Narragansett Pier.

The month was August, and the "season" being at its height every hostelry of this popular resort was crowded to its utmost capacity. At an early hour Aurora had gently touched the eyelids of the slumbering community, which forthwith awakened to life, and as Temple stood leaning his broad shoulders against the windows frame he could see the many spectacles so familiar to those who are in the habit of spending the humid months at the seaside: at the waters' edge numerous youngsters were excavating in the sand, while their nurses gossiped idly under the protecting shade of umbrellas; in the distance comes the invalid, slowly wheeled along by his valet, to whom he ever and anon gives a direction in that sharp, irritable tone peculiar to the chronic dyspeptic, and up and down the broad promenade saunters a gaily attired crowd, who have seized upon the earliness of the hour to take their constitutional, and so escape the extreme heat attendant upon a later period of the day.

Turning back into the room with a yawn Temple commences his toilet. As we see him now, clad in a decidedly meagre attire, that hides but little of those magnificent proportions which nature had so generously bestowed upon him, we have but little doubt in saying that if his mental he in keeping with his physical development he must indeed be a very perfect specimen of the *genius*, man! His servant has just finished preparing his bath, and declining the dash of hot water the man was about to pour in "just to temper it, sir," he plunges into its icy coldness with a vim and relish which proclaims him to be of good internal organization. After a vigorous rub down, and ten minutes devoted to the dumbbells he commences leisurely to dress himself. Then comes breakfast.

He had barely finished his first cup of coffee, when there is a knock at the door, and without further ceremony in walks a young gentleman the vivacity of whose countenance and general *tout en semble* stamp him unmistakably to be a fair specimen of that indefinite something called a *DUDE*. This most insipid youth is little over five feet in height, with light flaxen hair, and pale blue eyes as devoid of expression as their owner's little squeaky voice. Although the new arrival bears the very impressive cognomen of Augustus Van Ten Vedder, he is irreverently known to some low scoffers as "the tailors' block," owing, doubtless, to the fact that his coat changes like the aurora borealis. Augustus is also an anglo-maniac.

As Mr. Vedder appeared in the doorway Guy groaned in spirit. He seemed to possess a most irresistible attraction for this little fop. An open book lay at his hand and Temple very deliberately tore a strip from the morning paper, inserted it between the leaves, closed the volume, and laid it down again, hoping that this marked action on his part might suggest to the slowly working brain of his caller that the visit was inopportune and might be almost regarded in the light of an interruption. No such luck, however, rewarded the *denouement*. Mr. Vedder only inquired, in an affectedly languid drawl:

"Morning, deah boy. How—aw, the deuce can you find—aw, energy enough to—aw, read, on such aw dev'lish hot day as this? What is it?"

"Homer. Do you ever read him?" In response to Guy's query the "Tailors' Block" uttered a feeble little cry of horror, and dropping on a chair exclaimed, "Good Lawd! I should think not! Why man, what on earth should—aw, tempt me to do such—aw, despwate thing as that? I might—aw, catch bwin fevah, dontcherknow, or some other howid thing, gwacious!" and Mr. Van Ten Vedder closed his eyes, as if to shut out the awful thought and fanned himself limply with a palm leaf.

Temple looked at him a moment in ill-disguised amusement, and knowing that Mr. Vedder's only self-indulgence in the line of literature was a ravenous perusal of "Burkes' Peerage" and the society items of the daily papers, said, with an effort to control his features: "Yes, the ancient poet is rather heavy reading, particularly with the thermometer at 100° in the shade, and I can readily appreciate your confining yourself to something more digestible and less dense," and the absurdity of the "Tailors' Block" giving his attention to Homer coming suddenly upon him resulted in his losing control of himself altogether,

and throwing himself back in his chair Guy gave vent to a series of hearty roars, much to his caller's astonishment. Gradually it began to dawn upon that gentleman that he was the cause of all his hosts' merriment, and was, in some degree, being made an object of ridicule, so with an air of very much injured dignity he sat up erect and exclaimed rather hotly:

"Look heah, Temple, what the—aw, devil are you laughing at, you know?"

As soon as Temple could regain a comparative amount of composure he tried, with but poor success to explain satisfactorily his extraordinary conduct, and finally seeing that Mr. Vedder was not at all satisfied yet upon the subject, he thrust his arm through that of his little companion and proposed a stroll on the beach. Although the latter assented he was by no means appeased; but like the little snob that he was it thrilled him with delight to be seen in public, arm in arm with a notable, be it in the line of arts, letters, or—society, and as Temple had already attracted a good deal of attention from the fair maids of Narragansett, (not to mention also their eagle-eyed mammas'), Gustie had no intention of letting an opportunity like this slip. He had not gone far before the attention drawn to himself indirectly through Temple resulted in quite restoring his normal temperature, and he babbled away at some length, enlarging on the superior attractions of the luring damsels who frequented the Pier. Guy paid little heed to him, however, as he had, so far, escaped the amorous shaft of the dainty little god, and women were to him as yet a species that had found its way to this terrestrial globe with no better excuse for being here other than to decorate the street and drawing-room with fair faces and ravishing toilettes. After a time he made no pretense at keeping pace with his companions' rambling, but amused himself with watching the manoeuvres of a handsome private yacht out some little distance from the shore. Presently he was recalled to Mr. Vedder, of whose existence he had quite forgotten, by that gentleman's pointing straight ahead of them and exclaiming with emphasis:

"—and by Jove, there she is now!"

"There who is?"

"Why the girl I've been talking to you about for the last half-hour, to be sure! Jove, isn't she a stunner! I don't know her name yet, deah boy, but damme I won't be long finding out! Ta-ta old chappie, see you again." And with this parting assurance the little sparrow skipped lightly away in search of an acquaintance, through who's instrumentality he could be brought to a closer knowledge of his fair *enamorate*. Temple stood for a moment wondering which of the many pretty women along the beach he had reference to. The matter in any case being of little interest to him it soon passed out of his mind.

In the afternoon fearing again to encounter his persecutor, he lighted his pipe, and with Homer under his arm, started for a stroll up the beach. Presently he passed a projecting point of land, and finding a secluded spot threw himself down beside a large rock and once more gave his attention to the poet.

He had not been reading long, however, when he heard the sound of a girl's voice, singing softly to herself. The voice came nearer. A look of annoyance passed over his face for a moment, but was quickly replaced by one of amusement, as he pictured to himself her surprise at coming unexpectedly upon a young man, stretched at full length at the base of the rock over which she was even now walking, totally unconscious of any presence save her own. He made a desperate effort to bring his face, which was now on a broad grin, back to sober proportions. An instant later a merry musical laugh sounded in his ears, and he was suddenly aware of a confusion of skirts and petticoats sailing rapidly over his head and landing safely to the other side of him. Then as their proprietor turned around and caught sight of a young gentleman in tennis flannels laying at her feet and staring up into her face with mouth and eyes wide open in astonishment, she became crimson, and gave vent to a startled little "Oh!" Guy was equally embarrassed, and rising quickly to his feet exclaimed stupidly:

"I—I, I'm sure I beg your pardon, madam, The fact is—I—er—that is—" Poor Guy's quixotic intention of coming to the relief of the young lady happened to be about the worst thing he could have done. She took advantage of it at once, and drawing her superb little figure up to its full height replied frigidly:

"Pray say nothing, sir. Its quite unnecessary," and would have sailed off with all the dignity of an empress, had not retribution come swift and sure. Just at that moment the breeze, which had been freshening, gently lifted milady's large straw hat from off her dainty head and carried in gaily down to the water's edge, just in time for it

to light on the crest of an incoming wave, which carried it out, each time it receded into deeper waters.

"Oh! my hat," cried its fair owner in a distressed tone to Guy, every vestige of her old *horteur* disappearing with this new calamity. The appeal was too much to resist.

"Certainly," he replied, and the next moment was up to his neck in the water.

A few powerful strokes and he was beside the hat—one more, and he had grasped it. Placing the brim between his teeth he turned his face once more towards the shore. But now the real difficulty began, for the tide was going out and he could make but little headway against it. Gradually he felt his strength failing him, and presently, as he measured the distance to the land with his eye, there crept into his mind an awful doubt as to whether he would be able to reach it! Just then he caught sight of a hatless figure, clad in a loose flannel outing dress, standing on the shore, the fresh breeze stirring her wavy brown hair, a look of deep anxiety on her face. As his eyes rested for one brief moment on the figure a new life seemed to be born in him, which strengthened every sinew and nerved each muscle to the task. He even began to feel a contempt for allowing himself to lose heart for a moment, and smote the waves with double interest for each time they buffeted him. Gradually he neared the shore, and the girl standing at the water's edge could hear his labored breathing, while a pang of self-reproach shot through her heart. Nearer and nearer he came, stroke by stroke—three—two—one more, and he was standing in shallow water. A moment later and he was at her side.

"I—sincerely hope—your hat is not much—damaged," he said breathlessly, delivering up that article to its fair owner.

"How can I thank you, sir?" she replied with considerable feeling, "and to think of you risking your—your life for this miserable, wretched hat!"

"Oh, it was nothing," he laughed. "To tell the truth, I was too lazy to go in for a swim this morning, and—and—well, I got it this afternoon, that's all." And they both burst out laughing at the absurdity of his enjoying the soaking he had just received!

They got on better after this, and chatted gaily together, both utterly oblivious of Guy's wet clothes, until finally the young lady exclaimed:—

"Why you've been sitting here all this time in your wet things! How could you forget to change them? You'll catch your death of cold!"

"Because I've had something pleasanter to occupy my thoughts—besides the sun will soon dry them. See, they are nearly dry already."

"It is very kind of you to put it that way," she said with a smile, her face blushing prettily under the compliment his expository conveyed. Guy noted with a strange throbbing at his heart that she was evidently gratified by his gallant speech, as indeed she was, for a girl will always appreciate a compliment when the ring of truth proves it genuine.

"By the way," she went on after a slight pause, "we have been talking to each other here for nearly an hour, and neither of us know who the other is. Let me introduce myself. My name is Miss Emerson—Alice Emerson, and you—?"

"Guy Temple, at your service," and rising to his feet he bowed with an assumed gravity which set them both laughing again. Then they fell to comparing notes, and, Miss Emerson being from New York also, it was soon discovered they had many friends in common. Gradually the afternoon waned, and it was not till Guy had called Miss Emerson's attention to the beautiful sunset that they were aware of the lateness of the hour.

What will Georgie think of my being absent so long, I wonder?"

Now it was that Guy experienced a shock, who was "Georgie" and what right had he to "think" at all? pondered he in perplexity. Probably Miss Alice saw something in his face that prompted a spirit of mischief so dear to the feminine heart, for she continued with some concern in her voice.

"Poor Georgie will be so anxious at my disappearance, and I promised I'd be back in half an hour—and—dear me," looking at her watch "it's half-past six!"

Poor Guy got deeper in the mire. Was she engaged to this "George," he wondered, and yet, for a young woman engaged to another man Miss Emerson seemed to find the time pass very quickly in his own society.

"Well, 'what can't be cured must be endured' I suppose," she said, with a look of resignation which Temple thought very becoming. "But then," she went on, "I can't get poor Georgie's reproachful face out of my mind. To think that the poor thing might have been hunting for me all the afternoon; walking along the beach expecting to see my body borne in on the next wave!" this was accompanied by a little shudder as she arose, gathering up her parasol and book which had rested beside her on the beach.

"Where are you going?" asked Guy who had been stupidly gazing at her for the last five minutes in silent admiration.

To relieve poor Georgie's anxiety. Why I

declare, Mr. Temple, you look as if you were going to a funeral. What is the matter?"

"Nothing—that is—Jove! what a splendid shot," and he pointed to a flock of wild geese sailing serenely over head. "She is engaged, and I've been making a fool of myself all the afternoon in the bargain," and he longed to have the despicable Georgie's head under his arm for one brief minute.

"Good bye, Mr. Temple. I am ever so much obliged to you for the rescue of my hat." And she held out her hand for him to take.

"But not here. Mayn't I see you home? It's getting late, you know."

In twenty minutes they arrived at a large hotel overlooking the sea. In reply to Miss Alice's invitation to come in and meet her mother and sister, he begged her to extend the invitation to the next morning when he could make a more presentable appearance.

Very well then, tomorrow at ten. I do so want you to meet Georgie. I know you will be great friends."

"Damn Georgie!" mentally ejaculated Temple; but he only said "I shall be charmed, I'm sure to meet him, Miss Emerson," and with this big lie on his conscience he raised his hat and walked away, while a silvery laugh floated after him and a soft voice said:

"Until tomorrow then."

The next day dawned bright and clear, and having ordered and partaken of his breakfast an hour earlier than usual, so as to escape the ever vigilant "tailors' block," Guy lit his pipe and started for a walk which lasted an hour and terminated at the steps of the large hotel.

As he approached he noticed a group of three young ladies sitting on the broad piazza, and quickly recognized one to be Miss Alice Emerson. She came forward to meet him, and a moment later he was presented to Mrs. Emerson, a handsome, matronly lady of fifty or thereabout, and her eldest daughter, Miss Emerson; but he looked around in vain for Georgie, of whom his companion of the night previous had spoken. Miss Alice evidently noticed the searching glance which he ever and anon directed towards the door of the hotel, and Guy thought he detected a merry twinkle in her eyes as they met his own.

After they had talked on for some time Mrs. Emerson, reverting to the occurrence of the previous night, said innocently:

"Of course I was a little worried about your long absence, Alice, but I was nothing to Georgie, who, poor thing, was so anxious about you that, I verily believe, had you been away another ten minutes would have organized a searching party!" At this Mrs. Emerson and her oldest daughter laughed heartily, while Guy looked with some concern at Miss Alice, who had grown very red in the face and appeared to be choking.

That afternoon Guy and Miss Alice were strolling along the sands a few yards in advance of her mother and sister.

"Well, and how do you like Georgie?"

"You must confess I have had very little opportunity of forming an opinion as I've not had the pleasure of meeting your friend yet."

"What! Is it possible that I was guilty of such an oversight as not to present you to my sister?"

"Your wha—, I beg your pardon, but will you please say that again?"

"Why, whom else did you think it was?"

"Then it isn't a man—that is, Georgie is only your sister?" asked Guy, still unsatisfied.

"Certainly."

* * * * *

Two gentlemen were passing arm in arm down Fifth Avenue. When they reached the corner of Fifty-third street they halted a moment before a large brown stone church as the sounds of Mendelssohn's wedding march smote upon their ears.

"What church is that?" asked one, evidently, a stranger.

"St. Thomas'."

"Know who the contracting parties are?"

"Yes, Miss Alice Emerson, youngest daughter of Mrs. Howard Emerson, and Guy Temple; met last summer at Narragansett, so little Vedder tells me. I was asked to the slaughter myself; but hang it all, man, one has to draw a line somewhere, and I draw a very definable one at weddings." And they passed on.

The Presbyterian General Assembly, the highest court of the church in Canada will commenced its annual session in St. John today. An attendance of about 250 or 260 is expected. There will be delegates from all parts of Canada, including Winnipeg, Kamloops and Victoria. The most prominent ministers who will be present are Rev. Dr. Cochrane, Rev. Principle Grant, Rev. Dr. McVicar, Rev. Dr. Macdonald (Seaforth), Rev. Dr. McDonnell (Toronto), Rev. Mr. Herridge, Rev. Mr. Scrymger, Prof. J. Gregg and Rev. Dr. Bryce. These are all gentlemen who have a national reputation for their work, and there will be many others hardly less famous. The assembly will last a week, and perhaps longer.

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