

PENANCE.

He kissed me—and I know 'twas wrong,
For he was neither kith nor kin.
Need one do penance very long
For such a tiny little sin?

He pressed my hand—that wasn't right!
Why will men have such wicked ways?
It wasn't for a minute, quite,
But in it there were days and days!

There's mischief in moon, I know;
I'm positive I saw her wink
When I requested him to go;
I meant it, too, I almost think.

But after all, I'm not to blame,
He took the kiss! I do think men
Are quite without the sense of shame!
I wonder when he'll come again.

The Love of Scandal.

Who does not remember the greed of the Athenians for news? The love of gossip was one of their most striking characteristics, and "What news?" was as much part of the business of the Agora, when friends met each other at noon, as the "price of fresh fish" or the "condition of the flower girls' violets." No event was too trivial for them to chronicle, no shifting of life's kaleidoscope too minute for them to follow—nothing, in fact, in public or private, seemed to escape their scrutiny. Maid, matron, and hetaira, statesman and slave, the favorite poet's latest ode, the fashionable sophist's last oration, what blunder of uncouth simplicity the newest importation from Sparta had committed—of all things under heaven they discoursed freely, discussing and dissecting without restraint, without stint, as no people have done before or since. They were the lovers of gossip par excellence, and Athens was the paradise of all newsmongers of the time; for neither dramatist nor orator could get a hearing if any should raise the cry, "News! news!" "News from the Hesperides!" "News from the Cassiterides!" "News of Glaucus!" "News of Phryne!" "Who will hear my news?"

But even the Athenians had their limits, and knew when to forbear; the line of gossip had to be drawn somewhere, if they would not be like their own harpies ravening and befouling all things; and they drew it at the door of the tomb. The dead were as sacred to them as the gods, Hades as impenetrable as Olympus; for much latent delicacy underlay this sunny old-world love of gossip, this chattering, laughing, effervescent delight in personal details. Yes, although the Athenians were "heathens," in the common acceptance of the term nowadays, they respected the memory of their dead, and we do not. No friend would ever have said, of the dead he had loved and lived with, words which it would have been dishonorable to say to the living, for the same cause as that which makes it impossible for a high-minded gentleman to speak ill of the absent who are unable to defend themselves. The very helplessness of the dead was their safeguard against indiscretion as against slander, and "de mortuis nil nisi bonum" only expressed the general respect for that helplessness.

But we have changed all that "old-time" honor, all that bygone loyalty of reticence. We have gone in now for a coarse and cruel chatter which we call euphemistically "candour," but which is in reality nothing but love of scandal carried to the highest point of indecency. Now it is the irrepressible interviewer, who lurks in the shadow of the sick chamber and photographs the details of the deathbed with revolting minuteness; the various stages of disease (it may be) are reported in extenso, and surgical and pathological facts flood the magazines and newspapers. Death is the signal for prying into all corners, publishing every secret, giving forth to the world the most careless as well as the most confidential letters, which no doubt had been dashed off in a moment of unreflecting expansion. Had the deceased committed what the world calls an "indiscretion," the woman and children are exhibited in the pages of the memorialist as one exhibits wax figures at a show, and the love which he had cherished in secret—and, may be, repented of in agony—is beaten out into so many paragraphs of prurient sensationalism, with more hinted at probably than is safe or decent to detail.

"Rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur," and nothing is sacred to a biographer of that lower type, in whom the instinct of the jackal and hyena meet. His articles are written in the tears and blood of his dead friend; but what of that? It gives him both money and renown, and he would have us believe that if he did not positively create the genius which took the generation by storm, or held it breathless in delight, which created a new era in literature or opened a new pathway for science, for statesmanship, or for art, he at least educated, directed, coached, and inspired it. If these are some of the penalties which the illustrious dead have to suffer at the hands of their friends, they fare still better at the hands of mere acquaintances. Had finem effrenata audacia jactabit crowds of these men start up, like the evening, round the grave and kiss their beloved intimate, him who is weak and powerless within; him who when living they never had more than a passing, the most superficial interest in, and would never have been admitted

to more. Fancy conversations spreading over all sorts of important topics are reported as having taken place between them; conversations of the gravest moment built on the slender foundations of a passing half-hour's chat; and the most sensitive and reticent of men is suddenly exhibited as a gushing babbling, who gave his confidence unhesitatingly to a chance companion, with neither claim nor merit for such distinction. Nothing can be in worst taste than all this wretched half-scandalous, half-indelicate gossip. Just as a photograph, where the light has been unskillfully managed, is not like a person because out of drawing and due relation, so the most absolutely exact facts may give a false impression because taken without the context and surroundings belonging to them.—*Oliver S. Jones, in the North American Review.*

Barbarians at the Chinese Legation.

The Chinese Minister and Madame Yang have only to signify their intention to give a ball, for all Washington to ring their front door bell and leave cards in the fond hope of getting invited. What official representatives of the oldest and most punctilious nation on earth think of such exhibitions of vulgar curiosity I don't know. Fancy a Chinaman obtruding himself anywhere without an invitation or making a pig of himself with or without the right of entrance! Fancy a Chinaman forcing himself upon a stranger and boldly suggesting his presence at any function, public or private. I actually heard one woman say that were she invited to the Chinese Legation she would take several friends.

"Would you dare take such liberty with any European Embassy or Legation?" I asked.

"No."

"Then why except the Chinese?"

"Because they are not white and do not understand English."

I was so shocked at the callous brutality of this confession as to be speechless. It opened up vistas of possibilities from similar sources, and when I felt the jam on entering the Chinese Legation last Saturday night, I wondered how many had carried out the intention of my fair barbarian. No pains were spared by the Chinese Minister and Madame Yang to honor their American guests. Artistic decorations, music, a teeming supper table, all attested the thoughtful consideration given to the first function in the new Legation by the new regime. Every prospect pleased and only certain Americans were vile. Some masqueraded as persons who were known not to be in town; others walked in without the shadow of an excuse; several women appeared in bonnets and a contingent of men made a Chinese wall of themselves around the supper table, and ate, and ate, and ate, until methought they "swelled visibly before my werry heyes," as Sam Weller would have remarked had he been present. These noble specimens of the American hog recalled the woman who, being a constant attendant at afternoon receptions where elaborate lunches were served, was asked how she could stuff herself so unconscionably immediately before dinner.

"Dinner!" retorted the tramp in velvet. "You don't know what you're talking about. I board!" Perhaps the swallow-tailed Chin-American wall was composed of boarders who were seizing the opportunity of their lives. As there was not a blush among them, I blushed for them.

Whoever imagines because the Chinese belong to the antipodes and do not speak English, that they are not keen observers and quickly inform themselves on subjects foreign to their civilization, little appreciates the subtlety of a race that was the light of the world when Europe groped in darkness and the Americans were unknown.—*Kate Field's Washington.*

Religious Liberty Violated.

There is deplorable ignorance as to what constitutes religious liberty. To a large proportion of the human race, religious liberty means "the right to believe as I please, and act accordingly." Others mistake religious toleration for liberty. Great Britain grants toleration, but not liberty or equality. France grants a larger degree of religious liberty, but still lays a tax upon every one, of whatever belief or unbelief, for the equal support of every form of religious worship whose professors ask for this State aid.

In not a few of our States, religious liberty is grossly, wickedly, infamously violated, through abuse of what are called the Sunday laws. The International Religious Liberty Association, Battle Creek, Mich., publishes a pamphlet entitled "Religious Persecution," from which we gather a few facts. At Springdale, Washington County, Ark., Elders Wellman and Scoles, Seventh-day Adventists, held meetings which resulted in the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Elder Scoles gratuitously painted the meeting-house, which was out of sight of all public roads. On Sunday he did a small strip of painting. For this he was arrested and convicted. Mr. James, another Seventh day Adventist, did some carpenter work on the house of a poor widow, as an act of charity. The widow was to be thrown out

of the house in which she lived, and had no other shelter; so he worked, in the rain, on Sunday. He, too, was arrested and fined. He would have been imprisoned but for the fine having been paid by others. Mr. Armstrong, for working in his garden, was arrested and locked up in jail, with another prisoner, with only a little straw and a blanket about thirty inches wide for both of them. And all this time Sunday trains were running, Sunday excursions were advertised, men and boys were shooting squirrels in the woods, without check. So eager were the persecutors that men were arrested and fined and imprisoned when the alleged offense was committed previous to the enactment of the law. In Tennessee, Sunday gaming and shooting have not been interfered with, but when a lawless mob fired into a congregation of Sabbath Adventists, the crime went unnoticed. Men cut their wheat and rafted logs on Sunday, untouched by the law. But those who had conscientiously observed their Sabbath were put into the chain gang. From the windows of the jail where they were confined, on Sunday they saw a trainload of workmen passing in the streets, not thirty feet from the jail, going out to work. Similar persecutions have occurred in Maryland and in Georgia. A similar case occurred in Western Pennsylvania.

All these are in violation of the principle of religious liberty, which is that the State takes no cognizance whatever of any one's religion or lack of religion—that the State has nothing to do with religion, except to see that no one's religious rights are interfered with. No one, under whatever guise, has a right to disturb the Sunday worship of his neighbors. No one has a right, on Sunday, to go through the streets with a band of music, or to cry his wares. But any work done that does not interfere with the rights of others is utterly out of the proper reach of the law.—*New York Examiner (Baptist).*

A Country Sabbath.

It was Sunday in the country. The men came in from their morning chores stamping their feet and shaking their caps, for the snow was falling in great soft flakes. The road could not be seen from the house, so there was no hope of church-going that day. We settled ourselves in the big kitchen for a day of reading, talking, and apple eating. All too soon we felt the evening of the short January day closing in, but in the darkening the snow ceased. After tea, one of the boys hung over his mother's chair, and presently his curly head was close to her ear. They whispered a little while, and then the mother said, "Father, the boys would like to take the sleigh and drive around the block. They have been in the house all day."

The father hesitated a moment. He loves the remembrance of the Scottish Sabbath, but he also loves his children. There was a scampering to the barn; then we heard the bells at the door, and in a moment we had scrambled into the big sleigh. It had suddenly become colder. The moon was shining through drifting clouds, and it seemed a transformed world.

The road was indistinguishable, but the horses plunged on, as if they, too, were glad to be out. By and by we entered the swamp, where the long-armed hemlocks, bending beneath their weight of snow, almost met across the road. As the horses struck the branches, the snow fell in powdery showers. Once clear of the swamp, we turned to look at it. The great snow-clothed evergreens seemed to bow their heads in worship, stretching to heaven appealing arms in prayer.

The laughter and gay talk of our merry party were hushed. The curly-headed boy said to his twin sister, "Doesn't it make you feel as if you were listening to a big organ in church?" I think we all felt we were in the temple of the Almighty, and that silence became His house.

Presently the horses plunged their way onwards, but a Sabbath quiet was still upon us. When we reached home, and I was taking off my wraps, the twin sister laid her cold cheek caressingly against mine, saying, "Was it not beautiful? It makes me want to sing." When the curly-headed brother came in from putting up the horses, she did sing. As I heard their young voices thrilling with real feeling as they sang "All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea," I thought that, although we had not worshipped in a cathedral built by men, we had none the less been conscious of the presence of that Divine Spirit of which all the forms of beauty around us are some of the outward manifestations.—*Kate Conway.*

Which Would He Resign.

When the Czar was made colonel of the Royal Scots Greys, an officer of the regiment said to his orderly: "Donald, have you heard that the new Emperor of Russia has been appointed colonel of the regiment?" "Indeed, sir," replied Donald, "it is a vera proof thing." Then after a pause: "Beg pardon, sir, but will he be able to keep both places?"

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The Dear Girl.

She is so dear,
She's more than all the world to me;
She is so dear,
That lest I fall a sudden heir
To some great fortune, I shall be
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