

THE RED RIVER VOYAGEUR.

Out and in the river is winding
The links of its long red chain,
Through belts of dusky pine-land
And gusty leagues of plain.

Only at times a smoke wreath
With the drifting cloudbank joins;
The smoke of the hunting lodges
Of the wild Assiniboines.

Dreadfully blows the north wind
From the land of ice and snow;
The eyes that look are weary,
And heavy the hands that row.

And, with one foot on the water
And one upon the shore,
The Angel of Shadow gives warning
That day shall be no more.

Is it the clang of the wild geese?
Is it the Indian's yell?
That lends to the voice of the northwind
The tones of a far-off bell.

The Voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace,
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St. Boniface.

The bells of the Roman Mission,
That call from their turrets twain
To the boatman on the river,
To the hunter on the plain.

Even so in our mortal journey
The bitter north winds blow,
And thus upon Life's Red River
Our hearts, as oarsmen, row.

And when the Angel of Shadow
Rests his feet on wave and shore,
And our eyes grow dim with watching,
And our hearts faint at the oar;

Happy is he that heareth
The signal of his release,
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace.

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

AT SIXTEEN BELLS.

The government of the United States keeps for itself a number of "reservations" throughout the country which exist from the potential necessity of killing foreigners to defend Americans. Some of these reservations are army posts and some of them naval stations, and one of the latter is a navy yard on the Pacific coast in California.

This navy yard is placed upon an island; the island—call it stair island—lies near the mainland and paralleled with it is a land-locked bay. Its general shape in elevation is that of a wedge standing in a high bluff in one end, where it faces the mouth of a river, and from that eminence declining for a mile to the first part, where the navy yard buildings are disposed.

Beyond this built and inhabited portion the real island ends; but a low marsh, almost at a level with the salt water, and called the tules, stretches out of sight. There is a landmark which may serve to fix the point of demarcation between terra firma and the marsh. This vast brick structure is the steam engineering department, some hundreds of feet away from any other building.

By day, in spite of the voices of wild fowl out on the tules, the steam engineering department is desperately uninteresting, with its surroundings of old rusty ships' boilers and propellers and other condemned machinery and with the din of forging and riveting from within.

But at night so lonely is the situation that the memory of the commonplace noise and labor within the walls when lighted by the sun seems to emphasize now their utter abandonment to the gloom and solitude.

A dilapidated sentry's box, long disused, stands a-tilt. On either hand is a gleaming of quiet waters.

One evening—I was ensign on the little man-of-war Rover, which was lying at one of the navy yard docks—I left the ship and went up into the yard to call on my friend, Paymaster Monroe, an officer of the station. Monroe was a widower and lived alone in the spacious quarters assigned to the paymaster.

He was a man of wit and reminiscences. His library had become a rendezvous for men who after dinner found themselves with no duty. Several other officers were with the paymaster, or came in later. It was New Year's eve.

We had amused ourselves for the last hour or two when there was another ring at the door. Monroe went to the door himself. He brought back Johnston, a lieutenant of marines, with his sword on.

"I have just time for a cigar," said Johnston. You know we change the guard at 12, and I have to go around to all the posts before. Well, here's to the new year," as the paymaster handed him a glass. "May it end with a rainless night, or may I not be the officer of the day to see it out outside again."

"Is it raining?" inquired two or three of us, for it had not been raining when we came in. But we were not surprised at Johnston's assent. It was in the season.

"By the way," someone said, "they ring the old year out with sixteen bells tonight, instead of eight."

By the naval system of striking time, of course, every 12 o'clock is told by eight strokes of the bell. Sometimes the midnight between two years is struck with a repetition of the eight.

"Yes, the commodore mentioned it to Jackson of my ship," I remarked. "It is unusual, isn't it?"

"Fill up," said the paymaster to the officer of the day. Johnston yielded to this encouragement.

"By jove, you remind me," said Johnston, with the slowness of remembering something

curiously sudden. "It was at sixteen bells between 1856 and 1857 that a marine officer was shot down near the tules. You know that empty sentry box down there near the steam engineering; you can't get a man to stand guard there since. The men won't stay there."

"I never heard of this," said Stedley, a junior paymaster and a Baltimorean. "Who shot him? What is the story?"

"It seems to be indefinite, like other ghost stories," Johnston answered. What I know is this: The lieutenant's name, I think, was Reed. Reed had a man in his command that was in love with some fair one in the town over the straits. Reed fell in love with her himself, and had the misfortune of her falling in love with him. This disturbed the private."

"How natural," somebody dropped. "And he?"

"Reed was the officer of the day," continued the marine. "On the night of New Year's eve of 1856. That was in the wild, early days out here, and the officer of the day was always mounted. This is the anniversary of that night, and this Reed was on the same duty that I am on now, visiting the posts before the change of the guard."

"He had been to all the others, then rode out to that box toward the tules. You must have noticed it. Reed was on a white horse. Where did you get these cigars, Monroe. They are finely dried, as they should be."

"They are some that Commander Enton brought from Panama with the Charleston. But I'll ask you why cigars ought to be dry later; go on about this Reed."

"Yes, go on," we said.

"I have told you all but the finish. It must have been almost midnight, as it was near that hour when he left the guardhouse a little before the corporal came up with the relief to that out of the way post."

"They found there the body of the lieutenant, shot through the heart, with his horse gone. So was the sentry gone. Neither he nor the horse was ever heard of. It was supposed that they went out over the tules to the main land."

"But you said something about a ghost."

"Oh, of course, the ghost is Reed's," he answered. "He rides from the sentry box into the tules every midnight at the bell, especially on this night, I suppose."

"How interesting it would all be," said Stedley, "if we were a superstitious people. It is a lonely place—a good place for murder and a ghost. But how is it that the ghost has his white horse, if the sentry rode the animal away? Perhaps the horse came back to his master in the spirit when he died. You said that the men really refuse to stand duty there at night?"

That is the tradition at the barracks," the lieutenant replied, "but I don't know, of course, because that station was given up before I came. I suppose it was naturally abandoned as a useless one."

"Did you ever have the curiosity to go down there at midnight?" asked the paymaster.

"I never really thought of it," said Johnston, rising. "My tour does not take me in that direction. But I have finished my cigar, Monroe, and I must get down to the guard house; it must be 11.30. I have been at the other places."

"After that, why don't you go down and inspect the specter?" laughed a lieutenant—Thorne. "You can make a report to the commodore."

"I report to my major you know," said Johnston, a little stiffly, "not to the commodore. But no, thanks; it's too wet. I shall get back to my office as soon as possible and compose myself for a novel all night, while all of you are in your beds or bunks. You staff and line can't say that the maritime corps has nothing to do."

"I must go, too," I said.

"Then the guardhouse will be on your way to the river," said Johnston. And bidding the rest good night, we went over together.

It was a sodden night into which we had stepped out, dully raining as only on "the slope" it can rain, in the season.

As we walked down the navy yard I mentioned that the story he had related struck me as more singular than he seemed to take it.

"How many enlisted men have you at the barracks?" I asked.

"A hundred and thirty, about."

"And how many stations have you sentries at night?"

"Four."

"I suppose that the number of marines never become fewer—with the drafts that you receive and send—than perhaps eighty."

"I fancy not," said Johnston. "But I don't follow you."

"My point is simply that with the number of your men and paucity of night posts you could easily keep up as many stations again and the duty still be light."

"You said that the sentry box where Reed was murdered has been abandoned, probably as useless? It was evidently meant for the protection of the engineering building, which contains costly machinery and tools. The building is isolated and near the water of the straits, and might really be robbed by a boat from the town side."

"Of course, I don't believe in ghosts, but it seems to me for some reason or other the sentry box must have been abandoned not because it was superfluous, but because, as the barracks' tradition hinted, as you gave it men would not do duty there."

"It is odd," he agreed. "And, as you say, we have men and to spare to keep one posted there. You are right, that building ought to be guarded; I do not understand why it is not."

"But you will prefer your novel to a visit to the spot."

"On the contrary, though I can't imagine that we shall find anything but a soaking old sentry box; we will go and see it together, if you will."

"Who comes there?"

"The challenge rang from the guardhouse, which we had approached."

"Officer of the day," answered my companion, in the formula.

"Advance, officer of the day! Corporal of the guard!"

The corporal of the guard appeared from the guardroom, from which his men also tumbled out. They came to present, and we saluted as we came up.

Lieutenant Johnston exchanged some words with the corporal, leaving some routine orders. He had nothing further to do than this.

"What time is it, exactly, corporal?" he asked as we were about to turn away.

"Quarter of 12, sir."

"I am going to walk up to the tules with Mr. Dreighton," he said, to inform the soldier; then to me: "We have easy time; it is not a quarter of an hour's walk."

However, when, in two or three minutes we had left the pavements of the navy yard itself, the ground lying between those and the marsh was sufficiently discommoding under foot—the detestable adobe mud, the tenacious clay which old Mexican dwellings and missions have been built of.

The steam engineering building loomed in front of us at some distance, rising its ugly chimney up into the sky, thus looking by instinctiveness like a menacing giant.

After stumbling over some pieces of old iron, among the derelict machinery, as we proceeded, the crazy watchhouse drew in view. We could see the dreary dim of the light through its open sashes.

"There is no ghost," said my companion, as we looked into the little broken interior, which could hardly have held both of us at once. He had meant to jest, but our environment was too dreary for that. I merely replied that it was six minutes before 12 yet, and Johnston stepped into the box.

He turned around in it and came out again shuddering; the night was as chill as it was otherwise disagreeable. I looked into the small vacancy; there was no reason for my going in; the whole was nothing but a few upright planks put together in an octagon.

But, having bent into this little hole, I was irritated with myself for a shiver which I did not attribute to the rain.

"There is no use in waiting," said Johnston, while we stood off from the object.

"We will wait for the bells," I said.

"As you will; but it is cold. What time is it?"

"Four minutes of—"

We stood side by side before the sentry box, probably each of us congratulating himself that if the other knew that he was a fool, he knew the same thing of him.

"Do you know," I said, "that that thing slants beyond its centre of gravity?"

"It adheres to the mud," replied Johnston. I looked at his face. In that glance I saw him pass his hands before his eyes as if to free them from a veil. His expression was fascinated and he was trembling. I looked. I saw the house only as before.

"It moved," he said; "there is someone here. Go round that way—I go this."

We went round and met, on the side of the tules, with their dismal bird notes.

"Nonsense," I said.

Johnston was silent, but the next moment he was pointing.

The object had stood, with its slant, before us. Our eyes upon it, we saw it slowly, steadily rise its sunken side, and erect itself to the perpendicular.

It did not stay; it wavered, then, distinctly, it rolled; it waved, in a slow rhythm, from side to side, before our eyes.

Johnston swore. I clenched my hands. The box was motionless in its old position.

Johnston, with an utterance of the rage which is a man's resentment of his own fear, threw his shoulder upon the object. It toppled at the impact and fell over on the ground. Johnston sent his own sword into the earth where it had stood. It was ordinary ground, like that surrounding.

We drew up from examining it, and we were facing each other, about to speak—but there was a sudden noise.

In the overturned sentry box there was a rapping and a batting; as we looked we saw a lit lantern through the window, hurled repeatedly from one side to the other.

Before we could think or move another sound rooted us where we stood—the thunder of hoofs, at short succession.

They stopped short. The lantern had ceased and disappeared. Our eyes could discern no horse, no man. I heard birds screaming in the marsh, which had been alarmed by these sounds.

Suddenly I thought that my companion had discharged a revolver—but the detonation which rang in the air was not his shot. There sprang up from the prone house something white.

It took form. In its silent celerity it was like the approach of a cloud's shadow; the white mass—a white man on a white horse—lightly hurled itself upon us—it swept over us!

Johnston was down; I staggered back with a knock on the cheek. We marked the snowy bulk on its soundless career away down the land, pursued by the sixteen bells of the new year, which rang from the yard and followed it into the vaporous tuleland, where the alarms of the frightened fowl surrounded its flight.

Chased by the flying notes of the bell, there we lost it, down the night-vague, level distance of the marsh, the headlong dash of its fugitive gray.

Johnston told me two weeks later that the bruises still remained on his ribs, though the marks on my cheek did not last so long. It

Fine Tailoring.



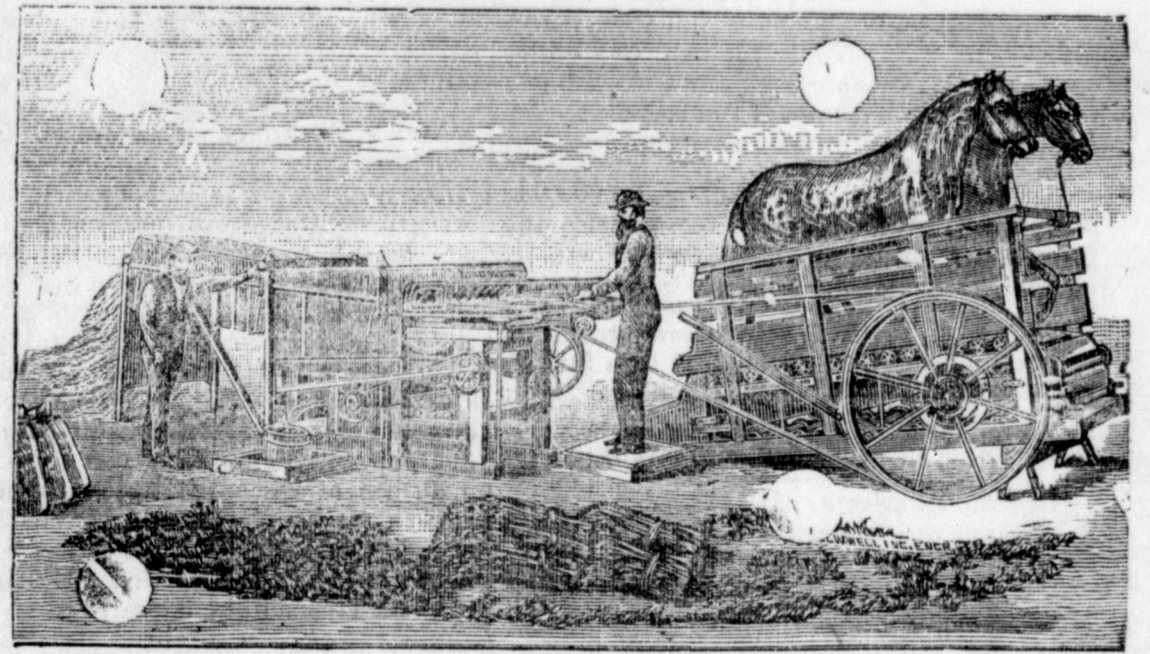
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What the People Say.



Mactaquacy, York Co., N.B., April 29, 1895.

Messrs. Small & Fisher, Woodstock:

Gentlemen,—Having used one of your Threshing Machines for a number of years, I can say that it did the work to my entire satisfaction. It is not only easy on horses, but does not waste any grain and cleans well, and always took the lead wherever I worked. I threshed 10,000 a year for 4 years and it did not cost me fifty cents for repairs.

Yours truly, WM. GRAHAM.

Scotch Settlement.

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Small & Fisher, Woodstock:

Dear Sirs,—I think that the Little Giant Thresher and Sowing Machine is the best that is put out. I had a share in one in 1894 and earned about \$500 with her.

Yours truly, G. W. STILES.

Whitney, Northesk, N. B. Mar. 1, 1895.

Small & Fisher, Woodstock:

DEAR SIRS,—I have been using your Thresher for six years, and it has given perfect satisfaction. I consider your Machine the best in the Maritime Provinces, as it is so easy on the horses, cleans well and feeds very easily. I can recommend it to the public as being first class.

Yours truly, DAVID WHITNEY.

North Tay, N. B., March 11th, 1896.

Small & Fisher, Woodstock:

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was the rider's boot that struck me.—Boston Globe.

Marry This Girl, Somebody.

I have been reading in your paper about several men and women that have been very successful selling self-heating flat irons, and I concluded I would see what a girl could do. I have worked 12 days and have sold 151 irons and have 218 dollars left after paying all expenses. Everybody is delighted with the iron and I sell one almost every place I show it, as people think they can't afford to be without one as they save so much fuel and don't burn the clothes. I know I can clear five thousand dollars in a year. How is that for a girl?

A GRADUATE.
Splendid, my girl, splendid, you are a true American girl. Anyone can get complete information about the self-heating iron by addressing J. F. CASEY & CO., St. Louis, Mo. It seems to me to be a winner, as everybody selling it writes in its praise.

A peculiar freak is to be seen at Oldham, which takes the shape of a small pig that was born with a head resembling an elephant's. The ears, which are much larger than is usually the case, flap down over the cheeks; while a large cavity resembling an elephant's mouth, covered by a miniature trunk about four inches long, takes the place of a snout.

Wore Greased Gloves Seven Years.

John Siron, mason, Aultsville, Ont., had Salt Rheum so severe that for seven years he wore greased gloves. He writes: "I used a quarter of a box of Chase's Ointment. It cured me. No trace of Salt Rheum now." Chase's Ointment cures every irritant disease of the skin, allays itching instantly, and is a sterling remedy for piles. Avoid imitations. 60c. per box.