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## The Birth of a King.

JANE BELFIELD IN LIPPINCOTT'S.

Up the long, straight street they came—four friars walking abreast carrying a long, black pole, in the centre of which hung the bell that at every step tolled with dismal presence—the toll to execution.

The overhanging balconies on Magdalena Street were filled with sympathetic onlookers, and an indignant crowd thronged the sidewalk. Small boys climbed the trees, slid down as the procession came in sight, and bent to look with morbid curiosity into the faces of the prisoner.

The condemned man followed the Capuchins, walking between two lieutenants of his own regiment—a tall, red-cheeked, sturdily built, blue-eyed soldier. The brass buttons bearing the arm of Spain had been severed from his uniform. About his temples a white handkerchief was bound. A soldier followed the prisoner—the barrel of his gun pointing to the ground.

Then four men—sharpshooters, none of whom knew in which of the guns slung across their shoulders was lodged the fatal bullet. A band of drums followed, beating the Spanish tattoo to the galleys; then came infantry, cavalry, artillery—all marching beneath the skies of sunny Valencia to the Campo Raso at the foot of San Miguel Castle. For this was Sebastian Salgueiro, who for love of Farruca, the little potato-digger on the farm lying near his native town of Lugo in Galicia, had slain his sergeant.

A stranger in the crowd—from his dress an Englishman—gazed with astonishment at the waiting throng stirred to a very ecstasy of compassion at sight of the prisoner.

As women upon the balconies leaned far over the rails frantically waving their fans and handkerchiefs, the condemned looked up and smiled. To him every face reflected the love of Farruca. They could not applaud this man on his way to death, but they could weep for him.

The stranger turned to a man by his side, who in grave silence and with folded arms was watching the procession.

"What is this?" the Englishman asked in broken Spanish. "If the man is a hero, why do they shoot him?"

The Spaniard turned, his black eyes flashing. "It is a crime, Senor—to slay this man. It is a blot upon the escutcheon of romantic Spain. Has not the Senor heard the story?"

"No, I arrived in Valencia but yesterday."

"The papers are full of it. El Imparcial de Madrid strongly condemns the execution. All Spain sympathizes, but can do nothing. The man was drafted in Lugo. Does the Senor know how that is done? No? Well, I shall tell you. There are a number of gutta-percha balls thrown in a basket—Spain goes back when she goes to war. In the centre of these balls a hole is bored, and on a folded strip inserted in the hole two numbers are printed—the number of the regiment and the company. Two little girls dressed in red and yellow, standing by stacked bayonets, shake the contents of the baskets as each soldier thrusts in his hand. By their side a second lieutenant directs the conscription."

"And is there a number hidden in every ball?"

"No, Senor; some of the balls are blank. But Sebastian Salgueiro did not draw a blank. He was obliged to leave the farm and Farruca, his sweetheart, and follow his regiment to Valladolid. But—and here comes the story—in the girl's family there was an old silver spoon presented to her grandmother by the Countess de Morelos. Farruca gave this highly prized heirloom to her lover to use at mess instead of the regulation tin spoon with which the soldiers eat from their two handled dishes. . . . But will the Senor come with me? The infantry have passed, and the execution takes place at sunset before San Miguel."

The Englishman turned his steps in the same direction.

"You may imagine, Senor, how the soldier prized this precious relic. But one day, as he sat at mess in front of the barracks, eating with two of his comrades—the Senor knows the soldiers stack their bayonets, three together, and eat in groups of three—the sergeant of Sebastian's company drew near and reprimanded the soldier for eating with this spoon instead of the regulation spoon of tin. High words followed; the sergeant taunted the man, seized the silver spoon, broke it in two, and threw the pieces in the face of Sebastian. The hot-blooded youth sprang to his feet pointed his fusil, and shot his officer dead."

"But, owing to the circumstances, could not appeal be made?"

"Farruca went to the family of the Countess who had given the spoon, and every effort was made in high places to obtain a pardon; but military law could not be set aside—the man had killed his officer."

"Under provocation. Could not the king pardon?"

"The Senor knows there is no king—Alfonso has been six months dead. But, Senor, we have arrived."

The procession had reached the Campo Raso on which the soldiers drilled. The flag above the fortress of San Miguel was at half-mast. Before the wide entrance of its octagonal barracks stood a sentinel in black and red. The regiment formed in a square, the prisoner towering in the centre. The condemned man cast his eyes proudly over his comrades' heads towards the crowd of enthusiastic men and weeping women who had followed him to this place; and as his gaze met the eager, peering face of an archer thrust out from the branches of a tree, he smiled.

"When will they shoot him?" the Englishman asked, with evident sympathy.

"At sunset. Hush, Senor. They are granting Sebastian one last request—it is the custom."

"What does he ask? Can you hear?"

"Yes; he takes the broken pieces of the silver spoon from his breast. 'Give these to Farruca,' he says. Ah, Senor, will nothing interfere?"

The four friars ceased singing the De Profundis; the confessor held the Crucifix to the man's lips. They bandaged his eyes and turned him towards the wide expanse of sunlight sea below the cliff.

"He will not turn his back!" the guide cried excitedly to the Englishman. "He says he is not a traitor—but—they make him! Punetas! They make him!"

An officer advanced—a sword in one hand and a handkerchief in the other—and took his stand at the prisoner's side. The four sharpshooters stepped into position. The drums beat the final tattoo. A moment more and the round red orb of the sun would drop below the horizon. The officer in command remained motionless.

"They wait for the sunset gun from the castle!" the Spaniard explained. "See, the officer raises his sword! The four men have taken aim. When the lieutenant drops the handkerchief it will be done! Now—no—hark! The cannon shot—but no—another roar from San Miguel! Twenty-one cannon shots! The King is born!"

Suddenly the flag rose to the end of the mast. The national anthem sounded from the fortress. A messenger on horseback furiously spurred his steed from the barracks, sounding the recall upon his cornet as he rode.

The officer with the sword took the bandage from the man's eyes; the soldiers lowered their guns!

"Right about—face!"  
And then the crowd went mad. Men



## Rural Phones

### Solve These

## Every-Day Problems

#### Problem I. Bad Roads:—

The old way was to curse nature and idly await sun's return.  
The new way is to telephone for what you want, and smile because you get the information in a thousand part of the time.

#### Problem II. Weather Forecasts:—

The old way was to work on belated information, and to excuse the losses with "That's what the farmer has to put up with."  
The new way is to telephone every morning to the weather man and overcome much of the needless hustle and bustle of the old way.

#### Problem III. Prices Current:—

The old way was to ask a neighbor or trust to the newspapers.  
The new way is to get information in the nick of time over the phone, thus knowing when to sell and when to hold.

#### Problem IV. Emergencies:—

The old way of procedure when some one took sick, was to harness up the "driver" and make all haste for the doctor. Effort in this direction, often procured as its only result the information: "doctor is out."  
The new way is to call up the doctor on the phone, and know instantly what can be done pending the medical man's arrival.

#### Problem V. Help:—

The old way was to allow men to go on boys' errands—waste half a morning walking to Smith's only to find that his barrow was already loaned.  
The new way is to make the phone your errand boy—buy, borrow, beg by means of the "short parties."

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shouted and threw their caps into the air, women screamed and fainted.

"What—what does it mean?" The Englishman turned excitedly to his companion, "Are they not going to shoot him?"

"No, Senor. Sebastian Salgueiro will return to his farm upon the outskirts of Lugo and dig potatoes for the rest of his life with Farruca, his sweetheart. All criminals may be pardoned for fifteen days after the birth of a King! It is the law."

### What Causes the Tail.

The "three billion leagues of tail" of a comet puzzles the astronomers. Of the various theories that have been put forward to account for the repulsion of comets' tails, besides the electrical theories, probably the most popular ascribes the streaming away from the effect of light pressures. When radiation of any kind, sunlight or the heat from a fire, falls on a surface it asserts a pressure on that surface tending to drive it back.

Light pressure must act, and probably acts powerfully on the minute particles which constitute a comets' tail, but a careful analysis of the strange motions and transformations taking place have convinced many astronomers that other forces are at work modifying, and in some cases increasing the repulsion. The envelopes of a comet are wreaths or veils thrown out towards the sun and flowing away on each side. They are not like the streamers from the nucleus, for they seem quite detached, forming an arch over the head. A fountain consisting of a large number of jets of water in different directions shows a sort of dome, which, when seen sideways exactly imitates the envelope of a comet.

It is not merely a bounding surface beyond which none of the water is projected. The arch is thickened along this surface. When the water is turned on fuller the arch rises. If it is turned off gradually it sinks, but if it is turned off suddenly the arch does not subside but vanishes. The water subsides but the thickening vanishes.

Prof. A S Eddington of Great Britain thinks it can hardly be doubted that the en-

velopes of a comet are formed in this way. The explosion from which the envelope results throws out matter with fairly uniform speed in all directions, this matter being under the influence of the solar repulsion, just as in the analogous case the water was under gravitation.

Whatever may be the true cause of the phenomena of comets' tails, it is at least clear that the source of the power which forms them and which directs them is to be found in the sun. The exceptional activity of Halley's comet may be due to the physical state of the sun at the time rather than to the constitution of the object itself.

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### A Strange Custom of Alaska.

Perhaps the most interesting archaeological discovery made on the northeast of Alaska has a relation to the present methods of personal decoration now used by the natives of Alaska, the most significant feature of which is the wearing of lip-buttons, or labrets, by the men. The present custom is that when a boy is 14 or 16 years of age holes are pierced in his lower lip, one below each corner of the mouth. A small wooden plug is at first inserted to keep the hole from growing together, and month by month a bigger plug is used, till finally the openings are half an inch in diameter. At this point the young man begins to wear stone or ivory plugs. These ornaments are put in from the inside ordinarily as one might insert a button into a shirt front. Usually the two buttons worn are each of a different sort, while sometimes only one of the holes is filled, and in summer men are occasionally met with who wear no buttons at all. When a visitor is seen approaching, however, the ornaments are always inserted for one does not feel dressed without them.

### A Lighthouse in a Church.

Some time ago an account appeared in The Wide World Magazine of a church at Charlestown, South Carolina, which has a lighthouse situated in its steeple. It was stated that it was the only one of its kind in the world. A vigilant and patriotic Danish leader, however, points out that his own country possesses a similar curiosity in the steeple of the church at Thuno, a small island in the Kattegat, near Samsø. The Government maintains the lighthouse, and the minister is the official inspector. This, the Danish correspondent believes is unique.

### The Decadence of France.

Mrs. Bellamy Storer contributes to the February North American Review a striking article on the Decadence of France. Mrs. Storer identifies the decadence of France with the exclusion of all religious sentiment from the school and text-books. She gives some interesting parallels showing the former texts and the present denatured ones. Mrs. Storer concludes her article thus: "Germany is threatened here and there, but under a strong rule and a devout Christian ruler the German people as a whole still worship the Lord and respect the law. The Christian inhabitants (both Catholic and Protestant of German Alsace and Lorraine may thank God today that they no longer belong to France!"

"Let this be said to the shame of the men who lead France today; the men who with their own hands have torn to pieces their great traditions and ground under" their iron

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heals her past glories! A German invasion did not and would not accomplish such wanton destruction as this; which Frenchmen have themselves wrought in France.

"She is indeed fallen. Nothing can lift her up again to her place among the great world powers, except a united effort to throw off the bondage of an odious tyranny. Any French patriot worthy of the name who denials her decadence is one of the blind who will not see. He is an ostrich who thrusts its head obstinately into the sand.

"We shall see the salvation of France only on the day when we may behold her snatched from the degradation and once more upheld by the two great pillars—religion and justice."

### His Son Andy.

Dr. Andrew J. McCosh was in his college days a famous athlete. He could run faster, kick a football farther and jump higher than any man in Princeton. Publicly his father, President McCosh, took no notice of Andy's achievements. That he privately rejoiced in his son's prowess the student learned in this way:

Jimmy, as the president was familiarly called, though exceedingly courteous, was given to fits of abstraction in which he entirely forgot his surroundings.

Once at a reception in his home, apparently forgetful of all the world, he was pacing up and down the room with head bent and hands interlocked behind his back. Suddenly he walked up before a young lady and asked:

"How tall are ye?"

In an embarrassed way she replied, "Why, doctor, I'm—I'm five feet two inches."

"My son Andy could jump over yer head," said the doctor and immediately resumed his walk.

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