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Who Can Tell?

CHARLES BABSON SOULE.

Who can tell what a woman thinks! Who can follow the golden links Of the chain that drops from the stately throne Into the depths of the great unknown.

Can anyone tell what a woman knows! Who can follow the zephyr that blows; Or trail the path through the gloom of night That the whip-poor-will leaves in its ghostly flight?

Can anyone tell what a woman will do? Who can catch the delicate coo From the lips of a baby, or afar Fetter the light of the morning star?

What a woman knows or does or thinks Is never known until she drinks Of the fountain of love and then—unfurl'd—Is the flag of her soul to the gaze of the world.

Forgetting hope, with its rainbow sheen; Forgetting self—she becomes a queen, And down life's pathway proudly moves, Hand to hand with the one she loves.

THE ACE OF HEARTS.

W. A. FRASER.

Four men were just sitting down to a rubber of whist in the veranda of the Gymkhana Club in Arakan. They had dined—which was wise—for "the devil lurketh in an empty stomach," say the Burmese, and no man can see the end of luck.

Cook and the Major cut together as partners, and Campbell sat opposite Herbert. Then, because the seat next the wall was out of the breeze and hot, they cut again for seats. That was the Major's doing; he was always like that, arranging things fairly.

"Here, you fellows, cut!" cried the Major. "Campbell has cut the 'Queen,' and I have turned up the 'deuce,' so I suppose I have won the warm corner!" Herbert cut a "ten," and Cook turned over the card he had been holding face down. It was—the "ace of hearts."

"For downright luck commend me to Cook!" laughed the Major, as Cook pitched into the hot seat.

And the cutting of the cards was the drawing of lives in a lottery!

"Can't make it out," sighed the Major, as he watched Cook throw away with complete care every chance which came his way. "It's either 'sun,' or the boy is in love."

Then the god of whist cursed with bad luck Cook and the Major. That was because Cook nursed six trumps until they were useless.

"You've the best of the cut, Cook," broke in Campbell, "for the breeze that comes across the corner of the veranda here is heavy-laden with the perfume of the native town. And it's *gnapie*, my boy, sweet *gnapie*, that I will back to knock out all the scents of Naples Bay."

"It's like a graveyard," grunted Herbert, lighting a cheroot; "it makes me ill."

In the billiard-room some one was picking at a banjo. Suddenly a fresh sweet voice sang a verse from the "Bengali Baboo," and the players joined in the chorus.

Only Cook did not sing. He sat like a gravedigger—a sense of coming evil had spread its gloom over him.

Then he made the second misdeal in twenty minutes. The Major never moved a muscle—he was facing the guns now. He bit the corner of his iron-gray moustache, and looked straight into his hand.

"Just as I thought," he muttered; "the young ass has lost his head over 'May,'

and there'll be no end of a row about it! The Colonel will never let May take up with a merchant. Why, he'd turn his nose up at a civil servant. He's a good enough little chap, but his position isn't in it with the Colonel."

Then Campbell ordered a bottle of "Simpkin," swearing that he couldn't stand Cook's long face, and that they'd have to drink the blue devils out of the game.

"Here's to the little woman that's driving the whist out of your head, Cook!" said Campbell, holding his glass up.

"Sh—h—h!" broke in the Major. "Leave the ladies out of it."

The wine made no difference; the luck ran just the same—dead against Cook and the Major. Cook was playing like one in a dream. The voices of his companions sounded far away.

The Major called for trumps—"shrieked for them," as he put it himself. But Cook was dead to such trifles; nothing short of a knock on the head with a tennis racket would have wakened him up to the occasion. There is only one result to such play—disaster.

"I'm sorry, Major," said Cook, when the rub was over, "for playing 'bumble-puppy' with the game, but there is something. When I put my hand over to your side of the table I feel as though I were touching a corpse."

Cook was serious enough, but the others laughed. "Bets are off when a man's dead," quoth the Major; "so you will have to pay the whole shot, Cook, if I'm dead. I tell you what it is: if you keep on I shall go behind this month. If it were not for the money I make out of you 'juniors,' I do not know what I should do."

This was good, coming from Lutyens, who was always paying up—if not for himself, for some one else.

They all knew that he'd give away everything he could not lose in a fair gamble, if anyone needed it, all but one thing—the "V. C." on his breast; that was the one thing he did seem to care for,—that and the Service.

The V. C.—Oh! that was up in Afghanistan, when he drove a horde of blood-thirsty Patans back from a wounded boy of a lieutenant they were trying to spit, and carried him in under his arm.

But the "Something" kept grinning at Cook from among the glasses and cards. Sometimes it was peering at him over the shoulder of one player, and sometimes the other. He saw it plainly enough; but to speak of it meant unlimited chaff, and an aftermath that might stick to him. It does not do to see "Things," and speak about them.

A man may hold his tongue, though it feel like Irish frieze, and as dry and thick; but he cannot help the nerves—nor the cold damp on the forehead, either.

The Club was very quiet, and the fellows who had been clicking the balls in the billiard-room and singing bits of song had gone home.

Suddenly, from the shadow of the sloping bamboo roof, a harsh, grating voice called "Tucktoo!"

Cook jumped perceptibly, and the pins were sticking sharper than ever in his scalp.

Seven times the "Tucktoo" called in his sharp, imperious way, the last dying out in a long drawn "A—a—a—h—h!"

"Hello! are you back again?" queried the Major, looking up toward the disagreeable voice. "Something must be going to happen. When I came here the Gym was blest with a lucky Tucktoo—a regular Mascot; but Hashim assured me that he left the day after I set foot in the place. I wonder if he thinks that I am not coming here any more? Perhaps my luck is going to change. Why luck should be associated with those hideous—"

"Tucktoo! Tucktoo! Tuck—ta—a—" drawled the lizard in derision overhead.

"Oh, never mind him, Major!" broke in Herbert; "he's only after the flies up there. He finds it deuced good stalking-ground when the lights are going."

The Club was very quiet—"creepy," Cook called it. Suddenly the big brazen gong over by the *Cutcherry* sent out a booming note, as the sentinel swung his heavy wooden mallet. Then again and again, twelve times, it was midnight.

"Ah! I wish that were 'Big Ben' calling to me from Westminster, and this my club at home," sighed the Major. Then he added abruptly, "Time's up, gentlemen! It's Sunday morning."

"Come on, Cook; I'll drop you home in my trap. You look as though the 'mulligatawny' had been a little too heavy for you."

Just as they rose from the table the weird, ghostly call of a jackal came cutting through the heavy night air like the thrust of a javelin; then another answer—just opposite; then another and another

took up the dismal, wailing note, until the whole night was made hideous with their ghoulish din.

Cold drops of perspiration stood out like beads on Cook's forehead. "Hold on!" he gasped; "I must have a peg before I go. I fancy that I'm a little off."

As the gray Waler mare swung them around the white stone post where the Club road turned into the main street, the Major felt some one get up behind on the dogcart.

"Is that you, Campbell?" he asked, for he could see the syce running on ahead yet. No one answered, and he looked round. There was no one there.

"Deuced queer!" he muttered. "I could have sworn that some one jumped up behind as we struck the road there."

Cook did not speak. He could feel it up there behind in the syce's seat—"It," that which had been peering at him over the other players' shoulders all the evening.

How raw the night air which blew in their faces from over the harbor was!—it made him shiver.

When Major Lutyens dropped him at his bungalow, Cook stood watching the high-wheeled dogcart as it whirled away into the night. "There are three sitting there!" he gasped. "I am glad Lutyens felt it. My head is so warm that I almost thought—I hope to God it's not Lutyens, though! He's too good a sort to 'snuff out' in this beastly hole!"

As Cook turned into his bungalow he realized that he was alone. "It" had gone from him. The terrible oppression which had been over his spirits all the evening had fallen from him, as one takes off armor. He felt almost like dancing a *pas seul*—and then the hideous thought that "It" was still with Lutyens sobered him. He slept like a log, for the strain of the evening had tired his senses.

The next day, about ten o'clock, Cook's head clerk, Baboo Grish Chunder, came to the bungalow.

"Chol'ra get plenty worse, sir!" said the Baboo. "All Burmese coolies under Manji Nee Aung run away last night. They plenty 'fraid this seekness' sir. Ramsammy telling me Herbert Sahib, he gettin' chol'ra too."

"Great God!" he muttered; "that's the first!"

Then he ordered his trap and drove over to Herbert's bungalow. As he pulled up his pony a man came out on the veranda—it was Major Lutyens.

"Look here, youngster! just turn your pony's head about and drive off to your own bungalow again. You can't do any good here, and I shall see after Herbert all right."

But Cook got down from his cart in a quiet, determined way, and told the syce to put the pony under a neighboring ban-yan tree.

Then Lutyens spoke again. "You're young, Cook, and you've got it all before you. I'll see that Herbert has every care. Of course the black devils will all clear out and leave him alone; but I'll stop, and the doctor will send an assistant down from the hospital if he can spare one. He says it's simply 'hell' up there. All the wards are full of the cholera patients, and the assistants are clearing out. God knows he hadn't too many as it was! So now, clear off home, and don't drink any water that anybody has even looked at."

But Cook had come up on the veranda by this time, and was coolly lighting a cheroot.

"Do you hear?" said Lutyens. "It doesn't matter if it does come my way. I've seen all there is to see. I think you ought to cut it for Somebody's sake, if not for your own. You'll be all right in that quarter some day, perhaps."

But his words seemed to have little effect on Cook, who puffed at his cheroot leisurely, and seemed to be waiting until Lutyens finished.

"As for me," continued the Major, "I really fancy that I am in for it anyway. The breeze that blew across the table last night over the three of us carried this infernal thing—this cholera; it was that which Campbell thought was the perfume of *gnapie*. You missed it where you sat—the 'ace of hearts' let you out."

"It doesn't matter about that, Major," answered Cook, in a dogged sort of way. "I have come to help look after Herbert. I haven't had as much experience as you've had, but I know what it is like when this comes along. All the servants clear out, and leave a man to shift for himself,—that means shifting over the river. I am sure it was last night did it, and because I was lucky enough to get the sheltered sea I am not going to back out of it that way. I am going to see the game through."

A soft, mellow light came into the Major's steel-gray eyes as he held out his hand to Cook, and said:

"You should have been in the Service, Cook. Come inside."

There was no doubt about it. The surgeon said it was "*pukka cholera*," and only the best possible care could save Herbert.

It is always the same: the fight is short and sharp—soon settled one way or the other—more often the other!

In India there is no hurry. Life is slow but "Death gallops on the King's horse." Yes, death is fast there—the yellow whirlwind rush of the tiger, the cobra's dart, the coming of the black death, the cholera: these are *ek dum* ("at once") where all else is so slow.

Side by side the two men fought through the silent watches of the night for the life of their friend; but as the gray streaked the sky next morning, the blue nails were driven into the white cramped palms for the last time. It was settled—the other way!

One hand had been played out, and together they must go on, for Campbell was down now.

There was no questioning, no admonition now to turn back; silently, steadily they fought it all over again—fought the hideous black thing that had come down from Chittagong with the coolies coming to the rice mills.

Born of the decaying bodies of the thousands who perished in the great cyclone, and that lay along the roads exposed to the burning sun, it had spread far and wide, carried by the travellers.

On the third morning there were but two left. Another hand had been played.

"Now, my boy," said Lutyens to Cook, as he left him at his own door, "I am going home; and if you hear that I am ill and come near the bungalow, I will shoot you. By God, I will!" he said, as he turned on his heel.

Cook watched his trap disappear up the road, then he turned into his bungalow with a sigh.

"Poor old man!" he murmured. "God grant that it may pass him! Poor old man!"—and then his head dropped heavily to one side as he sat in the chair. He slept like a log—the sleep of exhaustion.

At tiffin time the *Khitmutghar* woke him up.

"Go over and find out how Major Lutyens is," Cook said. "Don't let him see you."

Then he ate a little, and drank; it was safest, and would keep his strength up for the last fight, which he felt must come—the last hand in the rubber. After that—? He really didn't care very much; he was so tired!

He drove to his office; things were going all right there, so he drove home again.

"Major Sahib seek, sah," was the laconic report of his *Khitmutghar*.

Whatever had been the Major's intention with regard to the shooting, he had no chance to put it into execution, for Cook walked into his bedroom unannounced. That he swore and called Cook a young ass did not matter in the least.

The surgeon had been there—and it was the same thing over again, only now it was drawing toward the end. There was only one to fight.

Later on in the evening, when the terrible spasms had left Lutyens for a few minutes, he turned his gray eyes, now grown so large and luminous, on Cook, and said:—

"It's no use, old man! I never faked it in my life, and don't now. *Mera Kismet*, as the natives have it. There was only one life out of the four to be spared, and you got it when you cut the 'ace of hearts.' You deserve it all—for you're pluck to the backbone. Come here till I pin this V. C. on your breast, to show you what a dying man thinks of you. Of course I can't give it to you. I only wish I could, for if ever a man deserved the Victoria Cross you do! I shall be buried with it on my breast, but let my eye rest on it where it is now till all is over. I would rather die with the cheer of my men behind me and the howl of the enemy in front. God! how we pricked those Afghan devils with the cold steel the day I won that on your breast! But I know when I'm beaten, and shan't fret about it. I think I had better tell you something that is on my mind while I am talking. I myself loved winsome little May—everybody did, I think—she never knew it, though. It wasn't good enough for her—my love, I mean. The old Colonel was sweet on Herbert, and the title, and all the rest of it. Herbert, too, was madly in love with her; but you didn't know that, Cook. In some things your innocence is simply lovable. Promise me this, comrade, that when toward the end I begin to weaken, and the cramps double me up, so that you have to use all your strength to pull my head from between my knees, you won't pay any at-

tention when I ask you to put an end to it all by giving me an overdose of chloro-dyne, or a bullet, or something. Just let me fight it out to the end; then there will be no aftermath of misery for you."

All this talk did not come at once. There were the terrible and increasing spasms, and between brief spells of semi-collapse and quiet, in which the brave man, dying surely and horribly, talked.

It was only a little longer—as with the others. The surgeon and the drugs and the brandy and the rest of it, were as idle as the tears that coursed down poor Cook's cheeks—the round cheeks that were now so pale and drawn—as he worked over his dying friend.

"God bless—hearts—yes—yes—the—the—ace—Cook—the—the 'ace of hearts!'"

It were better thus. He did not feel the pain now—did not know it.

Then the eyes cleared for a minute and the lips moved—very dry and white they were. Cook put his ear down close.

"Good-bye, May,—Cook," came like the dying sigh of a gentle breeze.

The third and last hand had been played out in that game of death.

Cook drove home alone this time. There was nothing sitting on the seat behind now—not even the syce. The sahib was mad to expose himself to this terrible thing—he would rather run behind.

They are careful servants—the natives—of themselves.

There was no marriage. It is often that way in India—more of death than marriage.

"I loved Major Lutyens more than I shall ever love any other man," May said simply to Cook, when he asked her to be his wife; "but I suppose he never even thought of me. I avoided him because I knew he did not care for me."

That was why there was no marriage. The Ace of Hearts rests on Cook's dressing-table, framed in silver.

—Pall Mall Magazine.

The End Of The World

[N. Y. Herald]

Predicting the end of the world must be a rather fascinating pastime, if we may judge from the number of people who are engaged in it. It becomes a fad every now and again, and the peculiarity of the prophets is they never become discouraged; they follow the motto, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

In some of the principal European cities there is a deal of talk on this subject just now. The 19th or the 20th of September was the day fixed after long and exhaustive calculation, but in place of the general smash-up came the cyclone and with that they had to be satisfied. They could not have the whole loaf, so they munched their few crumbs of comfort and hoped for better luck next time. If they kept this thing going long enough the prediction will come true at last. Astronomers tell us that in something like twelve or fifteen million years there certainly will be a collapse of the whole solar system and these queer people ought not to grumble at a little postponement of that kind.

Some of the eccentrics in New York arranged a few weeks ago for the crash of matters and the smash of worlds. They had gone through long calculations in connection with "the times and half times" and fixed the date when they should be swept up into the air. But the stars winked that night as usual, and the moon hid behind a cloud for the purpose of laughing in her sleeve. The earth jogged along at her schedule rate of about seventeen miles a second and nothing happened.

There is no reason, however, why these prophecies should not continue. If they give pleasure that is a sufficient basis for their indulgence. They are certainly an innocent amusement, and as such are to be cordially approved.

The Doctor's Advice.

The doctor looked serious.

"You should be very careful for at least a month," he said.

"Is it as bad as all that?" asked the patient anxiously.

"If the result is to be satisfactory as I would like to have it, you cannot follow the rules I lay down too carefully."

"I will do exactly as you say," said the now thoroughly alarmed patient. "Am I eating too heartily?"

"Much too heartily. You should eat simpler food and not so much of it. If you follow my advice you'll cut your butcher's and grocer's bill just about in half."

"I'll do it, doctor."

"You ought to take more exercise, too," continued the physician. "How do you go to your office now?"

"On the street car."

Children Cry for

"Stop it at once. You must walk to and from your office every day, rain or shine. Do you ever go to the theatre?"

"Quite often."

"You mustn't do it while your under my care. How about smoking?"

"I smoke, of course, but only in moderation."

"Don't smoke at all," instructed the physician. "Throw away all your cigars and don't buy another one for 30 days, at least or I'll throw up the case."

"I'll do it, doctor, but—but—"

"Do you drink?"

"Occasionally, but I—"

"Stop it entirely."

"A little claret on the table now and then ought not to—"

"Not a drop at any time."

"All right, doctor. What next?"

"Nothing. Follow these instructions closely for thirty days, and by that time—"

"Yes," said the patient eagerly. "By that time, what?"

"By that time," repeated the doctor, you ought to have saved enough to pay me the balance due on that little bill you have owed me for a matter of about 18 months. Good day," according to the Chicago Post.

Again Ready For An Edge.

BARBERS say that the best razors in their shops sometimes become temporarily useless, not from breakage or injury, but from the loss of the capacity to receive an edge. At such times honing and strapping are in vain. Taught by experience the barber knows what to do. He simply places the razor in its case and lays it away. In a few weeks he brings it forth again, sharpens it without trouble, and finds that it cuts as well as ever.

Cutlery and machinists are familiar with this peculiarity of iron and steel. Metals that are called upon to endure a strain, especially with motion and friction, must have periods of rest entirely irrespective of any outward signs of weakness or fracture. They must have a nap; they must go to sleep.

If iron and steel must sleep, how about men and women!—how about nerves, muscles, and minds! "Why, of course," you say, "we all know." We all know, what? Let us see how much we know.

At my left hand as I write are two short letters, both from women. Neither is aware that the other has written. They live in different parts of the country, and are not probably personally acquainted. Yet their letters are almost identical in substance, and by a strange coincidence both contain the following sentence: "My sleep was disturbed with horrid dreams."

Now, whatsoever disturbs sleep is an enemy of man; and whatsoever does so in a vast number of cases (and continuously) destroys human sanity, human health, and human life—as no other enemy has power to do. What, then, did so infernal an officer for these two women? They will tell us, one after the other.

The first says: "In April, 1877, I felt tired and worn out. At first I had a bad taste in the mouth and a thickly-coated tongue. I could eat but little, and even that pained and distressed me. My sleep was so disturbed with horrid dreams that I got little rest at night. Then my legs became hot and painful and began to swell. For thirteen weeks I could hardly get across the floor. Later on I had a bad asthmatic cough and could scarcely draw my breath. I was in this condition over a year. I took blood mixtures and other medicines and got no better. Then I heard of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and a few weeks' use of it restored my appetite, my strength, and my sleep. All the other bad symptoms also left me, and I now feel like a woman created anew." (Signed) Mrs. Elizabeth Clawson, Welbourne, near Lincoln, November 15th, 1893.

The second lady says: "In the early part of 1880 I became ill without understanding the reason why. My mouth tasted badly, my tongue was furred, my appetite poor, and I had strange pains in the chest, sides, and between the shoulder-blades. I lost a deal of sleep, and my rest was disturbed with horrid dreams. I could not shake off the profound nervous depression that had seized upon me. I took no pleasure or interest in anything. I was too ill to go about, but not ill enough to lie up altogether. I had been in this miserable condition for eighteen months when I first read of Mother Seigel's Syrup, and what it had done for other persons afflicted and oppressed as I was. I bought the Syrup at Mr. Wells' Stores in Salisbury, and after taking it a few days felt greatly relieved, and after using two bottles I went about as bright and well as ever, and have enjoyed good health and good rest since then." (Signed) Mrs. Amelia Whitlock, The Green, Bright Waltham, Wantage, Berks, December 7th, 1893.

If the disease from which these ladies suffered—indigestion and dyspepsia—were to be dreaded for so other reason, its fearful effects on the nervous system would brand it as the most dangerous ailment known to man. It is the fruitful source of "horrid dreams" and of the nervous disorders of which they are the sign. Let the women notice and remember the cure.

For, if cold machinery must sleep, all the more must human beings have their regular hours in which both body and mind are beyond life's labours and cares.

Cashier—Don't think I can cash this draft, miss, I don't know you.

Miss—Here, don't be silly; give me the money. Who cares if you don't know me? I don't know you either.

Children Cry for

Pitcher's Castoria.