

POETRY.

DISPARITY.

A little maid with hair and eyes of brown,
And rosy cheeks and lips of vivid red,
Stands by my side with troubled gaze cast down,

SELECT STORY.

THE SKELETON CHAIR.

BY QUIBBLER.

About thirty years ago there lived in the seaport town of Windsor, Connecticut, a merchant named Benjamin Cole.

He had never married, and resided at the town of which we speak with an only and widowed sister, who had three sons.

These children were intelligent lads, and appeared to think a great deal of their bachelor uncle, and all was harmony and happiness until, one day, news came that a certain ship, in which the merchant had sent a large assortment of goods to foreign ports, had been lost at sea.

This sad intelligence went hard with Cole, for about all he was worth had been risked in the venture, and now, as that was lost, he found himself a poor man, with a good part of his life gone and nothing to show for it in the way of gains.

At length he settled up his affairs as well as he could, sold everything that would sell, even to his watch, in order to satisfy in a measure the claims of creditors who had advanced him goods, and for a time he appeared to have no definite aim or intention.

But the men who had trusted him, knowing his purity of heart, soon came to his aid, and with the offer of another and a larger cargo, induced him to again embark in business.

To this end he selected his goods, loaded a new vessel and sailed, going along himself this time to see if matters would not turn out more in accordance with his desires.

manage to find out to a certainty if all or any of his legal heirs were worthy of handling his money.

He matured his scheme in due time, and taking a supply of money, together with a stock of clothes, he set out for Windsor, the place where his three nephews lived, and renting a cabin, just outside the town, he furnished it with a straw bed, a pine table, and two old chairs, besides a few cooking utensils, and then turned in for the night, chuckling to himself at the odd figure he presented, but full of hope that, old as he was, he still had a chance to improve his mind and learn something more before he died.

The next day he went into town and bought some provisions—very little however—and so he continued to go back and forth, doing odd jobs for the people, and one word brought on another, until at length it leaked out that Benjamin Cole had come to life, and was living hard by, old and poor, and only too glad to do such chores as the people were willing to trust to his feeble hands.

How long it took his nephews to hear the news, I do not know, but it is certain that the manufacturer was the first one of them to hunt up the old man, and I suppose he did it as soon as he had reason to believe that his uncle was actually alive and in the land.

At any rate, he came briskly down the street one day to where the returned merchant was at work sawing some wood, and after identifying him urged him to go with him to his house, where he would find a home for the rest of his life.

"And if you desire to work, uncle," said he, "for I know you were always industrious, I will give you light and steady employment in my factory, where you can earn wages such as I have to give to other men. It is not a charity that I am offering you, because if you are not employed in my shop, some other man must be there in your place. And I am sure, as you need work, and much more need a home, I would dishonor the memory of my poor mother if I did not offer these to you."

This sort of talk was plain and sensible, and it struck the returned merchant with considerable force; but it was not a part of his plan to do any such thing as had been proposed. Besides, Robert—that was the manufacturer's first name—might be ashamed to have him working in the streets, and he might have made that offer with any other than the right motive.

He could hardly think, however, from his nephew's candid manner, that there was any truth in what he said. He declined to go with him, and the manufacturer went away comforted only by the assurance that the old man would send for him in case he got sick.

As regards his other two relatives, the bachelor uncle got no positive recognition from them, except as he happened one evening when by chance he went into the store owned in part by the dry-goods nephew. No one else happening to be in, this person questioned him a little concerning his voyage, and seemed in a half-hearted sort of way to acknowledge a relationship, but that was all.

As for the professional man, he carried his head higher than a peacock, and never so much as noticed Cole in any way whatever, although he repeatedly passed him upon the street.

The manufacturer, however, continued friendly, and as he could not prevail upon his uncle to go to his house, he often spent hours at a time standing by the roadside talking with him of things past and gone. And when Cole would wind up his discourse, as he generally did, with an expression of joy, because he had been able to get back to his native land with his life, not hinting that he brought anything else, Robert would add that it was a comfort, still it was hard to lose his ship and all he had, but many a man had fared worse than that.

By fall Cole had pretty well made up his mind as to what he would do some future day have the pocketing of the money to be derived from his estate. But he decided to wait until which one of the boys had the best head for business. He knew the knack of accumulating generally went with a sensible man, and that with a sensible man, was always found a warm and cheerful friend.

Still, if he could see with his own eyes, he would be assured of the respective merits of his nephews. To this end he went home, and after staying for some days about his cabin, so that he would be missed from the streets of the town, he despatched a letter, by means of a neighbor's boy who was directed to drop it into the post-office for the professional neighbor, stating that he desired him to come to his house.

The lawyer, for he was one, supposing that the old man wanted a home, or some kind of office, for the winter—for he knew nothing of his brother's offer—paid no attention to the missive, but settled himself into his easy-chair, and was only aroused from his dreams as to what he should be sent as minister to Japan when he got to be president of the United States, by another letter which came a day or two after.

By this time the man who had learned everything in college, began to stretch his head, and think that the moon might be inhabited after all, so next morning he took a blank on which to write a will if he were to die, and he was up and ready to get into his carriage, and went to where he supposed the returned merchant lived. Thinking he knew where the cabin stood, he made little or no inquiry, and therefore went a great deal out of his way. After much time spent in wandering about the country, he discovered the house at the most distant corner of a large field. Seeing no way of getting his vehicle through the fence, he tied his horse, and prepared to make the rest of his journey on foot.

A thunder-storm had been gathering, and he was barely inside the enclosure when the rain came down in torrents, wetting him to the skin. He still had more than an eighth of a mile to go before he would reach the rude cabin, and to escape the elements, he did not feel that he had any alternative but to enter it. He had not been there long when he discovered that it was a very comfortable one, and as he was not so much as wetted by the rain, he began to think that a personal insult was coming upon him from some quarter, the like of which he had never dreamed would be experienced. However, he thought of his blank, and pressed on as well as he could.

and that the returned merchant had delivered himself of a dry, husky cough, had placed a skeleton chair in front of the hearth, and wheezed out:

"Be seated, nephew?" This skeleton chair needs a little description here, for upon it hinges the experiment that Cole was trying. His object was to find out, if possible, by an ingenious way, how much business tact was respectively possessed by his nephews. The chair had been an ordinary splint-bottomed one, such as is found in many a farm-house, to-day; but the bottom was gone, and nothing but the frame remained. There was a light piece of board of convenient size lying upon the floor beside the chair, which served as a seat to the frame, and so he continued to go back and forth, doing odd jobs for the people, and one word brought on another, until at length it leaked out that Benjamin Cole had come to life, and was living hard by, old and poor, and only too glad to do such chores as the people were willing to trust to his feeble hands.

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When Cole, who had been watching all the morning from his one small window, saw his nephew nearing the house he arrested the British government which bids him to become a case celebris. Several years ago Major, along with three others, was arrested on a charge of burglary, and the former was sentenced to eight years imprisonment, which he served. After returning to that country, by the death bed confession of the real criminal, Major was proved innocent. Three thousand dollars is his claim for eight of the best years of his life. Mr. Blake hopes to make a good showing and is pushing the case, notwithstanding that the British government has so far refused to make any amendments on the ground of public policy.

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WHY HIS PAY WAS RAISED.

The Scheme of a Cautious Cashier.

Once there was a man. He was a clerk in a bank at \$45 a month. His name was John Brown. At a district meeting one day, after the directors had been passed upon and the portly directors were laboriously getting up to go, the president, who had the ablest and most expansive vest of any of them, stopped them.

"By the way," he remarked, "I have a note from John Brown, one of our young men, you know—some of you know him—but I guess I must have lost it. Anyhow, he wants his salary raised. Says the business of the bank is four times what it used to be, and his work has increased accordingly. Says with increase amount of money handled comes increase in the strain on his integrity. Seems to think he ought to be paid for not robbing us. Besides, he says he can scarcely keep his family on his salary. I suppose I can answer it without calling another board meeting," he concluded, facetiously.

"Tell him he oughtn't to have such a big family," suggested one. "Quote the law against embezzlement to him," said another, and so on, as they buttoned their overcoats and went out about their business.

By and by John Brown got a note like this signed by the president, and written on the note paper of the bank, bearing the imposing array of directors' names in neat engraving at the head of the list: "Mr. J. S. Brown:—In answer to yours of even date, I am instructed by the Board of Directors to say that they cannot agree with your view of the case. It is true that your work is largely increased with the growth of the bank, under its present management. But it is no more than you are able to do, and no more than we can find others to do for the salary we now pay you. The other phase of the matter you present—that we should pay you for the reflection of the bank, and for the temptation to steal, as well as for the physical and mental work you do—has no weight. Our relations, however pleasant personally, are purely business affairs on both sides. We pay you so much money for so much work. Your honesty is presumed. If you should prove dishonest we would discharge you and the law would send you to prison.

"With your family affairs we have nothing to do, but I may suggest to you that careful economy in small household expenditures will result in an annual saving which will perhaps surprise you. Without referring specially to you—for I never endeavored to pay into your private affairs nor inquired how you lived—I may say that in my opinion the prevailing error of young people nowadays is to live too high, instead of being careful to lay up something for a rainy day. Yours truly, etc."

The directors had not been in session long the next day when John Brown, dressed in a suit of black, and with a white necktie, and walked back to his desk. There was some silence for a minute, then a murmur, then the clerks outside heard a clatter of moving chairs in the Board room, and then the door opened and two or three clerks called "Brown" and he stepped out to resign, and that position, and would have Mr. Brown appointed his successor. Meanwhile, Mr. Brown could take a vacation for two weeks.

Mrs. Wislow's Soothing Syrup has been used by millions of mothers for their children's teething. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers, there is no mistake about it. It cures Diarrhoea, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind, Colic, softens the Gums and reduces Inflammation. It is pleasant to the taste. The prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States, and is sold at 25 cents per bottle by all druggists throughout the world. Be sure and ask for "Mrs. Wislow's Soothing Syrup."

John L. Sullivan got drunk in Augusta, Ga., and was sobering up when a train hand, named Townsend came through the depot while teaching. It disturbed at night and broken rest for a sick child crying with pain of teething teeth send at once and get a bottle of "Mrs. Wislow's Soothing Syrup" for Children Teething. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers, there is no mistake about it. It cures Diarrhoea, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind, Colic, softens the Gums and reduces Inflammation. It is pleasant to the taste. The prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States, and is sold at 25 cents per bottle by all druggists throughout the world. Be sure and ask for "Mrs. Wislow's Soothing Syrup."

"I've invented it myself," replied Brown, coolly, "in a safe place—\$250,000 of it. The other 20 cents I took for street car money. I took a quarter of a million away with me in plain English. When I got this response to my note to the president I— but, really, I must renew my suggestion about the advisability of getting some cash on the counter. You are very short, and you ought to attend to it at once."

"The directors drew their checks on other banks and sent them out, although the signatures were very shaky, and then, quiet at his case, Mr. Brown leaned up against the carved mantel-piece, read the president's not refusing his request for a salary of \$100,000 a year, and said: "When I got this note it set me to thinking whether, as our relations were a purely business affair, I couldn't do better than go on as I had been doing. There were \$250,000 in convenient shape that I could use in the public edition. I might have skipped to Canada with it, but I don't like the climate. I took the money away with me and concealed it"—pausing for a moment and smiling down into their eager faces—"in a place known only to myself. I shall have my cash, and as our relations, in the language of the president, had been 'personally pleasant,' I will save you the expense of a trial by pleading guilty. The maximum sentence for my offence under the laws of this State is ten years in the penitentiary. With the commutation of offer for good behavior, that will be about eight and a half years. It will be dull, but I will not be idle. I have never had leisure to cultivate the graces of the mind. I have a taste for music. I will cultivate it. I will buy myself up in the polite sciences. I will learn a modern language or two. I am 31 years old now. When I have served my term and an clear of the law, I will come out of prison 39 years old, with cultivated mind, and a comfortable fortune of \$250,000 awaiting me. I can afford to go away, to travel in foreign countries, and enjoy life. Of course I will lose the interest on my \$250,000 while I am in prison, but if I were to live on air, and go naked, and save all my salary, I wouldn't have one-fiftieth as much at the age of 39. The whole, of course, I think I have made a good speculation. Don't you?"

The opinions of the directors were not very coherent just at that moment. They made various appeals to him, on the confidence they had in him, on the good name he had earned, and on his work in cur, etc, but he responded that all these had not helped him to an increase in salary, and relentlessly quoted the language of the president's note to him, "that their relations were purely business affairs on both sides." Finally, he said: "Our relations have been 'personally pleasant,' and I have no unconquerable desire to spend the next eight and a half years in jail. I will make you a proposition. If you will sign a bond not to prosecute me, and publish in the daily papers a set of resolutions setting forth that whereas your valued and trusted employee, John Brown, by the receipt of a legacy from a deceased relative, has been relieved of the necessity of further service, resolved, that you part with him with extreme regret, etc. If you do this, I will bring back \$125,000, and content myself with the other \$125,000. The interest will make up a good part of the loss to me."

It was hard to give up \$125,000 and hitch to a set of resolutions complimenting the chief, but it was a choice between getting his loss or nothing. Was the satisfaction of sending him to prison for eight and a half years worth \$125,000 a year to them? They figured on it and agreed that it wasn't. They accepted the proposition, drew up the bond, and signed it.

"You can get the resolutions in shape by to-morrow," he said, "and have them ready when I bring the money. It would scarcely be delicate for me to be present when they are adopted."

"Couldn't you bring it to-day, Mr. Brown?" asked the president, in a perspiration.

"No, I haven't time to go after it. The work at my desk always keeps me busy until the hour for closing the bank. You will have to trust me till to-morrow, and by signing this bond you have committed yourself to the compounding of a felony, I guess I can trust you—even as a purely business affair."

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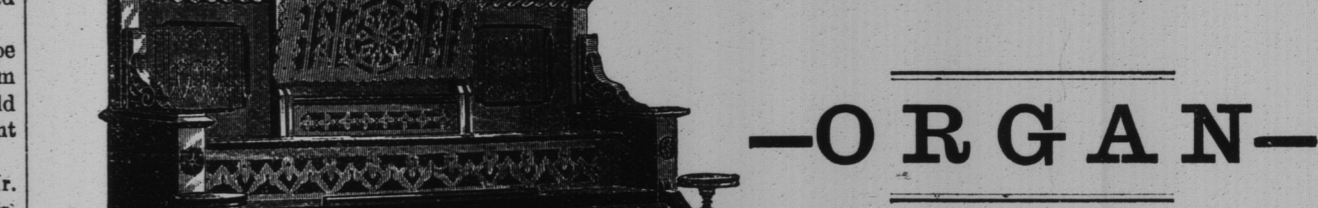
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