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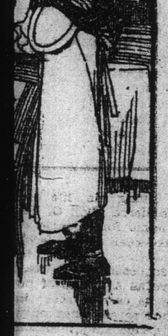

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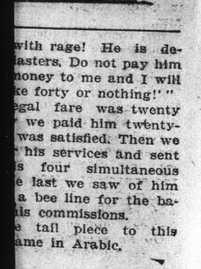

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THE CHRONICLES OF DON Q.

BY K. and HASKELL PRITCHARD.

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XI.—HOW DON Q. FOUGHT FOR HIS NAME.

During his life of brigandage in the sierra, Don Q. earned for himself a name for relentless cruelty, but he was cruel only because cruelty was a necessary part of the equipment of a sequestrador. Wealth he despised, save as a means of power; for his life he cared little; indeed, he was wont to say that only when it stood in danger did it become endurable to him.

But there was one thing he valued, a possession held in the secret of his heart, cherished, guarded, beloved above all else the world contained. To this secret he could turn for solace during his long fits of despondency when the bitterness of the past surged back to torture him. This secret, which he believed to be inviolate, set safe and high, far beyond the snatch of fate, which he never dreamed could again be jeopardized, was yet to cause him some of the fiercest moments of his life.

On an evening of late winter, Don Q., rising from his fireside, drew his cloak more closely round him, and, going out to the terrace, before the cave, began pacing up and down. As he walked, he read from an old book of Spanish legends deeds of high empire, carried through with a stateliness of courage that lends so great a distinction to many tales of Spanish chivalry. Presently he closed the book upon his finger, and as he walked amused his mind by comparing his own career with the mighty performances of old.

In the midst of his thoughts he drew up to peer curiously downward at a young man who was making his way through the groups cooking, gambling and smoking round the fires in the valley. He rushed up the path to the terrace, holding a mountaineer's leather bag at arm's length and laying it carefully at Don Q.'s feet, sprang back to some distance.

"What is this, Filipe?" The chief's tone was an ice-douche.

Felipe, gasped—"A bottle, lord."

"Corpse of a scullion!" Don Q. snatched at his knife. "Fool! speak before I cut the words from your tongue!"

"The fathers from San Pedro sent it. It was found in the chapel before the alter yesterday. No man would carry it hither, for all said it must be an infernal machine. Then came Maria, the wife of Thomas, to confession. She brought it, lord."

Don Q. laughed till the young man winced and colored.

"So it came by the hand of a woman, after all! Maria shall not be forgotten. Show the bottle to me!"

Felipe jerked up his head and shivered like a frightened horse.

"It will throw us to fragments, lord."

The chief drew out his knife and pricked the man sharply in the thigh. Felipe started, cast one glance at Don Q. and caught the flickering malevolence in his eyes, then leaped to obey.

He raised the bottle with shaking hands. It was of a curious shape, made of some dark-stained thick glass; the cork, well rammed home in the neck, was further secured by a strip of paper fastened over it. On this slip of paper was written, "Al senor Don Q."

"Lay it down." The chief stood for a moment brooding. This was probably some new scheme over his life. "Felipe," he said at last, "tap that bottle with the hilt of your knife until you break it, then we will judge whether it be indeed an infernal machine."

The lad hesitated. But his chief's eye compelled. White-lipped he stuck at the glass till Don Q.'s short patience gave way. He seized Felipe's hand over the knife-blade, forcing a strong blow. From the shivered fragments of the bottle fell out a letter.

Don Q. glanced at it.

"Hand me the letter and go!" he said.

By the crimson light of the sunset the brigand examined the letter.

"Senor," the letter ran, "I invite you to meet me on Sunday at midnight at Las Lechuzas. For the sake of the name you once bore, you will not fail me, and you will come alone."

Don Q. looked at the seal and looked again, then with a groan turned to seek his cave.

Crouched over his fire he brooded long. Here was a blow well aimed, and the more perilous because he was absolutely at a loss to know whose hand delivered it. "The name you once bore," He repeated the words under his breath, and the first fear of his reckless life crept cold and small about his heart.

The pride of his youth and of his young manhood passed before him, His loveless marriage day, the birth of his children, and then the dark hour when he knew but one way remained to carry the honor of his ancient name clear, and that was to give up all his great possessions and to die.

And in the eye of the world he had died, but the fierce blood in his veins has called to him to live somehow, in some fashion—hidden and unknown for ever, but secretely building up again those fallen fortunes of his house.

At length the brigand sighed heavily and sank back into his seat.

"It is sealed with my signet ring, I could not mistake it, the ring I gave to her on that evening of calamity. You grow old, Ceasar," he whispered to himself; "this has shaken you. Who possesses the ring now?"

After a while he brought his autobiograpgy and began to write:

"My name is threatened. It seems incredible, for I have been long in the sierra; so long that I myself can scarcely number the years. During those years but three men have suspected the name I once bore. A name of splendid traditions. I buried the third of these men 15 years ago. When I turned from his grave, I thought I had had my last dealings with such menaces. I felt safe. I reveled in my security. It appears, alas! I was mistaken, and that is why I must now go down to Las Lezuchas alone."

"It may be a trap for my life, and that will mean defeat to all my hopes and my plans. I could indeed remain in safety here and let them guess as they pleased perhaps, but for one thing. I am alone in the mountains, but in the world I am not quite alone. There is one other of whom I must think. If these animals know my name, of a surety they must know of her existence. If they can be base enough to bait a trap for me with my heart's blood can I imagine they will show mercy to her? It may be they guess only and have no certain knowledge of facts, but I must make sure. and, further, if chance befriends me, take means to close forever lips that can babble so muderously."

Don Q. sat bleav and solitary upon his horse. He had come to the end of his journey. For two days he had been riding downward through the mountains to keep rendezvous with his unknown enemy—a terrible ride, tortured with memories and harassed with suspense.

He was absolutely alone, for he had no companion whom he could trust. As for the men in his band, with the exception, perhaps, of Robledo, he divided them into two classes—the first, whom he could rely on a little, for though wolfish they were fools; the rest, endowed with low cunning, he would not depend on at all.

He had come to the conclusion that his correspondent must have in view one object—gain. He would endeavor to force hush-money from the brigand whose immense fortune was the common talk and envy of the plains. Such a soctet, affecting as it did the honor of a noble family, could not be trifled with, and, indeed, it was certain that Don Q.'s enemy had by some means become possessed of real information, that blown about would render decades of solitude and self-sacrifice vain. The chief's plan was a very simple one. To come face to face with his adversary, and to kill him. If he himself perished, what matter, so long as this great work was done.

Neglecting no precaution that his long years of guerilla warfare had taught him, he lay watching in the thicket until night fell. No living thing approached Las Lechuzas or came from it. Yet against the murk of darkness the chief saw a spark fly and die over the building, and knew that a fire was being kindled on one of its deserted hearths.

At once he began to move. To arrive before one is expected frequently disconcerts an enemy's tactics. Tying up his horse as near to the edge of the wood as possible, that it might be easy to find, Don Q. crept up to the building, through the ruined gateway, and across the courtyard. Within all was dark, silent and mysterious.

As he moved stealthily forward along the stone passage where the night seemed solid, a chill wind came after him, gathering up the death like odors that cling about places man has inhabited and forsaken. His fingers had rounded a broken corner of wall, when a rush of warmer air brought him the pungent smell of kindling wood. He thrust out his head and saw the entrance to the great central hall, against which a broken door, torn probably from one of the outbuildings, was propped; through and behind this the light of a fire leaped and sang.

It has been said that Don Q. was a famous hunter; he crept noiselessly to the makeshift door and listened. Five minutes passed. No sound came from within but the intermittent anger of the fire as it roared and crackled among the wet wood. The brigand slipped off his coat and wrapped it shieldwise round his left arm, then thrust the door backward. It shook, rose, poised a second, and flapped upon the floor, flinging up a cloud of dead old dust as it settled.

Don Q. slipped into the opening, and, seeing nothing but a high wooden screen that hid the fire, stood with his back against the wall until his eyes became accustomed to the light.

Still no sound.

After waiting a few minutes he walked softly and swiftly round the screen. A great fire roared up the chimney, an empty stool was by the hearth; no more Yes! He made out a figure drawn up into the darkest corner, between the screen and the outjut of the chimney; a figure, cloaked from head to foot.

"I have come," said Don Q. at last.

"With your knife in your hand," said a vibrating voice. "That is well."

Don Q.'s arm fell to his side. A woman.

She threw back her cloak and advanced into the full blaze — a tall girl with a passionate beauty that matched well her poignant voice.

"Pardon, senorita, I expected to meet with a different person."

"But you are Don Q.?" she asked.

The brigand swept his sombrero to the floor.

Her tragic eyes lit up.

"And you came to kill!" she exclaimed.

"Or to be killed."

"No! Don Q. will not belie his reputation," she rejoined. "He may kill some one to-night—if he dares!" she added suddenly.

The brigand eyed her for a moment.

"There are men allied to brave women, men who are cowards and who choose to be represented on occasions which they themselves fear to face. I have received a letter bidding me to come here. Do you knew anything of it?"

"All, since it was I who wrote it"

The chief shrugged his shoulders.

"May I be permitted to inquire — under whose orders?"

She smiled. "I am here alone, as I wrote alone. Hear me, for there is not time to spare." Don Q. mado a gesture of polite attention. He was keenly suspicious though there was a simple urgencyof woe in her face that almost compelled belief.

"I will tell you my name—I am Anita del Vilar," she went on, "and you are not Don Q. but—"

The chief flung up a fierce hand. "Hush, not even dead walls must hear it!"

A strange look came over her face.

"I judged rightly! You are the man who once bore—that name. My life is in your hands. Now I know that you will do for me all that I want." She bent near him. "There was once a young girl, loving, happy, and oh, so lovely." Her voice broke. "My little Lucia, my sister. She was mine from the day our mother died. We are of the nobles, as you know, but secretly, we stabled the lean horse," as the saying is—the lean horse, misfortune. He carried us to the verge of ruin, but we hid our troubles well."

Don Q. gazed at her; he had stabled that horse himself.

"Then a man, a lover, came to my Lucia. He was ambitious and her fortune meant much to him; but you see it was all gone. The marriage was arranged; then my father could no longor hide the truth." She faltered. "I thought my darling — she was younger than I, senor—would break her heart. Ah, but worst came. They met secretly and they went away. For a long time we did not know where she was. My father died of grief. Then I got a message from a stranger, and I hurried to Paris, but I found her dead, my little Lucia; dead of want and sorrow, with her lover's letters on her heart." She touched the chief's breast.

He took her hand and kissed it with a fine reverence.

"You, who never saw her dear face, are sorry for her." The girl's voice had the penetrating thrill of a harpstring. "I would have killed Diego Palomoro with my own hands if I could; but I was helpless until I thought of a way."

A prevision of irremediable evil came upon Don Q. He made her a gesture to continue.

"I had one weapon left. Do you blame me that I used it? I knew a secret I learat seven years ago in a convent in Castille, where I was brought up. I meant to keep it, O, believe me, I meant to keep it, but ——"

"First—how did you learn it?"

"From the mother superior of the convent."

...

A dreadful change passed over the chief's face.

"Enough! You are lying to me!" She fell on her knees before him.

"Hear me. I swear—let me toll you how I heard it. It was when she could not hide it. She was ill. I was always her favorite, and when she feared delirium, she directed that I alone should stay with her. In the night she wandered, and I—heard — all."

She hesitated, then rushed on.

"I promised her I would never speak. O, Mother of Heaven, forgive me! Afterward she gave me the signet ring to bury out of sight, for it was to her an occasion of mortal sin. I loved her, senor, she was so sad and beautiful. I could not part with it. I kept it for her sake because I laved her."

"Yet you could betray her."

Dona Anita rocked upon her knees in a passion of sobs. Then suddenly she sprang up, defiant.

"If it were to do again I should do it! A thought came to me that I had one weapon left. You forbade me to whisper that name to these dead walls. What if I have told it to living ears? I was right?" she laughed exultantly. "I went to Diego; I spoke to him of Lucia. He mocked me! Then I told him the secret—your secret."

"Why?"

"Because I knew that by doing so I was securing on my side the fiercest champion in Spain!"

Don Q.'s head fell on his breast. "You might have done the one without the other," he said sadly. "But finish."

"I told him because I knew the man who heard that secret must die. You will kill him?" she cried out. "I boasted to him that it would be his death sentence."

"And he?"

"He swore on the contrary that I had made his fortune," she wailed.

The chief moved alertly. "Good! he will not share his knowledge until he first tries to make use of it with me. When did you see him?"

"To-day. He is at his farm, six leagues away, where he came to look over the herd of bulls he bought from——"

"Yes—yes. Farewell, Dona Anita, I wish you had trusted me before you betrayed me."

She clasped his arm. "Kill me! I deserve it! But for Lucia's sake I would do the same again! Kill me!"

Don Q. gently pushed away the clinging hands.

"I cannot deny that you have deserved punishment," he said, "for you have done more than kill a man; you have perhaps killed a very ancient and noble name. Yet you were made with your sorrow, and you are but a woman. Farewell, Dona Anita. I go to find this Diego, who has indeed committed frightful crimes — the first, in deceiving and deserting your sister; the second and greater, in learning my name."

The sound of his light footfall had scarcely died away when Dona Anita heard a confusion of voices, a pistol shot and a cry. She started to her feet and hid herself in the dim corner by the chimney, drawing the screen closer.

* * * * * * *

As Don Q. was stepping from the great gate he stumbled against a rope tied across it. In spite of his fragility, and the fact that he borrowed his strength rather from the spirit than the body, he was not an easy prisoner to capture. He leaped rather than fell into the courtyard, but a stone crashed after him, striking him on the head, yet as he sank down his mind telegraphed danger to his hand, and he fired his revolver at one of the three dim shapes towering above him.

When Don Q. came to himself he found he had been carried back into the great hall and laid within the circle of fire light. His weapons were gone, his hands and feet bound, and the blood was already drying upon his face. At first he half believed it must be a dream, but remembrance roused him thoroughly—was he not fighting for his name?

Now, in all his life Don Q. had never been in bonds before, and it may safely be declared that the danger of his position was entirely swallowed up in the sense of the indignity thus put upon him. Two men stood talking by the fire, while a third lay upon the ground behind him. He could hear faint groans, from which the brigand gathered that his shot had not gone so far astray.

"Impossible!" The exclamation broke loudly from one of the two at the fire. "Why, the man's dead, heaven knows how long ago."

"So it was given out," said the other; "but in any case, Nicanor, this fellow will be worth something for he is undoubtedly Don Q. Did you see how he fought?"

"So would you, my dear Diego, under the same circumstances," laughed Nicanor.

"True, but not so adroitly as he did. This is an expert in the struggle for existence. Come, if he is not sufficiently awake to question we must rouse him."

"If this be really Don Q.," put in Nicanor, "it would be safer to kill him as he lies."

"All in good time. First let us extract the dollars." He stepped across to the brigand and kicked him. "Wake up, rascal, I would speak with you."

The chief opened his eyes and closed them again feebly. He recognized the lean, fine-featured face with its light, sinister eyes as that of Palomoro.

"Come, bandit, you will drowse no longer when you hear it is a question of your treasure. I hold you captive, as you have held many a one I know, and it is your turn to pay raasom."

The chief lay silent.

"Dona Anita lured you here and I followed Dona Anita; only just in time, or you would have escaped us. The fact that you are Don Q. is proven; we have the Ritness of your features," Diego pulled the brigand roughly up by the collar and held his face to the light. "The quebranta-huesos cannot be mistaken for a crow." The other man joined in Palomoro's laughter. "Where have you hidden your hoard?"

Don Q. propped against the stool, answered with toneless civility—

"Many men have asked that question."

"Many men have searched for your treasure," retorted Don Diego. "The good fortune of finding it has been reserved for me."

"Perhaps," replied Don Q. "But let us to business. How do you propose to learn where my treasure—presuming I have a treasure—is concealed?"

"By a method you understand — compulsion."

"But how?" the chief's politeness was unaltered. "Will you torture me? Or, it may be, threaten me with death?"

"Your courage is reputed to be unassailable," answered Don Diego, "though I may be driven to try conclusions with you in that way if gentler means fail. But I propose to begin on another basis, I happen to be the lucky holder of a secret belonging to your past life."

The brigand made a contemptuous gesture. "You are credulous, senor."

"Caramba! I know it to be true. Has any other bait tempted you into the jaws of a trap? No! But this was successful. As I followed the pretty Anita here, I realized that if you came at her call, whatever gods there are had delivered you into my hands. You must buy our silence.—my friend's and mine,"

"And what of the gentleman I have been so unfortunate as to wound?" inquired Don Q.

"Manuelo? Pooh! my groom. He is dead by now; you shot too straight. Come, our terms are simple."

"Go tell your secret in the streets of Malaga, you will be none the richer."

"We cannot haggle like a couple of old women in the market place. Make up your mind. If you lead us to your treasure we will give you our word of honor as gentlemen to preserve your secret inviolate."

"Senor, pardon me, You would sell your honor? Is it not so?" questioned Don Q. with exceeding suavity. "For my part, I cannot afford to buy it."

"Why?—against your principles?" said Don Diego with angry contempt; "Senor sequestrador, who holds to ransom."

"Precisely. It is against my principles. Not as a sequestrador, but against my principles as a man of business. I cannot buy that damaged article—your honor."

Don Nicanor burst into oaths; the other man stood deadly still.

"I am about to teach you, brigand," he said icily "the lesson you have taught many a better man—the fact that you are after all no more than flesh and blood. Strip him, Nicanor." He stooped and plucked out from amongst the heap of wood beside the hearth a bar of iron still imbedded in a broken window-sash. As he thrust it to heat in the flames, there was a movement of the heavy screen, and Dona Anita rushed out from her concealment.

"You would torture him!" she shrieked. "You shall not! You shall not!"

Don Diego's smile was not pleasant to see. "My dear lady, I fear Don Q. has to thank you only for his present position."

"Look at the door—in the doorway!" she screamed.

Both of the men swung round, and, taking advantage of the instant, Anita threw herself upon Don Q. and began to saw at the bonds with a delicate-bladed dagger.

The men pulled her off savagely and dragged her toward the door in spite of her frantic resistance. Of all that the brigand had to endure on that night, perhaps this moment was the worst, while he was forced to look on at the rough handling of this lady.

He heard the men say there was an upper room where they could shut her in. The noise receded. He was alone.

He looked around. Dona Anita's dagger was not to be seen, but his eyes fell on an iron bar already hot. He rolled toward the fire, pushed the bar out of the embers with his bound feet, and held the ropes upon it until they charred and he could jerk them loose. Scarcely conscious of the horrible burns on his hands and wrists, he untied the knots about his ankles and stood up free unarmed indeed, but yet free. Then he endeavored to stamp out the fire, but hearing footsteps he flung an armful of damp wood upon the glowing ashes, effectually darkening the hall.

It was Don Diego who entered. "Hullo, how dark it is! hey, Nicanor!" he shouted.

For Don Q. was on him like a cat. Springing at his neck from behind, he kicked his knees from under him and brought him heavily to the ground just as Nicanor came running into the hall.

"Robledo, Gaspar, to me! I have the other here," called Don Q.

Nicanor was deceived. He could see nothing but the outstretched form of his friend, and he imagined that the brigand's men had come to the rescue of their chief. He turned to escape. Don Q. snatching Don Diego's knife and pistol, started in pursuit.

Nicanor leaped out across the snow to where his horse was tethered. Cutting his friend's loose, he flung himself upon his own with a yell and a blow.

Hot after him followed Don Q. The night was now full of a pale luminosity for a white-rimmed moon had swum over a world that lay a-cold. Some moments were lost in reaching his horse in the wood, and by that time Nicanor was out of sight; but the chief knew his enemy would make for the nearest village, some four leagues distant. If Nicanor once gained its shelter he must escape, carrying with him the desperate secret.

With spur and voice, Don Q. urged his horse forward. The snow-bound chase sent no sound up to the dim heaven; a magic circle might have been putting to these two gasping riders and their passions. But Don Q. being much the lighter man, was gaining surely upon the other. Nicator, peering back over his shoulder and that one overtaking him fired again and again at the figure with the flying cloak bent so closely over his horse's neck.

No shot came back in reply. "He is without a pistol, this brigand," thought Nicanor, and turned at bay, wheeling his blown horse behind a thicket laden with snow. The chief swept nearer and nearer, then his horse seemed to stumble or rear. Don Nicanor could not clearly see what happened, but Don Q. was thrown from his saddle. He lit upon the ground not far from the thicket, and by the impetus of his fall rolled over to within a few feet of it.

Nicanor spying through the branches to take good aim, passed forever the light and consciousness of earth, for a little tongue of name licked upward from the tumbled figure upon the snow, followed by the smack of the striking bullet, a sound unlike any other in the world.

Instantly the chief was up to run in upon his foe, but Nicanor was hanging dead among the bushes, his feet still lodged in the stirrups.

"A very simple trick, good Don Nicanor, but it sufficed for you," said the brigand, as he pushed the body to the ground.

Climbing upon his horse, he glanced up at the moon, and saw with satisfaction that by its light he could ride at a hand gallop back along his own tracks. Nicanor's tongue was dumb forever, but infinitely the more dangerous of his two adversaries remained. So far Don Q. felt things had gone well enough, but the danger to his long hopes and hereditary pride still loomed darkly ahead. Diego was a man of cunning and malevolence, and one who did not lack courage. Perhaps he had not yet recovered consciousness, or he might have departed taking the secret with him, or most likely of all he was lying in wait for Don Q., whose return he very well knew he might safely count on.

Yet who could say what turn Don Diego's enmity might take? Suppose he recognize the fact that his deepest revenge lay in spreading abroad his knowledge to befoul the honour of that kingly name! At the thought Don Q. drove his horse on, but a cloud drifting up obscured the moon, and in a moment horse and rider were wrapped in a blinding squall of snow. It was impossible to tell the direction in which they were travelling, so for a maddening hour Don Q. plodded slowly on, consumed with impatience and anxiety, keenly alert to every sound, yet benumbed by cold and wind.

In the midst of his despair, he found himself on the mound of Las Lachuzas.

Hurriedly tying up the horse, he groped his way into the building, through the silent passages to the hall. In the dull glow of the fire it seemed empty.

Empty, empty, nothing to be seen but little fitful flames, feeling about the freshly piled wood on the hearth! Diego no longer lay where the brigand had left him. Don Q., keeping in cover of the great screen, waited, for it was clear that during his absence his opponent had recovered consciousness.

But the fire languished, and cast long deceptive shadows on the floor, and rugged walls. Watching, the chief at length made out something black and round, from which a dull gleam was struck at intervals.

All was very still, save those weird noises that wander forever in old habitations. The brigand crawled nearer and nearer to the dark object. All at once a flame leaped up, and showed him Don Diego's dark, well-groomed head lying within hand reach.

On the brow the death chill had gathered, and in the strong throat was thrust a dagger. Don Q. felt for the hilt; it was slender and delicately fashioned. Quickly he sought the dead man's right hand; it was empty; but among the fingers of the left he found coiled a strand of long, dark hair.

The chief started up. What, then, was become of Dona Anita? For a moment he forgot to exult that his name was once more safe from that world where people talk. The next he had kicked the fire into a blaze and looked around.

The girl lay half on the ground, half propped against the wall, with her hands clenched in her lap, her white face set in a tangle of dark hair, her great black eyes wide.

In an instant Qon Q. was beside her.

"Diego shot me," she whispered very faintly. "He wanted to force me to give up your ring as proof — but I saved it." Gently Don Q. took it from her failing fingers. "When I am dead," she went on, "you will perhaps forgive me, and carry me away from this place and lay me in some niche in the sierra, with the pure snow about me, where I can sleep well at last."

An hour before the dawn Don Q. began his journey back to the mountains, and across the saddle bow, wrapped in her long cloak, he carried Dona Anita to the burial she had desired. Scattered snowflakes struck at him and at his burden, for a wind had arisen; but far away from whence it came one star began to shine and sparkle through the snow-wet night.

UNCLE ELI'S FABLES.

THE BULL AND THE FLY.

One day, as a Traveller was passing along a highway a mighty bull in a pasture by the roadside went plunging up and down, lashing his tail in a furious manner, and as he halted for a moment the Traveller cried out:

"For heaven's sake, Taurus, but will you tell me what is the matter?"

"Please come over the fence and assist me!" was the reply.

"Assist you to what? You are a grand and massive creature. I doubt if the Elephant could stand before you. Your voice can be heard for two miles, and when you paw the earth the dirt flies thirty feet high. I have often admired and envied you."

"But do haste to my assistance if you have any pity in your heart!" begged the Bull.

"Why, of course. If you've been hit by a cannon ball, I'll do my best to extract it. Now,then, what is it?"

"Right there on my flank, where I can't get at it."

"What?"

"A horse fly. He's been driving me almost crazy for the last half hour. Swat him."

"By thunder, but do you mean to tell me that you have been raising all this fuss over one little fly?" exclaimed the Traveller, as he started back.

MORAL:

More statesmen have been worried over their oatmeal for breakfast than over the machinations of politics.

THE PEASANT AND THE CROW.

One day, as the Peasant was seated on his doorstep andthinking what a lonely life he was leading, since he was without wife or children, a Crow flew down beside him and said:

"This is a lonely old world,Mr. Jinks?"

"It surely is, and nobody works but father," was the reply.

"I have noticed your sad and dejected looks and felt to pity you, and have finally made up my mind to give you my presence and friendship."

The Peasant gave the crow welcome and for a week was elated at the change in his life. Then he went to get his seed corn and discovered that it was missing. So was a paper of rice. So was a large piece of dried meat.

"Tell me what has become of those things!" he cried out as he turned to the Crow.

"Take it easy, Mr. Jinks. I have eaten them."

"But by what right?"

"Why, I have given you my friendship. Friendship is a thing that can't go hungry, you know."

MORAL:

The less association you have with your neighbors the more tea and coffee you will have in the pantry.

A queer method of fishing is used by the Chinese. The fisherman lets down from the side of the boat a screen of white canvas. The shoal of fish mistake this for some floating obstruction and try to leap over it, with the result that the fish jump into the boat and are thus captured. This method is employed by Malays in their waters.

In porous glass, which is made in France, the holes are so small that neither dust nor draught can enter and yet the ventilation is said to be excellent.

It is announced that a Lancashire, England, mechanic has invented a machine which will sew direct from two reels of thread, thus obviating the winding of spools and threading of shuttles.

The Ratcliff-Rotherhithe tunnel, now being built under the Thames, will take five years to construct. Its length will be 6883 feet, with an external diameter of thirty feet, which will allow a carriageway of sixteen feet and two footways, four feet eight and one-half inches wide. When it is finished there will be three tunnels under the Thames at London.

On a Coast Steamer.

"Yes, I always call these meals 'Patti farewells.'"

"Indeed. Why?"

"Because I can never tell when they are going to turn up again."

Preparing to Get Even.

"Yes," he said, "I wish to adopt a girl."

"A little girl?"

"No, a girl old enough to have energy and perseverance and one who has had enough experience with the piano to make her think she knows how to play it. And if she thinks she can sing, why so much the better. I tell you, I am going to get even with the people in the next flat even if I have to adopt two musical prodigies."
—Lippincott's Magazine.