

WEAK SPOTS.

Brother Gardner "Looks Upon Lyin' as a Weak Hoop on de Human Bar'l."

"De odder day," began the old man with a half-ashamed expression of countenance, "when one of de members of dis club discovered me deyin' my h'r wid a leetle lamp-black an' sweet ile he dispressed de greatest astonishment dat a pusson o' my y'ars would be so vain. Gem'len, when you find a man widout a single weak spot in his character you have foun' a man too good fur dis weary world."

"When you find a drunkard you find a man wid a weakness. He may be honest and truthful, but when you offer him whiskey you peel de patch off his weak spot. If infloence am brought to b'ar to reform dat man, watch him. He am jist as sartin to break out in some odder spot as de sun am to rise an' sot. He will run to hoss-races or poker rooms, or he will dress to kill, or run arter women, or develop sunthin to prove dat he can't keep a tight rein on his hull character at once."

"Reform a gambler an' what do you make of him? Passion fur play am a weakness. Shake it off an' de weakness breaks out in some odder spot. I have known a sober, temperate gambler to reform from dat habit and become a drunkard."

"When you find a man wid a weakness fur horses, let him alone! Take his hoss away an' he will replace it wid sunthin' mo' disagreeable."

"I look upon lyin' as a weak hoop on de human bar'l. Few men lie to lie, but dey lie bekase dey want to kotch de moas' fish, or see de biggest b'ar, or cum de niggest to bein' killed. Lyin' may be called an ambitious weakness. Smith lies to get eben wid Jones, an' Jones to get eben wid Brown, an' so it goes. Reform a liar an' some odder hoop has got to bust."

"Gem'len, when de Lord an' de church refuse to recognize perfectshun in man why do we expect an' demand it? Half a millyun clergymen in dis kentry am tellin' us from de pulpit each Sabbath day dat man am weak an' sinful an' full of tricks, an' yit when a pusson beats us out o' half a dollar we riz up an' yell out as if it was a strange thing. I doan' drink nor gamble nor lie nor steal, but I've got a weakness. I've a bit vain. I imagine dat I look purtier wid my h'ar greased up an' de true color disguised."

"Giveadam Jones doan' drink nor chew nor play policy, but he has a weak spot. He'll bet his last dollar on a hoss race, an' he'll bet on de wrong hoss to boot."

"Judge Cadaver am regarded in his nighbourhood as de soul of integrity, but when he went fishin' las' summer he got so corndiculated dat he fell off de wharf an' came nigh bein' drown."

"Good old Sir Isaac Walpole am de friend of de sorrowful, a gran' fadder to all chill'en an' his purse am eber open to charity, but he has bought a lottery ticket each month fur de las' nine y'ars, an' you can't convince him dat he won't sooner or later strike a prize of \$50,000."

"In windin' up dis eulogy let me simply warn you agin expectin' to fin' any man or woman so good an' nice an' perfect dat a flaw can't be foun' in de structure. Give 'em due credit fur all good traits, an' stan' prepar'd to dodge when de bad ones come to de surface. Let us now march on to attack de reg'lar programmy."

"BURGUNDY ROSE."

[William Black in Harper's.]

Burgundy isn't a good thing to drink; Young man, I beseech you, consider and think, Or else in your rose, and likewise in your toes, You'll discover the color of Burgundy rose.

Burgundy rose, Burgundy rose— A dangerous symptom is Burgundy rose.

'Tis a very nice wine, and as mellow as milk; 'Tis a very nice color in satin and silk; But you'll change your opinion as soon as it shows.

In a haze around the extreme of your nose. Burgundy rose, Burgundy rose— 'Tis a very bad thing at the end of your toes.

TWO SONNETS.

[Earl of Roslyn.]

"OLD LETTERS."

It seems but yesterday she died, but years Have passed since then; the wondrous change of time

Makes great things little, little things sublime, And sanctifies the dew of daily tears. She died, as all must die; no trace appears In History's page, nor save in my poor rhyme. Of her, whose life was love, whose lovely prime Passed sadly where no sorrows are, nor fears. It seems but yesterday; to-day I read A few short letters in her own dear hand, And doubted if 'twere true. Their tender grace Seems radiant with her life! Oh! can the dead Thus in their lives live? I tied the band, And kissed her name as though I kissed her face."

"THE WOOD-NYMPH."

The lime-trees shed their blossoms, and the scent Filled the light air that dallied round the grove; The honeysuckle tendrils deftly wove A net to catch them—sweets on sweets intent. The thyme, scarce crushed (for she a-tiptoe went), Breathed a faint tribute of its dying love, Clinging about her footsteps as they move, And all the wood in smiling homage bent. Fair as young birds in early spring, one hand Led in rose-letters a new-captured fawn, The other held a palm leaf, from the stream That trickled through the thicket—like the wand Of some enchantress, gracious as the Dawn She passed, this Oread of a poet's dream."

A STORY OF A QUARTER.

An Old Sea Captain Who Found a Wonderful Difference "Atwixt Women."

[New York Sun.]

"I gave you a quarter, sir," said an elderly woman with an acid smile last Saturday, as she glanced through her glasses at an old sea captain who had just deposited her fare in the cash-box of a Madison avenue stage. He started up and rushed to the box just in time to see the quarter disappear through the trap. He turned around in confusion and said that he didn't notice the money, and that he thought it was all right. Then he hammered at the glass opening for the driver, and asked for twenty cents in change, but the driver wanted to know how he was going to get down into the box and get out the quarter. He was sure he wasn't going to pay it out of his own pocket, and trust to luck to get it back from the company. If the passenger wanted it she could go to the office and get it.

The old mariner said: "Blast your eyes, if you be so mean, I'll pay for my mistake," and he began to fish in his pockets for the money, while the woman looked like a picture of injured innocence, and asked another passenger in a bitter tone of voice if the one who had taken her quarter was not connected with the company.

"Me?" exclaimed the honest old blunderer, whose confusion was increasing because he could not find his change. "Bless you, I don't belong on land. I'll pay you back this money, though; but I don't believe I've got a cent."

He completed his vain search, and, picking out an old memorandum book, asked her

for her name and address, saying that he would call there that night and leave the money.

"Oh, never mind," said she in a mincing way; "it only teaches me a lesson. Hereafter I'll pay my own fare."

"Oh, I'll bring you the money, ma'am. I just happen to be out of it now," and he placed the memorandum book upon his knee and said politely: "What's the name? I'll get the money to you."

"Oh, well," she said, "let it go. It's all right. I've learned a lesson. I'll pay my own fare hereafter."

She repeated this several times with an air of one who knew she had been swindled, and wanted others to know it. The old Captain, with flushed cheeks, asked again for the name, and she at length gave it, but as a parting shot, repeated that she had learned a lesson.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "I am ready to make all amends, but I get a lesson, too; and while I'm not a saying what it is so much, I've got it all the same."

A pretty young woman, with eyes that began to snap beneath the shade of a big fur hat, could not repress her delight at this, and she said, in the softest tone of voice, to the old Captain: "I'll tell you, sir, what to do. We'll collect all the fares that come into the stage now until we make up this sum, and that will save you further trouble." The old Captain took off his hat, and looked volumes of thanks. He was too happy to speak, and he kept an eager look-out. "Here's one coming," he said. The stage stopped, and a well-dressed woman got in and opened a sealskin purse. The young girl explained what had happened, and the new passenger said, "Why, certainly." Five cents went into the purse of the woman with an acid smile. "Fifteen cents more, now," said the old Captain, shaking his head, "and we're safe." He sighted two more passengers, and his glee increased. They both laughed heartily in sympathy with the joy of the old Captain, as he saw his debt decreased to five cents. The remainder was soon collected from another passenger, and finally the injured woman alighted without a softened glance or a parting courtesy. The old Captain looked after her and said, "That wor a stress of weather. I didn't go to do it, but I'd got her money to her this night. I didn't tell her the lesson I learned, but I hope she'll remember the one she learned."

There was a laugh, and as the young woman who first suggested the way out of the difficulty was about to leave, she smiled a good-by at the hearty old mariner, and he took off his hat and said, "Thank you. Merry Christmas, miss." Then he leaned over and said in a hoarse voice to a man sitting opposite:

"What a difference there is 'atwixt women; wonderful, ain't it?"

THE MAN LAY AT DEATH'S DOOR.

[From the Independent.]

The man lay at death's door, but two strong angels took him

And swung him in a hammock made of cloud; With an undulating motion and from west to east they shook him, Lying plastic and in mist as in a shroud.

They towered above the earth as do elms above the grasses, And even handed swung him to and fro; He felt the vibrant life and the sharp, contending passes

Of streams of air which grapple as they flow. The angel swung him over seas whose sounding drums did thrill him,

And back above the homes of sleeping men; They swung him over mountains that their piney breath might fill him;

They swept an arc from stars to stars again. The man lay at death's door; now the cradle of hereafter

Rocked slowly; slowly settled from its sweep; "He has caught the broader life," said the angels with soft laughter;

"Now cover up his face; he is asleep."

NORMA OAKWOOD.

LASCA.

[Frank Desprez in San Francisco Chronicle.]

I want free life and I want fresh air, And I sigh for the canter after the cattle, The crack of the whips like shot in a battle, The mellow of horns and hoofs and heads That wars and wrangles and scatters and spreads; The green beneath and the blue above; And dash and danger, and life and love.

And Lasca!

Lasca used to ride On a mouse-gray mustang close to my side, With blue serape and bright-belled spur; I laughed with joy as I looked at her! Little knew she of books or of creeds; An Ave Maria sufficed her needs; Little she cared, save to be by my side, To ride with me, and ever to ride, From San Saba's shore to Lavaca's tide. She was as bold as the billows that beat, She was as wild as the breezes that blow; From her little head to her little feet She was swayed in her suppleness to and fro By each gust of passion; a sapling pine, That grows on the edge of a Kansas bluff, And wars with the wind when the weather is rough.

Is like this Lasca, this love of mine, She would hunger that I might eat, Would take the bitter and leave me the sweet; But once, when I made her jealous for fun, At something I'd whispered, or looked, or done, One Sunday, in San Antonio, To a glorious girl on the Alamo, She drew from her garter a dear little dagger, And—sting of a wasp—it made me stagger! An inch to the left, or an inch to the right, And I shouldn't be mauling here to-night; But she sobbed, and, sobbing, so swiftly bound Her torn reboso about the wound That I quite forgave her. Scratches don't count

In Texas, down by the Rio Grande, Her eye was brown—a deep, deep brown! Her hair was darker than her eye! And something in her smile and frown, Curled crimson lip and instep high, Showed that there ran in each blue vein, Mixed with the mildor Aztec strain, Tee vigorous vintage of Old Spain. She was alive in every limb, With feeling, to the finger tips; And when the sun is like a fire, And sky one shining soft sapphire, One does not drink in little sips.

The air was heavy, the night was hot, I sat by her side and forgot—forgot; Forgot the herd that were taking their rest, Forgot that the air was close oppress. That the Texas norther comes sudden and soon, In the dead of night or the blaze of noon; That once let the herd at its breath take fright, That nothing on earth can stop the flight; And woe to the rider and woe to the steed, Who falls in front of their stampede.

Was that thunder? No, by the Lord! I spring to my saddle without a word. One foot on mine, and she clung behind. Away! on a hot chase down the wind! But never was fox hunt half so hard, And never was steed so little spared. For we rode for our lives. You shall hear how we fared.

In Texas down by the Rio Grande, The mustang flew, and we urged him on; There was one chance left, and you have but one; Halt, jump to ground and shoot your horse; Crouch under his carcass, and take your chance; And if the steers in their frantic course Don't batter you both to pieces at once, You may thank your star; if not, good-bye To the quickening kiss and the long-drawn sign, And the open air and the open sky.

In Texas, down by the Rio Grande! The cattle gained on us, and, just as I felt For my old six-shooter behind in my belt, Down came the mustang, and down came we, Clinging together, and—what was the rest? A body that spread itself on my breast. Two arms that shielded my dizzy head. Two lips that hard on my lips were prest; Then came thunder in my ears, As over us surged the sea of steers, Blows that beat blood into my eyes, And when I could rise, Lasca was dead!

I gouged out a grave a few feet deep, And there in Earth's arms I laid her to sleep, And there she is lying, and no one knows, And the summer shines and the winter snows; For many a day the flowers have spread A pall of petals over her head; And the little gray hawk hangs aloft in the air, And the sly coyote trots here and there, And the black snake glides and glitters and slides Into a rift in a cottonwood tree; And the buzzard sails on And comes, and is gone, State y and still, like a ship at sea; And I wonder why I do not care For the things that are like the things that were, Does half my heart lie buried there In Texas, down by the Rio Grande?

It is stated by one who has tried it that a branch of jimson weed placed in a grain bin will kill or drive away all the weevils in it.

SUB ROSA.

There's a rose at the top of your letter, sweetheart, By which little bud, I suppose, You intended to say, in a delicate way, That your letter was written me under the rose.

'Tis true of half one's life, sweetheart, Of full half our cares and our woes; We laugh and we smile, but all of the while, The sad tears are falling, love, under the rose.

And so it is true of life's pleasures, sweetheart, Stolen pleasures which nobody knows, When some dear form we press in a loving caress, And ripe lips meet ours, darling, under the rose.

Give me then this bud which is secrecy's sign; To the world may it never unclose, My friends may be few, be they charming as you, And I'll love them, sweet, under the rose.