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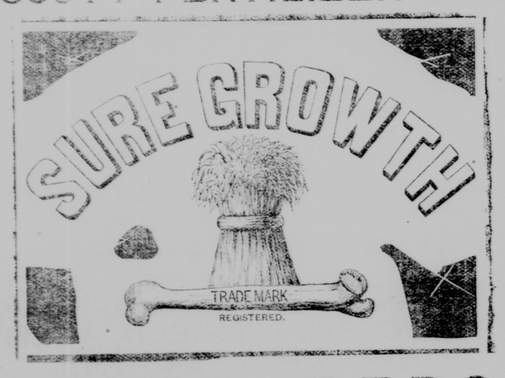

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NATURE VERSUS ART.

I know this hyar rhyme ain't perfect,
But rhyme he darned—'tis the song!
The bird doesn't measure its music
That warbles the whole day long.
Nor them stars up thar in squares don't shine,
Nor them spring green trees don't grow
A-followin one the other
Like a city tenement row!
The flowers o' fields cre big an small,
An they don't grow in circles, dear;
They may do so in them hothouse beds,
But I'm writin o' Nature here.

I ain't got much use for dogmas,
Creeds, nor schools, nor things,
My church is the plain. It's done the sky,
An my preacher th' bird that sings.
I see a Something in every cloud,
An twig, an brook, an flower;
An I reckon I know what's right an wrong
By the workin o' thet thar Power
Thet colors the leaves an sends the rain,
The cyclone an the sun,
An somethin 'thin here tells me
Thet I'm part o' thet great big One!

No! I ain't got much use for purty tunes,
Sich as writers rhyme down here,
But my soul jist loves thet music
Thet thrills from sphere to sphere!
I reckon your ears can't hear it,
For it pulsates in your soul,
But it takes a poet to feel it,
Coz his heart's part o' the Whole!

Now some don't like Walt Whitman—
His mention makes 'em rile,
Jist coz he dared to tell the truth,
Without earin much for style.
He pictured the world jist as it was—
Truth an facts an like—
An he didn't a-try to fix things up
To suit the critics' eyes.

But ain't the mud fleck jist as real
Ez the petal soft an fine?
An ain't the body ez real, too,
Thet holds this soul o' mine?
Thet's the reason I love Walt Whitman,
Jist coz he saw the whole—
The beauty o' outward symbols
Ez well as the inward soul.
He loved the man with toil browned hands,
He hadn't much use for a king;
He wuz a democrat thet loved mankind,
An thet's what made him sing.
He wrote jist like old Natur' is,
Without much dudish grace,
For he modeled his style on Natur's
Rough an wild, sweet face.

Like him I'll write ez I see fit,
An jist follor my own soul's light,
Then your gold pencil critters may go to grass,
Coz I know I'm doin what's right!

—Fitzgerald Murphy in Tacoma (Wash.) Ledger.

BOUM-BOUM.

The child was lying stretched out in his little white bed, and his eyes, grown large through fever, looked straight before him, always with the strange fixity of the sick who already perceive what the living do not see.

The mother at the foot of the bed, torn by suffering and wringing her hands to keep herself from crying, anxiously followed the progress of the disease on the poor emaciated face of the little being. The father, an honest workman, kept back the tears which burned his eyelids.

The day broke clear and mild, a beautiful morning in June, and lighted up the narrow room in the street of the Abessess where little Francois, the child of Jacques and Madeleine Legrand, lay dying. He was seven years old and was very fair, very rosy and so lively. Not three weeks ago he was as gay as a sparrow; but a fever had seized him and they had brought him home one evening from the public school with his head heavy and his hands very hot. From that time he had been here in this bed, and sometimes in his delirium when he looked at his well blacked shoes, which his mother had placed in a corner on a board, he said:

"You can throw them away now, little Francois' shoes! Little Francois will not put them on any more! Little Francois will not go to school any more—never, never!"

Then the father cried out and said, "Wilt thou be still?" And the mother, very pale, buried her blond head in his pillow, so that little Francois could not hear her weep.

This night the child had not been delirious, but for the two days past the doctor had been uneasy over an odd sort of prostration, which resembled abandon; it was as if at seven years the sick one already felt the weariness of life. He was tired, silent, sad and tossed his little head about on the bolster. He had no longer a smile on his poor thin lips, and with haggard eye he sought, seeing they knew not what, something there beyond, very far off.

"In heaven! Perhaps!" thought Madeleine, trembling.

When they wished him to take some medicine, some sirup or a little soup he refused. He refused everything.

"Dost thou wish anything, Francois?"

"No, I wish nothing!"

"We must draw him out of this," the doctor said. "This torpor frightens me. You are the father and mother; you know your child well. Seek for something to reanimate this little body; recall to earth this spirit which runs after the clouds!"

Then he went away.

"Seek!"

Yes, without doubt they knew him well, their Francois, these worthy people. They knew how it amused him, the little one, to plunder the hedges on Sunday and to come back to Paris on his father's shoulders laden with hawthorn. Jacques Legrand had bought some images, some gilded soldiers and some Chinese shadows for Francois. He cut them out, put them on the child's bed and made them dance before the bewildered eyes of the little one, and with a desire to weep himself he tried to make him laugh.

"Dost thou see; it is the broken bridge. Tire, tire, tire! And this is the general! Thou rememberest we saw one, a general, once in the Bois de Boulogne? If thou takest the medicine well I will buy thee a real one with a cloth tunic and gold epaulets. Dost thou wish for him, the general, say?"

"No," replied the child, with the dry voice which fever gives.

"Dost thou wish a pistol, some marbles—a crossbow?"

"No," repeated the little voice, clearly and almost cruelly.

And to all that they said to him, to all the jumping jacks, to all the balloons that they promised him, the little voice—while the parents looked at each other in despair—responded: "No," "No," "No!"

"But what dost thou wish, my Francois?" asked the mother. "Let us see; there is certainly something thou wouldst like to have. Tell it, tell it me! to me, thy mother!" And she laid her cheek on the pillow of the sick boy and whispered this softly in his ear as if it was a secret. Then the child, with an odd accent, straightening himself up in his bed and stretching out his hand eagerly toward some invisible thing, replied suddenly in an ardent tone, at the same time supplicating and imperative.

"I want Boum-Boum!"

Boum-Boum!

Poor Madeleine threw a frightened look toward her husband. What did the little one say? Was it the delirium, the frightful delirium, which had come back again?

Boum-Boum!

She did not know what that meant, and she was afraid of these singular words which the child repeated with a sickly persistence, as if, not having dared until now to formulate his dream, he grasped the present time with invincible obstinacy.

"Yes, Boum-Boum! Boum-Boum! I want Boum-Boum!"

The mother had seized Jacques' hand and spoke very low, as if demented.

"What does that mean, Jacques? He is lost!"

But the father had on his rough, workingman's face a smile almost happy, but astonished, too; the smile of a condemned man who foresees a possibility of liberty.

Boum-Boum! He remembered well the morning of Easter Monday when he had taken Francois to the circus. He had still in his ears the child's outbursts of joy, the happy laugh of the amused boy, when the clown, the beautiful clown all spangled with gold and with a great gilded butterfly sparkling, many colored, on the back of his black costume, skipped across the track, gave the trip to a rider or held himself motionless and stiff on the sand, his head down and his feet in the air. Or again he tossed up to the chandelier some soft, felt hats which he caught adroitly on his head, where they formed, one by one, a pyramid; and at each jest, like a refrain brightening up his intelligent and droll face, he uttered the same cry, repeated the same word, accompanied now and then by a burst from the orchestra, Boum-Boum!

Boum-Boum! and each time that it rang out, Boum-Boum, the audience burst out into hurrahs and the little one joined in with his hearty little laugh. Boum-Boum! It was this Boum-Boum, it was the clown of the circus, it was this favorite of a large part of the city that little Francois wished to see and to have and whom he could not have and could not see, since he was lying here without strength in his white bed.

In the evening Jacques Legrand brought the child a jointed clown, all stitched with spangles, which he had bought in a passageway and which was very expensive. It was the price of four of his working days! But he would have given twenty, thirty, he would have given the price of a year's labor to bring back a smile to the pale lips of the sick child.

The child looked at the plaything a moment as it glistened on the white cover of the bed, then said sadly:

"It is not Boum-Boum! I want to see Boum-Boum!"

Ah! if Jacques could have wrapped him up in his blankets, could have carried him to the circus, could have shown him the clown dancing under the lighted chandelier and have said to him, Look! He did better, Jacques, he went to the circus, demanded the address of the clown, and timidly, his legs shaking with fear, he climbed, one by one, the steps which led to the apartment of the artist at Montmartre. It was very bold this that Jacques was going to do. But after all the comedians go to sing and recite their monologues in drawing rooms, at the houses of the great lords. Perhaps the clown—oh, if he only would—would consent to come and say goodby to Francois. No matter, how would they receive him, Jacques Legrand here at Boum-Boum's house?

He was no longer Boum-Boum! He was M. Moreno, and, in the artistic dwelling, the books, the engravings, the elegance was like a choice decoration around the charming man who received Jacques in his office like that of a doctor.

Jacques looked, but did not recognize the clown, and turned and twisted his felt hat between his fingers. The other waited. Then the father excused himself. "It was astonishing what he came there to ask; it could not be pardon, excuse. But, in short, it was concerning the little one. A nice little one, monsieur. And so intelligent! Always the first at school, except in arithmetic, which he did not understand. A dreamer, this little one, do you see? Yes, a dreamer. And the proof, wait, the proof."

Jacques now hesitated, stammered; but he gathered up his courage and said brusquely:

"The proof is that he wishes to see you, that he thinks only of you, and that you are there before him like a star which he would like to have and that he looks"——

When he had finished, the father was deadly pale, and he had great drops on his forehead. He dared not look at the clown who remained with his eyes fixed on the workman. And what was he going to say, this Boum-Boum? Was he going to dismiss him, take him for a fool and put him out the door?

"You live?"

"Oh, very near! Street of the Abessess."

"Come!" said the other. "Your boy wants to see Boum-Boum? Ah, well he is going to see Boum-Boum."

* * * * * *

When the door opened and showed the clown, Jacques Legrand cried out joyfully to his son:

"Francois, be happy, child! See, here he is, Boum-Boum!"

A look of great joy came over the child's face. He raised himself on his mother's arm and turned his head toward the two men who approached, questioning, for a moment, who it was by the side of his father—this gentleman in an over coat, whose good, pleasant face he did not know.

When they said to him, "it is Boum-Boum!" he slowly fell back on the pillow and remained there, his eyes fixed, his beautiful large, blue eyes which looked beyond the walls of the little room and were always seeking the spangles and the butterfly of Boum-Boum, like a lover who pursues his dream.

"No," replied the child with a voice which was no longer dry, but full of despair, "no, it is not Boum-Boum."

The clown, standing near the little bed, threw upon the child an earnest look, very grave, but of an inexpressible sweetness.

He shook his head, looked at the anxious father, the grief stricken mother, and said, smiling, "He is right, this is not Boum-Boum!" and then he went out.

"I cannot see him, I will never see Boum-Boum any more!" repeated the child whose little voice spoke to the angels. "Boum-Boum is perhaps there, there, where little Francois will soon go."

And suddenly—it was only half an hour since the clown had disappeared—the door opened quickly and in his black, spangled clothes, his yellow cap on his head, the gilded butterfly on his breast and on his back, with a smile as big as the mouth of a money box and a powdered face, Boum-Boum, the true Boum-Boum, the Boum-Boum of the circus, the Boum-Boum of the popular neighborhood, the Boum-Boum of little Francois—Boum-Boum appeared.

Lying on his little white bed the child clapped his thin little hands, laughing, crying, happy, saved, with a joy of life in his eyes, and cried "bravo" with his seven-year gayety which all at once kindled up like a match.

"Boum-Boum! It is he, it is he, this time! Here is Boum-Boum! Long live Boum-Boum! Good day Boum-Boum."

And when the doctor came back he found seated by little Francois' bedside a clown with a pale face who made the little one laugh again and again, and who said to the child while he was stirring a piece of sugar into a cup of medicine:

"Thou knowest if thou dost not drink, little Francois, Boum-Boum will not come back any more."

So the child drank.

"Is it not good?"

"Very good! Thanks, Boum-Boum!"

"Doctor," said the clown to the doctor, "do not be jealous. It seems to me that my grimaces will do him as much good as your prescriptions!"

The father and mother wept, but this time from joy.

Until little Francois was on his feet again a carriage stopped every day before the dwelling of a workman in the street of the Abessess, at Montmartre, and a man got out with a gay powdered face, enveloped in an overcoat with the collar turned back, and underneath it one could see a clown's costume.

"What do I owe you, monsieur?" said Jacques at last to the master clown when the child took his first walk, "for now I owe you something."

The clown stretched out his two soft, herculean hands to the parents.

"A shake of the hand!" said he.

Then placing two great kisses on the once more rosy cheeks of the child:

"And," laughing, "permission to put on my visiting card:

"BOUM-BOUM,
ACROBATIC DOCTOR AND PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO LITTLE FRANCOIS."

—Translated from the French of Jules Claretie for Yankee Blade by Mary Stuart Symonds.

A General Falling.

It is rather unpleasant to hear a public speaker remark, "My friends—ur—I wish to say a few words—ur—on this occasion—ur." But then it should be remembered that to ur is human.—Boston Transcript.

Search the Scriptures.

The cruel Herod gives orders to the wise men to search diligently for the young child he is bent on destroying. But the loving "child," saved of God to be at last a sacrifice and redeemer, teaches the best and most profitable kind of search which can be known. To know and fear the Lord is the only saving knowledge there is. The kind of which Solomon says, "if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." And Jesus Christ goes further, telling where the best, most needed knowledge can be found in saying, "Search the scriptures."—Christian at Work.

Christianity Is Life.

Christianity is more than a belief: it is a life. It furnishes not only truths to be believed, but things to be done, and the doing of them is by no means a secondary consideration. The truth which we believe is to be exemplified in our life. The life that we live is to be "by the faith of the Son of God," who hath loved us and given himself for us.—New York Observer.

What We Need.

The harder our work, the more we need solitude and prayer, without which work becomes mechanical and insincere. —McLaren.

Many a Christian has ruined his influence with the unconverted by descending to coarse, silly jokes.—New York Observer.

THE STRAWS WE DRINK THROUGH.

How They Come Into Use and How They Are Obtained.

He was a man with a mind for details, and the straws through which he was absorbing a mint julep attracted his attention.

"Where do you get them?" he asked of the barkeeper, indicating the little yellow tubes.

"Buy 'em from peddlers," replied the mixer of drinks.

"And where do the peddlers get them?"

"Damno. Never asked 'em. What's yours, sir?" and the barkeeper turned to a company of newcomers, who didn't ask fool questions about things that could not possibly help swell the receipts.

But the man with the mind for details had also more than the average amount of persistence. Having therefore determined to find out where the julep straws came from he went to work on the problem with the most commendable industry, and after several days spent in investigation he learned all about them from the head of an importing house in Barclay street. This gentleman told him that the straws had been in use only about thirty-five or forty years.

Previous to that time people who drank juleps, lemonades and other similar mixtures, either took them as best they could directly from the glass or employed little glass tubes which were kept for the purpose. But those who have attempted it can testify to the unsatisfactory results of trying to drink out of a glass filled with a promiscuous assortment of ice, lemons, strawberries, etc., and the glass tubes acted as a damper on drinkers who had advanced ideas on cleanliness.

In this emergency an ingenious Yankee arose, as ingenious Yankees always do, and came to the rescue with the straws of today. It occurred to this Yankee that there was a great deal of waste in the rye straw that was raised at the time in northern New York and Massachusetts for braiding. The thick ends of the straw were useless in making braids, and were invariably thrown away. As an experiment a lot of these ends were handled and sent to the market for bar purposes. Their success was immediate.

When the raising of rye straw for braiding purposes died out in this country because the grain crop was found to be more valuable than the straw, the supply of julep straws of course went with the other industry. The saloon men thereupon turned to Switzerland, where straw braiding is one of the chief pursuits of the peasants, and subsequently to England. The chief source of supply is now found in the latter country.

The straws are cut green before the grain matures and bleached with sulphur. They pass from the hands of the producers to the control of London commission houses, from which they are bought by importers in this city and Philadelphia. It is said that there are not more than four houses in the trade, the straws being generally handled by firms engaged in the importation of china and glassware. The straws are put up in bundles of 500 fastened together with rubber bands. Forty dozens of these bundles are packed in a case, and in this shape they reach the United States.

None of the straws, according to the local importers, are used abroad for drinking purposes, and none are produced here to speak of. The straws sell at retail for twenty-five cents per bundle of 500. They are purchased from the importers by dealers in bar furnishings and peddlers, the latter of whom take them around at regular intervals to the saloons on their "route."—New York Times.

Oils for Lubricating Purposes.

Experiments have been made with a view to determine what fixed oils are best adapted for mixing the mineral oils for lubricating purposes. The results were as follows: Iron is least affected by seal oil and most by tallow oil. Lead is least affected by olive oil and most by whale oil; whale, lard and sperm oils all act to very near the same extent on lead. Brass is not affected by rape oil, least by seal oil and most by olive oil.

Tin is not affected by rape oil, least by olive oil and most by cottonseed oil. Zinc seems not to be acted upon by mineral lubricating oil, least by lard oil and most by sperm oil. Copper is not affected by mineral lubricating oil, least by lard oil and most by tallow oil. From these results it will be seen that mineral lubricating oil has, on the whole, the least action on the metals employed in the experiments—sperm oil the most.—Age of Steel.

Cheap Sermons in Wales.

In Wales sermons are too cheap. The preachers are an underpaid class. The very best known ministers in Wales will deliver five or six sermons for ten pounds. From this sum traveling expenses must be deducted. Under these circumstances ministers might well retaliate by preaching short sermons. But unfortunately Welshmen expect a long sermon—and they get it.—Liverpool Mercury.

She Still Lectures.

Mr. Tile—Your wife used to lecture before she was married; has she given it up now?

Mr. Milds—Well—er—yes; that is, in public.—Exchange.

Points to Consider.

Many obscure passages in the Bible are cleared up the moment you get acquainted with its author.

The best preacher is the one who comes the closest to living his own preaching.

Talk about conversion to the sinners and about entire sanctification to believers.

Divine consolation is so exceedingly precious as not to admit of a rival in our hearts.

THE HAPPINESS OF GIVING.

How the Charitable Shoemaker Was Visited by Our Saviour.

Martin again took up his work and began to stitch. After working some little time he saw that it was growing dark and he could no longer see to sew. Looking through the window he saw a lamplighter pass by. "Well," he thought to himself, "it is time for me to have a light." He arose, and after trimming his lamp and lighting it he hung it up and again prepared to work.

Presently he put his tools away and brushed up the scraps, after which he placed the lamp on the table. He next took down the holy book from the shelf. He intended opening it at a place which he had marked with a piece of leather, but on placing the book on the table it opened at an entirely different place, and as he did so he remembered yesterday's dream. At the same time he heard a noise in the room, as if some one was moving behind him. He turned suddenly around and fancied he saw a number of people standing in the corner, but he was unable to recognize them. Presently a voice whispered:

"Martin; ah, Martin, did you not know me?"

"Whom?" muttered Martin.

"Me," repeated the voice. "It is I," said Stepanovitch (whom he had fed), smiling pleasantly as he advanced from the dark corner, and then like a cloud he vanished.

"And this is I," said another voice, when the woman with her child (whom he had succored) stepped forth. The woman also smiled, while the infant laughed gleefully, and they, too, quickly disappeared.

"And here we are," said a third voice, when both the old woman and the boy, with an apple in his hand, came forward. They also smiled, and instantly faded away.

Martin was now almost overcome with a feeling of joy, more sweet than he had ever before experienced. He began to read the following passage at which the Bible had accidentally opened:

"For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; and I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

And Martin understood that his dream had been realized, and that the Saviour had in very truth visited him that day, and that he had received him in the proper spirit.—Translated from the Russian of Count Tolstoi.

He Found Heaven.

A minister one day preached on heaven. Next morning he was going down town, and he met one of his old wealthy members. The brother stopped the preacher and said:

"Pastor, you preached a good sermon about heaven. You told me all about heaven, but you never told me where heaven is."

"Ah!" said the pastor, "I am glad of an opportunity this morning. I have just come from the hilltop yonder. In that cottage there is a member of your church. She is sick in bed with fever, her two little children are sick in the other bed, and she has not got a bit of coal nor a stick of wood, nor flour, nor sugar, nor any bread. If you will go down town and buy five dollars' worth of things—nice provisions—and send them up to her, and then go up there and say: 'My sister, I have brought you these nice provisions in the name of our Lord and Saviour,' then ask for a Bible and read the Twenty-third Psalm, and then get down on your knees and pray—if you don't see heaven before you get all through I'll pay the bill." The next morning he said, "Pastor, I saw heaven, and I spent fifteen minutes in heaven as certainly as you are listening."—Christian Inquirer.

God's Grandest Luxury.

We make a great ado about our hardships, but how little we talk of our blessings. Health of body, which is given in largest quantity to those who have never been petted or fondled and spoiled by fortune, we take as a matter of course. Rather have this luxury, and have it alone, than without it look out from a palace window upon parks of deer stalking between fountains and statuary. These people sleep sounder on a straw mattress than fashionable invalids on a couch of ivory and eagles' down. The dinner of herbs tastes better to the appetite sharpened on a woodman's ax or a reaper's scythe than wealthy indigestion experiences, seated at a table covered with partridge and venison and pineapple. The grandest luxury God ever gave man is health. He who trades that off for all the palaces of the earth is infinitely cheated. We look back at the glory of the last Napoleon, but who would have taken his Versailles and his Tuileries if with them we had been obliged to take his gout?—Dr. Talmage in Christian Herald.

His Best Protector.

I have often seen a little child following his parent in the fields and stooping now and then to gather a few flowers. He looks up and sees him at a distance; the little creature runs and gets up to him again, afraid he should be left far away. Thus the Christian, while gathering a few flowers from the world, suffers his God to be often at a distance from him, but the moment he perceives that he is alone he runs to reach again his father, friend and best protector.—Rowland Hill.

No Good Deed Wasted.

No good deed, no genuine sacrifice, is ever wasted. If there be good in it God will use it for his own holy purposes, and whatever of ignorance or weakness or mistake was mingled with it will drop away as the withered sepals drop away when the full flower has blown.—Farrar.

The Lichen.

Unfling, fling, firm upon the wrinkled rock
The lichen clings, the skies be void of ruth;
If thou wouldst meet unscathed life's warfare shock,
Thus must thou cling to truth!

—Clinton Scollard in Independent.

Nothing Against Christ.

Men have much to say against our creeds, and against our interpretations of the Bible, and against our imperfect churches and very imperfect ministers and members, but they can have nothing to say against our Christ.—Independent.

Grains of Wisdom.

God's side of every question is the side the devil doesn't want us to take.

The water of life is free, but it costs something for the pitcher.