

A Sonnet

When, like the coming of the silent dawn,
After a night of lonely wandering
And sad perplexity, the years shall bring
A surer strength to me, to follow on
The paths of high nobility; when gone
From me are all the fears and trials of youth,
And, with new hope, I ponder on the truth
Of that which is, and that which lies beyond:
I can not think that all will yet be well;
I can not think but that I still shall sigh,
Remembering then old pleasures that are fled:
A song that can no longer weave its spell
About my soul; a twice-told tale that I
No longer love; a friendship that is dead.

—*R. B. D.*

Catching A Thief

The farmers in the little village of Capenne were in a state of perplexity that speedily grew into consternation when with their years of experience, the older members of the community had spent fruitless hours in seeking to solve the recent and mysterious disappearance of a great number of their sheep. These sages indeed with many a solemn shake of the head declared their misgivings as to the opinion of several that the thief was a bear or some such animal, but were inclined rather to attribute the ravages to some supernatural being. This latest theory, almost as soon as delivered, was absorbed by the people and spread a gloom over the entire village. It was whispered among the schoolboys, talked of in low nervous tones by the elders and became the chief topic of discussion by the women even at the church door on Sunday morning.

It would be a serious omission not to mention the observation which this sex forwarded to help establish this theory. Some had heard strange sounds in the direction of the forest, others had seen weird lights playing among the tall trees where, it was told, an old tyrannical landlord had been killed by a discontented tenant at the time when the island was divided among a few British landowners.

The little corner store now became the forum where the public menace was discussed. Each session was characterized by the bringing in of new evidence and lasted into night. Days lapsed into weeks and the villagers chafed with the suppressed desire of revenge.

One day a farmer who had been chopping wood at the back of his farm came home with a hair-raising story of how he had been pursued and had narrowly escaped capture by an immense and ferocious animal. Hurrying to the little corner store where he was soon surrounded by a group of eager listeners, he told of his narrow escape. "It could not have been anything less than a bear," he declared.

The village was in a ferment of wild excitement. The gloom that had so long lain over it lifted like magic and Joe's incident was destined to let loose all the restrained passions of the community.

The meeting house that night was filled to its capacity. The conversation was at a high pitch of animation and when Joe who maintained an elevated stand in the assemblage submitted once more the story of his adventure, gleams of anger shot from the eyes of each individual. No longer could be distinguished among them the signs of unmanly apprehension for they felt now the realities of their actual condition and were ready to meet it with energy.

The question now arose as to how the monster should be attacked and killed. Everybody remained silent and declined to offer their opinion. At length Mr. La Marc.,

the store-keeper broke the silence.

"Somebody give his opinion, What do you think, Vital."

"I dunno John," answered the old man, "but what do you tink is bettaire you Fidele, trap 'em or shoot 'em?"

"Well, I dunno, dunno, Vital," replied Fidele, "but if I had the doings of him, I'd set a trap and one that would do the trick too, by George, as I followed that business up now for the last thirty yreas."

Mosie Tade, the butcher of the village whose opinion no one had yet consulted, said angrily.

"I don't want to conterdict no man, but better tells us ,Fidele, how a man can trap an animal he doesn't know nothing about. I'll give in I don't know nothing about a gun but if that animal is so fond of meeting people, I'll tell you's no lie men, but leave it to me to stick my weapon in his wooly hide."

"You mean you'd go at a wild beast as you'd slaughter a pig would you?" said Fidele with bitter sarcasm.

"All I said was me own opinion and what I say I'll stick to it," replied Mosie.

"Well, I'm sorry Mosie", said Joe, "as I can't tell ye what sort of brute he was. But gentlemen, ever since I got me breath after the run I had, I studied the matter, and I come to the conclusion, gentlemen, it was too big a problem to risk to one man. Yes, we've been all concerned in this matter and we should every one of us take a hand in it."

Of this proposal nearly everybody approved. Joe was so convincing that finally it was resolved to organize a hunting expedition for the next day. Accordingly a place was appointed and a date set for the muster.

The next morning the whole countryside responded to the call for arms and a score or more of fiercely determined faces boded ill for the unlucky intruder. There

was no lack of weapons. Some grasped long pitch-forks; others wielded murderous looking axes; while, with heads held high three or four marched along carrying ancient muskets. With eyes agleam with the lust of coming conflict, the warlike contingent set out for the woods.

When they had arrived at the edge of the forest they halted to determine their plan of advance. At this point the eager, determined and impetuous character of these men suddenly gave way to feelings of the noblest generosity. The first proposal, to move in separate parties, they instantly rejected. The idea of separating from their comrades who eventually might be in distress went against their hearts. Not one of them would think of accepting first place in the ranks, unwilling to possess the undue advantage of striking the first blow at the enemy.

However, after parleying, a suggestion worthy of a Napoleon was advanced: that the musketeers form the first line, since their weapons were best fitted for fighting at long range; that the men of the pitch-forks form the second; while the axe-men should bring up the rear.

The wood was still with the silence of early autumn. The crackling of every twig sounded painfully loud in the ears of the hunters who had begun to picture the crouching beast springing in the midst of them. They strained their eyes to pierce the tree-tops, then cast them back to the ground, examining each shrub and bush.

Suddenly several recalled that they had an important business to attend to at home and an engagement of the utmost importance to meet. They therefore justly begged leave to withdraw. One of the company, however, had brought with him a jar of that famous jang-jang. The jar was passed around. The beverage strengthened their spirits. By its effects their zeal was kindled anew, the desire of revenge returned fresh to their minds again