BEING INSPECTED

By HENRY C. WILLING

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In college we were divided into good, indifferently good and bad. I regret to say that I was of the third class—bad. The badness in college boys is usually but a superfluity of health, youth and spirits, and when I look back upon myself at that period I see simply a boy passing into manhood.

As soon as I was graduated I sought the freedom of the wild west. Ranching was my vocation and cowboys were my associates. The only thing that I can remember creditable to myself while a rancher was falling in love with Eleanor Warfield, a visitor at a neighboring ranch. This occurred during my first year in the west and some time before I had been transformed from the grub, youth, into the superior being, man. Miss Warfield returned my proffered affection and consented to be my wife, but on one condition. I must be approved by her uncle. He was rich, and, being a bachelor, she was to be his heir. Nevertheless she was sure that if she married a man displeasing to him he would leave his property elsewhere.

My fiancee, having finished her visit, left for the east. She was to announce her engagement to her uncle and create as favorable an impression with regard to me as possible. Then, the way having been made smooth, I was to go east myself and present myself for inspection.

Miss Warfield wrote me some time after her arrival that she had informed her uncle of her engagement. She was not overhopeful in the matter, for he had asked a number of questions as to my antecedents which she knew very well would not please a critical old gentleman who had never sown his wild oats and whose ideas of a husband for his niece inclined to the clerical profession. What troubled Eleanor was that he asked at what college I had studied, and from my career at the university is I had frankly given it to her she was quite sure he would hear no good of me. She was agreeably disappointed in this, however, for the faculty spoke very well of me, a circumstance which surprised me and led me to believe that these gentlemen consider unmeritorious students more needful of encomiums than those who are meritorious. At any rate, I have found them far more lenient to my faults as a graduate than they were to me as a student.

When the time came for my inspection I wrote my fiancee, giving her the day and train on which I would arrive. On the way I fell in with an old gentleman who was the only person on the train I cared to talk to and whom I engaged in conversation. He was one of those men who have more sympathy with young people than those of their own age. He talked horse, and I was delighted to talk horse with him. He smoked to excess and drank whenever it pleased him to do so. We hadn't been together half an hour before he brought out a flask, cigars and cards. I was not personally averse to any one of the three and preferred them together. Having imbibed and lighted weeds, we proceeded to play. I found the gentleman the best euchre player I had ever met. Possibly my reason for so considering him was because before we reached our destination he had taken out of me all the money I had brought with me for expenses.

"Well," I said, "I'm cleaned out."

"Come to my bank tomorrow morning," he said, "and I'll cash a draft for you."

Since I needed money from the start, the first thing I did after my arrival was to call at the old gentleman's bank. I found him a very different person there from the man with whom I had traveled. He was dignity itself. He cashed my draft without the slightest reference to the manner in which we had whiled away the time on the train, asked a few civil questions and dismissed me with the remark that this was his busy day.

I felt a trifle groggy, and I feared I looked groggy. Therefore I took a long nap, deferring my call on my fiancee till evening. I was anxious to see Eleanor, but I hated to present a dissipated appearance to her uncle.

At 4 o'clock I took a Turkish bath, dined, and at 8, quite freshened, I rang the doorbell at the Warfields. Eleanor received me lovingly, of course, and told me that the account the professors had given of me at college had made her quite hopeful. After chatting for some time she led me into the library to be inspected. An old gentleman rose from an easy chair, and—well, I was appalled.

He was my fellow traveler.

He told me to sit down. Then he said that instead of making the inspection of me in his home he had gone west for the purpose of seeing what I really was by taking me off my guard. He was very well satisfied with me and considered me a much better man than I had been represented by the professors under whom I had studied, "or, rather, had not studied," he added.

"What did they say of me?" I asked.

"The reputation you left at college was far better than the one I left myself. I don't belong to a studious family myself, and I doubt if you do. I discovered on our trip that you are honorable, your impulses are good and you will turn out all right."

POWER OF AN AUDIENCE.

Influence It Exerts Over an Actor or a Speaker.

No orator living was ever great enough to give out the same power and force and magnetism to an empty hall, to empty seats, that he could give to an audience capable of being fired by his theme.

In the presence of the audience lies a fascination, an indefinable magnetism, that stimulates all the mental faculties and acts as a tonic and vitalizer. An orator can say before an audience what he could not possibly have said previous to going on the platform, just as we can often say to a friend in animated conversation things which we could not possibly say when alone. As when two chemicals are united a new substance is formed from the combination which did not exist in either alone, the speaker feels surging through his brain the combined force of his audience, which he calls inspiration, a mighty power which did not exist in his own personality before he rose to his feet. No public speaker ever forgets that first surprising feeling of confidence.

Actors tell us that there is an indescribable inspiration which comes from the orchestra, the footlights, the audience, which it is impossible to feel at a cold mechanical rehearsal. There is something in a great sea of expectant faces which awakens the ambition and arouses the reserve of power which can never be felt except before an audience. The power was there just the same before, but it was not aroused.—Success Magazine.

A SOLEMN MOMENT.

When the Great Mail Steamer Was Stopped in Midocean.

The great steamship wavered; the screw revolved more slowly and gradually ceased to turn. There is something uncannily disquieting about an unmoving ship in the middle of the ocean, and for a few moments there were fearsome rumors among the second and third cabin passengers. The steerage, being nearer to the heart of things, understood what was going on.

The deck stewards went about explaining, and as they explained the passengers moved to points of vantage. Then all was very quiet—quiet even for the sea.

A man whom the first cabin passengers knew to be a famous bishop stepped down from among them. A heavy, clumsy, grewsome bundle was brought up. Over it the bishop, with bared and reverent head, intoned the service for those who are buried at sea. As the bishop spoke the words of committal, "We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, when the sea shall give up its dead," a door in the bulwarks was lifted for the bundle and let down again, the ship began to move, sluggishly at first, then smoothly as was its wont, and the passengers went back to their games, their books and their lovemaking.

The greatest event in the dead stokar's career was over. He had stopped his majesty's mail.—Exchange.

The Eskimos and the Bible.

Frank Cross, a missionary among the Eskimos, has found considerable difficulty in using the illustration of the Bible in arctic regions. He gives two amusing anecdotes to bear out his statements. First, how his Eskimo interpreter translated a well known text into the following: "Every log that bringeth not up good 'appik' is cut up and used for firewood," "appik" being the Eskimo for dried apples and the nearest thing to fruit that they know. Again, of law, justice and government they have not the remotest notion. Mr. Cross' nearest neighbor had hundreds of dollars' worth of furs deposited in a cache. Wishing to preach on "Where Thieves Break Through and Steal," the interpreter gave up his attempt at translation, for he said such a thing was impossible among them.—T. P.'s London Weekly.

Disqualified.

One west side woman who thought herself an ardent suffragist was surprised to learn that other members of the sisterhood did not share her opinion.

"Why do you doubt my devotion to the cause?" she asked. "What have I done to make you think me less earnest than the rest of you women?"

Their answer was a letter which she had written to headquarters the day before.

"You wrote on your husband's stationery," they said. "No suffragist who is worth her salt will write a personal letter under her husband's letterheads."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Catastrophe.

"Did you hear about the catastrophe down at the Browns' last night?"

"No. What happened?"

"Why, Mrs. Brown gave the baby a bottle to play with, and while she was in the kitchen it fell out of the crib and broke its neck."

"What, the baby?"

"No; the bottle."

Not Just What She Meant.

A little community of colored people had raised the money to build a new church, and the dedication was to take place the next day. "Where are you going tomorrow?" the schoolteacher asked one young girl. Smiling radiantly, she answered, "I's going to the degradation of our church!"

Mamma's Joke.

"Oh, mamma, the hen is sitting on the vacuum cleaner!"

"Perhaps she's only trying to lay the dust, dear."—Yonkers Statesman.

A Souvenir From the Dead

By EDWARD BUCKMAN

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I am one of the old maids who became such by the civil war. An old woman with no hair on my head save what is white as snow, I have passed half a century alone, yet not alone, for once I have seen him.

He was killed in one of the battles around Richmond during McClellan's advance upon that city. A year before he had marched away with the soldier boys of '61—how young they seem to have been now and how strange that those who live are becoming tottering old men and that the boys' mothers and the girls who loved them could send them out to die!—he had gone down into Virginia, carrying my heart with him. He had fallen and been thrown into a trench, and then for the first time I wondered that I could have consented to his going.

No one has ever taken his place. I have lived as though we were one, he in the heavenly, I in the earthly sphere. For many years I wished to go down to Virginia and visit the spot where he died, and yet I dreaded to do so. It was not till the beginning of this century that I could make up my mind to do so.

I went to Richmond and visited the residence of the president of the Confederacy, which is now a museum. There I saw the arms and uniforms of Confederate heroes. But what took me nearer to the conflict of years before was a southern lady who told me how when a girl she had listened to the distant booming, gaining hope when it receded and losing courage when it drew nearer. From there I went to the battlefield.

I went alone. The battle in which he was taken from me is called Seven Pines. Why it is called Seven Pines I know not. There are thousands of pines there now, but I believe they have all grown up since the battle. It was fought in a cornfield. But it has not been tilled since that day in 1862, and the trees have had ample time to grow.

I found a long line of low earthworks that was thrown up by McClellan's army, behind which to resist the Confederates buried against it by General Lee. Forty years had passed over these works, during which the pines had grown up as if to shield the dead and the trenches beneath them, in which so many soldiers' bodies were thrown. Walking on the line of earthworks, every now and again I came to a redoubt, where stood cannon, and there beneath were the ruts made by the gun carriages.

Before going on to the field I had been told that I should have a guide. I declined to take one or to go with a party who were conducted by one. I went alone. It was late in the afternoon, and most of the visitors were coming away. It seemed to me a sacrilege to listen to the story from a human voice told so eloquently by those intrenchments, the rises here and there in the ground over the dead, the waving pines, which with every breeze sighed a requiem. And I wished to be where my boy lover had fallen without any one to jar upon me.

So I lingered till every one else had gone, sitting alone on the rampart, looking out upon the trees that obstructed further view. They were not there on that terrible day of '62. As I looked they seemed to dissolve and their place to be taken by waving grain. I saw a long brown line advancing, heard the word of command among them and the louder word of those preparing to resist them.

Whether a change that came over me was in the day or in the night, whether it was in me or in my surroundings, whether I saw what it seemed to see or it was a half conscious dream, I know not. But I was back in '62, and it seemed as if the wrath of heaven had come upon the earth.

The thunder ceased. The light was from scattered campfires. The sounds were the chatting of burial parties and the falling clods, with occasional volleys fired over the dead.

Suddenly I felt a touch on my shoulder. I looked up, and there was my soldier lover. Could this be he whom I had looked upon as a man? Why, he was but a boy—not a sign of a beard on his face. It was round and full, while in my head were many gray hairs and my face was wrinkled. One moment he stood looking down at me. I reached out for his hand, but before I could clasp it he had faded away.

When I came to myself the morning sun was shining down through the pines. I was lying on my back on the rampart, looking up at a patch of sky between the branches. It was blue and beautiful, with scattered white clouds sailing peacefully over it.

I was filled with consolation at having passed a night out on that battlefield of forty years agone. I raised myself with difficulty. My eye caught something mingling with the earth. It was a worn silver ten cent piece. I took it up, rubbed the dirt from it and on it traced with difficulty three letters—M. E. I.

I had forgotten that the night before he marched I had given him a new ten cent piece on which he had scratched my initials.

Is it anything to me whether or no my story is believed, whether I dreamed, whether where so many souvenirs of soldiers have been picked up it is to be wondered that I should have found one with my initials on it? In my own mind there is no doubt.

TESTING AN OCTOPUS.

The Power of This Repulsive Creature Much Overrated.

There have been made abroad experiments with an octopus, in a specially devised tank of sea water, in order to test the truth of the many stories told of monster cephalopods dragging human victims to the sea bottom, says Harper's Weekly.

In the tank with the octopus there was placed a "dummy" of the same specific gravity as a man, and this was baited with a crab. Attracted by this tempting morsel, the octopus made for the figure, seized it in its powerful arms and tried to drag it under water without success. It then urged its body toward the edge of the tank, and, holding the glass with some of its arms, it dragged its prey beneath the surface and crushed the crab shell with its powerful jaws.

It is believed that these experiments afford proof that the octopus can only drag its victims far below the water near rocks to which it can attach its suckers. There is one spot in the bay of Naples where these creatures attain a large size, and now and then a fisherman is reported missing. It is thought that such disappearances are due to the unfortunate man being caught by the leg by a concealed octopus and dragged under water. In the case of such a repulsive and powerful creature as the octopus it is difficult to separate fact from fiction.

A VACATION IN BED.

Twenty-four Hours' Sleep Versus a Week's Holiday.

If you want to obtain complete rest and recuperation equal to a week's vacation in minimum time sleep the clock around twice is the advice of a physician who holds a high place in medical circles in England.

"To spend twenty-four hours in bed," he said to a friend, "instead of rushing away for a few hours' change of scene when you are run down physically and mentally, is worth a week's holiday. The night before, having gone to a theater to take the mind off worries and having supped wisely and well, instructions should be given that the morning calling shall be omitted.

"Then sleep. On waking turn over and sleep again. On waking again ring for some hot milk. Drink it and sleep again and keep on sleeping. Have nothing in the interrals more substantial than soup. Do not read. Keep the eyes shut constantly. Have a warm bath in the evening and sleep again.

"When you are tired of sleeping sleep again for the night. Nothing calms the nerves more than resting the eyes."—New York Herald.

Remember the Baker.

At the court of assize in Venice when sentence of death is about to be passed a man clothed in a long black robe enters the court and, advancing to the bench, bows profoundly to the judges, saying, "Remember the baker!" Then he bows again and retires. Here is the explanation of the custom: Three centuries ago a baker was executed at Venice for a crime of which he was not guilty. When his innocence was fully proved the judges who condemned him invested a sum of money, the interest on which serves to keep a lamp perpetually lighted in the palace of the doges, this being called the "lamp of expiation." In addition, their fatal mistake has for 300 years been held up as a warning to their successors on the bench when they are about to inflict the extreme penalty of the law.

The Box Tortoise.

Though the tortoise is slow of foot, it is quick to make the best of all its available modes of defense. The box tortoise possesses a singular defensive apparatus. The plastron or shell covering the under part of the body is so formed that its front segment can be drawn upward to protect the animal's head, the head meanwhile being drawn back under the carapace or shell on the back of the tortoise. The upper and under shells then meet in front, forming a kind of box in which the creature is unassailable. When the danger is passed the reptile relaxes a muscle and the raised part of the plastron falls, allowing the head and fore feet to come forth. This movable plate is fastened to the plastron by a strong hinge of elastic ligament.

Circumstances Alter Cases.

When Israel Zangwill was an obscure youth teaching in a Jewish school in London he sent a short poem to a leading American monthly. It came back by an early post. He sent it, and after he had achieved fame as a writer he sent the same poem to the same magazine. This time he received a cable from the editor offering to buy the world rights for 1 year. The poem was the same, word for word.

Different.

"Why, a year ago you told me this place was easily worth $15,000. Now you estimate its value at less than $10,000."

"You must remember that I was trying to sell it to you then. Now you want me to sell it for you."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Adam Was Grouchy.

The Serpent—What's Adam so grouchy about today? The Ape—He says that the arrival of woman means that all his plans for universal peace have been knocked in the head for good.—Puck.

Whatever demands the greatest courage and endurance of most of us most usual more constantly its highest strength.—George W. Bridge.