THE STORY TELLER

A SONG FOR WINTER.

The fields are bleak, the forest bare;
The snowflakes, swirling, fall
Around each tree a winding sheet,
O'er all the fields a pall.

A wide, dead waste, and leaden sky,
Wild winds, and dark and cold!
The river's tongue is frozen thick
With life's sweet tale half-told.

Ah, no! not dead; the white fields sleep;
The frozen rivers flow;
And summer's myriad seed-hearts beat
Within this breast of snow.

The wolf-winds drive the brown leaves on
Like frightened flocks of sheep;
But where the old leaves trembling stood,
The new buds bravely peep.

With spring's first green the holly glows,
And flame of autumn late—
The embers of the summer warm
In winter's roaring grate.

The thrush's song is silent now,
The rill no longer sings;
But loud and long the strong winds strike
Ten million sounding things.

O'er mountains high and prairies far,
Hark, how the paeans roll!—
The lyre is strung 'twixt ocean shores,
And swept from pole to pole.

The songs of birds and streams and leaves,
Of storms and stars and seas,
Upgathered, break, with thunder crash
In winter's symphonies.

—Dallas Lore Sharp, in Youth's Companion.

On the Batture.

By S. Rhett Roman.

WHEN the river came creeping up and driftwood and great tree trunks from the caving banks of the hill region along the upper river, torn up and borne away by the rushing waters of the Atchafalaya and the Red, went by, Delphine always grew anxious.

She would stop singing those sweet, plaintive fishermen songs, brought over long ago from the Normandy coast of France by her grandfather, who told strange and fascinating tales of the "peches a grands cours" he went on when young.

He loved to describe the fishing fleet of the small village, perched high among the cliffs, as it flitted out of the narrow mouth of the harbor steering for the mackerel banks of the North sea to come back six, perhaps eight, months later.

Delphine and the old man were the only occupants of the little dwelling built outside the levee on high stilts, like many others lining the river front along the outskirts of the city.

That of the old Norman fisherman was the largest and most pretentious of those occupied by the queer cosmopolitan population scattered along the batture, and old Jean-Pierre Durant, stern-looking, powerful and taciturn, much-liked and somewhat feared, was considered the most prosperous of all the dwellers of the river settlement.

Delphine had no recollection of any parent but old Pierre.

It was he who had watched over her and taken care of her, and had brought her, when she was old enough, to the Convent of the Sacred Heart to be there educated.

Delphine had wept disconsolate tears when he left her in charge of the pale, sweet-faced mother superior. But how happy those years had been. How she had romped and played in the big shady garden of the old convent, and how pleasant it was in the high-ceiled, quiet classrooms.

How she had loved to sing in the choir of the chapel while the setting sun, through the stained glass windows cast violet and golden and crimson patches on the spotless white floor.

Delphine had to admit to herself, although never to Jean-Pierre, that she greatly missed her light-hearted companions of the convent and the care of the gentle nuns.

Her studies, at first irksome, how absorbingly delighted they became. It had been no effort, Delphine remembered, to win prizes and keep at the head of her classes.

She had more than once wondered why intellectual and wise Mother Agnes would watch her with a troubled gaze and sigh, anxiously, when giving her first honors.

Then she came back to live in the little house on the batture, among the shrimpers and fishermen, the Sicilians and Italians and the shifting, changing population, leading their strange lives along the bend of the river, where a small ferry boat went back and forth and tied up at night at its wharf, when its restless day's work was over.

Two rooms had been added by Jean-Pierre and bright colored awnings shaded the small porch. The boat, moored to a stake when the river was low and to the front step when the tide was gurgling around the piling and among the thick swaying willows around behind, had been repainted when Delphine came back.

There were days when Delphine, in spite of her bright spirit and determination to be cheery for Jean-Pierre's sake, felt a strange fear come over her, and an unconquerable dread of the great rolling yellow tide sweeping down to the gulf and rushing in foaming, murmuring counter currents around the little home, now so pretty, with its boxes of flowers, white curtains and gay awnings, and she felt that some day it would be swept into the tossing current by the hoarse gurgling eddies swirling so cruelly around.

Jean-Pierre, the Norman fisherman, had given up his seafaring life to watch over the baby girl whose loveliness had grown with each added year.

There had been times when Jean-Pierre missed the dash of the salt spume of the North sea in his face, and the roll of its billows under the keel of his boat, and the boat songs of his companions as the fleet sped onward to the fishing grounds.

It was for that reason he had selected the isolated house on the batture, around which the river spread in a foaming sea one day when, leaving the big ocean liner, with his brown-eyed girl in his arm, he walked along the levee, feeling a stranger in a strange land.

It often happened that "Del," as Jean-Pierre lovingly called her, was left alone with old Marie, their one servant, until late hours of the night, sometimes for several days, while Jean-Pierre ran down to the gulf for better fishing, or to work with the oyster goelettes.

In the summer time the willows were bright and green, and the batture animated, and Delphine sang her plaintive Norman songs, read and did pretty work and played on her mandolin, and she and old Marie were contented and happy.

But on this cold, bleak December afternoon, when the swollen tide washed sullenly against the levee, dashed in little wavelets against the steps and rustled the willows sighingly, old Marie took to chanting canticques in a dull monotone, while attending to her household duties, to drown the moaning of the wind, and Delphine, in spite of her books and cheery fire, felt distinctly dull and forlorn—for Jean-Pierre would not come home until the next evening.

On the other side of the river a young man stood impatiently urging a boatman to row him across in a skiff which looked like a child's plaything as it swayed and rocked on the edge of the broad expanse of turbid water.

"Now, look here, I must get over to the city. That boat is all right. Get out your oars and name your price," said Hugh Compton, stepping in and sitting down and taking hold of the tiller.

The man, thus urged, looked up at the sky, pointed to the clouds scurrying over from the north, and with a shake of the head, got in, untied the rope and pushed off.

A gust of wind dashed a handful of rain in Hugh's face, the skiff rode and danced, as the current, catching it in its strong grasp, swept it furiously along, paying very little heed to the vigorous strokes of Ben Barton's long oars.

When well out from the shore Hugh was better able to understand the boatman's reluctance to make the crossing.

It was a wild and tempestuous night, and when the frail boat was fairly in the current of the stream the sweep of the wind was terrific.

Hugh had an engagement to call on a very pretty woman, who was just at that time speculating as to whether or not the increasing storm would keep him away, while adding a few last touches to her elaborate and artistic toilet.

Dorothy Cameron decided that he certainly would come, in spite of the howl of the wind, deadened by the thick walls and heavy curtains, nor was the black gloom of the night at all appreciable, in the brilliantly lit room, for Dorothy Cameron lived in one of the handsomest houses on the avenue.

Yes, there were strong reasons why he should call that evening, Dorothy thought, with a contented smile, while contemplating her rosy, well polished nails, and the glitter of her rings, as she stood before the fireplace in the drawing room.

The bell rang and a caller was ushered in, but it was not Hugh, and while chatting of the mid-winter cotillon, carnival balls and the latest on dits and engagements in the world fashionable, Dorothy's ear was strained to catch the sound of the closing of the hall door. Others dropped in, for Dorothy was a social leader; evening waned, but Hugh was not one of them. Dorothy was feverishly gay, and a brilliant color made her more lovely than usual, and no one could possibly guess, that hid behind her wit and laughter, there was a keen distress, for after those whispered words in her box at the opera last night and the permission granted to call he so significantly solicited, surely she had the right to expect the words she longed to hear.

From others they were irksome. But Hugh—well, Hugh for this fascinating and brilliant social light was the one human being who could fill the world with joy. Without him——

Dorothy waited with growing anguish mingled with anger. But Hugh did not come.

Her callers dropped off, one by one, the hours grew late, and ringing to have the lights extinguished, Dorothy went slowly up the broad staircase, dismissed her maid and slowly sinking into a chair by the fire in her luxuriously appointed room, covered her face with her hands.

The storm increased to a hurricane, as the frail skiff in which Hugh and the ferryman sat, reached the middle of the rolling torrent of the Mississippi.

The passing in the blackness of a tramp ship steaming along to reach the docks and tie up, until the storm was over added long rollers to those whipped by the wind, and must have been the cause of the disaster, Hugh imagined.

Swamped by torrents of water, before Hugh could reach out to seize the boat, as he rose from his sudden plunge in the raging current, the skiff was already far out of reach.

Whether its owner was clinging to it or not Hugh could not make out.

Far away the lights of the great tramp ship shone in the mist, and gleamed in the blackness of night.

A man may be a good swimmer, and yet hampered by a thick overcoat well buttoned up and thick walking shoes, when swept along in the fierce current of the Mississippi, his fate is practically sealed.

Swimming desperately, Hugh had a distinct mental vision of a beautiful woman waiting for him by a brightly burning fire. He saw in the storm and darkness the glint of the light on her hair and jewels and the handsome surroundings he knew so well.

He saw her proud, sweet smile of greeting and a light in her eyes, for which he worshipped her.

Hugh groaned and fought on, knowing well the battle was all but lost.

A dark object came rushing by, and with a desperate effort he seized and clung to it. It was an uprooted tree being whirled down to the gulf by the current.

Delphine was restless and anxious. The soughing of the wind and water in the willows, the beat of the rain and storm on the roof of their solitary little house, the monotonous beat of the boat on the steps as it rocked on the wind-tossed undulations of the currents made by the batture seems strangely lonely this black December night.

Old Marie sat by the fire and crooned her cantiques, and neither thought of going to bed. There was a faint but reiterated call, and running to the door Delphine opened it and looked out, listening intently.

"Some one is in distress, Marie, out there. Look!" The cry was repeated. Snatching up her waterproof, Delphine slipped out, and in spite of old Marie's wailing remonstrance untied the boat, stepped lightly into it, and picking up an oar, began to scull out in the current with the skill and strength of a Norman fisherwoman's daughter, telling Marie she would not go far.

It was not long when returning she sprang out, fastened the boat and led a tall, thoroughly drenched and exhausted young man into the bright little room where Marie crouched by the fire wailing and lamenting.

"Allons, Marie. You see I was right. I saved him," she said, brightly, forcing Hugh to sit down and drink from Jean-Pierre's silver flask.

Slowly Hugh revived from the deadly exhaustion his long buffeting by the waves and winds had occasioned. It was very late. When sufficiently recovered, he stood holding Del's hands before leaving.

"You are an angel. The bravest woman in the world. You saved my life, and I have no words to thank you. I was all but spent when your boat came up," Hugh said, wondering at the fine beauty of this girl, who lived in so strange a fashion on the batture. The door closed and he was gone. But to Delphine that tall, handsome stranger continued to be a constant presence.

No, Del never forgot him.

Old Marie grumbled.

"Oui, oui. Save a man from drowning, and he will do you harm. Wicked harm. Everybody in Normandie knows that."

The handsome gift Hugh sent the next day was returned. But Del kept the note which expressed unending gratitude.

Two days later Hugh and his fiancee, in the handsome drawing room discussed the wonderful inmate of the house on the batture.

"It was a splendid, courageous thing to do; the storm was terrific," Hugh said.

"Is—she—good-looking?" queried Dorothy, slowly.

"Beautiful," Hugh answered, and Dorothy would have moved her fair head from its resting-place, only Hugh pressed it back with a laughing tenderness.

"They always do you a deadly harm—those you save from drowning," Old Marie reiterated.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Preferred Daylight.

A housemaid who had borne the pain of a troublesome tooth for several days, in the hope that by exercising a little more endurance and patience she might avoid the expense of a dental operation, was finally obliged to go to the dentist one evening to have the tooth extracted.

Being of a thrifty tendency, she inquired of the operator, "How much do you charge for taking out a tooth?"

"Fifty cents; with gas a dollar," was the reply.

"Then I guess I'll call to-morrow and have it taken out by daylight," announced the patient.—New York Times.

An Easy Task.

Bob had been taught never to tell tales, and he meant to live up to his teaching, but sometimes it was hard work.

"Bob," said his mother, one day, "I left a dish of peppermints on my table this morning, and there isn't one there now. Have you and Carl eaten them?"

"I haven't eaten one," said Bob, stoutly, "but,"—then he remembered he must not be a tale-bearer. "Well—perhaps, if—you'd better just smell Carl, and I guess you'll know all about it!"—Youths' Companion.

Just the Place.

She—Doctor, is Squedunk a good place to go for rheumatism?

Doctor—Sure. That's where I got mine.—Detroit Free Press.

ELEPHANTS' MAD SEASON.

Two Months During Which Trainers Have to Be Extremely Watchful of the Animals.

From February 1 to All Fools' day every elephant trainer in the United States watches his huge pets vigilantly. It is the season in which elephants go must, or mad, says the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. For two months the jungle fever rules the pachyderms, an instinct which has survived centuries of domestication, and which ofttimes causes the tamest brute to become crazed. In Indian jungles during the must season the elephant herds commingle, and the lordly bulls fight for supremacy. In the circus winter quarters and in the menagerie the solitary elephants are very likely to go mad.

"Once must, always mad," says Steve Lawrence, a man who has handled elephants for 20 years, and has the reverence of a mahout for the "elephant folk." Lawrence has known a dozen elephants who have gone mad. He has officiated at the execution of two mad elephants, and was acquainted with most of the man-killing elephants who achieved a gory notoriety.

"There was Sport," said Lawrence, "a huge brute 30 years old, that was executed at Baltimore three years ago. He was hung to a gibbet for the murder of two of his trainers. The gallows was a railroad wrecking derrick. A half-inch hawser was placed in the pulley at the end of the long arm, and a noose tied around Sport's neck. The other end of the rope was attached to a switch engine, and as it backed away the elephant was pulled to the top of the gibbet and left suspended. He died in eight minutes, and didn't make much fuss about it, either.

"We hung Jolly, a mean sick elephant, in the same manner. Jolly was a cross brute, but never killed her man. While the animals were in transit from Scranton, Pa., to Baltimore, the door of Jolly's car became loose, and she fell out. The train was stopped, and we recovered our elephant, but she had suffered a dislocated shoulder. We decided to kill her, and did so with a rope.

"Charley, a man-killing elephant, which once was the star of the Wallace company's herd, killed several men before he was executed. He stamped Henry Hoffman, at Peru, Ind., and later drowned a keeper who had taken him to the river for a bath. The brute objected to leaving the water, and the keeper struck him. Charley twined his trunk around the man and held him under the water. When the man ceased struggling Charley left him and walked ashore. Charley was hung, a double murderer.

"I knew Topsy, the man killer, executed in New York lately, well. She was the original baby trick elephant, and was the most docile brute in the Forepaugh herd. Thousands of circus-goers have seen her perform. As she grew larger the sense of her power came to her, and she began to show her temper. I lost track of her during the last five years, but I heard that she had killed a man in Texas, and had mangled many persons.

"Never trust an elephant. I have trained them, slept on their legs, and placed my life in their keeping a thousand times, yet I know they cannot be trusted.

"Madness comes to them stealthily. The keeper never realizes that his pet is must until he is caught in the inexorable trunk, and, perhaps, dashed to death.

"A man killer slays in two ways. He tosses his victim high in the air, or places him under his feet and stamps his life out. There is a possibility of escape in the first instance, but none whatever in the latter case.

"February and March are the dangerous months for elephant handlers.

"I have never heard of any mad elephant being cured. 'Once must, always must,' the Indian proverb, my experience supports. The brute should be killed the first time he runs amuck. He can never be trusted, and no matter how tame he may afterward appear, he is but waiting his chance to kill a man.

"I can trust a lion, but I have no faith in the elephant's character. He is apt to prove as treacherous as his natural enemy, the tiger."

Plain Food on Royal Tables.

There is a considerable list of illustrious persons who have been content with the simplest pleasures of the table. It was not thought undignified at Windsor in Queen Victoria's time to serve apple tart for luncheon, or the homeliest pudding. The apple tart was served on silver plate, but it remained apple tart for all that. In India, however, such unaffected dainties do not harmonize with viceregal splendor. It is related that the viceroy's eye lighted one day upon a dish at which he gazed for a moment with incredulity. "What is this?" he demanded at last. A trembling retainer gasped that it was rice pudding. No less a personage than the viceroy's consort had ordered the humble pudding which eminent statesmen may be seen eating at their clubs with undisguised enjoyment any day of the parliamentary session. But the viceroy frowned. "Take it away," he said. "Never let me see such a thing again." This is how the orient differs from the occident. Rice pudding might have ruined the dignity of the viceregal table in native opinion.—London Chronicle.

It Depends.

Shopper—I want to get a vase that doesn't cost too—

Floorwalker — Yes, madam. Chinaware department, fourth aisle in the basement.

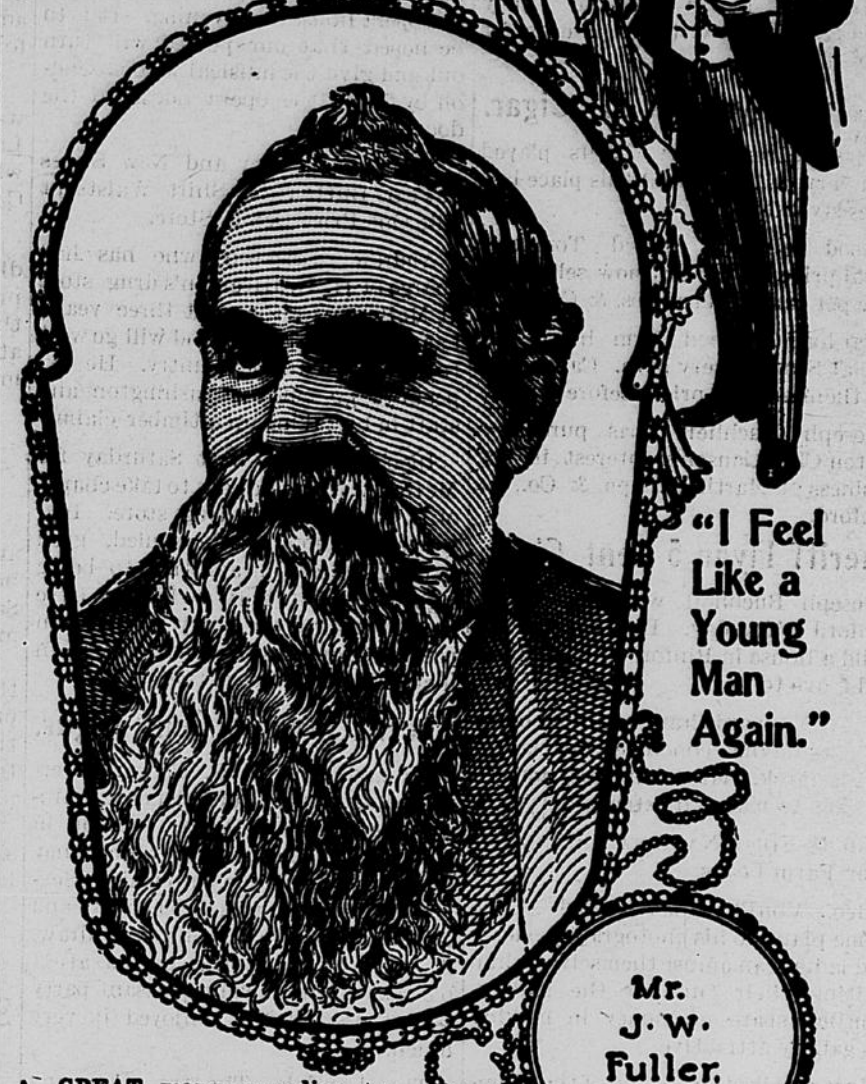
"Where did you say the "vawses" are to be found?"

"Art department, madam; second floor, front."—Philadelphia Press.

PRESIDENT FULLER OF THE JEWELERS' ASSOCIATION

Threatened With Loss of Hearing, Smell and Sight From the Ravages of Catarrh.

Pe-ru-na Cured Him.



A GREAT many remedies to temporarily relieve catarrh have been devised from time to time, such as sprays, snuffs, creams and other local applications, but, as a rule, the medical profession has little or no enthusiasm in the treatment of catarrh.

It is generally pronounced by them to be incurable.

It therefore created a great sensation in medical circles when Dr. Hartman announced that he had devised a compound which would cure catarrh permanently.

The remedy was named Peruna and in a short time became known to thousands of catarrh sufferers north, south, east and west.

Letters testifying to the fact that Peruna is a radical cure for catarrh began to pour in from all directions.

Thousands of such letters are on file in the office of The Peruna Medicine Co.

Rev. E. Stubenvoll, Pella, Wis., writes: "I feel obliged to extend you my personal thanks for my complete restoration. All through the winter I suffered from throat and lung trouble, but recovered my entire health by the use of your excellent remedy, Peruna."

The following letter from a prominent gentleman of Los Angeles, is a case in point:

Mr. J. W. Fuller, President of the Jewelers' Association of Los Angeles, Cal., has been in business in that city for seventeen years out of the forty-five that he has been engaged in business. Concerning his experience with Peruna he says:

"I was troubled with catarrh of the head for many years. It affected my sense of smell, hearing and sight. I spent lots of money with doctors and the use of local applications to relieve me but to no purpose, until my attention was called to the wonderful effects of Peruna.

"I must say that I met with most surprising and satisfactory results. Peruna took hold of the complaint and drove it entirely out of my system.

"Although well along toward the allotted span of man's life I am pleased as a child over the results, and feel like a young man again."—J. W. Fuller.

Such letters as the above are not used for publication except by the written permission of the writer.

A pamphlet filled with such letters will be sent to any address free. This book should be read by all who doubt the curability of catarrh.

If you do not receive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peruna write at once to Dr. Hartman, giving a full statement of your case, and he will be pleased to give you his valuable advice gratis.

Address Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, O.

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