THE FIREMAN'S MOTHER.

In the Sunset Chimes songs we,
Where the shape meets truth and the spirit wooing,
Lives a poor old mother, whose mortal wall
Now crumbles to its clay.

Her only or Mulvey a doomed train—
Dashed down in one crashing the wire thrilled
North from distance and thickets of Dakota,
"The fireman's wife is dead."

Only a fireman, we this will do,
Ready to fall to the number heart,
With a three line paragraph, terse and terse,
Pasted like a dart.

That never more would the old a light
In the cemetery home on the window sill
That would not be her say going by in the night,
"Dear mother is well."

There never about from in the cemetery gone
Is not that a matter wanded in vain
For the son, whatever souls would pass
Ere home, on the train.

And now, when the ruddy tints year by,
In that dark vale where the shadows lie,
No more will her answering signals cry,
"Dear mother is well."

—Minneapolis Times in Alexander Traveler.

A SPECULATION.

"I tell you, sir, I will not give my sanction unless by the 1st of next month you can show me a balance at your bankers of £3,000 or securities in your own name to that value."

"But, Mr. Seymour, where do you think I am to get £3,000 from in less than a month? Nellie and I are both young and can afford to wait for better times. I am confident of a rise in the best stocks of Kimberley, and have every reason to believe I shall one day become a partner. My salary from Jones is £250, and my old uncle allows me £100 a year and will leave upon his death. What more can you want?"

"It is of no use prolonging the discussion, Mr. Bartley. It is for your own sakes I decline. When my daughter married you I said settle £10,000 upon her, and I think her fortune ought to have at least £3,000. If, as I said before, you have that sum by the 1st of April next, I will sanction your engagement. If not, I shall use every means in my power to bring about their marriage with Captain Thompson, and in the meantime shall send her off to my sister in Scotland out of your way."

With these words he touched the bell, then intimating that the interview was at an end.

Mr. Seymour was chief partner in the firm of Seymour, Gordon & Co., stock jobbers, and was reported to be worth a million, but these were city rents which whispered that he was in rather a shaky state just now owing to heavy speculations on his own account, and that he would probably be in want of a few thousands before the next settling day.

When I left Mr. Seymour's office in Victoria street I wandered about for two hours, hardly knowing where I was going. I was unable to concentrate my thoughts upon anything definite. All I could think about was £3,000. Everything around me seemed to say the same thing. The very sound of the wheels of the omnibuses and cabs seemed to suggest, "£3,000, or Nellie is lost." I felt that I must have the money if I committed a crime to obtain it.

At last I called a cab and drove to my chambers. When I was seated in an easy chair by the side of a bright fire, with my pipe in full swing, I tried to think the matter over calmly. The only hope I could think of was my Uncle John, but it was like depending on a broken reed, indeed. He had always scoffed too against getting married at all, and politely to hinted with pride as one who had had not to nothing to do with women all his life but before I went to bed I had made up my mind to run down to Elkton on the morrow and see him.

I wrote a note to the office saying that I felt rather indisposed that evening (which was quite true) and should probably not be in the city in the morning.

* * * * * * *

Next morning, after a restless night, the chance of my uncle according to my request seemed smaller than ever, but there was no other hope, and I jumped into and make the best of it. At breakfast I took up the paper as was my want, and glanced down the money article, suddenly an idea flashed across my mind. Being on the Stock exchange I knew that fortunes were made and lost every month; why shouldn't I try and make £3,000 by speculating in some stock? The more I thought of it the better I liked it.

Of course I knew it was risky; I couldn't do it in my own name without it coming to the knowledge of my firm, and they wouldn't tolerate that sort of thing for a moment, and whatever plan I adopted I knew it things didn't go as I wished I should be ruined. But life without Nellie wasn't worth living, and I must have her at any cost.

The first thing to decide was the best stock in which to speculate. The markets were very quiet just now, with the exception of the South African Mining market, in which there had been lately quite a "boom."

One company in particular had caused a great sensation. This was the Great Cumberland Diamond mines, whose ten pound shares were quoted at twenty-five pounds. The company was supposed to have a most valuable property in south Africa, and although only started six months previously had already paid a dividend of 20 per cent., and the future dividends were expected to be as high as 30 or 40 per cent. That they had paid the 20 per cent. dividend was quite true, as I had received that on the few shares I held myself, but whether it was paid out of the profits or otherwise I did not know.

What I did know was that if any adverse report of the mine came over the price of the shares would inevitably drop quicker than it had risen. I therefore determined to confine my operations to Great Cumberland. Of course it would be sheer speculation, and there are people who say this is no better than robbery, and although I can't say I quite agree with them, I don't in any degree uphold the practice. It is quite true, the greatest evils of the age, but in my case I felt the end would justify the means. But how was I, when not muzzled, to affect the market?

What I wanted was some startling to Paragraphs, damaging to the prospects of the mine, to be communicated to the London financial papers. Any one who knows anything about Stock exchange business knows that in some stocks the most trivial whisper will immediately cause a flat or fall of several points. I had first upon the great Cumberland company because I know Dunbarton was well personally to dealers and speculators and not by the outside public. My conscience then was easier.

After breakfast I sallied to myself of once to Elkton and see my uncle, and if, as I expected, he would not give me the money I would write to my friend, George Whymark, in Cape Town, tell him how I was situated and ask for his help. I knew that George would do anything in his power to help me. We had been schoolfellows and always fine friends, and a year previously he had gone out to South Africa, partly on account of his health and partly to make his fortune—if he could. We had no secrets and had always helped each other whenever the help was asked for, even at our own personal inconvenience and loss.

I went to my uncle's place, just the whole matter before him, and asked him to lend me the £3,000. As I expected, he was very angry at first and tried to persuade me to let the whole affair drop. He said if I didn't get the money Mr. Seymour would withhold his consent. This wouldn't be my fault, and I could then wondered honestly. Of course, I scornfully rejected such advice.

"Well, Harold," he said, "I am very grieved to think that after all my advice you have made a fool of yourself at twenty-six years of age. But it shall make no difference in the future, my boy. I shall leave you all my money. But at present, even if I could, I couldn't realize £3,000 without great loss, as all my capital is locked up in various speculative undertakings, and I must say that for my own sake I am glad that you won't get the money."

I checked him for his kindness and went back to town.

That evening I wrote a long letter to George Whymark and told him everything and asked him for his help. I told him I wanted a telegram dispatched to nine beating paper in London, saying that things were decidedly wrong with the Great Cumberland Diamond mines, or something to that effect. This would very simple, but I didn't disguise from George that it wasn't altogether in accordance with the law, although I believe things like it are done very often in the world of speculation. I told George that I left the matter in his hands, but asked him for the sake of our great friendship to help me if he conscientiously could.

It would take three weeks for the letter to reach George. It was now the 1st of the month, and the last settling day was on the 20th, so if George did as I asked him to soon as he got my letter it would leave about five days for the operations. I tried to stifle all feelings of excitement for the next fortnight or so. I knew that if George was unable to help me, or if the market did not go as I wished, I should be ruined for life, and have to subject all hope of Nellie. I had not seen her since the evening of the interview with her father, but received a note from her three days after, saying she was that day starting for Scotland and would be away about six weeks. She told me to cheer up, so she knew all would come right in the end. I wished I could have felt as sanguine.

On the morning of the 17th the senior partner of my firm came to me with an open letter in his hand.

"Here is a letter from a Mr. Duncan, of Elkton, asking us to sell 1,000 shares in the Great Cumberland mine for next account. He mentions your name as a reference. Do you know anything about him?"

I knew all about the letter, as it was one I had written myself and posted from Elkton.

"Did you," I said, "that is all right. He is a friend of my uncle's. He mentioned the other evening that he wanted to deal in Great Cumberlands, and I advised him to do business through us."

"Well, you had better see to it, as I have to attend two meeting this morning."

During the day I managed to dispose of 1,000 shares at prices ranging from £21 10s. to £22 10s. per share, and had the contracts made out and posted to W. Duncan, Esq., Castle hotel, Elkton, the proprietor of which I knew very well, and with whom I had arranged to have my letters so addressed to handed to me. On Wednesday the 20th, I received a telegram from George with the last words "On Friday." Words cannot express how relieved I felt. I knew George would do nothing by halves, and I felt almost sure of success.

That afternoon I left the office early and went down to Elkton and dined at the Castle hotel. After dinner I wrote a letter, which I addressed to my firm, Messrs. Pritchard & Co., and arranged with the landlord to have it posted on the morrow, in order to be delivered in the city first post on Friday morning.

On Friday I seized the paper and glanced hastily down the money article. Yet it was there sure enough.

"We received a communication last evening to the effect that the Tarunga River district in South Africa was flooded and that great damage had been done to the Great Cumberland Diamond company's property. The mine was flooded and it was feared 100 workmen were drowned. The loss to the company was believed to be incalculable."

This I knew was bound to make the shares fall. You may be sure I felt in a great state of excitement, but I tried to look as unconcerned as possible when I arrived at the office.

About 10:30 Mr. Pritchard came to me with a letter.

"Here is another letter from Mr. Duncan asking us to buy in the 1,000 Great Cumberlands for him. I suppose he is all right, but it looks very much like speculation. I see there is a bad report of the mine in the paper this morning, so he will get them cheap. One would think he knew something about the business. However, that has nothing to do with us. Don't be in too great a hurry to buy, the price is sure to drop."

On my way to the Stock exchange I called at the office of the Great Cumberland company and asked if they knew anything about the telegram published that morning. They said they had received the same information, but thought there was some mistake. They were taking steps to have it confirmed.

When I arrived at the exchange I went straight to the mining market, and, as I expected, found it in a state of the wildest excitement. Every one was asking questions about Great Cumberlands. All the dealers were selling. "Great Cumberlands!" "Great Cumberlands!" "I sell 100 at 22; I sell 200 at 22½. Any buyers?" and such like.

I waited and watched closely. The first week down every market, until presently I found a man offer 22½ at 21. I bought them. I noticed several clerks were not employed, and one asked me if I knew anything. I answered, "No, but we have an order from a client to buy. Presently a dealer offered a parcel of 500 at 20. I took them at once. The other at 19 and so on, continuing to buy in small lots at about £19 to £19 10s. I went back to the office and reported to Mr. Pritchard that Great Cumberlands had dropped three or four points, and that I had bought 1,000 shares for Mr. Duncan, at an average price of about 20.

I had the contract notes posted that day to Mr. Duncan. On going through the accounts I found that after deducting brokerage and all expenses there was a clear profit of £3,250.

I feel time passed my end. On selling day it would only be necessary to pay on the shares from the time I had sold to the time I had bought them, and wait a check for the difference to Mr. Duncan, which of course was the same as paying it to myself.

The next morning a telegram was published in the money article stating that the information published the day before was exaggerated. The Tarunga district was flooded, but their property had not been touched. On the strength of this the shares in a few days regained their former position.

I wrote to George and told him of my success and thanked him for what he had done.

On the 1st of April I called Mr. Seymour. He seemed rather surprised to see me, but was very polite.

"Mr. Seymour," I said, "when I asked you for your daughter's hand a month ago you said you would only give me £10,000 on condition that by today I was worth at least £3,000. I have called to inform you that the amount of my balance at my bankers is now £3,700. I therefore presume there will now be no objection to our engagement."

"Well, Mr. Bartley," he said, "I am surprised, but also pleased, because, as I said last month, I have no personal objection to you as a son-in-law. I will write at once and tell Nellie to come home, but how did you manage to make £3,000 in a month?"

He laughed and said:

"You have been lucky this time, but take my advice and don't go in for speculation."

I won't mention to Mr. Seymour, but do you think I ought, my dear uncle?

"I expect you thought me very mercenary, Harold, but I must know how I was to make that stipulation. People engaged in one very wealthy, but lately I have met them, and one was in receipt of a few thousands for a week or two and haven't any available security to offer.

"Will you lend me your £3,000 for a month? You shall have it back with interest, and when you marry I will keep my promise and settle £10,000 on Nellie."

"You acquire subtlety in money," I said. "Still I mean to Nellie."

We were engaged six months, and have now been married three months, but I never regretted my first and only speculation. I didn't tell Nellie all the facts of the case, and she thinks I was seeing to a lucky run in one of my small investments that I was enabled to satisfy her father, and I don't think it necessary to undeceive her.—New York World.

About a Hoax.

They were walking under a very little umbrella, and she liked it well enough as to want a large spread of space. He was modest, and seemed to be nervous, and she finally remarked very softly, and with a tone of interrogation:

"Charley, I'll carry the umbrella if you will let me."

"Oh, no! I can carry it."

"Yes, Charley, but you see your arm takes up so much room that one side of me is out in the rain."

"I know, Fanny, but what will I do with my arm? Won't it be in the way all the same?"

"I don't know, Charley. Tom Clark always knows what to do with his arm when he is walking out in umbrella with Mary Martin, because Mary told me so."

The Size of an Orang-outang.

Various stories are told about the large dimensions and great height of the orang-outang, but I have never seen one over 4 feet high from head to heel, and from 3 to 3 feet, measuring from finger to finger across its outstretched arms, the width of the face varying in measurement from 9 to 12 inches, though the accounts of larger animals being been met with may be correct.—San Francisco Chronicle.

A Historic Remark.

The battle of the Nile was fought Aug. 1, 1798, between the French and English fleets. Sir Horatio Nelson was in command of the latter. Just before the engagement was about to begin he exclaimed, "Victory or Westminster abbey!" And victory it was.—Harper's Young People.

The circular college of 1892 will be composed of 344 members. There will be 256 representatives in the next house. The basis of representation is one member for each 173,659 of population, or a majority fraction thereof.

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