

STRIKE THROUGH THE KNOT.

I well remember, years ago, how I a little lad,
To split a knotty stick, essayed, with all the
strength I had;
In vain I hacked about the knot, but chips flew
round the door;
And wearied, I laid down the axe, and thought
to try no more.

Just then an old man passing by, who chanced
to see my plight,
Cried out aloud, "Hold, hold, my boy, you have
not tried aright;
This hacking splinters will not gain the object
you have sought,
But split it through the knot, my boy, directly
through the knot."

I tried once more, and on the knot struck hard to
make it twain;
Once, twice, thrice, and the stick was split; I
dropped my axe again;
"And now," quoth he, "by this you see, just how
it is in life;

All the way through you'll find hard knots and
sorrow, care and strife.

"And should you only hack at them, you'll make
but sorry speed;
But, if you strike them manfully, you surely will
succeed;
The lives of great men always lead through many
a troubled way.
And would you walk therein, my boy, remember
what I say."

Thus he spake, and ever since then, I've found
his words so true,

That I will give as I received, the same advice to
you,

And if you heed it, you will find, as others have, I
wot,

The wisest plan, the surest way, is striking through
the knot.

Backmailing.

The New York correspondent of the
Boston Journal writes:

The other morning one of our
wealthiest bankers, as he was sitting
down to the breakfast table, was told
that a lady wished to see him in the
reception room. He went in and found
a middle aged woman standing in the
middle of the room. "I want," she
said, "a thousand dollars in money,
and I want it now. I want a place
in your banking house for my nephew,
worth \$2,500 a year." "I shall give
you neither," was the reply. "Then
I'll come down to your banking house
and denounce you, and I will also
denounce you to your wife." The
banker rang his bell, and as the servant
appeared he said: "Ask my wife to
step in here, and send the coachman." They both appeared about the same
time. The coachman was ordered to go
for the police. To his wife the gentle-
man said: "You have often heard of a
blackmailer, I want you to look at one." The word police was enough for the
visitor, and she hurried out without
standing upon the order of her going.

A young but very successful banker
on the street was visited by an exquisitely
dressed woman, who stepped out of a
coup very daintily and did, what she in-
tended to do, attract general attention.
She inquired for the head of the house,
and was conducted to a gentleman sit-
ting at his desk in the midst of his
clerks. She desired a private interview.
It was declined on the ground that all
business transacted in the office was
public. "You can say what you have to
say," said the gentleman, "in the
presence of all who are here." The
woman proceeded to assign certain
reasons why it would not be proper to
do that. Before she had finished a gen-
tleman in blue tapped her on the shoul-
der and told her to accompany him to
the Tombs.

GLAD HE WAS A BOY.

I suppose men have their weak points
and I know women have theirs.

This is an age of jewelry.

Take the first women you meet. If
rich, they are loaded with expensive ex-
ponents of the artificer's skill. Dia-
monds in their ears, lockets on their
breasts, chains about their necks, watches
in their waistbands, rings on their
fingers, filigree what d'ye call 'ems on
their heads, and gold bands on their
arms. There isn't a point of a woman's
entire physique on which an ornament
can be placed which is not utilized by
our friends in the jewelry line.

If poor, they go the same length, the
only difference being in the cost.

It's a wonder to me where the money
comes from.

A curious glance at the six women in
a stage revealed six pairs of ear-rings
worth, at a moderate figure, \$1,500; six
gold watches, \$750; six gold chains, \$450.
Total, \$2,700. Then there were bracelets
and rings unseen, which would easily
run up to \$2,500 more.

But these figures of course do not rep-
resent anything of a particularly ex-
travagant toilette. Who of us hasn't
seen women in the streets, at the opera,
in the stage, even in the cars, with
literal fortunes on their persons?

I have often, and so have you.

I suppose it's folly to look for wisdom
in young women who grow up from
over-mature girls, and they from babies
who were sent to Germany, and all that
sort of thing, long before they can talk
straight.

After all, I conclude it's best to be a
boy.

A boy is always a boy till he's a man.
There is no grade in skirts which
marks his progress from a baby to man-
hood; his flannel shirt can't be exhibited;
and he is debarred, thank heaven, from
ear-rings, lockets, bracelets and head-
gear.—Hon. M. T. Judd, in N. Y. Sun.

The Laws of Domestic Storms—House-
hold Hints.

There are periods in life (says the
Pall Mall Gazette) when blood relations
seem born to harass and bewilder each
other. Where is the son, who on ar-
riving at age has not gone in the very
opposite direction to his father's wishes,
either with regard to calling, opinions,
or marriage? Where is the father who
has not waked up some morning to the
conviction that with the best intentions
in the world the paternal relation is a
failure? If he is a philosopher, he will
submit to the inevitable with a good
grace, and urge: "Yes, it is all very
well to dream when my son lay in his
cradle, how happy I should be if he
ever grew up to be a man. To have
him as a friend, companion, and advis-
er. Ah! life would indeed be worth
having. But how differently things
turn out to what one expects. He has
taken up with hateful opinions on poli-
tics, religion, and everything else worth
thinking about. He is determined to
marry an odious woman. He criticises
and distrusts my most serious convic-
tions. We shall always maintain af-
fectionate relations, but as to friend-
ship, that is quite another thing." If
on the other hand he is dull-headed and
iron-willed, the transient coldness is
sure to lead to an irrevocable separation.
On which indeed, of the domestic rela-
tions does not disenchantment at some
time or other wait?

But why should we lose faith in our
relations if, when weighed in the bal-
ance they are found wanting? In nine
cases out of ten there is a very inade-
quate basis for domestic discord, con-
jugal, parental, or fraternal. The begin-
ning and end is most often disappoint-
ment. A wise man will never let his
wife know that he has fallen off his
ideal. The wise woman will never
show that she does not think her hus-
band a hero. They will exercise toward
each other the same sort of hopeful for-
bearance that they exercise toward their
friends and citizens in general. We
often bear all kind of grievances from
the outer world with a good grace when
half the amount of provocation would
suffice to produce a very whirlwind at home.

The laws of domestic storms are in-
deed simple enough when studied prac-
tically. Some unfortunate men and
women spend their lives in devising
how this or that shall be avoided.
Like the Duke's daughter in M. Dis-
raeli's amusing novel, who if her hus-
band cried for the moon, promised it to
him immediately, they are always
ready to say black is white for the sake
of being agreeable. At night if they
say their prayers at all they can't help
whispering that they might with prop-
riety include a thanksgiving for hav-
ing kept the dreaded object of their af-
fections in good humor for a day. But
the sort of people who subject them-
selves to such a life of shifts, shams,
and petty little secrets know nothing
of the tragedy of a great storm. They
get battered about, and are always in
dirty weather, but they do not go
wholly to pieces.

An unfortunate journalist, condemn-
ed to write a special article on cabs,
went back to the Garden of Eden and
said:

"We are told that Adam and Eve
were 'driven' out of Paradise, but the
cautious student of Biblical history
must not perforce believe that they were
packed into a cab, and rattled away
along the Euphrates at a 2:17½ rate,
with Mrs. Eve on her knees on the back
seat, waving her handkerchief to the
gentleman with the flaming sword,
who stood sentinel at the gate. There
does not seem to be any foundation for
this idea."

TAKING THINGS WITHOUT ASKING.

When I was a boy I was playing out
in the street one winter's day, catching
rides on sleighs, and it was great fun.
Boys would rather catch a ride any day
than go out regularly and properly to
take a drive. As I was catching on to
one sleigh and another, sometimes hav-
ing a nice time, and oftentimes getting a
cut from a big black whip, I at last fas-
tened like a barnacle to the side of a
countryman's cutter.

An old gentleman sat alone on the
seat; and he looked at me rather be-
nignantly, as I thought, and neither
said anything to me nor swung his old
whip over me; so I ventured to climb
upon the side of his cutter. Another
benignant look from the countryman,
but not a word. Emboldened by his
supposed goodness, I ventured to tum-
ble into the cutter and take a seat under
his warm buffalo robe beside him, and
he then spoke. The colloquy was as
follows:

"Young man, do you like to ride?"

"Yes."

"Do you own a cutter, young man?"

"No, sir."

"It's a pretty nice cutter, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, it is, and a nice horse draw-
ing it."

"Did I ask you to get in?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, why did you get in?"

"Well, sir, I—I thought you looked
good and kind, and that you would have
no objection."

"And so, young man, because you
thought I was good and kind, you took
advantage of that kindness, and took a
favor without asking for it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is that ride worth having?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now, young man, I want to tell
you two things. You should never take
a mean advantage of the kindness of
others; and what is worth having is
worth at least asking for. Now as you
tumbled into this sleigh without asking
me, I shall tumble you out into that
snow-drift without asking you."

And out I went, like a shot off a
shovel, and he didn't make much fuss
about it, either. I picked myself up in
a slightly bewildered state, but I never
forgot that lesson.

Helmhold.

Bankruptcy is a commercial death
from which there is sometimes a resur-
rection. I am inclined, however, to
think that this Helmhold affair is ac-
companied by no such hope. Helm-
hold, in other words, is effectually
killed. I do not mention this as news,
but imply to make a few comments.
As the old song goes, "While he lived
he lived in clover, and when he died he
died all over." They say that seven is
a mysterious number, and Helmhold's
career in this city lasted just seven
years. In 1865, the year that Lincoln
was slain, he commenced his Broadway
drug establishment. He had a little
money which he brought from Phila-
delphia, and he made a dash with it,
meeting remarkable success. Most nos-
trums seem to be short-lived. Helm-
hold's preparations took well at first,
and he made enormous profits. In 1868
he reported an income of more than
\$50,000 and this was even increased. In
the great Presidential campaign of 1868
he determined to exceed all partisans
in liberality. A. T. Stewart gave \$30,-
000 to the Republican fund, and Helm-
hold, to "out-Herod Herod," gave \$40,-
000 to aid the election of Seymour. No
doubt he would be glad just now to
handle that sum again. Success makes
most men delirious, and Helmhold was
no exception. It was a remark of Peter
C. Brooks, the Boston millionaire, in
reference to his prosperity, "We made
money fast enough to have turned most
men's heads," and Edward Everett
commented on this as a striking peculi-
arity in Brooks, that it did not turn his
head. But Helmhold was bewildered
by success. He spent enormous sums
in a wasteful manner. His dashing
turn-out at Long Beach excited the
envy and admiration of fashion-wor-
shippers, and in the Central Park his
equipage also commanded attention.
His diamond breast-pin and his luxu-
rious life were the witnesses of a weak
vanity and pride of purse. The tide of
prosperity, like all other tides, had its
limit, and then came the ebb. For this
he was not prepared, and bankruptcy
followed. Some months ago I saw his
shattered and exhausted countenance
and his frail form standing in the porch
of what once was his palace of phar-
macy. He looked dazed and dreamy,
like one who hardly woke to the reality.
Now he is in Europe, seeking restora-

tion of health. It is more than prob-
able that he will return in his coffin. I
have seen this thing repeated more
than once. I remember the "patent
medicine Comstocks," and their grand
equipage, who after their failure were
in due time followed by Sarsaparilla
Townsend, who made a great fortune
and then likewise came out poor. Now
we have Helmhold to point a moral and
adorn a tale. As for Townsend, his
profits on sarsaparilla enabled him to
build a palace in the Fifth avenue, and
after his failure it was purchased by
Stewart, who pulled it down in order
to make room for his palace. Thus the
butterflies of success come and go,
while the meral of the scene is thus
gathered by.—Ex.

RECLAMATION OF ALKALI SOILS.

The first step in the progress of recla-
mation should be drainage by ditches.
A good rule would be to make the
drains of sufficient depth to take away
all the water completely as low as three
feet. It is impossible to lay down rules
applicable to all places or the distances
the drains should be made from each
other, so much must depend upon the
quantity of water to be removed during
the rainy season and the descent or fall
to carry it off. These are matters left
to the intelligent cultivator, consequent
upon circumstances.

Without drainage these soils can rare-
ly be plowed and worked properly as
early as they ought. An excess of water
in the soil renders it very difficult and
often impossible to work, prevents the
access of the air, and reduces the tem-
perature of the soil. Underdraining
may well be called a short-hand way of
virtually subsoiling, or plowing the
ground three feet deep instead of ten
inches or less, for by reducing the
general water level in the soil, espe-
cially if inclined to be wet, it increases
its power both of absorption and attrac-
tion, such as very deep plowing would
do. There is no branch of agricultural
industry that will do so much towards
a solution of this question, and I am
satisfied the result will be in the high-
est degree valuable and important.

The question whether the drainage
and reclamation of these soils will pay,
involves a variety of considerations,
and some of a strictly local character,
and which must be considered by those
who propose to undertake it. There
are considerations connected with this
subject which are not to be measured
by a pecuniary standard—I mean, for
example, such a refer to the health of
the locality. The miasma, and damp-
ness arising from these soils in their
natural state are a prolific source of ill-
health and sickness, such as fever and
ague and consumption. The cost of
reclamation may in some instances be
more than the land is worth after being
reclaimed, or it might be quite equal to
its value; but it is worth nothing in
its original condition the operation may
be considered as an actual purchase of
the land. The useful employment of
one's capital and labor, together with
the real satisfaction which one finds in
having accomplished a good work, may
operate as a strong inducement to such
an undertaking.

The next move towards reclaiming
these lands is deep plowing and
thorough and careful cultivation, with
the free use of the best fertilizers that
can be procured. In other words, to
keep the soil in the best possible con-
dition for the absorption of heat, mois-
ture, gases, and fluids indispensable to
vegetable life, from the sun and atmos-
phere above, and for the free attraction
of all their earthy constituents from the
depths of the soil below. We can safe-
ly say that no soil can be made too fine
for any crop within a given depth.
The finer the better. In gen-
eral cultivation it is left too coarse for
all crops. Finally, and by no means
the least important, a systematic crop-
ping of such vegetables as are known to
readily absorb and retain in their
composition an excess of the alkalis.

E. F. AIKEN

—Sacramento Union.

FOUND DEAD.—The Denver papers give
an account of a man, named Frank M.
Thomas, being found about three miles
from that place with a ball through his fore-
head, with a discharged rifle by his side,
and a string, formed of strips of cloth,
leading from the trigger guard of the
weapon to his left foot. Although the above
described appearances would indicate that
the man had committed suicide, yet other
circumstances lead many to the belief that
he had been foully murdered, and last ac-
counts state that a coroner's jury were giving
the matter a most thorough and searching
examination.