

THE LARK



The busy day, waked by the Lark, hath roused the
"ribald Crows:"

Troilus & Cressida

NUMBER 5 : 5 CENTS

The Lark;



GELETT BURGESS



ERNEST PEIXOTTO

LEWIS HOLT

JAMES F. MERIONETH 2nd

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AVIS AU LECTEUR.

C'EST une assez modeste Créature que THE LARK; elle ne se mesle pas de *Personnalités*; étant un Oiseau *matineux*, elle s'occupe du *Ver*. Ellenepouffe cependant pas l'*Insouciance* jusqu'à ne pas écouter les Notes louangeuses des *Cages* d'énbas habitées par les Autres. THE LARK n'est pas *ingrate*, et elle remercie le CRITIC * des Renseignements sur sa *Circulation*; le BOSTON JOURNAL † qui la trouve *un peu sauvage*; le CHAP BOOK ‡ qui l'appelle *intime*; le NEW YORK TIMES *** qui voit en elle une Menace à la *Modernité chicagienne*, et le NEW YORK TRIBUNE †† gentil Savant de la LARKEOLOGIE, qui la nomme L'OIE, sans doute à cause de ses *Œufs d'Or*.

AUSSI THE LARK est-elle un peu *embarrassée* de toucher les \$.60 que ses Amis libéraux lui envoient comme *Prix d'Abonnement annuel* et que les *Status* ridicules de l'*Administration des POSTES* la forcent de publier. Si l'Hiver venoit—et cela arrive parfois même en CALIFORNIE—THE LARK partiroit pour le MIDI, et elle ne promettrait pas de rendre ce que l'on s'est obstiné de vouloir payer d'Avance.

QUOIQUE bien à *contre-cœur*, et afin de subvenir aux Frais de *t'Imprimerie* †† de chaque Mois, cette Feuille accepte des *Annonces* d'accord avec le Gouft raffiné de ses Lecteurs, qui tous sont des Gens d'Esprit et d'une Education distinguée.

* "—One bookseller tells me that he has sold 100 copies." (1)

† In an editorial comment, remarkable only for its length and the fact that it calls *The Lark* an "ornithological specimen," and its opening article an "epilogue."

‡ "It is an assertion of the right of the artist to be wayward, and indulge in innocent drollery. "Its friends will be appreciative, but there will not be many of them."

*** "Incredibly, even impossibly, 1895; written by *les jeunes*, and delightfully young they are."

†† "One more hysterical magazine—from a realm remote from the moorings of intelligence."

‡‡ "*The Lark* is printed by C. A. Murdock & Co., 532 Clay Street, San Francisco. They are printers without a specialty; but regarding printing as an art, as well as a business, they are especially equipped for fine work. They recognize, however, no essential connection between high art and high prices."

"I don't

"I DON'T LIKE IT," SAID VIVETTE.



LONG, long ago, at the very dawn of history, there dwelt, secluded in a valley of the hills, a little family—father, son, and daughter. The sire had led a stirring life by field and flood, but when the mother died, had brought his children to this quiet place, to rear them in simplicity and peace. The daughter grew into the mother's place in the old man's heart, and in the son he saw his own youth live again. But, as time went on, the boy Ardon became more and more restive. He was filled with longings to adventure into the wild world outside, and see himself the strange life of which his father told. The old man, though saddened at the thought of parting, at last consented that, if the gods so willed, the boy should go; but not until the Fates had sent some sure omen calling him away.

* * * *

One day, while the men were hunting, and the girl was alone in the valley, she heard a voice calling from afar off; and, as she answered, it came nearer and nearer. And going out to meet it, she found on the hillside, a maid clad in strange garments, footsore, bruised, and fainting with fatigue. With gentle hands she led the stranger to the fire, gave her warm goat's-milk, and bound up her wounds. Then when she was refreshed, the girl told the story of her life. Her name was Persis; all her life she had spent with her uncle—a fierce, bold man, the chief of a roving band that preyed upon the tribes of the plains, sweeping up and down the land, ravaging and warring without reck or rest. Three days ago the band had made a hurried cut up and across a rugged pass to meet some new foe, and had camped at night in a defile in the mountains. Persis had arisen at daybreak, and had climbed the cliffs to pluck some strange blossoms; but, loitering too long, had found, when she came back, only the embers of

“FOR IT HAS A MORAL.”

last night's fire. The band had gone, and she was left alone. She hurried after, following their tracks, but could not overtake them. Three days she had wandered in the wilderness, till, half-dead and all but starved, she had chanced to find this place.

The girls, so strangely met, felt a great affection draw them still closer together. The sister told of her father and her brother, and their simple life. But, as the stranger needed rest, the two decided not to tell of her coming until the morning, and then surprise the men with this new friend that Fate had sent.

So Persis laid her down to rest in the lodge, and fell asleep. In the night she waked, and fell to thinking of the new home she had found, and of this brother, so different from the savage men that she had known; and, as her fancy stirred, she could not wait until the day to see him. So, stealing from the lodge, she crept across the moonlit glade, intent to have one glance at him, and then be gone. He lay on a bed of boughs, wrapped in a robe of skins, but with his face turned away; so Persis thought to hide in the shadow of a tree, and call him till he turned. And this she did, and he awoke. "Ardon!" she called; and he rose and stepped toward her. Frightened at what she had done, and fearful that he should see her, she flew across the glade and made her way back to the lodge.

But Ardon did not sleep again. It came to him with joy that this was a dream sent by the gods to call him forth. The voice and the glimpse he had of the fair girl set his heart on fire. He waked his father, and, telling him of the dream, implored him to let him go. The old man could say no more, but, fearing the pain the parting would cause his daughter, bade his son, if he must surely leave, to be up and away at dawn, before the sister rose.

The time had come; and, promising to return when the year had passed, Ardon set off in the fresh springtime with a beating heart.

“BUT NOT FOR US,” SAID I.

Three months he traveled to the west, over hills, across streams, and through the deep forests. He met strange peoples, and saw strange lands; but nowhere did he see the lovely spirit of his dream. Then, as the summer bloomed, he turned toward the north. He passed long caravans making for the west. Whole tribes were moving, village folk driving their herds, and warriors plundering as they roJe. He hunted with the men, and he gazed into the tents of the women, but could not find the face that haunted him.

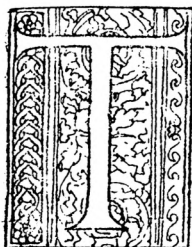
The autumn came, and Ardon struck out toward the east, and stemmed the tide of wandering nations pressing toward the setting sun. He saw new faces—faces everywhere—but none like that he sought. The old men told him that his was a foolish dream. They whispered of new lands beyond, and bade him come with them. The maidens smiled at him in vain.

And then, as the winter set in, he gloomily turned to the south, despairing of his quest. His spirit was broken, and he searched no more.

* * * *

One by one the old familiar landmarks came in sight; and at length he reached the home while all were absent; and, weary and sick at heart, he threw himself beside the fire. And, as he slept, Persis, returning from the spring, was first to find him there. But, with the memory of her first meeting, and the sorrow her thoughtless act had brought, she cried aloud, and flew to call the others. So Ardon awoke and saw her again flying from him; and thinking this last vision sent to mock him by a derisive Fate, with breaking heart he gave himself up to his despair. Unnoticed, his father and sister approached. Not till they were at his side did he hear their glad voices of welcome, but when, at last, he raised his eyes, he saw her whom he had sought so long, standing, smiling by his very side!

BB TIDE AT NOON.



*HE breezes sleep; their morning journey
done.*

*The seaweeds mat the sluggish
channel's edges.*

*The sand flat twinkles in the summer
sun,*

*And fishes flap and spatter in the
sedges.*

Far off across the dunes there comes the sound

Of lazy surges droning on the shingle.

My boat drifts idly, swinging half-aground,—

Then bickering gulls their raucous voices mingle,

For all has changed; and to the harbor bar

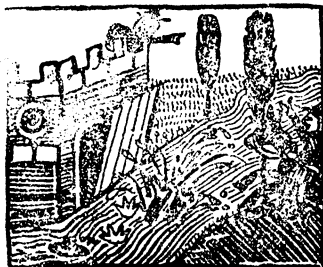
Has come a secret message from the ocean.

A thousand hurrying ripples speed from far,

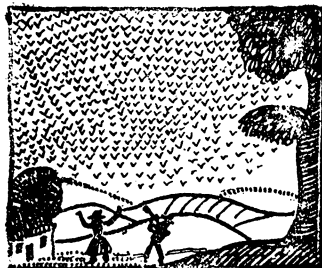
And all the waters waken into motion.

AWARDS IN A PROVERB COMPETITION. 1827.

1. Do not cross the Bridge until you come to it.



2. Birds of a Feather flock together; or, One Swallow does not make a Summer.



3. Misery loves Company.



4. Those who live in Glass Houses should not throw Stones.



ON CERTAIN UNREVIEWED LITERATURE.



AR beyond the extremest confines of the World of Letters, out of the track of the "gentle reader," undiscovered by critic or reviewer, huge, mysterious—lies the Dark Continent of Cheap Juvenile Fiction. Here dynasties rise, and are overthrown; publishers invade and conquer vast tracts of patronage; heroes flourish like demi-gods, and no hint of the great changes pass its frontier.

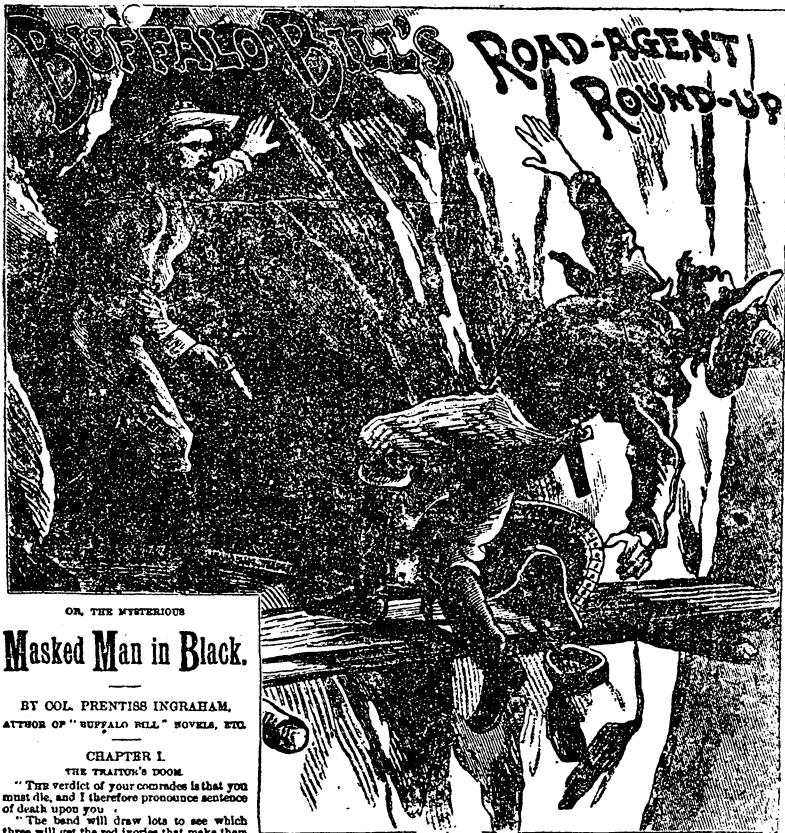
Lying broad and free under a tropic sun, its vegetation fattens and grows rank with sensation. Here the sub-title still flourishes; alliteration puts forth its myriad petals, and the short, crisp sentences are strewn abroad, like blades of grass. Jungles of verbiage, deserts of wornout phrases, mountains of fine writing and circumlocution balk the explorer; it is but the missionary and the foolhardy who dare brave its fevers and its savages. For here roam the dwarfs and giants—the ground swarms with life. Detectives, crooks, pals, redskins, highwaymen, and pirates herd together, or roam freely over the land. The air is thick with storms of battle; bullets patter on the leaves like summer rain; death stalks visibly across the open; peril and disaster duel with hairbreadth escape; the rivers run red with blood. It is a strange country surely,—at first sight picturesque, but the scenery repeating itself, like the second round of a peep-show. From Title and Sub-Title you shall know your plot, and by the "Cover-Situation" learn at once the very kernel of your tale. When (in No. 869)

"Buffalo Bill received a severe shock when he saw the robber miss his footing and fall backward."

(Not half so severe, however, as the robber himself received, for

"he fell from the dizzy height, and plunged downward to the surging torrent below, and the body struck the water with a loud report"),

THE DARK CONTINENT OF FICTION.



ON THE MYSTERIOUS
Masked Man in Black.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "BUFFALO BILL" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.
THE TRAITOR'S DOOM.

"The verdict of your comrades is that you must die, and I therefore pronounce sentence of death upon you."

"The band will draw lots to see which three will get the red ivories that make them the executioners of these men, for in just one-half hour they are to die."

BUFFALO BILL RECEIVED A SEVERE SHOCK WHEN HE SAW THE BORDER MEN IN FOOTING AND FALL BACKWARD.

you are initiated point-blank into the acme of what excitement the novel can offer;—you see again the well-known crisis of the whole range of "Buffalo Bill" romances—*The Skeleton Scout of the Colorado* (No. 787), *The Deserted Desperado's Defiance* (No. 710), *The Doomed Dozen* (No. 158), and *The Tigress of Texas* (No. 658).

WHERE REALISM DARE NOT TREAD.

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There are protectorates established in this foreign land that arbitrate its affairs and collect its tributes—Beadle, Tousey, Munsey, Munro, Street & Smith—these are the kings that have made this world their own, and regulate the succession of native chiefs. Buffalo Bill, Deadwood Dick, and Old Sleuth pay them homage, and even the Girl Mascot, Queen of the Ferrets, they hold in the hollow of their hands.

Romance of the old school is all but dead. The Dime Novel of our youth, yellow-covered and compact, is gone—as absolutely lost to the world as the burned volumes of Alexandria. Search as you will, you shall hardly find one; but in its place has arisen this thin, flat, emasculated thing, the Half-dime Library, much too broad to convey in the pocket without folding, or to conceal behind one's geography in school.

It is easy to divide these stories into distinct groups. First, the remains of the old type of romance—tales of love, pirates and redskins, the last fast fading before the herculean prowess of the border scouts. A few may still be found—dilutions of *Mayne Reid* and *Cooper*. The love story, pure and simple, survives only in the weekly story-papers—hardly to be classed as juvenile. Then the rami-

THE HALF-DIME NOVEL.

fictions of the detective plot,—young Pinkertons of incredible prescience, ever victorious against ruffian and desperado. To these, the narrative of pseudo-science—Jules Verne raised to the *x*th power—the miraculous inventions of *Frank Read, Jr.*, the *Steam Man*, the *Electric Horse*, and the *Air Ship*, appalling the reason with technical descriptions. Apropos of the *Electric Horse*, its inventor says:

“By the substitution of electricity I avoid the necessity of furnace, boiler, and fuel. The battery is double, and the one in use is kept in a miniature safe, secure from accident. The second is concealed under the first, so that no one would suspect its presence. The joints are provided with rubber guards and washers, so as to obviate the possibility of friction.”

And, lastly, the unspeakable comic tales,—*Shorty in Search of His Dad*, *Muldoon*, and *The Twins*, in every phase of horseplay, riotous with humor of the order of that of the suddenly removed chair; of which the mildest situation in fifty-two pages is:

“The next second the molasses-filled hat was jerked from his hands and jammed over his head, until its brim was on a level with his mouth.”

As has been said, the exploration of such literature is somewhat fatiguing to the cultured mind. It is no slight effort to read a half-dime novel in a thorough and honest way. One may clamber over such a sentence as this, perhaps:

“Several times Buffalo Bill had placed in the grave logs and dirt, and each time all had been removed, until one day he had found a warning there that it was kept empty by an avenger who had it dug for one who had wronged him, and for whom he was looking, to kill and bring there.”

It goes hard, though 'tis no worse than “French at Sight” to the tyro; but at the following description one pauses in some disquiet:

“I propose that we stand back to back, step off at one, count aloud together five paces, wheel at five, and open fire, pulling trigger till one of us is dead, whether wounded or not.”

“His face was a fine one, yet was marred by a cynical look hovering about the mouth that at times was bitter and cruel, so intense it became.”

CONTINUED.

Adventure, if you may, into this wild clime; traverse its false views of life, its pitiful humor, meager plot, and, though you bring home many marvelous curiosities of style and language, you shall travel over its whole extent and find no sneer at morality, or vile suggestion, but virtue ever triumphant, honor among thieves, and hero and villain dividing glory and shame; as separate and contrasted as the two Greek masks. And, fevered with these harrowing scenes, open the pages of a "proper" juvenile periodical, and rest your eyes on tales of priggish Saturday afternoons, doll-gossip, and schoolboy trials. Did sweet Louisa Alcott, when a child, endure such realism as her publishers cruelly demanded? Can the fire of Romance and Imagination live on "half-tones?"

And shall we initiate these benighted savages into our high civilization?

[No. 869. Buffalo Bill's Road Agent Round-up, or the Mysterious Masked Man in Black, by Col. Prentiss Ingraham. New York: Beadle & Adams. 1895. Paper, 8vo. Five cents.]



*Once there was a GIANT HORSE,
That walked through all the Town,*



*A-stepping into all the Roofs,
And Smashing Houses down!*

IN PREPARATION

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And Other Poems

-BY-

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W. Doxey proposes to issue during the fall a subscription edition of the poems of Miss Flora Macdonald Shearer. The volume will contain a poem of considerable length which has just been completed, and which will certainly add much to the reputation of the gifted author, together with a number of shorter poems, as "The Famine in Russia," which appeared originally in the "California," and afterwards was copied in the "Review of Reviews" and the "New York World," together with numerous charming poems, some of which have already appeared in "Lippincott's Magazine" and the "Overland Monthly."

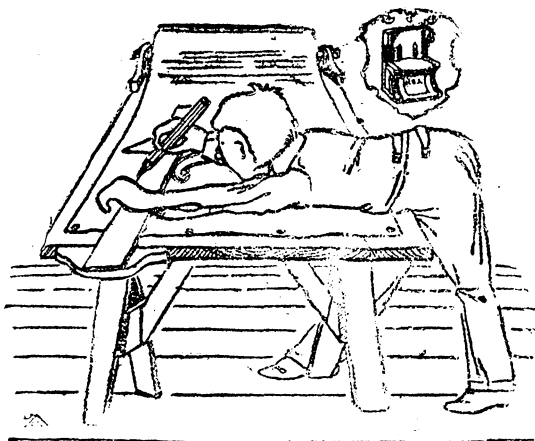
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The following verses are by that gifted woman, Miss Flora Macdonald Shearer. Amongst their other qualities are elevation and simplicity—than which in poetry no qualities are more engaging, nor any so rare.

—*Ambrose Bierce in San Francisco "Examiner."*

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