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Poetry.

TALK WITH TIME AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

Time, old Time, with the forelock grey, While the year in its dotage doth pass away, Come, sit by my hearth, ere the embers fail, And hang the scythe on yon empty nail, And tell me a tale 'neath this wintry sky Of the deeds thou hast done as its months swept by.

'I have cradled the babe in the churchyard wide, From the husband's arms I have taken the bride,

I have cloven a path through the ocean's floor Where many have sunk to return no more. I have humbled the strong with their daughter's breast, An laird the old with his staff to rest.

'I have loosened the stone on the ruin's height, Where the curtaining ivy grew rank and bright, I have startled the maid in her couch of down With a sprinkle of white 'mid her tresses brown.

I have rent from his idols the proud man's hold, And scattered the hoard of the miser's gold.

Is this all? Are thy chronicles traced alone On this riven heart or the burial stone? 'No—love's young chain I have twined with flowers,

Have awakened a song in the rose-crowned bowers. Proud trophies have reared the sons of fame, And paved the road for the cars of flame.

'Look to you child, it hath learned of me The word that it lispeth at the mother's knee. Look to the sage, who from me had caught Intenser fire for his heavenward thought. Look to the saint, who had nearer trod 'Tward the angel hosts near the throne of God.

'I have planted seeds in the soul, that bear The fruits of heaven in a world of care. I have breathed on the tear till its orb grew bright As the diamond-drop in the realms of light. Question thy heart, hath it ere confessed A germ so pure, or a tear so blest?'

But the clock struck twelve from the steeple grey And he seized his hour-glass and strode away.

Yet his hand at parting I feared to clasp. For I saw the scythe in its earnest grasp And I read in the glance of his upward eye His secret league with eternity.

THE HAUNTED HULK; OR—The Wreck on the Spanish Main.

BY GEO. MANVILLE PENN.

He was always a great scholar, was Bill, and knew a power of stuff. While the other boys were lolloping on the deck, smoking or telling yarns, Bill used to be lying flat there, with his chin resting on his hands reading away for dear life, and the older the books was the better he liked them.

Bill had got quite a chest full of old voyages and travels, and he could tell you anything about the Dons, who used to come out to the golden Americas to load their ships with bars and ounces, and then go back home.

Only get Bill in the humor, and the way he'd talk about Spanish galleons and dubloons, and silver jagots, why, it would make your fingers itch, being only a poor sailor, you know, with only two or three pounds a month.

'Jack Harris,' he says to me one day, 'would you like to make your fortune?'

'Like to make my what?' I says. 'Like to make your fortune, man, and have as much gold and jewels as would keep you in comfort to the end of your days?'

'Try me,' I says, sharp and short. Now, when he said that we were lying at Hispanetra, which is a shabby little bit of a port in the Carib Sea, right on the top of South America, you know, where the sea's shut in on the east by the islands Jamaica and St. Domingo, and the rest of them, and surrounded north, south and west by the Americas and the Isthmus of Panama.

It was a shabby sort of port, as I said; but our skipper, who was an artful sort of card, had forged it out, and, as far as we knew, our ship, the Jane Brown, of Liverpool, was the only one as ever traded there.

The consequence was that we did a fine bit of trade with the Indian chaps, bringing them Manchester cottons, Brummagem guns powder and shot, Sheffield knives and axes, and so on, with a few pretty beads and bright handkerchiefs for the women, while in return they used to swap dyewoods and we had leave from the chief—a caïque, he used to call himself—to go into the woods and cut down the great mahogany and ebony trees, which the Indians used to prise into

the little rivers, and we floated down to the bit of a harbor and got the sticks aboard.

There was no town, only a collection of huts; but they used to look very pretty strewed about the tiny bay, with the wonderful green trees and grasses, growing up about them. There was fruit enough to give all the sailors in the world the stomach-ache, and the Indians used to make a very tidy sort of a tippie out of a kind of great cactus plant, as grew abundantly in the dry parts amongst the rocks and stones, and then they used to be a simple, happy sort of people; good-looking, too, specially the women and they'd wear feathers and flowers, and work a little, and sing, and dance, and eat, and sleep, a good deal more, and so life went very easy with them.

We'd been there about a month when Bill came to me, as I said, one day, and asked me if I'd like to make my fortune. The ship was about three parts loaded, and all was going on well, the caïque spending half his time in the skipper's cabin, helping him to empty rum bottles, and we seemed to have about another fortnight to stay before weighing anchor for home.

I'd always notice that Bill slipped off of an evening as soon as cargo landing or wood-chopping was done; but, after running against him one moonlight night talking to a pretty little Indian girl, whose hair was full of red feathers and flowers, I winked to myself, and felt that I knew the reason why.

'Jack,' says Bill to me, 'you'r about the only man on the Jane Brown as I can trust.'

'Why so?' I says. 'Because, mate, you can keep your own counsel, and don't go chattering to every one all your hear and see.'

'Laziness, that's all,' I says, grimly. 'No, it isn't laziness, Jack,' he says.

'But how about this here fortune?' I says to turn the conversation, for I'm as silly as a gal when anyone gets praising me.

'Well, Jack,' he says, after giving a glance round to see that no one was listening 'you know I've often told you about the Spanish Dons who used to come here hundreds of years ago?'

'Was it about here?' I says. 'Yes, we're just in the very thick of their old haunts. The people about here in those days used to live in towns and cities, and be very rich in gold and silver, till the Spaniards came and killed them, burned their cities, and plundered them of their gold.'

'Well?' I says. 'Well,' said Bill; 'then they used to get back to their ships and sail off, and some used to get safe away, while others used to be wrecked in the hurricanes that came now and then—cast ashore with all their rich plunder, and nobody left to tell the tale.'

'Hard lines for them,' I says. 'Jack,' said Bill, 'in a whisper, and his voice grew very deep, while the water in the harbor seemed, as it beat softly against the sides of the ship, as full of fire-flies as the rustling woods ashore, where they were darting and gleaming about like dancing stars, though, of course, it wasn't fire-flies in the water, but those phosphorus jelly-fishes which swarmed in every bucket of water you dipped; so 'Jack,' says Bill 'it's always been my dream to find one of these wrecked Spanish galleons, and at last I've found one.'

'Loaded with gold, Bill?' I says, huskily for he quite took away my breath.

'That I don't know yet, but I hope so.'

'Where is she?' I says, eagerly. 'Wait a bit,' says Bill. 'You know Jack I've scraped acquaintance with a pretty little native lass.'

'Better let her alone,' I says. 'She's one of the caïque's daughters,' says Bill; 'and if all turns out right, as I expect, I shall charter a vessel somewhere, and come and load up here.'

'What with, Bill?' I says excitedly. 'Gold, my lad, gold! and then take her away to England, and make a lady of her.'

'And how about me?' I says. 'Your fortune shall be made, too, Jack,' he says. 'Only give me your word to stand by me to the last.'

'There's my fist,' I says, giving it to him; 'and that's better than lots o' words.'

So he gripped it fast, and then began to tell me his plans.

Tezela—that was the girl's name—had told him that in an out-of-the-way part of shore, about eight miles away, there was a great ship, lying half-buried in the sands where it had been cast ashore. According to her account it was bigger than our vessel; and, though it was gradually rotting away no one ever went near it, for the people of country said it was full of bad spirits, who would slay the first who went too near.

She had promised to act as lover, Bill; and was to meet him one night, to show him the way through woods; and Bill wanted me to act as of help-mate or body-guard.

We talked the matter well over, and decided that the best things we could do with us would be a good spade, a couple of axes, and a pair of cutlasses, if we could smuggle them out of the cabin.

I undertook to do that, and I got a sling bag, that held about a couple of of rum and water, and this I filled and ed ready.

The spade was the hardest thing to hold of. I knew there was some cargo, but couldn't tell where; so I got of the cook's shovel from the galley then, with all ready; waited for evening.

Fortunately, we had not had a very day, as it had been hot, and the slippers very easy with the men; so we were to be fresh in the evening, when it was dark, and Bill and me skulked over well armed, and ready for our task.

I had got a lathorn and candles, and the rest of them slung over my shoulder so that what with the keg, the axes, and cutlasses, too, I looked a regular son Crusoe sort of a character; only in the dark, and no one could see me.

Bill caught hold of my hand as we were ashore, and led me right from the little town into the wood, and taking a path, he went right on for ten minutes before stopping short under a great tree, whose leaves made every about us black as the hold with the battened down and tar-paulined.

Here he gave a sort of chirrup, cricket, and directly after was a faint noise from the left, like a little bird to its mate.

Bill chirruped again, and I could make out a slight dark figure coming along to be caught in his arms.

The girl started away again on me out, but on a word or two from Bill put her soft little hand in mine, and going in front, she led the way through woods.

We must have gone on walking for three hours, including ten minutes resting, when after a drink, Bill and ten minutes smoke, and then on again.

The wood was full of strange noise and more than once we heard a crash howl, which made us out with our cut and stand ready, but nothing attacked. One, too, I trod on something round soft, which glided along under my foot.

I knew it was a snake, and a shud through me as I expected it to bite; got away, and we went on through the wood.

More than once I was afraid on guide had lost her way in the darkness she kept steadily on, giving a bit of when Bill asked her if she knew he and at last I heard the dash of water I caught a gleam of light, and five after we were walking through the pool on which the water, gleaming like gold rolling on.

It was not so dark here, for the light colored, and the stars shone as the Judian girl laid one hand upon arm, and pointing with the other, her broken English.

'There it is!'

'I could only make out what looked a lump of rock lying close up to the trees which fringed the sand quiet yards from the water; and as I started to it the girl tried to stop me.

'No, no!' she cried. 'Bad spirit you.'

Both Bill and I laughed, and we saw we were going up to the hulk, a sort of sigh, and then in a stubble of way she mastered her fears, and close to Bill, walked with us to the beaten, massive old hulk of a very large which had evidently been cast up by a great wave, and since then the sea been filled up around it, while the evidently retired.

We walked around it, and found a strange, old-fashioned build, which was not rotted away; there was a vast starn, and the timbers were, though rotten, heavy and strong.

'An old Spaniard, Jack,' my mate, and then he made a climb on board. The girl gave a shriek, and clung but after a few words she let go and threw herself on the sand, sobbing.

Bill climbed up and stood on the top and I was not long in following him. I found there was no deck-plank, far as I could see in the dark, save the cross-beams and ties, and bulwarks and the upright pieces had crumbled and gone into dust.

'She's full of sand, Jack,' my mate to me, as he leaned down and peered down with his cutlasses, and when same I found he was right.

As to moving to where he had said that did not seem wise, for every trace of rotten and decayed that a step direction would most likely lead through the rotten wood into a full, perchance, of snakes or venomous.

I was on going down and was morn'nt Bill was too busy to stop that he started slowly off in the wa' creeping along by the side.

(Continued on next page)