

## ABSORPTION

**B**ELOVED, in the still deeps of thine eyes  
 Absorb my soul, that I may know no more  
 The pain of separation! I implore  
 Thy Self to take me in, and solemnize  
 My union with thee in some mystic wise.  
 I would no more be I, but would explore,  
 As thee, thy soul's dim temple, and adore  
 Therein, as thee, with secret sacrifice.

Oh, let me die to Self, and find rebirth  
 In some fair body as one soul with thee!  
 There are no purposes in life for me,  
 But as thy complement; nor any worth  
 In all the fame and splendor of the earth—  
 Unless one perfect spirit we may be.

ELSA BARKER.



## JUST SO

**M**RS. HOON—Mrs. Kidder's baby fell out of a second-story window yesterday,  
 and wasn't hurt a bit. Doesn't that seem strange?  
**MR. HOON**—Well, I don't know. Perhaps it is a bouncing boy.



## THE COMMON FATE

**D**AN CUPID limped into his office,  
 All battered and bruised was his head;  
 A bandage and splints graced his person—  
 "I umpired a love-match," he said.



## DARWINIAN

**F**IRST MONKEY—It seems to be a toss-up whether man is descended from  
 us.  
**SECOND MONKEY**—Yes, it's heads, they win; tails, we win.

# HANDSOME JACK

By Elias Lisle

WHEN Handsome Jack first struck the old Skopa Ranch, the boys didn't just take to him. In the first place, he was a stranger. In the second place, he was a swell—no missing that. Then he looked about as chummy as a rattleweed. Nobody knew his name; nobody knew where he came from; nobody knew how he got his place, or why, or how long he'd stick—or nothing. One thing was sure, though—he was onto his job, even if we weren't onto him. A girl down at Red Bottle nicknamed him Handsome Jack one day, and the outfit took it up because the name fitted. We had to call him something, and he wasn't the sort of guy you can say "Here you!" to, or whistle when you want him. Some of the ladies at the station thought he was, but they found out pretty quick he didn't know they were alive. That was another queer thing about him—until we learned.

It was Limbo Aleck that first made Jack solid with the boys. He rolled in from the highlands one day, with the red liquor inside showin' pink through his skin.

"Well, well, well!" he says, sizin' Jack up. "Who knocked that off the parlor mantel?"

Nobody said nothing, and Jack didn't make a move.

"Finished real delicate, ain't he?" Aleck pursued. "Where's the plush-lined box you came in, Marmaduke?"

Jack was just as thoughtful as a lizard in the sunshine. Accourse, Aleck had ought to have knowed that any man with the nerve to sit still and take that without a quiver is to

be approached with caution. But Aleck was nothin' but a megaphone for the Old Booze to holler through. He ground out a few more observations; then, over he goes and pats Jack on the head real patronizing-like. Aleck's hand weighs about twenty pounds, and his manners are mighty ornery when he wants to make 'em. Jack was real put out. He got up and swatted Aleck one in the jaw that would have knocked his head lopsided, if he hadn't swatted him the mate to it in the other jaw to set it on straight again. Talk about sinking softly to rest! Aleck stretched out so comfortable he didn't wake up for near an hour. Did he apologize? Not just exactly. Couldn't, because he had to wear his jaw in a sling for a week, and by that time the scrap was outlawed.

Naturally, we all treated Handsome Jack some considerate after that, particularly as we'd already made out that he could ride more than a few, and that his gun-record was in the Handle-with-care class. Only for one thing he'd 'a' been mighty popular: he was so blame' reserved!—never said a word about his own affairs. Yes, sir, he was a sure-enough shy and shrinking violet when it came to anything about himself. Why, he shot as pretty a hole as you ever saw through Dutch Peter's left ear, because Dutch asked him what brand he wore when he was on the home ranch. Dutch said it was a pretty tart answer to what was meant for a civil question, but he never laid it up against Jack. They got to be good friends, after a