



In came a skeleton, which walked slowly towards the couch—"Did you see that?" said the Doctor, while his voice trembled and was scarcely audible.—Page 57.

TALES  
OF THE  
PICKET-GUARD;

OR,  
THE BLUE-DEVILS DRIVEN FROM CAMP.

A COLLECTION OF STORIES

TOLD BY

THREE ROLICKING BOYS ON PICKET-GUARD.

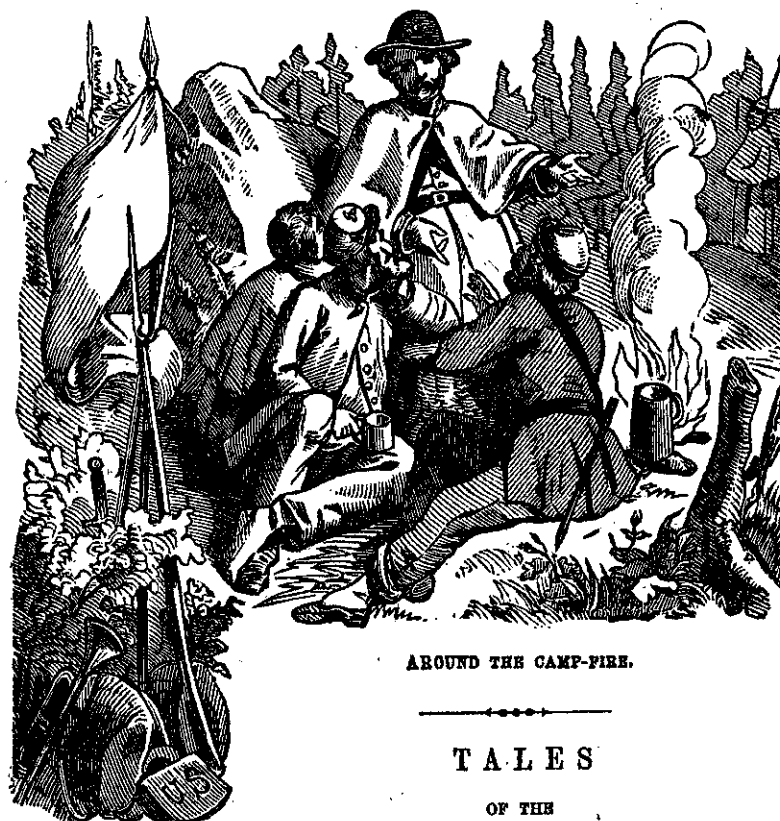
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PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY BARCLAY & CO.  
No. 602 ARCH STREET.  
1864.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by  
BAROLAY & CO.,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District  
of Pennsylvania.

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AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

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TALES  
OF THE  
PICKET-GUARD.

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CHAPTER I.

WHILE our regiment was lying in winter quarters near Culpeper Court House my company was detached and sent out on picket duty for two weeks. As the rebels were not intending any advance-movement, but were resting themselves after the hard campaigns of the previous summer and fall, our duties were not arduous. It seemed as if we were to be doomed to a very wearisome two weeks. In my company were two rollicking fellows, both of them old classmates of mine at Yale College. No livelier men were in the regiment than Jim Myers and Charlie Green.

Fortunately we were placed on the same outpost, and while always ready for the tread of a rebel we were alike ready for fun and amusement. One day as we were cooking our mess, Jim broke out very suddenly:

"I say, fellows, we must get up some excitement or we will die here in less than three days."

"Yes," rejoined Charlie, "these woods make me creep with horror every time I look around them."

"Ah! an idea strikes me," said I, "I tell you how we can pass the time pleasantly. Let's agree to tell a good story every day after dinner."

"Capital!" shouted Jim and Charlie, in the same breath. "We are agreed; and the man who tells a poor story will have to stand the watch of the other two."

"That suits me," I replied. "We will take turns every day. Let one story be told, and afterwards a few jokes and anecdotes will wind up the entertainment, which will be none else than the 'Tales of the Picket-Guard.'"

Having swallowed our hard-tack and coffee, we sat down beside the blazing fire, and, our pipes being filled and lighted to satisfaction, I was compelled, being the originator of the scheme, to lead off with the following:

#### MY REVENGE.

We met in the beginning of the action, I and my enemy, Richard Withers—he on foot, I mounted. It matters not why I hated him with the fiercest wrath of my nature. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and the details, while most painful to me, would be of trifling interest to you. Suffice it that our feud was not a political one. For ten years we were the closest intimates that the same studies, the same tastes, the same arms could make us. I was the elder of the two, and stronger physically; comparatively friendless, as the world takes it, and had no near relatives. Young, solitary, and visionary as we were, it is hard to make you understand what we were to each other. Up to this period of our estrangement, working together, eating together, sleeping together, I can safely say that we had not a grief, not a pleasure, or a vacation, that we did not share with almost boyish single-heartedness. But one single day changed all. We rose in the morning dear friends, and lay down at night bitter foes. I was a man of extremes: I either loved or hated with the strength of my heart. The past was forgotten in the present. The ten years of kindness, of congeniality, of almost humanly kindness, were erased as with a sponge. We looked each other in the face with angry, searching eyes—said but

a few words (our rage was too deep to be demonstrative), and parted. Then in my solitude I dashed my clenched hand upon the Bible and vowed passionately: "I may wait ten years, Richard Withers! I may wait twenty, thirty, if you will; but, sooner or later, I swear I shall have my revenge!"

And this was the way we met.

I wonder if he thought of that day when he laid his hand upon my bridle-rein and looked up at me with his treacherous blue eyes. I scarcely think he did, or he could not have given me that look. He was beautiful as a girl; indeed, the contrast of his fair, aristocratic face with the regular outline and red, curving lips, to my own rough, dark exterior, might have been partly the secret of my former attraction to him. But the loveliness of an angel, if it had been his, would not have saved him from me then. There was a pistol in his hand, but before he had time to discharge it, I cut at him with my sword, and as the line swept on like a gathering wave, I saw him stagger under the blow, throw up his arms and go down with the press. Bitterly as I hated him, the ghastly face haunted me the long day through.

You all remember how it was at Fredericksburg. How we crossed the river at the wrong point, and under the raking fire of the enemy were so disastrously repulsed.

It was a sad mistake, and fatal to many a brave heart. When night fell I lay upon the field among dead and wounded. I was comparatively helpless. A ball had shivered the cap of my right knee, and my shoulder was laid open with a sabre-cut. The latter bled profusely, but by dint of knotting my handkerchief tightly around it, I managed to stanch it in a measure. For my knee I could do nothing. Consciousness did not forsake me, and the pain was intense; but from the moans and wails of the men about me I judged that others had fared worse than I. Poor fellows! there was many a mother's darling suffering there. Many of my comrades—lads of eighteen or twenty, who had never seen a night from home until they joined the army, spoiled pets of fortune, manly enough at heart, but children in years and constitution, who have been used to have every little ache and scratch compassionated with an almost



THE BLOW FROM A FRIEND.

extravagant sympathy—there crushed and dying, huddled together—some where they had weakly crawled upon their hands and knees—and never a woman's voice to whisper gentle consolation. It was pitchy dark, and a cold, miserable rain was falling upon us, the very heavens weeping over our miseries. Then through the darkness and drizzling rain, through the groans and prayers of the fallen men about me, I heard a familiar voice close to my side:

"Water! water! water! I am dying with thirst—if it be but a swallow—water! For God's sake, give me water!"

I recoiled with dismay. It was the voice of my enemy—the voice of Richard Withers. They were once very dear to me, those mellow tones; once the pleasantest music I cared to hear. Do you think they so softened me now? You are mistaken; I am candid about it. My blood boiled in my veins when powerless to withdraw from his detested neighborhood. There was water in my canteen. I had filled it before the last ball came. By stretching my hand I could give him a drink, but I did not raise a finger. Vengeance was sweet. I smiled grimly to myself, and said down in my secret heart:

"Not a drop shall cross his lips though he perish. I shall have my revenge."

Do you recoil with horror? Listen how merciful God was to me.

There was a poor little drummer on the other side—a merry, manly boy of twelve or thirteen, the pet and plaything of the regiment. There was something of the German in him; he had been with us from the first, and was reckoned one of the best drummers in the army. But we could never march to the tap of Charlie's drum again. He had got a ball in his lungs, and the exposure and fatigue, together with the wound, had made him light-headed. Poor little child! he crept close to me in the darkness and laid his cheek on my breast. May be he thought it was his own pillow at home; may be he thought it, poor darling, his mother's bosom. God only knows what he thought; but with his hot arm about my neck, and his curly head pressed close to my wicked heart, even then swelling with bitter hatred of my enemy, he began to murmur in his delirium, "Our Father who art in heaven."

I was a rough, bearded man. I had been an orphan for many a long year; but not too many or too long to forget the simple-hearted prayer of my childhood—the dim vision of that mother's face over which the grass had grown for twenty changing summers. Something tender stirred within my hardened heart. It was too dark to see the little face, but the young lips went on brokenly:

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

It went through me like a knife—sharper than the sabre-cut, keener than the ball. God was merciful to me, and this young child was the channel of his mercy.

"Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

I had never understood the words before. If an angel had spoken it could scarcely have been more of a revelation. For the first time the thought that I might be mortally wounded, that death might be nearer than I dreamed, struck me with awe and horror. The text of a long-forgotten sermon was in my ears: "It is appointed for all men to die, and after death the judgment."

Worse and worse. What measure of mercy could I expect, if the same was meted out that I had meted unto my enemy. The tears welled into my eyes, and trickled my cheeks—the first that I had shed since my boyhood. I felt subdued and strangely moved.

The rain was falling still, but the little head upon my breast was gone. He crept away silently in the darkness. His unconscious mission was fulfilled; he would not return at my call.

Then I lifted myself with great effort. The old bitterness was crushed, but not altogether dead.

"Water! water!" moaned Richard Withers, in his agony.

I dragged myself closer to him.

"God be praised!" I said with a solemn heart. "Dick, old boy—enemy no longer—God be praised! I am willing and able to help you. Drink and be friends."

It had been growing lighter and lighter in the east, and now it was day. Day within and day without. In the first gray glimmer of dawn we looked into each other's ghastly faces for a moment, and then



THE PRAYER ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

the canteen was at Richard's mouth, and he drank as only the fevered can drink. I watched him with moist eyes, leaning upon my elbow and forgetting the bandaged shoulder. He grasped me with both hands.

Blod-stained and pallid as it was, his face was ingenuous and beautiful as a child's.

"Now let me speak," he said, panting. "You have misjudged me, Rufus. It was all a mistake. I found it out after we parted. I meant to have spoken this morning when I grasped your rein, but—but—"

His generosity spared me the rest.

The wound my hand had inflicted was yet bleeding in his head; but for the blind passion of the blow it must have been mortal. Was vengeance so sweet after all? I felt something warm trickling from my shoulder. The daylight was gone again—how dark it was!

"Forgive me, Dick," I murmured, groping about for him with my hands. Then I was blind—then I was cold as ice—then I tumbled down an abyss, and every thing was blank.

"The crisis is past; he will recover," cried a strange voice.

"Thank God! thank God!" cried a familiar one.

I opened my eyes. Where am I? How odd every thing was! Rows of beds stretching down a long, narrow hall, bright with sunshine; and women wearing white caps and peculiar dresses flitting to and fro with noiseless activity, which in my fearful weakness it tired me to watch. My hand lay outside the covers—it was as shadowy as a skeleton's. What had become of my flesh? Was I a child, or a man? A body, or a spirit? I was done with material things altogether, and had been subjected to some refining process, and but now awakened to a new existence. But did they have beds in the other world? I was looking lazily at the opposite one, when some one took my hand. A face was bending over. I looked up with a beating heart. The golden sunshine was on it—on the fair, regular features, and the lips, and the kindly blue eyes.

"Dick!" I gasped, "where have you been all these years?"

"Weeks, you mean," said Richard, with the old smile. "But never mind, now. You are better, dear Rufus—you will live—we shall be happy together again."

It was more a woman's voice than a man's, but Dick had a tender heart.

"Where am I?" I asked, still hazy. "What's the matter with me?"

"Hospital, in the first place," said Richard. "Typhus, in the second. You were taken after that night at Fredericksburg."

It broke upon me at once. I remembered that awful night—I could never, never forget it again. Weak as a child, I covered my face and burst into tears. Richard was on his knees by my side at once.

"I was a brute to recall it," he whispered remorsefully. "Do not think of it, old boy—you must not excite yourself. It is all forgotten and forgiven."

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," I prayed from my inmost heart.

"Those words have been in your mouth day and night, ever since you were taken," said my friend.

I lay silent, cogitating.

"Tell me one thing," I asked. "Are we in the North, or South?"

"North. In Philadelphia."

"Then you are a prisoner," I said, mournfully, recalling his principles.

"Not a bit of it."

"What do you mean?"

Richard laughed.

"I have seen the errors of my ways. I have taken the oath of allegiance. When you are strong enough again we shall fight side by side."

"And the wound in your head?" I asked, with emotion, looking up at his bright, handsome face.

"Don't mention it! It healed up long ago."

"And the little drummer?"

Richard bowed his head upon my hand.

"He was found dead upon the field. Heaven bless him! They said he died praying, with his mother's name upon his lips."

"Revere him as an angel!" I whispered, grasping him by the hand. "But for his dying prayer we had yet been enemies!"

"A good story," said Jim, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "but we must have a few jokes after that. So here's my attempt:

"You all recollect old Judge Jonah Jones. Well, he delivered a charge once in court that was a charge. Elim Crunch, an old vagabond, was being tried for theft. At the conclusion of the counsel's argument, the old judge, brushing up his thinly scattered hair, and rubbing his very red nose, delivered the following charge to the jury:

"Jury, you kin go out, and don't show your ugly mugs here till you find a verdict—if you can't find one of your own, git the one the last jury used."

"The jury retired, and after an elapse of fifteen minutes, returned with a verdict of 'Suicide in the ninth degree and fourth verse.'

"Then Judge Jonah Jones pronounced Elim Crunch this sentence:

"Elim Crunch, stan' up and face the music. You are found guilty of suicide for stealing. Now this court sentence you to pay a fine of five shillings, to shave your head with a bagganet, in the barricks, and if you try to cave in the heads of any of the jury, you'll catch thunder, that's all. Your fate will be warning to others; and the conclusion,

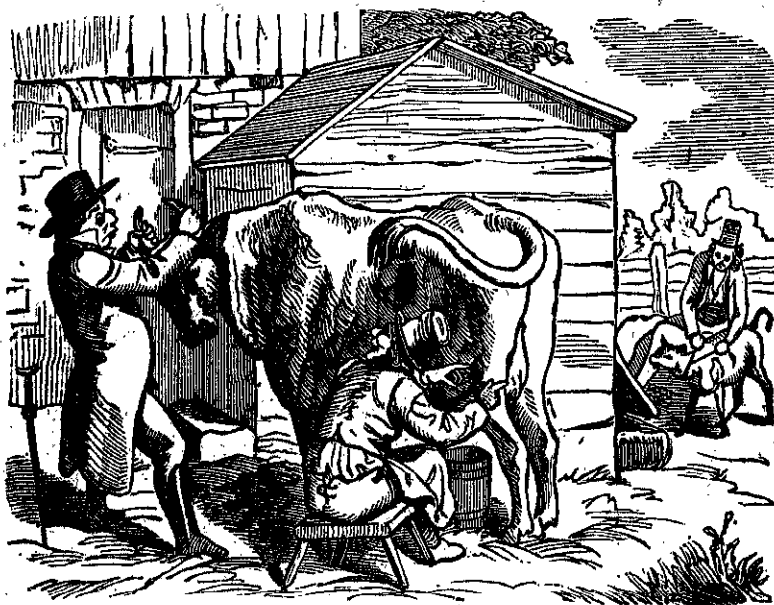
may the Lord have mercy on your soul. Sheriff, get me a pint of red eye. I am awful thirsty."

"A big thing on the judge," interrupted Charlie, "I hope he didn't have as much trouble in getting elected as another judge I used to know out West. Squeers was his name, though he never spelled it twice the same way. Old Squeers came upon a poor white man who had a vote, although just at that time he was milking his cow. Squeers thought he would gain a little favor with the old man, so he asked him if he should hold the cow, which seemed to be uneasy, and the old man consenting very readily, he took her by the horns, and held fast until the operation was done.

"Have you had Robinson (his rival) around here lately?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. He's behind the barn, holding the calf."

"Very good, boys, we are succeeding admirably; let my story conclude our day's fun.



TRYING TO GET INTO FAVOR.

"When I was coming from New York to Philadelphia, a year ago in the midnight train, the following incident occurred:

"Among the passengers was a tall, dark, nervous looking man, who was impatient as the cars stopped at the way station, and moved slowly and carefully along. He cast angry glances at the conductor who was 'laying back' for another stop. When the cars reached Passaic and the nervous man found that the speed was not increased, he called to the conductor, compelled that individual to bend his head as though

to receive a communication of some moment, and hoarsely whispered: "How much do you get for the job?"

"Sir!" said the conductor, again looking at the man as though desirous of enlightenment.

"How much for the job?" again asked the nervous man. "Does it come cheaper than hacks?"

"A stare was the only answer.

"Whose body is it?" continued the nervous man, stuffing a fresh piece of tobacco into his mouth.

"Body, sir! what do you mean, sir?"

"Why, ain't this car following a hearse?"

"No," answered the astonished conductor.

"Oh, I thought it was, judging by its speed."

"The conductor pulled the rope and the car went ahead with a rush."

## CHAPTER II.

"FELLOWS," said Jim, "I have a story for you to-day which I composed last night when about half asleep. I shall tell it to you as if I were reading it from a manuscript. Are your pipes full and puffing well? if so I will proceed."

We nodded assent, and Jim told the following with no interruptions save when he stopped to relight his pipe.

### THE ORDEAL OF BATTLE.

"And this is your final decision, Miss Clay?"

She was a beauty born, that rose-mouthed little Rachel Clay, with her large wistful eyes trembling with blue, radiant light, like a veiled cheek stained with pomegranate crimson—an empress of hearts from her cradle up! And sitting in the framework of roses that trailed athwart the casement, with white ribbons fluttering from her satin brown curls, and one red jewel flashing among the folds of her muslin dress, you would almost have fancied her some fair pictured saint.

Harry Cleveland was leaning against the window, a tall, handsome young fellow, with dark eyes and hair, and a brown cheek, flushed deeply with suppressed anger and mortification.



"Yes, Mr. Cleveland, it is," said Rachel, calmly lifting her clear eyes to his face. "You have asked me for my reasons—and, although I question your right to make such a demand, still, I have no objections to render them."

"Speak on," said Harry, biting his lip furiously, "let me know why I am condemned."

"They are soon spoken," said Rachel, quietly. "I have liked you very much, Mr. Cleveland—still like you—but in the man whom I marry I look for greater firmness and decision of purpose than you have ever displayed. Earnestness, resolve, these are the only qualities that I can respect. Do you misunderstand me? do you suppose that I blame you for the lack of qualifications which—"

Rachel paused instinctively, while the pomegranate tinge on her cheeks blazed into vivid scarlet, in sympathy with the deep blush that dyed her lover's whole face. He bowed simply, and walked out of the room with a firm, haughty step.

Late that evening he sat at his window, with clenched teeth and lowering brow, watching the fiery embers of sunset fade into the purple gloom, and noting the silver of innumerable constellations as they followed one another over the blue concave of heaven. But the gleam of sun and stars might have been Egyptian darkness for all he knew or cared about their gentle influences.

"Life!" he murmured darkly to himself, "what is it worth to me now? What care I who wins the glittering prizes in fate's lottery, or who is rejected—and for a mere whim too! If I could only forget her as quickly as she will forget me! the fickle, beautiful enchantress!"

"Hallo, Cleveland! I'm going to call on pretty Rachel Clay. Will you come go along, too?"

Captain Morrell had paused under the window, with his brown, merry face turned upward, and the dim gas-lamp flickering over his gold shoulder-straps.

Cleveland shook his head.

"Not to-night!"

And Morrell went on his way, the fire of his cigar gleaming fitfully through the darkness.

"There he goes!" muttered the pensive misanthrope, "with his gilt buttons and his military airs and—well, and it is for such as he that Rachel throws away my love!"

"So you've enlisted, Harry?" said the Squire Clay, polishing the glasses of his spectacles. "Well, it's what I'd do myself, if I was forty years younger. Ain't you ought to tell our Rachel good-bye? Haven't time? Well, I do declare!"

The Squire gazed in astonishment after the vanishing figure of Harry Cleveland on horseback, as it disappeared among the trees.

"I wonder what Rachel will say," was his unspoken comment.

But Rachel said nothing.

While, day by day, the old wound rankled and grew sorer in Harry Cleveland's heart.

"Will he live, Doctor?"

Every pulse in Rachel Clay's being seemed to stand still, as her blue, dilated eyes searched the doctor's kind, sun-browned face.

"Live? Why shouldn't he? All he needs is a little care, and I see he is likely to get that. Now don't blush up, my dear, he's not the first soldier in my ward that has a pretty girl come to nurse him, and I like them all the better for it! Give him the draught when he wakes, and keep the bandage on his forehead. He'll probably carry an ugly scar to his grave! but that will be the worst of it."

The good old man trotted briskly away to the next "case," while Rachel, kneeling down beside the low iron bedstead, cried tears of intense thankfulness that Harry Cleveland would not die.

"Rachel! I am not dreaming surely—yet it was but a moment ago we made that cavalry charge on fixed bayonets!"

His large, unnaturally brilliant eyes wandered vaguely around the room—and then returned to the tender face bending over him.

"It was three days since, dearest; you are lying in the barracks now, wounded, and I have come from Glenville to nurse you!"

"You, Rachel?"

"Yes, Harry, I!"

"Why did you come?" he asked quite gloomily.

"Because I love you, Harry," she murmured, the bright crimson suffusing her whole face.

A strange light of rapture flashed into Harry's eyes—his pulse leaped within the fevered veins.

"Love me, Rachel—yet it is not a month since you refused me!"

"Dearest, because I fancied you weak and vacillating. In the fiery smoke of the battle-field you have proved yourself worthy of the tenderest love—you have written your name here on the glorious though sanguine rolls of your country. Harry, because I refused you once, you will not reject me now?"

"Reject you, my heart's queen! Oh, Rachel, how can I be sure that this is not a bright, treacherous delirium?"

She bent her soft cheek on his—and then he knew that it was no baseless vision, but a sweet reality.

"Then you did not care for Captain Morrell after all?"

"I never cared for any one but you, Harry!"

And when September hung her crown of purple mist over the hills, Harry Cleveland came home to be married, still handsome, although his forehead bore a fresh scar across its broad expanse. When the villagers asked curiously if it was a life-long mark, Harry answered gayly—

"I would not lose it for a fortune; that scar won me a wife!"

#### HEROISM OF GENERAL BUTLER'S WIFE.

"Women are a great institution," said Charlie, as he brushed away as honest a tear as ever a soldier shed. "I tell you their devotion to us poor devils is a wonder. Yes, they are not only devoted, but sometimes I think they are a mighty sight more courageous than us men. The other day I was reading a description of the coolness of General Butler's wife in a storm off Hatteras, in which the Mississippi, having on board General Butler and his wife, together with his staff and a regiment of soldiers on their way to New Orleans, came near being lost.

"This account of the storm was written by Mrs. Butler herself."

Again the men formed in line, from hold to deck, and baled water all night, the seas, roaring, phosphorescent, gleaming as a serpent's back, struck the quivering ship like heavy artillery. The dread was, when she plunged into the trough of the sea, and the waves swept over her, that she would founder and go down. We turned our course north to run with the wind, which blew from the southwest; we kept in it that night and through the next day until twelve o'clock, when the storm was so broken that we turned short about, ran up three sails, and flew down the coast like a bird past Cape Hatteras, Point Lookout, down to Cape Fear.

We were at breakfast congratulating each other on our escape from the storm, the delightful weather, and the rapid speed we were making. I left the table a moment, and was in my room preparing to go on deck, when there came a surging, grating sound from the bottom of the ship. A pause—the engines stopped—(a hush of dread throughout the ship)—it worked again—another heavy lurching and quivering of the ship—again the engine stopped. We were aground on Frying Pan Shoals, fifteen miles from shore; the coast held by the enemy; four or five small boats, and sixteen hundred people on board. \* \* \* Brains and hands worked, busily devising, and executing ways to get her off, and men watched for sails at every point, for there, in truth, was almost our only hope. At last one appeared in sight. Signals were hoisted. It was proposed to hoist it with the union down.

"Not so," said General Butler, "let the union go up."

Guns were fired to show our distress, though apprehensive she might prove a rebel steamer, and we be forced to fight in our crippled state, or yield, inglorious prisoners. She proved a friend. It was now late in the afternoon. We ran on at full tide, and must wait until it returned, at seven in the evening, before we could hope to pull her off. A hawser was stretched to the other vessel, and the soldiers moved double quick, fore and aft, to loosen her from the sand. They labored and pulled, but failed to lift her. The tide was not yet full. Two or three hundred men were already sent to the Mount Vernon. The wind began to rise, and the waves to swell into the heavy seas, that looked so dark and wrathful. General Butler came to me and said:

"You must make ready to go in a few minutes."

Captain Glisson was about to run to his own vessel, and would take me with him. The general's duty would be to remain until every man was safe, or while the ship held together. This was clear enough, and I only said:

"I would rather remain here, if you are willing."

I know not why, but I felt more safety where I was than in that little boat tossing below in the mad waves, or in the strange vessel in the distance.

"Why do you think of such a thing?" he said; "are you mad, that you would risk to the children the loss of both?"

"I will go," I answered, "when the captain is ready."

General Butler went away to the pilot house. The ship was beating heavily in the surf, and men's hearts beat heavier still as the night swept toward us. The deck was crowded with men. Major Bell gave me his arm. There was a move—a "make way for Mrs. Butler." I was helped over the railing. (One man spoke out, "Well, if a woman can keep cool, it will be strange if we can't.") Captain Glisson preceded me down the side of the ship, and aided as much as possible. The boat was tossing like a nutshell far below, as down the unsteady ladder we slipped. When nearly at the bottom the captain said:

"Jump, madam, we'll catch you," and down I went into the boat. "Pull, men—be lively," the captain called out every few minutes. A wave leaped up and drenched the man at the tiller; he shrank from it, but the captain urged the greater speed. In a quarter of an hour we were aboard the Mount Vernon.

"The Mississippi was finally got off, and the heroic woman returned to it, and did much to quiet the apprehension of the soldiers, unaccustomed to the dangers of the sea, during the remainder of the voyage."





## A RATHER FAST WOMAN.

"Speaking of women," I said, "reminds me of what Artemas Ward says of his wife's doings while he was away to the wars. This is his language, verbatim:"

I must relate a little incident which occurred to your humble servint on his return from the wars. I was walkin' along the street, lookin' so gallient and gay, in me brass kote and blue buttons, and other military harness, when a excited femail rusht out uv a house, throw'd her pump-handles around me neck—which part I didn't mind much, as they was fair, round ones—an' exclaimed:

"Doo I behold thee once agin?"

"You doo—and I think you are holdin' me too fastly," sez I, a trying to release the eccentric femail's arms.

"Oh, have you cum back—have you cum back!" she wildly cried, hanging tighter to my neck.

"Certainly I've cum back, or else I would not be here. But I don't think I know yu muchly."

"Not know me—your own Claretta Rosetta Belletta—she who has not sot eyes unto yu for mor'n tew years. Yes," she continued, placin' her hands onto my shoulders, and lookin' up into my face like a dyin' hoss-fly—"yes, I see me own Alfred's eyes, his nose, his ears, his—"

"Madam," sez I, "excuse me, but allow me to correct yu. Ef I'm not mistaken, these eyeses, and earses, and noses, belong to myself individooly, an' your Alfred never owned 'em scarcely."

"Away with this farce," sez she. "You can't deceive your own Claretta. Cum into the house and see your little son, Lincoln Burnside McClellan Beazer."

It was evident that the femail was mistaken; that it was not me, but another man she wanted.

"How old is he?" sez I.

"Which?" sez she.

"The little son, Lincoln Burnside McClellan and so 4th."

"He's just 6 months old, the little darlin'."

"Well, madam," sez I, "ef Little Lincoln Burnside McClellan and so 4th is only 6 months old, and yu havn't sot eyes on your Alfred for mor'n tew years, I think thair's a mistake somewhair, an' that I'm not Alfred, but another man altogether."

The woman shot into the house like 60, and this was the last I saw of my Claretta Rosetta Belletta, but I pity Alfred.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO A SANITARY FAIR.

"How the women have worked for us during this war!" said Jim. "Here is a letter from my sister describing how some of the articles were marked at a fair recently held for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission."

Thus, on a homespun blanket, worn, but washed as clean as snow, was pinned a bit of paper which said: "This blanket was carried by Milly Aldrich (who is ninety-three years old) down hill and up hill, one and a half miles, to be given to some soldier."

On a bed-quilt was pinned a card, saying: "My son is in the army. Whoever is made warm by this quilt, which I have worked on for six days and most all of six nights, let him remember his own mother's love."

On another blanket was this: "This blanket was used by a soldier in the war of 1812—may it keep some soldier warm in this war against traitors."

On a pillow was written: "This pillow belonged to my little boy, who died resting on it; it is a precious treasure to me, but I give it for the soldiers."

On a pair of woollen socks was written: "These stockings were knit by a little girl five years old, and she is going to knit some more, for mother says it will help some poor soldier."

On a box of beautiful lint was this mark: "Made in a sick room, where the sunlight has not entered for nine years, but where God has entered, and where two sons have bid their mother good-bye as they have gone out to the war."

On a bundle containing bandages was written: "This is a poor gift, but it is all I had; I have given my husband and my boy, and only wish I had more to give, but I hav'n't."

On some eye-shades were marked: "Made by one who is blind. Oh, how I long to see the *dear old flag* that you are all fighting under."

### A FASHIONABLE WEDDING.

"I think," continued Charlie, "that we may as well conclude our fireside talk with an odd description of a wedding which I wrote long before I thought of shouldering a musket. Perhaps one of you can set it to music:

"Four and twenty bridegrooms all in a row;  
Four and twenty dandies dressed from top to toe;  
Four and twenty grimaces, four and twenty smiles;  
And the carriages extending four and twenty miles.  
Four and twenty bridesmaids dressed in hoop and feather,  
Eight and forty Nimshies standing all together.

The bride ringed and jewelled,  
The groom gloved and glum,  
And both of them look foolish,  
And both of them are dumb;

A thousand spectators  
To see the pretty match;  
A thousand tongues to whisper,  
He made quite a catch;

Eight and forty ninnies  
Marching out of church,  
Like so many school-boys  
Running from the birch.

Oh, what a sight to look upon as ever I did see;  
The world makes a great fuss for nothing, seems to me."

"One word," said Jim, "before we part. I wish to give you one of my ideas when a school-boy. It is this: the man who plants a birch-tree near a school-house, little knows what he is conferring on posterity."

### CHAPTER III.

"Nubbs," said my companions, as the rain pattered upon our rubber blankets, "this is a dreadful dreary day, and we must have a ghost story—something exciting, with a woman or two mixed up in it, and any thing else horrible."

"Well," I replied, "I can just suit you, and have a story in my mind which will make you puff those pipes more vigorously than you ever did before. It is titled:

### A RIDE WITH DEATH, OR THE SKELETON OF THE COLLEGE.

During the winter of 1859 I was a junior in one of the New England colleges, and ascending the hill of science, retarded somewhat by flirtations and adventures. Whether I was a good or bad scholar has little to do with my present purpose, but in order to assure myself of the confidence of the public I will say that by referring to the archives of said institution you will find my name in legible characters as a recipient of a sheep-skin.

I purpose to follow this imperfect but sufficient introduction with an incident in my college-life, which has never failed to exert a certain influence over me, and I am daily reminded of it by a grinning skull which hangs up in my bedroom.

One winter evening, after going over to the college buildings and satisfying myself that there was no special "scrape" on hand for that night, I returned to my room and concluded that I would conduct myself in a studious and quiet manner.

It had been snowing all day, but now the sky was clear and the stars shining brightly seemed to envy the moon as she threw her gentle rays through the snow-laden elms upon the streets below. Looking from my window I saw the merry sleighs dashing by, some filled with quiet love-makers, others over-burdened with boisterous students evidently out for a frolic, while on the opposite side of the street lay the city cemetery with its sad monuments of the dead, mocking as it were the enjoyments of the hour. Opening my pocket-book I found it fully concurred in the petition: "Lead us not into temptation;" and knowing that love was inadequate to procure a horse and sleigh, I donned my wrapper and slippers and prepared for intellectual havoc.

Accordingly I took from my library of ancient and modern worthies "Hamilton's Metaphysics," but considering that a smoke was first in order, my pipe was quickly filled with Turkish, a good old rocking-chair drawn up before the glowing grate, and my study table placed at my left, with a kerosene lamp throwing out a mild and pleasant light. Lighting my pipe, and seating myself as comfortably as experience or imagination could suggest, I indulged in lazy thoughts and fancies. Now I would make a ring (an accomplishment of dexterous smokers only), and as it sailed slowly toward the ceiling revolving on its imaginary axis, gradually expanding, and, finally breaking into many little clouds, seemed to fill the room with a thousand fairy

castles, I imagined each of them made more beautiful by her whose black eyes, peering through the smoke-wreaths, threw gentle glances and then vanished.

Again, I would speculate upon my course in college. Whether I would graduate with honor, passing successfully my examinations, and clothe myself with the dignity of an alumnus. Whether the world would receive me kindly, or was it cold and selfish as I had heard gray-haired men say it was, who, watchworn and weary, had experienced its hardships and, lying down to die, had longed to live no more, for life to them was bitterness and woe.

While musing thus I was startled by a rap at my door, and in came the old janitor of the medical college, "Captain Cook." Why he was surnamed "Captain" I am unable to say. Perhaps because like the mythical ferryman of the lower regions he was interested in the disposal of dead bodies.

"Well, Captain," said I, looking at him through a dense cloud of smoke, "what is the latest news from your abode of dead men's bones and empty skulls? Any new subject arrived for the unskilful knife of some heartless 'medic?' Come, old mortality, take a pipe and tell me some horrible tale about walking skeletons enveloped with sulphurous smoke that haunt your chamber every night, their sightless sockets peering over your bed and filling your soul with terror and longings for the light of day."

"Bob," replied the Captain, filling his short ebony pipe, "no ghost or skeleton ever frightened this old coon. Oh, no! they all know me. I haven't boiled down bodies and strung their bones upon wires for nothing. I tell you after a man has died, been hacked to pieces by one of those ignorant students, and then taken a warm bath in my old, black kettle, and finally been strung on wires—if he ain't dead after that, at least it will be pretty difficult for him to stand the night air. Eh, my boy!" and the Captain indulged in a low, chuckling laugh, evidently concluding that he had fully established a physiological fact that after a man had died his locomotive powers ceased, a conclusion which we all shall arrive at with less argument than the Captain's.

"Captain, to speak in a classical manner: 'Plato, thou reasonest well.' But I myself believe that we have visits from the spirit-land. In this very room only last night I was awakened by the sweetest music. At first it seemed at a great distance, but coming nearer and nearer, it finally appeared to be right over my bed. Quietly turning my head, I saw the most beautiful vision. Angels were bearing home to the realms of bliss some lifeless wanderer of the earth. As they mounted upward on their golden wings, filling the air with the most delicious harmony, this form, which had been perfectly motionless,

turned toward me and, smiling, whispered: 'Farewell. All is peace.' I am confident it looked exactly like my mother. And so excited was I by the resemblance that I could not sleep, but walked my room all night, now praying that my mother's life might be spared for many years, and again laughing at my fears and consoling myself that it was only a vision and perhaps a dream."

"Oh, gas!" interposed the Captain. "Some baby dream. Do you suppose that you are of so much consequence that angels would take the trouble to tell you what they are going to do? If so, I shall have to engage your board over at the asylum. Now, Bob, if you really want to have a good time, come with me to-night. I am going over to the B—— Poor-house, about half-past eleven o'clock, to get a couple of dead bodies. I have a horse and sleigh and plenty of good Santa Cruz, and if we don't have a jolly ride it will be because our companions ain't sociable. Come, my boy, no excuses. You must go. Such a chance don't come around every night. Well, I do say, how pale you look! You ain't afraid, are you?"

"No, Captain, I was merely thinking of that dream. But I will go. You may expect to see me over at your den in good season. In the meantime I will just run over my lesson for to-morrow. 'Duty before pleasure,' as Abraham said to Isaac when he was carrying the wood for the sacrifice. Mind you do not take too much Santa Cruz, for in that case you might become an unsociable companion."

"That will be all right," replied the Captain; "but do you take care that you don't keep me waiting by trying to figure out that vision before you go." Refilling his pipe he went away, leaving behind him a train of smoke which seemed to me to be filled with a thousand little dancing skeletons.

After he had gone, I said to myself: "This truly will be an adventure—a sleigh-ride with death"—and as I thought of the Captain I was tempted to say—"and the devil." Having seriously considered the possibility of the existence of ghosts, I thought that this would be a good opportunity to test the truth of my opinions; for surely we never could accomplish such a ride without seeing something of the supernatural. Deciding that I would go with the Captain, I took down my Metaphysics and prepared my recitation for the following morning. Soon I became absorbed in such interesting questions as, How does a man know that he knows what he does know? How many latent ideas would be developed by an ass standing between two equally attractive bundles of hay? Is a man falling from the top of a building a free-will agent, or the creature of necessity?

While I am thus engaged confusing my mind with Hobbes's Theory Refuted, Reid's Doctrine Disapproved, Hume Confuted, Fallacy of

Adam Smith, etc., I would call the reader's attention to the following sketch of my friend the Captain.

The Captain was a very original character, both in his appearance and conduct. Long, red hair fell in tangled locks upon his shoulders. His face red with the evaporation of Santa Cruz rum was rendered more unseemly by a short, grizzly beard, while two restless eyes, shaded by an old slouched hat and set far back in his head, looked out upon you with such a sly, wicked glance that your soul was filled with fear and you imagined there stood before you some old pirate whose hands were stained with the blood of a thousand innocents. He had been janitor of this medical college for forty years, and could tell you many a sickening tale of bodies stolen from their quiet resting-place and stowed away at night in the cellar of that old building to be prepared for the dissector's knife. How he loved to visit country graveyards when nature blushing in all the beauties of spring called upon relatives and friends to cover with flowers the quiet resting-places of those they mourned, and when with tears they leaned upon the tomb-stone and sighed for the same repose, he had laughed to think the grave had been emptied long ago by his own hands, and the forms so much loved by them ruthlessly seized from their calm repose while the tones of the funeral bell still lingered on the midnight air.

He seemed to have lost all sympathy for the good and beautiful. So many years he had walked among the dead that the "King of Terrors" by him was never feared. No thought had he of immortality, or life beyond the grave sacred to the service of God.

He had but one companion of his solitude. It was a small black bottle filled with his favorite Santa Cruz. Barnaby Rudge was not more attached to Grip, the omnipresent raven, than was the Captain to this bottle. He wore a pea-jacket with a capacious pocket for its express accommodation, and watched it as if it was the palladium of his liberty.

Why I had taken such a fancy to this man I cannot tell. Although I feared him still I could not resist the temptation to associate with him, and many hours have I enjoyed in hearing his wild and curious tales of olden times.

## CHAPTER IV.

HAVING fortified myself with cigars, a Colt's-revolver, and "a little for the stomach's sake," I set out for the Captain, who, by the way, lived in the basement of the medical college-building which immediately adjoins the cemetery, a circumstance no less curious than appropriate. I was confident that if we were stopped on the road I could at least establish my identity as a student, peaceably if possible, forcibly if necessary, as warlike men say.

"Hilloa, Bob! I was just going over after you. Jump in, my boy. No time to lose. Dead people, you know, are mighty punctual."

I was thus saluted by the Captain, seated in a double sleigh, reins in hand and anxious to be off. We were soon on our way; and driving rapidly through the streets, meeting here and there parties returning from some pleasure-excursion, we emerged from the city, and flying along the turnpike we soon found ourselves travelling alone and in solitary places. We had some twelve miles to go, and soon the jingling bells became very monotonous, so I determined upon having a talk with my old companion. Lighting a cigar—I could not persuade the Captain to take one, since he preferred his pipe—I said to him:

"Captain, who are these people that we are going after? Tell me whether their friends know about your errand to-night."

"Friends!" replied the Captain, looking at me with a sneer; "who ever heard of poor-house people having friends. But suppose they had friends, how much better off would they be now? Death wouldn't serve them a bit better. The grave, you know, treats king, beggar, thief, and Christian, all alike—the worms feed upon all. Queer, ain't it?" and the Captain, taking a long draught from his bosom friend, the black bottle, broke out into a laugh which seemed to startle the very hills.

"Come, Captain, less moralizing! And now about our future companions—do you buy them?"

"Yes," said the Captain, "five dollars a-piece. I tell you, Bob, it makes me feel bad as I think of the time when I didn't have to buy subjects. I used to watch for funerals, and there wasn't a body put under the sod for ten miles around this place without my knowing it. You see that moon?" I used to hate it, for I never could work handy with so much light, and many good chances have I lost by its shining brightly on new-made graves. But times have changed.

Every thing is built up around here, and instead of burying people in the country they are laid away in the cemeteries under lock and key. This new way of doing things has made the Captain's spade rusty and his resurrection wagon of no account. There's one of the evil effects of civilization for you!" and the Captain lashed the horses as if they had been the instigators of these improvements in the science of burial.

"Captain," I asked, "are these bodies male or female?"

"One is a man, the other a woman," replied the Captain. "I feel kind of bad for the man, but I am glad the woman is gone. I wish every woman was dead. I hate women. Yes, I hate 'em—don't I, Santa?" said the Captain, addressing himself to his bottle. As he replaced it I judged from his manner that he had received a satisfactory reply.

"Is there any thing or anybody that you love? You seem bereft of every kind feeling and sympathy. How can you bear to lie down and die, knowing that you have never loved or kindly treated your fellow-man, and that no one will ever mourn your loss or drop a flower upon your grave?"

"Bob," said the Captain, "take the reins and I will tell you a secret which has never left my breast for twenty years, and your friendship is the pledge of secrecy hereafter:

"Full thirty years ago \* \* \* \* \* she turned toward me with a countenance full of sorrow and love and said: 'I forgive you all, but will never return. Farewell.' Soon her form was lost in the distance as she rapidly hurried away from one who should have been her best friend and protector. I went back to our room. It was a bitter cold night, and as I lay down upon my bed I could but wonder where she would go for shelter. I slept; and waking on the morrow I found I was indeed alone. She who had sacrificed so much for me, and with all my faults loved me as no mortal ever loved, was gone. Aye, driven away by my own hand, and never again to return. As I pondered over it I grew more hardened, and hated her worse than ever. Through her I hated all women, and wish them evil. Since then I have lived alone, no friend but Santa until you came to college. So much for my secret."

"Well, Captain," I replied, "no wonder that you hate women. We always dislike those whom we have injured. Their very presence, since it calls up our own misdeeds, becomes unbearable. Therefore it is natural that you, after such cruel treatment of your best friend, should hate not only her, but those who remind you of her. Ah, Captain, a fortune-teller could easily predict your fate."

We were rapidly approaching the town. Staid-looking farm-houses

with their air of homeliness and virtue were gradually giving place to the more modern and neat-appearing houses of a New England village.

We passed through the sleeping village, and as we neared the outskirts a light was visible in the distance. The Captain, rousing himself from the stupidity into which my moral dissertation on his character had evidently thrown him, pointing to the light, said:

"That's the poor-house, Bob. There's where paupers live high at the expense of other people, and die in the midst of comfort. If you are ever in want of a home here is a safe retreat and plenty of victims to keep you company."

"Captain," I replied, "I think, from all accounts of the benevolence of such institutions, their unstinted charity and kindness, I should much prefer the application of cold-steel to my jugular and a comfortable suicide."

"I hope they'll tote them bodies out mighty sudden," said the Captain as we drove up to the door of a large, dingy-looking house, which seemed to have "pauper" written on its very door-stones."

"Well, you're a nice man, ain't you, keeping pious folks up till midnight," said a sharp voice, as a woman appeared at the door holding a candle in one hand and with the other protecting it from the wind which threatened every moment to extinguish it. From her appearance I immediately concluded that she was the female guardian of the establishment. Such a sharp, angular, vinegar-faced, dead-to-all-humanity countenance is seldom exhibited to mortals, and piercing eyes, which must have struck terror and dismay into the very vitals of the most energetic pauper, added an additional incubus to her charms.



THE PRETTY JANITRESS.

"Woman, I'm no pauper!" said the Captain. "Either bring out those bodies, or else take your own in very sudden."

"Joseph, what in the world are you doing? I never saw such a lazy man! Why don't you fetch 'um down? I should think you was dying yourself."

Having given this command in a voice which startled by its harsh-



ness even our horse, the matron disappeared for a moment and returned followed by a forlorn-looking man who carried in his arms a huge bundle wrapped in a sheet.

"That's the woman," said Joseph, in a scarcely audible voice, as he deposited the body in the back-seat of the sleigh.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Grip, "and she was the laziest woman that's been in this house for fifteen years. Pretended she had the heart-disease and could not work. I used to give her a piece of my mind 'bout folks living on other people's means, when if it wasn't for being so 'tarnal lazy they might make a fortin. Now I've supported myself and that husband of mine for the past twenty years by keeping this house, and laid up money beside by scrimping the table. Ain't it so, Joseph?"

"Yes," answered Joseph, in a tone which indicated that his future happiness depended in a great measure upon the reply he should make, "Sally Ann is the sharpest woman in this town, sharp as a razor with a dozen fine edges."

"Poor Joseph!" I soliloquized, "you are only one of a thousand such obedient husbands, the celerity of whose movements is only equalled by the rapidity of their wives' tongues. Unfortunate man! what historian shall ever do justice to thy matrimonial docility or the humility of thy meek and quiet spirit."

While musing thus upon the character of this hymenial martyr who had now brought out to the sleigh our second passenger, I was interrupted by the energetic language of Mrs. Grip:

"That's a man. I'm glad to see him go. Of all the laziest men that man was the laziest. I believe he died because he was too lazy to breathe. He was everlastingly complaining of the rheumatism, but he was always the first at the table, and eat—I never saw the beat! The extra amount that man has cost the parish would keep the heathen in tracts for a year."

"What did you say was the matter with this woman, Mrs. Grip?" said I, interrupting her in the midst of her raillery at my much-injured and oppressed sex.

"I don't know what you would call it. The doctor said it was consumption; but they kinder run every thing into consumption in our days, specially when they can't tell what does ail us."

"You say she has been in this house for fifteen years. Do you know her history, Mrs. Grip?"

"Don't know any thing 'bout her," replied Mrs. Grip.

I tried mighty hard to worm out of her who she was, where she came from, for what she came here, whether she had any friends, and why she didn't go to them. But she wouldn't tell me, so I quit asking.

"Come," said the Captain, "we can't wait any longer. Here's ten dollars for these bodies. I tell you, Mrs. Grip, I feel sad to think that I am buying bodies right in sight of the graveyard where I used to steal them," and as the Captain counted out the money into the broad palm of Mrs. Grip's hand, which looked like an expanded contribution-box, he seemed to be very doubtful as to the propriety of the act. I could but notice the utter disregard manifested by Joseph as he saw this new influx of specie into the matrimonial treasury. While Mrs. Grip's eyes dilated to their utmost capacity, Joseph's countenance illustrated the practical working of the rule: "To the victor belongs the spoils." He well knew that the money represented no future personal happiness of his own.

## CHAPTER V.

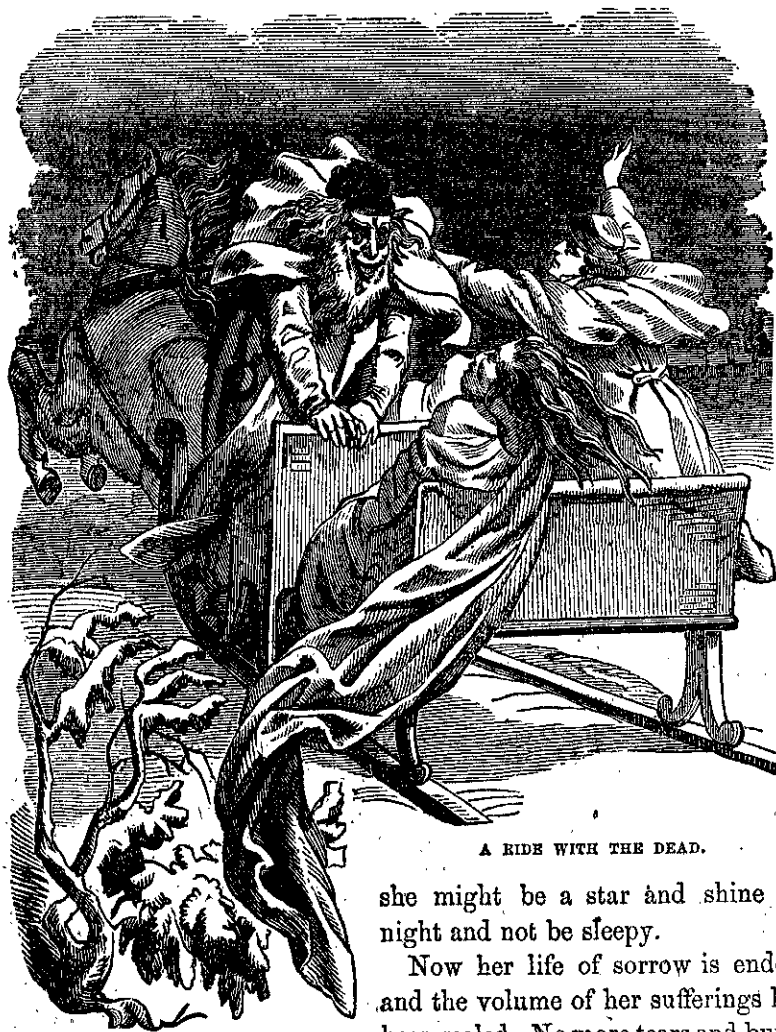
THE Captain having assigned to me the back-seat in order that our female friend might not want for any attention in her midnight ride, deposited the male body on the front seat by himself, so that the dead were indeed the companions of the living.

Bidding Mrs. Grip and her obedient spouse good-evening, and being assured that she expected "two more to go off" before the winter closed, we turned our horses homewards and rapidly retraced the road through the village, which, quiet as ever, seemed unconscious of the errand we had accomplished, and that two of its inhabitants rode through its streets for the last time.

Directly in front of me was the Captain, regardless of his new companion, who sat beside him grim and silent. Cautioning him against too much drink, I soon became occupied in speculations as to my fellow-passengers.

Within a foot of myself, and leaning back against the seat, was the body of a female, silent and motionless, enveloped in a sheet. What a commentary, thought I, is this on human life! What matters it whether this body, once so full of life, but now soulless and decaying, is buried beneath the green sod of the valley over which the winds would ever moan their sad requiem and merry birds mock with their thousand songs the silence of the grave, or the dissector's knife, rapidly destroying all human shape and beauty, consigns it to the loathsome depths of some dark vault filled with mouldy bones and eyeless skulls.

She must have a history. No doubt a sad one. Perhaps upon this very moon, which now shines so gently upon her winding-sheet, she has often gazed sorrowful and alone, and, watching with tearful eyes its silent march through the heavens, wished herself as near the realms of endless bliss. Or, when a little girl, before time had burdened her heart with its many sorrows, no doubt she watched those very stars as they twinkled and glistened in their distant home, and wished that



A RIDE WITH THE DEAD.

she might be a star and shine all night and not be sleepy.

Now her life of sorrow is ended, and the volume of her sufferings has been sealed. No more tears and burning sorrows; no more long and wretched nights filled with sad forebodings of the future; no more desertion and cruelty from friends and kindred, and freezing charities doled out by the greedy hand of wealth; no more crushing poverty, making her soul recoil upon its very self and sigh for the tardy coming of death, a welcome messenger to those



No fear of death attended my mother's departure—all was peace and joy—while angel forms and voices, beckoning the wanderer home, broke on the midnight hour.—Page 59.

bereft of hope; no more bitter strivings with want and disappointments following fast upon her plans and purposes; no more sighing for the rest of those who, drawing from their very wretchedness the hope of heaven, leave beyond the grave in peace and happiness. Oh! fortunate woman, to be thus free from pains and ills!

As I was thus soliloquizing, a sudden gust of wind blew aside the sheet and exposed to view the face of her whose history had so engaged my mind. What lustrous eyes! Although set in death, yet as the moon's rays fell upon them they seemed to look at me with all the earnestness and power of life—thought. An open mouth disclosed a beautiful set of glistening teeth which, grinning in her shrunken jaws, gave to her face a hideous look. Her long, black hair floated upon the breeze in wild disorder, while her winding-sheet catching in its loose folds the passing wind caused her frail body to sway with a life-like motion.

By a sudden lurch of the sleigh her body turned, and that frightful face fastened its cold, steady gaze on me. My blood ran cold, and a creeping horror thrilled my veins, and trembling with terror I rode along unconscious of every thing but my companion, who now watched my every motion.

While thus spell-bound by the supernatural, I was aroused by the fierce voice of the Captain:

"Aha!" said the Captain, with a fiendish shout, "I have you at last! Pray for me! did you? Drink! did I? You were never going to return!" and the Captain sank into his seat exhausted by this sudden fit of anger.

The truth flashed upon me. She was the Captain's wife of former years. Recovering from the shock which this information gave me, I determined upon preventing any further outburst of passion on the part of the Captain. To be riding in the dead of night with two corpses and a drunken man was bad enough, without witnessing any fiendish exultations by the man who had once been the husband of her whose lifeless remains now claimed my protection from his desecrating hand.

It was the work of a moment. The Captain greatly overcome with liquor was speedily reduced to submission, and sullenly seated himself with no gentle assistance from myself by the side of his injured but forgiving wife of former days, while I, gathering up the reins, drove rapidly homewards, keeping a watch upon the Captain's movements.

"Here," thought I, "is a situation calculated to satisfy the most fastidious adventure-seeker. All alone with death, drunkenness, and villany." After a little muttering of vengeance the Captain fell into a drunken stupor from which he did not awaken until we arrived at

our destination as the clock struck four. Having seen the Captain and his two companions safely deposited in the college-building, I took the horses to their stable, and then hastened to my room to catch a few hours' sleep before the prayer-bell should announce the commencement of the day's duties. The recitation in metaphysics which succeeded such an intercourse with the natural world is a matter of college history, and represented by a cipher.

On the following Saturday night I repaired to the Captain's domicile to witness the process of boiling the bodies of our midnight companions who had already undergone the ordeal of dissection. As I neared the college-building I saw a dim light shining from one of the basement-windows, and on looking in there sat the Captain watching a huge cauldron which hung in an old-fashioned fire-place, and around which thick and roaring flames wound their sheets of lurid fire. Near him on the table was Santa, evidently well supplied for the night's entertainment, and beside it were several rusty knives and an old scraping-instrument, all of which no doubt had many a sickening tale written upon their time-worn blades. A peculiar knock gave me safe entrance to this sanctum which the Captain guarded with the strictest privacy.

"Well, Captain," said I, "here you are engaged in your evil deeds. I wonder that you are not afraid of your shadow which dances so wildly upon the wall. Your heart must be as dead as these old bones strung about the ceiling."

"Ah! Bob," replied the Captain, "time does every thing. Wait till you have seen body after body boiled down in that old kettle, and if you don't work without being scared, then you are not like the rest of men. Who do you suppose I have in that kettle now? Yes, nobody else. You see, Bob, I hate her worse than ever, and can make no difference in her favor. Every body that has come into this house for the last twenty-five years has had to go into that kettle. I can't break over my rule. Serve all justly: that's the true doctrine for all who are in authority."

Don't that fire look gay licking with its huge, red tongue the kettle and making it hiss and boil like a young volcano! These old fire-places are glorious, giving out such a flow of light and warmth. No stove for me! I like to see the wood burn and crackle, throwing out its thousand sparks, which go up the chimney like so many stars seeking the heavens. The Captain, rubbing his hands with the greatest enjoyment, drew closer to the fire as if it were his native element. This was indeed a picture of human depravity. An old man—his form bending as it were over the grave—with no hope for the future his soul seared by the sins of many years and dead to all repentance

with no redeeming trait of character, no love for man or fear of God! The body of his wife, desecrated by his own hands, hanging before him in a cauldron, while the rapid flames fast divested it of all that had once made it fair and beautiful! No thought of love or suffering for him in days gone by, when, with all a woman's tenderness and care, she sought to lead him back to truth and virtue, could melt his stubborn heart.

There he sat, his long hair hanging over his face, while his eyes filled with a fiendish delight fixed their revengeful gaze upon the hissing cauldron, which now threw out large volumes of steam, and running over sent up clouds of ashes and smoke from the fire below.

"Captain," said I, "it will be a great calamity if you have your senses on your dying bed. Every one of your misdeeds will rise before you to torment with their hideous shapes your last moments. The ghosts of all the bodies you have so wantonly abused will come around your bed and make death a thousand times more fearful."

"Don't talk such stuff to me!" replied the Captain, with a contemptuous air. "I will risk it. The old Captain will die as he has lived, afraid of nothing and frightened by nobody. Here's to your health, my little preacher, and may you meet your end as bravely as the Captain." Saying this he drank a copious health to our final exits.

Feeling a sort of dread and expectation of walking-skeletons and ghosts, I was continually glancing around the room, listening to every sound, and as the doors creaked or windows rattled, I could almost detect the approach of human footsteps. Thus annoyed by my fears I leaned my chair against the wall and watched the Captain as he emptied the cauldron of its contents into a large tub and drawing up his chair began to scrape the flesh off a skull which he had picked out from this mass of human ruins. As bone after bone was divested of its flesh and thrown upon the floor, I turned away in disgust and looked now at the skulls and bones which hung dangling from the ceiling and seemed to watch me like so many argus eyes, and now going around the room I inspected the curious medical diagrams which hung against the wall exhibiting the wonderful structure of the human system, and opened up a wide field for speculation and research.

"No charnel-house," thought I, "can equal this. For here instead of mouldering coffins with their exuding dampness are bones and skulls devoid of flesh, making death more terrible by their open barrenness and swift decay."

"There," said the Captain, as he tossed the last bone upon the floor, "that job is done and I can sleep in peace. I will let the bones dry before I wire them. The skeleton of my wife I shall keep, and dying bequeath it to you as a rich legacy."

## CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after I saw the skeleton hanging up in the Captain's rooms, giving to the apartment a dreariness which none but the most callous heart could have endured.

Notwithstanding such an insight into the Captain's character I could not relinquish our acquaintance, but continued it during my college course until the next and last winter of my sojourn in N— H—, when the following incident occurred terminating our intercourse forever.

One night during the winter of my Senior year I was aroused from my sleep by a loud rap upon my chamber door. Hastily opening it in came a messenger from the Captain. He had expressed a desire to see me, and as he could live but a short time the doctor had granted the request.

The Captain had been battling with a fever for several weeks, and although every thing had been done for his comfort and recovery, this midnight summons was not wholly unexpected to me. A few moments and I was at the bedroom door of my sick friend, and, entering, saw him pale and emaciated lying upon his bed while an attendant bathed his throbbing brows.

I looked at the doctor, an old friend of the Captain's, and was satisfied of the truth of my conjecture. On approaching the bedside he immediately recognized me, and motioning his attendant to retire he extended his emaciated hand, and I sat beside him.

"Bob," said he, in a low and painful whisper, "I am going. Don't forget the old Captain, but remember that he died game. Yes," said he, looking wildly, and throwing his arms with force upon the bed, "I am game, ain't I, Santa? Hal did you see that skeleton waiting beside the door? He promised to come again. Take it away! I didn't murder her!"

Exhausted with this delirium he sank upon his pillow.

"His mind wanders," said the doctor. "What a life he must have led to be thus tormented! It seems as if the powers of hell had conspired against him."

The Captain now lay breathing long and hard, and as I looked at his wasted frame, his sunken cheeks and glassy eyes, and thought of his sad and ill-spent life, I could but bow my head and weep.

While thus engaged I was aroused by the Captain, who, turning toward me, asked me to hear his last request.

"Bury me," said he, "in some quiet spot, where no one can disturb my rest; in some country graveyard where the birds sing all day and the moon keeps quiet watch by night. Take Santa, and her skeleton, and keep them for my sake. Look!" said he, quickly rising in his bed and staring wildly at me, "did you not see that glittering knife? Take away those skulls, their eyes of fire and chattering teeth!"

A struggle, a groan, the death-rattle, and the clock strikes twelve.

The sound of the distant bell had hardly died away when the door opened and in came a skeleton, which walked slowly toward the couch, looked for a moment at the dead and noiselessly retreated from our sight.

"Did you see that?" said the doctor, while his voice trembled and was scarcely audible. "He must have been in league with the dead."

"Stranger things than that have happened in this house," I replied. "Let us stay no longer, for my blood runs cold, and we know not what scenes may yet transpire before the morning light."

A creaking of the rusty lock and silence alone kept company with the dead.

I saw the Captain buried in a spot which I know he would have himself selected. It was in the graveyard of the village from which we had one year previous brought the two dead bodies referred to in the narrative. In a quiet corner of this churchyard, safe from the intrusion of strangers, we laid the Captain down to rest. In the spring, flowers were planted upon his grave, and having erected a suitable stone to mark his resting-place I left him to the calm repose of the grave, over whose sleeping inmate God himself would keep watch, decking it in summer with beautiful flowers, and in winter wrapping it up in garments of matchless purity.

As I often visited his lonely resting-place, and watched the weeping willows as they swayed to and fro over his tombstone, sorrowing as it were for the end of life, which to all alike must come, the Captain's character as I had known him came back to memory, and filled me with sad forebodings. Thus, thought I, is the fate of those who die in sin. Their friends, while fearing, still hope that He who loved man beyond all thought of pain and suffering may yet be merciful to those who serve Him not while life was full and promising.

The Captain had been buried but a few months, when I was summoned home to witness the death of one whose loss to man is not reparable, and fills existence with an aching void—my mother.

For many weeks consumption, with slow and steady steps, had been leading her to the brink of death's dark waters. As I hastened home,



with what misgivings was my journey filled! Now I hoped, as all in sorrow will, that there yet remained a chance of health returning to her I loved; but when I thought of her last letters to me, so full of tender love and prayers that I might prosper, and the calm resignation which had pervaded every moment of her sickness—her faith shining with all the brightness of Christian purity and love—the earnest longings for heaven's rest which filled her soul and seemed to draw her from the fading things of time to those which are immortal, I felt that my fate was sealed, and that ere long the world as it pushed along, bearing upon its whirling tide men full of selfishness and lust, would look upon me motherless.

Without a mother! Let those who have experienced such a loss, tell of their vain endeavor to comprehend its greatness. How like some mighty phantom it haunts their dreams, and follows in their weary footsteps as they go on life's weary pilgrimage, now made dreary and joyless by the absence of her smiles and guidance.

You seek in your loneliness the room where her spirit winged its flight for the world of better joys, and as you look upon her vacant chair, where, in childhood kneeling, you learned from her the evening prayer, or gaze with sorrow upon the many things which are now blessed because they were hers, what memories of those happy days come back, filling the very room with their thousand forms of love and beauty! Once more she lives—the same sweet countenance and winning smile; the same forbearance, checking by its gentleness the bursts of youthful passion; the same counsels, breathing forth all the depth and ardor of her never-faltering love; the same earnest desire for your happiness, for which she can make no sacrifice too great; the same ready sympathy for all your sorrows, the least of which passes not unnoticed by her quick discerning love; the same intensity of affection which no waywardness, or lapse of time, or separating distance can in the least decrease, but growing firmer day by day is not weakened or suspended by death itself! Heaven has no greater virtue than a mother's love.

"Over the river the boatman pale  
Carried mother—the household pet—  
Her dark hair waved in the gentle gale—  
Darling mother! I see her yet!

"She crossed on her bosom her wasted hands,  
And fearlessly entered the phantom bark;  
We watched it glide from the silver sands,  
And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.

"We know she is safe on the further side,  
Where all the ransomed and angels be.  
Over the river, the mystic river,  
My childhood's idol is waiting for me."

I could not but contrast this scene with that which I had witnessed when the Captain died.

No fear was here making death hideous with a thousand fiendish shapes, but peace and joy drawn from a life well-spent and the promises of God to those who love him, while angel forms and voices beckoning the wanderer home alone broke upon the midnight hour.

As her spirit was borne upward to the realms of bliss, I heard her whisper: "All is peace." Why did I start? It was the same form and voice, the same words that I had seen and heard in the vision of my college days.

She too was buried where she wished to be—in a tomb shadowed by the very church in which while living she was always present, within the sound of that bell which had gladly summoned her to the worship of Him whom she loved to honor.

Do you think me a believer in ghosts and visions? I am certain that

"Some return from those quiet shores  
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale.  
We hear the dip of the golden oars,  
And catch a glimpse of the snowy sail."

We hear their angel voices whispering words of tenderness and love when, in our hours of melancholy, life seems a burden and death the



TENDER CARE. (See p. 35.)

only relief from ills which crush our weary souls. Visions of beauty from the spirit-land break upon the darkness of the midnight hour.

filling our hearts with joy and making life more earnest as we look upon the shining forms of those who, gone before, come back to tell us of harps and crowns and many treasures for those who living well lie down to die.

Love sleeps not in the grave, but filled with heavenly power comes back to earth and watches over those who felt its magic influence in days gone by. So, too, the forms of those we have injured will ever haunt our dreams and cause the heart of him to tremble who glories in his deeds of cruelty and shame. Awake or sleeping we feel the chilling shadow of every misdeed. It follows us the whole day long, and keeps its ceaseless watch through long and weary nights.

Many have presentiments of death. Some read their fortunes in a dream; others, in the falling of a leaf, or the dreary moanings of the wind; some fancy their death-summons in curious sounds, heard in some vacant chamber, or the violent ringing of bells by an unseen hand; others behold in visions the loss of friends and kindred.

The skeleton haunting the Captain's chamber and keeping at his death an appointment made many years before—the vision of my college days, which too soon became a sad reality—have made me a firm believer in supernatural visits.

As I look at old "Santa"—which now hangs before me on the wall, and beside it the skeleton of the Captain's wife, which I guard as the queerest legacy ever left to man—I am not certain but that the Captain will make a flying visit to this mundane sphere to inspect his former goods and chattels. If so, you shall be duly informed whether he comes in a "questionable shape" or not.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE sun shone brightly on the seventh afternoon of our tale-telling. Jim, Charlie, and myself, concluded that the heat was too great to admit of long stories, so we concluded to confine ourselves entirely to anecdotes and wit.

Charlie having smiled several times as if he had a good one on hand, began as follows:

"Captain Thomas one day told in my hearing to our major this military yarn:

One day while my regiment was on duty at Columbus, Kentucky

I received orders from my Colonel to proceed to Memphis with two companies of the regiment, in charge of some rebel prisoners. We embarked about ten A.M., on board the "C. Hillman," and immediately sailed down the river. Our boat had a large number of passengers aboard, among whom was Judge L——, with whom I was well acquainted, and who, by the way, was a strong Union man. He asked if I had any objection to his conversing with the rebels. I told him, "Not in the least," when he went forward, and selecting a rough, uncouth, lank-haired private from Arkansas, the following colloquy ensued, which fully illustrates the intelligence of our deluded "Southern brethren:"

Judge.—"What regiment do you belong to?"

Rebel.—"The Thirty-ninth Arkansas, by G—d!"

Judge.—"You have been in some battles?"

Reb.—"Well, I reckon."

Judge.—"My friend, what are you fighting for?"

Reb.—"We're are fighting for our rights."

Judge.—"Well, what are your rights, or of what rights have you been deprived?"

Reb.—"I tell you, we're fighting for our rights."

Judge.—"That's all very well, but define them."

Reb.—"Oh, I ain't no politician, and I hain't got no eddication to speak on, but I know we're fightin' for our rights, sartin."

Judge.—"Well, my friend, I can tell you what you are fighting for: you are fighting to destroy the best Government and noblest nation the world ever saw. Look at that glorious banner" (pointing to the stars and stripes, floating from the gaff)!, "are you not ashamed, sir, to fire on that beautiful flag?"

Reb.—"Flag! I never saw that flag till I went and jined the army."

Judge.—"What! you never saw the stars-and-stripes?"

Reb.—"No, I never did."

Judge.—"How old are you?"

Reb.—"'Bout thirty-five, I reckon."

Judge, in a tone of stupendous astonishment.—"And you never saw the stars-and-stripes before?"

Reb.—"No; I told you once already."

It was a poser for the Judge. He was completely floored. With mingled feelings of indignation, pity, and dismay, he paced the deck for some time in silence. At last, stepping directly in front of his incorrigible acquaintance, in a subdued, serious tone of voice, he asked: "Did you know, my friend, that Christ was dead?"

Reb., evidently surprised.—"You don't say! 'Is he, though? What regiment did he belong to, and whar was he killed?"

While we were laughing, Jim suddenly checked himself and let off with:

#### LEGAL INTELLIGENCE.

A countryman walked into the office of Lawyer Burns one day and began his application:

"Burns, I have come to get your advice in a case that is giving me some trouble."

"Well, what is it?"

"Suppose, now," said the client, "that a man had one spring of water on his land, and his neighbor below would build a dam across a creek through both of the farms, and it was to back the water up into the other man's spring, what ought to be done?"

"Sue him, sue him, by all means," said the lawyer, who always became excited in proportion to the aggravation of his clients. "You can recover heavy damages, sir, and the law will make him pay well for it. Just give me the case, and I'll bring the money from him, and if he hasn't a great deal of property, it will break him up, sir."

"But stop, Burns," cried the terrified applicant for legal advice, "it's I that built the dam, and it's neighbor Jones that owns the spring, and he threatens to sue me."

The keen lawyer hesitated a moment before he tacked his ship and kept on.

"Ah! well, sir, you say you built a dam across that creek. What sort of a dam was it, sir?"

"It was a mill-dam, sir."

"A mill-dam for grinding grain, was it?"

"Yes, it was just that."

"And it is a good neighborhood mill, is it?"

"So it is, and you may well say so."

"And all your neighbors bring their grain to be ground, do they?"

"Yes, sir, all but Jones"

"Then it is a public convenience, is it not?"

"To be sure it is. I would not have built it but for that. It is so far superior to any other mill, sir."

"And now," said the lawyer, "you tell me that man Jones is complaining just because the water from your dam happens to put back into his little spring, and he is threatening to sue you. Well, all I have to say is to let him sue you, and he will rue the day as sure as my name is Burns."

I followed suit with:

#### JOSH BILLINGS ON THE MULE.

The mule is haf hoss and haf jackass, and then comes to a full stop, natur diskeverin her mistake. Tha weigh more akordin to their heft than enny other kreetur except a crowbar. Tha kant hear enny quickr nor further than the hoss, yet their ears are big enough for snow-shoes. You kan trust them with enny one whose life ain't wuth more than the mule's. The only way tu keep them into a paster, is to turn them in a medder jinein, and let them jump out. Tha are reddy for use as soon as tha will du tu abuse. Tha ain't got enny more friends than a Chatam street Jew, and will live on huckleberry brush, with an okasional chase at kanada thistles. Tha are a modern invenshan; the Bible don't delude to them at all. Tha sell for more money than enny other domestic animals. You kant tell their age by looking into their mouth, enny more than you kould a Mexican kannon's. Tha never had no disease that a good club won't heal. If tha ever die, tha must come right to life agin, for I never heard nobody say "ded mule." Tha are like some men very korrump at hart; ive known them to be good six months just to get a chance to kick somebody. I never oned one, nor never mean to, unless there is a United States law passed requirin' it. The only reason why they are pashunt is becaus tha are ashamed ov themselves. I have seen eddicated mules in a sirkus—tha kould kic and bite tremenjous. I would not sa what I was forced to sa agin the mule, if his birth want an outrage, and he ain't to blame for it. Enny man who is willin tu drive a mule ought to be exempt by law from runnin for the legislatur. Tha are the strongest kreeturs on arth, and beviest accordin' tu their size. I heard tell of one that fel oph the to-path on the kanawl, and sunk as soon as he touched bottom, but he kept rite on toin' the bote tu the next stashun, breathin throu his ears which was out ov water 3 feet 6 inches. I didn't se this, but an actioneer told me ov it, and I never new an auctioneer to li unless he would make sumthin' out ov it.

Charlie not to be outdone, retorted with a scene in a Connecticut family:

#### BUTTER AT THE OLD PRICE.

Somewhere in Connecticut there is a family by the name of Barstow, who were never noted for cleanliness. On the contrary the name was proverbial for filthiness. They were farmers, and Mrs. Barstow was engaged in the dairy business. Each week she posted to a village near by and disposed of her butter to Squire Walker, who dealt in country produce and groceries. Ere long she learned that she did not

get half as much for her butter as her neighbors were receiving, and this aroused her usual quiet temper, and she determined to demand an explanation of Squire Walker the next time she went to market. So the following week, with her regular amount of butter, she presented herself at the grocer's counter and said:

"Squire Walker, what are you paying for butter to-day?"

He opened her boxes, and after a careful survey of the contents, replied:

"Twelve and a half cents."

"Twelve and a half cents!" she repeated. "How is it that you pay Mrs. Perkins twenty cents a pound, and only allow me ninepence—and this you have done all along?"

"Well," said the Squire, coloring up and hesitating on each word, "the fact is, Mrs. Barstow, your butter is not so clean as hers, and I find it hard work to get rid of it at that price even, when people know who made it."

"If that is all that is required," she replied, with a confident air, "I will show them that I can make as good butter and as *clean* butter as anybody."

Mrs. Barstow all excited hurried home, notwithstanding the oppressive heat of the afternoon, and seizing the milk-strainer, and wiping the perspiration from her face, exclaimed to her daughter:

"Betsy Ann, Squire Walker had the impudence to tell me that my butter was not as clean as Nance Perkins's, and now I mean to show him that I can make as clean butter as she."

"Du tell! I think I should try, mother," replied Betsy Ann, emphatically.

Mrs. Barstow commenced skimming her milk and pouring the cream into her old-fashioned churn. It was all in but the last pan, and mounted upon a stool, was reaching after that; but unfortunately she slipped, and one of her dirty feet went down into the churn until it brought up at the bottom, scattering it in every direction. Extricating herself as soon as possible, she commenced scraping the cream from her limb and throwing it back into the churn, and remarked in a slow, deliberate tone to her daughter,



SEASONING THE BUTTER.

who was laughing in a very unbecoming manner at her parent's mishap:

"Well, Betsy Ann, I guess my butter will have to go at the old price once more."

"Here is an ode, boys, which cost me a great deal of meditation last night. It is titled:

#### PADDY MILES TO GENERAL BUTLER.

'Pon me sowl, Mister Ginerall Butler,  
But yer doing the quarest owld thricks,  
Rigulating secishers and nagurs,  
That ye'll hev mighty soon in a fix.  
Sure in New Orleans didn't ye do it?  
And don't they, dear general, give thanks?  
For thin they were poor hungry divils,  
And now they hev plenty in Banks.

But the thrick that astonished the British  
Was the way ye showed crinoline up  
Whin insultin' our dacint defenders,  
Neutrally assisted by ivery Bull pup.  
But ye tached thim sum moral acquirements  
That I think they'll remimber sum time;  
If they don't, sure ginerall, yer handy,  
You can give thim more army quinine.

Faith, if ye had bin wid old Adam,  
Shure we id awl bin alive till this day,  
For the divil a bit iv the apple  
Muther Eve wud iv got any way.  
The sarpint wud hev bin prasecuted  
And put in Jerusalem jail;  
And, be jabers, when the case wud be over,  
Divil an inch wud he hev iv a tail.

Niver mind, Ginerall Butler, me honey,  
Though Jeff says yer head he'll buy in,  
He is going to bankruptey shartly,  
And suspend wid a rope 'neath his chin;  
For his frind, Johnny Bull, doesn't see it,  
"Ow 'e houghter 'ad better hassist,"  
Whin he knows by ixperience the people  
That once emptied his Bullship's tay-chist.

Long life to ye, Benny, achushla!  
May ye always lead forth yer brave band  
Against awl "wayward sisters" or ribils,  
And see thim most beautifully tanned.

Thin unfold to the breeze our brave banner!  
 Let it wave o'er one Union for all!  
 One Ruler, one Army, one Navy—  
 One Nation that niver shall fall!

"Good poetry," replied Jim; "but the subject is a good one, and you ought to be ashamed to treat it in any other manner. I will follow your rhymes with:

#### PUT THAT IMPUDENT RASCAL OUT.

While a congregation was collected at church on a certain occasion, an old, dark, hard-featured, skin-and-bone individual was seen wending his way up the side aisle and taking his seat near the pulpit. The minister began his prayer by saying:

"Father of all, in every age, by saint and savage adored—"

"Pope!" said a slow but clear voice near old hard-features.

The minister after casting an indignant look in the direction of the voice, continued:

"Whose throne sitteth on the adamantine hills of Paradise—"

"Milton!" again interrupted the hard voice.

The minister's lip quivered for an instant, but recovering himself, he continued:

"We thank thee, most gracious Father, that we are permitted once more to assemble in thy name, while others equally meritorious, but less favored, have been carried beyond that bourne from whence no traveller returns—"

"Shakespeare!" interrupted the voice.

This was too much:

"Put that impudent rascal out!" shouted the minister.

"Original!" ejaculated the voice, in the same calm and provoking manner.

"That reminds me," said Charlie the tears trickling down his cheeks from excessive laughter, "of

#### THE DEACON AND THE WASPS.

A worthy deacon in the State of Maine was remarkable for the facility with which he quoted Scripture on all occasions. The Divine Word was ever on his tongue's end, and all the trivial, as well as the important occurrences of life furnished occasion for quoting the language of the Bible. What was better, however, the exemplary deacon always made his quotations the standard of action. One hot day, he

was engaged in mowing, with his hired man, who was leading off, the deacon following in his swath, conning his apt quotations, when the man suddenly sprang from his place, leaving the swath just in time to escape a wasp's nest.

"What is the matter?" hurriedly inquired the deacon.

"Wasps!" was the laconic reply.

"Pooh!" said the deacon, "the wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion!" and taking the workman's swath he moved but a step when a swarm of brisk insects settled about his ears and he was forced to retreat, with many a painful sting, and in great discomfiture.

"Ah!" shouted the other with a chuckle, "the prudent man foreseeeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."

The good deacon had found his equal in making applications of the sacred writings, and thereafter was not known to quote Scripture in a mowing-field.

After waiting a few moments to see if any other joke would come from my companions, I thrust my hands in my pockets, and standing up said: "Boys, I will now open the latest magazine of jokes and oddities. Here they are:

The editor of an English paper was recently presented with a stone, upon which was carved the following letters. The editor was informed that the stone was taken from an old building, and he was requested to solve the inscription. It read:

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	St—

Eminent men were called to consult upon the matter, and after an immense amount of time consumed, they were informed that the stone was: "For cattle to rub their tails against."

A Milwaukee paper gives the following statistics illustrating the conversational powers of the people of that village. The record was taken down one morning last week:

	Persons.
A "fine morning"	50
A "lovely morning"	12
A "gay morning"	2
A "gay and festive morning"	10
A "beautiful morning"	101
A "bully morning"	16
A "pleasant morning"	1



An Irish gentleman, visiting some friends, was received with so much hospitality, and drank so very hard, that he departed in a shorter time than was expected, and when asked the reason, very gravely said that he "liked them so very much, and he ate and drank so incessantly, that he was sure, if he had lived there a month longer, he would die in a fortnight."

A friend of ours, visiting a neighbor, found him disabled from having a horse step upon his foot. Hobbling out of the stable, the sufferer explained how it happened.

"I was standing here," said he, "and the horse brought his foot right down on mine."

Our friend looked at the injured member, which was of the number-fourteen pattern, and said very quietly:

"Well the horse must step somewhere."

An affecting incident occurred at the New Haven barracks the other day. A woman desired to see her husband, embraced him, began to sob and cry violently. Husband gave her his handkerchief to wipe



THE DISCOVERY.

her eyes, after which she curiously manipulated it under her shawl and returned it to him. Husband took it as if it were a brickbat. Officer of guard investigated, and found a bottle of old rye whiskey in the handkerchief.

A Hoosier having taken a looking-glass home in his trunk, one of his hopeful offspring was curious to see the contents of the mysterious box. The mirror was on the top, when the youngster opened it, gave one brief look, dropped the lid and, with terror depicted on every feature, exclaimed:

"Oh, mother, mother, father has brought home a young cub! I seed him—a young bear!"

A man noted for his calmness and a scolding wife was one night stopped in the woods by a pretended ghost:

"I can't stop, my friend," said he. "If you are a man, I must request you to get out of the way, and let me pass. If you are the devil, come along and take supper, for I married your sister."

"Isaac, can you describe a bat?"

"Yes, sir. He's a flying insect, about the size of a stopple, has India-rubber wings, and a shoe-string tale, he sees with his eyes shut, and bites like the devil."

A Dutchman being advised to rub his limbs well with brandy for the rheumatism, said he had heard of the remedy, but added:

"I dush better as dat—I drinks de prandy, and den I rubs mine leg mit de pottle."

An Irishman, while fishing in a stream, was suddenly caught in a shower of rain, which obliged him to take refuge under a bridge near by. On being asked if he expected to catch any fish there, he replied:

"An' shure, won't they be afther comin' in here for the shelter?"

Mrs. Partington, when Ike was about to proceed to the Black Sea, among other parting admonitions, gave him strict injunctions not to bathe in it, for she did not want to see him come back a nigger.

A nobleman once asked a clergyman, who was dining at the bottom of the table:

"Why the goose was always placed next to the parson?"

"Really," said he, "I can give no reason for it; but your question is so odd that I shall never see a goose again without thinking of your lordship."

A Western paper thus happily closes a poetical description of a cold day, when Old Sol struggled fruitlessly to thaw the ground:

"But the sun's rays were as futile as the dull reflex of a yellow bull-dog."

A young lady down East advertised for the young man who "embraced an opportunity," and says that if he will come over to their town he can do better.

There is an old maid at Waterville, Wis., so determined to have some kind of a husband that she offers to marry even a draft-skedaddler from Canada.

#### THE SAVED.

They were alone in the world—these two—a brother and sister. She, two years the elder, had watched over him with all the tenderness of a mother, since that beloved parent had confided him to her care on her dying bed, six years before. She had told her of the dangers that would await the lad as he entered upon life, and temptations of every kind would surround him. No father's counsel or example, no mother's loving word to guard or strengthen him. Faithfully had the sister kept watch and ward over him, entering into all his pursuits, striving to make life as pleasant as their somewhat isolated position would permit. She had a small income from a few thousand dollars placed at interest, and this she eked out by teaching. They lived in a model house, those comforts to the small-income, but yet refined class of people. It was in one of the pleasant suburban towns, with good air and water, and a blessed peep at the glorious sky.

They had been so happy. But now a cloud no bigger than a man's hand was rising up on the horizon of their serene trust; she felt its blighting, chilling influence. Charles had been placed with an engraver, and he had been much absorbed by the beautiful art; but of late he had seemed much changed; he was restless and moody. Often absent from home on an evening, and resenting the kindly-expressed inquiries of his sister, she felt that there was some influence at work upon him which was acting against her, and undermining the very foundation of his character. She went in to see his master, and found from him that Charles was much less steady and industrious than he had been, and that he had formed an intimacy with a clerk in a neighboring store who did not bear a very good character, and Mr. Berri was fearful it was having a ruinous effect upon him.

Ellen returned home with an aching heart, which found no solace but in the one ejaculation: "Oh, God, Father, help him, strengthen him, guide me in the right way to influence him!" and with this prayer ever welling up in her full heart, she found solace.

Charles came home that night restless and sullen. He made no response to Ellen's efforts for a cheerful tea-table. She had gathered upon it a few of the little luxuries he was most fond of, hoping to allure him in this most innocent way to some return of former feelings; but he took no notice of them, and while her untasted tea was before her he arose from the table, put on his hat, and went out. It was the first night he had done so without at least the show of an excuse,

such as: "I promised to meet Patterson this evening," or "I have pledged a game of chess at the club;" but this seemed so defiant, so thoughtless of her feelings, she felt as if he must have taken a long stride downward before he could have done this.

All that sad evening she brooded upon what she could do; what course she should pursue to awaken in the erring boy a sense of his danger; how call the good angels again around to guard and aid him. He looked unhappy; she was sure he did not enjoy his wrong-doing—and there was comfort in that thought; but she feared that he was becoming so entangled with bad associates it would be impossible for him to escape. The evening passed slowly on; each hour of the heavy clock seemed to strike a knell for one hope after another; the twelve strokes sounded, and she was sick at heart; he had never been so late. Was he indeed really gone from her? Then her quickened ear, intensified by long watching, caught the sound of his foot (it could be no other), as it turned into the court, with a bound almost of joy, so great was the relief to have him once more at home. She sprang up, that she might open the door and speak a word of welcome to him—not a reproach, she thought, lest I drive him from me. But he entered hastily, opening the door with his night-key; he pushed past her, and rushed up stairs to his own room. She could only see that he looked unnaturally wild and haggard. She did not follow him; but when he had been some time in his room, she stole gently to the door, that she might judge of his state. She could hear him toss restlessly upon his bed, and groans and exclamations burst from him. She prayed there—so near him, and yet all unseen by him—that he might be guided safely through this terrible conflict.

When Charles came into the breakfast-room he did not raise his eyes to his sister, but said huskily:

"Will you give me fifteen dollars? I will repay you before long."

"I cannot, Charles. All the money I have just now is the twenty dollars laid aside for the rent. If I take that, and you do not pay me before it is due, we shall lose our home. You wouldn't like that, I know, Charlie dear. We feel our mother blesses this place, and the thought of her associated with it consecrates it for us."

An expression of fierce agony crossed his features. He said not a word more, but darted out. An impulse—she knew not what, but is it wrong to believe it an influence from that mother's spirit—impelled her to put on her cloak and follow him. "I may save from one rash act," said she, and catching the waterproof which hung in the entry, she covered herself with its long folds and drew the hood closely around her face. It was but a second's work, but when she stepped out of the door Charles stood upon the horse-car, which happened to

be passing the head of the court as he went out. She rapidly followed, took the next car, and was fortunate enough to secure the upper seat where she could keep watch of all who got out of the vehicle ahead.

She saw him get out at Boylston street. She followed him to a jeweller's establishment. She knew there was a lad there who had been a dear friend of Charles before he got drawn in with his present bad associates. She hoped he was going to consult with him on the present troubles he was in, and perhaps get aid in some way. To her surprise, as she passed and repassed the window, she saw he was chatting quite gayly with his young friend, while he was examining gold-chains. Soon other customers entered the store. The young man was called away, and after a moment's hesitation, Charles left the store.

"What will he do next?" was Ellen's thought.

He passed her with rapid strides. He did not recognize her muffled form. She followed on and on to a strange part of the town. He entered a low, dirty-looking shop. What could it be for? Her heart sank within her. She peered into the window, and the sight she saw froze her heart. Charles stood with a sparkling gold-chain in his hand, which he was evidently endeavoring to pawn!

Finally, she saw the man give him money and take the chain. Her brother—yes, her, till then, almost innocent brother—came out from that polluted shop, shorn of half his manhood, his eyes glancing furtively around. As soon as he was gone out of sight, she went into the shop, and with a quiet dignity of manner, which repulsed the forwardness of the Jew pawnbroker, she said:

"You received a chain from a young man just now. I require you to give it to me, and I will repay you the money advanced upon it."

"A pretty thing, that, for me to do. The chain is worth twice what I paid, and what am I to do when the young man claims it, miss?"

"He will not come again for it, I will guarantee that. Please give it to me."

And she took out her pocket-book, which she always carried about her for safety, and in which was the rent-money.

"I shall do no such thing, young woman, unless you bring me a certificate from the young man," said the man insolently, for he felt that he had her in his power.

Ellen was resolute and fitted for all emergencies.

"Then, sir," she said, "I shall make a complaint of you as a receiver of stolen goods. That chain was stolen. I can prove it. You know best if this establishment can bear the test of examination."

The man turned pale, said not a word, but opening a drawer, gruffly said:

"Fifteen dollars."

She gave it to him.

"If I find you have made me pay more than you gave him, I shall make it known to the proper authorities."

She breathed more freely as she left the stifled shop. She sought a car, and soon found herself, wearied with excitement, at home. Perhaps this very thing, this being led to the very brink, might save her beloved brother, she thought as she sat with the chain before her trying to solve the mystery. What had led him to it? What did he want with the money? What could he have done? She longed for, yet dreaded his return. He came not all day, nor till eight o'clock in the evening. Then he went directly to his room.

Another painful night followed. At breakfast he came down with bloodshot, sleepless eyes. Her cheek was ashen pale, but the smile was on her lip, and her voice cheerful as her wont. She tried not to let him see her agitation, hoping for an opening to let her into his heart.

While each was trying to hide from the other their secret, the door-bell rang. The penny-post brought a letter for Charles. He seized it, opened it, read it. "Oh, my God, what can I do!" burst from his agonized soul.

Ellen took the letter and hastily read it. She found it was from their young friend at the jeweller's. It ran thus:

"DEAR CHARLES:—One of the handsomest of our watch-chains is missing. It has not been seen since you were looking at them yesterday. Could one have dropped accidentally into your pocket, or did you take one home to show your sister (I think you said it was for her you were looking), trusting to make it all right with me to-day? I hope this is so; and if the chain does not appear my employer will send a search-warrant to your house. In haste,

"ROBERT G."

Ellen drew the chain from her pocket, and laid it on the table. The rattling sound attracted Charles, who raised his head, caught the glitter of gold, seized it convulsively, and then dropping on his knees, he buried his head in her arms and sobbed like a child, murmuring words like these:

"Thank the Heavenly Father, thou hast saved me! Oh, give me strength to overcome temptation in the future!"

Ellen let this strong feeling have its way for a time; then she drew close to him, placed her hand on his head, and then laid that head upon her true, sisterly breast; and there she held it till he, worn out by his

emotion, dropped to sleep. She sat thus an hour, till feeling the importance of time, she gently roused him:

"Go up-stairs now, Charles, and rest. I will take this chain to Robert, see Mr. Berri, get you excused from to-day's duties, and this shall be a day of feasting and joy to us, for oh, the prodigal has returned to his Father, has he not, dear Charles!"

Such a look of glad relief, of perfect thankfulness and trust, crossed his face; and then he obeyed her and went up-stairs.

She carried the chain to Robert, and gave it to him without a word. She could not frame a lie—she left the explanation to his generous kindness.

That night Charles told her the whole—how he had been led away—ate, drank, and gambled with his evil companions; how it was continued warfare with him, but he was led on step by step; at last he lost twenty-five dollars at play. He was dunned for it, and threatened with exposure to his master if he did not pay it. He had only ten dollars to pay it. As a last resource he had asked Ellen for the money; and when she had refused, and for so good a reason, he was desperate. As he rode into Boston he thought of Robert, and then the idea came into his mind, if he could get some piece of jewelry and pawn it, he would soon get the money to redeem it, and would then replace it, and probably the owners would not miss it. But the agony of the first day of "thief-life," when the gleam of the gold was ever in his eye, and its feel in his hand, and "thou art the man" was sounding in the recesses of his heart, and it was a foretaste of hell which he could not bear; and he had risen from his sleepless bed with the firm resolve to take the first step toward right; and how much he was aided in it by that watchful sister's love and ingenuity, none but those who have been through the same temptation and a similar rescue can say. Sisters, yours is a glorious work. Be noble yourselves, that you may teach your young brothers to be noble. Be unselfish, that they may learn the sweetness of the unselfish life. Be ever watchful over them. Teach them to respect, through you, every woman.

#### ENTRAPPING A MURDERER.

In the year 1833, we went to the Red River country with a view of speculation in horses, lands, or any thing that might give promise of a profitable return for a cash investment. Of course I carried a good deal of money with me, but knowing I was going among a wild, lawless class, of every grade and color—among half-civilized Indians, negroes, gamblers, thieves, robbers, murderers, and assassins—with perhaps a few settlers with some claims to honor and honesty, if they

could be sifted out from the mass—I thought it the safest plan not to seem well off in this world's goods. Accordingly I secured my money in a belt about my body; put on a very coarse, rough dress, which, by intentional carelessness, soon had a very mean, slovenly appearance; and allowed my hair and beard to manage matters their own way, without any troublesome interference of razor or comb. Thus prepared, and armed with two revolvers and a bowie-knife, I passed over some dangerous country in comparative safety, and flattered myself that no one guessed my riches through my apparent poverty.

In fact, on two occasions, I began to think it might have been to my advantage to have looked a little more respectable. The first of these was when, in travelling through Choctaw nation, I found a drove of horses that pleased me very much, and was told by the owner in reply to my question as to what he would take a head for the entire lot, that he was not in the habit of naming his price to every wandering beggar that chose to satisfy an idle curiosity. I was disposed at first to put on some dignity and get indignant, but concluded, after a careful survey of my person, that the man had good cause for speaking as he did, and so merely assured him that I knew an individual that wished to buy horses, if he could get them at a fair price. The horse-owner, however, was not disposed to believe my statement, and so I passed him by, with the resolve that, if nothing better turned up, I would give him another call under a more advantageous appearance. As the second instance alluded to was similar to the first, it may be passed over without further notice.

But out of this same cause grew a very remarkable adventure, which it is my present purpose to relate.

While passing between two settlements, over a very lonely gloomy horse-path leading through a dark, hemlock wood, and while in the most solitary part, there suddenly came before me, leaping from a thicket on the right, a human figure of the most startling appearance. It was a man of medium height, but of a stout, powerful frame, all covered with dirty tatters, that he appeared to have worn and wallowed in for years. He had no covering for his head or feet, and his skin was so coated with grime that it was difficult, at a first look, to tell whether he belonged to the white race or not. His face, high upon his cheeks, was covered with a dirty, brown beard, and his matted hair hung in wild confusion all around his head, except a little space before his swollen, bloodshot eyes, and altogether he looked like a madman or human devil. His hands held and swung a formidable club, and his attitude, as he sprung into the road before me, was one of fierce menace and defiance.

I stopped in alarm, and, while fixing my eyes sharply upon his

quietly slipped my hand into a convenient pocket and grasped the butt of one of my revolvers, firmly determined to keep him at the short distance that divided us, or kill him if he advanced.

For perhaps half a minute we stood silently regarding and surveying each other, and then, resting one end of his club on the ground, and partly leaning forward on the other, he said, in a coarse, gruff tone, with a kind of chuckling laugh:

"Well, — me! I's in hope I'd got a prize; but you're better off nor me, you don't show it, by —! Stranger. Who ar' you, and whar you from?"

"Well," I returned, feeling highly complimented, of course, that I resembled such a villanous object as himself, "some people call me beggar, and I know I don't pass for a genteel gentleman."

"I'll swear to that—haw! haw! haw!" was his chuckling response. "The world hain't made much of you, mor'n it has of me. I see steal in your face as plain as daylight. Say, what jail lost you last?"

"Never mind that," said I. "Probably neither of us have got our deserts."

"Well, if you had been decent dressed, and looked like you had five dollars about you, I'd have knocked your brains out!" continued the villain, with a broad grin. "As it is, you can pass; for I can swear you hain't got a red."

"Much obliged for your candor," rejoined I.

He still stood before me, looking straight into my eye, and now seemed to be pondering some new idea. At length he muttered, as if to himself:

"I think he might do." Then a moment after he said to me: "I say, old fellow, how would you like to make a raise?"

"How would I like to eat when hungry?" I answered, thinking it not unlikely that the scoundrel had some dark project in view which, by seeming to chime in with him, I might discover.

"Well, I've got a plan," he said, throwing down his club, as if to assure me of his pacific intentions towards myself, and quietly advanced to my side. "I've got a plan that will give us both a heap of money, and it'll take just two to carry it out. I've been wanting a pal, and if you'll join in, I'll go you halves."

"If's there's any chance to turn a penny, I'm your man," said I.

"Good!" returned he. "You look like a trump, and I'll bet high on you. I don't know," he added, eying me sharply, "but I may be deceived, but I think I'll risk it. If you go for to play any game on me, you'd better look out for yourself, that's all."

"Do I look like such a scamp as that?" returned I, in an indignant tone.

"Well, let's take a seat and talk it over."

We found an old log and sat down; and after some preliminary conversation, my new and interesting acquaintance unfolded to me a most damnable scheme, the substance of which was as follows:

He knew the country well for miles around, and the exact position and condition of every settler. One man, living in a rather lonely quarter about five miles distant, was a speculator in horses and cattle, which he sometimes bought up and drove to a distant market. He had a good deal of money, which it was supposed he kept secreted in his dwelling; and to get possession of this money was, of course, the object in view. The trouble was that the man himself was a brave, determined fellow, who always went well armed, and had, besides his wife, two grown-up sons and a daughter, which was a force too great for any one individual to encounter. About a mile from him lived a poor widow, who had nothing worth stealing except her clothes, which would be valuable for carrying out our plan. This plan was to rob the widow first of her clothing, dress me up in them, and have me seek lodgings at the speculator's house. Then in the night, when all the family should be asleep, I should unbolt the door, let in my confederate, and we were to attempt the murder of the inmates—the robbery and burning of the house to follow and be the closing scene.

I secretly shuddered at the atrocity of the contemplated crime, but appeared to receive the disclosure with the business air of the most hardened wretch, inquiring as to the amount of money we should thus probably obtain, and objecting to nothing but the great risk we should have to run, both before and after the accomplishment of our purpose. I permitted my eager companion to gradually quiet my fears, and at last consented to act.

When every thing had thus become settled, we struck off into the fields, to avoid being seen, and just before night came in sight of the widow's house. As my companion was acquainted with the premises, I insisted that he should procure the female garments—but solemnly warned him that if he harmed the poor old woman in the least, I would have nothing more to do with the affair.

As good luck would have it, the widow was not at home, and my murderous friend managed to break in and get the necessary clothing without doing any further damage. The widow being a large woman, I had no trouble in arranging the dress so as to pass in a dim light as a tolerably respectable female; and then, having agreed upon the story I was to tell, how I would manage the matters, and the signal that would assure my accomplice of all being right, we went forward together, till we came in sight of the house to be robbed, when I made my nearest way to the road, and continued on alone, reaching the



dwelling about an hour after dark, and just about as the family were concluding their evening meal.

Had my design been really what I had led my villanous companion to believe, I certainly could never have gone forward with such confident boldness; but feeling my conscience all right, and knowing I was acting from a good motive, I kept up a wonderful assurance, feeling curious to see how well I could play my part, and to what extent I could carry the deception.

I asked for lodging for the night and something to eat, and was kindly and hospitably received. The first thing that sent the blush of shame and confusion to my cheek was the coming forward of a young lady about eighteen, beautiful as an houri, and in sweet, gentle tones, asking me if I had walked far, if I was much fatigued, offering to take my hood, and telling me that I should be refreshed with a warm cup of tea. This was too much for my equanimity. I could have got along with all the rest, without being specially disturbed; but I was a young, unmarried man, and though not particularly susceptible to female attractions in general, I thought I had never looked on so lovely and interesting a creature before. I stammered out some unintelligible replies, kept my hood well drawn over my face, and asked to be permitted a few moments' private conversation with the master of the house.

Of course the request caused considerable surprise, but it was granted, and as soon as we were alone together, I told him in a few words who and what I was, the strange adventure I had met with, and disclosed in full the plot of my road acquaintance to murder and rob him. He turned pale at the recital, and seemed much astonished, but begged me not to mention the design to his wife and daughter. He then called his two sons—strong, determined fellows—recounted the plot to them, and arranged to have every thing go forward as if the scheme were being carried out as its vile author designed.

It took some shrewd management to keep me to my part without letting the females into the secret; but it was effected, and before midnight I cautiously opened the door and looked out. There was my man ready and waiting.

"Is all right?" he whispered.

"Yes, come in."

As he crossed the threshold, the father and sons sprang upon him. But the fellow was strong and desperate, and perhaps had some suspicions of the truth. With a wild yell he cleared their united grasps at a bound, leaving a large portion of his rags in their hands. The next moment the whole four of us were in chase of the villain, as he

ran across the road to gain the cover of a woods about twenty rods distant.

"Fire!" shouted the father, "shoot down the rascal!"

We were all armed and prepared, and at the word, four revolvers began to crack behind him. But he seemed to lead a charmed life, and ran on, keeping a short distance ahead of us. Once I fancied I saw him stagger; but he gained the woods and disappeared, and we reluctantly and with deep chagrin were compelled to give up the chase.

When we returned to the house, the wife and daughter were both terribly alarmed. Of course an explanation followed—the host being disappointed of making the capture as he intended without exciting their fears. There was no more sleep in the house that night.

The next morning we went out to the wood, and discovered a trail of blood. We followed it for half a mile, and found the ruffian lying dead, face downward, his hands firmly clinched in some bushes. One of the sons recognized him as a suspected murderer, who had years before left that part of the country. We buried him with little ceremony. I was warmly thanked for the part I had played to serve the family; but from no one did the words sound so sweet to me, as from the lips of the beautiful maiden.

The family pressed me to stay a while, and I stayed—long enough to lose my heart and win another. Strange as it appears in looking back to it, the event of that villain leaping into the road before me changed the whole course of my fortune; and sometimes when I gaze upon my wife, I am tempted to bless the dark and wicked design that providentially led us to so much happiness.

#### WOUNDED.

Let me lie down

Just here in the shade of this cannon-torn tree.  
Here, low in the trampled grass, where I may see  
The surge of the combat, and where I may hear  
The glad cry of victory, cheer upon cheer,

Let me lie down.

Oh, it was grand!

Like the tempest we charged, in the triumph to share;  
The tempest—its fury and thunder were there.  
On, on, o'er intrenchments, o'er living and dead,  
With the foe under foot and the flag overhead—

Oh, it was grand!

Weary and faint,

Prone on the soldier's couch, ah! how can I rest  
With this shot-shattered head and sabre-pierced breast?

Comrades, at roll-call, when I shall be sought,  
Say I fought where I fell, and fell where I fought,  
Wounded and faint.

Oh, that last charge!  
Right through the dread host tore shrapnell and shell.  
Through, without faltering—clear through, with a yell—  
Right in their midst, in the turmoil and gloom,  
Like heroes we dashed, at the mandate of doom!  
Oh, that last charge

It was duty!  
Some things are worthless and some others so good  
That nations who buy them pay only in blood;  
For Freedom and Union each man owns his part;  
And here I pay my share, all warm from my heart.  
It is duty!

Dying at last!  
My mother, dear mother, with meek, tearful eye,  
Farewell! and God bless you forever and aye!  
Oh, that I now lay on your pillowing breast,  
To breathe my last sigh on the bosom first prest!  
Dying at last!

I am no saint;  
But, boys, say a prayer. There's one that begins:  
"Our Father," and then says, "forgive us our sins."  
Don't forget that part; say it strongly; then  
I'll try to repeat it, and you'll say: "Amen!"  
Ah, I'm no saint!

Hark! there's a shout!  
Raise me up, comrades! We have conquered; I know!  
Up, on my feet, with my face to the foe!  
Ah, there flies the flag with its star-spangles bright—  
The promise of glory, the symbol of right!  
Well may they shout!

I'm mustered out!  
Oh, God of our fathers! our freedom prolong,  
And tread down rebellion, opposition, and wrong!  
Oh, land of earth's hopes! on thy blood-reddened sod,  
I die for the Nation, the Union, and God!  
I'm mustered out!

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

In the Democratic Review of November, there was an account of the trial of Harry Blake for murder, who was convicted on circumstantial evidence and hung. About three months after his death, the judge who presided at the trial received a note from a prisoner under sentence of death, requesting to see him without delay, as his sentence was to be carried into effect the day following. On his way thither he overtook an old man walking slowly, who accosted him, and the judge recognized him to be Caleb Grayson, who had been a witness at Blake's trial, and had a similar note to his own, equally at a loss to know the meaning of the summons. They entered the cell together. The prisoner did not move, but raised his head, when Grayson recognized him, having seen him at a tavern the night before Blake's execution, and at the gallows.

"Well, Judge, I sent for you to see if you can't get me out of this scrape. Must I hang to-morrow?"

The Judge shook his head: "It's idle to hope, nothing can prevent your execution."

"An application might be made to the highest authorities," answered the prisoner. "Pardons have come sometimes on the scaffold."

"None will come in your case," said the Judge. "It is needless for me to dwell on your offence now, for it was one that had no palliation, and you may rest assured that whatever may have occurred in other cases, no pardon will come in yours. In fact, I understand that an application has been made for one by your counsel, and has been refused."

The features of the prisoner underwent no change, nor did the expression of his face alter in the least. After a moment's pause, he said: "Is this true, Judge, upon your honor?"

"It is," replied the Judge.

"Then I know the worst," replied the criminal, coldly, "and will now tell what I have to communicate, which I would not have done while there was a hope of escape. You," he said, turning to the Judge, "presided at the trial of young Harry Blake, who was accused of murder, and sentenced him to death."

"I did."

"And you," turning to Grayson, "were one of the witnesses against him. You swore you saw him stab Wickliffe. On your testimony principally he was hung."

"I was," said Grayson. "I saw him with my own eyes."

The prisoner uttered a low, sneering laugh, as he said, turning to the Judge:

"You, sir, sentenced an innocent man. And you," turning to the other, "swore to a falsehood. Harry Blake did not kill Wickliffe. He was as innocent of the sin of murder as you were—more innocent than you are now."

The old man staggered as if he had been struck, and leaned against the table to support himself, while the condemned felon stood opposite, looking at him with an indifferent air.

"Yes, old man," said he, sternly, "you have blood and perjury on your soul, for I, I," said he, stepping forward so that the light of the lamp fell strongly upon his savage features, "I murdered William Wickliffe! I did it! Thank God I did it, for I had a long score to settle with him! But Blake had no hand in it. I met Wickliffe on that afternoon alone—with no one to interfere between us. I told him of the injuries he had done me, and I told him that the time was come for redress. He endeavored to escape, but I followed him up; I grappled with him, and stabbed him. As I did so I heard the clatter of horse's hoofs, and I leaped into a clump of bushes that grew by the roadside. At that moment Blake came up, and found Wickliffe dead in the road. You know the rest. The tale he told was as true as the gospel. He was only attempting to draw the knife from the man's breast, when you came up and charged him with the murder."

"Good God! Can this be possible?" ejaculated the old man. "It cannot. Villain, you are a liar!"

"Pshaw!" muttered the man. "What is there I could gain by a lie? To-morrow I die."

"I don't believe it! I don't believe it!" exclaimed Grayson, pacing the cell and wringing his hands. "God in mercy grant that it may be false! that this dreadful sin may not be upon me!"

The prisoner sat down and looked at the Judge and the witness with a calmness that had something in it almost fiendish, when contrasted with the extreme agitation of the one and the mental agony of the other.

At last the old man stopped in front of him, and with a calmness so suddenly assumed in the midst of his paroxysm of remorse, that it even overawed the criminal, said: "You are one whose life has been a tissue of falsehood and crime. You must prove what you have said, or I'll not believe it."

"Be it so," answered the prisoner. "I saw the whole transaction, and heard all your testimony at the trial, for I was there too. I'll now tell you what occurred at the spot of the murder, which you did not mention, but which I saw. When you rode up, the man with you jumped off his horse and seized Blake by the collar; and your hat

fell off on the pommel of your saddle, but you caught it before it reached the ground. You then sprang off your horse, and while Walton held Blake you examined the body. You attempted to pull the knife from his breast, but it was covered with blood, and slipped from your fingers. You rubbed your hands on the ground, and going to a bush on the roadside, broke off some leaves and wiped your hands upon them and afterwards the handle of the knife. You then drew it out, and washed it in a little puddle at the foot of the sumach bush. As you did so you looked at Blake, who was standing with his hands folded, and who said: "Don't be uneasy about me, Caleb. I didn't kill Wickliffe, and don't intend to escape." At that time you were within six feet of where I was. It's lucky you didn't find me, for I was ready at that moment to send you to keep company with Wickliffe; but I saw all even when you stumbled and dropped your glove as you mounted your horse."

"God have mercy on me!" ejaculated Grayson. "This is all true. But one word more, I heard Wickliffe, as we rode up, shriek out: 'Mercy! mercy! Harry!'"

"He was begging his life then; my first name is Harry."

The old man clasped his hands across his face, and fell senseless to the floor.

It is needless to go into the details of the prisoner's confession, which was so full and clear that it left no doubt on the mind of the Judge that he was guilty of Wickliffe's murder, and that Harry Blake was another of those who have gone to swell the list of victims to circumstantial evidence.

#### THE END OF MERRY DICK COON.

"I think I never told you about an old chum of mine," said Charlie, "that I used to have many a good time with, Dick Coon of the —th Ohio Volunteers. Poor Dick! I'll drink to his memory next time I get a chance"—and then a deep sigh followed.

"Hope it's not a ghost-story, Jim," said Charlie. "It seems to make you kinder melancholy like. I don't like ghost-stories on duty."

"No, lad," said Jim, "it's not a ghost-story—at least not as such things are called; but I seem to see poor Dick before my eyes this minute just as he used to be when we camped out together long ago, and as he was when he went down at last."

"Just the boy for the camp then!" said Charlie. "Now do tell us about him!"

"Well, lads, I'll tell you of his end, and then it'll be time to turn in. It was way down in Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley, where there were a lot of little battles going on, not of any great account,

only they thinned down our muster-roll as much or more than one big stand-up fight! Ah, lads, it makes one sigh to think on all the brave boys he'd seen the last of!"

"Come, lad, don't preach!" said Charlie. "How about Dick Coon's end?"

"Why, it was one o' them fights, too big for a skirmish and too little for a battle, and the rebel gunners had been blazing away with their shells, and their sharp-shooters picking off our lads like so many prairie-chickens, and Dick had escaped scot-free, and cheered like an early rooster every time he saw a rebel drop.

"But at last there came a cannon-ball right against poor Dick, and cut off his thigh as clean as if old Hackett had sawn it off with his toggery.

"I was standing along side of Dick, and saw his limb fly off ever so many rods, and when it fell it gave one of our chaps in the rear quite a stunner—caught him right on his face and set his nose a bleeding.

"Dick had turned round and seen it, for I caught hold on him and he hadn't dropt. So says Dick, 'Did ye see *my seven-leagued boot*? That shows you the pace I'm going to make my last march at. Guess it beats the double-quick hollow.'

"So says I: 'Blest if you ain't a trump, Dick, to be game after that blow, but I guess that's the last time you'll draw blood, dear old fellow.'

"'Devil a bit!' says Dick. 'Just load my musket for me, and you'll see the last blood that my poor carcass spills shall be rebel blood and not loyal.'

"So, of course, boys, I loaded Dick's tool, though the blood from his big artery was spouting like a hose tap in a fierce fire.

"'Be quick!' says Dick. 'The whistle's sounded, and the train'll be off in half a minute.' So I up and gave him his musket, and another boy helped me to prop him steady in the rank. 'Now watch,' says Dick. 'There's yon tall rebel by that cotton tree. I'm going to take him prisoner, and let him keep me company on the long march I'm just getting ready for;' and then he levelled and took aim, and sure enough the rebel dropped dead as a door-nail. Dick gave one faint cheer, and his one leg shook as though he was trying to give a leap: 'Now, then, boys,' says Dick, 'you see I'm not going all alone; I've got a companion, or a prisoner, God knows which; but I bear him no malice, so, boys, bury us in the same grave. Maybe we sha'n't fight in the land we're marching to.'

"These were poor Dick's last words. I need not tell you his commands were obeyed, and Dick and the rebel sleep in the same grave! Peace be to their memory!"