THE GHOST BELL OF STITHNEY.

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The ancient and tiny church-town of Stithney stands near the southern coast of Cornwall, at the edge of dreary, windswept downs.

As far as the eye can reach to the north are ragged, furrowy hillocks of furze, and to the south, over a treeless plain, there is nothing to relieve the sense of desolation but the white sails, or the trailing plumes from passing steamers' funnels, upon the gray or spumy sea.

Of the hundred or more souls housed in the stone cottages, huddling close against the venerable parish church, gray and drear as the sea and land, a few gain their scant livelihoods in the distant mines; a few sell "growder," a sort of rotten stone which, from time immemorial, has provided the Cornish housewife with a substitute for soap in her weekly scouring of floors and furniture; some are hedge cutters, field hands, furze gatherers and cottage thatchers; others are the village blacksmith, shoemaker, joiner and what-not of the scrimp-penny village, but most are coasting sailors, or fishermen who seek the harvests of the deep, from Mullion Cove to Marazion and Mount's Bay.

One of the latter, Joe Davy, was destined to give the hamlet of Stithney no little Cornish distinction. And it all originated in his unwise and inexplicable devotion to the church bells of the village.

These, three in number, had hung in their little old Norman tower for more than an hundred years. Joe had been their head ringer since he was a lad, and though he knew not one note from another, his dogged insistence and indomitable perseverance had left him for many years undisputed, though not undisturbed, master of the Stithney bells.

All this time a tragedy of superficial love was enacting at Stithney. Poll Treenoodle was Joe Davy's betrothed. Scraggy, lean and gaunt, the girl slaved on and waited for the blessed bans to be read, but Joe's life was so wrapped up in the bells, was so distraught from the constant cunning attempts of rivals to oust him from his proud position, and his meager earnings were so engulfed in repairs for ropes, brass, gudgeons, stay straps, bolts, head stocks, sliders and pulleys, that the time never came when the bitter tongues of the Stithney harridans could be stilled by the only act, that of a wedding, which might give them kindly silence.

Poor Poll Treenoodle bore their gibes in silence, and starved and slaved until the years silvered her hair and bent her scraggy form, while Joe Davy, fiercely contentious for the possession of his loved bells, grew to be stiff and old in the hard life of the sea.

For years Poll Treenoodle, forced from housework by the cruel taunts of the ignorant women about her, had been a despised "growder" seller. With donkey and cart she had hurried up and down the village highways and halted before village doors with her well-filled tub and her shrill cry to the Cornish wife of,

"Growder to-day, mawther?"

"Hown't a sellin' un to-day, Poll?" was the endless rejoinder.

Her changeless reply would be,

Same ol' drug,
Hapn'y a tub!

Then the housewife would empty the tub, pay the immemorial half-penny and look at old Poll Treenoodle contemptuously and pityingly as she trudged on. If the latter, she would sometimes be moved to call after her:

"Poll, Poll, besn't tha coortin' Joe Davy o'erlong?"

"No, no, mawther," Poll would sadly and wearily reply. "Joe be coortin' th' Stithney bells o'erlong!"

Perhaps the housewife would toss poor old Poll a half-penny with,

"Weel, weel, Poll, theer be a hap'ny for tha marryin'."

This the growder seller would clutch with miserly eagerness and hasten to her next customer.

But though her ragged form sped from hamlet to hamlet in a seemingly endless quest for growder buyers, whenever the bells of Stithney rang, Poll Treenoodle would be found crouching in a corner of the old church tower, well away from the whipping of the ringers' ropes, living another life as she watched old Joe and his men with an almost fierce pride and happiness, or closed her eyes and listened noddingly to the chiming of the bells above her.

Then, when their tones had ceased, the old couple would sit alone in the tower and croon over their plans for wedded life, when Joe Davy should feel it safe to have the bans read, precisely as they had done times without number for nearly two score years.

One Sabbath day Rector Dunlea came to them here, with resolute but troubled face.

"Poll and Joe," he said with a touch of genuine compassion in his voice, "I've something to say to you very earnestly."

"Thankee, sir," said Poll humbly, crouching a little closer to Joe.

"It's a word an' a scat wi' us, Coden (cousin) Jacks. "So, bear away, sir." And timorously, "Besn't aboot th' beels, sir?"

"Yes, Joe, about the bells and yourselves besides."

"We need na words, sir, an' th' beels need less."

"Joe," continued the rector unheeding the ringer's reply, "you and Poll should have been man and wife long, long ago."

Poll's face took on a harder look, Joe gave the rector a furtive glance, but the two remained silent.

"It's the scandal of Stithney!—of course nobody thinks ill of either of you, Poll and Joe," this as the two eyed him doggedly and dangerously; "but, Joe, you must give way to a younger man, to a musician, to a scientific ringer. Besides, we must have a peal of bells at Stithney."

"A peal o' beels?" muttered old Joe, huskily.

"Yes, of six, at least, Joe. Now, you know, you cannot ring their changes properly. Your devotion to our old bells has been grand, Joe, but Crowan, Helston, Wendron, St. Hilary, even St. Earth, are all replacing their old chimes with peals. Stithney cannot fall behind."

The old fellow's hand sought Poll's unconsciously and he held it close and hard for a time. Then he asked assertively,

"Tha'll na be sax new beels!"

"Oh, no, we'll need but three—four, five and six, they are called."

"Hown't a sellin' un—tha four, five, sax?"

"They will cost at least a hundred pounds, Joe, put in place."

"Doan't ee knaw, an' tha a passon, Stithney'll braak under th' drug (burden)?" retorted old Joe desperately.

"Joe, there's no use," replied the rector sadly but emphatically. "Poor as we are at Stithney, the bells must be had. They must be rung properly, besides. Here now, both of you, listen! I'll put ten pounds in your own and Polly's hands the day you're married, and you, Joe, will let some younger man take your place at the bells!"

This was a grand burst of generosity for so poor a cleric as the rector of Stithney. He patted each of the grizzled old lovers kindly on the shoulders as though the thing were done, with his blessing on it besides, and, humming a pleasant melody, stepped lightly away to the mossy rectory behind the ancient church.

A pretty, quizzical face greeted him at the rectory door, a smiling, doubtful, half-mocking, but altogether loving, face, and, as the rector entered, its lips parted with,

"Well, father?"

"Well, Rose, it is well."

"I don't believe it!"

"Assuredly it is, daughter. Why, I showed the obstinate old fellow how useless was his persistence, the necessity for the change, and what do you think I did besides?"

"Told him he was standing in the light of the whole parish?" suggested Rose, teazingly.

"No," said her father gravely, "though that should not have been omitted. But I actually promised them a gift of ten pounds if they would marry and Joe would step aside for some younger and more competent man."

"And you believe Joe Davy will do this?"

"Certainly he will."

"Certainly he will not. Father, nothing but death will ever loosen his hands from the tenor bell of Stithney Church. And that poor, half demented old Polly Treenoodle would shed her last drop of life blood before she would let him do it!"

"Nonsense, Rose. We shall have no further annoyance from that quarter."

"Why, father, you don't know old Joe and old Polly. When Will Hardy was down here from London—you know he has a genuine literary penchant for odd characters?—I made him acquainted with them both. He said there was the stuff in the old couple for a grand romance!"

The rector laughed good humoredly and ventured the opinion that if the young London literator, William Hardy, based his hopes for literary fame on the portrayal of such a pair, he had better take a haberdasher's clerkship for a livelihood at once.

"But, father, you don't understand them," urged the rector's daughter. "Joe's love for those bells amounts to a madness. In proportion to his very ignorance is his intensity of idolatory for them. To him, they are wife, home, love—all. And old Poll has but one dull, dead, endless hope before her, to minister in some dumb way to his passion for them. So Will Hardy says, and I believe it, too."

"Well, well, well," exclaimed Rector Dunlea dubiously, just as stumping, sturdy footsteps were heard approaching over the graveled walk.

He parted the vines at the open window and looked out. Hand in hand old Joe Davy and old Poll Treenoodle were approaching the door. The rector noticed that Joe was very stern and white, and he asked him kindly:

"Well, Joe, what can I do for you now?"

"It's naught tha can do for me, passon. "It's sumet we s'll do for tha!"

"About the bells?" This to Joe: and then to Rose behind him: "You see he has come to give in like the good fellow that he is!"

"About th' beels," he answered laconically.

"Well, Joe?"

"Weel, passon, Poll an' me'll bren (buy) th' beels fra Lunnon. Poll ha' saved a prill (a bit of gold) fra growder sellin', an' I ha' saved a scubmaw (a little wreckage) fra th' sea. We'll bren th' beels fra Lunnon—an', passon, God's word on't I'll ring 'em t' th' eend!"

He said this determinedly and fiercely, and old Poll chuckled hoarsely and strangely, as, still clutching each other's hands, they turned on their heels and stumped proudly away.

Rose Dunlea came close to her father's chair, gently pressed her pretty fingertips over his astonished eyes, and as she bent and kissed his flushed forehead she softly murmured:

"What does father think of Will Hardy's judgment now?"

"I—I think," he said feelingly as he raised his own hands and held his daughter's for a moment where she had lovingly placed them, "that God alone can fathom the depths of the lowliest human heart!"

No power could turn the old lovers from their purpose. The village folk laughed and jeered, but they went bravely on and on. Slaving and starving Poll dug and sold her growder, adding fiercely and savagely to the hard-earned hoard. Savagely and fiercely, too, old Joe braved all dangers of the coast, from Mullion Cove to Marazion, and the sea, as if responsive to his daring, gave its richest harvests to his furious quest.

"Their baans (bans) will be caa'd oot above their greaves," the villagers would whisper as they wagged their heads.

"Th' brave beels I'll bring tha curse on Stithney," others would gravely prophesy.

"Awd rat tha beels," still others would mutter; "they'll crumble like growder an' rot like fish; fatched (got) by sech betwattled hoddymandoddies (crazy simpletons)!"

Despite the croaking of the villagers the new bells for Stithney came at last from London, and old Joe and Poll, fending all sacrilegious hands from their shining forms, saw them safely put in place.

But the full peal remained unheard. All entreaties that it be rung were unheeded. Old Joe's triumph was to be had in such a surprise to the Stithneys as they had never before experienced. He clanged away with old-time clamor upon the three ancient bells, but the new ones were mute. At Christmas, not before, should the glorious peal be heard.

Meantime the bent old ringer stole secretly to Crowan, to Helston and to St. Hilary and there, night after night, practiced with the ringers and trained his own ringers on the tuneful numbers of "Hark that News," "Hark the Herald" and "Hail Smiling Morn," while a haggard old woman always sat shivering and mute but radiant in the dark shadows of the towers, and when the ringers were done the same trembling old form trudged beside Joe Davy over the dreary roads or through the ghostly lanes back to dark old Stithney hamlet.

Three days before Christmas old Joe had "set up" the bells of Stithney, and, after locking fast the church tower, so that no envious hands should endanger his great triumph at midnight of Christmas Eve, he hastened back to the shore and his boat for another short cruise for fish, the proceeds of which were to be expended upon his ringers for their payment and cheer, so that Stithney should assuredly hear the bravest change-ringing that Cornwall had ever known.

This "setting up" the bells, as may not be generally known, is a common custom among the peal-ringers of England, when, as at midnight of Christmas or New Year's Eve, or on the occasion of great weddings or general jubilations, a sudden melodious and tremendous clamor of the bells is desired.

For this purpose upright oaken or iron "stays" are fitted into the stocks or beams upon which the bells are hung. When the bell is reversed, mouth upward, this stay strikes a "slider" and moves against it gently, permitting the bell at last to remain stationary in this position, but so triflingly overbalanced that a babe's hand upon the ropes will bring bells of tons' weight whirling madly in their thunderous throbs, and a full peal of from five to eleven bells set off, in this impetuous manner in the silence of the night, produces one of the most thrilling and solemn effects with which the human ear can be greeted.

This afternoon before Christmas was a wild one in the English channel. Great banks of fog pounded along the southern Cornish downs. Driving rain and sleet cut sharply the faces of all who braved the blast, and the thunderings along the coast were fearsome to hear.

It was so dark, but an hour after midday, in the single straggling street of Stithney, that huge miners' candles flared in the dingy windows of the dingier shops, and other lights flashed cheerily out of a few of the better habitations and from the latticed windows of the rectory.

Little for Christmas cheer was preparing in the scrimped homes of this old Cornish hamlet, and the only objects of animation or life in the storm-beaten village street were Poll Treenoodle with her donkey and cat, and a greedy rabble of children following after, as Poll passed from door to door, her usual load of growder now exchanged for sprigs of holly, wreaths of mistletoe, and that greatest treat to Cornish little folk, the currant-filled, saffron-smothered Christmas bun.

But old Poll was in surprising spirits, and even in more surprising attire. Over her poor, bent frame was a strange white gown. She had twined about this scraggy garlands of mistletoe, interlaced with gaudy ribbons, and on her palsied head hung an outlandish Cornish gowk, a wide bonnet whose flap covers the shoulders, and from this the mist and sleet trickled upon her gown, sadly discoloring it with the flimsy, fading ribbon shades.

Some came to doors and windows and looked pityingly upon her, with such sayings as "See the poor mazed pattie (simpleton)!" or "Awd rat it! 'Tis a pity on th' readlin' i' th' skew (pelting storm)!" or "Ol' Poll's streeved (labored) o'erlong, thar's down souse (that's plain)!" and the like; but the lonely soul smiled and gurgled to compassionate or railing face alike, and sold her Christmas wares betimes, unheeding all the folk and storm.

She had come in front of the little parish church with her stores nearly gone. She looked up to the belfry with a grand and knowing air. Some who were near heard her mutter:

"When our beels bes't once wrang th' baans'll be caa'd oot, an' then Joe an' Poll'll be just one!"

Those who heard this, also saw her suddenly grow pale and totter against the cart. They saw, too, that her eyes were almost starting from their sockets and were fixed in an agony of terror upon a corner of the church tower battlement.

Peering through the mist they saw a single raven perched upon the stone. The bird of ill omen bobbed and ducked and craned its cunning head, first toward the belfry and then down toward old Poll and her cart. Then it settled its head back between its shoulders, opened its uncanny throat and uttered a mournful,

"Caw—caw—caw!"

With an unearthly cry of "Joe, Joe!—ye're a korph maro (dead body) corb'n (bumping) on th' shore!" she leaped into her cart, shriekingly urged the donkey into a mad pace and disappeared in the thickening fog in the direction of the sea.

They tell at Stithney to this day how the miner, "fatchin' hoam," from the pits; the fisher folk, trailing into the village from their boats and their nets; the laborers hastening back to their cottages in the early evening hours; and all the lowly folk that gather there from lowly work and toil, watched in little groups in shops and the smithy, or in open cottage doors discussing the grewsome sign and peering with eager eyes far down the highway toward the sea, for sight of returning Poll and Joe.

They tell, too, that it was the dreariest Christmas Eve that old Stithney ever knew; that as the storm changed from fog to sleet and from sleet to pelting snow, it drove the villagers indoors early; that but few were bold or strong enough to loiter and wait; and that, finally, but two old miners, nerved by brave tales and gin and treacle, were the last ones left beside the village smithy door, where the flickering light from the forge played fantastic conjurings with the strange snow shapes along the hedges and the roads.

But here the two old miners waited until nearly midnight, and at last, stupid from waiting and from grog, were just about closing the smithy door to plunge through the snow-drifts to their cottage homes. One more look they would take down the swirling, snow-pelted road. They stepped from the door together. They fell upon and over some suddenly upraised obstacle. One of the old men plunged headlong over a snow-whitened donkey into drift, and the other sprawled strugglingly within a snow-filled cart.

What his hands touched and his body met, besides the snow, sent him bounding and floundering into the highway.

Then old Stithney hamlet was awakened by cries of terror which brought its men and brawny housewives to the smithy door. Crouching behind it the watching miners were chattering and mumbling in superstitious fear.

They pulled and pushed the mute donkey and its cart within the shadowy place. White as a new washed fleece they could see the donkey then. White as driven snow were the donkey cart and wheels. White as snow or death, the stiffened objects, to which the pelting flakes had strangely molded. White as the drifts in blossoming hawthorn lanes the faces that they found beneath.

For there lay the ringer of the tenor bell of Stithney, with sand and tiny sea shells and seaweed drift in his grizzled hair and beard, just as old Poll had laid his lifeless body in her cart, and there beside it, too, her thin and shriveled hands clutching the other one's against her pulseless heart, lay Poll Treenoodle, a smile on her weazened face, for had not their bells been rung, their bans called out, and had not the two at last become as one in the everlasting sleep?

"Stithney would not ever since have rested under the shadow of something like a superstitious curse," perplexedly remarked Rector Dunlea to his daughter Rose and their young literary friend from London, Wm. Hardy, as they sat together in the pleasant library of the rectory, some three years later, "had not an unaccountable incident at that moment occurred."

He had been recounting the tragedy of three years before, and the awe and solemnity which had overshadowed the villagers from the ghostly return of the dead, when donkey, cart and mute burdens had come with their appalling silence out of the bitter storm to the open smithy door.

"They had got the frozen bodies stretched stark upon a rude litter in a corner of the smithy, had covered them tenderly with sheets from near housewives' stores, and were whispering among each other, arranging for watchers of the dead until morning, as is the custom here in Cornwall, when there burst upon their startled ears a mighty clamor of the old church tenor bell."

"That was Joe's bell, Mr. Hardy," interrupted Rose.

"Yes, it is the largest bell. As head ringer Joe had rung that bell for more than forty years. It had never been 'set' for a full peal before. It thundered madly for a time, finally subsiding into something like a toll, and at last died tremulously away."

"It startled every one in Stithney, even us here at the rectory, from our beds in fright," added Rose shudderingly.

"And brought all those in the smithy to their knees in added terror," resumed the rector, "for their superstitious imaginations nothing short of some supernatural power could have rung Joe Davy's bell as he lay there dead before them.

"'Lans! Joe's speris!'—his ghost or wraith—they cried as they tremblingly crouched together. From that moment to this the great bell has been the 'Ghost Bell of Stithney,' for it has rung out wildly about midnight of each Christmas Eve, but at no other time; and the villagers stoutly claim that this is done by old Joe's ghostly hands."

"The old wives of the village have many grewsome sayings, Mr. Hardy, which you should know," persisted Rose with a keen interest which won grateful response from the writer's brightening eyes. "I can recall a few of them at this moment. Here is one:

"'Ghaist beel, ghaist beel!
Rings for a' not weeded weel!'

"This passes current as fine scorn in the villages roundabout, particularly as a reflection on the quarrelsome nature of some of our people. Another is:

"'Th' Ghaist Beel o' Stithney
Warns him bes't wed na!'

"And many of the sailors and fisherfolk profess to have heard on that dreadful night, and to hear every night the bell is still mysteriously rung, these doleful and distinctly repeated words in the strokes of old Joe's bell:

"'All—ye—'ave'n—sweehearts—off'n—land!
Baans—caa'd—too—late—for—th'—hand!'

"There are others I will try and get for you," she concluded, as he wrote the couplets hastily in his notebook, but these will serve to show how unhappy superstition is completely interwoven with the villagers' lives."

"That is the worst of it," returned her father discouragedly. "It has greater influence upon them than my pulpit. It has brought hundreds of morbidly curious people here. It has become the subject of untrue, unjust trivial and most irritating newspaper comment. It has actually rendered the living here almost unbearable. More painful still, the ghost bell rings on from year to year, and, so far, no human ingenuity has been able to silence it. I would give," he added with deep feeling, "five years of my life to discover a rational and clearly explainable cause for this manifestation, and to have the tongue of this ghost-bell stilled!"

William Hardy was a writer of the day who fortunately recognized an opportunity when he saw it, for he asked quietly, without raising his eyes from his notebook or betraying the slightest emotion:

"Instead of five years of your useful life would you not rather bestow the hand of Rose here upon an acceptable suitor?"

The girl, suffused with blushes, fled precipitately from the library, but any one, save perhaps a father distraught by ghosts or ghost bells, could easily have seen where her heart and wishes lay.

Rector Dunlea turned and faced the young writer in utter amazement, almost in anger. The latter wrote on imperturbably, and finally turned his eyes full upon the clergyman's face. Perhaps because they were honest eyes, in a moment more both faces had broken into pleasant smiles.

"Well, well, well, Hardy, isn't this a little abrupt?"

"Let's call it straightforward. Is it an agreement?"

"Yes, yes—if I find—"

"That the party of the third part, who, in this instance, is the real party of the first part, is willing to thus covenant and agree?" replied young Hardy radiantly.

"Oh, of course, of course! Well, well, well! That ghost bell is working strange havoc in Stithney parish!"

Upon this William Hardy, securing the key to the church tower, began his investigations amid the smiles and shruggings of the villagers as hundreds had done before him.

He first made sure that no human being could have entered the belfry to mischievously affect the ghostly action of old Joe's tenor bell. Then, night after night, he "set" the bell, as the ringers set them all for the annual Christmas peal, hoping by some fortunate chance occurrence to dispel the supernatural character of the single yearly happening, but the bell remained upright and silent.

He now visited the belfries of surrounding parish churches and studied the construction of their bell cages and the arrangement of wheels, pulleys and ropes, but without eliciting a single hint or suggestion to aid him.

They were precisely alike save in one particular. He discovered that, owing to the diminutive size of the Stithney belfry the cages of the six bells were so crowded that there was no room for the rope upon the great bell to pass straight from the fillet of its wheel to the rope-stand on the tower floor below.

Instead, it passed over the smaller bells to a fixed pulley, at equal hight, on the opposite side of the belfry, giving, when the tenor bell was set, a taut horizontal reach of rope, directly across the belfry, of fully fifteen feet in length.

He noticed this, as he noticed the most trivial circumstance, but in every direction he was completely baffled in accounting for the happening which had brought such unrest to ancient Stithney hamlet.

One stormy night, late in December, he had set old Joe's tenor bell and had determined to pass the night alongside it in the belfry. He stepped over to the rectory to apprise his friends of his probable absence until morning. On his return to the church he was surprised to find the door ajar, and, after he had bolted it securely and began the ascent of the belfry, he was startled at coming upon a ragged lad heavily laden with a huge basket, a cricket bat and various well-patched bags.

The lad immediately began to whine and plead for mercy.

"I fan th' door op'n, an' I jess pushed un in!"

"Never mind that," replied Hardy cheeringly. "What are you after up here, anyhow?"

"Staarlin's, sir, fur Kersmas pie!"

"Starlings! — and for Christmas pie? Not this time of the year, sonny; nor in church belfries, and not fit to eat at any time, you young rascal. Try again, now."

The lad sat down on one of the stone steps as if from very exhaustion at the writer's ignorance.

"Skin 'em an' eat 'em, an' ee'll knaw," he finally retorted triumphantly, and then added with fine diplomacy—"Wust ee give me a' I'll scat t' lems (all I'll knock to pieces)?"

"In this belfry?"

"Yes, i' th' beelfry."

"How do they get in there?"

"Th' stoorm dreaves hunners (hundreds) o' 'em in th' crazen'd (broken) shutters."

"Come on, lad! You shall have every starling in the belfry," exclaimed Hardy excitedly, as he led the way.

"Durk th' kendle!—durk th' kendle (put out the light)," whispered the lad hoarsely, springing after him.

Hardy did as bidden, but not until his head was above the belfry floor, and a quick and searching look had revealed a remarkable spectacle.

Within countless nooks and crannies, crouching upon stone, iron and timbered projections, clinging to wheels, pulleys, stocks, blocks and stays, and—far more important in its meaning to him, thickly crowded upon the taut but swaying rope of Joe Davy's tenor bell—were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of dazed and half-starved starlings, which had thus taken refuge from the storm.

The sudden impulse of flight given the huddled line of birds upon the rope, he had noticed, was even then as the light went out swaying from its poise the huge mouth of the bell.

In another instant there was a deafening clamor in the belfry. As though a thousand brazen throats had madly shrieked protest at intrusion, the great bell swayed and groaned and thundered, startling and stunning the young writer until he shrunk down upon the belfry floor, and the lad, springing past with, "Mind yer eyes and feace, an' let me at un," began shouting and swinging his bat like a wicked demon of the dark.

Almost as terrific as the thunderings of the bell were now the flutterings, dartings, shriekings and plaintive death-gurgles of the birds about him. How long it lasted he never knew. But when the young bird-butcher desisted from sheer exhaustion, Hardy realized that his face and hands were bleeding from countless strokes and gashes of the bills and talons of the frenzied starlings; that the villagers were astir from the ill-timed ghost-peal of old Joe Davy's bell and were tugging at the locked door below, and that the sturdy Cornish lad who knew how to provide his own and neighbors' larders with material for starling pie, had slaughtered more birds than they both could carry to the street, while from out the darkness, as the first faint, weird flash of the lad's "kendle" broke through the gloom, he could hear a puffing, panting Cornish voice as it triumphantly muttered:

"Wass think o' un now? Wass think o' un now?"

The next morning when Wm. Hardy, literator, appeared late in his place at the breakfast table of the rectory, his ordinarily expressive face was drawn into immobility by sundry cubes and parallelograms of court-plaster, crossed and interlaced in strange and fantastic confusion.

"Bless us!" exclaimed the rector in unfeigned alarm.

"Mercy!" cried the startled Rose. "Why, Mr. Hardy, can it be possible that you encountered the ghost?"

"N—not exactly," responded William Hardy grimly, while extricating the edges of his cuffs from the pale cubes and parallelograms upon his hands and wrist. "But if the Rev. Mr. Dunlea will expend the matter of about two pounds in repairing the broken shutters of his belfry — so that the starlings cannot utilize it as a cote in time of winter storms and practice peal ringing upon old Joe Davy's tenor bell—the Ghost Bell of Stithney will be forever stilled!"

[For the RECORD-UNION.]

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

[To my little grandson, R. W. C.]

Come, little child, for a summer
Over the mountains so high,
Where the summits are white with drifted snow,
Untouched as the years go by.
We will camp by the beautiful lake,
And dwell in the palace of leaves.
Aspen groves are sweet with laughter;
Zephyrs murmur through the pines;
Fairies pass the bridge of shade
By the willows interlaid,
And a brooklet clear as air
Hurries past with music gay.

You can learn to climb and swim
In the sun's prismatic glow;
You can see the little fishes
Nibbling at your naked toe,
And can paddle in the water
Where your father used to row,
When it all was new to him.

I will show you a cool spring
In the forests shadowing,
Where the bluebells, columbine,
Golden rod and Indian pink
Are pictured in its waters mine;
A narrow path will take us there,
A little trail made by the feet
Of timid deer that come to drink—
O! you will make the grace complete.

Where the dragon flies are glancing
On their jeweled wings
We will speed our light canoe,
Sending ripples on the sand,
Set the waterlilies dancing,
Blowing sweetness to the land.

Past the rocks and silent cave,
Where the "echoes" live alone,
You may call and they will answer
From their halls of stone,
Till the chipmunks run to cover,
And the birds try to discover
How a little boy's "halloo"
Ever could have scared them so.

Where "cold stream" and river meet
Meadows red with berries sweet;
Where the children swarm,
Shout and make a dreadful clatter,
Bears do wonder "what's the matter,"
As they beat a safe retreat.

When the camps are shining bright,
Making beautiful the night;
Cheerful fires of fir-tree boughs
Bring the fishes, bring the berries,
Bread and milk and wine,
Gather in the little comrades,
Tired, dirty, sleepy crew,
We will have a high carouse.

High up the rattle and rumble
Until the mountain jars,
Flying through tunnels and snowsheds,
The "Central Pacific" cars,
Curving to the bands of steel,
Binding the West and the East.
Let this not disturb our feast;
Look up little child through the treetops,
And see God's beautiful stars.

Donner Lake, July 23, 1894. S. C.

LAW IS KING.

Shout it from the hilltops,
Speed it o'er the plain!
Loud above the tumult
Speak it once again!
Tell it in the cities
And by wayside spring,
Euerywhere men gather,
Law is King! Law is King!

'Tis our only ruler;
None else would we brook
'Tis not flesh in purple,
But a statute book,
Mighty in its promise
Peace and truth to bring,
Mighty in performance—
Law is King! Law is King!

'Tis not one man's fancy;
Sixty million wills
Into one will molded—
How the mere thought thrills!
Changeable, but potent,
'Tis no empty thing,
Rule and tool of millions—
Law is King! Law is King!

Bend the knee before it!
Hold it up for aye!
Praise it in your labor!
Laud it in your play!
Smite the hand that strikes it
Or to grief would bring
Our one sovereign ruler!
Law is King! Law is King!

Law is King! Long live the King!

—Columbus Dispatch.

Work has been suspended at the Norfolk Navy Yard, and 1,200 men have been laid off.

A NEW MAN OF HIM.

What Paine's Celery Compound Did for Sheriff Sinnott.

While the sun shines the farmer makes hay.

Men and women whose store of strength and nervous energy has fallen so low that it barely keeps them through the day should fill their veins with fresh blood full of red corpuscles, and store the million tiny nerve cells with energy by means of Paine's celery compound, while it is summer and the sun shines.

There are now few drafts upon the strength of the body; no winter colds to resist, nor spring languor to drag one back. It is amazing how rapidly it is now possible to lay up nerve force and vigor, over and above the daily expenditure. Those who suffer from kidney troubles, liver or stomach weaknesses and rheumatism find no time so suited as the present to overcome these diseases by giving these overworked, poorly fed organs blood that is rich and pure in quality and sure to invigorate.

This is what Paine's celery compound is doing all over the country while it is summer and while everyone feels that now is the time to get well.

That most remarkable blood and nerve remedy of this country—Paine's celery compound—makes new, vigorous red blood; removes disease from vital organs by richly feeding worn out nerve tissues all over the body and building up the strength of the body—that is why it makes people so quickly well.

Prof. Edward E. Phelps, M. D., LL. D., of Dartmouth College, first prepared Paine's celery compound. It has met the hearty approval of physicians and scientific men all over the world.

It makes people well.

Says Deputy Sheriff John Sinnott of Whitehall, N. Y., whose portrait is given above:

"In my opinion, Paine's celery compound is the best remedy in the world. I have been troubled with inflammatory rheumatism some twelve years, sometimes crippled for three months at a time. A friend told me to try Paine's celery compound, and I am now on my twelfth bottle, and it has made a new man of me. I heartily recommend it to everyone troubled with rheumatism."

It makes people well.

HE MOVED ON.

The Unfeeling Officer Gave Him No Encouragement to Stay.

"My dear man," he began, as he stopped a policeman on the Campus Martius at midnight the other night. "I want to ask a great favor of you—a great favor."

"Well, sir," was the curt reply.

"I left Buffalo for Chicago the other day. I have many reasons for believing that I have arrived in Chicago, but yet a perfidious doubt insists on entering my mind. Now, then, can you see your way clear to telling me whether I am in Chicago or not?"

"Of course you are not. You are in Detroit."

"In Detroit? That is a town about half way between Buffalo and Chicago, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sometimes called the City of the Straits?"

"Yes, sir."

"Because it is a town of straight people?"

"What do you want?" queried the officer, leaving the question to take care of itself.

"Queer—very queer! I start from Buffalo for Chicago, and I find myself in Detroit. I walk around town for three hours hunting for my friend Doboy of the police force, and not finding him a perfidious doubt begins to develop itself. approach you and ask for information, nd I find that Chicago and Doboy are till two hundred and eighty miles further toward the setting sun. I can not make it out, can you?"

"No, sir," stiffly replied the officer.

"Would you call it a case of absent-mindedness?"

"It might be that."

"Or could I have suddenly lost my identity? People do suddenly lose their identity, you know?"

"I expect they do."

"Hold! Could I have been in that condition known as inebriated?" anxiously asked the stranger.

"Very likely," grimly replied the officer. "Is that all you want to know?"

"About all. Stay a moment, however. I spoke of Doboy. He has implicit confidence in me. Should I ask him for a dime with which to—"

"Move on, sir," interrupted the officer.

"Towards Chicago?"

"Yes, sir, move on."

"Move on toward Chicago because of Doboy and that dime?"

"Move on or I'll run you in?"

"Very well. I move. I move toward Chicago. I decrease the distance between myself and Doboy. When I finally reach him I shall murmur: 'Doboy, old man, beware of Detroit, the city of the crooked! Beware of a big, overgrown, hard-hearted, avaricious, wobbled-kneed, red-eyed—!'"

The officer rushed for him, but his club only beat against a soft, damp shadow of the night.—Detroit Press.

Don't pay money for water!

A SOLID Extract of Beef is more ECONOMICAL than a liquid, because concentrated, and housekeepers will find it much cheaper to

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Liebig COMPANY'S Extract of Beef,

a solid, concentrated extract, free from fat and gelatine or any foreign substance and dissolve it themselves.

The genuine has this signature on the jar, IN BLUE: J. v. Liebig

NOTICE TO CREDITORS.—NOTICE IS hereby given by the undersigned, executrix of the will of CHARLES SCHWARTZ, deceased, to the creditors of and all persons having claims against said deceased, to present their said claims, with the necessary affidavits and vouchers, to the undersigned, within ten months next after the first publication of this notice, at the office of White, Hughes & Seymour, number 420 J street, of the City of Sacramento, in the County of Sacramento, State of California, the same being the place for the transaction of the business of said estate.

Jul. 14, 1894. MARY SCHWARTZ, Executrix of the will of Charles Schwartz, deceased.

WHITE, HUGHES & SEYMOUR, Attorneys for Executrix. jy14-5t8

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Plumber, Gas and Steam Fitter.
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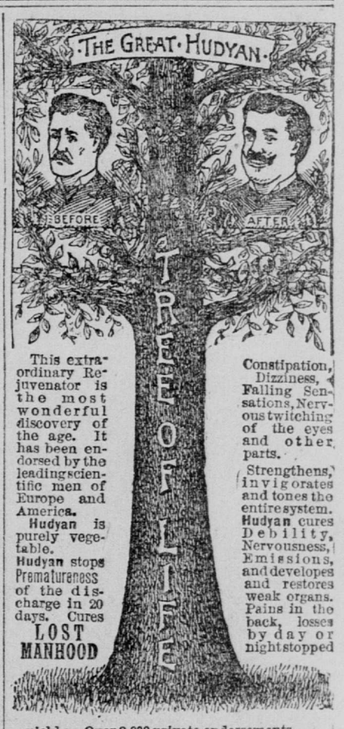

This extraordinary Rejuvenator is the most wonderful discovery of the age. It has been endorsed by the leading scientific men of Europe and America. Hudyan is purely vegetable. Hudyan stops Prematureness of the discharge in 20 days. Cures LOST MANHOOD quickly. Over 2,000 private endorsements.

Constipation, Dizziness, Falling Sensations, Nervous twitching of the eyes and other parts. Strengthens, invigorates and tones the entire system. Hudyan cures Debility, Nervousness, Emissions, and develops and restores weak organs. Pains in the back, losses by day or night stopped

Prematureness means impotency in the first stage. It is a symptom of seminal weakness and barrenness. It can be stopped in 20 days by the use of Hudyan.

The new discovery was made by the Specialists of the old famous Hudson Medical Institute. It is the strongest vitalizer made. It is very powerful, but harmless. Sold for $1.00 a package or 6 packages for $5.00 (plain sealed boxes). Written guarantee given for a cure. If you buy six boxes and are not entirely cured, six more will be sent to you free of all charges.

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