UNDER SEAL OF CONFESSION.

I.

A bony white horse jogged along, and the driver swore at the weather in an undertone. The young priest who sat beside him drew his cassock round him and shivered. The driver turned to him presently, and pointing ahead with his whip, said in an encouraging tone: "See, yonder are the two towers of Carhaix; we shall be there soon, *mon pere*, and there will be food and shelter at the Widow Royer's. It is but a few kilos on to Plougallec."

But the priest only bent his head silently. Cold and wet as he was, he cared little about reaching his journey's end. It was a journey unwillingly taken; to his own thinking he was going into exile, and he hardly heeded the discomforts of the way, though no doubt they added to his feeling of depression. He was out of heart and discouraged; he has just relinquished a post for which he felt himself entirely fitted, and in which every talent found congenial exercise, and was on his way to undertake a cure in a lonely Breton village, hidden away among the spurs of the Montagnes d'Arrees, and his heart sickened at the prospect.

Meanwhile the little hooded carriage had lumbered up the hill, between the two gaunt but stately churches, past the gray old convent with its rows of narrow, secretive-looking windows, then swinging round the corner beneath ancient projecting gables, rich with carvings which were a marvel of rude bygone art, and rattling over the stones, pulled up in front of the low white inn where the Widow Royer stood at the open door to welcome new arrivals. The good woman would fain have ushered M. le Recteur into the cold and dignified seclusion of the dining-room, but he much preferred to warm his chilled hands at the hospitable kitchen fire, while she and her white-coifed handmaidens bustled about preparing a hasty repast, for another carriage was already being made ready to convey the traveler to his ultimate destination before the early night should fall.

Another wayfarer was in possession of the chimney corner — a young sailor, drinking a glass of cider, who had already tramped some distance according to the testimony of his muddy shoes. He moved civilly away at the approach of the newcomer, but the priest bade him remain; there was plenty of room for both on the broad oaken settle. He liked the look of the lad's open countenance, and indeed there is something wonderfully taking about a Breton sailor in his holiday garb.

Thawed by the warmth of the fire, and perhaps cheered a little by the look of the bright face opposite, Armand was about to shake off the numbness of fatigue and cold and enter into conversation with his neighbor, when the latter drained his glass, and setting it down with a civil "Good night, sir," went his way. "That is one of M. le Recteur's parishioners," said Widow Royer, placing a large dish of eggs on the table and drawing up a chair. "He has been away a year at Brest, on service, and he has just come back on leave to see his old mother. A very decent woman is Mother Nedelec, and has had a deal of trouble. Her sons were a wild drinking lot, all but Herve there; he is the youngest, and a very good sort of boy. She is a strange woman in her ways, and keeps herself to herself; nobody seems to know much about her, though she has lived in Plougallec all her life. Folks do say she isn't as poor as she makes out; but she lives in a miserable bit of a place right away beyond the great cross as you go up to the ruined chapel. It is just where the path turns down the gorge to the place they call the Devil's Caldron. But Monsieur has not seen that yet? It is quite a show; there's many comes in the summer just to look at it. Herve used to make a good bit of money before he went to sea taking visitors round; for it is a curious place, worth seeing, they say, for them that has got a steady head, but dangerous for strangers. Will Monsieur please to come to the table? The carriage will be round in less than half an hour."

Another little ramshackle hooded cabriolet was produced presently, with another gaunt and bony horse, and by way of variety a hunchbacked driver who could not speak a word of French; and the priest, after his brief rest, mounted into his place and resumed his journey. Still the same gray hills and granite tors looking huge and menacing through the mist as the light faded. By and by Armand's ear, weary of the monotonous hoof-beats on the hard road, caught another sound, blithe as a lark's song, a merry tune such as the men and women dance to at the country fairs, whistled clear and loud by a traveler as he plodded along. Soon the carriage overtook the wayfarer, and the priest, leaning forward, recognized the young sailor, and perceived, too, that, in spite of his cheery whistle, he was walking gingerly as if he were footsore and chafed by his heavy shoes. With a hasty gesture he checked the driver, and bade the lad mount beside him. The hunchback growled, but if he made any objection it was lost on his auditor, being couched in an unknown tongue, and the boy sprang nimbly in and curled himself upon the straw at the bottom of the carriage, declining the proffered share of the seat.

As they jogged on Armand roused himself with an effort out of the regrets for the past and gloomy forebodings for the future in which he had been indulging, and began to talk to his companion. When he chose to exert himself he had a great gift of attraction, and he soon grew interested in spite of his depression of spirits, in the lad's frank and simple chatter of himself, his seafaring adventures, and especially about his home. Insensibly his heart warmed to this first sample of his parishioners. He purposely drew him on to enlarge on his life at Plougallec, to describe the hard work on the upland farms, the roystering fun at the yearly Kermesse, the long, dreary winter, and the old tales and legends that haunted every hill and rock, for he found as he listened that he was gleaning some notion of the people with whom he would have to deal. He had thought he understood Frenchmen, but the Breton nature was new to him, with its hardness and its simplicity, its deep religious sentiment, its clinging to tradition, its credulity bordering on superstition, its loyalty, and its almost fierce independence, and he began to see that, if rougher on the surface, it was no less interesting. He took some lessons, too, from his new friend in the strange old British tongue which still lingers where the railway has not penetrated, but is fast dying out as it has already died out among ourselves. Slow as their progress was over the steep hills, he was surprised to find how many long miles had been passed when, as they reached the towering cross, his companion swung himself down with grateful thanks and disappeared in a rocky gorge.

The encounter had cheered De Jacquemard, and he did not feel so lonely as he expected when he entered the little bare whitewashed presbytery, adjoining the church, which was to be his home.

II.

The line of the Arrees are glowing purple and golden and blue under the hot afternoon sunshine of July. The flood of radiance had washed away all the gloom of winter even from the frowning granite tors, and turned the inky weather stains into delicate shades of amethyst, which served to tone down the insistent brilliance where heather, mingled with gorse and dotted with patches of succory, almost wearied the eye.

The lank spare form of Pere Jacquemard in his black cassock looked rather like one of the rooks which from time to time alighted and stalked about among the flowers. Around, the silence was murmurous with the hum of little wings, and the joy of living manifested itself on every side in crowds of butterflies which danced and wavered above the yellow blossoms.

The summer had got into Armand's heart too, and showed itself in the alert, springing step with which he strode across the hills. If his removal from Baigneville had been intended as retribution for any misdeed, it had failed, for he was happy; if as discipline, it had succeeded. He was learning the lesson it takes most of us a lifetime to master, that if we will but adjust ourselves to our circumstances instead of straining against them, it is possible to find both work and happiness where perhaps we would not have chosen to seek them. It would probably have surprised those who had appointed him could they have seen how effective the fashionable preacher of Baigneville was among these ignorant farmers. Probably the secret of success was the same in both cases, and lay in the gift of an unusually sympathetic temperament. He never tried consciously to adapt himself to his hearers, but spoke out of the sincerity of his own heart, and whether to peer or peasant the appeal went home.

The one thing impossible to Armand was stagnation. His busy brain was as full of schemes for the benefit of his flock as it had ever been, and it was in pursuit of one of these that he was marching across the hills to-day. His church was large, but it was situated at one corner of the widely scattered parish, and he had set his heart on the restoration of an ancient ruined chapel at the further end. He would have found no difficulty in collecting more than the sum he needed among his former parishioners, but he wanted to teach his people to help themselves, so he utilized the little gifts that their thriftiness (we will not call it parsimony) would bestow, and from those who had no money to bestow he got a day's labor or a load of stones, worth far more to him as a proof of his hold on their love than any number of francs from the outside world.

His present errand was not a very hopeful one. It would have seemed to most people scarcely worth while to come so far out of his way to ask for a contribution of a few sous from Mother Nedelec, who had the reputation of being close-fisted, and from her own account had barely enough to keep body and soul together. Her little cottage stood by itself at some distance from the high road at the opening of a wild rocky gorge. Just beyond it the path forked, one way leading by a short cut to Carhaix, the other winding down to an extraordinary spot where one might fancy a company of giant children had been playing at houses with the monstrous bowlders, as human children build with pebbles. Tradition named the successive grottoes the sleeping-chamber, the parlor and the kitchen. The last was the most awful of all, for in its depths a brown torrent formed a seething caldron, and woe betide anyone who should slip on the round polished bowlders that flanked it. Legend of saint and devil ascribed a miraculous origin and lent a deeper interest to the place; far as it lay out of the beaten track, travelers occasionally left the diligence at the nearest point on the high road and came to peer awestruck into its mysterious depths. Before Herve went to sea it had been his task to act as guide, piloting the unaccustomed visitor warily with strong hand and watchful eye, and relating with a Breton's unconscious poetry the old-world stories of the place. He had not failed to introduce his friend the priest to what he considered the chief lion in Plougallec, but Armand shrank with an unaccountable distaste from the gloomy spot.

Ere long he reached the old woman's solitary dwelling and rapped. There was no answer, and after a repeated summons he went to the little window which, though rather high up in the wall, his tall stature could command, and peered in. He knew Mother Nedelec was deaf, and he was unwilling to assume that he had had his long hot tramp in vain till he had made certain that the cottage was empty. At first, dazzled with the sunshine, he could make out nothing, but presently he perceived the stiff wings of her white cap bending over something in the corner by the black oak bureau. As his eye got used to the obscurity he saw what was in her hand, a long stocking of gray-blue wool, and into it she was counting money; he could hear the chink of the pieces as they fell, and could see the gleam of gold. So, after all, rumor had not been so far wrong!

He would not startle her nor betray that he had seen her occupation by rapping on the window, but returned to the door, to which a repeated and peremptory summons brought her after a brief delay. Mother Nedelec was a pale old woman with handsome aquiline features; her gray eyes were cold and hard, and her thin-lipped mouth shut tight. She listened civilly to the priest's explanation of his errand, but gave a cold response. She was a very poor old woman, she said, with hardly enough to put bread into her mouth. She wondered M. le Recteur should take the trouble to come so far for what she could give. Why not ask M. Michelet? He could afford to build the chapel all himself and not feel it. Armand, looking at her white face and lean wrinkled neck, could have believed these professions of poverty but for what he had seen through the window. He was too much of a gentleman to refer to this; in fact, he felt as though he had been playing the spy, and the feeling seemed to cripple his eloquence. He tried, however, to explain to the old woman that the value lay in the good-will of the giver, and that her little gift would be quite as precious as M. Michelet's if it was in proportion to her means. But he was glad to depart presently, with a contribution of two sous in his pocket.

III.

In the cool freshness of an October morning Armand was pacing up and down the little narrow orchard that adjoined the presbytery. The sunlight flickered down upon his tonsured head through the branches; the mists were clearing, but left every leaf and blade of grass thick strung with glittering gems which the skirt of his cassock brushed off as he passed. His breviary was in his hand, his forefinger marking the place as he held it half closed, and his lips moved from time to time.

Into the stillness broke suddenly a noise, a confusion, a horror. First, a cry, then hurrying feet, then shrill voices all together, and through the broken exclamations of terror and dismay the ghastly tale was presently unfolded. There had been murder up in the lonely gorge by the Devil's Caldron. Mere Nedelec lay on the cottage floor in a pool of blood with a hideous gash across the back of her head, and Herve was already in custody for the murder of his mother. He had been met flying like a madman from the house, and then this horrible discovery had been made.

Hardly waiting to hear the details which were poured in upon him from every mouth, Pere Jacquemard vaulted over the paling that divided his orchard from the road, and hastened to the place with the ever-thickening crowd. The gendarmes were already in possession, and the curious throng had to content themselves with what they could see through the high, narrow window. A kind farmer's wife was trying to lead away little Georgette, the murdered woman's granddaughter, the only creature who had been in the house with her; but the child, sick with terror and bewildered with the questions of the gendarmes, refused to stir and struggled and fought against the kind hands that tried to hold her. At sight of M. le Recteur she wrenched herself away and flew to him, hiding herself in his skirts. He picked her up in his arms, and presently, feeling herself safe and sheltered in that eminence, she whispered in his ear the little she could tell of the events of the night.

She had been put to bed early as usual in the oak press bed in the wall with the doors drawn close, and in the middle of the night she had woke in a fright, hearing a loud, hoarse scream and a heavy sound like a fall, then a sort of gurgling noise, and then the door banged and all was still. She had been too frightened to call out at first, and then she thought that perhaps she had had the nightmare and that grandmother would be angry if she screamed, and so lay trembling till she slept again. In the morning she awoke suddenly; she thought she heard the door slam again, but was not sure, and grandmother had never come to bed, and it seemed all strange and dreadful. And then people came, and there was poor grandmother on the floor all blood——

This was all she could tell, and Armand questioned it out of her by degrees and repeated it to the official, who wrote it down. Some one asked whether any robbery had been committed. Had the old soul anything to lose? Then Armand told what he had seen of the little hoard of coins counted into the old stocking. Search was made and revealed that a drawer in the bureau had been wrenched open and was empty. This seemed to supply what had hitherto been lacking in the evidence, a possible motive for the crime.

"This makes it look blacker still for the young fellow," said the man who had been taking notes. "Who else could have known or suspected the existence of the money?"

"Where is he?" asked the priest. "Can I speak to him?"

This, however, could not be permitted; the gendarmes declared they had no authority to allow any one access to their prisoner. A disused pigsty had been turned into a temporary jail, while a conveyance was being fetched to drive the accused to the town; and there he was sitting in close custody. What he had to say for himself could only be gleaned from the people who were there when he was taken.

By his own story, he had got an unexpected furlough and had come from Brest as far as Carhaix by diligence, and thence had set out to walk, but as the night was foggy he had stayed at a little tavern about a mile from his mother's cottage. Armand shrewdly suspected that the attractions of vermuth had proved too strong for his not very steady head. With the earliest dawn he had started, slipping out unfortunately without rousing any one, having paid his reckoning over night. To his astonishment he found the cottage door ajar, and, stepping in, he had almost fallen over the prostrate body of his mother. He had not even thought to look for the child who was sleeping behind the closed doors, but, rushing out nearly mad with terror, had met two peasants setting off to their field work, who, taking his incoherent consternation and blood-stained hands for evidence of guilt, hastened to rouse the village and summon the gendarmes.

To Armand nothing but the testimony of eye-witnesses would have seemed evidence worth considering. Herve's open, boyish face and clear eyes came before him with irrefutable witness of the impossibility of a crime so hideous. He lingered about the spot for a while, on the chance of discovering something that might throw light on the mystery.

Presently there was a movement among the crowd, and the little cart that was to take the prisoner away was heard lumbering over the narrow, stony road. It was awkward to turn just here, and the spectators were forced to scramble up the bank out of the way. There seemed quite a little lane of them to pass through when the accused was led out, pale, wide-eyed, with the gaze of a terrified child, between two men in uniform. The appealing look he cast at the priest, as he caught sight of him, was like little Georgette's when she had rushed to hide her face in those friendly arms. The utter helplessness and trust in it went straight to Armand's heart. He pressed forward. The gendarmes hurried their prisoner into the cart and whipped up the horse. "God help you, my boy! I will do all I can for you."

It was all there was time for. He remained watching so long as the cart was in sight; and Herve, looking back, could see the thin, black figure standing out against the sky, and knew there was one man who believed in his innocence.

IV.

It was the evening of All Souls' Day. Masses for the dead had been going on all day in the old church among the hills; vespers were just over, the congregation had dispersed and the sacristan glided noiselessly about extinguishing the lights. Only the priest lingered. He had laid aside his vestments and knelt, a black shadow among the shadows, in one of the side chapels. His heart was heavy. The day before he had gone to Quimper to visit Herve Nedelec in the prison; the trial was but ten days distant and not a scrap of evidence was forthcoming to exculpate the poor lad. The unlucky point was that he had slipped out of the public house with the earliest dawn, without seeing anyone; not a soul could testify that he had really spent the night there; it looked very black.

The sacristan paused, having ended his task; he straightened a few books and hassocks in the choir and coughed deferentially; he wanted to go home to his supper, poor man. Armand rose from his knees. "You can lock the doors and go; I have my key of the sacristy. Lock that door also as you go out; I do not wish to be disturbed." The man obeyed, murmuring as he went that M. le Recteur would kill himself with his fasts and vigils. He locked the great west doors first, then the south porch; the little chancel door was fast already. Then he went out by the sacristy; the outer door clanged behind him and the key turned with a click.

Now Armand felt himself alone. He returned to the shrine of St. Corentin and threw himself on his knees upon the stones. It was no personal sorrow that weighed him down, but sympathy for the best loved of his flock in this cruel tribulation; and horror also that a ghastly crime had been committed here, in his very parish, and that he could do nothing to avert the punishment that was about to fall upon an innocent head. He went over his last interview with Herve in the prison. The poor lad had knelt at his feet, and with the candor and simplicity of a child had made confession of his sins; of a drunken brawl at Brest, of his neglect at mass, of the many slips of his rough and sorely tempted life. It was not possible that a hideous crime lurked behind. And when the priest had absolved and blessed him, he had burst into a flood of boyish tears, and, seizing the kind hands, sobbed:

"Oh, my father, you know I am innocent! Can't you save me? It seems too terrible to die so, with such a shame on me! I did love my poor mother, though I was not always such a good son as I might have been. They have taken away my money; they say I robbed her of it, when I was bringing it to her. Perhaps they would let me have some of it to give you to say a mass for her soul!"

"Don't trouble about the money, boy; the masses shall be said."

The warder's step was heard in the corridor outside, intimating that it was time the interview should end. It went near to break Armand's heart to leave the boy there in his cell, sitting on the side of his narrow bed. And now the time was slipping by, and there was no help, no hope. He flung his whole soul into the petition that some discovery might be made in time.

He was so lost in prayer that the sound of a heavy footstep advancing up the aisle did not at first surprise him; it roused him from his abstraction, however, and he rose to confront a rough-looking man in sailor's dress, with a pale face and a tangled red beard. In his hand he carried a long stocking of blue-gray wool knotted to serve as a purse.

"What do you want with me so late?" asked De Jacquemard, who did not recognize his visitor, but thought he must have brought a summons to some death-bed or hurried baptism.

"I would confess, father," was the answer in a surly tone.

"I do not usually hear confessions at this hour. Would not the morning do as well? Come early, before mass, and I will hear you."

"No, the morning would not do as well for me. Will you hear me or no?"

Struck with the strangeness of the man's tone, Armand recollected the locked doors, and the wonder flashed across his mind how could the fellow have made his way in. But he could not refuse such a request, however inopportunely made, so he entered the confessional and proceeded to put the usual questions. The penitent put these aside unanswered, and proceeded to tell his story in his own way. As he listened the priest felt his heart stand still; a cold shudder ran over him; his hair bristled upon his head; was this the answer to his prayer?

The man stated that he was a sailor, that he belonged to Plougallec, and had known Mother Nedelec and her hoarding ways of old. Then he went on to relate in a hoarse, rapid whisper how he had been coming home on foot across the mountains after a long voyage, penniless, having squandered all his money at Brest; how, as he passed the cottage at the head of the gorge, the thought had come to him how lonesome it was, how easy it would be to overcome the old woman's feeble resistance, and possess himself of her savings; how he had entered the cottage and struck her down with a cowardly blow from behind, before she had time to turn or cry, and had left her lying there in her blood.

Then he stopped, and the priest, who had listened as one paralyzed, he cried out:

"You must give yourself up to justice; it is the only expiation you can make. Do you know that an innocent man is suffering for your crime? Will you confess this publicly to-morrow?"

"Nay, I have done enough," was the answer. "Take the money."

All this time he had held his primitive purse fast in his right hand. Now he poured out the gold coins into his left, and flung them on the ledge in front of the confessional with such force that several pieces bounded off and rolled upon the floor. The thought darted into Armand's mind, as he stooped to gather them up, how Judas cast down the pieces of money in the Temple. He was not stooping more than a moment, but when he raised his head his strange penitent was gone.

The church was very dark; only the hanging lamps before the altar cast here and there a feeble and uncertain light. Armand hastened down the aisle to the west door, but it was locked. The man might be lurking in the south porch, hidden in the shadow of the deep intersecting arches; but no, that door too was fast. He retraced his steps and looked into the sacristy; no one was there. He tried the handle, fancying he might have been mistaken in thinking he heard the key turn in the lock, but it would not yield. Could the stranger have been hidden in the church from the time of evening service? He took a lantern from a shelf, lighted it, and explored every corner. All in vain; however he had accomplished it, the man had made good his escape. Armand then looked at the money in his hand. There were seventeen gold pieces; sixteen were Napoleons, and the seventeenth was an old Spanish doubloon. Having counted them carefully, he put them into a small iron box, at present empty, which he used for keeping alms for special purposes, and locked the box safely away in a strong cupboard in the wall. This done, he unlocked the sacristy door and let himself out, fastening it again behind him.

It was a wild and blustering night, but the rough wind was grateful to his feverish blood. He was agitated and perplexed, and for hours he paced up and down his room, distracted as to what could be done. It was an agonizing situation; to know the truth, and to be utterly powerless to act; to have a clue, and to feel that in following it he would be committing a mortal sin, was torture unutterable. Only one faint hope remained; the man's own conscience, not wholly dead, might drive him into giving himself up to justice, now that he knew that an innocent man was about to suffer for his crime. It was possible; but was it likely? His sudden disappearance looked rather as though his confession had been repented of so soon as made.

Dawn came at last, and Armand threw himself on his bed to rest his limbs for an hour or so, though with little hope of sleep. Wearied out as he was, slumber fell on him suddenly, and he found himself walking near the scene of the murder, but away from the cottage, through the gorge towards the Devil's Caldron. It was very dark and he was alone; he wished to turn back, but could not; he kept clambering over the great bowlders trying to get away, and all the time feeling himself drawn nearer and nearer to the chasm. The struggle was so great that he woke to find himself clutching the edge of his wooden bedstead in an agonized grip. Such sleep was worse than waking; he resumed his walk, and till far on into the morning paced up and down the narrow room trying to calm his agitated thoughts. His haunting fear was lest the confession had been almost involuntary, wrung by stress of remorse from a tortured soul, and that already the guilty man had fled. There seemed but little probability either that he would give himself up or that anything would happen to reveal the truth in the little time that yet remained. For himself Armand was powerless; his lips were sealed; this knowledge must be to him as though he had it not.

In the course of the day a message came requesting the priest to visit an old bedridden parishioner, Loic Goan by name, living in a lonely part of the hills not far from the cottage of Mother Nedelec. His ministrations over Armand was about to leave the room, when the old man beckoned him back mysteriously, and signed to him to stoop down his ear to his lips.

"Have you heard anything of my son down in the village, my father?" he asked in a loud whisper, though there was no one within hearing.

"Your son? I don't think I know him. I did not even know you had a son," answered De Jacquemard.

"Well, I have not seen him these five years," said the old man; "and it is not that I want him; I would sooner that he kept away. He has been a bad son, and the truth is I am afraid of him; but they say he has been near here, and I can't rest till I know. The last I heard of him he had gone on a voyage to China, but he would be back by this time. He must know that it's no use coming here for what I can give him; but if he comes terrifying me as he did last time it will be the death of me."

"What makes you fancy he has returned?" asked the priest.

"Why, as my daughter-in-law was coming home from vespers last night a man brushed past her so close as quite to startle her, and she declares it was Jean Baptiste."

"I have not heard of any one mention any stranger in the village," returned De Jacquemard, with an uneasy recollection of his penitent last night. "What was your son like?"

"He was a big fellow, a fine made man with a red beard, and he had a bit of a scar at the side of his eyebrow. Marie says she saw the scar quite plain in the moonlight, and that what was made her so certain."

There was no doubt about it then; he had himself observed the scar as the lamplight fell on the kneeling figure. His penitent was Goan's son.

"What do you wish," he asked constrainedly, "if I should meet the man you describe."

"I don't know that I wish anything," said the old father, "but to know him out of the country again. I can't sleep easy at nights for thinking of him."

Convinced as he felt that the poor old man would never again be troubled with his worthless son, Armand was unable to give him the assurance, and after a few vague consolatory words, left him, heavy-hearted. He had hitherto avoided the road past the scene of the murder; to his nervous, sensible temperament the sight of the forsaken cottage was too distressing; but now some strange impulse, perhaps a morbid one, prompted him to return by the Devil's Caldron. The way led within a few yards of the chasm which had figured so painfully in his last night's dream. As he drew near a strange feeling of horror overwhelmed him, as anguished sense of trouble and dismay beyond what any mere association could produce; his knees shook and his breath seemed almost to fail. For an instant he fancied he saw the pale, red-bearded face of his penitent against a gray bowlder in the gathering dusk. He crossed himself and looked steadily at it; it disappeared and he hastened on.

As he was leaving the church after vespers that evening, it suddenly occurred to him to count the money again. It could hardly be of much avail, since it could not be used as evidence against the criminal; but he felt a desire to examine it once more. The keys were in his pocket, where they had lain ever since he put the coins away on the preceding night. He unlocked the cupboard, and carried the little box across to his own room, thinking, as he did so, how strangely light it felt. The lock was a complicated one, but the key made the double turn with ease; the lid fell back, and Armand remained gazing into it speechless with dismay. It was absolutely empty! It was quite impossible for anybody to have had access to it; the sacristy had been locked as fast as the safe in which the box had been placed. There was only one solution possible; he had been the victim of an hallucination, and no penitent had knelt in the confessional pouring into his ears the story of his crime. There was no deliverance after all for poor Herve; the whole thing must have been a dream. Slender as the hope had been, the disappointment was sharp. Armand buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

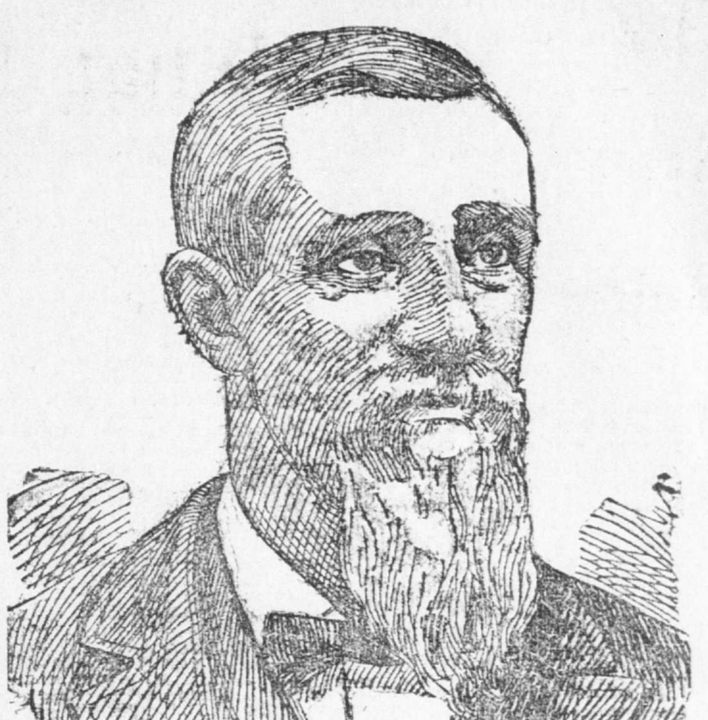
After another sleepless night, tortured by thoughts of the unhappy prisoner awaiting his doom, in the gray of the morning the priest fell asleep, and again that hideous dream came upon him. Once more he was among the bowlders by the Devil's Caldron; he tried to turn and fly, but unseen hands were dragging him on, till he felt himself falling over the edge, and clutching wildly, with a hoarse cry, he woke. To sleep again was impossible; he rose and sat by the window till daylight broadened in the east. Then a thought came to him; he dresssd and went out, walking with a quick, firm stride in the direction of the gorge. The sun had risen by the time he reached the spot, and was shining down into the awful chasm. As Armand leaned over the brink his eyes fell upon a prostrate body, with pale face, framed in a ragged, tawny beard, turned up to the pitiless light; one arm was bent and doubled under the body as though broken; in the other hand was a stocking of coarse, gray wool knotted in the middle; the dress was that of a sailor.

Within half an hour the gendarmes were on the spot, and the corpse was drawn up with ropes and examined. It was identified as Jean Baptiste Goan by the scar on the eyebrow. Without doubt the man had been dead a considerable time; and every indication pointed to a fall in his flight on the night of the murder. His back was broken and his arm, and there were no wounds about him to account for the blood stains on his hands and clothes; moreover a sailor's dirk, much stained, was sticking in his belt. Armand asked to be allowed to see the contents of the stocking; they were sixteen Napoleons and one Spanish doubloon. The fellow-stocking was found in Mother Nedelec's bureau. So Herve's innocence was established. The dead man had already paid the penalty of his crimes, and passed beyond the reach of human justice.

Armand kept silence about the events of the night of All Souls; but long after he had been removed to a different post, far from Brittany, mysterious rumors crept about, and a new legend grew up around Devil's Caldron—the story of a miraculous vision vouchsafed in answer to the prayers of a saint, uncanonized save in the hearts of his people.—Macmillan's Magazine.

COLORADO'S FOREMOST ENGINEER

Tells His Story—It is Religiously True and Can Be Authenticated by Anyone Who Will Write to the Hon. W. N. Bacheider.



WM. N. BACHELDER.

Rugged and honest, brave and big-hearted William N. Bachelder is one of the leading engineers in the White Metal State. The silver badge on the Hon. William N. Bachelder is indicative of his ability in engineering circles. It was presented to him by a silver convention held in Colorado last year. From overwork, mental and physical confinement, while he was trying to save the pieces in the wreck of the cyclonic financial storm which devastated the rich fields of Colorado, brave William N. Bachelder lost his good health. He was no longer the active man, the man of resources, the brainy engineer—why? His nerves were unstrung, his eyes lost their wonted luster, he seemed to age rapidly. He lost his appetite, gas generated in his stomach. Mentally and physically this brilliant engineer was a wreck.

Now his friends all over the State of Colorado are congratulating him. He has recovered. He is a strong, hearty man. Read what he says; doubt it and write to him:

DENVER, Colo.—Hudson Medical Institute—Gentlemen: I find but few words in the English language to express my appreciation for the benefit that has been bestowed upon me by the Hudson Medical Institute. Not a great many months ago I felt as if my days were numbered. For weeks I had a continuous headache and the slightest exertion left its mark. A feeling of nearly having run my span of life had possession of me; I was about to accept the inevitable. A friend in need, who lives out the old maxim and proved a friend indeed, recommended me to your institution. I clutched at his words as does a drowning man to anything. I wrote and told my troubles, and after you had shown me a ray of light and hope I immediately took a firmer grasp of life. I can truly and do gratefully say that I am ten years younger in looks, in ambition, in health. I feel perfectly safe in recommending the Hudson Medical Institute to my fellow-sufferers. Yours truly,

WM. N. BACHELDER,
State Engineer, 817 Equitable building, Denver, Colo.

DENVER, Colo., Nov. 5.—Hudson Medical Institute—Gentlemen: I am feeling finely. I send you my photograph. I will always speak highly of your physicians.

WM. N. BACHELDER.

AT THE INSTITUTE.

What the Specialists Are Doing Daily to Restore Health and Strength to Sufferers.

It is an established rule of the Institute that no incurable diseases are taken. If an applicant is found to be suffering from true cancer or tubercular consumption he is frankly told that he cannot be cured, though much may be done to allay his sufferings, but as medical science has yet failed to discover any cure for these two dreadful maladies, all the physicians at the Institute say freely and frankly that it is beyond human power to remove these evils. Nevertheless it should not be forgotten that there are many instances where mistakes have been made in diagnosing these diseases, so it is well for all sufferers to apply for help at the Institute.

All the following cases are curable:

Catarrh of the head, stomach or bladder; all bronchial diseases; all functional nervous diseases; St. Vitus' dance; hysteria; shaking palsy; epilepsy; all venereal diseases; all kinds of blood troubles; ulcers; wastes of vital forces; rheumatism; gout; eczema; all skin diseases, from whatever cause arising; psoriasis; all blood poisoning; varicocele; poison oak; lost or impaired manhood; spinal troubles; nervous exhaustion and prostration; incipient paresis; all kidney diseases; lumbago; sciatica; all bladder troubles; dyspepsia; indigestion; constipation; all visceral disorders, which are treated by the depurating department. Special instruments for bladder troubles.

There are a few of the special diseases in which exceptionally remarkable cures have been made by the specialists, and it may frankly be stated that a helping hand is extended to every patient.

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Ask the men who are making imitations of COTTOLENE, the new vegetable shortening, why they give up lard and try to trade on the merits of COTTOLENE? Perhaps YOU can guess why.

ASK HIM WHY?

Ask the grocer who attempts substitution, why he tries to sell an imitation when people call for that pure, palatable and popular vegetable shortening, COTTOLENE? Perhaps YOU can guess.

ASK YOURSELF WHY?

Why should not YOU use COTTOLENE, instead of lard or any other compound, for all cooking purposes? It has the highest possible endorsement; from Physicians as to healthfulness; from Cooking Experts as to superiority; from housekeepers as to economy. Use COTTOLENE and stick to it.

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HUMPHREYS'

Dr. Humphreys' Specifics are scientifically and carefully prepared Remedies, used for years in private practice and for over thirty years by the people with entire success. Every single Specific a special cure for the disease named.

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SPECIFICS.

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LA FIESTA DE LOS ANGELES CARNIVAL OF 1895.

APRIL 15th TO 20th, INCLUSIVE.

A MAGNIFICENT SPECTACLE.

The Fiesta will be on a larger scale of magnificence than before. This delightful annual event is growing to be one of national interest, rivaling, if not exceeding in splendor, the Mardi Gras of New Orleans and the Veiled Prophets of St. Louis.

Santa Barbara Flower Festival.

WEDNESDAY, April 17th.
Exhibition of Fruits and Flowers in the Pavilion afternoon and evening. Wonderfully attractive. Music.

THURSDAY, April 18th.
Grand Floral Procession of Decorated Floats, Carriages, Carts, Equestrians, Etc., Etc., Etc., to be immediately followed by the BATAILLE DES FLEURS and the distribution of prizes. Music.

THURSDAY EVENING, April 18th.
Grand Concert, American Concert Band (40 pieces) of San Francisco.

FRIDAY EVENING, April 19th.
Grand Flower Festival Ball in the Pavilion, opened with a Minuet and Dances in Costume.

REDUCED RATES.

The SOUTHERN PACIFIC CO. will make special Excursion rates for these two important events at ONE-THIRD LESS than regular fare, as follows:

From San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose and all points south to Los Angeles or Santa Barbara and return. Also from Phœnix, Ariz., and all points west to Los Angeles or Santa Barbara and return.

Tickets will be good for going trip on trains arriving at either point April 13th to 20th, inclusive; returning on trains arriving at destination of ticket not later than April 22d.

Arrangements will also be made enabling visitors to include both points in one trip if desired.

For full particulars inquire of T. H. GOODMAN, Gen. Pass. Agt., San Francisco, or any agent S. P. Co. ap1-till ap15

The Original & Genuine (WORCESTERSHIRE) LEA & PERRINS SAUCE

Imparts the most delicious taste and zest to

Hot & Cold Meats, GRAVIES, SALADS, SOUPS, GAME, FISH, and Welsh Rarebits.

BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

Take None but Lea & Perrins.

Lea & Perrins

Signature on every bottle of original & genuine
John Duncan's Sons, New York.

RAILROAD TIME TABLE.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY

[PACIFIC SYSTEM.]

MARCH 12, 1895.

Trains Leave and are Due to Arrive at Sacramento:

LEAVE (For)	TRAINS RUN DAILY.	ARRIVE (From)
11:15 P	Ashland and Portland.....	4:35 A
7:25 A	Calistoga and Napa..........	8:40 P
2:30 P	Calistoga and Napa..........	11:40 A
10:25 A	Deming, El Paso and East	5:15 P
5:20 P	Colfax.....	1:40 P
7:45 P	Knights La'd'g & Oroville	8:25 A
10:25 A	Los Angeles..........	5:15 P
5:15 P	Los Angeles..........	10:25 A
12:25 P	Atlantic Express for Ogden and East........	1:25 A
10:50 P	European Mail for Ogden and East........	5:00 A
*3:05 P	Oroville via Rosev'le J'nc	*10:15 A
*7:25 A	Red Bluff via Woodland	*7:45 P
3:05 P	Red Bluff via Marysville	10:15 A
10:45 A	Redding via Willows......	3:25 P
1:45 A	San Fran'co via Martinez	12:10 P
4:50 A	San Fran'co via Martinez	11:00 P
5:20 A	San Fran'co via Martinez	10:30 P
7:25 A	San Fran'co via Napa Jc..	8:40 P
2:30 P	San Fran'co via Napa Jc..	11:40 A
*10:00 A	San Fran'co via steamer	‡6:00 A
10:25 A	San Fran. via Livermore	2:50 P
10:25 A	San Jose..........	2:50 P
10:25 A	Santa Barbara..........	5:15 P
*7:25 A	Santa Rosa..........	*8:40 P
2:30 P	Santa Rosa..........	11:40 A
	Stockton and Galt..........	5:15 P
10:25 A	Stockton and Galt..........	2:50 P
5:15 P	Stockton and Galt..........	10:25 A
12:25 P	Truckee and Reno..........	1:25 A
10:50 P	Truckee and Reno..........	5:00 A
7:25 A	Vallejo..........	8:40 P
2:30 P	Vallejo..........	11:40 A
*7:00 A	Folsom and Placerville...	*2:20 P
*4:10 P	Folsom and Placerville...	*11:05 A

*Sunday excepted. ‡Monday excepted.
A—For morning. P—For afternoon.

RICHARD GRAY, Gen. Traffic Manager.
T. H. GOODMAN, Gen. Passenger Agent.

THE JUDSON EXCURSION for all points EAST leaves Sacramento every TUESDAY. Upholstered cars and managers through to Chicago and Boston. Call on C. J. ELLIS, Agent S. P. Co., Sacramento, or address JUDSON & CO., 19 Montgomery street, San Francisco.

NOTICE.

The Mechanics' Exchange Hotel,

I STREET, BETWEEN FRONT AND SECond, having changed hands, the new proprietors would respectfully solicit a share of the public patronage. As we intend renovating the house from top to bottom, and as the culinary department is in the hands of an old and experienced caterer, we feel justified in asserting that the MECHANICS' EXCHANGE HOTEL, under the new management, shall be inferior to none of its class.

Respectfully, McCAW & SNYDER.

Superior to COPAIBA, CUBEBS & INJECTIONS.

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A CURE IN 48 HOURS.

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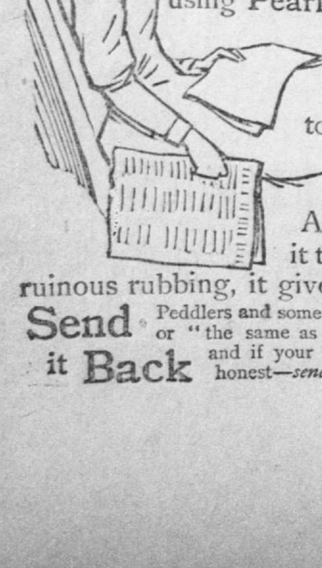

in order to find out about Pearline. Your friends can tell you all you want to know. You'll find most of them use it. Ask them about it. We'll leave it to any one of the millions of women who are using Pearline, if it isn't the best—the most economical thing, for washing and cleaning. But all the Pearline users don't get its full benefits. Some seem to think that it's only for washing clothes or cleaning house.

Pearline washes everything.

And with almost every use you can put it to, besides the labor it saves and the ruinous rubbing, it gives you better work—better results.

Send it Back Peddlers and some unscrupulous grocers will tell you "this is as good as" or "the same as Pearline." IT'S FALSE—Pearline is never peddled, and if your grocer sends you something in place of Pearline, be honest—*send it back.* 445 JAMES PYLE, New York.