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[For the Sunday Republican.]

SOMETIMES.

BY MARY WALSINGHAM.

We pass along our ways in life,
And here and there we meet a face,
A voice, a smile, amid the strife
That ever after leaves a trace
Of changeless memory on the heart—
A sign that never will depart.

Like random waves that kiss the sands,
Then hurrying seek the broad blue main,
Soft hands caressing kindly hands,
Sweet eyes adoring eyes again,
In lingering fondness heart to heart
Awhile we seem to meet—then part.

Awhile these kindred souls and ours,
Scarce knowing why the charm, or how,
With hearts o'erflowed like drooping flowers,
Their longing lips together bow
And meet, in spirit, heart to heart;
In seeming meet—then drift apart.

And seething waves of life roll on,
Roll outward to eternity;
The voice, the face, the smile are gone—
Gone downward in the broad, deep sea,
Yet still we hold them in the heart,
Bright dreams that never do depart.

MY WIFE'S MAID.

The series of burglaries which startled the public in the autumn and early winter of the year 186- was of a description to alarm any household. The general features of each robbery were the same. In every case a gang of from seven to eleven masked men had broken into an isolated dwelling containing an unusual amount of silver or jewels; had intimidated the inmates by threatening them with fire-arms; mastered them, secured them, gagged them, then quietly proceeded methodically to strip the house of all the valuables it contained. Their intelligence of the premises was never faulty. Secret drawers and sliding panels, supposed to be known only to the family, were sought and opened at once, and safes, whether built into the walls or exposed in closets, were equally at their mercy, and easily forced by means of drills and gunpowder.

The police seemed indefatigable in investigation and pursuit, yet five of these audacious and astounding robberies had succeeded each other without a single arrest taking place. Plenty of rumors were abroad that the gang were in the hands of the authorities, but such statements contained not a grain of truth, for the detectives were absolutely in the dark.

My own position filled me with anxiety. My house is six miles from town, set in the centre of wild grounds, remote from any habitation but the gardener's cottage at the gate. Both my wife and myself had inherited a large amount of bulky family plate, and besides this useless metal, which never came out of the safe, I had several costly services presented on the occasion of our marriage, three large salvers, etc., testimonials from societies of which I had been an active member, to say nothing of a complete and varied assortment of small articles in silver and gold.

Then my wife's possessions were those of a princess, for she had been the daughter of a millionaire, and all her life a spoiled child of fortune. Besides plate and jewels, her house contained a valuable collection of statuary, paintings and bronzes, and I was only too conscious of having expended a fortune upon the surroundings of our daily life, and was inspired with grave doubts as to its safety. Brooding over such thoughts, and reading the newspapers, filled with speculations concerning these mysterious burglaries, I soon became the victim of an exaggerated disquietude. Had my own wishes been carried out, every ounce of silver and every jewel we owned would have been sent into town to my bankers; but my wife objected, laughed at my apprehensions, and begged me not to worry.

But I continued to worry, and perplexed myself with conflicting plans for safety, and one day while in town I went to the headquarters of the police, and inquired for Betts, the detective engaged on this case.

He admitted me into his private room. I asked him for the latest news. Had anybody been arrested? No. Was anybody to be arrested? He shrugged his shoulders. Was anybody suspected?

He chuckled softly to himself.

"My dear sir," said he, "we suspect everybody."

"Then," cried I, "arrest everybody on suspicion! Good God! I can not sleep in my bed, for something assures me my turn will come next. I can't decide what to do, Betts. My wife won't let the silver and the diamonds go out of the house, and this very night I may be awakened to find masked men standing over me with loaded pistols, who will rob my house under my very eyes!"

Betts shook his head, mused a little with his legs crossed and his left forefinger pressed into his cheek. "By-the-by," said he presently, "how many servants have you, Mr. Powers? Please tell me about them individually."

I went over their names, and the detective checked them off in his memorandum book as I gave the facts connected with them. Saunders, the butler, had been with us seventeen years, the cook five years, coachman and groom seven and the chambermaid three—all fixtures in the household but Marie, my wife's maid, who had come within the last four weeks.

"Ah!" exclaimed Betts, "where did you get Marie? Was she well recommended?"

"Oh, yes; she is French, and has just come to this country with a family by the name of De Sturges. She was nurse to a child who died on the passage, and was thus thrown out of employment; she advertised, and my wife saw her, liked her, and engaged her."

"You continue to like her?"

"Capitally; she's a perfect genius, with effective magic in her fingers."

"Did you see her former employers?"

"Yes; both De Sturges and his wife, chatty, agreeable people, of some means, apparently, and are going to settle in New Orleans."

"Describe her, if you please," said Betts, with a keen interest, which surprised me. "Oh," he added, as I stared at him, "give me leave to be curious."

"With all my heart. Marie is small, black-eyed, black-haired, compactly built, with remarkably neat hands and feet. She had a saucy, laughing face, and her hair is short, crisp and curly."

"How about her voice?"

"Very clear and ringing. She does not speak English fluently, but understands every word that is said to her."

"Now, about her little ways."

"A thorough French woman, with a knack of pleasing everybody. I don't know when I've seen such an artless, good, happy little girl."

Betts laughed uneasily, then bent his head on his hand, his elbow resting on his knee.

"Mr. Powers," said he at last, looking up with a peculiar flash in his eyes, "I am going to take you into my confidence, but you must be discreet, or you will ruin me. I've sworn to see this thing through or resign my position. I'm sick of this infernal foolery of calling myself a detective and letting Satan reign night and day all over the city. The newspapers drive me mad! They know nothing about the obstacles we contend with, and goad us into premature steps, which cost us our reputation and end in failure. I've been working in the dark these nine weeks, but, by Heavens, I believe you have shown me a glimmer of light."

His manner indicated intense exitement; his words came spasmodically, his face worked, and he had to draw his hands two or three times across his mouth before he could go on. Then, producing a note-book, he opened it at well worn leaves.

"There have been," he began, looking at me with a sort of smile, "five great robberies within the last six months, and each one has these special features characterizing it as the work of the same hands as the other four:

"First, the combination of seven to eleven masked men, all adroit burglars; second, an isolated house is attacked, sure to contain ample provision for a successful robbery; third, the thieves know the premises; fourth, the leader of the gang is a small man, of active habits, with a clear, shrill voice."

He stopped and looked at me.

"I did not know there was a recognized leader," I remarked.

He drew a large book from his desk. "Here," said he, "is the full testimony in all five cases. Run your eye over it, and you will see that the general facts all coincide. The small man gives directions and leads everybody."

"Probably some London cracksman."

Betts nodded, winked, then leaned forward, and whispered in my ear, "I suspect it's a woman."

"Impossible! no woman has the nerve."

"A she-devil, then—something in a woman's form at all events. Now for the facts on which I base this relief. The rest of the gang are as free and easy with each other as you please, yet no one ever lays a finger on this little one, but all draw back to let him pass. He gives orders, exerts himself when ingenuity is required, but when strength is needed he looks on while the others fall to work. Besides, young Stewart, who was brought down stairs in his night-shirt the night of their robbery, told me jokingly that he believed there was a woman among the thieves, for one of them took offense at his bare legs, and ordered them covered up with the piano spread."

"Still, a very airy hypothesis this about the woman."

"You have to jump at conclusions sometimes, and find facts to suit. As soon as I had mastered these details I was impressed by the conviction that one of the thieves had been on the premises before. At Mr. Stewart's, for instance, the safe is built into the wall and a false panel in the wainscot is the only opening to it; yet the first place the burglars approached was that panel, which the little fellow slid aside at once. So I set to work looking for a suspicious character in the house and found all satisfactory till I came to a French governess, who staid with them six weeks last spring. Now, sir, in each house entered by these masked devils there has been during the past twelve months some similar transient inmate. At Wardell's it was a French cook, in white cap and apron; at Lewis' the young lady's page, a clever Buttons; at the Pratts' a protege of the children, a handsome vagrant Italian boy, with a violin. And now, Mr. Powers," continued Betts, bringing his hand down heavily upon my knee, "I am ready to swear that you have this dangerous inmate under your roof in the character of your wife's maid."

I started as if I had been shot.

"Impossible!" I gasped; "impossible!"

"But why, sir, impossible?"

"The idea is monstrous. Marie is a sweet little girl, playful as a kitten."

"But, Mr. Powers, you are a man of the world, and know that a woman is not proved honest because she bewitches you."

"But, Betts, admit that though I am an old fool, my wife is a thorough woman, and, as a rule, suspects all her own sex, yet she is positively fond of Marie."

"Marie is a clever little puss. Wherever she has lived, as man or woman, the whole family have adored her. I have always thought," he went on, with a sort of chuckle, "that no fact about women is more damning than that the good ones are, as a rule, the dull ones. Put spirit, sparkle, intellect into any one of them, and she is certain to play the devil. Has Marie shown an interest in these burglaries?"

There could be no doubt of her having questioned me concerning them with intense eagerness, and if I spoke to my wife about my apprehensions while she was present, Marie never lost a word.

"Does she know about your silver? Has she any charge of your wife's diamonds?"

I started. That very morning I had shown her my safes behind a false book case in my study, and asked her opinion whether any one could mistrust those innocent-looking encyclopedias, or suspect the existence of a closet six feet square between my room and the library. I was ashamed of my greenness, but made a clean breast of it to Betts; who was good enough to refrain from the expression of his opinion of my discretion.

"My word for it," he cried, "she has been waiting to find out that secret, and now she will leave your house within forty-eight hours. Her pretext will be a reasonable one, and she will promise to return, but when she does return she will bring her gang at her heels to rob your house for you."

The idea of connecting our pretty Marie with such outrages filled me with horror. I rejected it strenuously.

"Believe or not as you like," he returned, with a shrug, "so long as you only follow my advice. Just out of curiosity, take home a little dog with you, and see if Marie does not set to work to bewitch it at once. Then the moment she speaks of leaving your house, telegraph to me."

Our interview lasted another hour. When I left him I went to a dog-fancier's and bought a little yelping black-and-tan spaniel and carried him home with me. It was approaching dinner time when I arrived, and my wife was in her room sitting before the mirror, with Marie braiding her hair. I entered, as was my habit, and sat down by the fire, and let the girl draw off my boots and bring my slippers in her usual way. It seemed an unmanly treason to suspect her as she moved about me with her bright smile and easy grace. She rarely spoke, unless actually addressed, but her intuitions of any one's wishes amounted absolutely to genius.

"Whom did you see in town?" inquired my wife.

"Don't speak of it," said I, looking fearfully about, as if the walls had ears, "but I was with Betts, the detective. You must not repeat what I say, Marie."

"Never, monsieur!" cried Marie.

"The fact is," I proceeded, sinking my voice into a sepulchral whisper, "that gang of masked burglars have been traced to New Orleans, and may be arrested by this time."

"Then I hope dear," said my wife, laughing, "that you will again sleep soundly in your bed. After you got up last night for the fourth time to promenade about, pistols in hand, I decided it might be better to eat off pewter, and to wear French gilt jewelry than to lead such a life."

I too laughed, and stretched my legs comfortably. "Yes, I mean to sleep like a Christian hereafter; besides, I have brought home a dog."

"A dog!" exclaimed Marie, startled.

"Yes." I turned and looked at her attentively. "Don't you like dogs?"

She protested vehemently that she loved dogs better than anything in the world, and when Jingle, the spaniel, was produced it was so pretty a sight to see her playing with him that I was freshly incensed with Betts for putting his cursed suspicions into my head. She took the little beast to bed with her, I believe, and next morning he would obey her lifted finger.

That very day she received a letter from Mme. De Sturges, her former mistress, asking her to come in and pass a few hours with her before she left for New Orleans. Marie carried the letter to Mrs. Powers. "Madame wishes to talk to me about Mlle. Helene," pleaded the girl, with tears in her eyes. "To-morrow will be the birthday of the *pauvre ange*, who lies at the bottom of the cruel sea."

"Poor Mme. De Sturges," exclaimed my wife, touched at the thought of the sorrowing mother; "you must spend to-morrow with her, Marie. Go in at nine o'clock and come back at five."

Marie was grateful, and told melting stories about the pauvre ange—her beauty, her piety, her intelligence—and nothing could equal my wife's sympathy, and when the girl went into town the next morning she actually carried a note to Mme. De Sturges, written in my wife's very best French.

Meanwhile I had telegraphed Marie's proposed movements to Betts, and now, with some nervousness, awaited events. The detective had warned me that she would win the dog's affections; that she would leave the house, promising to return, but would not return. Two of these predictions were already verified; but if Marie came back I could laugh at his suspicions, and regard them as futile.

But Marie did not return at five o'clock; a telegram arrived in her stead from Mme. De Sturges, saying that she had kept the girl, and would write at length and explain. Next morning a letter was received from that lady. She told my wife she was ill, yet obliged to travel; home sick in a strange land, without a familiar woman's face near her, and that she had persuaded, almost forced, Marie to remain and set out with her and her husband for New Orleans that very evening. An incoherent, tear-blotted note from Marie accompanied this, filled with protestations of sorrow at the necessity of thus deserting us. She was torn by conflicting feelings of love toward Mrs. Powers and her sacred duty to the mother of little Helene, the angel child, whom she had so dearly loved, and whose voice she now heard calling to her from the spirit world, bidding her remain and comfort the lonely mother.

While my wife read this to me with tears, I stood aghast at Betts' predictions.

Theories are fascinating, but when speculations turn into threatening certainties, and there stares you in the face conclusive proof that your house is to be robbed, you experience small pleasure in the accurate foreknowledge of any prophet.

I instantly telegraphed to Betts that I would meet him at my son-in-law's office at twelve o'clock, then proposed to my wife that she should go to town and spend a couple of days with our daughter, and offered to drive her in myself. We set off within an hour, and after leaving her up town, I hurried down, eager to see the detective. It was on the stroke of twelve when I entered the office, and I thought at first that Betts had failed me, for no one was there but a ponderous old gentleman with gold glasses and white side whiskers. I am not used to intrigues and masquerades, and when I recognized Betts in the disguise I could hardly refrain from exclaiming at his cleverness; but his own coolness kept me within bounds, and I sat down beside him and began reading a paper. Presently, with his eyes still fastened on his *Herald*, he edged toward me, and dropped these sentences into my ear:

"It's all going beautifully. . . . I followed the girl in yesterday. . . . Went to —— hotel. . . . The De Sturgeses booked there all straight. . . . Whole party left Jersey City at nine o'clock last night, ticketed and luggage checked to Washington. . . . Slipped out of the cars at Newark, all three in men's dress, and were back here before midnight. . . Met eight fellows I know at a saloon in —— street, and I can spot all eleven of them this very minute. . . . They're at a den in —— street, getting ready to play their little game somewhere to-night."

"At my house?" I cried.

He shook his head.

"Dunno," said he, looking straight into the fire.

"Look here, Betts, I whispered, "this may be fun to you, but, though I'm no coward, it's death to me. Why not arrest 'em now?"

"Yes, just so," he returned irritably—"why not? Where's your evidence? Now, Mr. Powers, just look at this matter sensibly. You know as well as I do that half of the thieves we catch get off because no one will swear to their identity at their examination. Now I am anxious to make a sure thing of it for once, and take my oath that I caught them in the act."

"You mean to arrest them while they are robbing me?"

"I do."

"All right—only I should prefer to have the row in another man's house."

I saw at once that Betts' opinion of me had gone down to zero; but he disguised his contempt, and went on to tell me that he had dispatched one of his men, Johnson by name, to my place to make a reconnoissance, under pretense of trimming my evergreens. Upon this man's report, and upon two or three other open questions which he did not think it worth while to explain, depended his programme for to-night. If, by any possibility, there was a likelihood of my house being entered at once, I was to know it by dinner time, that I might be prepared for the burglars. I was meantime to go home quietly and spend my time in my usual manner, so as to excite no comment among the servants, and receiving no word from Betts I was to rest satisfied and consider my house safe for another twenty-four hours.

I went home according to directions, and set about spending my day in my usual way, but the house was so still, and seemed so deserted, I found it impossible to read, even to sit quietly in a chair, for more than five minutes at a time. So I called the little dog, Jingle, and set out for a walk about the grounds, feeling some curiosity to get a glimpse of the detective, Johnson. It was a black December afternoon, a shivering wind in the tree-tops, and leaden clouds promising snow before midnight. The bare ground was frozen hard, and a few dead leaves eddied about in gusts that rose and fell at uncertain intervals. I heard the sound of an ax through the sombre stillness, and Jingle frisked forward and barked at a man hacking at the firs in the shrubbery. I addressed him regarding his work, and he winked back his appreciation of our mutual sharpness, then I went on, reconnoitred a few minutes longer, and again turned in.

The day seemed endless, and I was glad when Saunders lit the gas and shut out the shivering landscape and funereal clouds with the heavy curtains. Dinner time came, and brought with it a semblance of occupation, and when I was half through my meal I suddenly remembered Jingle, and sent for him to keep me company. He was not in the house. It flashed upon me that I had not seen him after passing Johnson in the thicket, and I dispatched the coachman to call him in; but only echoes answered the cry. He had evidently remained out in the grounds with the policeman, and I dismissed the subject from my mind, finished my dessert, and went back to my library fire. No word had come from Betts, hence I was safe for to-night, at all events, and I breathed freer, and stretched my legs and dozed until ten o'clock in comparative comfort. Then, rousing myself, I lit a lantern and went out the door and along the side piazzas to speak a word with Johnson, who, Betts had arranged, was in any case to keep a watch under the covered carriage way.

He was not there. I did not understand it. Had he got drunk, or had Betts taken him away? Perhaps, however, he was still loitering at the edge of the grounds; accordingly, I walked out on the lawn, and swung my lantern two or three times. Then, as it was bitter cold, and was beginning to snow, I turned in, and, finding that it was almost eleven o'clock, I ordered Saunders to close the house and send the servants to bed, and to bed I went myself.

But as soon as the light was out, and my head touched the pillow I was freshly impressed by the mystery of Johnson's disappearance, and accordingly I got up, opened my pistol case, took out two revolvers, and putting them and a swordcane within easy reach, I returned to bed.

"Deuce take this suspense!" said I, as I again lay down. "I shan't sleep a wink." But after tossing a few times, and assuring myself I could not close my eyes, I fell asleep—at least, after a time, I was awakened bright light shining full in my face.

"Good God!" I cried out loud, "they've come to-night." For three men, with black cambric masks concealing their faces, stood over me, each pointing a pistol at my head.

"Please to get up, Mr. Powers," said one of them, in a cool, civil way; "please to put on that dressing-gown and those slippers. You shall not be harmed in the least if you will only be quiet and obey directions." With three pistols aimed square in his eyes, any man will be docile, I suppose; at least I got up and put on a dressing-gown and slippers. Then one of the men caught my arms, drew them behind and manacled them; another gagged me with one of my own silk handkerchiefs; and thus rendered harmless, I was led down stairs, where my household, in various stages of night attire, gagged and tied back to back, were awaiting me in the diningroom. I was put into an arm chair and fastened to it by feet and hands, then was left alone to stare about me. Maddened, desperate though I was, when I discovered that the sixth of the prisoners was Johnson, the detective, I recognized him with a keen sense of the ridiculous, and only wished that Betts—whom I was mentally anathematizing with curses not loud but deep—were in his place, and tasting some of our humiliation.

Besides the three masked men who had mastered me and brought me down, there were five others in the dining-room. Two were left as sentinels over us, and the rest at once fell to work in a way that meant business. A small, active man (was it our Marie?) motioned toward the sideboard. It was wheeled aside, and, stepping forward, he pressed the sliding panel and disclosed the closet where the silver in daily use was kept, and the shelves were at once stripped, and the contents piled on the table.

The bedrooms up stairs were next visited, the locks of drawers and wardrobes wrenched apart, and the contents thrown pell mell on the floor for the chief expert to decide on what should be carried off. The upper rooms gutted, they came down with their spoils, which they piled high before our eyes on the table, and then, leaving us alone with our sentinels, they went through the entry into my library.

It was a dark hour. I leaned back my head and closed my eyes, and felt that fate was cruel to me. Only one consolation illumined the blackness of my despair—my wife had carried her jewels to town with her, and I was spared the humiliation of telling her I had lost them for her through my idiotic faith in Betts. There was a long silence now, which I understood but too well; it was followed by three muffled explosions that shook the house like an earthquake, and almost simultaneously was heard the noise of a scuffle, and I opened my eyes to see the room filled with policemen, and hear pistol shots exchanged, while our two sentinels were thrown down, disarmed, and pinioned before my eyes.

I looked and listened, mentally stunned, without clear comprehension of the meaning of the uproar, for with the noise of firearms, the clang of manacles and the beat of heavy feet the tumult was somewhat terrifying.

In less time than takes me to describe it, the situation had been reversed, and now Betts, the detective, appeared in the door at the head of his posse of men, who brought in eight of the captured burglars, two of them wounded and bleeding profusely, while the rest showed signs of having maintained a stout resistance; all had lost their masks in the melee, and disclosed sullen and brutal visages.

"How are you, Mr. Powers?" inquired Betts, coming forward and releasing me. "I hope you are not hurt. I beg your pardon for taking possession of your house in this way."

"Why did you make me think I was safe for to-night, Betts?"

"Because," he replied, with a shrug, "I discovered you were just a little upset at the prospect, and I felt afraid of you." He ran his eye over the group beside me, and when he saw Johnson, he grinned, and going up to him, knocked his manacles off. "You're a pretty detective, you are," said he, "to be caught and tied up by the very fellows you were in waiting for!"

Still, Betts was in too high good humor to be angry even with the humiliated Johnson. Meanwhile I was peeping into the faces of the thieves, fearing to find Marie among them.

"Betts," I gasped, suddenly, "you haven't got the little one."

He gave a tigerish cry, and glared from one to the other of his prisoners.

"You are sure there was another?"

"No doubt of it," I returned; "any one of these fellows is four inches taller than the leader of the gang."

In another moment he had set picked men at work searching both house and grounds; but he never succeeded in finding even a trace of the eleventh of the party of burglars. Nor even after the conviction and heavy sentence of the other ten, would any one of them confess the secret of their leadership. I had easily identified M. and Mme. De Sturges—both swarthy and robust Frenchmen—among them, but in spite of all my efforts, neither one could be induced even to acknowledge they had ever heard of such a person as Marie, or that they had ever masqueraded under the respectable disguise of her employers.

But when the snows melted off in the spring, one little silent witness came to light, and told his pitiful story against her; it was the dog Jingle found dead in the shrubbery, his throat cut, and his frozen eyes still upturned in reproachful agony.—*Harper's Bazar.*

How the Young Man's Marriage was Referred.

The London correspondent of the New York *Herald* tells the following good story:

Here is a good story which has not yet found its way into print, but for the truth of which I can vouch. Lord George Gordon, a young man of four-and-twenty, wishing to marry a certain young lady, went quite recently to ask the permission of his father, the Duke of Argyle. The Duke, a pompous little man, replied in effect: "My son, since our house has been honored by being united with the royal family, I have thought it right to delegate a decision on all such matters to your elder brother, the Marquis of Lorne. Go, therefore, and consult him." The Marquis of Lorne, on being applied to, said: "My dear brother, in a case of importance like this I should think it right to ask the decision of the Queen, the head of the royal family, into which I have married." The Queen, on the matter being laid before her, declared that since her terrible bereavement she had been in the habit of taking no steps without consulting the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, the brother of her deceased husband. To the Duke, then, the case was referred, and from him a letter was received telling his dear sister-in-law that recent political events induced him to do nothing, even as to the giving advice, without the express concurrence of the Emperor William, before whom he had laid the matter. The Emperor William wrote a long letter, declaring that though he was surrounded by counselors there was only one who had on all occasions proved himself correct, loyal and faithful, and without whose advice he (the Emperor) would give no decision. Therefore, he had referred the matter to his faithful minister, Prince Bismarck.

And it is narrated that when Prince Bismarck was made acquainted with the subject, he roared out, "Gott in Himmel, what a fuss about nothing. Let the boy marry whom he pleases, so long as she is young and pretty."

Charity and Actors.

An individual recently wrote to Miss Charlotte Cushman, asking her, without much ceremony, to give a gratuitous representation for the benefit of the poor, and requesting her to answer by telegraph "Yes" or "No." To this summons Miss Cushman sent the following sensible and appropriate reply:

DEAR SIR—I am in receipt of yours of the first, in answer to which I find myself under the necessity of saying "no" to your request that I would give one of the nights of my short engagement in Washington for the benefit of your local charities. My reasons for this decision are as follows:

I think the time has come in which some one should make a protest against the system now so fully inaugurated of making artists pay so much more than the rest of the community for charities in which they are not especially interested, and which have no claim upon them.

You simply ask of me that I should give from $400 to $500 to your poor, while those more immediately concerned, those who are bound by all the ties of neighborhood and common brotherhood, think they are doing their part in paying their quota of a dollar or two, when they receive in return a full equivalent out of the labor, severe enough, of the often hard pressed and struggling artist. Each one of these already does to the best of his or her ability, within the range of the claims which fall upon every human creature alike. You may think it indelicate, but is is surely not irrelevant for me to say here that I every year give to my poor and needy, upward of $2000 which I consider a very fair percentage upon my income. As for myself, it would take every day of every year, if I were to respond to one-half the applications of this kind that meet me at every turn; and each one of us who are so freely called upon in these ways, I have no doubt have not only their regular clientalage of claimants to whom they are bound, and for whom they are accountable, but also hosts of such applications and claims for which they are in no way bound.

It strikes me that the whole affair is one-sided, and that a word is necessary in the way of justice. I am willing to place myself in this breach, and say for all my confreres in art—whose errors have never been on the side of niggardliness—that it is unfair that we should do all the work, and pay also, both publicly and privately, as we do to my certain knowledge.

Allow me to suggest that in place of this easy manner of doing good, a house to house visitation for charitable objects would place it within the power of every citizen to help the poor of his own city and neighborhood, with much greater comfort to his conscience than this cent per cent contract of so much money for so much amusement—and the poor thrown in. Believe me to be, with much consideration, respectfully yours,

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

A DUMB POET.

Oh, to sing one mighty strain,
One prophetic burst of song,
Full of an immortal pain,
Deep and tremulous and strong;
Quivering with the bitter cry,
With the yearning agony,
Breaking forth for evermore
From men's wounded hearts and sore!
That should travel through the years,
Blend its music with the spheres,
Live for aye, and have its part
In the throbbings of the heart!

Even in the voiceless grave,
That sad grave to which I go,
Though the wintry winds should rave,
And the air be thick with snow;
Though the boughs should sigh above,
And the hearts of those I love
Be beginning to forget
Any lingering regret,
Should the music of that strain
Warm my frozen heart again.

But, ah me! it may not be—
Still the mocking music slips,
And the soul's deep melody
Dies in sobs upon the lips.
In the grim grave shall I lie,
With shut lips and sightless eye,
And the world will laugh to scorn
That sweet hymn that died unborn.

—[All the Year Round.

JEFF THOMPSON TWENTY YEARS AGO.

Among the many dreary books the public have been expected to read during the past year "The Gilded Age" has appeared with the loudest flourish of trumpets. No one who has enjoyed other writings of Mark Twain and Dudley Warner can take up this book without disappointment, and when he lays it down will never lift it again. The result of the combination of these two authors is similar to that generally obtained by locking twelve sensible men up in a jury box. The product is an unnatural sequence of evolution in a single intellectual vacuum.

But the book has photographed our friend Jeff Thompson as he appeared twenty or twenty-five years ago, when he was younger and more frisky, but not more energetic and active than he is now. He could talk then as fast as he does now, but he is excelled in volubility by Colonel Sellers, a speculative dead beat dealer in castles in Spain that nearly ruins all the rest of the dramatis personæ. The Colonel's description of Jeff is an excellent introduction to the reader:

"The Salt Lick Pacific Extension is going to run through Stone's Landing! The Almighty never laid out a cleaner piece of level prairie for a city; and its the natural center of all that region of hemp and tobacco."

"I've talked with Jeff Thompson, the division engineer. He understands the wants of Stone's Landing, and the claims of the inhabitants—who are to be there. Jeff says that a railroad is for the accommodation of the people, and not for the benefit of gophers; and if he don't run this to Stone's Landing he'll be damned! You ought to know Jeff; he's one of the most enthusiastic engineers in this Western country; and one of the best fellows that ever looked through the bottom of a glass."

And when the young speculators are introduced, they find—

The recommendation was not undeserved. There was nothing that Jeff wouldn't do to accommodate a friend, from sharing his last dollar with him to winging him in a duel. When he understood from Colonel Sellers how the land lay at Stone's Landing, he cordially shook hands with that gentleman, asked him to drink, and fairly roared out: "Why, God bless my soul, Colonel, a word from one Virginia gentleman to another is 'nuf ced,' there's Stone's Landing been waiting for a railroad more than 4000 years, and damme if she shan't have it."

Jeff appears frequently as a repository of anecdotes, and—

Told Philip that he once asked Senator Atchison, then acting Vice President of the United States, about the possibility of acclimation. He thought the opinion of the second officer of our great government would be valuable on this point. They were sitting together on a bench before a country tavern, in the free converse permitted by our Democratic habits.

"I suppose, Senator, that you have become acclimated to this country?"

"Well," said the Vice President, crossing his legs, pulling his wide-awake down over his forehead, causing a passing chicken to hop quickly one side by the accuracy of his aim, and speaking with senatorial deliberation, "I think I have. I've been here twenty-five years, and dash, dash my dash to dash if I haven't entertained twenty-five separate and distinct earthquakes—one a year. The nigger is the only person who can stand the fever and ague of this region."

The scene in the camp displays our friend in two characteristics. We are familiar with one, but never heard him do the other:

A brisk gallop brought the rider in sight of the twinkling light of the camp just as the stars came out. It lay in a little hollow, where a small stream ran through a sparse grove of young white oaks. A half a dozen tents were pitched under the trees, horses and oxen were corraled at a little distance, and a group of men sat on camp stools or lay on blankets about a bright fire. The twang of a banjo became audible as they drew nearer, and they saw a couple of negroes from some neighboring plantation "breaking down" a juba in approved style amid the "hi, hi's" of the spectators.

Mr. Jeff Thompson, for it was the camp of this redoubtable engineer, gave the travelers a hearty welcome; offered them ground room in his own tent; ordered supper, and set out a small jug, a drop from which he declared necessary on account of the chill of the evening.

"I never saw an Eastern man," said Jeff, "who knew how to drink from a jug with one hand. It's as easy as lying. So." He grasped the handle with the right hand, threw the jug back upon his arm and applied his lips to the nozzle. It was an act as graceful as it was simple. "Besides," said Mr. Thompson, setting it down, "it puts every man on his honor as to quantity."

Early to turn in was the rule of the camp, and by nine o'clock everybody was under his blanket except Jeff himself, who worked a while at his table over his field book, and then arose, stepped outside the tent door and sang, in a strong and not unmelodious tenor, the "Star Spangled Banner" from beginning to end. It proved to be his nightly practice to let off the unexpended steam of his conversational powers in the words of this stirring song.

It was a long time before Philip got to sleep. He saw the fire light; he saw the clear stars through the tree tops; he heard the gurgle of the stream, the stamp of the horses, the occasional barking of the dog which followed the cook's wagon, the hooting of an owl; and when these failed he saw Jeff standing on a battlement mid the rocket's red glare, and heard him sing, "Oh, say, can you see?" It was was the first time he had ever slept on the ground.

To run the lines to accommodate the views of Colonel Sellers was almost enough to baffle even Jeff, but he at last accomplished it in this way:

They were making what is called a preliminary survey, and the chief object of a preliminary survey was to get up an excitement about the road, to interest every town in that part of the State in it, under the belief that the road would run throught it, and to get the aid of every planter upon the prospect that a station would be on his land.

Mr. Jeff Thompson was the most popular engineer that could be found for this work. He did not bother himself much about details or practicabilities of location, but ran merrily along, sighting from the top of one divide to the top of another, and striking "plumb" every town site and big plantation within twenty or thirty miles of his route. In his own language he "just went booming."

They had not been in the field over two weeks when Harry wrote to his friend, Colonel Sellers that he'd better be on the move, for the line was certain to go to Stone's Landing. Any one who looked at the line on the map, as it was laid down from day to day, would have been uncertain which way it was going, but Jeff declared that, in his judgment, the only practicable route they then stood on was to follow the divide to Hone's landing, and it was generally understood that that town would be the next one hit.

"We'll make it, boys," said the chief, "if we have to go in a balloon."

And make it they did. In less than a week this indomitable engineer had carried his moving caravan over slues and branches, across bottoms and along divides and pitched his tents in the very heart of Stone's Landing.

"Well, I'll be dashed," was heard the cheery voice of Mr. Thompson, as he stepped outside the tent door at sunrise next morning. "If this don't get me. I say, you, Grayson, get you out your sighting iron and see if you can find old Sellers' town. Blame me, if we wouldn't have run plumb by it if twilight had held on a little longer. Oh! boys, get up and see the city. There's a steamboat just coming around the bend;" and Jeff roared with laughter. "The mayor'll be round here to breakfast."

The description of Stone's Landing has a rival only in Martin Chuzzlewit's Eden; but of the river Jeff said:

"This, gentlemen, is Columbia river, alias Goose run. If it was widened, and deepened, and straightened, and made long enough, it would be one of the finest rivers in the Western country."

"Well," said Mr. Thompson, moving toward the tent, "the railroad has come to Stone's Landing sure; I move we take a drink on it all round."

The proposal met with universal favor. Jeff gave prosperity to Stone's Landing and navigation to Goose run, and the toast was washed down with gusto, and with the return compliment that a railroad was a good thing and Jeff Thompson was no slouch.

The railroad, of course, collapsed, and Jeff appears to have had a pretty fair idea of its condition at the start. He did his duty, and run that "straight line over Goose ran," caring little whether any one else run straight or not.

Mr. Harry Brierly drew his pay as an engineer while he was living at the City Hotel, in Hawkeye. Mr. Thompson had been kind enough to say that it didn't make any difference whether he was with the corps or not.

Through more than a score of pages our friend Jeff crops out, but as the railroad vanishes into speculative air, so does he. We confess the only pleasure we have had in reading the book is watching to see him turn up with his surveying instruments and jug, even though they are called by such names as Colonel Sellers gives them.

"Now then—there you are! It's a beautiful road, beautiful. Jeff Thompson can outengineer any civil engineer that ever sighted through an areroid or a theodolite, or whatever they call it—he calls it sometimes the one and sometimes the other—just whichever levels off his sentence neatest, I reckon. But ain't it a ripping road, though? I tell you it'll make a stir when it gets along."

The Colonel lays off the road on the table with skeins of thread to represent Goose run, and says:

"And just look at that river—noblest stream that meanders over the thirsty earth! calmest, gentlest artery that refreshes her weary bosom! Railroad goes all over it and all through it—wades right along on stilts. Seventeen bridges in three miles and a half—forty-nine bridges from Hark-from-the-Tomb to Stone's Landing altogether—forty-nine bridges and culverts enough to culvert creation itself! Hain't skeins of thread enough to represent them all—but you got the idea—perfect trestle work of bridges for seventy-two miles. Jeff Thompson and I fixed all that, you know; he's to get the contracts, and I'm to put them through on the divide. It's the only part of the road I'm interested in—down along the line—and it's all I want, too. It's enough, I should judge."

The sketches of Congressmen, trial of Laura for murder of her deciver, pictures of judges and lobbyists and descriptive passages at arms in Congress are dull enough to be true, and with the account of what the natives of Stone's Landing thought of the enterprise, we take leave of Jeff:

"Good morning, gentlemen," called out the chief engineer from the table.

"Good morning," drawled out the spokesman of the party. "I allow this yer's the railroad; I hern it was a-comin'."

"Yes, this is the railroad, all but the rails and the iron horse."

"I reckon you kin git all the rails you want outen my white oak timber over thar," replied the first speaker, who appeared to be a man of property, and willing to strike up a trade.

"You'll have to negotiate with the contractors about the rails, sir" said Jeff. "Here's Mr. Brierly, I've no doubt would like to buy your rails when the time comes."

"Oh," said the man, "I thought maybe you'd fetch the whole bilin along with you. But ef you want rails, I've got 'em, haint I, Eph?"

"Heaps," said Eph, without taking his eyes off the group at the table.

The next morning the camp moved on, followed till it was out of sight by the listless eyes of the group in front of the store, one of whom remarked that "he'd be doggoned if he ever expected to see *that* railroad any mo'."

The Magic Power of Love.

Two or three years ago the superintendent of the Little Wanderers' Home, in Boston, received one morning a request from the judge that he would come up to the courtroom. He complied directly, and found there a group of seven little girls, ragged, dirty and forlorn, beyond even what he was accustomed to see. The judge pointed to them and said:

"Mr. T——, can you take any of these?"

"Certainly, I'll take them all," was the prompt reply.

"All! what in the world can you do with them all?"

"I'll make women of them."

"The judge singled out one, even worse in appearance than all the rest, and asked again:

"What can you do for this one?"

"I'll make a woman of her," Mr. T—— replied firmly and hopefully. He took them all home. They were washed and dressed, and provided with a good supper and beds. The next morning they went into the schoolroom with the rest of the children. Mary was the name of the little girl whose chance for the better things the judge thought was small.

During the afternoon the teacher said to Mr. T——, in reference to her:

"I never saw a child like that. I have tried for an hour to get a single smile, and failed."

Mr. T—— said afterwards to himself that her face was the saddest he had ever seen, sorrowful beyond expression; yet she was a very little girl, only seven or eight years old.

After school he called her into his office, and said pleasantly: "Mary, I've lost my little pet. I used to have a little girl here that would wait on my knee, and sit on my knee, and I loved her very much. A kind lady and gentleman adopted her, and she went to live with them. I miss her, and I should like you to take her place and be my little pet; will you?"

A gleam of light flitted over the poor child's face as she began to understand him. He gave her ten cents, and told her she might go to a store near by and buy some candy. While she was gone he took two or three newspapers, tore them in pieces and scattered them about the room. When she returned, in a few minutes, he said to her: "Mary, will you clean up my office for me? Pick up those papers, and make it look real nice."

She went to work with a will. A little more of this sort of management—treating her just like a kind father would—wrought the desired change. She went into the schoolroom with so changed a look and bearing that the teacher was so astonished. The child's face was radiant; and half fearful of some mental wanderings, she went up to her and said:

"Mary, what is it? What makes you