A LUMP OF CARBON.

Tell me, lump of carbon burning
Lurid in the glowing grate,
While thy flames rise twisting, turning,
Quench in me this curious yearning,
Ages past elucidate.

Tell me of the time when waving
High above the primal world,
Thou, a giant palm-tree, lifting
Thy proud head above the shifting
Of the storm-cloud's lightning hurled,
While the tropic sea, hot laving,
Round thy roots its billows curled.

Tell me, did the mammoth, straying
Near that mighty trunk of yours,
On the verdure stop and gaze,
Which thy ample base displays,
Or his weary limbs down laying,
Sleep away the tardy hours?

Perchance some monstrous saurian, sliding,
Waddled up the neighboring strand,
Or leapt into its native sea,
With something of agility,
Though all ungainly on the land;
While near your roots, in blood-stained fray,
Maybe two ichthyic beasts colliding,
Bit and fought their lives away.

Tell me, ancient palm-corpse, was there
In that world of yours primeval,
Aught of man in perfect shape?
Was there good? and was there evil?
Was there man? or was it ape?

Tell me, lump of carbon, burning
Lurid in the glowing grate,
Lies there in each human face
Something of the monkey's trace?
Tell me have we lost a link?
Stir thy coaly brain and think,
While thy red-flames rise and sink,
Ages past elucidate.
—*Chambers' Journal.*

JUST IN TIME.

Dinner was over at last, and Mr. Walter Currie, English Commissioner at the up-country station, at Huttee-Bagh, in Northern India, had gone upon the veranda with his wife and his two guests, the Colonel and Major of the ——th light infantry, to enjoy the cool of the evening.

On three sides the house was surrounded by its compound, a large inclosed space serving the purpose of a courtyard, but the fourth was only separated by a small patch of garden from the road, along which a number of native women were passing with their little pitchers on their heads.

The sight of them naturally turned the conversation upon a favorite subject with all Anglo-Indians, viz., the character of the natives and the best mode of dealing with them.

"There's only one way," said the Colonel, emphatically. "Tell 'em what they are to do, make 'em do it, and thrash 'em well if they don't. That's my way."

"Well, I venture to differ from you there, Colonel," said Mr. Currie, quietly. "I had to do some thrashing once or twice, I own, but most of my native servants get along very well without it, and they seem to serve me excellently, I assure you."

"I wish you had been in my place, then," retorted the Colonel; "you'd have changed your opinion, I warrant. Why, the year before last, when I had charge of two battalions of the rascals down at Suttepoor, because there wasn't another Queen's officer within reach—just like my confounded luck!—there was no getting anything done unless I did it myself. By Jove, sir! I had to be everything at once—my own Quartermaster, my own Sergeant Major, my own caterer, and—"

"And your own trumpeter, Col. Annesley?" asked Mrs. Currie, with an arch smile.

The Colonel's broad face reddened ominously, and an explosion seemed imminent, when a sudden clamor of angry voices from the road below drew them all to the front veranda.

The cause of the disturbance was visible at a glance. Two half-drunken English soldiers, swaggering along the road, had come into violent contact with a native who was running past; and one of them, enraged at the collision, had felled the poor lad to the ground, and was unclasping his own belt with the evident intention of beating him unmercifully.

"Served the young whelp right," shouted the Colonel, rubbing his hands; "that's just what they all want."

The other officer, Maj. Armstrong—popularly called Maj. Strongarm—was a huge, brawny, silent man, whose forte lay in acting rather than talking.

During the whole discussion he had sat like a great bronze statue, never uttering a word; but, at sight of this man ill-using this child, he woke up rather startlingly.

To leap to the ground twelve feet below, to dart across the garden, to vault over the high stockade beyond, was the work of a moment for the athletic Major, and in another instant he had raised the boy tenderly from the ground, while saying to the foremost soldier, in the low, compressed tone of a man who means what he says:

"Be off with you."

"And who the deuce are you, shovin' yer nose in where you ain't wanted?" roared the infuriated ruffian, to whose eyes the Major's plain evening dress bore no token of his being an officer. "Jist you—"

The sentence was never finished.

At the sound of that insolent defiance Armstrong's sorely-tried patience gave way altogether, and the powerful right hand which had hewed its way through a whole squadron of Shiv cavalry fell like a sledge-hammer upon his opponent's face, dashing him to the ground as if he had been blown from the mouth of a gun.

"Well done, Maj. Armstrong," shouted Mr. Currie from above. "You deserve your name, and no mistake."

At that formidable name the soldier took to his heels at once, and Armstrong, without even looking at his prostrate antagonist, proceeded to look at the hurts of the boy.

The latter was sorely bruised in many places, and the blood was trickling freely over his swarthy face; but the little hero still did his best to stand erect, and to keep down every sign of the pain which he was enduring.

"You're a brave lad, and you'll make a soldier some day," said the Major to him in Hindoostanee. "Come with me, and I'll see that no one molests you again."

The lad seized the huge brown hand which had defended him so bravely, and kissed it with the deepest reverence; and the two walked away together.

Six months have come and gone, and Mr. Currie's hospitable home presents a very different spectacle. The pretty garden is trampled into dust and mire, and the bodies of men and horses are lying thick among the fragments of the half-destroyed stockade.

All the windows of the house are blocked up, and through the loop-holed walls peer the muzzles of ready rifles, showing how steadily the besieged garrison stands at bay against the countless enemies, whose dark, fierce faces and glittering weapons are visible amid the half-ruined building and matted thickets all around.

The Sepoy mutiny of 1857 is blazing sky-high over Northern India, and Col. Annesley is blockaded in Huttee-Bagh, with a certainty of a hideous death for himself and every man of the few who are still true to him, unless help comes speedily.

Day was just breaking when two men held a whispered council in one of the upper rooms.

"No fear of the water running short," said Maj. Armstrong, "but, even upon half rations, the food will be out in four days more."

"And then we'll just go right at them, and cut our way through or die for it!" growled the old Colonel, with a grim smile on his iron face, for, with all his harshness and injustice, Col. Annesley was "grit" to the backbone. "We mustn't say anything to them about it, though," added he, with a side glance at Mr. Currie, who, standing in the further corner, was anxiously watching the thin, worn face of his sleeping wife.

At that moment a loud cheer from below startled them both, and the next moment Ismail (the "Major's boy," as every one now called him) burst into the room with a glow of unwonted excitement on his dark face.

"Sahib," cried he, "there is hope for us yet! A detachment of Ingleez (English) are coming up the other bank of the river; if we can send word to them as they pass we are saved."

"How do you know?" asked the Major eagerly.

"I heard the Sepoys say so, while I was lying hid among the bushes yonder," answered the lad.

"Among the bushes yonder?" roared the Colonel, facing around. "Have you really been in the midst of those cut-throat villains listening to what they said. Whatever did you do that for?"

"I did it for Sahib Armstrong's sake," replied the boy, proudly; "because he was good to me."

The Colonel turned hastily away to hide the flush of not unmanly shame that overspread his hard face; and Armstrong smiled slightly as he heard him mutter:

"By Jove! these chaps aren't so black as they're painted, after all."

"But if the troops are beyond the river how can we communicate with them?" asked Mrs. Currie, who, awakened by the shouting, had arisen and joined the group. "They may not pass near enough to hear the firing, and we have no means of sending them word."

"Fear nothing for that, mem-sahib" (madam), answered the Hindoo boy, quietly. "I will carry them word myself."

"But how can you possibly do it?" cried Mrs. Currie, thunderstruck by the confident tone in which this mere child spoke of a task from which the hardiest veteran might well have shrunk.

"Listen, Sahib," answered Ismail. "I will slip out of the house and make a dash into the enemy's lines, as if I were deserting from you to them, and you can tell your people to fire a shot or two after me with blank cartridge as I go. Then the Sepoys will receive me kindly, and I'll tell them that you're all dying of thirst, and that they must only wait one day more to make sure of you, so that they won't care to make another attack. Then, when they have no suspicion, and think I'm quite one of themselves, I'll steal away and slip across the river."

"But are you quite sure the Sepoys will believe you?" asked Maj. Armstrong, doubtfully.

"They'll believe this, anyhow," replied the boy, deliberately making a deep gash in his bare shoulder and staining his white frock with the blood as he glided from the room, followed by Armstrong.

The plan was soon explained to the men below, and a moment later Ismail's dark figure was seen darting like an arrow across the open space in front of the building, followed by a quick discharge of blank cartridges from marksmen at the loopholes. The sound of the firing drew the attention of the Sepoys, several of whom ran forward to meet him.

In another instant he was in the midst of them.

"I can scarcely see for those bushes," said Col. Annesley, "but he seems to be showing them the wound on his shoulder, and telling them it was our doing."

At that moment an exulting yell from the enemy came pealing through the air.

"That's the story of our being short of water, for a guinea!" said the Major; "it was a very good thought of his. If it only delays their attack two days longer, there may be time for help to arrive yet."

Slowly and wearily the long hours of that fearful day wore on. The heat was so terrible that even the native soldiers of the garrison could barely hold their own against it, and the handful of Englishmen were also helpless. Had the Sepoys attacked them, all would have been over at one blow; but hour passed hour, and there was no sign of an assault.

At length, as afternoon gave place to evening, a movement began to show itself in the enemy's lines. Then curls of smoke rising above the trees showed that the evening's meal was in preparation; then several figures with pitchers in their hands were seen going toward the river, among whom the Colonel's keen eyes detected Ismail.

"By George!" cried the old soldier, slapping his knee exultingly, "that lad's worth his weight in gold! There's his way down to the river right open to him without the least chance of suspicion. Why, he's a born gentleman—nothing less!"

Every eye within the walls was now turned anxiously upon the distant group, fearing to see at any moment some movement which would show that the trick was detected. How did Ismail mean to accomplish his purpose? Would he plunge boldly into the river, without any disguise, or had he some further stratagem in preparation? No one could say.

Suddenly, as Ismail stooped to plunge his light wooden dipper into the water, it slipped from his hands and went floating away down the stream. A cry of dismay, a loud laugh from the Sepoys, and then the boy was seen running frantically along the bank and trying in vain to catch the vessel as it floated past.

"What on earth's he up to?" grunted the Colonel, completely mystified.

"I see!" cried Maj. Armstrong, triumphantly; "there's a boat yonder among the reeds, and he's making for it. Well done, my brave boy!"

But at that moment a yell of rage from the Sepoys told that the trick was discovered.

Luckily those on the bank had left their pieces behind, or poor Ismail would soon have been disposed of; but the alarm instantly brought up a crowd of their armed comrades, whose bullets fell like hail around the boat and its gallant little pilot.

"Let us fire a volley and make a show of sallying out," said the Colonel; "it'll take their attention from him."

But in this he was mistaken.

The first rattle of musketry from behind the house did indeed recall most of Ismail's assailants, but at least a dozen were left, who kept up an incessant firing, striking the boat again and again.

All at once the Colonel dashed his glass to the floor with a frightful oath.

Between the two gusts of smoke he had seen the boat turn suddenly over, and go whirling down the river, keel upward.

"There's an end of the poor lad," muttered the veteran brokenly. "God bless him for a brave little fellow. And now, old friend, we must just die hard, for there's no hope left."

The first few hours of the night passed quietly, and the exhausted defenders, utterly worn out, slept as if drugged with opium. But a little after midnight the quick ears of the two veteran officers—the only watchers in the whole garrison except the sentries themselves—caught a faint stirring in the surrounding thickets, which seemed to argue some movement on the part of the enemy.

Listening intently for a few moments, they felt certain that they were right, and lost no time in arousing their men.

The scanty stores of food were opened once more, and, crouched together in the darkness, the doomed men took what they fully believed to be their last meal on earth.

"They're coming!" said Maj. Armstrong, straining his eyes into the gloom through a loop-hole. "I hear them creeping forward, though I can't see them."

"What the deuce was that?" exclaimed the Colonel, suddenly. "It looked like a fiery arrow flying past."

"It's worse than that," said the Major, in a low voice. "The rascals are shooting lighted chips of bamboo out on to the roof to set it on fire. Send the women up with buckets to flood the thatch; there's not a moment to lose."

"I'll go and see to it myself!" cried Mrs. Currie, hastening out of the room.

But the power of this new weapon had already become fatally manifest. The house was an old one, and dry as tinder from the prolonged heat, and as fast as the flames were quenched in one place they broke out in another.

When the day dawned the fire had already got a firm hold of one corner of the building, and a crushing discharge was poured upon all who attempted to extinguish it, while the triumphant yell of the human tigers below told them that they felt sure of their prey.

"It's all over with us, old fellow," said the Colonel, grasping the old comrade's hand; "but, at least, we shall have done our duty."

"Give me one of your pistols," whispered Mrs. Currie to her husband, in a voice that was not her own. "I must not fall into their hands alive."

At this moment Maj. Armstrong was seen to start and bend forward, as if listening intently; for he thought—although he could scarcely believe his ears—that he had suddenly caught a faint sound of distant firing.

In another instant he heard it again, and this time there could be no doubt, for several of the others had caught it likewise, and a gleam of hope once more lighted up their haggard faces and bloodshot eyes.

Louder and nearer came the welcome sound, while the sudden terror and confusion visible among the enemy showed that they, too, were at no loss to guess the meaning.

Then high above the din arose the well-known "hurrah!" and through the smoke-clouds broke a charging line of glittering bayonets and ruddy English faces, sweeping away the cowardly murderers as the sun chases the morning mist.

"That boy's worth his weight in gold," said Col. Annesley, as, a few hours later, he listened to Ismail's account of how he had dived under the boat and kept it between him and the Sepoys, that they might think him drowned. "He's the pluckiest little fellow I've seen, and, although he belongs to the Major, I'm going to take my share of helping him on, by Jove!"

How Famous Writers Work.

It is curious to recall the manner in which "The Great" seek inspiration and how they work.

M. Alexandre Dumas, fils, is a morning worker; the dawn finds him already up. He salutes her with a genial countenance. His habitual good humor proves that his health and his mental faculties are in complete equilibrium. He is hungry immediately on rising and attacks a good plate of soup with the eagerness of a rustic. After that he seats himself before a large secretary and writes until noon—in negligent dress, as you may suppose. M. le Comte de Buffon, before entering his study, always put on his court dress, did not forget his sword, and did not deign, except in lace cuffs, to occupy himself with the humble animals whose history he was writing.

There are few coats more threadbare than those of the master of all. I have named M. Victor Hugo. M. Hugo is also an early riser, but he does not live on soup. Before noon he lives only on his thoughts. He writes a great deal and his heart is in the work. In his long walks he prepares the work of the morrow, and as his memory is prodigious he has only to write out what his faithful memory dictates. He has often related to his friends that in his youth, during a rainy winter, he was occupied with his "Marion Delorme." He had chosen as a place of exercise, under shelter, the Passage du Saumon.

The first act, a marvelous commencement, full of passion, poetry, and fire, was the work of two afternoons spent in promenading in the passage of dingy shops, where were sold, side by side, stockings, straw mattings, and butchers' caps.

Lamartine, another early riser, composed his most beautiful verses on horseback. That was a habit worthy of an aristocratic poet, a lover of the open air and of heaven, who, not possessing the Pegasus of heroic days, gave wings to an English saddle horse. Byron showed this sportive taste, probably because he had a club foot.

The poet, beloved of lovers, Musset, adored the reveries of evening. But it was not under blue heaven, by the splendor of the stars, that he evoked the muse of night, whose voice still vibrates in young hearts. It was in the glare of candles, at the angle of a table reddened by overflowing cups.

George Sand always wrote at night. Lady of the manor during the day, devoted to her guests, making preserves and engaged in needlework, it was at 1 o'clock in the morning, when the chateau was fast asleep, that the genius awakened and gave to us "Mauprat," "Francois de Champi," "Consuelo," and a hundred other works.—*Paris paper.*

MOTHER EVE copied Satan. Satan ate, and Eve ate. And the daughters of Eve have acted like Satan ever since. This was handed in by a wretched bachelor. Our first thought was to destroy it, but we concluded to print it in order to show to what depths a man outside the reigning influences of wife and family may descend.—*Boston Transcript.*

A TALE OF THE CAT-TAIL.

Down in a swamp where the alders bloom
A weary cat-tail hung its head.
My heart is wrapped around with gloom;
I would, I would, that I were dead!
Life here is never hilarious,
And always somewhat malarious,"
Said this discontented cat-tail.

"Why am I not a fair moss-rose,
That a poet's strain might tell of me,
Or a maiden press me to her nose,
And gently, tenderly, smell of me?
Oh, how I bemoan my humble walk!"
And a large tear trickled down the stalk
Of the sorrowful, weeping cat-tail.

"But since my lot with grief is rife,
Since fate, cruel fate, so decrees,
I'll do my best, and the orange of life
I will most thoroughly squeeze;
And I'll lift my head—I will, indeed—
And put off for a period going to seed,"
Said this very virtuous cat-tail.

So it pushed aside the green leaves that
Surrounded it like a closet,
And the neighboring plants were astonished at
Its great adipose deposit.
On other cat-tails it quite looked down,
For none grew so plethoric and brown
As this noble-hearted cat-tail.

Bigger and browner the cat-tail grew,
Till at last, one summer day,
A maiden fair, with eyes of blue,
Came driving along that way.
She had studied artistic decoration,
And gave a delighted exclamation
When she saw the noble cat-tail.

She spared it not; in its noble prime
She cut it short on life spot;
But it knew it was near its sooty time,
And it would rather be cut than not.
And it almost erupted its sleek fat side
With its fervid joy and its honest pride,
This stout but modest cat-tail.

The maiden showed to all her friends
Her captured cat-tail, brown and tall;
She made it a bow with loops and ends,
And hung it up against the wall.
The humble cat-tail was much elated,
In its position so elevated,
As a decorative cat-tail.

For by its side there hung in state
Some Kensington-work on flannel,
While a one-legged stork looked for his mate
From a pleasing neighboring panel.
And these with a gorgeous peacock's feather
And a Japanese fan all hang together,
With the now æsthetic cat-tail!
—*Harper's Bazar.*

TERRIBLE ADVENTURE.

In the spring of 1876, Mexico was in a tumult. Lerdo, the Chief Justice, succeeding to the Presidency at the death of Juarez, and afterward elected for a second term, announced himself as a candidate for the third. His political opponents, enraged at the thought of a third term, uprose in all directions and declared for Diaz. In March of this year only the rumblings of the rebellion were heard, but society was daily becoming more and more disturbed. Armed men were everywhere about, and many bands of lawless ruffians were scouring the outskirts of the cities and towns, stealing from the farmers, and leaving behind them desolation and despair—truly a peculiarly dangerous and unfortunate time for a foreigner to set out on a journey.

On a lovely morning in early March, a young American gentleman left the town of Matanzas to travel to Jalapa. The narrow road at first winds up the side of the mountain, turning sharply around sudden bends, where a single misstep of the horse or mule would hurl the rider far down into the valley below. It is as if the great mountain had been hollowed out, and the jagged sides left standing, with a rude path trending from the base to the summit. The American was accompanied by six native horsemen mounted on mustangs similar to his own, and four footmen. The whole party were armed. After passing about half way up the mountain side the traveler halted, and motioned to his followers to do the same. For a long time he sat motionless in his saddle gazing out at the exquisite picture before him. In the distance, far below, lay the wonderful valley of Matanzas, the "Garden of Mexico." The rich, excessive vegetation could plainly be discerned, and a few light and graceful clouds hung drifted against the towering rocks. The beams of the lately-risen sun were pouring over the hill-tops and illuminating the vast plain beneath with a fresh and rosy light. He must have been indeed a prosaic and unappreciative man who would pass carelessly by such a wonder-work of nature.

His reverie was suddenly broken by a shout from above. Looking up he saw a single horseman picking his way carefully toward him. He was soon recognized by the men as a resident of Matanzas. When he drew near he spoke rapidly and excitedly to the escort in their peculiar *patois*, gesticulating violently all the while.

The effect was immediate and startling. The entire body of native horsemen, with one exception, and all the footmen, turned sharply around and made their way rapidly down the mountain side, without a word of explanation or farewell to their employer. The only one who remained was Filomeno, who had been sent by his master, a friend of the traveler, to accompany him to Jalapa, and who understood English after a fashion. He sat motionless in his saddle, gazing after his countrymen, now fast disappearing around the curves of the pathway.

"What's the matter, Filomeno?" asked the American at length, rising in his saddle as he spoke, and shading his eyes with his hand, as he looked after the deserters, "what did that fellow say that has made all this fuss?"

"He said," replied the Mexican slowly, "that revolution had already broken out at Jalapa; that the terrible soldiers of the plains are before us, and that if you proceed you will be surrounded and killed."

"Stuff," said the American, "I am not afraid. Filomeno, let us go on." And, as he spoke, he tightened his hold on his horse's rein, and was about to proceed, when he saw that Filomeno had not stirred.

"Come, Filomeno," said he, "time is slipping by and we must be off. Surely you are not afraid to accompany me?"

"No matter," answered the Mexican, "but I cannot go as I am. All these robbers know Filomeno, and would give a good price for my head. If I go with you I must go disguised. Wait;" and, turning around, he scrambled lightly and quickly back from the road toward a little hut near by, whence a thin wreath of smoke was curling lazily up through the clear morning air. He was gone scarcely fifteen minutes, and when he again drew near the American hardly knew him. Filomeno had disappeared under the guise of a charcoal-burner.

"Now I am ready; I have left my horse where it will be taken care of," he said, and now on foot he fell into his old place close behind the American's mustang.

And so they journeyed on, up into the clouds and then down again, over the rich breasts of valleys which are only found in the tropics, and along the tracks of old watercourses, and through brooks and little rivers of a peculiar greenish hue. Around them was nature in all her wasteful luxuriance, but no sign of anything human to help or hinder them.

That night they encamped in a small valley, and resumed their journey at daybreak. At 11 o'clock on the morning of this day they were drawing near Jalapa. The sun was beating down out of a cloudless sky; the heat was intense; and a deep stillness seemed to have settled over the great plain. Before them was the Valley of Jalapa; on the right the Volcano of Orizaba, its cone white with snow and ice, its sides covered with that luxuriance of foliage only known where eternal summer reigns.

The American, too tired even to notice this, was nodding in his saddle, and for a long time had not spoken to his companion. He was aroused by a low cry from Filomeno. Turning toward him and following the direction of his eyes, he saw a large body of horsemen galloping toward him. He could see at once that they were not regular soldiers. They advanced in confusion, and no two men seemed dressed alike. It was a squad of the dreaded guerrillas on a foraging expedition. With a terrible feeling of despair the American again looked around for Filomeno. He had fled. The American was alone, with a hundred wild and lawless Mexican robbers bearing down on him, like a rushing wind across a placid lake.

In a moment, as it seemed, they were upon him and around him. Resistance was useless. A score of pistols pointed at him, a score of swords were raised above his head, and a score of long sticks with knives on the ends, called *matchezies* were pricking him in all directions. He was pulled off his horse in a twinkling, stripped naked in the midst of a dense circle of howling savages, who were cursing and fighting for his various articles of dress. At length his clothing, arms and valuables were divided. The leader of the band, with the American's watch dangling from his belt, shouted out an order to his men. Two troopers armed with *matchezies* rode up to the prisoner and commanded him to walk before them. "You American devil," they exclaimed in Spanish, "you dog of a spy, be off to Jalapa. When we get you there we'll teach you to sneak around our lines. March!"

And in order to add emphasis to their words they prodded the prisoner with the points of their *matchezies* till the blood started from more than one wound on his arms and legs. Angry, faint and sore, and half blinded by the fierce rays of the sun, the American wheeled around and upbraided the leader for these indignities, and especially for depriving him of his clothes. In reply, one of the soldiers pulled out from under his saddle a piece of coarse and filthy matting which he carelessly tossed to the prisoner.

"Take this," he said; "it is too small for you, but the fleas in it will keep you warm."

And so, wrapping this dirty covering about his shoulders, our countryman started on his painful march to Jalapa.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon they reached the town. The American was hustled into a wretched adobe hut on the outskirts of the village, and the Mexicans, after posting a guard around the place, tied their horses under a shed and gave themselves up to rest and boisterous recreation. Inside the hut on a rude bench the American sat silent hour after hour. At length he walked to a little window and begged for water. There was no response. The bare walls only echoed his cry of "*Aqua! aqua!*"

All the next day, too, the prisoner was kept without food or drink or clothes. At times his mind wandered a little. At sunset the cool evening air somewhat revived him. He moved his bench under the window of the hut, and stretching himself under it listened carelessly to the idle conversation of the soldiers outside. Suddenly his heart gave a terrible throb; a cold perspiration overwhelmed him, and he fainted.

What he had heard was this: The soldiers were talking about a fair that was to open in Jalapa on the morrow, and they were detailing to a new-comer some of the amusements that had been planned for the occasion.

"We are going to have a shooting match at noon," said one; "we have got an American spy in that box yonder, and we are going to tie him to a stake and shoot at him with our revolvers. Whoever kills him will get five silver dollars. The dog's hours are numbered."

These were the words which had fallen on the American like a pall.

It was probably much less than a hour that the prisoner lay insensible. Then he roused himself, and, like the brave man that he was, looked his doom in the face. So he was to die, and die the death of a miserable cur; he, the inhabitant of a pleasant Northern city, with youth, health, kind friends and fortune. To be tied to a stake in a Mexican market place and shot at for a paltry prize. These thoughts were maddening. He called fiercely to his captors to liberate him; he strode furiously up and down the room; he rushed to the window and rattled the bars; and finally from sheer exhaustion he sank down on the floor in despair.

He lay still for a long time.

He could not mark the hours, but at length he knew by the cool wind that crept in through the bars, that day—his last day—was not far away. Then he heard a cock crow; and then he saw a bright ray of sunlight come flashing into his miserable hut, and he was sure that he had but a few hours more to live. He made up his mind that he would die bravely. He rose to his full height, stretched his limbs, and raised his head proudly. As he did so he heard a sound of horses galloping toward him. He rushed to the window and looked out. A cavalry officer, in a fine uniform, with flashing arms and equipments, and followed by a squad of men, was coming every moment nearer and nearer.

The lounging guerrillas around his prison started up and stood respectfully aside; several who lingered were knocked over by the hurrying hoofs of the horsemen. The officer rode close up to the hut, and, pulling his horse almost on to his haunches, he leaped to the ground. With a quick and angry command to the guard at the door the bolt was drawn back.

The American, entirely naked, was standing in the middle of the room. Advancing, and speaking in English, the officer said:

"Who are you, and where do you come from?"

"I am an American traveler from the State of Massachusetts," was the reply.

"Massachusetts!" said the other; "that is near Connecticut. I went to school in that State years ago. I like Americans. Yesterday I heard, in this city, that some rascally devils had captured an American and were going to torture him at the fair to-day. It is fortunate for you that I have come."

Then taking off his coat he insisted on the American wearing it, and, in response to his call, other garments were soon obtained.

"Now," said the officer, "take this horse and come to my quarters."

Then, turning around, he shouted out, in Spanish, to the chief of the guerrillas:

"Francisco, if I hear of another prank like this, I shall send my orderly to blow out your brains."

At the officer's quarters, in the city, our countryman received every possible attention, and as soon as he was rested and refreshed he was furnished with horses and money and escorted safely to Vera Cruz.

Cold Snaps.

"We're havin' some pretty wintrish weather," said old Daddy Wotherspoon to Uncle Sammy Honniwell, as the two gentlemen met near the City Hall. "Right for'ard weather for the season."

"Jist so; jist so," conceded Uncle Sammy. "Reminds me of the fall of 1831. It commenced long the fore part of November, and froze stiff till March. Good, smart weather, too. I remember that it was so cold in Brooklyn that November that bilin' water froze over a hot fire."

Daddy Wotherspoon looked at him and braced himself. "Yes, yes," said he, "I mind it well. That's the fall the milk froze in the cows. But the cold season was in 1827. It commenced in the middle of October and ran through to April. All the oil froze in the lamps, and we didn't have a light until spring set in."

"Ay, ay," responded Uncle Sammy, growing rigid. "It's just like yesterday to me. I walked 140 miles due east from Sandy Hook, on the ice, and slid back, owing to the convexity of the earth, you know. It was down hill comin' this way. But that wasn't as cold as the winter of 1821. That season commenced in September, and the mercury didn't rise a degree till May. Don't you remember now we used to breathe hard, let it freeze, cut a hole in it, and crawl in for shelter? You haven't forgotten that?"

"Not I," said Daddy Wotherspoon, after a short pause. "That's the winter we used to give the horses melted lead to drink, and keep a hot fire under 'em so it wouldn't harden till they got it down. But that was nothin' to the spell of 1817. We begun to feel it in the latter part of August, and she boomed stiddy till the 30th of June. I got through the whole spell by living in an ice-house. It was too cold to go out doors, and I jist camped in an ice-house. You remember that season of 1817. That's the winter we wore undershirts of sand-paper to keep up a friction."

"Well, I should say I did," retorted Uncle Sammy. "What! remember 1817? 'Deed I do. That was the spell when it took a steam grindstone four days to light a match. Ay, ay! But do you know I was uncomfortably warm that winter?"

"How so?" demanded Daddy Wotherspoon, breathing hard.

"Runnin' around your ice-house to find out where you got in. It was an awful spell, though. How long did it last? From August till the 30th of June? I guess you're right. But you mind the snap of 1813, don't you? It commenced on the 1st of July, and went around and lapped over a week. That year the smoke froze in the chimneys and we had to blast it out with dynamite. I think that was the worst we ever had. All the clocks froze up so we didn't know the time for a year, and when men used to set fire to their buildin's so's to raise the rent. Yes, indeed. I got $3,000 a month for four burnin' buildin's. There was a heap of sufferin' that winter, because we lived on alcohol and phosphorus, till the alcohol froze, and then we eat the brimstone ends of matches and jumped around till they caught fire. Say, you—"

But Daddy Wotherspoon had fled. The statistics were too much for him.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

A Trapper's Encounter with a Panther in Maine.

Dave Mosher, a trapper and guide in the North Woods, Me., had a terrific encounter with a North Woods beast recently. Three miles from Sacondaga Lake there is a wild, rugged pass between the mountains, known as the Black Cat Valley. The mountains on either side are very steep and rocky, and are covered with a heavy growth of black balsam and spruce timber. As the snows deepen and the weather becomes cold, many deer and animals take shelter in that locality.

Among the rest are the rock-marten, having a valuable dark-colored fur, known among trappers in those regions as "Black Cat." They seldom move by day, keeping concealed in trunks of trees or between the fissures of rocks. Owing to the uncertainty of finding one twice in a place, and their natural shyness, it is quite difficult to trap them. However, when they become pinched with hunger they will jump at the bait without hesitation.

A keen, strong, steel trap is set and covered with snow or leaves, directly under a drooping branch that the animal can reach by rearing; upon this is secured the bait, and in the effort to reach which it is pretty apt to step in the trap. Then comes a system of desperate manœuvres, and the only way to hold them is by having the trap-chain attached to a small sapling that will spring and lift them off the ground. This sleek, fine-furred animal is about the size of a red fox, and, as David used to express it, "they're a sassy varmint to get holt on."

As Mosher was going the rounds of his traps he saw through the bushes ahead a terrible commotion under a large white birch, where a trap had been set. As he approached, a long, gaunt, tawny-colored, fierce-looking animal, whose wild scream upon the mountain-side at night will send a thrill of horror to those who are safe in the cabin, sprang upon a lower limb of the birch, and bid defiance with glowing eyes. It was driven to desperation by hunger.

Had David quietly backed out he could have enjoyed his supper of venison and pancakes. But no, he raised the old rifle and fired. In one fourth of a York minute, Bill Stewart's exact time for skinning a Montezuma bull-head, all the clothes upon him would not have made a bib for a china doll. He directly found himself beside a log, partly scalped, with his lower limbs looking as though they had been through a threshing-machine, while, at the same moment, with a spit and a scream, a panther disappeared up the mountain-side.

When he came up the panther was engaged in killing and devouring a marten which was caught in the trap, and his hunger being partly appeased was the means of the trapper crawling off with his life.

THE editor wrote "An evening with Saturn," and it came out in the paper "An evening with Satan." It was mighty rough, but the foreman said it was the work of the "devil." And it looked that way.

After friendship and love come benevolence and that compassion which unites the lenо to the unfortunate.

THE FAMILY DOCTOR.

IF we add a pint of pure water to a pint of impure water, we dilute the impure water, and it is made that much the more pure. If we add a dozen pints of pure water to it, we dilute it still more, and bring it nearer purity yet; but if we add a certain number more, instead of the impurity becoming diluted, it is absolutely destroyed, and Dr. Letherby, of London, says that the water is perfectly pure. It is the same way with impure air. A certain quantity of pure air added to it, dilutes the bad air and makes it less noxious, while if a certain quantity more is added, the impurity of the air is destroyed, as is the case with impure water. Any person can judge of this from the good effect of much pure air upon bad air.

THE following hints concerning the use of tea may prove useful: 1. Whosoever uses tea should do so in great moderation. 2. It should form a part of the meal, but never be taken before eating, between meals, or on an empty stomach, as it is too frequently done. 3. The best time to take tea is after a hearty meal. 4. Those who suffer with weak nerves should never take it at all. 5. Those who are troubled with inability to sleep nights should not use tea, or, if they do, take it in the morning. 6. Brain-workers should never goad on their brains to overwork on the stimulus of tea. 7. Children and the young should never use tea. 8. The overworked and underfed should never use tea. 9. Tea should never be drunk very strong. 10. It is better with considerable milk and sugar. 11. Its use should at once be abandoned when harm comes from it. 12. Multitudes of diseases come from the excessive use of tea, and for this reason those who cannot use it without going to excess should not use it at all.

DR. DAY says in a late lecture: Whatever be the plan of treatment decided upon rest is the first principle to inculcate in very severe headache. Rest, which the busy man and anxious mother cannot obtain so long as they can manage to keep about, is one of the first remedies for every headache, and we should never cease to enforce it. The brain, when excited, as much needs quiet and repose as a fractured limb or an inflamed eye; it is obvious that the chances of shortening the seizure and arresting the pain will depend on our power to have this carried out actually. It is a practical lesson to keep steadily in view in that there may lurk behind a simple headache some lesion of unknown magnitude, which may remain stationary if quietude can be maintained. There is a point worth attending to in the treatment of all headaches. It is that the head be elevated at night, and the pillow hard; for if it be soft the head sinks into it and becomes hot, which, with some people, is enough to provoke an attack in the morning if sleep has been long and heavy.

EXCEPT a Turkish bath, nothing is more efficacious in the sore throat of children or adults than a wet compress to the throat. Double a towel two or three times, so as to make a pad that will fit snugly under the chin and over the throat, and let it extend around from ear to ear. Then bind a thickly-folded towel over the wet pad, having the towel wide enough to overlap the edges of the pad. It is best to pass this outer covering over the head, and not around the neck after the style of a cravat, the object being to exclude the air so as to keep up a perspiration over the diseased parts. But if the soreness is low down on the throat, the outside towel may be passed around the neck; yet, when this is done, it is much more difficult to exclude the air. The wet compress may be put on cold or warm; but, when cold, it soon becomes warm from the heat of the skin, and is really a warm vapor bath. When the pad is taken off, the throat should be washed in cold water to close the pores, and then well dried with a towel. This is applicable to croup and to all kinds of sore throats, and will be found more cleanly and equally as efficient as grandmother's stocking filled with ashes.

Loss of Sight.

A little accident, carelessness and ignorance in regard to the condition, strength and power of the eye to endure, has given to many an early blindness. It may not be generally understood that writing on the cars, steamboat, coach, or anything in motion, is intended to impair the eyesight.

The sculptor Crawford, was accustomed all his life time to read lying down. To this, very largely, the physicians attribute the loss of his eye. Very soon a cancer formed in the other, which caused his death.

The great historian, Prescott, lost his eyesight when a student, by a bit of bread thrown in sport by a fellow student at the table. A pair of scissors or a fork thrown in sport or anger, has caused the loss of an eye which the wealth of the world cannot replace. A friend who was very ambitious to finish a set of linen for her brothers, spent almost a winter in the stitching, sitting up often late at night over the work, in which she took great delight. The result was, the nerve of the eye was so injured that she was obliged wholly to give up sewing, knitting and reading, under penalty of becoming perfectly blind.

A young lady, who lived but ten miles by train from school, used to spend the time in studying a certain lesson while she was riding down in the morning. The result was a severe affection of the eyes, which disabled her from study for a long time. It is always hurtful to the eyes to read in the train, though we may not see the effect so plainly when it happens only occasionally. A steady practice like this, young ladies, may produce even worse results when the system is in a bad state.

Never read by twilight, nor before eating in the morning. The little you gain in time will be doubly lost before life's sundown.

I know a young clergyman who is a remarkably well-bred man, but whose eyes are a perfect deformity. He said he ruined them by reading at night, long and intently, when he was getting his education. He seems to have no control of the lids, which twich and move in a most grotesque manner. Don't fancy you can do what you please with your eyes, and yet have them serve you faithfully. Take good care of them as you would of gold, for gold can never replace lost eyesight. When once we lose our eyesight, we lose the greater part of the light and joy of our life.

AFTER the stage manager had exhausted his patience and fifteen minutes' time in endeavoring to teach a couple of supes to repeat a few lines, he broke out with: "It is of no use; you fellows are like the Siamese twins—you can never get a part."