up all the springs. Formerly a team could not cross this field unless in severe frost, but now it is entirely dry. Where much peat abounds and there is little clay, it is found beneficial to cover the surface with a thin coat of gravel. For the same reason muck from the swamps is applied to the uplands, and thus good farming in Massachusetts would seem to consist in restoring an equilibrium between the two soils. Although the expense of reclaiming these marshes is heavy the investment must make handsome returns, and farmers in that region will do well to watch the results on this farm

The sheep being of large frame, and readily taking on flesh and fat, are found quite profitable, entirely aside from the important result of enriching the soil. These two leading pursuits, keeping sheep, and draining marshes, form the true and only system by which those exhausted farms can be restored, for experienced farmers declare that commercial manures will not pay. It is true that bone dust, guano, and superphosphate are used to give turnips a rapid start but not as the basis for the final and main growth. A main object in visiting this farm was to see the herd of Kerry cattle which, so far as I know, is the largest in this country. These cattle are noted for the quality of being able to live on little and poor food. They originated in the mountain regions of Ireland, where a poor family owning a Kerry cow is, so to speak, rich. They are entirely black, have extended horns like the Devons, and though not of large size, are compactly and well built. I was present while Kerry, Alderney, Ayrshire, and Durham cows were milked, and I noticed that the Kerrys gave most, although they all fared alike; and as there are large sections in the South where feed naturally is scarce, and as we have much mountain country in the West, destined to be settled, and indeed already settling fast, it is a most important inquiry whether these Kerry cattle would not be made more valuable for supplying milk and butter than any other breed, for, according to all accounts they thrive where other cattle starve. All the cows are fed with some kind of green fodder each night and morning. This should never be neglected when milk is an object. Muck is used plentifully in the stables, which are properly arranged, and the manure is received in the basement cellar through trap doors, saving much work. All these things make the Appleton farm worthy of especial attention.

Another farm at a short distance from Newburyport, owned by Ben Perley Poore, will interest the general reader. It is called the Indian Hill Farm. It includes about 200 acres. On ascending the hill beyond the house one passes long flower borders and grape trellises, and young forest trees, thousands in number, planted and cared for by Mr. Poore himself, while carriage drives miles in extent wind around the hill. Below, northward, is a broad valley, all in meadow, and on the other side is another devoted to pasturage, where white Devon cattle are kept. On a part of the southern slope is a forest of perhaps 20 acres, in oak, chestnut, hickory, locust, and evergreen trees, planted nearly 30 years ago by Mr. Poore. It shows how valuable the bare and rocky hills of New-England may become by being planted with such trees, for the worth of this timber, as it now stands, far exceeds all that the ground could have been made to produce by the most laborious cultivation. Mr. Poore's house is probably among the most attractive in New-England. The front retreats in a semicircle, and has an extent of about 150 feet, with castellated towers at each corner. I was told that it resembles an English manor house, and it is so extensive that with a little preparation more than 100 guests can be accommodated. In a rear wing is a suite of rooms devoted to the representation of actual colonial domestic life. First is a parlor with low ceiling with furniture which was in use before the Revolution, including some chairs which belonged to George Washington. Next is the kitchen, with large fireplace, with cooking utensils, crockery ware, and everything in use in the old days, and in excess of what a common family would require. Ascending a flight of stairs is a bed-room with an old-fashioned bed and ancient bedding; in the bureau drawers are silk and other dresses, lace-work, collars, and nick-nacks, making one almost think himself an intruder in an apartment from which the proper occupant had only just stepped out. In the hall and library are many rare objects, and not the least is a great variety of Indian curiosities. Among the books is a copy of every work on Agriculture published in this country—a collection quite unique. In addition there is a collection of manuscript autographs from almost every distinguished man in the world. There are about 14,000 in all, in several handsomely bound volumes. Among other curiosities is a China set given to Martha Washington by the Society of Cincinnati; also a gold medal from the same source. There is, too, a massive roll of silk of various colored pieces, which once belonged to the skirts of the dresses of the Richmond ladies, who had given them to make a balloon to watch for Arnold; but, alas, the balloon became unmanageable, and was captured by our men. In an upper room Mr. Poore has one of the veritable printing presses on which Ben Franklin worked. He uses it himself, for he has cases of type and does little jobs of printing. How he came to be a printer I shall tell before I get through. In addition to his a collection of ante-revolution family documents of great interest. To collect these curiosities has been a work of years, by a busy man. Besides carrying on the farm, he was for six years Secretary of the American Agricultural Society. As a proof how ever that he did not neglect his farm he possesses some $2,000 worth of silver-plate received as premiums for fine stock.

At Winthrop square, Boston, I found Marshal P. Wilder, and he invited me to visit his place at Dorchester. As he is an eminent horticulturist and President of the American Horticultural Society, I was surprised to find him an extensive commission merchant, one of a firm with a branch house in New-York. They are agents of many manufacturing establishments, and sometimes make sales to New-York merchants to the extent of half a million of dollars at a time. After riding through many interesting streets, and visiting the vast Coliseum, we reached Mr. Wilder's grounds, which include twelve acres. The mansion is in the old style, but comfortable and elegant, and the stranger meets a pleasant and attractive family. For a long period Col. Wilder has been experimenting with fruit, particularly with pears, and for five years he has imported from Europe every new variety regardless of cost, that our country might be benefitted. Of camellias he has a rare stock, and of new and rare ones a large number. Almost every kind of grape is cultivated, and the flower borders and beds are arranged with effective skill. Most of the ground is in pears. Altogether he has tried as many as 600 varieties, but the number which have proved profitable is small. Among them he names the following: Beurre d'Anjou, Buffum, Bosscock, Bartlett, and Merriam, Willy Seckle and Duchesse d'Angoulême, so popular South and West, he has had no success. He has already tried long, and diseases have assailed him as they will assail us all, still he is courageous, and claims to belong to the Young American. To no one is American Horticulture more indebted than to Mr. Wilder, and much of what distinguishes Boston in its schools and public improvements might have been less glorious had he not contributed his labors thereto.

To relieve the agricultural part of this letter from what to some will seem dullness, I shall close with a little story which illustrates how useful difficulties may be in early life. Many years ago one of the farmers of Eastern Massachusetts, who had become an extensive merchant had an only son whom he sent to school in a Hudson River town, providing him with plenty of money and a pony. Naturally he was somewhat wild, and one would say he stood a good chance to be ruined. When he was thirteen years old his teacher sent word home that the boy was lazy. The father wrote to his son to come home. None of the family had ever been lazy and he thought he could whip it out of him. The boy answered that he would go to sea, and in a few years come back proving the charge false. At Providence on his way to New-Bedford, he came across an essence pedler, who told him that he was making $15 a day, and offered to make a trade, giving his trunks and essence for the boy's gold watch. The offer was accepted; but, after a hard day's work, he reached Worcester having sold only one vial of essence. Here he hired out as an apprentice in a printing office, for his board and a dollar a week. He did all the dirty work, was at the call of everybody, and, when cold weather came, suffered for want of clothes. Still, he was determined to carry the business through. The second year he wrote the "Carrier's Address" and got quite a sum, and then becoming a type-setter he made fair wages, and soon had considerable money laid up. At the end of two years he wrote to his father stating how he was doing, and that he would like to come home for a visit. Meanwhile, his father had sent to every seaport, inquired of every captain, and had searched high and low, without hearing a word. When the boy's letter, and soon after himself, came, the fatted calf was killed, and there was great rejoicings. Naturally, he became interested in newspapers, and, to omit much, it is sufficient to say that, in addition to many other duties, he has been for 22 years the Washington correspondent of one of the best Boston newspapers, with a salary of $10 a day and expenses paid.

N. C. M.

HOME CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

THE WAHSATCH AND UINTAH RANGES—MOUNTAIN STREAMS AND LAKES—COAL AND IRON DEPOSITS—JOSEPHITES IN UTAH—MORMON CO-OPERATION.

PARLEY'S PARK, Utah, Aug. 22.—The hight of felicity in France is said to require a "Hotel in Paris, and chateau in Normandy." In America it should be a "Town house in Fifth-ave., and a country seat in the Rocky Mountains." The scenery of Colorado is becoming familiar to enterprising tourists, but Utah, except along the line of traffic, is comparatively unknown. By leaving the train in the Weber Valley, and ascending the mountain above Morgan, one finds himself on the ridge of the continent. A lofty plateau spreads out around, undulating in enormous green waves. To the West the Wahsatch Mountains, tipped with snow, extend from north to south at first a single sharp ridge, and then a broad system traversed by cañons of varied beauty. Directly west is the deep notch of the Weber Cañon, through which the Union Pacific Railroad runs, and beyond which one can see the Great Salt Lake with its long islands, and the distant mountains of the Desert. To the south stand out against the sky the grand forms of the snow-clad Uintahs, stretching easterly, at right angles to the Wahsatch, and losing themselves near the Green River in softened curves, and more delicate, luminous color.

The Uintahs, rather difficult to penetrate at present, are singularly interesting as the strata are nearly horizontal. The peaks are frequently domed or pyramidal, and sometimes reach a hight of 13,000 feet. The valleys are often scooped out in the shape of theaters and amphitheaters, with vertical walls of warm gray rock. The blue of the sky is uncommonly pure, and the clouds brilliant. The timber becomes thinner and more park-like, and there are many lakes of the clearest emerald green.

In these mountains rises the Bear Lake, and then sweeps to the northward beyond Bear Lake, and then sweeps to the south-west, passing the Wahsatah at "The Gates" and falling into Great Salt Lake. Further west, in the Uintahs, rises the Weber, which takes a somewhat similar course. Near the source of the Weber is the head of the Timpanogos, which flows nearly west, passing the Wahsatch in fine cascades at Provo Cañon, and falling into Utah Lake. This Lake is the Mormon Sea of Galilee, from which the Jordan runs northerly to the Mormon Dead Sea. Along the northern slope of the Uintahs is a fine belt of firs 70 or 100 miles long. In the valleys of the Bear and Weber are excellent coal deposits—that at Evanston, on the Union Pacific Railroad, being especially promising. South of Utah Lake there is abundance of iron. Everywhere are admirable runs for sheep, but in the north these animals require folding and feeding in Winter. It is a good country for roots. Wheat is raised in the valleys, and has absorbed too exclusive attention. The Mormons have a tradition that once, when they had lost their crop by grasshoppers for several years, they prayed to God, and he sent them flocks of gulls from the lake. Possibly, flocks of turkeys would have been preferable. There are some good dairies in the elevated valleys east of the Wahsatch, such as Cache Valley and Ogden, north of the Weber, and Parley's Park and Kansas Prairie to the south. Fruit is abundant in the older settlements; and it is pleasant to see the little gray, adobe cottages, nestling in peach orchards, with streams of mountain water flowing in paved channels along the streets, and cooling the air like a Moorish fountain.

The Mormon settlements are scattered up and down the country for 500 miles. Most of the people are poor and ignorant, and were originally Scandinavian or British peasants. They were brought here with little expense to themselves, under a thoroughly well-organized system of emigration. Devout immigrants complain that Mormonism here is not what it is in Europe. The Josephites are to the Brighamites what the Scribes were to the Jews. Two sons of Joseph Smith are now in Salt Lake City, preaching against polygamy to overflowing congregations.

Brigham Young is engaged in organizing a system of cooperation, designed to confine the trade of the Territory to Mormon hands. Wholesale warehouses have been set up in the city, with retails shops in every ward and village. In the former the larger capitalists are invited to take stock, and in the latter all the Saints who have any savings. The English plan of limiting the dividends upon stock, and dividing the surplus profits among the customers, has not been adopted, but the tenors of the Church are held over the people to prevent straying. At the head of Gentile traders are the Walker Brothers, young men of ample means and business talent. They have a fine store, and some of the best real property in the city. The Walkers dare not undersell their fellow Josephites, and encourage them to occupy it free of charge. President Young, however, seems likely to hold his own as long as he lives.

WHITE PINE.

VEINS CAPRICIOUS—ORE FOUND IN FISSURES—DISTRICT OVERRATED—SUFFERINGS OF THE MINERS.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]

HAMILTON, Nev., Aug. 20.—Business is not very brisk in the great center of mineral attraction, White Pine, just now. The various veins here, expanding into pockets, fissures, and deposits, is not encouraging enough to induce capitalists to invest the money where no ledges can be found. Some very rich ores have undoubtedly been discovered, but almost invariably exists in fissures. After a few pounds have been taken out a huge mass of limestone generally appears, and the result is that the miner gets despondent and soon quits in disgust. San Francisco has given the cold shoulder to this district, and what mines we have cannot be developed without capital. The question is, where is the money to come from? Will New-York or Chicago invest? This is our last resort. White Pine did not warrant the hue and cry unprecedented in the annals of America, which rang throughout the land about it. The whole district is yet overrun with men, the greater number of whom are suffering for the common necessaries of life. There is little or no work, less money, and but a faint glimpse of hope to cheer them. Our Autumn has already commenced, and in a few weeks cold, icy Winter will be upon us. Lieut. Wheeler of the United States army has gone on a tour of exploration in the south-eastern part of the State. His party is accompanied by a mineralogist of scientific men, and, no doubt, some rare and valuable discoveries will be made.

They are to make a complete topographical survey of the country from this city to the Colorado River.

Ophir district is advancing, but slowly, owing to the want of milling facilities. The Oreo in Sacramento district is quite rich in gold and silver, but the work of quartz mills, well-defined ledges and capital, keeps our miners. The weather has been very disagreeable for a week past, and a thin sheet of ice visited our water pails yesterday morning. The cold, bleak wind blows with great fury to-day, swirling up vast clouds of dust, and causing one's teeth to chatter.

The Water Company has succeeded in laying their pipes within the environs of Hamilton, and we shall henceforth have an abundant supply of good water. This will be infinitely better than the melting snow which the inhabitants were compelled to use last Winter. Altogether the miner has a hard time of it here. Small-pox is abating, and other diseases usually so prevalent in a mining camp are scarce.

KANSAS.

INCREASING POPULATION AND WEALTH—RAILROAD DEVELOPMENTS—LEAVENWORTH IN 1869—EXTENSIVE SALE OF LANDS.

LEAVENWORTH, Kansas, Aug. 28.—There has been so little said about poor blighted Kansas since the days of Border Ruffianism, that she has almost been forgotten. She has increased so rapidly in wealth and population that she has become as influential as any of her Western sisters. For the past two years emigration has been steadily pouring in at the rate of 100 a day. The crops have never been surpassed and corn never grew so tall or has been so plentiful. The land abounds with milk and honey. The railroads by their wire nuts of printers' ink, have disposed of enormous quantities of lands. The history of the Illinois Central Railroad shows the important part played by railroads in settling a new country, and the results in this State are still more conclusive. Kansas has now a population of 350,000. The great inducements are stock raising and agriculture; but apples, grapes, peaches and the small fruits never grow in finer soil or in a more favorable climate. The Gulf breezes make the Summer's day cool and delightful and the nights pleasant and refreshing. We have had a long wet season, but dry weather has now set in. Corn is growing rapidly; garden products are plentiful, cheap, and luscious. The only trouble is that most of our fruits grow too large and coarse. Of strawberries the Wilson is the best; every one grows it. The peach crop is light, owing to severe frosts and a late Winter. Apples are abundant, but grapes less plentiful; owing to the wet season many the varieties rotted, but the Concords are as prolific as ever. The cattle trade is to be one of our main sources of wealth. It requires little capital and less work. The stock range is large enough for millions, and the climate mild and short. The beautiful valleys of Kansas rival those of Italy, and the sections are as extensive as we could wish. Many things here could be improved, particularly the mining system.

The Railroad system of Kansas is becoming rapidly developed. There are indications that a boat 6,000,000 acres of the finest land in the country will be thrown into market in the Spring by the various companies. In political matters the Republican party is overwhelmingly in the majority. Any persevering man with some means can get an office. Kansas has been cursed with politicians. Of Lane, Pomeroy, Clarke, and Ross, the first did more for Kansas than any of the others; Pomeroy and Clarke have done more for themselves, and Ross has not had any power to do either.

The prospects of Leavenworth are brightening, and the speedy completion of the great iron bridge across the Missouri, the Atchison and Leavenworth, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroads, are beyond doubt. The bridge will be finished in a month. The city is increasing in wealth and population. Its wholesale trade has almost doubled in the past year, and is very active now. The annual State Fair will be held in Lawrence in September, and will in all probability be a great success. A few days since, the National Land Company sold for the Kansas Pacific Railway Company 32,000 acres of land to a colony of 1,200 English families. The tract is rolling prairie, north-west of Junction City, and sold at an average of $3 per acre.

VIRGINIA.

FERTILITY—THE TRUCKING SYSTEM—OLD DOMINION STEAMSHIP COMPANY.

NORFOLK, Va., Aug. 30.—Nature has bestowed her gifts bountifully upon this section of Virginia, and nothing is now lacking but n[illegible] and means to give us in a few years a position of im[illegible]rtance. Our lands are naturally productive, easily cultivated, and susceptible of every sort of improvement. Fruits, vegetables and cereals grow with luxuriance. Our trucking interest has been somewhat disastrous this year, the first time for many seasons past; but this is exceptional. The large and rapid fortunes which have been made here during the last ten years by persons following this industry, created an unhealthy excitement among the farmers, and many went into the business. The result has been, the market was overstocked and prices were brought down to a ruinous figure. The products of this section are generally from two to three weeks earlier than those of New-Jersey. They are always of fine, luxuriant growth, and if properly handled on their way to market, command high and profitable prices. The middle and poorer classes of Northern cities have heretofore only enjoyed the first fruits of our land. During the season just passed early vegetables were sent from sections south of this, and when our superior produce reached market none but the wealthy competed for it. The supply being greater than this class demanded, prices fell. The truckers of this section are clamorous for additional facilities for getting their products to market, and complain of the management of the Old Dominion line of steamers. If other capitalists of the North will put suitable steamers on the line from Norfolk to New-York they can control the trade. The Old Dominion line is regarded as an uncompromising, unaccommodating, and grinding monopoly, and we are anxious to be relieved from their exactions. A few days since the farmers and truckers of this section held a meeting to protest against "this unscrupulous monopoly." One strawberry grower, whom I know well, shipping strawberries to New-York by this line, made barely sufficient to meet expenses, the complaint being that the berries were all "mush and mold." Believing that they were carelessly handled he determined to ship them by the Boston line to Boston, and the result was a saving to him of about $3,000. This Old Dominion Company seems to think its position impregnable. They handle the fruit and truck, which are the farmers all, roughly and carelessly; piling it on board without proper ventilation; charging what they please for freight, and refusing to be responsible for loss or damage. We need Northern farmers here to help till the soil, your mechanics to help work up the raw material, your merchants and capitalists to control the products of the country, and, finally, a new line of steamers between this city and New-York.

RAILROADS IN IOWA.

KEOKUK—THE MISSISSIPPI BRIDGE—VARIOUS RAILROAD INTERESTS.

KEOKUK, Iowa, Aug. 27.—The great iron, railroad and wagon bridge, which is to span the Mississippi at this point, is in rapid process of construction, and may be completed in a few months. The Des Moines Valley Railroad, starting from Keokuk, is pushing its way from the capital of the State up to Fort Dodge. It passes through one of the finest regions of Iowa. The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Company, having purchased the Keokuk and St. Paul Railway, are thoroughly repairing and extending it to Burlington, thus giving to the people of the place a second connection with Chicago. The roads east of us, desiring to connect with the Pacific Railroad, have purchased what has been called the Iowa & Missouri State Line Road, and workmen are busy grading at different points on the line. Then, to afford an outlet below the rapids, for the immense produce of one of the most thickly settled parts of the State, funds have been raised, and most of the rights of way secured, to grade the Keokuk and Minnesota Railroad. The work will be vigorously pushed forward. When these roads, with what we have already, are completed, and when the canal around the rapids is finished, furnishing a safe passage to the vessels on this river, and an unrivaled water power, we feel assured that we shall attract many capitalists in this direction.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

SING SING PRISON—THE SECRET OF THE TROUBLES THERE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: You have been exposing State Prison matters, but, it seems to me, don't get at the right spot for the best beginning. If you will take for your text, "To the victors belong the spoils," and enlarge thereupon, you will hit the mark. Who do you suppose reimburses the inspectors, agents, wardens, guards, keepers, and matrons, for the outlay attending their patriotic and tremendous efforts to get their situations? Do you imagine that convicts, who have or can control money, have no rights which officials are bound to respect? Do you think the prison tailor can be trusted to make pantaloons for the gentlemanly criminals? Did you never hear anything about "parlor cells" for distinguished strangers? Did you never see or "hear tell" of financial geniuses, overcome by too great temptations, furnishing to their keepers bribes and cigars? or did you never accidentally catch contractors, contractors, and clerks, all seated around a table for a common footstool, and drinking to the health of the victims? How much do you suppose contractors have to pay to get the men the State agrees to furnish? How much to the keepers to make them do their work? And then how much to the convicts? Who pay the officers who make the money on all the illicit trading that is done? Is it not natural that "cash men" should gain advantages to escape? Is it not natural that "poor devils" should revolt when they see and know these things? The Prison Association is a very respectable body of men, but there is a great deal of "namby pamby" in moral suasion unless administered with judgment and common sense; and though brute force is revolting, yet it also becomes ridiculous when the judge and officer have no other claim to respect than a very small held on a Government seat. "Now, Mr. Editor, it takes as much brass to convict and sentence a poor sinner, and worst criminal of our State as it does to "run a bank" or "keep a hotel." Whenever you hear the sovereigns who do the voting are willing to yield the principle embodied in Marcy's inspiration that "to the victors belong the spoils," then you may begin to think about "reform in our State Prisons." I shall then advocate the appointment of a *Governor* for each institution, with right to rule as near divine as Louis Napoleon, and let him do *all* the stealing. "Too many cooks spoil the broth"—and that's what's the matter just now at Sing Sing Prison.

New-York, Aug. 17, 1869. ONE WHO KNOWS.

THE FENIAN FUNDS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Having read in the last issue of *The Irish Republican* an article exposing the duplicity of John O'Mahoney in his dealings with the money, &c., in regard to the Fenian funds, I think it high time for Irishmen to take action in this matter. The case as it now stands to solve it rests in the question, Are honest Irishmen to stand idly by, and see this money coolly filtered away by the imbecility of a few political schemers, while the wives and children of patriotic brothers now in British prisons or in exile, are suffering the greatest privations? Now is the time to come forward and prove our sincerity by acting in concert with James M. Fitzgerald of Cincinnati, Ohio, who proposes to have the remaining portion of the Fenian funds handed over to those guardian angels of the families of the State prisoners, Mrs. Thos. Clarke Luby, Miss Kitty O'Leary, and those other good ladies who compose the committee in Dublin. By doing this we will be doing a duty which our country requires of us as Irishmen, by taking care of our English law made widows and orphans. It will also help to cheer the hearts of J. O'Donovan Rossa, W. F. Roantree, and the host of honest patriots who are undergoing a martyrdom, the honest part of which is the thought of the dear little ones they have left unprovided for. There is none in any local or isolated action being taken in this matter, but let a committee be formed composed of men of Fitzgerald's stamp, who will call a public meeting of Irish Nationalists and bondholders, and let the voice of our people be heard on the matter.

ST. PATRICK.

New-York, Sept. 4.

GREAT FOOD.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Your correspondent, A. B. Allbeim, in Monday's paper, says that the assertion that it will not pay to send the crop to market, must be a mistake. If so, will go into the country and look about a few days, as I have just done, he will see the matter as the farmer sees it, and will change his mind. Acres of berries are mapped, wagon-loads of the finest melons are left in the field or fed to cattle; apples, tomatoes, and other articles of the crop are ungathered, because it does not pay. The farmer must pay his help, and the prices he receives for his produce from the dealers in the city do not give a sufficient return to meet the outlay on gathering and carrying to market. We pay enough for these things to the grocer, and there is a heavy profit realized *between the farmer and the consumer*, and here the whole difficulty is to be found. Berries for which the farmer pays two cents a quart for picking, and sells for two and a half cents, we in the city pay eight, ten, and even fifteen cents for. The difference goes to the dealers, and does not benefit the farmer. Unquestionably be a thorough reform of this grasping and unreasonable traffic which robs both producer and consumer.

LAYTON.

New-York, Sept. 1.

THE BIG LIMITS—BREAKING THE LAW.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: What is the Building law good for? A frame edifice is building in the triangle corner of Madison Peach and New-Chambers sts. Where are the inspectors? Who will answer? INQUIRADO.

New-York, Sept. 1.

The late Scientific Convention at Salem, Mass., has called so much attention to that ancient city that the inhabitants are beginning to hope that it may eventually become as important as a scientific center as it was once as a commercial mart. A Boston evening paper, after referring to the long roll of honored sons of whom Salem may well boast—poets, scholars, historians, novelists, statesmen, and jurists of national renown—finds an earnest of its future in the Peabody Academy, the earnest and enterprising Essex Institute, with its specialty of field-days, the State Normal School, and other institutions which give to the capital of old Essex a prominent place among noted municipalities, even in these bustling times; and would do so were it without its singularly rich history and traditions.

THE BOY MAGICIAN;

OR,

THE SECRETS OF THE SEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRISONER OF MID-OCEAN.

Late one Summer afternoon, a dozen years ago, a solitary white man stood before an idolatrous temple on an island in the South Pacific.

He was of middle age, tall, thin, and gaunt, with rugged features and sorrowful eyes, and with every sign of goodness and intelligence.

Beside him was a grim stone idol, in grotesque human form, more than twice as tall as himself, which he had just finished, as was indicated by the mallet and chisel in his hands.

"It is done," he muttered. "And these heathen little suspect that I have cut my name and story into the base of this idol."

He ran his eye rapidly over the inscription in question. It was as follows:

"The 8th of May, 1852, I, David Lester, of the firm of Lester & Nichols, of Norfolk, Virginia, sailed as a passenger from Charleston to Hong Kong, via Cape Horn, in the ship Hecla. A cyclone struck us in mid-ocean, the ship foundered, and we took to the boats, which all filled, with the exception of the one I was in. After drifting several days, during which my companions perished, I reached this island. The idolatrous inhabitants made me a slave in their temple, and for more than four years I have been doing menial offices and carving images. I have been chained every night, and watched continually by day, but have nevertheless made three attempts at escape, and shall soon make another—doubtless my last, as I am resolved to succeed or die, preferring death to a longer captivity. I therefore write these words upon this idol, praying any one who may see them to report my fate, if possible, to my family, at Norfolk, Va. Finished this inscription this 7th day of July, 1857."

For several minutes the prisoner contemplated these lines in silence, and then aroused himself, looking warily around.

"Three times I have tried to escape in a canoe," he muttered, "and every time I was caught and visited with tortures. To be caught again in such an attempt will be certain death. Yet I will risk all the first opportunity that offers. This longing for freedom and my family is becoming positive madness. Oh, my God, what is that!"

He gazed in perfect stupefaction to the eastward, far out upon the ocean.

There, miles and leagues away, was a ship, her white sails gleaming as she lay becalmed upon the waters!

"A ship! a ship!" cried Lester, sobbingly. "At last, oh Heaven! At last my prayer is answered!"

THE PRISONER'S HOME.

On the east bank of the Elizabeth River, just out of Norfolk, and overlooking Hampton Roads, stood a beautiful cottage, the home of the wife and daughter of David Lester, the prisoner of the lone island in the far Pacific.

Near the close of a lovely afternoon in May, Mrs. Lester and her daughter sat together upon their front verandah.

The mother was a lovely, sweet-faced, sad-eyed woman of two-and-thirty years.

The daughter, Amy Lester, not yet fifteen, was a strange compound of child and woman.

"You are thinking of father, dear mother!" murmured the maiden, as she marked the lady's longing gaze.

"Yes, child. Your father, my husband. Where is he? Somewhere under the sea-waves, wrecked on a desert island, or languishing on a hostile shore! It is five years since he left us on that fatal voyage to China. My reason assures me that he is dead; yet, Amy, I can only think of him as living."

"It is so with me, mother," said Amy, with a tremulous quiver of her lips. "I dream often that he is living that he is coming home!"

"We need him in a hundred ways," said Mrs. Lester, sighing. "If anything were to happen to me, Amy, I shudder to think what would become of you. You have been brought up in luxury, and would feel keenly any change to poverty."

"Are we not rich, then, mother?" asked Amy, in surprise.

"I supposed so, dear, until three years ago," replied the mother sadly. "Your father was a merchant and ship-owner, a partner of Colonel Nichols. But two years ago Colonel Nichols informed me that the outstanding debts of the firm more than balanced the assets; in short, Amy, that he was on the verge of bankruptcy, his fortune and ours alike wrecked."

"I don't like Colonel Nichols!" said Amy, thoughtfully. "If he lost all his money with ours, how does he live in such grand style? To whom do his ships and great house belong?"

"To his nephew, Ally Bell. Colonel Nichols is Ally's guardian. The Colonel has nothing of his own, excepting a farm or two up-country, which were not risked in the business."

Amy contracted her little brows reflectively, and was about to reply, when the garden gate swung on its hinges, and a boyish figure came lightly up the walk.

"It's Ally, mother—it's Ally Bell!" exclaimed Amy, all smiles and blushes. "I'll bring him to you."

The young girl ran lightly down the verandah steps and met the new-comer, linking her arm in his, and drawing him gently toward the house.

He was a lad of seventeen, an orphan, the nephew and ward of Colonel Nichols. Bright and gay and handsome, Allen Bell was also impetuous, ardent, and intelligent—one of those noble, manly boys who mature early into grand and noble men. Boy as he was, he loved Amy Lester with a pure and chivalrous love, which bade fair to deepen in time into the great love of his life.

He was the bearer of a letter from his uncle to Mrs. Lester, and having delivered it, he strolled with Amy down the wide garden walks into the cool shadows of a grove at the bottom of the garden.

"I've been expecting you this good while, Ally," said Amy, with charming frankness. "I thought you would be down here to try those scientific experiments to-day!"

"We'll try them, to-night, Amy," replied Ally. "The blue lights show better at night. I'm getting along finely in my chemistry, Amy. I like it best of all my studies."

"I am sure you do," said Amy, earnestly. "You are the nicest boy I ever saw!"

Ally Bell laughed aloud. Amy's childlike simplicity and outspoken truthfulness were her greatest charm in his eyes.

"The sight of that brig yonder," said Ally, "reminds me that I promised to meet Col. Nichols on board of it directly after I delivered that letter to your mother. I must go now, but you may expect me as soon as it's dark."

He clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

For a minute the youthful lovers stood at the garden gate, toward which they had slowly walked, and here they parted soberly—Ally to go down to the brig where he had engaged to meet his uncle, and Amy to return to her mother.

She found Mrs. Lester, the open letter in her lap, silent and motionless as a statue, her attitude that of profound despair.

"What is it, mother?" cried Amy, in wild alarm, sinking to her side.

Mrs. Lester looked at her daughter with a woe-stricken face.

"O, Amy!" she cried, turning to that brave, childish heart for strength and comfort. "Colonel Nicholas writes me that we are beggars! He reminds me that he has asked me three several times to marry him. And, Amy, he says he knows your father to be dead, and he offers himself to me for the last time. He reminds me of my ill-health, of your youth and helplessness. And he says," and Mrs. Lester's voice broke down in a tempest of sobs, "that on one hand he offers me wealth, comfort, and happiness, on the other, poverty and sorrow. If I refuse him, he swears to turn us out of our home to-morrow!"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Amy, with a sharp cry, as she hid her face in her mother's bosom.

CHAPTER II.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

Before Ally Bell reached the brig lying at the wharf, his uncle, Colonel Nichols, had been there and arranged with the Captain, who went by the name of Hiley, to carry Ally off to China, for which service the Colonel promised to give the Captain the brig and ten thousand dollars, *in case the boy never came back*. Hiley was a murderer, whose real name was Sprouls, and Colonel Nichols knew it. And Colonel Nichols had robbed Mrs. Lester, and now wanted to rob his nephew and have him murdered, and Hiley knew that, and resolved that Ally Bell should never see Norfolk again.

"Where is the lad?" he asked as he and Colonel Nichols finished drinking success to their nefarious schemes, to which the Colonel replied.

"He should be here at this very moment. Ah, I hear his step on deck now! Here he comes."

Even as he spoke, Ally Bell came hurrying into the cabin, his face flushed with pleasurable excitement.

"I'm just in time to see you off, Captain Hiley," he said, not noticing the guilty looks of the conspirators. "The wind is fair, and the crew anxious. A good voyage to you, Captain. Bring me some rare shells when you return. They are for a little girl's cabinet, and must be pretty!"

"Aye, aye, Mr. Allen," responded the Captain, heartily. "Didn't you see my collection of shells in yonder state-room! No! You are welcome to your choice of them all, sir."

He advanced, and flung open the state room door.

Ally bent forward and looked in.

With a quick thrust, Hiley pushed him into the little room, and hurriedly locked the door.

With an exultant smile Colonel Nichols said adieu, and went ashore.

The next minute the hurried trampling of feet was blended with the songs of the stout seamen, as the brig moved slowly from the wharf toward the sea.

Ally's first thought on finding himself shut up in Captain Hiley's state-room, was that the two men were joking—merely intending to scare him a little, and then let him out; but he soon discovered that the *Quickstep*—the brig was so named—had left her wharf, and was standing down the Elizabeth River toward the ocean.

The truth flashed upon him!

"I see it all!" he cried, leaping to his feet. "Hiley is taking me to sea with him! Captain Hiley!" he shouted, pounding on the wall, "open the door this minute! Let me out or it will be bad for you!"

No reply was made to him—no attention paid to his cries.

He saw that he was fast.

For a moment he was stunned by the knowledge of his situation.

Then he drew up his slight, boyish figure proudly, his eyes flashing defiance.

"The thing for me to do," he mused, "is to help myself. A boy who can't fight his own way will never be a man!"

Drawing from his pocket a match, of which he usually carried a supply, he lighted the candle in its box at one end of the stateroom.

"I see," he mentally commented, looking around, in the light thus furnished. "Here's a whole dray-load of boxes and bundles. And here's a cannon, too," added Ally—"a small one, which is expected, no doubt, to bring a big price from those simple natives in the South Sea."

"I can use this thing," thought the boy, with kindling eyes. "I have plenty of powder in my pocket!"

He had bought this powder just before he came aboard of the brig, for the experiments he had promised to show Amy that very evening.

Without more ado, Ally set about loading and firing the little cannon as rapidly as possible, smashing the door, and calling out for everybody to keep out of the way. The captain and crew were frantic with fear, as there was a large quantity of powder in the state-room, and the prospect was that the ship would be blown to atoms. Having filled the state-room and cabin with smoke, Ally seized one of the captain's revolvers, burst open the shattered door, rushed upon deck, and leaped into the river.

"Thunder and lightning!" cried Hiley, startled beyond expression. "After that boy, all of you! Satan himself is in him! A hundred dollars to the man who first puts a hand upon him!"

With a yell, as of blood-hounds, half a dozen of Hiley's men splashed into the river, incited by the promise of money, and sprang to the pursuit, while Hiley, hastily lowering a boat, rowed after his men, whom he soon overtook, one after another, and ordered into the boat. They then pulled on after Ally, who had distanced the men while they were in the water, but who could not compete with the boat. Arriving at an old sunken schooner, a long way from the shore, the boy climbed upon the topmast, and looked back at Hiley, who was rapidly approaching. The captain felt sure of his prey, and was telling his men how to seize the boy, when Ally suddenly fell from the topmast, as if shot, and immediately sunk from sight.

"Thunder and lightning!" cried Hiley, "he's gone!"

"Gone!" echoed all the men in chorus.

"Yes, gone!" and Hiley sprang to his feet, bending forward. "I saw him go! He fell back into the water, and went down like a bullet, without the least cry! Pull for your lives!"

The men obeyed. The boat was quickly beside the topmast. But no trace of the boy could be found!

"I'll take my Bible oath," said Hiley, "that the young salamander has not gone toward the nearest shore—or any other. A cramp or a shark has took him!"

The eyes of the scheming villain lit up strangely, almost savagely.

"And such being the fact, men," added he, "we may as well give up the search."

The men resumed their oars, the captain the tiller, and the boat returned in silence to the brig, *with Ally clinging quietly to the stern*—his head just far enough out of the water to enable him to breathe—and there he continued to stay until the boat returned to the brig.

And then, the boat being left in the water, at the stern of the brig, it occurred to Ally to unfasten the boat from its painter, let it drift down stream some distance, then climb into it and row away for Norfolk, which he at once did.

For a minute or two the boat continued to speed away in the darkness.

And then Ally climbed out of the water into it with a long sigh of relief, and seized a pair of oars resolutely.

Crouching out of sight in the bottom of the boat, he began rowing shoreward—but softly, for he was still near the brig, and the night was so calm he feared his enemies would hear him.

There was only too much occasion, as it proved, for this caution.

The boat had not been gone two minutes from the brig when Captain Hiley, wishing to go ashore to see Colonel Nichols, made his way aft, and, discovering its disappearance, at once sent a couple of men after it in another boat.

Ally seeing that he must again take to the water, took the oars along with him, and went drifting seaward, with nothing put a pair of oars to support him.

The night had now fully set in and the tide ran fast. Cramped and chilled by his long continuance in the water, the boy was whirled along, growing weaker every moment; but just as hope was at its ebb, he suddenly beheld a sail behind him, rapidly approaching, under the force of a freshening breeze.

"A brig, certain!" he groaned, after a long look at the nearing cloud of canvas. "It must be old Hiley's! The wind having come again, he is off for the Pacific ocean!"

He regarded the brig, as it came nearer, asking himself if he should hail her.

"Let her be what she may," he muttered, "friend or foe, I must hail her! My strength is used up! I shall soon slip off from these oars and drown! Fortunately the brig is coming straight toward me. I will hail her!"

He waited till the brig was near him, and then carried his resolve into execution. His feeble call was heard and answered, the brig hove to, and he was taken aboard the stranger. The boy had only strength enough to learn that the brig was *not* Hiley's, and then he fainted.

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