H A Collins

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Who Robbed Madame?

I had waited but a few minutes when she entered.

The tasteful cap surmounting the brown locks clustering in a pretty confusion of short curls about her forehead proclaimed her no longer young, though the fair blooming face and shapely form were far more suggestive of youth than of old age. Altogether, Madame Leroux was a lady of most attractive appearance.

She approached me with nervous haste, her eyes fixed on mine. "I sent for you—you are—" she faltered almost incredibly, and then paused in a pitiable state of agitation, her slender fingers slowly intertwining themselves, and her whole frame trembling.

"Detective Ashton," I responded, hastily drawing forward a chair.

She sank into it, and by a silent gesture invited me to be seated. Presently she murmured in a low, quivering voice: "Monsieur, I am in great distress. My——" and she again paused, overcome by her emotions.

I waited a minute in expectant silence, and then said:

"A case of robbery, I understand, Madame. Permit me to ask whether your servants are entirely honest?"

"Entirely," she murmured brokenly. "They have served me for twenty years."

"And your pupils?"

"Not a shadow of suspicion may touch them."

"And the resident teacher?" She gasped once or twice, and then, controlling herself with a mighty effort, answered tremulously:

"Pardon my agitation; I am worn with trouble and anxiety," adding presently, in more even tones, "I will tell you about it Monsieur. My school is, as you doubtless know from report, the best, and, consequently, the most flourishing, in the city. I take much money, and often keep large sums by me. This is my private business room, and in yonder cabinet I store my surplus funds."

"A rather unsafe place," I commented.

"Not at all, Monsieur," she answered decidedly. "It is furnished with a secret receptacle. Discover it if you can." And, rising, she led the way to the cabinet and threw open the clock.

But I exhausted my wits to no purpose. Madame looked on in silence till I then turn and folded my arms. She then quietly asked:

"You would not suspect the fact I have stated?" "If the secret compartment is here, most certainly not."

"It is here," she replied, briefly, emphatically, as she closed the clock.

"How many times have you been robbed?"

"Nightly for the past week," she answered excitedly. "A large amount was taken the first night, but since then only a few counterfeits which I deposited in the hope of detecting the thief without assistance."

"Has any one under your roof a knowledge of the secret of the cabinet?" I inquired, after a little interval of silence. "But one," she cried, bursting into tears, and wringing her hands in an agony of distress.

I again deliberated a moment, and then said, firmly: "Madame, I have not a doubt that I can, in time, clear up this matter without assistance. But it is no less certain that perfect candor on your part will greatly aid me."

It was some minutes before she could compose herself sufficiently to answer.

When she did, it was in heart-broken tones: "You are right, Monsieur, I must tell you. My suspicions point to one who has for years been my all—namely, Mademoiselle De Antoinette De Gray. Mademoiselle De Gray has been my protege since the death of her parents, which occurred while she was yet an infant. In her I have hitherto reposed the most unlimited confidence; now I am distracted with doubts—it is impossible to silence.

"But, Monsieur, I have not sent for you to unravel this web of mystery with any intention of giving publicity to her guilt. Heaven knows I only desire to learn the truth for her own dear sake. I would not wrong the innocent even in thought; the guilty I would unceasingly labor to restore."

Then with a sudden burst of grief she exclaimed:

"My poor Antoinette! She is so young! so winning! and so beautiful!" "Does Mademoiselle De Gray know of your suspicions?" I inquired, as a deep sob choked her utterance.

"She does. A few hours before I sent for you I told her of my loss, and entreated her to confess and receive my forgiveness." "With what result?"

"She gazed at me with startled eyes for a moment, and then in proud, almost scornful accents, replied that I, above all others, should know whether she was capable of such a deed." "And is she acquainted with the fact of your having secured my services?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur. I hoped it would frighten her into a full confession." "Your servants?"

"They know nothing whatever." For Mademoiselle De Gray's sake, I have kept these startling robberies a profound secret. After a few minutes' serious consideration I said:

"Madame, I will watch here nightly until the mystery is solved." Madame shook her head despondingly.

"It is quite useless, Monsieur. I am no coward, and have already tried that plan, and, strange to say, my cabinet remained intact both times."

"Perhaps Mademoiselle De Gray suspected your intentions," I replied. "This time we must guard against the possibility. And now, if you please, I will trouble you for a few more details. About what time do these robberies take place?"

"Always between midnight and daybreak. I seldom retire till 12 o'clock, and on the night of the first theft it was considerably later. I remember distinctly; for by a singular coincidence, Mademoiselle De Gray and I sat here discussing the possibility of the very event which occurred. The recent Madworth robbery had impressed us both deeply, and, as I left the room, I bade Mademoiselle lock the door."

"Did you lock the other?" I asked, indicating one I had noticed awhile before. "It might secrete a burglar." Yes, Monsieur; but it did not. That is only a store closet." I was in there a very few minutes before we retired."

"And the key of the door here did Mademoiselle know where you put it?"

"Certainly, Monsieur."

"And since that night?"

"Alas! Monsieur, I have hidden my keys in vain."

After some further conversation I took my leave, promising to return about midnight. I did so. Mademoiselle and the servants had retired, and, as previously arranged, Madame answered my light tap herself. She ushered me into the private room, and soon bade me good night.

After a short absence, she returned with a steaming cup of coffee and a plate of Dutch cake.

"I always take a cup before retiring," she explained, "and thought you might find one acceptable." And with a fical good night she left me. Feeling both chilled and thirsty, I emptied the cup almost at a draught. Then wheeling a chair behind the curtains draping a bay window, I extinguished the light and sat down to await the appearance of the unknown thief.

But I saw nothing. Just at daybreak Madame softly entered the room and spoke to me. I arose unsteadily to my feet, and stepped from behind the curtains. She gazed at me in surprise for a moment, and then smiled a little ironically:

"Monsieur slept well, I perceive." "Yes, Madame, if well means soundly," I replied. "The coffee was drugged."

"Drugged!" she echoed, staggering back a pace or two.

"Yes, Madame. Permit me to ask who made it?"

She covered her face with her hands for an instant, and then dropping them reeled over to the cabinet. In a minute she was beside me again.

"Who made it?" she repeated, in deep hollow tones. "Mademoiselle De Gray! And, mon Dieu, *the money is gone!*"

"But," I answered, in some vexation, "Mademoiselle, of all others, should not have known of my presence here."

"Ah, Monsieur, I was most careful," returned Madame sorrowfully. "Then my eyes here she gained her knowledge." "Well, Madame," I answered, after a few minutes deliberation, "we will meet Mademoiselle on her own ground. Permit her, if you please, to prepare another cup of coffee to-night. She will no doubt, count upon its effects. And that night I received another steaming cup. But it was received only. Consequently I was not found napping. I had watched patiently for two hours or more, when the door softly opened, and a pale, slender, little old woman, wrapped in a crimson dressing gown, and about whose fair head floated a few scanty gray locks, stole noiselessly into the room. She carried a bunch of keys and a lighted taper in a small bronze candlestick. Closing the door carefully behind her, she proceeded at once to the cabinet. "Can this weird looking woman be Mademoiselle De Gray?" I thought, gazing at the singular apparition: "No, it cannot be. Certainly, Mademoiselle is young. This might be some old relative or friend of Madame." Quickly and noiselessly she approached the cabinet, and in a moment it was unlocked—and the secret compartment open.

After carefully withdrawing the notes deposited there by Madame a few hours previous, she snapped the spring and relocked the cabinet. Then turning quickly away, she went over to the clock.

I now left my hiding place and cautiously followed. When I reached the door she was in the act of removing the false bottom from a large japanned box in one corner. Dropping it on the floor beside her, she took from the box a roll of notes, and after adding the one just stolen, returned the bundle to its place again. Then heedfully restoring the box to its former order, she rose and turned away.

I stepped back a pace or two, with the design of seizing her outside the closet.

In a moment she appeared and confronted me, and for the first time I obtained a full view of her features. But instead of the horror and dismay which I had been anticipating, I was the one to fall back aghast. My outstretched arm dropped powerless as with swift tread and strong gaze, she swept past me and out of the room.

"And this is the solution!" I muttered, drawing a deep breath of relief as the door closed upon her. "What will Madame say? Will she readily credit the reports I must give?"

Without deciding on the question I dropped on the sofa and made myself comfortable for the remainder of the night. As on the previous day Madame sought me early. She looked at me scrutinizingly.

"Ah! Monsieur has had another good night, without the aid of drugs," she remarked, somewhat tartly.

"Yes, Madame, a very good one," I replied; "but I first earned the right."

"Ah!" ejaculated Madame again; but this time very tremulously. "Then you have—you—"

"Yes, Madame," I answered finding she could not finish the sentence. "And now will you kindly allow me to see Mademoiselle De Gray.

"No, Monsieur! no!" she replied, with hasty emphasis. "My poor Antoinette has sinned no doubt; but she shall be protected. You shall not see my poor child, Monsieur," she concluded passionately. "Heaven and I will make a good woman of her yet!"

"My dear Madame, you quite mistake me." I answered feelingly. "Mademoiselle is innocent." I was hardly prepared for the little Frenchwoman's outburst of joy.

"My Antoinette! My pure darling! My white dove! Sweet heaven, I thank thee!" she cried tearfully.

And before I could say any more, she had darted from the room. In a few minutes she returned, leading a tall elegant golden haired girl, whose proud eyes glittered with tears. This fair vision of youthful beauty left Madame's side and came to me. "I thank you Monsieur," she said with simple dignity, "I thank you most truly."

"I have done little or nothing to entitle me to your thanks, Mademoiselle," I smiled in response. "But have you no desire to learn the name of the guilty party?"

"Ah, true!" exclaimed Madame. "I forgot all but my infinite joy. Tell us, Monsieur."

"First Madame," I answered, "permit me to restore your stolen money. You have your keys, I see, will you be kind enough to open the treasure-box?"

And hastening to the closet I brought out the japanned box.

Madame knelt down and wonderingly turned the key. I then lifted the lid and removed the false bottom. An astonished exclamation parted Mademoiselle De Gray's lips, but Madame leaned over the box like one in a dream, and could not be convinced until the notes were in her hand and counted, that it was no dream at all, but a most pleasant reality.

"Yes, Antoinette," she at last said, rising and cending the notes on the table "every sou of it is here. And to think of its being in the old box Antoinette?"

"Yes," smiled Mademoiselle, with a puzzled expression, "but——"

"But," interrupted Madame, even more vivaciously, "who put it into the box?" And she fixed her eyes in eager expectancy on mine.

"The the apparition," I faltered, "entered the room between two and three o'clock, and went straight to the cabinet. In a few moments the notes were pettioned and deposited where you just now found them."

"But the secret compartment, Monsieur," interrupted Madame, excitedly, "was it opened without difficulty?"

"Yes Madame."

"Strange! most strange!" she ejaculated in perplexed tones, adding the next instant, "Go on, Monsieur."

"That is all, Madame."

"All! But what did you do, Monsieur?" she asked, sharply.

"Nothing, Madame, but stagger aside and gaze like an imbecile after the retreating form I had extended my hand to seize."

"Oh!" exclaimed Madame, in a low, awed voice. "Was it—you called it an apparition. I terrified, Monsieur. What—what did it resemble?"

"It was a woman. A small pallid woman, clad in a trailing crimson——"

"A crimson robe!" echoed Madame and Mademoiselle, both evidently aghast.

"Yes, and with silvery-white hair."

"White hair!" again echoed both, looking at each other with faces of consternation.

Mademoiselle De Gray recovered herself first.

"What else, Monsieur?" she queried, impatiently.

"Nothing else, Mademoiselle, except that this unusual apparition carried a bronze candlestick and yonder bunch of keys."

Mademoiselle gazed at me a moment in silence, and then turning, suddenly flung her arms about Madame's neck, and kissing her on both cheeks exclaimed between tears and laughter, "Oh! you naughty, naughty thief."

Madame stared at Mademoiselle the picture of bewildered dismay; then dropping her eyes to the floor resolved, apparently, some perplexing question. Presently she looked up.

"Tell me, Antoinette," she muttered doubtfully, "why did you drug Monsieur's coffee?"

"I?" exclaimed Mademoiselle, flushing with astonishment, "I did it no more than I stole the money. I knew not that Monsieur was here until I—that he took coffee. But perhaps," she regretfully added the next moment, as she again showered kisses on Madame's rosate cheek, "that perhaps you can plead guilty."

Again bewildered dismay bewildered Madame's eyes, and after a little, she faltered, "Oh, Antoinette, I—I—yes, I certainly did." Monsieur slept well and I slept poorly. Yes, Monsieur got no powders! I never thought of it till this minute."

"What powders?" laughed Madeline with delight.

"The morphine!" exclaimed Madame more composedly. "I left sleepless and excited, and put it into a cup, intending to pour my coffee over it, but I must have given Monsieur the wrong cup."

Then suddenly snatching the keys from the table, she thrust them into Mademoiselle De Gray's hand, exclaiming tearfully, "There! keep them no more, a rouged darling. I have played 'La Sonnambula' enough."

And I, looking at Madame's brown curls, rosate skin, and faultless figure, thought unkindly: "What a parcel of French art." *English Monthly.*

AUSTRALIA MINDED. The following story is told of the absent minded ness of a clergyman of the church of Scotland: He married rather late in life, and the marriage tour was on the continent. At one of the halting places, Mrs.—— retired to the bridal bower in advance of her lord, who sat for a time cogitating down stairs. Presently he came to himself, and summoning the waiter, requested to be shown to his bedroom. He was of course, shown to the room to which his wife had already retired. But he had forgot all about matrimony and what it involved, and recoiling from the doorway in horror, turned upon the waiter with angry upbraiding for showing him to a bedroom already occupied by a woman! One Sunday morning he was dressing in his bedroom, on a chair in which lay a tray containing half a dozen shirts, starched with fitting clerical stiffness. He progressed leisurely in his dressing till he came to attempt fastening his waistcoat, when he found that operation impossible. After many ineffectual struggles, he called his wife to his aid, who likewise found the waistcoat difficulty insurmountable. She was at a loss to explain the phenomenon, till she happened to cast her eye on the shirt tray. It was empty. The minister in his absence of mind, had put on the whole half-dozen shirts, one on top of another, and it is no wonder that his waistcoat would not button. On another occasion he and his wife were under invitation to dine at the mansion of the laird of the parish. The minister had been out for a long day's work, visiting his parishioners, and when he came home, a little late, he found the mistress already dressed and waiting. He at once went up stairs to make his toilet, with strict injunctions from the good lady to be quick. He was so slow, however, that she got impatient, and went to see what was the cause of the delay. Entering the bedroom, she found the worthy man placidly enjoying his first sleep. Having undressed, it seems that in his absence of mind, he had taken it for granted that the natural sequel was to go to bed, and he lay, totally oblivious of the dinner-party at the laird's.

PRICE OF GRAY HAIR IS PARIS.—Gray hairs sell for a cent apiece. Hair dressers inquire of their customers for them, and beg that they may be saved from the comb, in dressing. Gray hair is the most expensive and difficult to obtain.

Superfluous Clothing.

The 34th Massachusetts was famous for its thorough discipline and strict adherence to military usage, as well as for its fighting qualities; and whether before the enemy or behind him, in camp, on the march or in bivouac, it was never known to relax in the observance of that punctilious etiquette that does so much in a military organization toward making up the *esprit du corps*. The Colonel would always insist on the regulation uniform being worn by all his officers, and particularly when they were on duty, or paying their respects at head-quarters, it was an unpardonable offence for any of them to appear out of uniform. In the spring of 1864 the 34th, with other troops, was lying at Martinsburg. The troops there gathered were about to march on what was afterward known as "Hunter's raid," and an order had just come down from headquarters by which the line officers of the command were prohibited from taking any baggage except barely what they could carry about their persons, and ordering that "all unnecessary baggage and superfluous clothing" should be immediately packed up and sent to the rear. Capt. —— was one of the most intrepid officers in the regiment, and was as particular in all the details of military life as the Colonel himself. He accordingly, in obedience to the order, packed up and sent away all his best clothing, retaining only one suit. Capt. C. of the 34th then serving in the brigade staff, had just been promoted to a Lieutenant Colonelcy in another regiment, and before leaving he gave a reception at head quarters to the officers of the 34th and others. It whispered, that same morning, that Capt. —— had the misfortune to get the skirt of his only remaining uniform coat accidentally torn, so that it was beyond repair. He took the garment to his company tailor and had the skirts cut off all around, thereby transforming it into a very neat appearing cavalry jacket. Arrayed in this nondescript garment the Captain presented himself at the above said reception at the headquarters of the brigade at Martinsburg. When the Colonel of the 34th saw him in this rig he was not a little chagrined to think that one of his most particular officers should so appear before the commanders of other regiments there assembled. He could not let the opportunity pass without inquiring into the matter; and in the presence of the whole company the following colloquy ensued:

Col. "Allow me to inquire, Captain, what kind of a uniform that is that you have on?"

Capt. "Certainly, Colonel. It is the new uniform for the line officers in the field, and recently ordered for the officers in this command."

Col. (A little mystified.) "Oh, indeed! And pray, Captain, where do you get your authority for wearing such a garb?"

Capt. "In General Orders No. ——, through these headquarters, dated April ——, 1864; and as you see I have acted accordingly."

Col. "You must be mistaken, sir; there is nothing in that order that could be so construed."

Capt. "No mistake about it, Colonel; here is an official copy of the order signed by your own Adjutant to do so." (producing it.)

Col. "Well, Captain, be kind enough to point out the clause that refers to this new uniform of yours."

Capt. "Certainly, sir," and he read that part of the order relating to the baggage allowed to company officers, ending with, "and all unnecessary baggage and superfluous clothing will be immediately packed up and sent to the rear." "Now, Colonel," continued the Captain, "it is very evident that the tails of a uniform coat must come under the head of superfluous clothing, and, for want of transportation, I have had mine cut off accordingly and sent to the rear."

The Colonel joined heartily in the general roar that followed, while the Captain was escorted by the Master of Ceremonies to the refreshment room.

It may not be out of place to add that in the many engagements in which the regiment took part during the following summer there was at least one officer who never forgot his coat tail in the enemy. *Farmers Falls Exponent.*

An Extraordinary Fabric

STRANGE METAMORPHOSIS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE PILLOW TICKS.

Mr. H. W. Ripley, of this city, has brought to our notice a piece of cotton fabric which affords an interesting study for the curious. The fabric itself is a stout grade of ordinary cotton bed-ticking, striped in blue and white, a material which may be said to have been less affected by progress and improvement than any fabric of dry goods in common use. This piece of ticking is made up into ordinary pillow-tick, for the purpose of holding feathers. The right or outward side of this pillow-sack, presents the usual blue and white stripes, and is in no way noticeable; the inside, which when the sack was full, came next to the feathers, is the curiosity. It presents the appearance of a surface of fine, soft, thin fur, or light plush, perfectly uniform, like velvet, and of a pretty pearl gray color, the color of the downy under-feathers of ordinary domestic fowls. It seems a soft, silky nap, like that on the soft side of cotton-flanned, which, every one knows is made by carding lightly the surface of spongy, loosely woven, twilled cotton cloth, and its nap is necessarily the color of itself being carded up from the threads of the web. The nap upon the inner surface of this pillow-tick, has on the contrary, not at all the color of the fabric to which it is attached being, as has been said, of a soft pearl-gray, or somewhat darker, whereas the cloth is distinctly and only blue and white. This nap seems to have a decided direction, like the glossy surface of a silk hat; smoothed with the hand in the right way, it has a satiny unbroken surface; rubbed the other way, it has the tumbled, irregular appearance common to other furry surfaces under similar treatment. Mr. Ripley gives this account of it.

A family in Whitefield, New Hampshire—a place somewhat known latterly as a summer resort—made, five years since, or in 1869, a feather-bed tick and six pillow-ticks, out of common Amoskeag ticking. The bed-tick was filled with turkey's feathers, the pillow-ticks with hens' feathers. Some time after the pillows were put in use, slight noise inside them was perceived, and at last attracted sufficient attention to induce those interested to investigate the mystery. This was about three years after the feathers had been placed in the pillow-ticks. On opening the pillows, the whole inside surface of the ticks was found coated with the nap or fur above described. The bed-tick was next examined, and the inner surface found in the same condition, with only the difference that the furry nap had the bronze color of the turkey's feathers. The feathers had been emptied into a tub for the purpose of being cleansed; but the peculiarity of these developments determined the beholders to put the feathers in fresh sacks, and try the experiment further. This was accordingly done; and, on opening these sacks some months after, the fury deposit—if it may be called such—was found in spots all over the inside, but the process apparently not completed. Several garments—capes, a vest etc., were made from the original bed and pillow-ticks, the furry side of course being placed outward, and these garments attracted the attention and interest of numerous people, visitors, residents and strangers, not more from their peculiarity than their intrinsic beauty. When the feathers which had been placed in the tub were examined, there were found among them, many tiny cocoons, about the size of mustard seeds. No other sign of possible life, and nothing unusual aside from this, was perceived.

No microscopic examination has been made as yet. Under a common magnifier, the questionable surface presents the appearance of cottony or silky filaments, some being slightly lighter in color than others, with nothing of the plumy appearance of magnified feather-threads. The dark stripes in the ticking are perceptable through the nap, but not sufficiently to betray their color. The nap is not easily removed, and seems like a part of the fabric of the cloth to which it is attached. Mr. Ripley has left one of the pillow sacks at this office where it may be seen by the curious. *Portland Advertiser.*

A Man Who is Going to be Dropped Into the Ocean.

Paul Boyton is the name of a daring individual who is to be dropped in the ocean, 200 miles from land. He is now at Atlantic City, N. J., where he is under an engagement with the Camden and Atlantic railroad company, to take charge of the life guard established there. He is an intelligent young man of about 27, of average size and well developed. The Merriman life-saving suit in which he will make his hazardous experiment consists of pantaloons and boots, and a jacket with a hood attached. Seven small tubes with mouth-pieces are connected with air chambers in different portions of the dress. The hood, as it becomes inflated, is drawn tightly over the face, leaving the eyes, nose and mouth visible, and making a perfect air pillow for the head which is not only comfortable, but also serves to keep the face constantly above the waves without the slightest exertion. Mr. C. S. Merriman of New York, the patentee of the life dress, has offered $500 to Mr. Boyton to make a sea voyage in his suit in order to demonstrate to the public its merits as a life preserver. He has accepted the proposal, and on or about the 25th of September he will be carried from land, when he will be dropped and left to the mercy of the waves until he shall meet with some passing vessel. He will carry with him in a rubber bag sufficient rations, consisting of dried meats, etc., for one week, as well as a good quantity of fresh water. He will also carry signal lights and flags, with a sectional staff twelve feet long for raising them, all of which are to be stowed away in the unlimited pockets of the rubber bag, which is about two feet square, and is so little in its inconvenience, strapped to and floated at the side of the swimmer. His feat by many may be considered as decidedly challenging death, but Mr. Boyton is very sanguine of success, and even says that he would willingly allow himself to be left a thousand miles out if necessary, without the slightest fear regarding his safe recovery.

A Fearful Suicide.

A fearful suicide occurred at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Saturday. A notorious character named James Cramsey repaired to the Kaal rock, on the bank of the river, 85 feet high, and lying down, fell asleep, being in a half intoxicated condition. After an hour's slumber, he rose and said to a person with him, who had been pumping, "I will give you a house, horse, and show you a leap." Pulling off his shoes, he went to the edge of the rock, evidently to look for a place from which he could jump easily into the water below without striking on the rock. Running back from the edge, he exclaimed, "that's not much of a jump!" and started for the leap. A man interfered, and caught him and held him back. Cramsey exclaiming, "What's the matter with you? Let me go!" Again he started for the edge, looked over, and ran back 10 feet for another start, and was caught the second time and a struggle took place and Cramsey struck one of his captors in the breast crying, with an oath, "If you don't let me go I'll take you with me." He was released, and sat down for about five minutes, and a man took a seat between him and the precipice. Cramsey said, "Let me jump, and I'll meet you at the furnace dock." In another moment, he suddenly made a dash for the edge of the rock, shouting, "Now, I'm off!" and with a fearful spring leaped into the air and plunged feet-first down a distance of 75 feet into the Hudson. It is stated that he turned once in the awful descent and struck the water sideways.

Locomotive Caprices.

It is perfectly well known to experienced engineers that if a dozen different locomotive engines were made at the same time, of the same power, for the same purpose; of like materials, in the same factory, each of these locomotive engines would come out with its own peculiar whims and ways, only ascertainable by experience. One engine will take a great meal of coal and water at once; another will not hear to such a thing, but insists on being coaxed by spadefuls and bucketfuls. One is disposed to start off when required at the top of his speed; another must have a little time to warm at his work and to get well into it. These peculiarities are so accurately mastered by skillful drivers that only particular men can persuade engines to do their best. It would seem as if some of those "excellent monsters" declared, on being brought from the stable, "If it's Smith who is to drive, I won't go; if it's my friend Stokes, I am agreeable to anything." All locomotive engines are low-spirited in damp and foggy weather. They have a great satisfaction in their work when the air is crisp and frosty. At such a time they are very cheerful and brisk, but they strongly object to haze and mists. These are points of character on which they are united. It is in their peculiarities and varieties of character that they are the most remarkable.

State Equalization Statistics.

EXHIBIT OF VALUATION OF REAL ESTATE.

The following table shows the valuation of the several counties in 1865, 1870 and in the *county* conventions of this year:

Counties	Val'n of 1865.	Val'n of 1870.	Val'n of 1874 by county conventions.
Addison,	$6,341,560	$6,567,200	$6,591,140
Bennington	4,354,695	4,557,777	4,921,548
Caledonia,	4,960,230	5,421,133	6,742,124
Chittenden	5,082,405	9,555,409	7,953,149
Essex,	1,166,221	1,436,308	1,594,145
Franklin,	4,948,339	7,411,342	6,100,711
Grand Isle	741,222	913,142	917,019
Lamoille,	2,374,400	2,613,999	2,636,983
Orange,	5,463,588	5,255,313	5,074,879
Orleans,	4,215,002	4,464,230	4,675,166
Rutland,	9,525,919	9,814,595	10,004,257
Washington,	5,336,226	6,220,775	6,398,493
Windham,	5,908,510	6,556,166	7,283,341
Windsor,	8,651,061	9,446,562	10,314,930

Rates for farming lands, as established by the county conventions July 1874, stood as follows, per acre:

Addison $13.21, Bennington 9.65, Caledonia 10.92, Chittenden 16.25, Essex 4.97, Franklin 13.00, Grand Isle 17.83, Lamoille 8.67, Orange 11.12, Orleans 9.62, Rutland 12.84, Washington 11.86, Windham 9.95, Windsor 13.16.

The following table shows the number of acres in each county and the rate per acre of lands, in 1874 as finally settled by the Equalizing Board:—

Counties.	Whole No. acres.	Rate per acre of farming land.	Total rate per acre.
Addison,	422,984	$13.21	$15.81
Bennington,	360,864	9.07	12.91
Caledonia,	350,080	9.83	17.23
Chittenden,	300,225	17.42	26.70
Essex,	355,735	4.72	5.92
Franklin,	351,139	14.36	19.16
Grand Isle,	47,840	17.83	19.18
Lamoille,	236,564	8.64	10.69
Orange,	369,657	11.12	13.02
Orleans,	379,296	9.62	12.16
Rutland,	522,755	12.84	19.11
Washington,	383,520	11.27	15.95
Windham,	456,189	8.91	14.33
Windsor,	550,351	12.39	16.93

The following table shows the valuation of the several counties in 1874, as finally established by the State Equalizing Board, and also shows the increase or decrease as compared with the valuation of 1870:

Counties.	Board's Valuation, 1874	Increase, compared with 1870.	Decrease, compared with 1870.
Addison,	46,201,140	$23,940	
Bennington,	4,921,548		$646,406
Caledonia,	6,067,912	646,779	
Chittenden,	7,816,794		1,138,615
Essex,	1,594,148	78,130	
Franklin,	6,749,592		710,560
Grand Isle,	917,019	4,01	
Lamoille,	2,636,983	23,088	
Orange,	5,074,879		180,434
Orleans,	4,675,166	154,936	
Rutland,	10,004,257	189,662	
Washington,	6,398,493		192,019
Windham,	7,553,003	18,841	
Windsor,	9,983,937		163,100

Expensive Coffins.

Was the name of an undertaker ever seen in the lists of bankrupts? We have never found patent caskets in any schedule of assets exhibited by an assignee. Farmers are sold out. Brokers break. Companies collapse. Government becomes insolvent. But the fashionable undertaker flourishes and is never brought to grief, except in a professional way. The dealers in metallic cases are unaffected by financial panics.

Is it because burying is a steady, unfluctuating trade, or is it that there is a wider margin of profits in coffins than in other merchandise? They ought as necessities of life, or, rather, of death, to be, like other necessities, cheap. But does not the cost of a modern sarcophagus, walnut or metallic, rank among the luxuries? There is a growing inquiry whether this peculiar kind of joiner's work is not rated much above the usual cabinet prices.

People pay funeral bills without a word. To hesitate at a single item is counted a sign of an ignoble spirit, and to quibble over the price of a coffin would entail disgrace upon children's children. In other purchases men examine the goods and beat the prices. They pass from shop to shop and buy only at the best bargains. But who has the heart to inquire the price of the coffin which must receive the first born of your inwhood friend, far less to haggle over the price put on it by the maker. The day of mourning is not a time to pass from street to street comparing these sad forms of polished wood, and setting the price of one against the other.

There are many households that can ill afford to lose the head of the family, and find that the burial expenses cut deep into a years income. Not to have a fitting funeral equipment, such as the fashion of the day requires, argues in the public mind ignorant or unworthy views, and to yield to the full tax of modern mortuary upholstery is a severe pressure upon persons even of not very limited means.

We shall hail the day with pleasure when the mode of sepulcher shall be simple, and the laying of the dead in the earth will not heavily burden the living. When "dust to dust" is so expensive is it any wonder that the cremationists have received countenance, when they offer at a trifling outlay and in the old classic fashion, to turn "ashes to ashes."

Whoever will inaugurate a "movement" against expensive funerals will be a benefactor indeed. *Richmond Advocate.*

Seasonable Food.

The wholesomeness of food depends nearly as much upon the time it is taken as on the quantity. We have grown so luxurious in our physical as well as mental