SECOND PART.

THE PITTSBURG DISPATCH.

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REVEALED BY FIRE.

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BEING ONE OF A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES ENTITLED

THE ROMANCE OF AN INSURANCE OFFICE,

BASED UPON PASSAGES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF MR. AUGUSTUS WILLIAM WEBBER, Formerly General Manager of the Universal Insurance Company.

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I.

A glorious afternoon in summer. The fierce rays of an August sun are tempered by a light cool breeze which goes whispering through the heavily laden bows of a prime orchard adjoining a Somersetshire farmhouse, scarcely lifting the brown leaves as it passes.

In a hammock, slung from the branches of a wide-spreading apple tree bending beneath its weight of golden fruit, Gerald Latour lies idly lounging, with his magnificent dark eyes, so lustrous in their shining and so dreamy in their unfathomable depths, intently fixed on the form of a young girl of 20, who is seated near him on a camp-stool industriously plying her needle, with her blushing face half hidden as she bends more closely over her work to hide her confusion.

A very pleasant picture for the eye to rest upon amid such surroundings is Netta Dean, with her clear cut profile, her smooth, fair brow and arched eyebrows, her delicately cut nostrils and the rounded outlines of her cheeks, with as pretty a rosebud for a mouth as ever invited a lover's kisses. Her flaxen hair, which waves naturally, is fastened up behind in thick plaits, suggestive of unusual length. The light muslin dress she wears, cut somewhat loose to the figure, cannot wholly conceal the sweeping curves of a finely molded form, for, though a rustic beauty slightly built, Netta Dean's joyous life, happily free from care hitherto, has tended, with her upbringing and wholesome faring, to perfect the symmetry of a lovely figure. Add to this eyes of sapphire blue with a look of wondrous innocence and trustfulness and the picture is complete. And yet the little lady holds her head in such a queenly fashion and there comes at times such an air of resolution round her pretty mouth that only a superficial observer would fail to perceive that, gentle and confiding though her disposition is, she is not the woman to put up with a slight or meekly bear an injury.

Her companion would attract attention anywhere by his handsome, commanding presence, for nature has given Gerald Latour a noble exterior, which has already played sad havoc on the hearts of women less susceptible to manly beauty than Netta Dean's. Gerald is tall, well made, with the frame of a young athlete. His dark complexion — dark even to swarthiness—is brightened by a glow of warm color that burns beneath his skin, which, with his lustrously dark eyes and a curling beard of jet black, carefully trimmed to a point, gives him the appearance of a handsome brigand or a Spanish gypsy, according to the point whence he is regarded. That he is a handsome man is undoubted. The lassic regularity of his features would alone edeem his face from the commonplace. he warm blood of the sunny South inherd from distant ancestors circulates in his ins, and is perhaps partly responsible for luxury of his disposition. For Gerald our, it must be confessed, is a Sybarite. Cote Farm, of which Gerald Latour has n an inmate for two months past, lies tling under the befriending shadow of Quantock hills. Very proud is Farmer De to have such an inmate in his house. True, Gerald Latour is no "prince in disguise." He is simply a city tradesman who came to Cote to find health and strength again in the balmy Somersetshire air, and, though doing a large business as an Italian warehouseman in Great Chester street in the city, he is not very much lifted above the social scale occupied by the Deans, though they are reported as a primitive people. But Mr. Dean is proud of his guest, proud because of his flow of animal spirits and his fund of information, proud, too, because of what Cote farm has done him, seeing that he came to them like a shadow, worn down with illness, and has now become a shining example of what fresh country air, wholesome living, early hours, and the peaceful occupations of a country life can accomplish for an invalid. But he is most proud of all because Gerald Latour is his son's first patient, and owes his life to Maurice Dean's unremitting skill and care.

It is seven years ago since Mrs. Dean passed away, leaving behind her two children, Netta, whom the reader has seen, and Maurice, who claims a word or two of introduction. It was a sore blow to Farmer Dean when his only son declared one day, in the astonished hearing of the old man, that he would not be a farmer and that he would be a doctor. "It's that eddication I gave thee that has spoiled 'ee," the old man cried in his vexation. "I towd t'mother how it would be. Nothing good comes of eddication."

But Mr. Dean had ever been an indulgent father to his children, and when he found that the lad's heart was set on his profession, he gave way reluctantly, but with many grumblings at "that eddication that has done it all." Maurice Dean had just completed his medical studies and had started in practice for himself near Great Chester street when the wheel of fortune threw him in the way of Gerald Latour, who had never known a day's illness in his life, was suddenly stricken down with typhoid fever, and the young surgeon had been called in. There were other doctors near, but Latour had not needed the services of a physician before, and he had no one about him capable of discriminating between the rival merits of the neighboring doctors. Maurice Dean happened to be the nearest, and to this circumstance alone his presence was owing. Whether the same confidence would have been reposed in his skill if it had been known that Gerald Latour was the doctor's first patient may be considered doubtful.

It was a difficult and complicated case, but Maurice Dean, who had a genuine enthusiasm for his profession and was alive to the importance of not allowing his first case to slip through his fingers, and of the lift it would be to his reputation to succeed in pulling his patient through, left no stone unturned to achieve success. By dint of his own incessant attention, watching all the phases of the malady and superintending the nursing, together with Gerald's splendid constitution, he contrived to pull his patient through, though this involved many a night's weary watching, when the tiny flickering flame of life burnt lower and threatened to vanish outright.

"I owe my life to you," Gerald cried thankfully, when he was pronounced convalescent.

"You must not say that," said Maurice Dean modestly. "You have your own fine constitution to thank for your escape."

"That may be," said Gerald; "but a fine constitution would have served me little if I had not possessed in you a skilful physician and a kind friend. I shall never forget my obligation to you—never! I owe you my life, as I have said before."

"If I were superstitious you would make me uncomfortable," Maurice Dean replied. "We have a saying down in our parts that if you save a man's life you are sure to receive some terrible injury from him."

"And where may your parts be?" asked Gerald.

The young doctor dilated on the beauties of Somersetshire, and the delightful simplicity of his rural home under the Quantock hills, until he infected Latour with so ething of his own enthusiasm. Gerald by this time ready for change of air and scene to complete the work of convalescence, and, learning from Maurice Dean that the Deans had occasionally received summer visitors, delicately broached the suggestion whether he might be so fortunate as to find a temporary home at Cote Farm. Dean took the suggestion in good part, and though he was sensible of the danger of introducing a handsome stranger beneath the roof that sheltered his guileless sister Netta, he consented to write home and inquire if his people could conveniently entertain an invalid, with what result the reader already knows.

Very happy had those two months been to Netta Dean, during which Gerald Latour's stay at Cote farm had lasted. The circle of Netta's acquaintances was necessarily a restricted one. Since she had left the boarding school at Taunton, where she had been sent for her education, she had not left Cote Farm. The sons and daughters of the neighboring farmers comprised her little world, and though the lads were honest and brave, they were rough in their ways, and in no respect corresponded with the ideal man of Netta's day dreams.

The stranger had not been many days in the house before Netta began to make comparisons between him and the men of her acquaintance, very much to the disadvantage of the latter. Gerald bore all the outward insignia of a well-to-do, middle-class gentleman, with a good deal of savoir faire. He was well read in general literature, and with a bright and sprightly wit he contrived, as soon as he began to regain his strength, to make the days pass very pleasantly to Netta, who often wondered how she had borne her existence before he broke in upon the peaceful flow of her life—"vegetating," Gerald called it—and how she would endure it when the time came for Latour's departure.

It is rarely possible for a maiden to occupy her mind with thoughts of the man who has stolen her heart away without betraying the secret which she jealously seeks to guard. Netta had an uncomfortable habit of blushing, and often as she encountered Latour, the tell-tale signal would convey to the quick eyes of the man everything that poor Netta sought to hide.

Latour's vanity was touched at these signs, which he knew so well how to read, and before long he had drawn from Netta the confession of her love. How far matters had progressed between them on this August afternoon must now be told.

"Netta," Latour was saying, "have you thought over what I was saying last night?"

Netta confessed that she had, and, bending her blushing face over her work, plied her needle more diligently.

"You see, dear, I would not ask it of you," resumed Latour, "only my uncle, to whom I owe everything, has so completely set his mind on my marrying my cousin Helen that he would withdraw his capital from my business and cut me out of his will if he knew that I even as much as thought of marrying anyone else. That is a sacrifice I could not afford to make for your sweet sake. There will be little Nettas to provide for by-and-bye, you know."

At this remark Netta blushed more violently than before, and she bent her head still lower over her work.

"Give me my own way in this one thing, Netta," Latour continued, "and you shall have your way forever afterward. Lift up your head, my pretty one, and let me see your face."

But Netta did not comply with this request, and presently something like a sob broke from her. Gerald cautiously came down from his hammock—fearing an ugly tumble if he moved hastily—and approaching where Netta was sitting, threw his arm around her, and asked her with passionate concern he knew so well how to assume, "What is the matter, Netta, darling?"

"I cannot do this. A private marriage, unknown to my father and to my brother Maurice! What would they think?" asked Netta in low, pleading tones.

Latour had an answer ready to lull Netta's dutiful fears to rest. He painted in more vigorous language than any he had hitherto felt it necessary to employ the certainty of his uncle's anger and the dire results which would result if once the news of his nephew's marriage leaked out and reached his Uncle Marchant's ears, and wound up by declaring that in a very little time Netta, if she would consent to give way on this point, should return to Cote Farm and make her marriage known to her father.

"So long as my uncle thinks I am not married," Latour explained, "he will be contented. Helen does not care for me, and all that is wanted is a little time for her to find a suitor more to her mind, and I shall be free to do as I like. Only until then do I ask that our marriage be kept secret."

But Netta's objections were not silenced yet. Latour had still another argument in reserve.

"You do not love me, Netta," he cried, "or you would agree. It must be my way or not at all. Surely you can see that. If I cannot obtain my uncle's consent to my marriage with you—and that is impossible—and you will not marry me quietly we cannot be married at all, and we must part for years—perhaps forever, who knows?"

No sooner was this vision conjured up before Netta's mind than her courage began to give way. There had been a traitor in the camp even while Netta held out against Latour's pleading. Her own heart, which had passed entirely out of her keeping, had seconded all Gerald's pleadings, and now, when his arguments overpowered her reason and she saw nothing before her except years of weary waiting for the man she loved, or, worse still, a lifelong severance, Netta's resolution gave way, and she consented to steal from the home where she had tasted a full cup of happiness and plunge herself into the unknown depths of an untried experience, trusting and confiding in the love of the man who had won all her heart.

Latour returned to town a few days later, and a week afterward came back to the neighborhood of Cote Farm by stealth. The morning after he journeyed down to Somersetshire Netta was missing.

She had gone, leaving no trace behind her—nothing but one short note saying that she would come back again very soon, and then she would tell her dear father everything.

Farmer Dean gazed at Netta's note with dazed eyes, like one stupefied. His Netta gone! Stolen away like a thief in the night! Gone, without a word of explanation or a moment given to farewell! He could not believe it. It was too terrible. But there was the letter, and, alas, there was no Netta to brighten Cote Farm with her presence and her merry laughter.

Would he ever see her face or hear her laughter again? he wondered.

II.

Maurice Dean, who went down to Somersetshire on hearing news of his sister's disappearance, was sorely perplexed to unravel the mystery of Netta's flight. He sharply questioned the farm-servants at Cote, but Gerald Latour had conducted his love-making with so much circumspection that the servants, who are usually the first to indulge in suspicion, had not observed anything to lead them to suppose that any love-makings had been going on between young mistress and the handsome The circumstance that a week had een Gerald's departure from d Netta's flight also told in Latour's favor, so that when he was approached on the subject and frankly declared he knew nothing of the matter, Maurice Dean declared himself satisfied with the denial, and directed his inquiries elsewhere.

But two years passed, and still there was no news of Netta. For a long time Farmer Dean and his son prosecuted their inquiries, hoping against hope. At last hope died away, and the quest was abandoned, and the old Somersetshire farmer entered into the bitterness of Jacob's lot when the plaint was wrung out of the anguish of his soul, "Evil hath happened to my son."

Meanwhile Netta was living in a little cottage at Willesden, happy on the whole, though inwardly chafing at the secrecy which her husband continued to impose, and fretting as she pictured to herself the distress that her hasty and unexplained departure from Cote, and her long silence, must have occasioned her father and her brother Maurice. Sometimes she would take her housekeeper, Mrs. Coppock, a worthy, respectable woman, into her confidence and complain of the hardship of her position.

"It is too bad," she would say, "when I am so happy with my husband and my two little ones, that I cannot even write home and let them know that I am safe." At such times Mrs. Coppock would sympathize with Mrs. Latour and soothe her with assurances that Mr. Latour must soon set her free from her promise to him and allow her to put her friends out of their long suspense. Netta rarely broached the subject to her husband. She had only seen Gerald angry once, and she could never forget it. It was the last time that she had ventured to urge him to allow her to go down to Cote Farm and tell her father everything and give him ocular demonstration of her welfare. Gerald curtly refused and reminded her of her promise to keep their marriage secret.

But Netta, who had been thinking much of her old home that day, and of the old man left desolate by her flight, was determined to persevere despite the chilling reception she had met with. But to her further request that she might be permitted to write to her father, Gerald replied more angrily, and when she asked that he would himself take Maurice into their confidence, his anger broke loose, and Gerald's handsome gypsy face became transfigured with passion. It was an awful revelation, that outburst of wrath, to the poor wife. For the first time she discovered what a volcano of tempestuous passions lurked beneath his debonnair exterior which she had never suspected, and fear blended with her love for him. She resolved never to allude to the subject again, but to wait and bide his time for making the disclosure for which poor Netta's heart ached.

"Let us have no more of this," Gerald exclaimed, passionately, clenching his demand with a loud oath that fell with terrifying effect on the ear of the loving-hearted woman. "They shall know in good time. And remember that if you ever show your face in Great Chester street, you will rue it to the last day of your life. That would mean ruin for us both."

Netta had one other cross at this time. Latour's visits home had latterly become less frequent than she had known them. The premises in Great Chester street contained one small sitting room and a bed chamber, which Gerald had occupied in his bachelor days, and which he occasionally used after his marriage, pleading the necessities of his business when he failed to return home to his wife. More frequently than before Latour began absenting himself from the cottage at Willesden, always contriving, however, to hinder suspicion from springing into Netta's mind by affirming that "business was going to the dogs," and he must stay in town and work late.

It was true that Gerald Latour's business was, as he pithily expressed it, "going to the dogs;" partly on account of Latour's inattention to his affairs, and partly from the withdrawal of large sums of money from the concern, which he took to indulge in his gambling propensities. The evenings that he spent away from the cottage at Willesden were passed either in a gambling hell or in sighing at the feet of Helen Marchant, and breathing love vows in her ear. Sometimes, too, in more shameful occupations which would have broken Netta's heart if the good had not been kind to her, and hidden Gerald's midnight revels from Netta's eyes.

An accident revealed to Netta how hollow the ground was on which she was standing. She was engaged in brushing a coat which her husband had been wearing, and on turning out the pockets, discovered a bulky letter written in a remarkably clear and firm hand, indisputably the handwriting of a woman, as her first glance told her. A sickening sense of fear crept into Netta's heart as she turned over the letter again and again in her hand. But her face flushed hot with anger, and her fine nostrils dilated with wounded pride, as her breath came quicker at the unexpected revelation of her husband's perfidy which the letter contained.

Her husband? It was not clear to her that Gerald Latour was her husband, and that she was an honest wife, when she had had time to master the contents of the letter. The communication, which bore the signature of Helen Marchant, was filled with the warm outpouring of a woman's heart—spoke of her coming marriage with Gerald Latour, and described the preparations she was engaged in making for the great event in her life.

Utterly overwhelmed by the discovery, Netta remained a long time in abject misery, too numbed to feel, too dazed to think. Bit by bit the suspicion grew in her mind that she had been shamefully deceived by a bogus marriage. There was one other alternative—that her husband, relying on her continued silence as to their secret marriage, was bent on tricking his cousin into a marriage that was no marriage if her own was a valid one. When this grew clear to her she roused herself out of the state of apathy and tearless misery into which she had fallen, to think out and decide what to do.

The revelation had rifled at a stroke the guileless simplicity and girlish confidence which had characterized all her previous relationship with her husband. She was a girl no longer, to be silenced with kisses or to be put down with a display of unseemly anger. She sprang into existence in an hour—a woman!—a woman scorned and wronged!—a woman who had her own rights as a wife to defend, and the legitimacy of her offspring to make good—if she could! It seemed to her as if years had passed since her dream of security was so rudely shaken, and that she had redoubled her thinking powers in the brief interval which had elapsed.

How was she to set about her task? Gerald had often spoken of his cousin Helen to Netta, and bits of bygone conversation recurred to her memory now. Putting these fragments of conversation together, she gathered courage from the sum of the impression they left upon her mind after reflection. Helen Marchant was a good woman who must not be wronged, who would prove her friend in her hour of bitter, sore need, and who would insist on justice being done to her and her children. If there were shame to hide, Helen would help her to hide it. If wrong had been done which admitted of a reparation, however tardy and poor, Helen would not suffer that act of reparation to be left unperformed. Yes! she would appeal to Helen. She would write to her and tell her the story of those happy months at Cote Farm, when Gerald Latour stole her heart away, of her marriage, and the happy time since, marred only by the fatal concealment and the trouble that must have been occasioned to loving hearts in the old farmhouse in Somersetshire. And then she would tell her of the discovery she had made that day, and beg her assistance to vindicate her cause.

The letter occupied a long time to write, but it was done at last. She hastened to put on her bonnet and cloak, and went out. Late that evening Netta stood with beating heart before the business premises of her husband in Great Chester street. The doors were closed and fastened for the night, but there was a light feebly burning in one of the upstairs rooms, and a more brilliant light in the basement. She beat with her knuckles on the door, and after an interval there was a sound within as of the shooting back of bolts and taking down of bars, and at length the door was opened and her husband stood on the threshold with a look of amazement on his face, as though he had seen an apparition.

Without pausing to enable him to recover from his astonishment she passed within, and the door closed behind her.

III.

Some five months elapsed after Mrs. Latour paid her late visit to Great Chester street, when, soon after midnight in February, the inhabitants of that neighborhood were aroused from sleep by the cry of "Fire!"

There was a hurrying of feet along the street as the crowd, hastily gathered, sped to the spot. Smoke was seen issuing through the roof of Gerald Latour's warehouse in small puffs, and, slowly wreathing themselves, melting away into the murky atmosphere of a winter's night. Denser volumes of smoke were seen issuing from the crevices of the doors on the basement, while the reddened glow visible at these points showed clearly enough that the flames had obtained a firm hold upon the lower portion of the premises.

The excited crowd, which the policeman on the beat had much difficulty in keeping back until the arrival of reinforcements and the fire engines, had barely time to note these particulars, when a dull heavy sound as of an explosion fell on their ears, to be followed at intervals by another, and yet another. The crowd fell back, less to give way to the firemen as they came on the scene with their engines than to escape the danger from falling tiles and slates. A hole had been rent in the roof by the last explosion through which immense volumes of smoke now poured, as from the throat of a burning crater, followed by huge showers of sparks. In a moment the upper rooms were lurid with flame through the admission of air from the roof, and there was the sound of shivering glass as the flames burnt more fiercely, and the window panes cracked into a thousand pieces, broken by the burning heat.

There was no hope of saving the building, looking to the immense amount of highly combustible materials stored on the premises, and the energies of the fire brigades that had been brought together on the scene were directed to minimising the danger which threatened the adjoining properties. Suddenly, when the first excitement was at its height, some one roared out from the crowd, "Where is Mr. Latour? Is he in the building?"

It was known that Mr. Latour often slept there, and anxiety was naturally felt lest he should have remained there that night, and been stifled by the smoke without opportunity to escape. But no one could tell what had become of Mr. Latour, though one here and another there among the crowd were heard to testify that they had seen a light burning in Mr. Latour's sitting room upstairs not more than two hours ago.

"If Mr. Latour is in the building," cried one of the firemen, seeking to allay the excitement which the query had aroused, "he is a dead man by this time. No man could be in that building and live."

The firemen worked hard that night, strenuously assisted by the eager crowd of helpers who were permitted to take their part in diminishing the danger that threatened the homes of many of them, but from the time of the arrival of the engines it was too clear that the building was doomed, and that nothing could save it. Happily, the extension of the fire was checked; but all danger was not over until the building was completely gutted from the basement to the roof, which had fallen in with a crash, filling the air with sparks and dust and smoke, which drove back crowd and firemen alike.

Through the long night the brigade men, many of them with scorched hands and blackened and blistered faces, continued at their task, pouring water from the engines on the smoking ruins and heated walls, until as the sun rose the hot steam rose in large volumes and hung over the site where Gerald Latour's business premises had once stood, like a mimic cloud spreading itself out to the sky, until broken up by the breeze it was carried off.

Among the first to arrive next morning was Joe Gillett, Latour's head warehouseman, who was followed shortly afterward by Gerald himself. All doubts respecting Latour's safety were set at rest by his visible appearance in the flesh, and a sense of relief was experienced by his neighbors on palpable evidence being afforded them that he, at any rate, had not perished in the ill-fated building.

Nothing could exceed the look of surprise on Joe Gillett's face when he saw the smouldering ruins, from which columns of hot steam were rising, unless it was the look of blank wonderment and consternation on Latour's face. Gerald wrung his hands and cursed in his anger the malign fate that had placed an arresting hand on his business enterprise. Asked to explain the origin of the fire he declined to express an opinion. "That must be a matter for inquiry by the proper authorities," he replied.

"Was he insured?" a sympathetic neighbor inquired.

"Yes," with the Universal," he answered; "but far below the value. The loss to me is irreparable. I am not only a heavy loser from the fire, but, worst of all, it stops my business for weeks and months, and I had many good things on hand."

"Was there any gunpowder on the premises?" asked Captain Barnes, the head of the fire brigade.

"Ask Gillett here; he can tell you better than I. I think not."

Gerald Latour was insured, as he said, with the Universal, and lost no time in calling upon Mr. Webber to acquaint him with the disaster. The fire involved the insurance society in a heavy loss, as Latour was insured for £25,000. Mr. Webber followed the usual office rule in such matters and sent down Mr. Doggett, his private inquiry agent, to institute an investigation on behalf of the Universal into the origin of the Great Chester street fire.

The heat emanating from the smouldering ruins was so great that a close inspection of the premises was impossible, not only for that day, but for several days to come. Doggett, however, made a rough preliminary inspection, and a rude drawing of the interior of the building as it stood after the fire, carefully marking out in his sketch the various heaps of debris for future examination. He picked up odd bits of information while in pursuit of his task, learning, among other things, that while the premises were what is known as "lock-up" premises, Mr. Latour had frequently been in the habit of sleeping there, and that as late as 11 o'clock on the night of the fire, according to common report, he had been seen either entering or leaving the premises.

It is the business of an inquiry agent in cases of fire, especially fires involving large money losses, to protect the interests of his employers from incendiary frauds, and Doggett at once pricked up his ears like a young terrier on the scent at this piece of information. There might be nothing in the report, even if it were true—and its truth Doggett had yet to learn—but, at any rate, it was his business to inquire, and to take nothing on trust.

He first endeavored to trace out the origin of the rumor that declared that Mr. Latour had been seen on the spot within a short time of the breaking out of the fire. One of the constables informed him that persons in the crowd had expressed themselves alarmed for Mr. Latour's safety, and had declared that they had seen him, and he himself had at first shared their fears.

"These must be neighbors, of course," Doggett reflected. "We shall soon find out." A few inquiries carried him to all the information that was likely to be forthcoming on that point. Mr. Latour had not been seen but a light had been noticed by several persons burning in the room usually occupied by Mr. Latour, when he slept at Great Chester street, at 11:15. The constable on the beat supplied the information that at 11:45 there was no light burning in the room, nor did he perceive any smell of fire. The fire was discovered by the constable when he passed that way again on his rounds, which would be half an hour later —12:15.

It narrowed itself to this then, that some person was on the premises as late as 11:15, and in Mr. Latour's room, too, and who, it was conceivable, might have remained on the scene to within a few moments of the time when the constable passed the door at 11:45 and found all right. In that case, though the origin of the fire might be traced to perfectly innocent causes, as for instance to carelessness on the part of the last person to quit the premises in putting out the light, there was room for the play of suspicion as to a possible incendiary act.

"Did you meet anyone on the street as you came along?" Doggett asked of the constable.

But no, the constable had had the street to himself. It was a particularly quiet street, he explained, at that hour of the night. Later on, when the public houses disgorged their visitors at closing time, he might have encountered a good many persons whose way home lay along Great Chester street, but as it happened he met no one.

"Not Mr. Latour?" asked Doggett.

No, not even Mr. Latour. The constable was one of several witnesses who was prepared to swear to the fact of the gaslight being turned on at full in Mr. Latour's room at 11:15, and he supposed that Mr. Latour was staying there that night, and had gone to bed when he passed at a quarter before midnight. Doggett felt that a good deal would turn on the explanation that Mr. Latour might be able to give of the light burning in his room at that late hour, and upon the character of Mr. Latour's explanation would hinge the question whether it would be necessary to ask him to account for his movements that night. But the detective was not the man to act precipitately. Further inquiries into the mystery of the burning light in Mr. Latour's room could very well be held over until an examination of the premises had been made.

As soon as the embers, which continued to smoulder many days, had cooled down, Doggett, assisted by the police and a capital salvage corps, took possession of the gutted building, and began his examination of the debris. The building was a mere shell of blackened walls bearing the impress of the scorching blaze to which they had been subjected. Happily, however, the walls, though tottering in places, threatened no immediate danger, and after they had been well shored up with timber where they appeared weak, the inspection could be attempted without risk.

The examination had not proceeded very far before the detective came across unmistakable signs of gunpowder. Doggett was keen-scented, and could not easily be led into the blunder of confounding the difference in the smell from fire and that from gunpowder. The discovery was important. Gerald Latour, when questioned by Captain Barnes, the head of the fire brigade, was unable to say whether there was gunpowder on the premises or not, and had referred Captain Barnes to his man, Joe Gillett. Gillett, on being questioned on the point, had declared that there was no gunpowder on the premeses, and when asked how he accounted for three successive explosions that had startled the crowd, confessed his ignorance, unless it was the bursting of the gas pipes.

But when the debris began to be cleared away the matter was placed beyond all dispute. Under a great heap of rubbish, though not buried deep, since portions of the roof—slate, tiles and timber—were found with it, was discovered a small keg of gunpowder. The supposition was arrived at that the top floor had been carried away before the flames had reached this small barrel of explosive, a guess that was confirmed by other signs discovered still later.

But there were graver elements of suspicion behind. Though it was made plain by the frightful havoc wrought by the flames that combustible elements had been placed with great skill, the same cool judgment had not been applied all along the line. Buried beneath the heaps of rubbish there was gradually brought to light large bundles of tow, soaked in inflammable oils, and other indications of a criminal attempt to fire the premises, which had succeeded only too well, but not without leaving incriminatory testimony behind.

While these discoveries were being made, Doggett was not idle in other directions. He instituted an inquiry into Mr. Latour's private life, and collected a number of proofs which went to show that at the outbreak of the fire Mr. Latour was in a position of serious embarrassment. He ferretted out his gambling habits, and the heavy sums that he staked and lost at baccarat. He wormed his way until he learnt that the timely discovery of his marriage, at the time when he was paying his addresses to his cousin Helen Marchant, had lost him the hand of a rich heiress, and permanently alienated his uncle, who had insisted on withdrawing his capital from the business, which he had himself built up and given to his nephew.

There was matter enough in this to sustain Doggett in his next step. Armed with a warrant signed by the presiding alderman at the Mansion House he arrested Latour and Joe Gillett on a charge of incendiarism with intent to defraud the Universal Insurance Co.

Doggett had prepared his case so well that after an exhaustive magisterial inquiry both prisoners were committed to stand their trial at the next sessions of the Central Criminal Court.

It would have been well for Gerald Latour if he had had no more terrible accusation to meet. But there was worse behind, and Nemesis was walking swiftly at the heels of the doomed man.

[*To be concluded next Saturday.*]

A DREAM OF GOLD.

How a Quarter With a Hole in It Was Found After Many Years.

Augusta (Me.) New Age.]

In 1868 Lizzie M. Trask, of Vienna, was dressmaking in Lewiston. She came into possession of a gold 25-cent piece with a hole in it; this she showed as a curiosity to her friends. At that time she had a little niece 2 years old, daughter of Jonathan P. Trask, now the wife of Leman Butler, trader in Mt. Vernon. The little coin Lizzie once showed to her niece Addie, when she was a very small girl, telling her that she would give it to her when she was old enough to take care of it. Lizzie died 12 years ago. In her possession was a good ladies' wallet with several compartments. This wallet her mother used until her death seven years ago. Then James, a brother of Lizzie's, had it and it has been in constant use almost daily ever since, either by him or his wife. The little gold coin was never seen after Lizzie's death, or before for several years by her friends, and its whereabouts was not known and in fact its existence had passed from their memory. A few days ago Mrs. Butler made her parents a visit, stopping with them several nights.

While there, she dreamed that she saw her Aunt Lizzie's wallet, and that it was faced with green, and in a certain compartment she found the little gold coin which she saw so many years ago. On telling her mother her dream she was informed that Lizzie did have a wallet which answered her description, and that her Uncle James had it. The wallet Addie had never seen. She then visited her uncle, and told her dream to her aunt, who laughed at the idea of anything being in it other than what she and her husband had placed there. But at Addie's earnest solicitation she produced it, and as soon as Addie saw it she exclaimed, 'That is the same wallet that I saw in my dream,' and pointing out the compartment that held her treasure. She then took a needle, and running it to the bottom she drew forth a small piece of newspaper, and in it was, indeed, a gold quarter with a hole in it, wrapped no doubt by the hands of her aunt, at least 12 years before, where it had lain all this time, and no one knows how much longer, without the knowledge of anyone until Addie's dream caused it to be brought forth.

GRAY-HEADED GAMES.

Some of the Amusements Which Were in Vogue Long Before the Christian Era.

Boys cannot help being boys, and if it is any comfort to them to know it, they always have been, says the *Youth's Companion*; There is no reason to doubt they have played approximately the same games for thousands of years. If a flavor of antiquity can dignify sports, the following extract will satisfy many an anxious parent that his offspring are entirely respectable in their methods of amusement.

Sakya-Muni, the founder of Buddhism, who died probably 400 years before Christ, gave to his disciples some paragraphs on conduct. He took a conservative stand against certain games. The fact of his speaking of them shows that they must have existed long before his day.

He says that the true Brahman should refrain from "games detrimental to progress in virtue; that is to say, with a board of 64 squares, or of 100 squares; tossing up; hopping over diagrams formed on the ground; removing substances from a heap without shaking the remainder; dicing; trapball; sketching rude figures; tossing balls; blowing trumpets; ploughing matches; tumbling; forming mimic windmills; guessing at measures; chariot races; archery; shooting marbles from the fingers."

The reader will easily recognize in this list games which he himself has often played. The first is no doubt chess; but can any reader tell what the 100 square game was? Is any such played now? After these come hop-scotch, jackstraws, perhaps backgammon, cupball, and cartoon drawing.

To our surprise, we find that baseball, the "great American game," is by no means a recent invention, but rather a survival of the fittest. Cornets are still a nuisance, and ploughing matches are still heard of once in a while out West. Even in those days cartwheels were turned and other frightful attitudes struck by "contortionists."

Our boys make mimic waterwheels oftener than mimic windmills; but the "guess" game is still a favorite; horse racing and archery are not modern diversions; and marbles are as popular now as when the first pair of youngsters went to school. It is claimed that chess dates back about 4,000 years. What reason is there to doubt that hop-scotch, ball and marbles are equally ancient.

HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

Why Do Women Powder and Paint Before Visiting a Dentist?

New York Sun.]

"It's a mystery to me," said a dentist of large practice recently, "that a woman will make up her face to come to a dentist's chair. Yet many of them do. Hardly a day passes that I don't have some women in here rouged, powdered and pencilled to the last degree. You would think they would hardly care to face the strong, cruel light which I employ in my work, or my own close, if involuntary, scrutiny, but they don't seem to mind either.

Only yesterday I worked for three hours over a woman whose lips were so besmudged with some vermilion paste that it came off generously with every use of the syringe to wash out her mouth. The powder on her face dusted my coat sleeve with every motion almost, and I discovered before I was through with her that even the veins on her temples owed their delicate blue look to some outside influence."

Ready to Take His Medicine.

Merchant Traveler.]

"Did I ever say all that?" he asked despondently, as she replaced the phonograph on the corner of the mantelpiece.

"You did."

"And you can grind it out of that machine whenever you choose?"

"Certainly."

"And your father is a lawyer?"

"Yes."

"Mabel, when can I place the ring on your finger and call you my wife?"

A Serious Puzzle.

Wide Awake.]

"I wonder why," said little Sue,
"You say, mamma, 'If I were you
That's not the way that I should do,'
So many times a day!
I s'pose I'm wrong; but I don't see
If you were turned right into me
Why, truthfully, you wouldn't be
'Most sure to do my way!"

Like an Open-Faced Watch.

Jewelers' Weekly.]

Mr. Quickwit Moralizes—Mr. Quickwit (to Mrs. Coarseair, who is profusely bedecked with imitation diamonds)—Madam, you remind me of an open-faced watch.

Mrs. Coarseair—How so? Te, he, he.

Mr. Quickwit—Your crystal is so prominent.

SOMETHING ABOUT BOILS.

What Causes Them and How They Should be Treated.

A boil may be defined as a limited area of inflammation situated in the loose tissue which binds the skin to the deeper structures, says the *Youth's Companion*. Generally it starts in or around a sweat gland, and approaches the surface as it grows.

Many theories have been advanced to account for the origin of boils, but it has now come to be pretty well established that they are caused by the growth of the tissues of certain minute organisms. These are found in every such abscess; they can be cultivated, their life history can be studied, and when they are placed in the tissues again, under favorable circumstances, another boil, precisely like the first, is produced.

How these boils find their way into the system it is sometimes not easy to say, but probably it is through some slight break in the skin which has escaped notice. Some persons seem to present a more suitable soil for the cultivation of the germs than others, and certain conditions of the system are very favorable to their development.

A lower vitality, sea bathing, changes of diet, especially during athletic training, and convalescence from certain fevers are not uncommonly followed by boils. Children with scorfula and rickets are apt to suffer. Excessive sweating, lack of cleanliness, the long use of poultices, the application of irritants to the skin, and especially the chafing of clothing, seem to favor their formation.

Any part of the body may be affected, but they are most frequently seen on the back of the neck, in the arm-pit and on the lower part of the trunk. Where the skin is firmly tied down, as in the passage of the ear, the pain and tenderness become intense; in the looser structures it may be but moderate.

If left to itself, a boil will break in four or five days, and discharge puss and generally, some dead tissue known as the "core." It is usual to apply poultices till the abscess nears the surface, and then make an opening; but often, if a free incision is made at the beginning, the process will be arrested. Poultices are of benefit only to relieve pain; they should not be continued after the incision is made, since they serve but to prolong the discharge.

More than that, Dr. Pye Smith, of London, in the course of a recent discussion, declared his belief that the crops of boils which sometimes are seen in the case of schoolchildren are due to the transfer of germs, by means of poultices, from an open sore to the glands of the healthy skin.

The rational treatment, then, is an early opening and washing out of the boil, using fluids that are destructive to the germs. At the same time the general health must be seen to, in order that it may offer a sufficient barrier to further inroads.

AN IMPROBABLE YARN.

A Chicago Man Too Bashful to Talk to a Pretty Widow.

Chicago Herald.]

"I know it's the general supposition and the rockbound belief on the part of the most women that really bashful men don't exist anywhere off the farm," said a Southside man, "but I know one woman who is convinced that bashfulness can flourish and become confirmed right here in the city, with the Board of Trade as a stamping ground.

"The lady I speak of is a charming young widow who lives with her parents in an elegant big residence away out south. The bashful gentleman has been acquainted with this pretty little widow for a good while, and a short time ago asked her to go to the theater. I don't know how he ever nerved himself up enough to make the request, but he did, and the young woman's father, who is quite friendly with the bashful man, suggested that they use the family carriage. So he rode down to the mansion on the Illinois Central, and the elegant carriage of the widow's father rolled up to the front door to take them to the play house. The widow was handed in and settled herself in the back seat. Then the bashful man to her surprise, took a seat directly opposite her, and the carriage rolled out on the boulevard and toward the city.

"The pretty little widow exhausted all the arts of which she was possessed—and, being a widow, you may believe they were numerous—to apprise the bashful man of fact that it would be proper for him to take a seat by her side; but he was more afraid of her than he ever was of a panicky wheat market. The widow wanted to laugh, and yet she felt silly, sitting over there alone, with carriages passing, whose occupants could see her isolation. All her hints, however, were of no avail, and she finally said:

"'Mr. ——, if you are quite convinced that I will not bite, please sit over here. It looks much better. You can snuggle into your own corner if you want to and go to sleep. I will not bother you.'

"He complied, stammeringly, and crouched into his corner all the way to the theater, responding with hesitating monosyllables to her efforts at conversation. The home trip was just as bad.

"And this man is one of the brassiest brokers on the floor of the Board of Trade."

BOUND TO PLEASE.

A Georgia Clerk Who is Too Smart to Show His Inexperience.

Jessup (Ga.) Sentinel.]

One day last week a lady called at the store of Whaley & Lee, and Bill Westberry, having just given his mustache a fine twist, hastily stepped forward to wait upon her. Bill approached with a pleasant smile about a yard wide, and with one of his most graceful bows politely informed the lady that he was at her service. She told him she would be pleased to see some Corps de Lisse ruchings. This staggered Bill, but not wishing to appear green, or at a loss, he told her that he had just sold the last keg they had that morning, but had ordered 40 kegs more, and was looking for them by every freight.

The lady bade him good morning and went out smiling, and Bill gave his mustache another twirl and consoled himself with the thought of how fortunate it was to be ready witted.

HE STUDIED IT HARD.

How a Museum Orator Unwinds His Tale of the Sword and Spike Walker.

New York Sun.]

There is a lecturer in an east-side museum who unwinds amazingly. Here is a specimen of his oratorical powers. "This, ladies and gentlemen, "is Singalee, the sword and spike walker. She is a native of Lucknow, India, and walks with her bare, naked, and tender flesh upon the glistening, keen-cutting, bristling, incisive, penetrating, needle-like, horrible edges of quivering, wavering, trembling swords, and the jagged, pointed, tearing, terrible, cross-cutting, fearful, frightful, horrifying, spearified, tri-pointed, gashing, deep-sinking, death-wounding, feet-ruining spikes dancing and rolling on a bed of bare and pointed carpet tacks, and running a race on glistening cimeters."

Sixteen Years Without a Day Off.

Lewiston Journal.]

Most folks think they have stuck to their work closely when they only take a week or two of vacation in a year, but Mr. Joseph Maddocks, keeper of Owl's Head Light, has distanced all competitors in close attention to business. He is now on a trip West, and it is said that this is the first time for 16 years, 4 months and 15 days that he has spent a night away from his post. Mr. Maddocks deserves to have an enjoyable vacation.

A STUDY OF NOSES.

How to Judge Readily of a Person's Disposition and Character

BY HIS FACIAL ORNAMENT.

The Inquisitive Man, the Pugnacious Man and the Non-Combatant.

PHYSIOGNOMY AS AN EXACT SCIENCE

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

There are few, indeed, who do not pride themselves upon their ability to discern traits of character from a glance at the face. We say of one we meet for the first time: "There's something about that person I don't like," but when pressed for a cause for dislike, few can give any satisfactory reason to an inquiring mind.

Much has been written of human character as delineated in facial formations, but with but two or three exceptions, scientists have refused to spend time in the investigation of physiognomy or phrenology as a science, because of the disrepute charlatans have brought them into. Physiognomy is but the visible sign, in the features, of the brain's development; hence, there is no cause for wrangling between physiognomists and phrenologists.

The nose on a face attracts attention naturally, just as the spire of a church does. We look at the latter before we examine fully the bastions and buttresses in its architecture; and in the nose likewise we find strong indications of character. The Roman nose indicates force and strength. As an arch is stronger than a square in architecture, so is the arched nose an indicator of greater strength than a straight one in physiognomy. It means pugnacity first of all, but whether in the form of self-defense, relative-defense or attack is to be determined by a more careful scrutiny.

If there be a prominence at the point—a retrousse or turned up nose—it indicates an inquisitive character, with a strong propensity to pry into the affairs of others. This sign is usually conspicuous in great detectives and the discovery of things which have been stolen and secreted.

INQUISITIVE AND COMBATIVE NOSES.

In animals the hog has this faculty large, the nose being turned up into a flange; and he exercises it to find food in the ground in digging up nuts, roots, etc. The faculty is strongly indicative of a disposition to dig into the earth in search of food or treasure. In connection with acquisitiveness it forms a character sordid and covetous, often miserly.

Self-defense is indicated by a prominence on the nose just above the tip. It indicates a character that would always stand on the defensive—considering himself always the one attacked, and, therefore, ready to oppose, to contradict, to be continually on the opposite side. Such an one has a stronger dislike to interference than most people. To him self-defense is the first law of nature, and he wears written all over him the motto, John Paul Jones had on his flag, "Don't tread on me."

This faculty was conspicuous in many of our public men at the outbreak of the rebellion, particularly those who were favorable to all propositions calculated to mollify the South, until after the attack on Fort Sumter, when they became almost implacable. It was prominent in Lincoln, O. P. Morton, Zach. Chandler, Henry Winter Davis, General Schenck, George S. Boutwell, Simon Cameron, Governor Curtin and others.

In horses this disposition manifests itself by leering, throwing back the head and ears, attempting to bite, striking or kicking with the hoof, by which acts the animal conveys the warning: "Keep your distance, don't touch me."

Relative-defense, or the disposition to defend one's family, friend or neighbor is situated on the ridge of the nose, about the middle and above self-defense as seen in pictures of W. H. Seward. Such a person will defend his country, his home and fireside, and will let the blow fall upon himself rather than on his wife and children or friends. He is easily provoked by anything like encroachment upon the rights of others, particularly those of children or the weak and simple. It is

THE PATRIOTIC SIGN

and is commonly seen in American profiles. It is prominent in the portraits of Charles Sumner, W. H. Seward, Wendell Phillips, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Lloyd Garrison, Owen Lovejoy, Joshua R. Giddings, Lucretia Mott, Jane Grey Swisshelm and all the pioneer Abolitionists, as well as in many of our cotemporary public men. It is also frequently found in controversialists, and may be seen in portraits of John Calvin, John Knox, Sforza, Beza and others, who were noted alike for controversy and dogmatism.

The faculty of attack is indicated in the upper part of the ridge of the nose above relative defense. It indicates a quarrelsome, pugnacious character. Such a disposition is obnoxious to those who have large self and relative defense. He is not content to allow others quiet in person or opinion. If a gross, vulgar character, he attacks their person; if intellectual and refined, he attacks their opinions, and is a controversionalist, with a pronounced tendency to dogmatize. Domination is

A LEADING CHARACTERISTIC

of such a face. It is the Roman nose. It is apparent in the face of Julius Cæsar—a fit type of that people whose love of conquest gained them jurisdiction over the then known world, and whose rule was powerful, often tyrannical, and whose laws have survived the changes of Government in all civilized countries.

In the Irish face we see either self defense or attack, or both, largely developed, with less relative defense. In the English face attack is always prominent; and in the French a large sign of relative defense. These mark the combative Irishman, the domineering and dogmatic Englishman and the irritable Frenchman.

Having no distinctive national facial characteristics, owing to the conglomerate origin of our people the American shows sometimes a few and sometimes a compound of all these signs in his face.

JOHNSTON II.

Not Very Flattering.

Detroit Free Press.]

"Mighty fine woman I saw you lifting your hat to, back there, old boy."

"Yes, rather."

"Some mash of yours?"

"Yes."

"Couldn't introduce a fellah, eh?"

"Might if you'll come up to the house some evening."

"Oh! your wife?"

"Yes."

"Pshaw! I supposed it was your cook!"

A Profitable Business.

Boston Courier.]

Robinson—Thompson seems to be very prosperous nowadays.

Johnson—Well, I should think he would be prosperous. He is in a profitable business.

R—What is he doing?

J—Why, he's engaged in the manufacture of antique furniture.

Appearances Deceitful.

New York Sun.]

"Who is that tall, handsome gentleman over there? He must be a poet or an artist!"

"No; that is Smith the stomach-pump manufacturer."