Jean's Confession.

A STRANGE STORY BY A POPULAR AUTHOR IN WHICH CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE PLAYS A LEADING PART.

"You lie!"

"I loathe you!"

"And I detest and despise you! I abhor you!"

Clear and cutting each word of the dialogue rang out in the fierce tones of utter wrath. The two were alone in a morning room, the silken draperies and luxurious elegance of which seemed well able by their quiet and soft beauty to move the thoughts of any occupant to quiet peace. Alas, how useless! For now the man and woman stood opposite one another, each seeming alternately to surpass the other in the bitter, scathing scorn of their hate. The man showed manly there in all but the cruel words that were so rapid from his lips. He was tall and of majestic form and features, whose irregularities announced an individuality excessive. Just now with eyes blurred by the magnitude of his indignation, with his hair tangled and tossed by the energetic vibrations of his head which trembled in sympathy with the agitation of his speech, with his fine face working with emotion and his form convulsed by the strength of his passion, he well seemed the incarnation of some good spirit, struggling powerless in the overwhelming grasp of a demon.

The woman was quaintly and rarely fair, with that superior loveliness which takes not its birth in the insipid regularity of facial outline, but is the outcome, rather, of lineal harmony graced by the wonderful, passionate temperament of the soul. Even now the bitter fires which flamed so piercingly in her eyes, suddenly died. The cold lines about the ardent mouth softened, the tense hauteur of the little form relaxed, and with a half-sob she stretched out her hands towards the man and cried:

"Reece!"

But the appealing hand laid upon the man's arm was harshly shaken off and he rushed from the room.

Left alone, the woman abandoned herself to despair. "He no longer loves me!" she wailed. Then she sank upon her knees beside the fauteuil and gave vent to her agony in a storm of sobs, which racked her as in the throes of mortal pain, until, finally, the strength of her suffering brought unconsciousness, and she lay huddled in a dismal heap upon the carpet. But the last words of her lament were: "And I loved him so!"

II.

"Polly, my duck, you are a real, genuine angel."

"Ah, go along with your blathering, Sam."

That Sam did go along with his blathering was evident from the sound of a smack, the honest harmony of which gave sweet joy to the fair Mistress Polly's maiden bosom.

After this matutinal delectation Mr. Samuel Gubbs went cheerily whistling about his duties. After a time he came to a corner of the house where the mounting rays of the April sun cast a pleasant glow, sheltered from the rudeness of the spring winds, where he lighted his pipe and gave himself up to choice reflections, in which the fair upper maid of his master's household played no inconsiderable part. Then, by a natural sequesce of ideas, from the contemplation of his own suppositities joys of the future, he came to reflection upon the marital relations between his master and the fair bride brought home a year before, and Mr. Gubbs' brow knitted ominously and he muttered violently and repeatedly, "Taint him, nor yet her. Taint nuther!"

Then on a sudden Mr. Gubbs slapped his thigh and a satisfied look overspread and extinguished the perplexity of his expression. He slapped his thigh again with even greater violence, and ejaculated:

"It's the devil!"

After a little Mr. Gubbs rose and sauntered lazily away. Soon he returned and resumed his place and ruminations, which latter included tobacco.

"Master sleeps uncommon late this morning," he said. Then, after another interval, as Polly had brought him no word of his summons (as she had promised if the master's bell should ring), he became uneasy lest she had forgotten, and making some cynical utterances depreciatory of womankind in general and upper maids in particular, he regretfully entered the house. Mounting the stairs to his master's room he first knocked, and then, as no answer was made, he softly tried the door, which yielded, and he quietly stepped within the room. No, his master had not risen. The dressing room which he had entered revealed his master's garments as Mr. Gubbs had arranged them the night before. Wondering at this unusual lateness, and fearing that the master was ill, the man cautiously passed into the sleeping chamber. As he swept aside the portiere, a sickening odor greeted him. He reeled for a moment and then sprang swiftly forward. Yes, master slept late that morning. There on the bed he slept. But the face was drawn and white and the eyes would open—when? The valet grasped the hand that hung by the bedside, then dropped it horror stricken and staggered from the room.

"Murder! *Murder!* MURDER!!" From the terror-stricken lips of the man the wild cry went ringing down the long corridor of the hall. When the trembling women and blanching men had gathered about him, he could only whisper faintly and point to his master's room. Then, after a little, they understood, and some of the bravest even ventured to the chamber of death, but they went close to one another and the gastliness of their returning faces needed no words to tell the tale.

* * * * * * *

"We must have a post-mortem," the pompous coroner said. He was a man of accredited shrewdness (as he himself admitted) and most eminently calculated to sit upon an inquest, if for no other reason than that he weighed close 20 stone. "Yes, yes," he repeated, "we must have a post-mortem."

But then came news, and news the most amazing possible. No, it could not be. It was inconceivable! The dead body of Reece Neville, squire of the hall, had vanished! No one knew whither! No one could imagine how! It was gone, the perplexed domestics said, and there was an end on't. Mrs. Neville was invisible. In vain did the worthy coroner storm and invoke the mighty phrases of the law. Her lady's maid was inexorable: Her lady was ill and unable to see any one. Then the shrewd man of inquests began a private investigation with the wary Abigail. At its conclusion the coroner knew nothing, which was his usual state; while the maid knew that her mistress was suspected of the murder of her husband and of spiriting away the body to prevent the discovery of her crime. As long as the body could not be found she would be safe, and therefore she had secretly stolen it away. So said the man of law.

III.

That night Mrs. Neville left her home by stealth. She fled, terrified by the agonized entreaties of her maid, to avoid the fate that she feared awaited her as a murderess.

She took nothing but her jewels and the small remainder of her monthly allowance. She went alone and none knew whither.

And while the good people, and the evil as well, wondered at the success of the flight of this beautiful murderess, with the record of whose crime all England was ringing, she had lost her identity in that safest of all retreats—a city hospital. Crazed by her suffering and fears, she had wandered, raving, in the streets of London, until a pitiful Sister of Charity had soothed her wildness to a sad apathy and then coaxed her to a hospital. There she remained through the long tedious illness that followed and there she remained in training as a nurse, after a pale image of her former beauteous self began timidly creeping about the aisles of her haven. Her wealth of hair had been ruthlessly shorn by the necessity of disease, and, bowed by her woe, with hollow eyes and pallid face, she knew that none but her husband could ever have known her thus, and he, alas, was dead!

For many years she lived there, and the fame of her labors and piety went about through the land. She took no vows, she knew that she needed none to hold her to this work of duty, in the active exercise of which she could alone find relief.

IV.

As time went on and five years had passed since the death of Reece Neville, people had almost forgotten the murder and the flight, and only to strangers, who commented upon the deserted appearance of the hall, was the strange tale told. The lassies of the village ceased to dream of the hideous shape that had lain so cold and still on that doomful morn, and nervous matrons no longer feared to unearth the vanished corpse of the squire in their own garden plots.

Then, on a sudden, the parish was all agog. Old Dame Jean Marro was dead and she had made a dying declaration, in due form, before the magistrate. The hideous old woman, on her death-bed, impiously and with a horrid glee revealed that 20 years before she had murdered her own husband. He had, as she told the story, been absent from home working in the mines, and one night secretly returned and, by violence and threats, endeavored to extort her hoardings from her. Enraged by her refusal to comply with his demands, he had sprung upon her. Moved by exasperation and the spirit of self defense, she had seized a hatchet lying upon the table and struck at him with all her might. The keen edge of the weapon cleft his skull and he fell back dead. Then she dragged the grisly thing to the cellar and there, with her unaided hands, scooped a trench in the soft earth and laid him from sight. All that night she toiled at her unholy task, and the morning saw no tell tale marks of blood. Ever since she had lived there alone close to the ghost of her crime, and she had never repented. In the cellar they found the traces of the dead man, as she had said, although naught remained but the crumbling bones.

But, had this been all, it would have still remained conceivable. More she told and, though incredible, it must be believed, for dying women tell the truth.

SHE KILLED THE SQUIRE.

She was sorry for that. She admitted that she had repented bitterly. It had all been a mistake. She also justified the reputation that she possessed as a thief; for it was on the night of the murder that, having occasion to visit the hall on some errand, she had, as an opportunity offered, concealed herself within, in the hope of securing some booty—to comfort her declining years, she ingeniously added. When, in the darkness of midnight, she entered the squire's room, she had heard him restless upon the bed, and had saturat d a cloth upon the table with chloroform, which she always carried, and then held it softly to his face. She had no intention of killing him. It was, as she said, before, a mistake from overdose. It would have been all right had she been a doctor instead of a thief.

When asked to explain the disappearance of the body she confessed that this occurrence was as mysterious to her as to anyone else. But she hinted sagely the one word: "Burkers!"

Placards were on the walls in all the leading towns of the three kingdoms bidding Mrs. Reece Neville to return to her home for her innocence was established. But time passed on and she came not. She had vanished as completely as her husband's corpse, and all search and inquiry were in each case unavailing.

V.

One night as Sister Leah, formerly Mrs. Reece Neville, passed through the accident ward of the hospital, she suddenly threw up her hands and fell to the floor in a dead faint.

Much alarmed, the sisters and physicians hurried to her and applied, hastily, every possible restorative. Soon her eyes wearily unclosed and she gazed vacantly about her. Then, as sense and memory returned, she uttered a cry:

"Take me to him! Take me to him!" she implored. They would have soothed her, for they thought her mad, but she spurned their entreaties to remain, and, breaking from them, rushed back to the ward. When they came upon her she was kneeling beside a couch upon which lay a man whose forehead was bound by a bandage. With her head upon his breast, Sister Leah was weeping tears of sweetest pain; for the dead was become alive again, and her lips met those of Reece. Badly wounded he was and weak, but he lived and knew her. He clasped his feeble arms about her, and heart to heart each knew that never more could discord come between them.

VI.

As soon as Reece was partially recovered husband and wife went to a quiet place in the country where they could, unnoticed, enjoy their new happiness. One day Reece, glancing over an old city newspaper, was astounded to see, underneath a heavy headline, the notice issued for his wife's eye telling her that she was safe to return. As he read the notice farther, he was amazed to discover that a death bed declaration had revealed the true criminal. His wife, as well, was unable to comprehend what it could mean. They decided to return home at once and solve the mystery.

Reece's account of the whole affair, as given to his wife, was as follows:

After the quarrel, from which he left her so overcome by his anger, he had retired to his room, and soon after had hastily undressed and sought his bed. Torn by his passion, he had at last sunk into a stupid, apathetic condition and remembered no more until late the next morning, when he had been awakened by a cry of terror. "When, however, I attempted to move," he continued, "I found that I could not. I was fettered and bound down immovably by something that I cannot define. Let it suffice now to say that since I have determined my condition and know that it was a catalepsy. In this trance I must have remained for some hours, although hearing was the only sense at my command by which I could determine the course of events. Then, on a sudden, I experienced a curious thrill and soon afterward a violent tremor agitated me and I was again alive. Ah, the joy of that moment! I staggered to my feet and rushed madly from the house. Then there is a long blank. Where I was, or what I did, I can not tell. After a weary length of time my mind returned in part to me, but my memory, so far as places or persons were concerned, was gone. I knew neither myself nor my country! Then came a stern struggle for work. I finally, after two years of hand to mouth existence, secured a position as translator in a publishing house, and there, at a salary of a few beggarly pounds per month, I have been ever since, until this falling sign broke my skull and restored to me my wife and memory."

VII.

Do you marvel that the parish was in a ferment? Here, in sooth, was a nice state of things. The dead came to life and, worse than that, so the gossips said, nobody murdered after all! Things were coming to a pretty pass when people would on their dying beds and with their last gasp accuse themselves of things and tell of murders they had made and they as innocent as the unborn babes. Many gray heads wagged in, actually, a ferocity of astonishment, and a sadly skeptical town is that even to this day. "For," say the bald and ancient men and dames, "there beant nothin' sure! We knaw. We knaw."

The squire's lady, Leah, has told to her husband one incident of the stormy first year of her married life.

One day when old Dame Jean Marro was at the hall, on entering a room quietly, she had found the old woman on her knees before a trunk and upon the point of transferring some valuable lace to her pocket. The lady rebuked her gravely, but, upon the old beldame's representations of hardship and woe, she had compounded the larceny and had, as well, given her an ample supply of coin of the realm. The woman had kissed her robes in an ecstacy of gratitude.

"A wonderful thing she did for me," said the lady of the hall.

CHEAP TRAVELING IN HUNGARY

A System of Railroad Passenger Rates That Deserve Study.

A novel system of railroad charges has been in operation in Hungary for a little more than six months. The experiment, though radical, has apparently been successful. Passenger rates on a majority of the Hungarian roads are no longer based upon the cost of service or upon what the traffic will bear, or even upon the mileage. The rates are regulated according to the "zone system." The state railroads of Hungary had been doing badly under the old system—the earnings fell from $1,300 a mile in 1887 to $1,000 in 1888, and the government felt that matters could not be worse than they were.

The zone system of charges is based upon the theory that there are two classes of passenger traffic which can be increased in volume—the passengers traveling a short distance and those going a short distance. The former are generally provided for on railroads by commutation rates, the latter have not received attention heretofore. A further point advanced by the advocates of the zone system is that where the cars are not occupied to their full capacity an increase of traffic necessitates only an infinitesimal increase of expense. The advocates of the system, therefore propose three zones—a short zone, a long one, and a medium one. The Hungarian railroads extend the idea somewhat by issuing two classes of tickets, those for zones and those for short distances. In the latter class were two tickets, one carrying the holder to the next station, and sold for 5 cents, 7½ cents, and 15 cents, for third, second and first class, and another carrying the holder to the second station for 7½, 11 and 20 cents for the three classes, respectively. These tickets are good between any two contiguous stations without regard to the actual distance and are sold in bulk at 5 and 10 per cent discount. The zones are fourteen in number, the circles being drawn about ten miles apart. The fourteen zone including all distances of 140 miles and over. The rate for the first zone is very low—less than 7-10 of a cent a mile for the lowest class and 1-6 cents for first-class express—and increase more than in proportion to the distance through the different zones until the rate at the fourteenth ranges from 1 cent to 2½ cents per mile for the 140 miles. Beyond this the rate again decreases, owing to the fact that any additional distance is not charged for. Thus a trip of several hundred miles may be made for the same price as one of 140.

The innovation went into effect August 1 of last year, and was introduced on the state lines—about one-half of the total mileage of the country. Two private companies have since adopted the zone system. During the first month of the new tariff the number of passengers carried on the state lines was increased 500,000 and the passenger receipts about $100,000.

From the report of the Austro-Hungarian minister of commerce it appears that the passenger receipts of the Hungarian railways for 1869 were 52,152,105 florins, or an increase of nearly 1,000,000 over those of 1888—this in the face of a reduction of rates equal to more than 50 per cent. The new system was in effect during only five months of 1889. This extraordinary reduction and extraordinary increase have excited the amazement of the railway world. Several foreign railways have sent representatives to Hungary to examine into the results of the change and report to them.

Cheap Pleasure.

From Texas Siftings.

"Vat ish it you vants, Schacob?" asked Mose Schaumburg of his eldest son. "Give me haluf a tollar, voder." "Vat you vants mit such large sums of monish?" "I vant to make myseluf some funs. I vants to go dot theater in." "So you vants to make yourseluf some bleasures? I dells you how you can have some bleasures midout spending monish. Vait until next vinter ven it vas cold. Den stick your feet dot ped out until dose feet vas almost frozen. Den you pulls dose feet dat varm ped in. I dells you, Schacob, you don't vant to make your old vodder weep mit dose frivolous bleasures vat was so tam expenshive."

A Sensible View.

From Chatter.

Friend (leaving the office with the broker)—I say, old man, you didn't lock your safe.

Broker—No; I never do. It cost $300 and I don't want burglers to spoil it for the little amount I've got in it.

SAYINGS IN LIGHTER VEIN

Stray Shots by the Wits at the Follies and Foibles of the Day.

Advantages of a European Tour—The Note Was From His Wife—Only One Drink in the Flask.

From the Detroit Free Press.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he gasped, as he sat on the window sill in the postoffice yesterday with an open letter in his hand.

"What's the matter?" queried the friend with him.

"Why, I advertised for a lady correspondent—not over twenty-five—lively—brunette preferred. Here is my first answer."

"Any name signed?"

"Yes, 'Maude, but I know the writing. It's my own wife's hand, and she is a blonde, very dull, and over forty years old. Just think of her cheek in answering such an ad! No wonder our sex has lost confidence in women."

Political Bias.

From the Lewiston Journal.

There is no mistaking the political bias of a certain little miss whose father had served two terms in the Maine legislature. She went on a visit to a relative in Oldtown not long since, accompanied by a lady. Arriving late in the evening at Uncle Eben's, the young politician, being much fatigued, wished to retire early and urged her companion to go with her. "No," said the lady, "I must sit up until Uncle Eben has prayers."

"Prayers!" ejaculated the amazed little one, "does Uncle Eben pray? Why, I thought he was a democrat!"

He Had Been There.

From Light.

Miss Gushington (romantically)—How the stars twinkle to-night. Mr. Playhouse! Would you not like to be the being who rules them? Would you not love to have charge of their movements?

Mr. Playhouse (a manager)—Not much! I've had the management of a good many stars, and they're hard things to take care of.

The Right Spirit.

From the Detroit Free Press.

Visitor—You're getting to be a pretty old man Uncle Joshua.

Uncle Joshua—Eighty years.

Visitor—And you don't have to use glasses yet, I understand.

Uncle Joshua—No, an' I don't ever calculate to. When I can't drink outen a bottle I'll take a dipper an' drink water.

The Question is Unanswered.

From Munsey's Weekly.

"You are authority on feats of strength, I believe?" remarked a stranger to the sporting editor.

The latter bowed and replied:

"What can I do for you?"

"I wish you would tell me which is the stronger, the female shoplifter or the woman who holds up a train?"

Takes It Just the Same.

How often in the crowded car
You've risen to your feet
To give a woman who comes in
The comfort of a seat.
"Oh, no; I thank you," she protests;
"I'd really feel to blame;
I don't at all mind standing"—but
She takes it just the same.

The friend you ask to have a drink
Says alcohol's a curse;
It never does men any good,
And always makes them worse;
Men never know just when to quit;
'Tis really a shame;
He greatly disapproves it—but
He takes it just the same.

—*Washington Post.*

What Thirst Will Drive Men to.

From the Harrisburg Telegraph.

Two New Jersey farmers had a fight over a drink of water yesterday and one stabbed the other with a pitchfork so that he will die. Water must be scarce in New Jersey. Perhaps the men were in the same situation as once confronted the gentleman from Kentucky. Said he: "I was once offered the entire site where Omaha now stands for one drink of whisky." "And you refused?" said his listener. "Gentlemen," said the Kentuckian, a proud smile on his face, "you forget there was but one drink in the flask."

A Chip.

"Johnnie," said a prominent mine operator to his youngest the other day, according to Derrick Dodd in *Puck*, "I'll give you $1 if you'll dig up the front yard all ready for your sister's new garden."

"All right," said Johnnie, thoughtfully, "but I shall have to ask for 25 per cent. of the contract price in advance. Not as an evidence of good faith, but for working capital."

"Work! What do you mean?"

"Well, you see, I guess I'll just bury the quarter some where, and tell all the boys in the neighborhood that a pirate hid some treasure 'round there. When they strike that quarter they'll make the dirt fly, I can tell you. In that way I can clean up about seventy-five per cent. In fact, ——"

"Well, what?"

"In fact, don't know but what I can also arrange so as to find that quarter myself. I'll work it just like that salted mine you were telling mamma about unloading on the street last night."

And the father wept tears of joy as he thought what a cold day it would be for Jay and Rufus when his boy grew up.

How to Write a Play.

From the Washington Post.

It isn't so very hard to write a play that is a good nerve-twisting sensational drammer. Here is one already started. All that's needed is a story to go with it.

Great Heavens! I see it all now.
Has it come to this?
You here!
Mother!
Where am I?
Sir, you shall answer for this.
Saved!
Listen, and I will tell you a story.
Has it come to this?
I would kill you as I would a dog.
Discovered.

How Jimmy Connelly Was Fooled.

One of the best stories that have gone the rounds in sporting circles for a long time is told by Lem McGregor, "the St. Joe Kid," on Prof. Jim Connelly, the "one-eyed rooster from Boston."

"We were standing in a well-known sporting resort the other night," says Lem, "when an old man who sells ducks came in. The poor old fellow had but one limb and one lamp and the crowd jollied him up and got a few drinks beneath his jacket. He finally began to imagine that he was a second Sullivan, and told of the scores of men that he had met and knocked out. Connelly was sitting down at a little table near the end of the bar and the boys told him to go down and 'slug' him. Connelly about that time stepped up for a drink, and, oh! my, didn't he get it. Right on the jaw, too, and one that staggered him.

"Connelly was paralyzed for a moment, and then he exclaimed: 'Blast me bloomin' hyes, let me hat 'im.'

"Here a friend rushed up and said: 'That man is crazy.'

"'Don't you know Hi thought that,' said the professor, as he eyed the man, and he started to down his decoction.

"Here the duck-peddler got in his work again and harder than before.

"'Blast me hyes, he'll not do that again,' said the professor, and he handed his glass to the bartender. 'Crazy hor no crazy, Hi'll 'it 'im.'

"'Professor,' exclaimed his friend, 'that man has but just been released from a lunatic asylum.'

"'Blame me ef Hi don't get hinto one ef Hi don't 'it 'im,' swore the now enraged man with the glass eye.

"A burst of laughter greeted Jimmy's ears about this time, and, realizing that he had been sold, 'he folded his tent, like an Arab, and silently stole away.'"

WHY M'CLELLAN FAILED.

A Story of Balloons, and How They Misled the Commander.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

"Why did McClellan get whipped at Richmond?"

Plunkett asked this question as he turned facing Brown and let the smoke curl from the right corner of his mouth.

"Bekase Lee had an army and something for the army to eat," ventured Brown.

"It was balloons," replied Plunkett, as he continued:

"There has been mighty little said erbout these Yankee balloons. They done the Yankees more harm than they did good by er long sight, and I lay the defeat of McClellan's army to their use. All they done was to make Lee march his soldiers nearly to death, and that is where the confusion to the Yankee generals come in.

"This young generation don't know nothing erbout this balloon business, for it has never been printed in the books, but every old soldier knows that McClellan had his whole battle line dotted erlong with 'em erway up in the clouds, and they were depended upon to watch Lee's movements, and that is where they busted.

"These balloons mout do on prairie battle grounds, where they haint any bluffs nor woods, or they would do where there haint no night, but in the hill country of old Virginia, where the oak and hickory growed high, and where the spruce pines grew so thick that you couldn't see er cow 10 foot off through 'em' the balloons were a snare and caused confusion to the yankees.

"These balloons would get erway up in the elements so high that they would look blue like the sky, and er fellow would set in er basket that was tied to 'em and peep through his telescope and chuckle to hisself that he knowed everything that Lee was doing.

"General Lee would have er talk with old Longstreet and Jackson and they would wink at one another and do some chuckling theirselves.

"A Confederate division would march down er road in plain view of these baloon fellows till they got to where the big trees and the spruce pines would shelter them, then with a quick 'file-left' they'd get under cover of the woods and march right back and repeat the same movement over ergin, and thus one division was made to appear as the massing of the whole army at one point, and the Yankees would begin to rush to that place, weakening other parts of their line, and the first thing they knowed they were getting thunder knocked outen 'em at some point where the balloonist least expected.

"Night time was used to confuse these balloons, too. Erlong in the afternoon the Confederate generals would wink at each other, then looking erlong the battle line at the balloons they'd chuckle and pretty soon thousands of Confederate troops would be moving from the left toward the center and right, and the balloon fellows would chuckle and tell McClellan, and pretty soon the Yankee soldiers were moving to meet the emergency. When night comes on so the balloon fellows couldn't see, the Confederates right-abouted, and at daylight the next morning the guns were rattling on the left, and er battle was as good as gained. But it did march thunder outen the Confederates, though, and that's why I always will hate balloons.

"I've heard erheap said of late erbout the brave things done during the war, but I don't think that any braver fellow was in arry one of the armies than was one of these balloonists.

"You could have counted fifty of these balloons stretched erlong the horizon on the day that Stonewall Jackson broke upon their rear. These balloonists were looking all the time toward Richmond. They didn't know old Stonewall then as well as they did after that, and they were plum surprised when some of Jackson's men rushed up to the windlass where the rope was tied which held one of these balloons and captured the squad erround and begin to wind the balloon fellow down.

"The balloonist took in the situation and drawed his pistol, and before you could have said Jack Robinson he plugged one of the confederates with er ball as big as your little finger. In er minute er lot of confederates raised their guns to plug him, but an officer stopped 'em and told 'em not to shoot er man up in the clouds and called on the balloonist to surrender, and ordered a soldier at the windless to wind him down.

"I won't surrender, never," said the Yankee, and with that he blazed erway with his pistol ergin and at the same time he reached down with his knife and cut the rope that held him to the windlass, and up he scooted into the clouds with er thousand muskets banging at him.

"They didn't hit him. He went up till the balloon, basket, man and all didn't look bigger than er stovepipe hat, when suddenly he turned square off to the left and went skimming toward the James river."

"You are right," said Brown, "that was the fellow what came down from the heavens and scared old Drewry's niggers."

"He sailed to the river and crossed over," resumed Plunkett, with a wicked cut of his eye at Brown for disturbing.

"Balloons weren't common then like they is since this Piedmont exposition got up, and when the balloonist dropped down ermong the niggers at Drewry's Bluff they thought it was the devil come to get 'em for the part they had took in preventing the Yankees from capturing Richmond, and they scattered in er stampede, and before the confusion was over the Yankee had picked himself up and went skinning down the James and got erboard er Yankee gunboat."

Young ladies wear the Breton plastron, or vest of white cloth, embroidered in red, yellow and green silks. Young lades are also using much white woolen braid for trimming their spring and summer dresses. It is employed in one or several widths, and in a great variety of ways. Several rows border the skirt, or the three sides of a square tablier. On the bodice it outlines a square or round yoke, while on the sleeves it frames a puff or forms a deep cuff.

Finest brands of wines, liquors and cigars at Keefe's.

"COAL OIL JOHNNY"

The Ex-Petroleum Prince a Station Agent in a Nebraska Town.

When His Career as Spendthrift Ended He Owed Nearly $20,000 for Board.

The interest in Johnny Steele, known to fame as "Coal Oil Johnny," has never flagged, says an Oil City, Pa., letter to the Pittsburg *Commercial Gazette*. The visitor to the oil regions asks first about Coal Oil Johnny and next about John D. Rockefeller. Numerous inquiries reach the oil country for the famous spendthrift's address. It is not longe since the writer received a letter from a dime museum firm in Chicago inquiring his whereabouts, with a view, as they said, to offering him a chance to exhibit himself as a freak. The address was furnished, but the offer was declined, although the salary in Mr. Steele's present circumstances must have had its temptations.

The statement is often published that Coal-Oil Johnny has died or that he has regained his squandered fortune. There is as much truth in one as there is in the other. He is still alive at the age of about 50 years and his address is Ashland, Saunders county, Nebraska, where he has lived for the last twelve years. He is at present employed as a station agent at Ashland. He has not recovered his fortune or any part of it, but makes a comfortable living and has apparently forgotten the princely days of his youth. After he had run through with his money he came back from his wild journeyings and settled down at Rouseville, the scene of his former grandeur, as station agent of the Buffalo, New York & Pennsylvania railroad. This was within sight of the old farm whence all his wealth had come. He was here a few months and then went west, where he has been ever since and doubtless where he will end his days. His son a year ago came east and married a young lady of Cooperstown, Venango county, Pa., and took his bride back to Ashland. He is a telegraph operator and the operator at the station where his father is employed.

Coal-Oil Johnny was about three years running through with his fortune. The Widow McClintock farm, from which this fortune was made, is about three miles from Oil City. Rouseville is about a quarter of a mile distant from the McClintock farm. It was at Rouseville where Johnny began to throw his money away, but that town, although one of the red-hot oil towns, was soon too small for him. Erie, Buffalo and Pittsburg knew him next, but it was at Philadelphia that he distinguished himself most. How much money he squandered in three years is a matter of conjecture, even in the oil country. There is, however, a wide misapprehension of the amount. His fortune did not reach into the millions, as has often been stated. The best judgment here places it at not above $300,000. He was the adopted son of Widow McClintock, and at her death her oil farm and its accumulated earnings pased to him. It was petroleum that made Mrs McClintock a rich woman in a few months, and strange to say, it was the exploding of an oil can that caused her death. She was kindling the fire with oil, when the can exploded, and lived but a short time after receiving her injuries. Perhaps $100,000 was turned over to Johnny on the settling of her estate, and his share of the products of the farm after that time is supposed to have been about $200,000. He therefore squandered about $100,000 a year for the three years the money lasted. At the end of this time the old bonanza farm had ceased to yield and his money was spent.

His career as a spendthrift came to an end Thursday, February 13, 1868, when he filed a voluntary petition in bankruptcy in the United States district court at Pittsburg. His indebtedness at the time was thus scheduled:

W. H. Kanga, Girard house, Philadelphia	$19,824
William E. Galbraith, attorney-at-law, Erie, Pa.	10,000
J. E. Caldwell & Co., Philadelphia, jewelry	5,805
John D. Jones, harness	1,280
W. S. Horn, cigars	56
E. H. Conklin, Philadelphia, liquors	2,024
Phalan & Collender, billiard tables	1,500
Unknown creditor, oil painting	2,000
For hats	300
Total	$32,789

This schedule tells its own story of a royal spree, extending over a period of three years. The indebtedness at the Girard house was for board, liquors, etc. While at this hotel he occupied a suite of rooms on the parlor floor, and usually had from one to three kindred sports with him whose board and expenses he paid for the sake of their company. The amount of his unpaid bill at the Girard house, nearly $20,000, is an indication that he and his companions lived tolerably high. How much money he paid at the Girard house is not known, but it is thought to have been as much as he left unpaid.

A good deal of fiction has been told in regard to his wild extravagances. It is not true, for instance, that he took offense at the management of a Philadelphia hotel, bought the property, installed a new management of his own, and, then tiring of the hotel business, made somebody a present of the whole outfit. It is authenticated, however, that he bought a carriage and team, and in a day or two gave the rig to the driver. He squandered a large amount of money in taking a minstrel troupe around the country, perhaps as much as $75,000. He had a boon companion that he always took with him on his travels, and Johnny paid all expenses. He was a young man from Erie. Both dressed exactly alike, even to jewelry and neckties.

It is a curious fact that the old, played-out Steele farm has been revived and is making another man rich. That man is John W. Waits of Oil City, who bought the old place a few years ago for $7,000. He has since been offered $80,000 for it. Waits was a street gamin about Rouseville when Johnny Steele was cutting his wide swath here, and frequently held the young oil prince's team while the latter went into a saloon to get a drink. Waits grew up among the oil derricks around Rouseville, and undertands thoroughly the business of managing oil wells. He has made a study of the oil wells along Oil creek. He was very familiar with the wells on the old Steele or the McClintock farm, and believed, with the improved appliances for pumping, they could be made to yield oil in paying quantities although they had been abandoned for years. He bought the farm from an oil company that was glad to sell it, paying $7,000. Several of the old wells were cleaned out, torpedoed and rigged up for pumping. They all produced oil, as Mr. Waits thought they would. The best results, however, have been obtained from the new wells that he drilled on the farm. Nearly all of his new wells were good producers, as Oil Creek wells go now, though, of course, they are small affairs compared to the spouters that poured out their wealth for Coal Oil Johnny. Johnny Waits is a very different man from Johnny Steele. He is extremely practical, and none of his money is spent foolishly. From an abandoned farm, thought to be next to worthless, he has developed a very profitable property.