# THE MILAN EXCHANGE.

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### PARSON LEE.

To a drowsy country village
Came a certain Parson Lee;
And a man so quaintly different
From all other men was he
That the 'Squire himself, the sceptic,
Came to church to hear him pray,
And to note the strange things uttered
By this marvel of the day.

The eccentric said this planet
Was a true and goodly place,
And the only thing they wanted
Was the more of Heaven's grace;
And he sought to show the people
How to think and work and live,
So that each should help the other
And unto the needy give;

How the door that leads to Heaven
Was most amply broad and wide,
And how each could turn the handle
And go easily inside;
That the very gentlest natures
In the world may yet be strong;
And how truth is always wisdom,
And all wickedness is wrong.

He explained how true religion
Was day-working, nothing more;
That this world was not an ocean,
Nor we pebbles on the shore;
But that thinking men and women
Should find better things to do
Than in twisting God's commandments
Or quite breaking them in two.

"As for acting like our neighbors,
Why, we none of us are fools
You cannot be made a Christian
Under everybody's rules.
If your neighbor's not as good as
He or you would have him be,
Just you go ahead and beat him!"
Said this candid Parson Lee.

Next, he told them how complaining
Was a noxious, choking weed;
That the flowers scarcely blossomed
Ere they changed to homely seed;
How that seed again sprang upward
And bore many flowers more;
And that life was ever fading
And renewing, o'er and o'er.

So, this man, by honest talking,
Worked his wonders in the town;
But he never cared for praises,
And he laughed at high renown.
Yet the people loved him dearly,
And they blessed God for the sight,
Till at last the Master left them,
On a cold, dark winter's night.

Thus he went, they knew not whither;—
Have you ever met him, pray?
You would know him by his smiling,
And the sunshine on his way.
We have hunted o'er Creation,
Over land and over sea,
But no trace can discover,
Of our missing Parson Lee

*—Weekly Graphic.*

### MY WIFE'S MAID.

The series of burglaries which startled the public in the autumn and early winter of 186– was of a description to alarm any household. The general features of each robbery was the same. In every case a gang of seven to eleven men had broken into an isolated dwelling containing an unusual amount of silver or jewels; had intimidated the inmates by threatening them with fire-arms; mastered them, secured them, gagged them, then quietly proceeded methodically to strip the house of all the valuables it contained. Their intelligence of the premises was never at fault. Secret drawers and sliding panels, supposed to be known only to the family, were sought and opened at once, and safes, whether built into the walls or exposed in closets, were equally at their mercy, and easily forced by means of drills or gunpowder.

The police seemed indefatigable in investigation and pursuit, yet five of these audacious and astounding robberies had succeeded each other without a single arrest taking place. Plenty of rumors were abroad that the gang were in the hands of the authorities, but such statements contained not a grain of truth, for the detectives were absolutely in the dark.

My own position filled me with anxiety. My house is six miles from town, set in wide grounds, remote from any habitation but the gardener's cottage at the gate. Both my wife and myself had inherited a large amount of bulky plate, and besides this useless metal, which never came out of the safe, I had several costly services presented on the occasion of our marriage, three salvers, etc., testimonials from societies of which I had been an active member, to say nothing of a complete and varied assortment of small articles in silver and gold. Then my wife's possessions were those of a princess, for she had been a daughter of a millionaire, and all her life a spoiled child of fortune. Besides plate and jewels, our house contained a valuable collection of statuary, paintings, and bronzes, and I was only too conscious of having expended a fortune upon the surroundings of our daily life, and was inspired with grave doubts as to its safety. Brooding over such thoughts, and reading the newspapers, filled with speculations concerning these mysterious burglaries, I soon became the victim of an exaggerated disquietude. Had my own wishes been carried out, every ounce of silver and every jewel we owned would have been sent into town to my bankers', but my wife objected, laughed at my apprehensions, and begged me not to worry.

But I continued to worry, and perplexed myself with conflicting plans for safety, and one day while in town I went to the headquarters of the police, and inquired for Betts, the detective engaged on this case.

He admitted me into his private room. I asked for the latest news. Had anybody been arrested? No. Was anybody to be arrested? He shrugged his shoulders. Was any body suspected?

He chuckled softly to himself.

"My dear sir," said he, "we suspect everybody."

"Then," cried I, "arrest everybody on suspicion! Good God! I cannot sleep in my bed, for something assures me my turn will come next. I can't decide what to do, Betts. My wife won't let the silver and the diamonds go out of the house, and this very night I may be awakened to find masked men standing over me, with loaded pistols, who will rob my house under my very eyes!"

Betts shook his head: mused a little with his legs crossed and his left forefinger pressed into his cheek. "By-the-bye," said he, presently, "how many servants have you, Mr. Powers? Please tell me about them individually."

I went over their names, and the detective checked them off in his memorandum-book as I gave the facts connected with them. Saunders, the butler, had been with us seventeen years; the cook, five years; coachman and groom, seven; and the chambermaid, three—all fixtures in the household but Marie, my wife's maid, who had come within the last four weeks.

"Ah!" exclaimed Betts, "where did you get Marie? Was she well recommended?"

"Oh yes; she is French, and has just come to this country with a family by the name of De Sturges. She was nurse to a child who died on the passage, and was thus thrown out of employment; she advertised, and my wife saw her, liked her, and engaged her."

"You continue to like her?"

"Capitally: she's a perfect genius, with effective magic in her fingers."

"Did you see her former employers?"

"Yes; both De Sturges and his wife—chatty, agreeable people, of some means, apparently, and are going to settle in New Orleans."

"Describe her, if you please," said Betts, with a keen interest, which surprised me.

"Oh," he added, as I stared at him, "give me leave to be curious."

"With all my heart. Marie is small, black-eyed, black-haired, compactly built, with remarkably neat hands and feet. She has a saucy, laughing face, and her hair is short, crisp and curly."

"How about her voice?"

"Very clear and ringing. She does not speak English fluently, but understands every word that is said to her."

"Now about her little ways."

"A thorough Frenchwoman, with a knack of pleasing everybody. I don't know when I've seen such an artless, good, happy little girl."

Betts laughed uneasily, then bent his head on his hand, his elbow resting on his knee.

"Mr. Powers," said he at last, looking up with a peculiar flash in his eyes, "I am going to take you into my confidence, but you must be discreet, or you will ruin me. I've sworn to see this thing through, or resign my position. I'm sick of this infernal foolery of calling myself a detective and letting Satan reign night and day all over the city. The newspapers drive me mad! They know nothing about the obstacles we contend with, and goad us into premature steps, which cost us our reputation, and end in failure. I've been working in the ark these nine weeks, but, by Heavens, I believe you've shown me a glimmer of light."

His manner indicated intense excitement; his words came spasmodically, his face worked, and he had to draw his hand two or three times across his mouth before he could go on. Then producing a note-book, he opened it at well-worn leaves.

"There have been," he began, looking at me with a sort of smile, "five great robberies within the last six months, and each one has these special features, characterizing it as the work of the same hands as the other four:

"First, the combination of seven to eleven masked men, all adroit burglars; second, an isolated house is attacked, sure to contain ample provision for a successful robbery; third, the thieves know the premises; fourth, the leader of the gang is a small man, of active habits, with a clear, shrill voice."

He stopped and looked at me.

"I did not know there was a recognized leader," I remarked.

He drew a large book from the desk. "Here," said he, "is the full testimony in all five cases. Run your eyes over it, and you will see that the general facts all coincide. This small man gives directions and leads every body."

"Probably some London cracksman."

Betts nodded, winked, then leaned forward, and whispered in my ear.

"I suspect it's a woman."

"Impossible! no woman has the nerve."

"A she-devil, then—something in a woman's form at all events. Now for the facts on which I base my belief. The rest of the gang are as free and easy with each other as you please, yet no one ever lays a finger on this little one, but all draw back to let him pass. He gives orders, exerts himself when ingenuity is required, but when strength is needed he looks on while the others fall to work. Besides, young Stewart, who was brought down stairs in his night-shirt the night of their robbery, told me jokingly that he believed there was a woman among the thieves, for one of them took offense at his bare legs, and ordered them covered up with the piano-spread."

"Still a very airy hypothesis this about the woman."

"You have to jump at conclusions sometimes, and find facts to suit. As soon as I had mastered these details, I was impressed by the conviction that one of the thieves had been on the premises before. At Mr. Stewart's, for instance, the safe is built into the wall, and a false panel in the wainscot is the only opening to it; *yet the first place the burglars approached was that panel, which the little fellow slid aside at once.* So I set to work looking for a suspicious character in the house, and found all satisfactory till I came to a French governess who stayed with them six weeks last spring. Now, sir, in each house entered by these masked devils there has been during the past twelve months some similar transient inmate. At Wardwell's it was a French cook, in a white cap and apron; at the Lewises', the young ladies' page, a clever Buttons; at the Pratts', a protege of the children, a handsome vagrant Italian boy, with a violin. And now, Mr. Powers," continued Betts, bringing his hand heavily down upon my knee, "I am ready to swear that you have this dangerous inmate under your own roof in the character of *your wife's maid.*"

I started as if I had been shot.

"Impossible!" I gasped; "*impossible!*"

"But why, sir, impossible?"

"The idea is monstrous. Marie is a sweet little girl, playful as a kitten."

"But, Mr. Powers, you are a man of the world, and know that a woman is not proved honest because she bewitches you."

"But, Betts, admit that though I am an old fool, my wife is a thorough woman, and, as a rule, suspects all her own sex, yet she is positively fond of Marie."

"Marie is a clever little puss. Wherever she has lived as man or woman, the whole family have adored her. I have always thought," he went on, with a sort of chuckle, "that no fact about women is more damning than that the good ones are, as a rule, the dull ones. Put spirit, sparkle, intellect, into any one of them, and she is certain to play the devil. Has Marie shown any interest in these burglaries?"

There could be no doubt of her having questioned me concerning them with intense eagerness, and if I spoke to my wife about my apprehensions while she was present, Marie never lost a word.

"Does she know about your silver? Has she any charge of your wife's diamonds?"

I started. That very morning I had shown her my safes behind a false book-case in my study, and asked her opinion whether any one could mistrust those innocent-looking encyclopedias, or suspect the existence of a closet six feet square between my room and the library. I was ashamed of my own greenness, but made a clean breast of it to Betts, who was good enough to refrain from expression of his opinion of my discretion.

"My word for it," he cried, "she has been waiting to find out that secret, and now she will leave your house within forty-eight hours. Her pretext will be a reasonable one, and she will promise to return, but when she does return she will bring her gang at her heels to rob your house for you."

The idea of connecting our pretty Marie with such outrages filled me with horror. I rejected it strenuously.

"Believe or not as you like," he returned, with a shrug, "so long as you only follow my advice. Just out of curiosity, take home a little dog with you, and see if Marie does not set to work to bewitch it at once. Then the moment she speaks of leaving your house telegraph to me."

Our interview lasted another hour. When I left him I went to a dog-fancier's, and bought a little yelping black-and-tan spaniel, and carried him home with me. It was approaching dinner-time when I arrived, and my wife was in her room sitting before the mirror with Marie braiding her hair. I entered as was my habit, and sat down by the fire, and let the girl draw off my boots and bring my slippers in her usual way. It seemed an unmanly treason to suspect her as she moved about me with her bright smile and easy grace. She rarely spoke, unless actually addressed, but her intuitions of any one's wishes amounted absolutely to genius.

"Whom did you see in town?" inquired my wife.

"Don't speak of it," said I, looking fearfully about, as if the walls had ears, "but I was with Betts, the detective. You must not repeat what I say, Marie."

"Never, monsieur!" cried Marie.

"The fact is," I proceeded, sinking my voice into a sepulchral whisper, "that gang of masked burglars have been traced to New Orleans, and may be arrested by this time."

"Then I hope, dear," said my wife, laughing, "that you will again sleep soundly in your bed. After you got up last night for the fourth time to promenade about, pistols in hand, I decided it might be better to eat off pewter and wear French gilt jewelry than to lead such a life."

I too laughed, and stretched my legs comfortably. "Yes, I mean to sleep like a Christian hereafter; besides, I have brought home a dog."

"A dog!" exclaimed Marie, startled.

"Yes." I turned and looked at her attentively. "Don't you like dogs?"

She protested vehemently that she loved dogs better than anything in the world; and when Jingle, the spaniel, was produced it was so pretty a sight to see her playing with him that I was freshly incensed with Betts for putting his cursed suspicions into my head. She took the little beast to bed with her, I believe, and next morning he would obey her lifted finger.

That very day she received a letter from Madame De Sturges, her former mistress, asking her to come in and pass a few hours with her before she left for New Orleans. Marie carried the letter to Mrs. Powers. "Madame wishes to talk to me about Mlle. Helene," pleaded the girl, with tears in her eyes. "To-morrow will be the birth-day of the pauvre ange, who lies at the bottom of the cruel sea."

"Poor Madame De Sturges," exclaimed my wife, touched at the thought of the sorrowing mother: "you must spend to-morrow with her, Marie. Go in at nine o'clock and come back at five."

Marie was grateful, and told melting stories about the pauvre ange—her beauty, her piety, her intelligence—and nothing could equal my wife's sympathy, and when the girl went to town the next morning she actually carried a note to Madame De Sturges, written in my wife's very best French.

Meanwhile I had telegraphed Marie's proposed movements to Betts, and now, with some nervousness, awaited events. The detective had warned me that she would win the dog's affections; that she would leave the house, promising to return, but would not return. Two of these predictions were already verified; but it Marie came back I could laugh at his suspicions, and regard them as futile.

But Marie did not return at five o'clock; a telegram arrived in her stead from Madame De Sturges, saying that she had kept the girl and would write at length and explain. Next morning a letter was received from that lady. She told my wife she was ill, yet obliged to travel; homesick in a strange land, without a familiar woman's face near her, and that she had persuaded, almost forced, Marie to remain and set out with her and her husband for New Orleans that very evening. An incoherent, tear-blotted note from Marie accompanied this, filled with protestations of sorrow at the necessity of thus deserting us. She was torn by conflicting feelings of love toward Mrs. Powers and her sacred duty to the mother of little Helene, the angel child whom she had so dearly loved, and whose voice she now heard calling to her from the spirit world, bidding her remain and comfort the lonely mother.

While my wife read this to me with tears, I stood aghast at Betts's predictions.

Theories are fascinating, but when speculations turn into threatening certainties, and there stares you in the face conclusive proof that your house is about to be robbed, you experience small pleasure in the accurate foreknowledge of any prophet.

I instantly telegraphed to Betts that I would meet him at my son-in-law's office at twelve o'clock, then proposed to my wife that she should go to town and spend a couple of days with our daughter, and offered to drive her in myself. We set off within an hour, and after leaving her up town I hurried down, eager to see the detective. It was on the stroke of twelve when I entered the office, and I thought at first that Betts had failed me, for no one was there but a ponderous old gentleman with gold glasses and white side whiskers. I am not used to intrigues and masquerades, and when I recognized Betts in this disguise I could hardly refrain from exclaiming at his cleverness; but his own coolness kept me within bounds, and I sat down beside him, and began reading my paper. Presently, with his eyes still fastened on his *Herald*, he edged toward me, and dropped these sentences into my ear:

"It's all going beautifully.....I followed the girl in yesterday.....Went to —— hotel.....The De Sturgeses booked there all straight.....Whole party left Jersey City at nine o'clock last night, ticketed and luggage checked to Washington.....Slipped out of the cars at Newark, all three in men's dress, and were back here before midnight.....Met eight fellows I know at a saloon in —— street, and I can spot all eleven of 'em this very minute.....They're at a den in —— street getting ready to play their little game somewhere to-night."

"At my house?" I cried.

He shook his head.

"Dunno," said he, looking straight into the fire.

"Look here, Betts," I whispered, "this may be fun to you, but, though I'm no coward, it's death to me. Why not arrest 'em now?"

"Yes, just so," he returned, irritably—"why not? Where's your evidence? Now, Mr. Powers, just look at this matter sensibly. You know as well as I do that half the thieves we catch get off because no one will swear to their identity at their examination. Now I'm anxious to make a sure thing of it for once, and take my oath that I caught them in the act."

"You mean to arrest them while they are robbing me?"

"I do."

"All right—only I should prefer to have the row in another man's house."

I saw at once that Betts's opinion of me had gone down to zero; but he disguised his contempt, and went on to tell me that he had dispatched one of his men, Johnson by name, to my place to make a reconnaissance, under pretense of trimming my evergreens. Upon this man's report, and upon two or three other open questions which he did not think it worth while to explain, depended his programme for to-night. If by any possibility there was a likelihood of my house being entered at once, I was to know it by dinner-time, that I might be prepared for the burglars. I was meantime to go home quietly, and spend my time in my usual manner, so as to excite no comment among the servants, and, receiving no word from Betts, I was to rest satisfied, and consider my house safe for another twenty-four hours.

I went home according to directions, and set about spending my day in my usual way, but the house was so still, and seemed so deserted, I found it impossible to read, even to sit quietly in a chair, for more than five minutes at a time. So I called the little dog, Jingle, and set out for a walk about the grounds, feeling some curiosity to get a glimpse of the detective, Johnson. It was a black December afternoon, a shivering wind in the tree-tops, and leaden clouds promising snow before midnight. The bare ground was frozen hard, and a few dead leaves eddied about in gusts that rose and fell at uncertain intervals. I heard the sound of an axe through the sombre stillness, and Jingle frisked forward and barked at a man hacking at the firs in the shrubbery. I addressed him regarding his work, and he winked back his appreciation of our mutual sharpness; then I went on, reconnoitred a few minutes longer, and again turned in. The day seemed endless, and I was glad when Saunders lit the gas, and shut out the shivering landscape and funeral clouds with the heavy curtains. Dinner-time came, and brought with it a semblance of occupation, and when I was half through my meal I suddenly remembered Jingle, and sent for him to keep me company. He was not in the house. It flashed upon me that I had not seen him after passing Johnson in the thicket, and I dispatched the coachman to call him in; but only echoes answered the cry. He had evidently remained out in the grounds with the policeman, and I dismissed the subject from my mind, finished my dessert, and went back to my library fire. No word had come from Betts, hence I was safe for to-night, at all events, and I breathed freer, and stretched my legs and dozed until ten o'clock in comparative comfort. Then, rousing myself, I lit a lantern and went out the door and along the side piazzas to speak a word with Johnson, who, Betts had arranged, was in any case to keep a watch under the covered carriage-way.

*He was not there.* I did not understand it. Had he got drunk, or had Betts taken him away? Perhaps, however, he was still loitering at the edge of the grounds; accordingly, I walked out on the lawn, and swung my lantern two or three times. Then, as it was bitter cold, and was beginning to snow, I turned in, and finding that it was almost eleven o'clock, I ordered Saunders to close the house and send the servants to bed, and to bed I went myself.

But as soon as the light was out, and my head touched the pillow, I was freshly impressed by the mystery of John on's disappearance, and accordingly I got up, opened my pistol-case, took out two revolvers, and putting them and a sword-cane within easy reach, I returned to bed.

"Deuce take this suspense!" said I, as I again lay down. "I sha'n't sleep a wink." But after tossing a few times, and assuring myself I could not close my eyes, I fell asleep—at least, after a time, I was awakened by a bright light shining full in my face.

"Good God!" I cried out loud, "they've come to-night." For three men, with black cambric masks concealing their faces, stood over me, each pointing a pistol at my head.

"Please to get up, Mr. Powers," said one of them, in a cool, civil way; "please to put on that dressing-gown and those slippers. You shall not be harmed in the least if you will only be quiet and obey directions." With three pistols almost square in his eyes, any man will be docile, I suppose; at least I got up and put on dressing-gown and slippers. Then one of the men caught my arms, drew them behind and manacled them; another gagged me with one of my own silk handkerchiefs; and thus rendered harmless, I was led down stairs, where my household, in various stages of night attire, gagged and tied back to back, were awaiting me in the dining-room. I was put in an arm-chair and fastened to it by feet and hands, then was left alone to stare about me. Maddened, desperate though I was, when I discovered that the sixth of the prisoners was Johnson, the detective, I recognized him with a keen sense of the ridiculous, and only wished that Betts—whom I was mentally anathematizing with curses not loud but deep—were in his place, and tasting some of our humiliations.

Besides the three masked men who had mastered me and brought me down, there were five others in the dining-room. Two were left as sentinels over us, and the rest at once fell to work in a way that meant business. A small, active man (was it our Marie?) motioned toward the sideboard. It was wheeled aside, and stepping forward he pressed the sliding panel, and disclosed the closet where the silver in daily use was kept, and the shelves were at once stripped, and the contents piled upon the table.

The bedrooms up-stairs were next visited, the locks of drawers and wardrobes wrenched apart, and the contents thrown pell-mell on the floor for the chief expert to decide on what should be carried off. The upper rooms gutted, they came down with their spoils, which they piled high before our eyes on the table, and then leaving us again alone with our sentinels, they went through the entry into my library.

It was a dark hour. I leaned back my head and closed my eyes, and felt that fate was cruel to me. Only one consolation illumined the blackness of my despair—my wife had carried her jewels to town with her, and I was spared the humiliation of telling her I had lost them for her through my idiotic faith in Betts. There was a long silence now, which I understood but too well: it was followed by three muffled explosions that shook the house like an earthquake, and almost simultaneously was heard the noise of a scuffle, and I opened my eyes to see the room filled with policemen, and hear pistol-shots exchanged, while our two sentinels were thrown down, disarmed, and pinioned before our eyes.

I looked and listened, mentally stunned, without clear comprehension of the meaning of the uproar, for, with the noise of fire-arms, the clang of manacles, and the beat of heavy feet, the tumult was somewhat terrifying.

In less time than it takes me to describe it, the situation had been reversed, and now Betts, the detective, appeared in the door at the head of his posse of men, who brought in eight of the captured burglars, two of them wounded and bleeding profusely, while the rest showed signs of having maintained a stout resistance; all had lost their masks in the melee, and disclosed sullen and brutal visages.

"How are you, Mr. Powers?" inquired Betts, coming forward and releasing me. "I hope you're not hurt. I beg your pardon for taking possession of your house in this way."

"Why did you make me think I was safe for to-night, Betts?"

"Because," he replied, with a shrug, "I discovered you were just a little upset at the prospect, and I felt afraid of you." He ran his eye over the group beside me, and when he saw Johnson, he grinned, and going up to him, knocked his manacles off. "You're a pretty detective, you are," said he, "to be caught and tied up by the very fellows you were in waiting for!"

Still, Betts was in too high good humor to be angry even with the humiliated Johnson. Meanwhile I was peering into the faces of the thieves, fearing to find Marie among them.

"Betts," I gasped, suddenly, "you haven't got the little one."

He gave a tigerish cry, and glared from one to the other of his prisoners.

"You are sure there was another?"

"No doubt of it," I returned; "any one of these fellows is four inches taller than the leader of the gang."

In another moment he had six picked men at work searching both house and grounds; but he never succeeded in finding even a trace of the eleventh of the party of burglars. Nor even after the conviction and heavy sentence of the other ten, would any one of them confess the secret of their leadership. I had easily identified M. and Madame De Sturges—both swarthy and robust Frenchmen—among them, but in spite of all my efforts, neither one could be induced even to acknowledge they had ever heard of such a person as Marie, or that they had ever masqueraded under the respectable disguise of her employers.

But when the snows melted off in the spring, one little silent witness came to light, and told his pitiful story against her; it was the dog Jingle, found dead in the shrubbery, his throat cut, and his frozen eyes still upturned in reproachful agony.

### Different Kinds of Eyes.

No branch of science has been more thoroughly mastered than optics. The principle of vision must be essentially the same in all eyes, but they differ remarkably, according to the habits of the animal. Birds of lofty flight, as the condor, eagles, vultures, and carrion-seeking prowlers of the feathered race, have telescopic visions, and thus they are enabled to look down and discover their unsuspecting victims. As they approach noiselessly from above, the axis of vision changes—shortening, so that they can see as distinctly within one foot of the ground as when at an elevation of one mile in the air.

This fact explains the balancing of a fish-hawk on its pinions, half a mile above a still pond watching for fish. When one is selected, down the savage hunter plunges, the focal axis varying always to the square view of his intended prey. As they ascend, the axis is elongated by a curious muscular arrangement, so as to see far off again.

Snails have their keen eyes at the extremity of flexible horns, which they can protrude or draw in at pleasure. By winding the instrument round the edge of a leaf or stalk, they can see how matters stand on the opposite side.

The hammer-headed shark has its wicked-looking eyes nearly two feet apart. By will effort they can bend the thin edges of the head, on which the organs are located, so as to examine the two sides of an object the size of a full-sized codfish.

Flies have immovable eyes. They stand out from the head like half an apple, exceedingly prominent. Instead of smooth hemispheres, they have an immense number of facets, resembling old-fashioned glass watch-seals, each one directing the light directly to the opti retina. That explains why they cannot be approached in any direction without seeing what is coming.

It is a very remarkable fact that the three men, Christopher Columbus, Sebastian Cabot, and Americus Vespucii (the first discoverer of the Western World, the second the shore line of the United States, and the third giving his name to the Continent), should all have been Italians. The Italians are very proud of this, and they have a right to be.

When is a young lady like a whale? When she's pouting.

### The Boston Collectorship.

[From The Nation, Feb. 26.]

We must confess that we do not quite understand the burst of surprise, indignation, and dismay which has greeted the appointment of Simmons as Collector of Boston. There is, to be sure, very little to be said in favor of his selection. He is a young man of about the age of thirty-five, whose circumstances rendered it impossible for him to continue his education beyond the age of twelve (though it is stated by his friends that he afterwards read law between the hours of 4 and 8 a. m.), and to whom a naturally energetic disposition early pointed out the field of predatory politics as one in which he was most likely to shine. He has since spent some of his time as a revenue detective, some of it as a Supervisor of Internal Revenue, the duties of the post being chiefly to arrange ward-meetings; and as he is quite illiterate, and in appearance a good specimen of the street rowdy, Mr. Simmons is not exactly the person we should ourselves select to succeed Mr. Russell as Collector of Customs in one of the chief ports of the United States. Still, we do not know that there is much more reason to consider him fit for the post of Supervisor of Internal than Collector of External Revenue. Indeed, according to the Boston *Advertiser*, Mr. Simmons was, as Supervisor, "so grossly negligent or incompetent that John D. Sanborn, following around in his tracks, almost without effort discovered several hundred thousand dollars' worth of taxes due the United States that had escaped notice," these large amounts being "chiefly such as the most ordinary efficiency might have secured—namely, legacy and succession taxes, and taxes on railroad dividends;" and the *Advertiser* says that as it was the duty of Mr. Simmons to collect these taxes, and as the Government employed Sanborn on a contract giving him half the proceeds, the United States lost a hundred thousand dollars by the manner in which Mr. Simmons performed the duties of his office.

The appointment, however, was one of a kind which was on the Butler cards six months ago quite as plainly as it is now that it has been played. Butler has been endeavoring for some ten years, not, as some people seem to imagine, to persuade the people of Massachusetts that he is a noble and virtuous citizen, deserving their suffrages for high office, but to get control of the political machinery of the State through the local machinery of the United States; and he has not worked in a very underhand manner either. It was announced at about the time of his defeat three years ago that the next movements to take place in Washington and Massachusetts politics were the resignation of Boutwell as Secretary of the Treasury, and the installation in his place of Butler's friend Richardson; the election of Boutwell to the Senate as the Butler candidate, and the reappearance of Butler himself as a candidate for the nomination of the Massachusetts Republican Convention. These things all happened. Boutwell did resign, Richardson did accept, and Boutwell was elected to the Senate, notwithstanding the opposition of Mr. Dawes. Butler reappeared as candidate for Governor, and having been narrowly defeated, he naturally enough began again. One of the things made evident by the contest was that Simmons was Butler's right-hand man; indeed, this was made so evident that the Republican Convention passed a resolution directed at him, and virtually calling upon the President to move him from office. Obviously, under these circumstances the thing for Butler to do was to place Simmons in some secure position of honor and profit, from which, with the United States authority behind him, it would be difficult to oust him, and where he would have great political power. The position of Collector was clearly the position. It was still less a secret that the politics of Mr. Thomas Russell were of that uncertain stripe which would naturally lead him to adopt any arrangement which might seem to be for the best interests of the party of Human Rights; it was his influence of which both the Butler and the anti-Butler party had been most afraid throughout the campaign; and it had been for a long time well understood among the politicians that Butler and Russell were not irreconcilable foes. That Butler should go quietly to work and elect his local legislature and make his arrangements with Mr. Russell and his friends at Washington (who, it must be remembered, are no others than the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, to say nothing of Mr. Boutwell, ex-Secretery of the Treasury and active Senator from Massachusetts, and about half of the Massachusetts delegation), was not unnatural either. The curtain rises on the vacant collectorship and the appointment of Mr. Simmons. There is nothing so very strange or unnatural in this. It is said to be an insult to the people of Massachusetts, but why should the people of Massachusetts not be insulted? When "Tom" Murphy was appointed some years ago Collector of the port of New York, that was generally considered an insult to New York; and if Murphy was good enough here, we cannot see why Simmons is not good enough there. "Insulting the people" is in fact the way in which the machinery of the Government is carried on—by Conkling in New York, by Casey in New Orleans, by Butler in Massachusetts. If the inhabitants of Massachusetts had awoke from a sleep of half a century, or were all newly arrived from some foreign country, they might indeed be surprised at a good many things they hear and see; but why should it surprise or dismay any one of the present day to see the ins and outs of the little game we all know so well?

The population of Massachusetts is not, as the good people of that State seem to suppose, the quiet, orderly, religious, homogeneous agricultural community, composed of church-members and governed by deacons and descendants of the first settlers that it was a hundred years ago, but a thriving, energetic, populous modern manufacturing State with highly diversified industries, large and continually growing cities; each man bent on making money, and relying for good government much more on the traditions of the State than on his own exertions; the gulf between the very rich and the very poor continually widening, and, in all the thriving cities, a large and continually increasing number of operatives and other sorts of laborers who look with jealousy on the people of wealth and position who used to administer the affairs of the State, and who wish to be led by some plain, straightforward, blunt man who "has no nonsense about him"—who will give them what they want—money without work, profits without capital, good republican government without their taking too much trouble themselves to be good republicans.

The general apathy of the people of Massachusetts while Butler is working and making the strategic arrangements which are the necessary preliminary to the decisive battles of his campaigns, compared with the dismay which they exhibit when he actually makes his *coups*, is something curious. They certainly cannot expect him to remain idle, and, as the Republican organization in such States as Massachusetts is that which wise and prudent politicians make use of to further their designs, of that he naturally makes use. It is hardly probable indeed that he will ever organize a Corruptionist party by that name, holding meetings to which none but corrupt men are admitted, issuing platforms pronouncing in favor of robbery, fraud and embezzlement, and electing representatives who pledge themselves in writing to advocate none but schemes of spoliation, and recommending appointees on the ground of their service in the way of theft and imposition and their conspicuous sacrifice of public duty to their private interests. The people of Massachusetts seem always to to be waiting for the organization of some such party as this, and nothing seems to surprise these good, honest, confiding people more than to discover, as they do now every few months, that the thieves and despoilers make use of the very organizations to which they themselves belong.

The part played by the President in the appointment of Simmons seems to have excited as much hostility and display of astonishment as that of Butler himself. But we may observe that this is not the first appointment of this kind he has made. After sending Sickles to Spain, and reappointing Casey in New Orleans, and withdrawing the name of Benedict, and letting Mr. Curtis be driven out of the Civil-Service Commission, there seems to be no particular reason why Simmons should not be put over the Boston merchants, the "brood of importers" as Jayne calls them. Indeed, the President's amusing offer to nominate some one else if the Massachussetts delegation can agree on any other nominee, he knowing very well they cannot, and if they could the "principles of civil-service reform" demand imperatively that their wishes should be no more regarded than those of any other well-meaning citizens—this offer seems, here in New York, where we understand the system of administration at Washington pretty well, to be a very natural and obvious way of arranging things.

The attempt to organize an honest man's party was made in earnest some three years ago, and, had the plans of those who had the matter really at heart been carried out, we should now have either a President of undoubted character and intelligence, and got rid of the Butlerites at one blow, or, the attempt failing, the nucleus of a reform party would have been left with which to begin another campaign. There were plenty of Simmonses to be seen in various offices of trust and profit, all over the United States, even in 1872; and Grant had the same sort of belief in reform that he has now. If it was only necessary then to have confidence in Grant, and a few well-known principles which were settled and enacted into law some ten years since, it is equally unnecessary now to take any active steps. If, on the contrary, it is necessary to be very active now, and make a stand in such cases as that of Simmons, those people seem to be in the right who have always maintained that the creation of an active and earnest and persistent opposition is the crying need of the country.

### How a Lobster Dines.

Frank Buckland, the English naturalist, writes as follows: A lobster is a much more particular fellow in his food. I have been watching one in my large marine aquarium at Reculvers. If a portion of food be thrown down to him, he immediately sets his long horns at work to ascertain the whereabouts of his dinner. If he does not like it, he at once pushes it away from him with the attitude of an epicure who bids the waiter take away a plate of meat he does not fancy. If the food is agreeable to him, he munches it up, moving his jaws in a peculiar way, like a weaver making a blanket. He tears his food into large pieces, leaving the actual pounding work to be done by the very peculiar internal teeth, which are to be found in the lining of the stomach, and which my reader can easily examine, if he will take the trouble. When the lobster goes out for a "constitutional," and is not in a particular hurry, he carries his great claws in front of him, well away from the ground, like the big flags we sometimes see heading street processions. He "walks" upon the little legs which are underneath his body while he keeps his horns moving in front of his nose, like a blind man tapping the flags with his stick as he plods along, led by his dog; hence I conclude the lobster is short-sighted. If the least thing alarms him he scuttles backward on his hind legs, which move with the rapidity of the legs of a centipede. If he does not go fast enough in this way, he suddenly snaps his tail toward him like a man suddenly closing his hand, and flies backward with a jerk like an India-rubber band snapped in half. He always goes into his cave tail foremost, and he takes the most wonderfully good shots at the entrance. It has been said by a friend of mine that a fly fisherman will never be perfect until he has got an eye at the back of the head so as to prevent his drop-fly from getting hitched up in the tree behind him. I really think the lobster must have an eye in his tail somewhere. Our pet lobster is not willing that the secrets of her toilet should be exposed to vulgar gaze, so the first night she was in the tank she artfully collected cockle and oyster shells and made a trench round herself after the fashion of the Romans when they took possession of a hill-top. A branch of seaweed forms a canopy overhead, and there she is at this minute, in a house of her own making, a regular "compound householder," with no taxes to pay.

### What Carpet-Bag Rule Costs.

The Charleston *News and Courier* publishes a brief table which shows very effectively one of the results of carpet-bag and negro rule in South Carolina, namely, the increased expenses of the State Government since it has been in the hands of the Grantites. Here are the figures from the official records of the cost of the State Government in 1865 and in 1873 respectively:

| | 1865. | 1873. |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries | $76,143.63 | $231,797.39 |
| Public printing | 17,418.64 | 231,945.66 |
| Legislative expenses | 51,337.10 | 191,339.47 |
| Schools | 8,579.45 | 361,101.37 |
| Public asylums | 25,897.00 | 128,432.11 |
| Contingent funds | 6,922.99 | 75,943.75 |
| Sundries | 88,413.31 | 294,668.85 |
| | $290,248.04 | $1,717,318.60 |
| Deficiencies | ..... | 540,328.00 |
| Total | $290,248.04 | $2,257,646.60 |

And this vast increase in the public expenses has been made in States where owing to misgovernment and excessive taxation property has depreciated enormously in value, and in which a public debt of millions and millions of dollars has been fraudulently contracted by ignorant and venal legislators, black and white, who sold their votes to the highest bidder for the promotion of all sorts of rascalities. It was to keep those thieves in office and thereby secure the electoral vote of the State for Grant that several counties, previous to the last Presidential election, during a period of complete quiet, were put under material law and harried by United States troops.

How to make Toast—Warm your bread well, by changing the sides of the slice when heated through, brown as is desired; there should be rather little than much browning, and the slices should be quite thin, say a quarter or three-eights of an inch—no more. But do not scorch; avoid that in all cases. The philosophy of browning is to take your time until you are done. Where the toast accumulates, keep a hot dish, but use as soon as possible. What is desirable in toast, is the rich color and flavor formed by changing the starch into dextrine, or gum. Heat evaporates moisture in bread as well as elsewhere. The moisture that escapes from toast leaves the bread light, soft and porous inside.

No matter how great the esteem in which he is held by his townsmen, no matter how many nor how exalted have been the positions of honor and trust which he has filled with credit, we cannot but distrust that man who keeps his tobacco cut up into chews in his pocket and jiggles it into his mouth under the pretence of stroking his chin.—*Brooklyn Argus.*

There are now over one hundred opera-houses, so-called, throughout the country, in which an opera was never heard. In some of the towns where they exist the inhabitants think an opera is a strawberry festival for the benefit of a church, and hugging the girls on the sly.—*Graphic.*

On a woman with red hair who wrote poetry—Unfortunate woman! how sad is your lot! Your ringlets are red, but your poems are not.

### Secret Writing.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary deceits ever known in cryptography was adopted by Histiæus in his message to Aristagoras, advising him to revolt. This Histiæus, then, chose one of his most faithful slaves, and having shaved his head tattooed it with his advices, and after keeping him till his hair had grown again, dispatched him to Aristagoras with this message only "Shave my head and look thereon." Two objections might be urged against this method; first, if the communication was of an urgent nature (which indeed it was), the growing of the hair involved some little delay; and secondly, it is difficult to see why, if his slave was most faithful, Histiæus did not intrust the message to the slave's mind instead of his skull, especially as the slave must have known, from the pain of the operation, that some mystery lay there, and, in his time of trial by threats and promises, would probably have said so. The account we have given is that offered by Herodotus, who has been irreverently called "the father of lies." The story is better told by Aulus Gellius, who says Histiæus chose for his purpose a slave who had an infirmity in his eyes, and shaved his hair under pretense of healing his diseased vision, and after, when his hair was grown, sent him to Aristagoras, bidding the slave tell the ruler to repeat the operation. By this version the slave's suspicion was less likely to be aroused, but the difficulty of the delay still remains. Aulus Gellius denominates the whole undertaking as "an unexpected and profound wile excogitated by barbaric craft."

Most people have tried their hand at that so-called secret writing which is effected by various vegetable juices, and brought to light by fire or water—here the use of sal ammoniac and juice of on