MOTHER.

LIFE is over. Death is sweet.
Lay the lilies at her feet.
May they rest upon her bier,
She who walked among them here.

Gently fold her wasted hands,
Smooth the hair in silver bands
O'er the brow where lines of care
Time hath wrought so gently fair.

Calm and still, no wild alarm
Stirs the heart whose sweetest charm
Lies beneath the churchyard sod.
She hath known the widow's God.

Weary grew her eyes and dim,
Mourning day by day for him,
While she watched and waited long
For the angel's greeting song.

Oft when worn with grief and pain
Could we feel her touch again;
It would calm the aching brow;
But no sigh she heedeth now.

When we sink in death's last sleep,
Other eyes the watch must keep:
O'er her children's dreamless bed,
Other eyes the tears must shed.

But we would not call her back
More to tread life's dusty track.
She hath done her life work well.
Let the lily petals tell.

THE HAUNTED LAKE.

In southwest Texas there is a lake that bears the reputation of being the most desolate and uncanny pool in the world. The place is a veritable city of ghosts. It is a body of water three-quarters of a mile wide and a dozen miles long, lying in the shadows of an almost impenetrable forest in the bottoms of the Nueces river, in Dimmitt county. The lake is very deep; so deep that in many places no procurable line has ever reached the bottom. Hence, the rumor says there is no bottom at all. Its shores are absolutely uninhabited, and the boldest wayfarer hesitates to tarry near its ill-omened waters even in the broad light of day.

It swarms with fish, and immense alligators dwell there.. Fierce, wild animals slink unmolested through the tangled growth along the bank. At night the owl's hoot and the long-drawn, high, plaintive wail of the hungry panther form a fit accompaniment to the ghostly revels of unquiet spirits.

That some inexplicable happening takes place on these lonely waters on certain nights is beyond question. The evil repute has existed for more than a century—such sights have been seen and sounds heard by those bold enough to attempt investigation, that efforts in that line have entirely ceased; the lake is shunned, and further inquiry must be made by strangers, for no one knowing the place can be bribed or forced to stay there after nightfall.

The lake was the scene of a tragedy over 100 years ago, and from that day to the present it has borne an unhallowed reputation. In those days there was a road that skirted its lower end. The road was the single highway connecting Mexico with the mission settlements and the Spanish outposts along the San Antonio river, and further east, in what is now Texas.

The lake was a well-known and favored camping place. There was good water there, good grass and abundant shade; a welcome rest spot for those coming from the south over the hot sandy cactus-covered uplands. Near the close of a September day long ago, a large wagon train stopped to camp for the night. Within the wagons were sacks of silver coin for the payment of troops in the frontier garrisons. To guard this was an armed mounted escort, numerous enough to put at rest all fear of danger. The whole lay down to rest and slept that night, unsuspicious, careless and negligent. But a deadly peril was lurking near at hand, eager-eyed, blood-thirsty and ever-watchful of an opportunity.

All the way from the Rio Grande the

THE GHASTLY PROCESSION.

trail of the crawling wagons had been followed by bandits—thieves, renegades and murderers they were, cruel as tigers, brave as grizzlies. Every move had been noted, every camping place watched, every sign of careless confidence eagerly scrutinized by keen eyes that shone with the ill-repressed light of anticipated plunder.

On this September night, when the whole camp was resting, the sentinels nodding, even as they stood in the dark shadows of the trees, the robbers made their attack; a fierce yell, a rattling volley and a savage rush. The startled escorts sprang up, grasping their old-fashioned escopetas, and made what resistance they could. There was close desperate fighting all around, and a confusion indescribable. The commandant realized that the fight would soon go against him, so, exhorting his men to stand to the last, he gathered the teamsters about him and togther they took the sacks of silver from the wagons and threw them over into the bottomless depths of the lake.

There was barely time, for all resistance was soon overcome, the survivors begging for mercy and the human wolves in complete possession. But the silver was beyond them, out of their reach, and all their trouble and pains profitless. Mad at the thought of being balked, the outlaws took the survivors, the commandant, the teamsters, the soldiers, bound them hand and foot, tied heavy stones to them and tossed them, living, one by one, over into the dark water. Of all who had laid down to rest in the evening, not one was alive in the morning. Pools of blood, trampled grass, half burned wagons, the ashes of expired camp fires, marked the spot, and that was all. Deep down in the still, cool water lay the bright silver, and on the surface a swirl here and there told of the alligators fighting over their hideous feast.

Exactly one year later to the very day another party camped at the lake. They were troopers returning to easy service in Mexico, after a season of loneliness, hardship and danger on the frontier. The memory of the tragedy enacted there had either been forgotten or given slight consideration, for in those days lawlessness was but too common to cause especial remark.

The troopers picketed their horses among the trees, camp fires were lighted, supper was eaten; there was a restful hour or two given up to smoking, story-telling, laughter, singing, the playing upon guitar and mandolin, and then each man, tired and drowsy, wrapped himself in his blanket, soon to be soundly sleeping. All but the sentinels, who kept their steady rounds as the solemn night wore on. There was a nearly full moon, that at midnight rested just north of the zenith, illuminating with its mild light the surface of the open lake, and emphasizing the black shadows under the trees. The sentry whose beat lay nearest the shore chanced to glance carelessly out over the water as he walked slowly along and he saw something there that changed him from a half somnambulist to an intensely awakened man.

The water lay still and quiet as death, and from its waveless surface the sentinel saw what first seemed to be wreaths and strands of gray mist, rising and twirling. In a moment, even as he looked, the shadowy vapors resolved themselves into the forms of men—horrible shapes, with agonizing faces, and arranged themselves in ghastly procession, and, swaying as in a gentle wind, moved swiftly forward toward the camp of the sleeping soldiers. A weird low cry, the shadow of a wail, rose up and chilled the hearer's utmost soul with deadly terror. More from fright than boldness the sentinel fired his carbine at the advancing shades and then ran shrieking into the woods. The sleepers, roused up as one man, saw, heard, and they too fled, panic-stricken, into the thickets. The horses plunged and broke the picket ropes. The noise of maddening beasts crashing through the undergrowth and the cries of terror-stricken men grew fainter and fainter as all hurried from the horror.

Later on in the night a few of the boldest met together, and, with courage somewhat restored, determined to go back and have a second look at the things that had affrighted them. Cautiously they returned within view of the camp. They saw forms moving about here and there, strangely dimmed in the flickering radiance of the campfires and strangely illumined when in the shadows. Dropping behind bushes and trees they watched breathlessly, not daring to advance. The camp was, indeed, occupied, but by no mortal occupants. The unearthly visitors moved swiftly about as though busying themselves with camp duties, and, as the scared watchers yet looked on, the first flush of morning began to mingle with the wan light of the dying moon. Again arose that vague wailing cry. Again the shades marshaled themselves in regular order and moved down silently to the edge of the lake and out upon the water, there to sink out of sight.

When the demoralized troop had been gathered together again and was well on its way the men spoke of the occurrence with bated breath and called the place "Espantoso." As the story became known the lake came to be regarded as accursed, and travelers passed swiftly by, not daring to rest, however weary. Belated wayfarers, chance hunters and fishermen added reluctant tales to the sum total of experiences. Strange forms were seen after dusk and whisperings were heard from beneath the water and from unseen lips in the air. As years passed the experience of the soldiery was undergone by other camping parties, some strangers who knew not, and others who had heard and believed not. All were one in belief thereafter. It is also said that certain persons who were known to have camped there at night were never seen or heard of again. So evil became the name of the place that the road was finally turned away from the lake shore, and "Espantoso" became a name to be spoken with dread and a place to be avoided. It so remains down to this very day.

A Sad Dream That Came True.

George H. Wheeler was found mangled and dead on the Pennsylvania railroad tracks recently with a letter in his pocket containing this startling prophecy:

'I dreamed that you were dead; that two men placed you in a wagon and that you were bloody from head to foot."

This letter was written by a brother to the dead man and dated Elk Ridge, Md., March 5, 1896. Wheeler was a yard clerk in the Jersey yard of the Pennsylvania railroad company, had been in the employ of that company nineteen years, lived at 426½ Ninth street southwest and leaves a wife and five children.—Washington Times.

Mr. A. J. Balfour is one of the few really good musicians in the house of commons. He follows the movements of the musical world with keen interest, and is no mean performer on the pianoforte.

MEXICO REJOICING.

NOBODY ANXIOUS FOR GOLD DOWN THERE.

Agricultural and Manufacturing Enterprises Bring Great Prosperity—The British Gold Standard Has No Hold There—Farmers Growing Wealthy.

Mr. Curtis sometimes writes in such a vein as to lead one to suppose that he believes in the gold standard. When the direct question is raised, he disclaims being a silver man, and by implication he does the same when the point under consideration bears so immediately upon the main issue that its decision necessarily and palpably involves the entire question, as in the statement concerning silver production which is elsewhere commented upon. If he openly conceded that silver had fallen compared with gold, or, more properly, that gold had risen compared with silver, because of silver's demonetization, it would be a complete surrender of the gold side of the case. But wherever the connection is not so patent—where there is a chance for hedging, qualifying and explaining, the whole trend of his writings is against the gold standard.

A considerable portion of one of his recent letters to the Chicago Record is devoted to a statement by ex-Gov. Shepherd, relative to business conditions in Mexico. What the governor says is here given in full:

Ex-Gov. A. R. Shepherd, who is now principal owner and manager of the Batopilas silver mines, in Chihuahua, Mexico, has been spending the winter in Washington for the first time since he left here sixteen years ago, and before leaving for his Mexican home yesterday he addressed the following letter to Representative Newlands of Nevada, in reply to some inquiries from that gentleman concerning the economic condition of Mexico as a silver basis:

"I have been a resident of Mexico since 1870. When I first went there the ratio between silver and gold was 15½ to 1. The first exchange I bought was at the rate of 15 per cent in coin silver on a New York draft. Since then, owing to the demonetization of silver, many changes have occurred in the rate of exchange. During the famine, which existed the whole period from 1889 to 1892, when two-thirds of all the grain used for food in Mexico was brought from the United States, the rates of exchange ranged from 60 to 95 per cent, and at times went as high as 100. Notwithstanding this, Mexico met all her obligations, paid all her interest, and suffered less than any country.

"The present condition of the silver market is leading the Mexican people to doing their own manufacturing. As an instance of this I may cite Chihuahua as an example. An iron foundry and machine shop was established there some time ago, with $60,000 capital, for the purpose of manufacturing the mining and other machinery for which there was a large and growing demand in that vicinity and which was formerly supplied by the United States. The success of this venture may be realized when it is known that the capital stock was increased to $300,000, and that the company secured a contract recently for a large amount of machinery in competition with the firm of Fraser & Chalmers and other large concerns in this country. Cheap clothing, all of which was formerly purchased in the United States and Europe, is now manufactured in Mexico. At Chihuahua a canning establishment, with a capital of $1,500,000, is now being organized for the purpose of preserving meats and fruit, and a large brewery, with a capital of $200,000, is being put in operation. A woolen factory, with $200,000 capital, was started, and was enlarged last season to meet the increased demands upon it, and smelters at Chihuahua now treat the Mexican ores that were formerly sent across the border at heavy expense.

"Numerous other enterprises have been established and are contemplated, all having the effect of giving remunerative employment to Mexican artisans and laborers, and what is equally important, serving to keep Mexican money in Mexico, for the fruit of all these forms of industry represents the life necessities of which Mexico has hitherto been dependant on this country and Europe.

"The conditions in Chihuahua are truer of the more advanced portions of Mexico, and the development is steady and remarkable throughout. In the northwest of Mexico a railroad will be built within the next year, running from El Paso to a point south of Corralititas, a distance of 250 miles, opening up a country rich in mines and agricultural resources. The $5,000,000 capital for the undertaking has been furnished by New York parties.

"The conditions of the people have improved correlatively with the development of the country. The district of El Fuerte, which furnishes the part of the mountains in which our mines are located, has doubled in population in the last fifteen years and its productive capacity correspondingly increased. Formerly the peon system of labor, which pervaded all Mexico, was the rule in El Fuerte. Now the scarcity of workmen is so great that almost everything is produced on shares, and it is almost impossible to raise a crop unless the workmen are interested in it.

"Another instance may be recited showing the wonderful progress of northwest Mexico. When the Mexican Central railroad was first opened it was thought that the northern part of it would be unremunerative. The opening of mines and the development of agriculture along this portion, however, has made it one of the most profitable sections of the road.

"Shortly before my departure I was conversing with a very intelligent Mexican banker. He declared that he wanted the difference between silver and gold maintained, as it enabled the Mexicans to keep their money in their own country. Other Mexican financiers with whom I have talked hold the same views.

"There have been but two or three bank failures since I have resided there. The Mexican banks are required to keep one-third of their circulation in silver dollars in their vaults.

"The system in Mexico allows the miner to send his silver to the government depositories and receive silver dollars in return for it in any part of the country where there is an assay office, the government tax and cost being about 4½ per cent.

"Perhaps the best sign of the stability of Mexico under a silver policy may be found in the fact that Mexican 5 per cent bonds stand at 93 in London."

This is exactly in line with what Mr. Curtis has stated as the result of his own observations in Japan, and there can be no doubt that in thus quoting Gov. Shepherd at length, he intends to fully sanction the statements made, especially as they are given without comment.

A man like Edward Atkinson, who is utterly incapable of reasoning from cause to effect, might say exactly what is given above, and still believe in the gold standard, but Mr. Curtis is a much abler man than Atkinson, and it is difficult to see how he can so clearly recognize the benefits which Mexico and Japan are reaping from the use of silver, and still believe that free coinage would ruin the United States.

That the appreciation of gold is stimulating the industries of Mexico on many important lines, is too plain for discussion. It, in fact, is denied by no one who understands the situation and is candid enough to speak without disguise. The gold people do not meet this point fairly. They say, "See how much greater, richer, and more advanced the United States is than Mexico," and then they seek to convey the impression that it is owing to our establishment of the gold standard, while Mexico uses silver. They entirely ignore the self-evident fact that the United States was always far in advance of Mexico. Even in greenback times, when our only money consisted of depreciated paper, worth but 40 cents on the dollar, we were away ahead of Mexico, which was then doing business with silver dollars worth about five cents more than the American gold dollar. Nay, we were then relatively farther in advance than we are now, because of late years Mexico has been gaining upon us rapidly.

A few years ago Great Britain was vastly richer than the United States, and her business was incomparably greater, but that did not prove that her form of government or her financial syestem was better than ours. The reason was that Britain had the start of us. But we have overhauled and passed her, and we are now the richest nation in the world, although by no means so rich as we would have been if we had not gone deliberately at work to cripple our own resources and increase the burden of our debt by destroying one of the money metals with which that debt might have been paid, and of which metal we were the greatest producers. So we are a long way in the lead of Mexico for various reasons with which students of history are familiar, but our adoption of the gold standard in 1873 is not one of those reasons.

As between American and Mexican conditions at the present time, the question is one of comparative improvement, and there is no intelligent and fair-minded investigator who denies that Mexico is now gaining ground with race-horse speed.

The explanation of the advantages that inure to the silver standard countries has been frequently given in these columns, and the matter will not be gone into now. The reader is simply urged to carefully read what Gov. Shepherd says, as presented by Mr. Curtis, and then seriously ask himself how a money standard that is so nourishing to the industries of Mexico could possibly be rank poison to those of our own country.—National Bimetallist.

Deception.

Jacob stole the birthright of his brother Esau dressing himself in a kidskin and thus deceiving his blind father Isaac. A good many republican and democratic candidates are trying this year to similar deceive and rob the people by masquerading as bimetallists by international agreement, etc. Look out for them.

Where Our Money Goes.

The family of Levi P. Morton, governor of New York and aspirant for the presidency, sailed on April 8 on a European trip. The farmers of the west will continue to take daily trips along the furrows which bear the crops which pay the traveling expenses of the Morton family.—Exchange.

Secretary Carlisle's speeech on the currency before the Workingmen's club in Chicago a few days ago was a wishy-washy collection of spiritless axioms on money matters. If a school boy, on the third form, produced such a melange, he would be whipped.—Catholic Sentinel, Chippewa Falls, Wis.

The above from a gold paper is rich.

It is possible that Rothschild will allow the democratic party to adopt a free silver platform at the Chicago convention, with a view to dividing the silver forces and making McKinley's election certain.—Exchange.

Perhaps.

"It's strange," said the young man who is always looking for coincidences, "that so many politicians nowadays are remarkable for their whiskers."

"It seems to me," replied the girl who is studying art, "that it must be largely due to the manner in which everybody has gone wild over Beardsley effects."—Washington Star.