

THE CASTLE OF BONCOURT.

A dream wafts me back to my childhood—
Disturbing my hoary head;
How come ye, again, oh! pictures!
That long seem'd forgotten and dead?

High rises, on shady enclosure,
A glittering castle, in a state—
The battlements know I, the tower,
The olden stone bridge and the gate.

I see on the gilded escutcheon
The Lions, familiar to me,
I salute thee, my dear old acquaintance
And hie to the court-yard with glee.

There lieth the Sphinx by the fountain;
The big tree is green by stream!
And yonder behind the old window
Dreamed I, sweetly, my life's first dream.

I enter the dear castle chapel,
And seek for my ancestor's grave—
There it is—there, hang by yonder pillar
Old weapons, once worn by the brave.

My dim eyes can't read the inscription,
The traces yet lingering there—
How'er clear, through the painted windows
The light breaks with golden glare.

So standest thou, home of my fathers
In my heart, oh, so true and fair!
And yet from the earth thou hast vanished
The plough goes over thee there.

Be fruitful, oh soil, well beloved,
I bless thee with love and a tear—
And bless him two-fold, who shall ever
Move the plough o'er thy bosom so dear!

But I will arise from my dreaming—
With my mournful harp in my hand;
I will wander the wide world over,
Still singing from land to land.

THE MAIL ROBBER.

Fourteen years ago I drove from Danbury to Littleton, a distance of forty-two miles, and as I had to await the arrival of two or three coaches, I did not start until after dinner and very often had a good distance to drive after dark. It was in the dead of winter, and the season had been a rough one. A great deal of snow had fallen, and the drifts were plenty and deep. The mail that I carried was not due in Littleton by contract until 1 o'clock in the morning, but that winter the postmaster was often obliged to sit up a little later than that hour for me.

One day in January when I drove up with my mail at Danbury the postmaster called me into his office.

"Pete," said he with an important, serious look, "there's some pretty heavy money packages in that bag," and he pointed to it as he spoke.

He said the money was from Boston to some land agents near the Canada line. Then he asked me if I had any passengers who were going through to Littleton. I told him that I did not know.

"But suppose I have not?" said I.
"Why," said he, "the agent of the lower route came in to-day, and he said that there were two suspicious characters on the stage that came in last night, and he suspects that they have an eye to this mail; so it will stand you in hand to be a little careful this evening."

He said the agent had described one of them as a short, thick-set fellow, about forty years of age, with long hair, and a thick, heavy clump of beard under his chin but none on the side of his face. He did not know about the other. I told him I guessed there was not much danger.

"Oh, no, not if you have passengers all the way through; but I only told you this so that you might look out for your mail, and also took out sharp when you change horses."

I answered that I should do so, and then took the bag under my arm and left the office. I stowed the mail away under my seat a little more carefully than usual, placing it so I could keep my feet against it, but beyond that I did not feel any concern. It was past one when we started and I had four passengers, two of whom rode only to my first stopping-place. I had reached Gowan's Mills at dark, when we stopped for supper, and where my other two passengers concluded to stop for the night.

About six o'clock in the evening I left Gowan's Mills alone, having two horses and a pung.

I had seventeen miles to go, and a hard seven, it was too. The night was quite clear, but the wind was sharp and cold, the loose snow flying in every direction, while the drifts were deep and closely packed. It was slow, tedious work, and my horses soon became leg weary and restive. At the distance of six miles I came to a little settlement called Bull's Corner, where I took fresh horses. I'd been two hours going that distance.

As I was going to start a man came up and asked if I was going through to Littleton. I told him I should go through if the thing could possibly be done. He said he was anxious to go, and as he had no baggage I told him to jump in and make himself as comfortable as possible. I was gathering up my lines when the hostler came up and asked me if I knew that one of the animals had got a deep cork out on the off foot. I gave such directions as I considered necessary, and was about to turn away when the hostler remarked that he thought I came alone. I told him I did.

"Then where did you get that passenger?" he inquired.

"He just got in," I answered.

"Got in from where?"

"I don't know."

"Well, now," said the hostler, "that's kind of curious. There ain't been no such man at the house, and I know there ain't been none at any of the neighbors."

"Let's have a look at his face," said I.

"We can get that much, at any rate. Do you go back with me, and when I get into the pung, just hold your lantern so that the light will shine into his face."

He did as I wished, and as I stepped

into the pung I got a fair view of such portions of my passenger's face as were not muffled up. I saw a short, thick frame, full, hard features, and I could almost see that there was a heavy beard under the chin. I thought of the man whom the postmaster had described to me, but I did not think seriously upon it until I had started. Perhaps I had gone half a mile when I noticed the mail-bag wasn't in its place under my feet.

"Hello!" says I, holding up my horses a little, "where's my mail?"

My passenger sat on a seat behind me, and I turned toward him.

"Here is a bag of some kind that slipped back under my feet," he said, giving it a kick as though he would shove it forward.

Just at this moment my horses lumbered into a deep snow drift, and I was forced to get out and tread down the snow in front of them, and lead them through it.

This took me all of fifteen minutes, and when I got in again I pulled the mail bag forward and got my feet upon it. As I was doing this I saw the man taking something from his lap, beneath the buffalo, and put it into his breast pocket. This I thought was a pistol. I had caught a gleam of the barrel in the starlight, and when I had time to reflect I knew I could not be mistaken.

About this time I began to think somewhat seriously. From what I had heard and seen I soon made up my mind that the individual behind me not only wanted to rob me of my mail, but was prepared to rob me of my life. If I resisted he would shoot me, and perhaps he meant to perform that delectable operation at any rate. While I was pondering the horses plunged into another snow drift, and I was again forced to get out and tread down the snow before them. I asked my passenger if he wouldn't help me, but he didn't feel very well, and wouldn't try; so I worked all alone, and was all of a quarter of an hour getting my team through the drifts.

When I got into the sleigh again, I began to feel for the mail-bag with my feet. I found it where I had left it, but when I attempted to withdraw my foot I discovered it had become fast in something—I thought it was the buffalo, and tried to kick it clear; but the more I kicked the more closely it held. I reached down my hand, and after feeling about a few moments, I found that my foot was in the mail-bag. I felt again, and found my hand in among the packages of letters and papers. I ran my fingers over the edge of the opening and became assured that the stout leather had been cut with a knife.

Here was a discovery. I began to wish I had taken a little more forethought before leaving Danbury; but as I knew making such wishes was only a waste of time, I quickly gave it up, and began to consider what I had better do under existing circumstance. I wasn't long in making up my mind upon a few essential points. First, the man behind me was a villain; second, he had cut open the mail-bag and robbed it of some valuable matter—he must have known the money letters by their size and shape; third, he meant to leave the stage on the first opportunity; and, fourthly, he was prepared to shoot me if I attempted to arrest or detain him.

I revolved these things in my mind, and pretty soon thought of a course to pursue. I knew that to get my hands safely upon the rascal I must take him wholly unawares, and this I could not do while he was behind me, for his eyes were upon me all the time, so I must resort to stratagem. Only a little distance ahead was a house, and an old farmer named Longee lived there; and directly before it a huge snowbank stretched across the road, through which a track had been cleared with shovels.

As we approached the cot I saw a light in the front room, as I felt confident I should, for the old man generally sat up until the stage went by. I drove up, and when nearly opposite the dwelling, stood up, as I had frequently done when approaching difficult places. I saw the snow-bank ahead, and could distinguish the deep cut which had been shoveled through it. I urged my horses to a good speed, and when near the bank forced them into it. One of the runners mounted the edge of the bank, after which the other ran into the cut, thus throwing the sleigh over about as quick as though lightning had struck it. My passenger had not calculated on any such movement, and wasn't prepared.

He rolled out into the deep snow with a heavy buffalo robe about him, while I alighted directly on the top of him. I punched his head in the snow and called out for old Longee. I did not have to call a second time, for the farmer had come to the window to see me pass, and as soon as he saw my sleigh overturned he had lighted his lantern and hurried out.

"What's to pay?" asked the old man, as he came up.

"Lead the horses into the track, and then come here," I said.

As I spoke I partially loosened my hold upon the villain's throat, and he drew a pistol from his bosom; but I saw it in good season, and jammed his head into the snow again, and I got it away from him.

By this time Longee had led the horses out and came back, and I explained the matter to him in as few words as possible.

We hauled the rascal out into the road again, and, upon examination, we found about twenty packages of letters which he had stolen from the mail bag and stowed away in his pockets. He swore, threatened and prayed, but we paid no attention to his blarney. Longee got some stout cord, and when he had securely bound the villain we tumbled him into the pung. I then asked the old man if he would accompany me to

Littleton, and he said, "Of course I will."

So he got his overcoat and muffler, and ere long we started on.

I reached the end of my route with my mail all safe, though not as snug as it might have been, and my mail bags a little the worse for the trick that had been played on them. However, the mail robber was secure, and within a week he was identified by some officers from Concord as an old offender, and I am rather inclined to the opinion that he is in the State prison at the present time. At any rate he was there the last time I heard of him.

This is the only time I ever had any mail trouble, and I think that, under all the circumstances, I came out of it pretty well.

Brother Gardner on Jeremiahs.

"Dar am sartin folkses I want to keep away from," began the old man as the voices of the Glee Club died away on the last strains of "Sarah Jane's Baby." "I mean dat class of people who groan ober the wickedness of the world, an' who have heartaches an' sorrows to peddle aroun' de kentry at the reg'lar market rates. Dar am de ole man Turner. He comes ober to see me now and den, but he can't sot still kase somebody stole his dog, or hit him wid a brick-bat, or beat him out of seventy-five cents. He fully believes dat de world am gwine to smash at de rate of fifteen miles an hour, an' it would enamest kill him to lose his ole wallet an' find a man honest 'nuff to return it.

"De widder Flumssel comes ober to borrow some butter for supper, an' she draps down on a cha'r an' heaves a sigh as big as a barn doah an' goes on to say that dis am a cold an' unfeelin' world. 'Cording to her tell all men am dishonest all women extravagant, an' all chill'en just ready to come down wid de measles. Tears run down her cheeks as she tells how she has to work an' plan while eberybody else has money to frow inter Lake Erie, an' she wipes her nose on her apron as she asserts dat dis wicked world can't stan' mo' dan fo' weeks longer.

"Deacon Striper draps in to eat popcorn wid me of a Friday ebenin', an' he hardly gits out from under his hat befo' he begins to tell what his first wife died of; how his second run away; how his third broke her leg by fallin' off a fence and cost him \$28.14 for doctor's bill, an' befo' he gits frew you couldn't make him believe but what de hull world was dead agin him. He predicts a late spring, a hot summer, poor crops, high prices, a bloody war, an' goes home feelin' dat he am stoppin' on airth only to accommodate somebody.

"I have no sorrow of my own. I've been robbed, but dat was kase I left a winder up. I've been swindled, but dat was kase I thought fo' queens would beat fo' aces. I've bet on de wrong hoss; I've bought lottery tickets which didn't draw; I've bin sick unto death, and I've bin shot in the back wid a hull brickyard, but I do not sorrow an' I do not cry an' sympathize. De world am plenty good 'nuff fur de class of people livin' in it. Honest men an' not lonesome fur company; an' honest woman an' sartin to be appreciated. De janitor will now open fo' winder an' we will proceed to business."—[Detroit Free Press.

Crowded Churches.

Of course the Roman Catholic churches are crowded; they always are. The Roman Catholics during Lent have their regular services, and go to church "between meals," as well. How is it with the Episcopalians? I went to Trinity the other day, and I had to stand round for half an hour before the gowned verger could find me a seat, and when he did find me one, just at the beginning of the sermon, it was in the aisle. I went to St. John's Church one evening; it was crowded to the door. I went to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, and was seated behind a stone pillar, where my view of the gorgeous ceremonial was confined to a dozen candles, which flickered on the extreme right of the altar, and to an acolyte who sat near the altar rail and made eyes at a pretty girl in the congregation. No wonder there was a crowd. Such vestments, such incense, such lights, such singing, and such painted saints on the wall! Surely the congregation was not fallen off here. The Baptists—well, go to Dr. McArthur's, and you must be early to get a seat; or go to Mr. Judson's, where you'll surely find a crowd, though you may always count on a seat, even if some of the regular congregation have to give up theirs to you. Go to almost any Baptist church, and you'll find almost as many people as the church will contain. The Methodists never have small congregations; one of their proverbial virtues is church going. In short, go to any well established church of any living and working denomination, and you'll find out how absurdly false is the periodical paragraph about failing congregations. But go where agnostism is preached and you will see a beggarly number of empty benches. The vagaries of spiritualism and the agonies of second adventism are no longer popular. The predicaments of the former and the predictions of the latter have proved disastrous. As far as New York is concerned, I believe that the proportion of church-goers to the population is as large as at any time in the city's history—and larger than in most New England villages.—[New York Correspondence Boston Traveller.

A California man worth nearly half a million dollars recently attended the funeral of his son. Just before the coffin was lowered he unscrewed the silver handles, and taking them back to town, sold them to an undertaker.—N. Y. Herald.

Man Bolled Down.

The average number of teeth is 31.
The number of bones in man is 240.
The average weight of a skeleton is about 14 pounds.
The weight of the circulating blood is about 18 pounds.

The average weight of an adult man is 140 pounds, 6 ounces.
The brain of a man exceeds twice that of any other animal.

A man annually contributes to vegetation 124 pounds of carbon.
A man breathes about 20 times a minute, or 1200 times in an hour.

One thousand ounces of blood pass through the kidneys in one hour.
The skeleton measures one inch less than the height of the living man.

A man breathes about 18 pints of air in a minute, or upwards of 7 hogsheads in a day.

The average weight of the brain of a living man is 3½ pounds; of a woman, 2 pounds 11 ounces.

Twelve thousand pounds, or 24 hogsheads, 4 gallons, or 10,782½ pints of blood pass through the heart in twenty-four hours.

The average weight of an Englishman is 150 pounds; of a Frenchman, 136 pounds, and of a Belgian, 140 pounds.

Five hundred and forty pounds, or one hoghead, 1½ pints of blood passes through the heart in one hour.

The average height of an Englishman is 5 feet 9 inches; of a Frenchman, 5 feet 4 inches, and of a Belgian, 5 feet 6½ inches.

One hundred and seventy-four million holes or cells are in the lungs, which would cover a surface 30 times greater than the human body.

The average of the pulse in infancy is 120 per minute; in manhood, 80; at 60 years, 50. The pulse of females is more frequent than that of males.

The heart beats 75 times in a minute; sends nearly 10 pounds of blood through the veins and arteries each beat; makes four beats while we breathe once.

A man gives off about 4.10 per cent. carbonic gas of the air he respire; respire 10,666 cubic feet of carbonic acid in 25 hours, consumes 10,667 cubic feet of oxygen in 24 hours, equal to 25 inches of common air.

Twenty Sons.

One day there came into old Mr. Gallagher's hat store a man who asked to look at a cap. He was shown a number of caps, and selecting one that suited, he stated that he would take four of them. The hatter was somewhat astonished to hear the man ask for four caps at once, especially as he said he wanted them all the same size.

"Have you four sons of one size?" asked Mr. Gallagher.

"Yes, sir, I have; and I've got sixteen others besides," answered the man.

"Where are they?" inquired the hatter, who stood all torn up by a curiosity at the strange statement.

"They're down here at the market," "They're down here at the market," was the reply.

"Bring them here," said the hatter, "and I'll make them all a present of a cap each."

The man went out, and shortly returned, chasing into the store a drove of boys that looked something like the famous staircase band you might see in the theater if you ever visited such a place.

"Hyar they be, mister. These be my boys, they be."

"Well, well, well, I never! Doesn't that beat all!" ejaculated the old hatter, as he gazed in wonder at the group of gawking young fellows who stood there in all sorts of awkward attitudes, some staring about in an absent sort of way, others giggling like school-girls, and the rest getting all tangled up with each other in endeavoring to keep from trampling on the boxes or oil-cloth or matting on the floor.

"Come in, boys, come in and make yourselves at home, shouted Mr. Gallagher as the string blocked up the doorway. And he was soon busy "fitting" their pates with caps.

"This 'ere's Thomas Dittimus," said the lumpy father, dragging forth the eldest of the gang. "He's the first born, and a mighty good boy he is, too. He's about thirty-five years old."

He was speedily suited with a cap and told to stand aside.

"This 'yar one," said the old stock-raiser, "is the next oldest. His name is Christopher Holmes." And his father grabbed another of the drove as though he were a big sheep. "Ef you'll notice, stranger, you'll see that the first boy has got blue eyes like mine, and this has blue eyes like his mother." It was but the work of a second to slap a cap on the blonde head, and he was pushed over by the side of his older brother, with the injunction not to get mixed in with the others till every fellow had got his new cap.

"Step out here, Peter Dialander," commanded the owner of the bunch of boys. At this, a third young man ambled out in front of the delighted hatter, who enjoyed the experience beyond description. "Hayr's a other black-eyed boy," remarked the boy-builder. "You see every other one is a blue-eyed, and the rest is black-eyed so far, and this helps to keep the run of them if you understand the system, but when you come to get through the whole string you'd get mixed after the first ten, as I'll explain to you further along. Now this one is Calendar Jones," and making a dash in among the mob the daddy brought out a fourth son and almost held him up by the back of the neck. A cap was passed down over his head, and he was assigned a position among the seniors.

Number five was fished out of the regiment and introduced as Ecce Icy.

He got his cap and went to join the others that were already fitted out. Then came Ozy Neeshy, followed next by George Wampum, then Shawno Cato.

"I kind o' sort o' try to keep 'em divided into lots of five, you see, by giving them names of a different nature, yet something alike; for instance, Injun names all come together. But right about hyar I always get mixed when I try to pick the lads out according to their ages, 'cause, you see, the eyes begin to change along about the tenth baby that comes. Commencing with the first, who, as you saw had black eyes, the change of color keeps on black, then blue till it gets down to the tenth or eleventh, when there is a change right around the other way. For instance, the tenth being blue the eleventh ought to be black, but one of his eyes is blue and one is black; then the others start out just opposite to the way they first began. That is, you will notice, now strange that—let me see," mused the father, trying to single out the proper one. "Yes, the twelfth, who should have had blue eyes if the change had not taken place, is black. Then the next is blue, the next black and so on to the end. On account of this change the first and last are black, whereas, if the alteration had been kept up as it started they would have been opposite in color. In the same way the next to the first and next to the last are both blue, and so on."

The introductions kept on, and the boys were all fitted with a cap each, free of cost, by the good-natured hatter. The father stated that there were no twins in the party, and that they were all the offspring of one wife. There was about a year's difference in their respective ages, the youngest being about twelve. Relative to keeping the run of the family the old man stated that his wife, the mother of the boys, knew them better than he did a great deal—that is, she could call off their names and ages without having to stop to think, like he did, at times.

"What do you propose to do with your boys?" inquired that hatter.

"Make farmers of 'em. We're jest traveling through hyar now on our way to settle somewhar, but we don't exactly know whar."

"Did you ever have any girls?" "Nary gal, stranger. All boys, and we've never had any death in our family."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

A Brave Girl.

About a mile from the village of Preston, Conn., a girl of 19 lives alone with her father. The other evening the father went off to the village, leaving the daughter by herself in the house. Some time after dark she heard a rap at the door, and on opening it she found a little negro, leaning on his stick and evidently very feeble, who asked for something to eat. The girl would probably have turned back to find something for the beggar, but she suddenly caught sight of the negro's eyes and saw that they were blue. Now, a blue-eyed negro, as the intelligent young lady was aware, is something of a rarity, and she at once touched the little old man's face with her finger, causing some charcoal from the one to stick to the other. The pretended beggar no sooner saw that his fraud was detected than he threw off all disguise, revealed himself a tall, powerful man, and rushed upon the girl before him. She struggled with all the strength which her terrible position gave her, and at last succeeded in getting near the fire-place. With a great effort she freed her arm, grasped an iron poker and put her whole soul into a blow on the ruffian's head. He was stunned for a moment and the young lady lost no time in tying his feet and hands together. Having done this she went out and hitched the horse to the wagon, came back and forced the helpless prisoner into the vehicle, drove off and only thought her work done when the fellow was in safe-keeping in the village.

A Strange Tale.

The Shanghai Mercury says: A very singular discovery is reported to have been made by a party of six Spaniards while on a shooting expedition in the island of Formentera, which is part of the Balearic group. They came upon a large cavern, entrance to which seemed almost impossible, owing to the thick growth of brambles. Their curiosity, however, was excited by the evidence that the cavern had been made by human hands, and they cleared away the obstacles in their path, arriving after several hours' hard work in a spacious chamber of Arab architecture in an excellent state of preservation. In the centre of this chamber stood two splendid tombs of very peculiar shape and of great external beauty. They lifted without much difficulty the lids of these two tombs and were greatly astonished to find that they contained the mummies of a young woman and an elderly man of colossal stature. Upon the head of the woman was a diadem which, if the stones are real, is of priceless value. There was a large pearl necklace round her throat, carbuncles in her ears, and her fingers were covered with rings. The male figure had an imperial crown upon its head and a sceptre in its right hand.

When a Kentucky congressman was informed that he could have all the garden seeds he wanted from the agricultural department, he exclaimed, "Seeds! what do I want seeds for? But hold on! Yes, yes; I believe I do want a few."

And he forthwith sent for a half bushel of cardamom seeds, the only seeds he had any use for.

There is a strong probability that the year 1882 will add 4,000,000 to our population by immigration alone.