



VOL. XXIV, NO. 92.

ASTORIA, OREGON, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1885.

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THE BASTILE

The Mystery of "the Man of the Iron Mask."

A strong interest has been directed two hundred years toward a man with an unknown name, who lived during the reign of the magnificent, but dissolute monarch, Louis XIV., of France.

About 1682, a state prisoner, tall and well proportioned, of noble bearing, was secretly conveyed to Pignerol, and consigned to the guardianship of St. Mars, governor of the castle. Six years later he was transferred to the Isle of Marguerite, in the Mediterranean. St. Mars accompanied him and watched him with unceasing vigilance. He ate and slept in his room, and allowed him no chance of escape or communication with anyone.

In 1690 St. Mars was appointed governor of the bastille. Secretly his prisoner was conveyed on a litter to this place, and a well-furnished room was provided for him. Again he attempted to make the discovery of his name, which he wrote on a strip of linen and gave to one of his attendants not in possession of the secret, but this person died suddenly; it was supposed by poison.

St. Mars was always provided with weapons with which to end his life should he attempt to escape, or succeed in disclosing his secret. No wonder he was vigilantly guarded, for the penalty of his discovery would have cost St. Mars his life.

Thirteen years went drearily by, during which time the illustrious unknown man of the bastille still lived, yet he was dead to the outside world. Books and music were his only source of pleasure. Once in a while a glimpse was gained of him, and public curiosity was excited toward him, and whisperings as to who he was went from circle to circle, but availed nothing.

When the bastille was destroyed, the room he had occupied was eagerly searched, but the furniture had been burned, the ceiling and casements destroyed, and also everything on which he could have made any records of his life. Neither did the prison books reveal any item of importance. Every means had been taken to keep his identity in the dark forever.

Who could this distinguished personage have been, styled in history "The Man of the Iron Mask?" By many, he is supposed to be a son of Anne of Austria and the Duke of Buckingham, and consequently a half-brother of Louis XIV. Some writers think him of less importance. There are also reasons for supposing the Iron Mask to have been a twin brother of the king. An old prophecy had foretold misfortune to the Bourbon family in the event of a double birth, and to escape this it is possible Louis XIV. concealed the existence of the last born of the twins, by consigning him to a dungeon, and hiding his features which may have closely resembled Louis XIV., his brother. It is certain, every one in possession of the secret, died without disclosing it; and who the Man of the Iron Mask was, will ever remain a mystery.

A Young Man's Cupidity.

Father—Are you sure that Featherly loves you? Perhaps he wants to marry you for your money. Daughter (an heiress)—Yes, I am sure that he loves me, papa. He swears that he has worshipped me from the first minute that he saw me. Father—Where did he first see you? Daughter—At Coney Island. Father—Were you dressed in a bathing suit? Daughter—Yes. Father—My fears are realized. He is after your money.

Michael Angelo.

This great sculptist was born in 1475, four hundred and ten years ago on the 6th of March at Settignano, thirteen miles from Florence. His correct name is supposed to have been Michael Angelo Buonarroti. Mike began to draw as soon as he was large enough, and for miles and miles around Florence they still point with pride to pictures on the high board fences of which he is supposed to have been the author.

While very young, Michael went into the Madonnas business, and now it is a pretty poor Italian town that can't afford a Madonna of some kind. The first great work that Mr. Angelo executed in Rome was the "Drunken Bacchus." It seems that Bacchus was a first-rate boy if he had let liquor alone. But he would drink. He would go and fill his skin as full of old-fashioned red liquor as it would hold, and then he would hunt up a sculpture and get himself measured for a bust.

Early in the sixteenth century, Michael executed a statue of David, from memory. This statue weighed 18,000 pounds, and several Americans who have been over there and who were perfectly familiar with the American to settle the merits of any great work, from the creation itself down to the latest joke. The fame of the great sculptor had by this time reached the ears of Pope Julius II, who was meditating the erection of a colossal mausoleum for himself in St. Peter's. A serious misunderstanding arose, however, between Michael Angelo and the pope over this work, and the sculptor left a disgust. It is not yet fully settled what this trouble resulted from, but as near as I am able to learn the pope became enraged and charged the sculor because, at the last moment and when it was too late to remedy the evil, he found that the mausoleum didn't fit him. If this be true, I am free to say that Mike was in the wrong. No man wants to pay a large sum for a mausoleum and then find when he comes to try it on that it bags at the knees.

Later on, at Florence, the great artist designed a magnificent work representing a company of soldiers started by the call of a trumpet while bathing in the Arno. This was never completed and only the cartoon itself remains to suggest what a masterpiece was designed. So life-like is the cartoon alone that on a still day you can hear the snort of the trumpet as the soldiers rush to the bank. As you gaze at the picture you are lost in admiration and you hardly know whether to go wild over the master's great genius or to go and inform the police.

Michael frescoed the Sistine chapel ceiling in twelve months; and did it well, too. He was a rapid as well as a thorough artist, and his head was literally full of ideas. At last he and the pope again became reconciled, and in 1513 the surprising pontiff died leaving instructions for Angelo to cut his mausoleum a little higher in the neck and his executor would settle the bill on sight.

It would take many pages to give even a rough outline of the many beautiful monuments which Michael Angelo has erected to his own undying fame as a sculptor, painter and poet. He lived to be ninety years old, and then, full of years and crowned with the glory he had carved out by his own genius and industry, he died.

Though his work was beautiful, he was not himself beautiful. He ran largely to brow, but his nose was broken in a little misunderstanding that he had at school with a young designer, who thought it would be a good scheme to put what was termed in Florence in the fifteenth century a tin nose on Mike. This gave him a look of pain, and his nose served to convey the idea that the great sculptor has just detected the presence of Limburger cheese under his pillow.

As a general thing, however, great men are not beautiful. The pretty young man has really but one avenue open to him in the world's great race. If he cannot mash a tough old hearse whose father has got the pip, he has very little chance in the mighty struggle of life.

If an eagle should show any signs of great physical beauty, having taken them from his mother's side of the house, I would immediately hump my back ready to bear a great burden; for, judging by the world's history, his father-in-law and I would have to take a turn about in maintaining the young man and his cumulative family.

The following account is given of the origin of the term "eavesdropper." At the revival of Masonry in 1717, a curious punishment was inflicted upon a man who listened at the door of a Masonic meeting in order to hear its secrets. He was summarily sentenced "to be placed under the eaves of an outhouse while it was raining hard, till the water ran in under the collar of his coat and out at his shoes." The penalty was inflicted on the spot, and the name has continued ever since.

Be pleasant and kind to those around you. A man who stirs his tea with an icicle spoils his tea and chills his fingers. St. Jacobs Oil will, however, restore the circulation.

He Cracked a Chestnut.

"It was a bad thing for the industrial interests of the country that Cleveland was elected," remarked a man in a Monroe street saloon.

"Oh, that's all in your eye," replied the bartender. "I'll bet you drinks for the party that in just four months from Cleveland's inauguration nineteen out of twenty of the business houses of Chicago will be closed up."

A doctor who ought to know says that the practice of the wholesale use of smelling salts, which came in with universal fashion of carrying smelling bottles, is sure to have its influence upon the olfactory nerves, sooner or later, and renders the victim unable to distinguish cologne from sawdust. More than all that it causes headaches, sore throats and red noses. The last argument will have its weight. The smelling bottle must go.

A pretty way to make a shade for the lamp, or rather a cover for the porcelain shade, is to take a narrow strip of red silk, gather it quite full at each edge, drawing it close at the top so it will fit the shade, then trim the bottom with antique lace; this should be gathered, but lie smoothly over the shade; then with heavy embroidery silk draw in a fringe all around the lace; this should be thick and close, and should quite conceal the shade.

The growth of the oyster industry in Connecticut has been remarkable. The first steamer that was used in this trade was put on less than ten years ago, and now there are forty steamers, with an aggregate capacity of 26,720 bushels a day. Four more large new steamers are building for the spring.

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