

THE FOUR GUESTS.

A knock at the door—but he
Was dreaming a dream of fame;
And the one who knocked drew softly
back,
And never again he came.
A knock at the door—as soft—
As soft—as shy—as a dove.
But the dreamer dreamed till the guest
was gone—
And the guest was Love.

A knock at the door—again
The dreamer dreamed away
Unheeding—lost to the gentle call
Of the one who came that day.
A knock at the door—no more.
The guest to that door came.
Yet the dreamer dreamed of the one who
called—
For the guest was Fame.

A knock at the door—but still
He gave it no reply;
And the waiting guest gave a cheery hail
Ere he slowly wandered by.
A knock at the door—in dreams
The dreamer faint would grope,
Till the guest stole on, with a humbled
sigh—
And the guest was Hope.

A knock at the door—'twas loud,
With might in every stroke;
And the dreamer stopped in his dreaming
thought,
And suddenly awoke.
A knock at the door—he ran
With the swiftness of a breath;
And the door swung wide, and the guest
came in—
And the guest was Death.
—Baltimore American.

AFTER 12 MIDNIGHT

THE man who speaks loudly in public places of the value of his sideboard and the insecurity of his front door may safely be put down as an amiable idiot. Yet Thomas Nedham of the firm of Nedham & Wilkins was no fool. He was reputed to be a cute man of business, who knew how to keep his counsel when his money was at stake, and yet here he was to-night, on the front seat of a crowded omnibus, boasting to his neighbor that his silver-plate was the heaviest in all Hampstead.

"Burglars?" he laughed, in answer to a question. "I have been thirty years a householder, and never one of the gentry has deigned to visit me. I often think that the man who takes no precaution comes off best in this matter. I have known some men spend a fortune in locks and bolts, and have a housebreaker in as regularly as the chimney sweep. You did not know my partner, Wilkins? He's been dead these dozen years, and before things went wrong with him, and I bought him out, he had a collection of coins worth £1,000. Well, he kept the treasure in a room whose windows were sheathed nightly in heavy shutters, bolted and bolted again. But, of course, he rose one fine morning to find the lot gone. That broke the old fellow's heart, and from then till they placed him in Norwood cemetery he was never off the rocks."

As the old gentleman proceeded in a lower voice to tell stories of the burglaries that he had known befall his friends, the tall young fellow immediately behind him showed evident signs of nervousness. He shifted uneasily in his seat, and, as ever and anon, the gaslights were passed, his pinched face showed white, and his big eyes seemed riveted on the jovial Nedham. When the merchant left the "bus with a hearty "good night!" to all and sundry, the stripling rose and slipped off, too.

Twelve midnight had long since boomed from the church steeple opposite, and still Thomas Nedham, city merchant and importer, lay wide awake. Usually he was a heavy sleeper, but to-night slumber had deserted him.

His active brain insisted on scrutinizing and dissecting the stock and share list of the previous day, and gambling through his now silent city warehouse. The old gentleman chuckled as he held his eyes tight, and conjured before him the thousands of great bales that lumbered every inch of his stores.

"Wonderful!" he said audibly. "What a great thing may sometimes grow from a small one, to be sure! Only thirty years ago and I was wondering how I could meet a bill for £2 15s. Now, new blocks added, six and fifty warehouses, piles of paying work and still growing, growing, growing. Wonder what Wilkins would think of it all if he were looking up now? Poor Wilkins! They tell me he died declaring that I had robbed him. That was a hard thing to say. No robbery, say I, but a business transaction. Besides, in any case, it was a question of tit-for-tat. But for Wilkins I should not have been a bachelor."

Nedham moved uneasily in bed, and, through a doorway arched with troubled memory, he stole to the land of forgetfulness.

How long he slept he hardly knew, but he woke with a start. He had the distinct impression that he felt warm breath on his face, and, springing out of bed, he switched on the electric light. No trace of an intruder was in the room, but the door, which Nedham felt sure he had shut, stood partly ajar.

Hastily pulling on his dressing gown and shoving his bare feet into slippers, he reached a heavy riding crop from the wall and stumbled downstairs. As he opened the drawing room door there was the shuffle of hasty feet, and when the light went up a tall young fellow, shabbily dressed, stood revealed. The two men faced each other across the table, Nedham gripping tight the whip handle.

"Now," he said, in a wonderfully composed voice, "I've caught you clean."

What in all the world may you want here?"

The youngster removed his battered hat, and his eyes fell as a tinge of color rose to his cheek.

"A straight question demands a straight answer," he replied. "I am in quest of some of the silver plate you boasted about on the top of the Hampstead 'bus last night. I overheard that conversation."

Nedham laughed, and laid the crop on the table.

"You young fool!" he said. "You do not know Tom Nedham, or you would not have tried this mug's game on." He rubbed his hands. "Tom Nedham has never been known to be caught napping—never!"

"I have heard said," replied the burglar nervously, "that you are a smart man of business—a very smart man of business," he added, raising his eyes and looking Nedham squarely in the face.

"You fatter me, young man," chuckled the portly merchant. "And who, may I ask, reported so favorably of me?"

"My name," replied the stripling, leaning over the table—"my name is Wilkins; my father was your partner." And having fired that shot he awaited results.

II.

Nedham shivered slightly and his face changed color. In a moment, however, he had mastered himself.

"Ah," he said, lightly, "are you the boy I've heard him speak so often about? How strangely people meet sometimes! Who could have dreamed that I should have had the pleasure of seeing you at such an unlikely hour and place? Sit down, sit—sit down!"

The stripling sat in silence; for a minute no words passed.

"I suppose," Wilkins muttered at last, "you will now send for the police?"

The merchant laughed loudly as he lay back in his chair.

"Why police?" he said. "You have not robbed me."

"I had that intention," was the reply. "But, like most of my other schemes in life, it did not come off. But, remember, if I had cleared your sideboard I should not have called myself a robber—not even a law-breaker. My father has told me that you robbed him, and were the cause of his ruin at the end."

Nedham drew himself up, fidgeting on his seat.

"I do assure you," he said soothingly, "there is no vestige of truth in the accusation. You may not know that your father was subject to hallucinations long before we parted company."

"I disagree with you, sir," put in the other, with a trembling lip. "But that is all past now, and need not be mourned over. My father is far beyond business trickery at this moment. But, candidly, I bear you a bitter grudge, and ever will do so. So does another—my mother."

"Your mother?" queried the old man, in a whisper. "She is still alive, then? Ah, the mention of her brings back to me the days of youth. I presume your father never told you how he came between us, and made the only woman I ever loved his wife?"

"I am in no mood for sentiment," the young man interrupted. "And, besides, that, too, is a bygone. What I do know is that the terrible crash came unexpectedly, and brought down to the earth like a card-castle all that made for happiness with us. I had to leave college, and, though I have tried, I never have been able to mend the broken thread of my life. But all this does not interest you." And he moved toward the door.

As the gentleman-burglar passed in to the hall he turned with a forced smile and said:

"I came by the back door and will go by it, I presume?"

"Not at all!" cried Nedham effusively. "No visitor at Woodlands has ever been allowed to do that. Let me show you out by the front door, and, when next you come to see me, perhaps you will give me fairer warning than you did this morning."

He opened the door and held out his hand. The youngster took it coldly.

"By the way," said the merchant, "is your mother in need of money?"

"Money?" said Wilkins, drawing himself up proudly on the doorstep. "Charity? And from such as you? Thank God, we are not yet reduced to that level!"

And so saying, he passed out into the night.

Nedham listened to the retreating footsteps for some moments, and then quietly shut the door.

"Queer fellow, certainly!" he chuckled. "But a boy of spirit—ay, a boy of spirit!" he added emphatically, as he pulled on the bolts.

The Australian branch of Mr. Nedham's business, which he opened at Melbourne some four years ago, is thriving beyond all expectations. But when business friends congratulate Mr. Nedham, he laughs and says:

"I mustn't take the credit. It's young Wilkins' concern. I'm taking him into partnership with the New Year."

Odd Effect of the Sun.

The effect of strong and continual sunshine on the features is, it seems, most damaging. A writer in a Sydney paper points out that the women in some parts of Queensland are contracting a lifted upper lip. This he attributes to the fierce Queensland sunlight, which causes one to contract the facial muscles near the eyes in order to avoid the glare. The rest of the face is, of course, affected by these muscles.

Every girl of sixteen has so many important secrets with her girl friends that she longs for a cipher when she talks to them over the telephone.

BASE-BURNER THE THING.

The Old Man Says It Beats Other Heaters and that Steam and Hot Air Won't Do for the Family Use

"Well you can talk about your steam heat and your hot water pipes and your furnaces and your natural gas all you want to, but as for me give me the good old-fashioned base-burner," said the old man as he stretched out his hands toward a glowing pattern of his favorite heater of the style of about 1885. "There's something kind of artificial about these other things, even natural gas," he continued. "Some way or another they don't go to the spot—not with me. They make me feel just like I had on a new pair of boots, and mighty bad fitting ones at that. They go against the grain and don't make me feel at home. And, besides, they don't always deliver the goods. Now, just look at this one. You bet it delivers the goods all the time."

The old gentleman was right, at the moment, at least, for in the lamplight you could fairly see the heat shooting away from the base-burner. The thermometer registered 87 degrees and the furniture nearby was beginning to smell "scorchy" and little warts in the paint had raised up on the side next the stove.

"Yes, sir," went on the base-burner advocate, "you can't find anything that'll touch the base-burner." (Certainly his proposition would not have been disputed just then.) "There's a lot of poetry to be found looking into a base-burner that is in good working order. Now, where are you going to find any poetry in looking down into a register that is spouting up nothing but a big stream of hot air, and how are

and found out how to do just the right thing. All I had to do was to keep looking there long enough and the way was made clear. Why, I want to tell you a good base burner just beats a crack fortune teller all to pieces every day in the week! And all this is the reason why I maintain that a base-burner is the only thing to have in the house for heat purposes and for getting in the family together and makin' 'em feel right."

VEILS AND THE EYESIGHT.

Women Often Ruin Their Vision by Wearing such Gause.

One would naturally suppose the eyesight is of such inestimable value that rational human beings would scrupulously shun all risk of impairing it, and that above all things fashion should not be permitted to decree modes whose effect is to weaken that most sensitive of the organs, the eye. Yet it is a deplorable fact that many of the fashions are blindly followed by the fair sex at the behest of some "leader" in the gay world of society.

The veil is one of the fashions of the present, as it has been of past times. The sex is divided in opinion as to the effects of the veil upon the vision, but where you will find one to maintain that such an adornment fades the complexion you will find ten to aver that no penalties would prevent them from wearing it.

Go and ask an oculist his opinion, and what he has to say on the topic is to

Then come the quite condemned veils, which have chenille spots all over them; they are bad in proportion, as their dots are close and large or scanty and small, but they are less sight-weakening than a veil that is patterned as well as spotted, a veritable agony to sensitive sight. White veils are often much more evil in their effects than black, for the material, be it tulle or net, possesses a faculty for dazzling the vision and making everything seen through it wavering and ill-defined. Finally, has not the case been proven that those who are conscious of strain, a lack of clarity of sight or weariness after wearing a veil, should give up the task of looking smart at the expense of vision. Even the strong argument in favor of veils of a sensible and clear mesh, which the oculists do not attempt to deny, namely, that such veils do keep the eyes from the assaults of grit, especially during a drive or while cycling and motoring, should not appeal to the weak-sighted.

COLOR OF GOLD COINS.

Reasons for Difference in Tint of Coins of French Mintage.

Some time ago a Frenchman placed together a number of gold coins of French mintage of the beginning, middle and end of the last century. He was much surprised to see that they differed in color. He set about finding out the reasons for this difference, and the results of his investigations have been published in La Nature.

There is a paleness about the yellow of the ten and twenty-franc pieces which bear the effigies of Napoleon I. and Louis XVIII. that is not observed in the gold of later mintage. One admirer of these coins speaks of their color as a "beautiful paleness" and expresses regret that it is lacking in later coins. The explanation of it is very simple. The alloy that entered into the French gold coins of those days contained as much silver as copper, and it was the silver that gave the coins their interesting paleness.

The coins of the era of Napoleon III. were more golden in hue. The silver had been taken out of the alloy.

The gold coins of to-day have a still warmer and deeper tinge of yellow. This is because the Paris mint, as well as that in London, melts the gold and the copper alloy in hermetically sealed boxes, which prevents the copper from being somewhat bleached, as it always is when it is attacked by hot air; so the present coins have the full warmth of tint that a copper alloy can give.

If the coins of to-day are not so handsome in the opinion of amateur collectors as those issued by the first Napoleon, they are superior to those of either of the Napoleons in the fact that it costs less to make them. The double operation of the oxidation of the copper and cleaning it off the surface of the coin with acids is no longer employed; and the large elimination of copper from the surface of the coins, formerly practiced, made them less resistant under wear and tear than are the coins now in circulation.

PARIS IS BEST FORTIFIED.

Twenty-one Miles of Defenses Now Guard the French Capital.

The best fortified city in the world is Paris. It is defended by seven great forts about the city, eight miles away from its walls; nineteen smaller forts four miles out, each containing three acres and mounting two ninety-five-ton guns. Great stacks of 100-pound melinite shells are ready for those guns to hurl. There are twenty-one miles of continuous fortifications about the town—earth-work walls 150 feet thick at the base and fronted by forty-five-foot moats. So cleverly are the forts masked by long slopes of green turf and the walls by trees and bushes that one can pass in and out of Paris a dozen times and see scarcely a trace of its fortifications.

The range of the ninety-five-ton guns



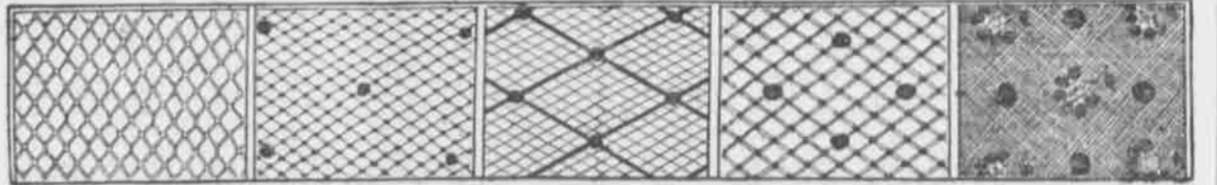
AROUND THE OLD BASEBURNER.

you going to find it putting your feet up against a steam radiator? Shucks! There's nothing in the world like a base-burner for the family to gather around. I tell you the base-burner is the heart of the home. Here the children and the old folks can get together in the right kind of style. Imagine a family gathering around a steam coil or snuggling up to the hot air shooting up from the furnace. That would promote a family feeling in fine style, wouldn't it?"

"You see, the old base-burner, with its ruddy glow and radiating heat, just sends out good feeling that can't be resisted. When the winter blasts are howling outside, fairly shaking the chimney, and shrieking around the corners and banking up the snow against the side of the house, then's

plump condemnation upon every veil that is worn. Yet he will admit that, while some nets are extremely dangerous and deleterious to the eyes, others are almost unobjectionable. There are fashions in nets and gauzes, and many are the variations with which the veil is worn, but in England it always covers the eyes, and it is here that the danger arises.

Of all the veils ever tried, the ideal one is yet to be discovered. Some women can trace step by step its evolution throughout the century. They have heard their grandmothers talk about the white lace "fall" that used to be liked, and themselves can recollect the thick green, blue, gray, white and green gauze horrors worn to protect the complexion from tan. Those veils were followed by thinner silk ones, which in



SIGHT TRAPS—FIVE SPECIMENS OF THE INJURIOUS VEIL.

the time you realize what home would be without a base-burner. That's the time that all of us hustle up to the stove in a kind of semi-circle. Nobody gets clear behind the stove, where the chimney is, but that's the only place they leave clear. Then we just have a good old family talk. Me and the boys yank off our boots so's to get real comfortable and the women folks peel the apples an' we crack nuts, eat popcorn an' drink cider an' have the all-friendest good time you ever did see.

"Then if any of the boys has got bruises on their ankles where their boots rubbed while they were tryin' to skate, this is the time that mother gets out her home-made salve and fixes 'em up. You can't do tricks like that in front of a hot water radiator. I s'pose if the boys broke through the ice and come in with their feet wet they could, maybe, dry with furnace or steam heat, but they couldn't do it quick and do it good and right, like they could with the old base-burner."

"An' you say all you please about these new-fangled heaters, but you can't make me believe that you or me could look at 'em hard enough or long enough to see things in 'em. They wouldn't help you none to solve yer problems or lighten yer burdens. But you can get all that kind of help out of the base-burner. Ye can see figures and things in the red-hot coals you couldn't find in no radiators or registers. I've looked into them coals many and many a time,

is fourteen miles. To work these guns Paris has 50,000 trained artillerymen among her reservists. She could man every gun twice over, garrison all her forts with infantry reservists and put a dozen cavalry regiments into the field for scouting purposes. Such a performance no other city on earth could rival.

At every 1,000 yards along the inner slope of the fortifications is a three-story guardhouse. Some 20,000 troops could thus be sheltered within call of all attackable points. Every horse over 4 years old is registered. The general staff could choose from some 120,000 horses. There are in Paris 1,600 cabs, with three horses to a cab—48,000 mounts fairly suitable for cavalry. Add 20,000 tram and bus horses and 50,000 draught horses—the balance may be taken as in private hands. The military stores of Paris are boundless. In a day she could arm and clothe 450,000 fighting men with 70,000,000 rounds of melinite cartridges, and at the army bakeries she reserves large stores of grain.

A Spider's Thread.

What we call a spider's thread consists of more than 4,000 threads united.

The girl who used macilage to keep her hair in curl has been much stuck-up ever since.

Fools are apt to discern the faults of others and overlook their own.

HARD TO BEAR

Story of a Druggist Who Was Always Compounding Remedies for Others Yet Suffered Agonies Himself.

From the *Republican, Eldorado, Ill.*

Perhaps in no case where stomach trouble was the ailment has the efficiency of a popular remedy been so thoroughly demonstrated as in the case of W. E. Mathis, a prominent druggist of Eldorado, Ill. The story as told by Mr. Mathis is as follows:

"In the spring of 1894 I had a very serious case of indigestion. My stomach commenced to give me great trouble, and, while I knew the nature of the pain, I did not at first use the proper precaution. For some time I did not pay any attention, but it gradually grew worse, when I consulted a physician, who prescribed for me. I used his medicine according to instructions. I began to experience nervous spells, became subject to congestion of the stomach, and considered myself in a precarious condition. The physician's medicine and other remedies I tried failed to benefit me.

"One day a friend urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. I considered it a useless experiment, but as I had tried everything else, I agreed to take them. That was three and a half years ago. When I had used three boxes I could not very plainly feel the change for the better. When I had used the seventh box I was cured.

"The pills have not only cured the indigestion, but they have also cured my nervousness, my blood is in perfect condition, and they have brought my weight from 140 pounds at the commencement of the stomach trouble to 180 at present.

"If any one who reads this desires to know more of my experience I will gladly answer letters which enclose stamp for reply.

W. E. MATHIS.

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 27th day of June, 1900.

Thos. D. Morris, Justice of the Peace.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People are sold at all druggists or will be sent direct from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Schenectady, N. Y. Price 50 cents per box; six boxes, \$3.50.

Night in Kansas City.

Conductor—Why don't you stop for them three fellows that signalled?

Motorman—I got me week's salary in my pocket, and you bet I ain't takin' chances like that.

Salary of Marine Band.

The leader of the marine band at Washington gets \$1,500 a year, and the first and second class musicians \$60 and \$80 a month respectively. They are allowed ration money in all cases.

Paid \$3,700 for a Cow.

The highest price ever paid for a Hereford cow was brought by Carnation, which animal was sold to J. C. Adams, of Moweaqua, Ill., for \$3,700 at a Kansas City exposition. The previous high price record was \$3,150.

Will Experiment With Japanese Oysters.

Eastern oysters do not reproduce well in the colder waters of Oregon and Washington. An attempt is to be made, therefore, to acclimatize there the fine large oysters of Northern Japan.

To Be Sure.

Quizzer—"What does it mean by 'biling your light under a bushel?'"

Guy—"Sending valentines without writing your name on 'em."

Church Membership at Newton.

The ministers of Newton, Kan., have just completed a religious census of that town. They found 5,353 persons in 1,453 families and of these people 2,316, or less than half, professed to be church members.

Union Elects Negro Vice-Presidents.

It is the custom of the Alabama district of the United Mine Workers to elect a negro as vice-president.

The Powers That Be.

"Hush! Not so loud, we're having a conference of the powers."

"Eh? Who is conferring?"

"My wife, my mother-in-law, and the cook!"

Tramps Are Scarce There.

A Missouri judge has hit upon a novel plan for getting tramps to leave town. He sentences all brought before him to 30 days' work on the streets and gives them half an hour to get their tools. That half hour sees them well on their way.

Exports of Coal Grow.

The exports of coal continue to grow monthly, and in 10 months this year this country has shipped abroad coal and coke to the value of almost \$20,000,000.

Pitch Cloak for Life-Saving.

A pitch cloak is the newest form of life saving apparatus. It is a Swiss invention. It weighs about one pound, and will keep even a fully equipped soldier above the surface of the water. It has water proof pockets in which food and drink may be carried, as well as blue lights, in case the wearer is shipwrecked in the night.

Abandoned Farms Being Taken Up.

The abandoned farms of Massachusetts are fast being taken up. Three years ago there were 380 thus classified in the state. A recent enumeration shows there are now but 136.