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"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."—Euripides.

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LITERATURE.

ALBUM RHYMES.

A task—a pleasant one indeed
Is mine, with willing hand, to write
Some verse, for gentle eyes to read
On this fair album page to night.

What shall it be? some wise old thought—
Some sparkling jest—or flowing rhyme
Whose murmuring melody hath caught
The joyful spirit of the time?

What can it be, but one fond theme
Of deathless passion sweet and strong—
My fervent thought, and ceaseless dream
Alone, or in life's busy throng.

All day a vision of delight!
A fair young face a smile so near;
And through the silent hours of night
A sweet voice lingers on my ear.

Dreading or waking, still these thoughts
Around me that rich stream of song,
The while the softly-blending notes
Nestle her skilled fingers sweep along.

How dear these thoughts and memories are,
Blessing and brightening all life's hours!
For love is now the guiding star
To all my spirit's earnest powers.

Love for that fair and graceful form
Deep in my pulse is beating true;
And while life's tumult is hark warm
That feeling shall not fail or die.

Through all the years, O were it mine
To guard the pathways of her life;
What light should round her richly shine!
What flower-like joy be ever thine!

And should the tears of sorrow start
In spite of all my earnest care,
O would I met with yearning heart
The bitter burden more than share!

Ver like a stream increasing ever,
The Love that prompts this simple rhyme
Shall flow—a deeply swelling river—
Along the hidden tracks of Time.

THE MYSTERIOUS WATCH.

AN OLD DOCTOR'S STORY.

You have no faith in the supernatural? I have. You do not believe in necromancy, or astrology, or in the power of the evil eye? I do. The reason for this is you are Americans, descended from English ancestors, while I have German blood in my veins, and inherit a reverence for what you sneer at. Were a disembodied spirit to arise at my bedside to-night, I should question it and own to being frightened, while you would throw a candlestick at its immaterial head, and insist to the last upon its being a burglar in disguise. Yet, mark me, in spite of yourself, your hair would rise and your blood curdle, and you would not acknowledge it for the world. Bah! if such things have no existence, what do our strange shiverings and shudderings mean? And why do we look about us with awe-stricken eyes when we pass grave yards after dark? You do not, you say. Are you sure of it? I have never seen a ghost, and I cannot say I desire the spectacle. There must be an uncomfortable beating of the heart at such a sight. I doubt if many could retain both life and reason through such an ordeal.

I am a doctor. Years ago I was very poor and very young. I came from my own country with my diploma, and nothing else. I found that the great cities of the New World were full of doctors young and poor as I was. I left them and went westward. I settled in the State of Indiana. It was then one great forest, with clearings here and there for fields of corn and rude log houses. Any one led a hard life there, and a doctor, it seemed to me, worst of all. Miles and miles of hard riding through rain and mud, to visit patients, who could pay nothing; miles back again, to steal a few moments of repose before another announcement of some one being "very bad!" I was skin and bones in a twelve-month, but that was nothing uncommon in that part of the world. The only wonder is that I did not have what they called "fever 'n' ager." I was the only person free from it within ten miles square. However, I prospered, after a certain fashion, and in a year or two made a considerable local reputation. The place was growing, and my spirits began to revive.

It was about this time that I first saw my watch, to which all I have now to tell relates. A cold night in November had set in; I was at supper in my little home, and enjoying it as only a hungry and weary man can enjoy food. Don't ask what I had; it was "out west," remember. Of course, there was a preparation of pork, and a preparation of whiskey; corn meal, pork and whiskey are the staple articles offered "out west." I was enjoying my supper, as I have said, and a loud knock at my door told me not the most delightful sound which could have broken the silence. However, I said, "Come in," with as good a grace as possible, and a stranger entered. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, in the dress of a backwoodsman, and his large features wore a troubled expression. I saw at once that something serious had occurred.

"It's a bad night to trouble you to come so far, doctor," he said, looking at me from under his fur cap; "but there's a bad accident happened over at our clearing, and if you kin do anything for the poor chap, I'll be glad to see it done, more particularly as I helped to shoot him!"

"Helped to shoot him?" I said, with a start; "what do you mean?"

"We took him for some kind of a critter, that's how it was," answered my visitor; "not a purpose, stranger. We think heps of him. I'd sooner he shot myself."

I knew the man spoke the truth, and, taking my box of surgical instruments under my arm, followed him to the spot where his horse was tied. Mine was already saddled; my little derkey knew well enough what the arrival portended, and made him ready. We were off in a few moments.

Few words were spoken as we rode along through the darkness. I asked whether the wounded were serious, and my companion replied, "I'm afraid they be, doctor." I asked if the injured man were young or old, and he answered, "Hising forty;" and then after a few words upon the badness of the road, we relapsed into silence.

At last a glimmering light told that we had approached a dwelling, and with a

short, "We're thar, doctor," my companion sprang from the saddle and entered the door. I followed him. The room was feebly lit with flickering candles. About a bed in the centre were grouped four or five men and a woman, large and broad-shouldered as any of her companions. A child, too, lay crying in its cradle, but no one seemed to notice it. They made way for my approach, and I saw a figure stretched upon a bed. It was that of a man with sinewy limbs and weather-beaten face. His shirt was unbuttoned, and the breast and sleeves were soaked with blood.

"Taint of no use, doctor," he said, as I bent over him; "I'm a gone cown. Doctor's stuff ain't no account to me, now."

I did not believe him. His face was not that of a dying man, and the wounds scarcely seemed dangerous. "These bullets are bad things to have in one's side," I said, "but men have lived through more than that. Cheer up!"

"I ain't down-hearted, doctor," answered the man. "I shan't leave no children nor wife to fret after me and suffer for want of my rifle. I never he been much afraid of death. But I tell you all you can do's no use. There's a sign that can't be mistook."

The group about the bed glanced at each other, and the woman shook her head as she thought she would have said, "Never mind his words."

I did what I could for him. The bullets were extracted, the wounds bound up. He was weak, but not desparately so. I looked at him and smiled. "How now?" said I.

"Taint no use—the watch is stopping fast," he answered.

Then for the first time I noticed that beside him on the bed lay a great, old-fashioned silver watch, the case battered, the face discolored, and that ticked with a strange dull sound, as though it were very old and feeble.

"This watch has been injured with the bullets, I suppose," said I; "besides, all watches stop at times."

"Not this one, stranger," said the wounded man. "They've laughed about that watch a hundred times; now they'll find my story's true. I reckon. That watch and I will stop at the same minute."

The woman at the bedside shook her head again. "It's an old fancy 'o yours, Mike Barlow," she said; "you'll live to see the folly of it."

"So they talk," said the man. "Now listen, doctor. You've come far to see me and done all you could. I'll give you that watch. Its money valley ain't much, but it'll do you service. It was give to me by an old Frenchman, out o' Canada, when he was layin' just as I am layin'. It had been his father's, and his grandfather's, and his great-grandfather's before that; and this is what he told me about it, and this is what you'll find to be true. That watch will tick slow and steady, regular as the sun, as long as whoever it belongs to is well, and safe, and thriving. When there's danger coming, it begins to go fast, faster and faster, until it is past, and so fast that you can hear it across the room as plain as if you had it in your hand. When death is coming that watch begins to stop, it goes slower. Its voice grows hollow; and when the breath leaves the body, there's no more sound to be heard, and all you can do won't make it go for a year. At the end of that time it will start all of a sudden, and after that you can read your fate by it and know your death hour. It was so after old Pierre died. It will be so now. Keep the watch when I am gone, doctor."

I could not help looking with some interest at the battered time piece. A strange story had been woven about it, and the marvellous always had a charm for me.

I sat beside my patient until he sank to sleep. He seemed to be doing well still, and I had no doubt but that the morning light would see him greatly better. But western hospitality would not permit of my departure at that late hour, and I was lodged in an upper chamber upon a bed as clean and fragrant as it was simple. I slept soundly. At midnight, however, I was awakened by the news that my patient was worse. He was awakened in mortal agony. Some inward injury, impossible to discover, had done its work. I said nothing of hope now, and the dying man looked at me with a ghastly smile.

"Take the watch," he said. "Watch it and me; and you will find me right."

These were the last words he uttered. He muttered incoherently after this, tossed his arms about, and struggled for his breath. At last he seemed to sink into slumber. My hand was on his heart. I felt its beatings grow faint, fainter, fainter still. At last there was no motion. He was dead. I lifted the watch to my ear—that had stopped also.

There were tears in the eyes of the rough men about me, and the woman wept; she might be for one of her kindred. I could do no good now, and I turned away, leaving the watch upon the coverlid; but one of the men came after me.

"He give it to you," he said, "and it's yours. He had nobody belonging to him, so you needn't be afraid of takin' it. Take it, doctor." And so the watch was mine.

It was dumb and motionless, and remained so. I took it to a watchmaker, and he laughed at the idea of its ever going again. This was after I had left the West, and I dwelt in a large and populous city in the Eastern States, some eight or nine months after poor Mike Barlow's death. The watchmaker only confirmed my suspicions. It was a strange coincidence that it should last exactly its master's lifetime, but that was all. So I hung it upon my chamber wall, a memento of those days of toil and struggle in the far West.

One morning I awoke early. The blushes of dawn were just breaking over the earth. It was the month of November, but still the day was lovely. An unusual sound smote my ears, and I turned round and listened attentively. At first I could not guess from whence it came. Had the sky been cloudy I should have imagined it to be rain on the roof. Then I began to feel that this sound I heard was too delicate for the pattering of rain. It might have been the clang of a fairy hammer, or the tapping of the beak of some minute bird, save that it was too regular. But the mystery of the sound was that it seemed to appeal to me—to approach me with forgetting it.

I sat up and looked about me. In an instant I understood the sound. It was the

tick of the old watch upon the wall! Silent for a twelve-month, it had actually found voice, as though some spirit hand had touched its spring. I looked at my memorandum book. Twelve o'clock of the past night was the anniversary of Mike Barlow's death. His words had come true at last. He had said that when it once began to move, it would be as my monitor of safety or danger. All else had happened as he had foretold; why should not this come to pass? I wore upon my gold chain a dainty little Geneva watch. I fastened it, and put the battered silver monitor in its place. The budding development of the mystery made it more precious to me than if it had been set with jewels.

It did not stop again. I heard the soft clear "tick, tick, tick," all day, and when I wakened in the night. Once or twice it beat more rapidly than usual, and always before peril—the first time when a fever threatened me; the second when I stood upon a broken bridge, which was swept away an hour afterwards; and at other moments, which I have forgotten, but which served to keep alive the fancy which I have loved to cherish. Never was its voice so clear and soft as on that evening when I first met Rosa Grey. I loved her from the first moment, and she loved me in return. We had neither of us any friends to interfere, for she was an orphan, brotherless and sisterless; and so, after a brief courtship, we were married.

I have no secrets from my wife, and in a little while she learned the story of the watch. She had faith in it, and though she fancied that she could detect the very shades of difference in its utterance. When I was weary, she said the watch was weary too; when I was glad, it had a joyous echo. I know that on that night, when a feeble breath fluttered in a feeble frame, and the little creature to whom our love had given existence struggled vainly for its life, there was a piteous cadence in the voice of that old watch I hope never to hear again.

So we lived in together. It was God's will that we should be childless, but we loved each other all the more. I grew rich and prosperous, and our only grief was the missing of those baby eyes and voices which we had hoped to have about our hearth.

It was my fortieth birthday—I never shall forget the day—and when the watch began its warning. My wife and I heard it at one moment. Never before had the voice of that watch been so loud or so rapid. All day long, all the next, and all the next, that warning continued. The strong pulse of the watch shook the table on which it rested when I drew it from my pocket, and made the garments on my bosom rise and fall when I replaced it. We were threatened with illness? No! her cheek was blooming and my pulse was regular. What could it mean?

After four days I began to laugh at my own credulity, and even Rosa began to lose her faith in the monitor. About noon I left her, and went alone to a little room where I kept my medical works and some rare drugs and curiosities. It was my purpose to study for a lecture which I had to deliver that evening. I seated myself at my desk and commenced to read; but after a few moments I began to experience a singular faintness and to inhale a disagreeable odor. I recognized the smell in a moment. In one of the jars upon my shelves was a rare essence of great use in cases where a suspension of unconsciousness was necessary, but excessively dangerous save in skillful hands. Some one—a servant, probably, had been meddling with the jar, and removed the stopper, and the room was full of the powerful odor. I must leave the room if I would live. I staggered to the door, but my hand upon the lock when, horror of horrors! it remained immovable—something had happened to the catch. I strove to call aloud, but my voice failed me, I clutched the table for support, but lost my hold, and fell heavily to the floor. I could see nothing—all grew dark about me. Mechanically I placed my hand upon the watch within my bosom. It had stopped!—and I remembered nothing more.

Consciousness came back to me as it may come to a new-born babe, for aught I know. I felt without understanding; I was conscious of facts for which I cared nothing; I was in the dark; I was very cold, and my movements were constrained; but it did not seem as though that were any affair of mine. Hunger at last awoke me; and the animal around the mental, and I began to wonder where I had been and where I was. I put up my hand as well as I could. There was a low roof over my head, folds of muslin lay about me, and something was upon my breast which emitted a sickly fragrance—a bunch of flowers seeming half withered. I knew this by the touch. What was the matter with me? Why could I not breathe freely? Was I blind and deaf that I could neither see nor hear? Suddenly the truth flashed across me; I had been buried alive!—I lay in my coffin!

And all this time, you ask, where was my wife?—how had she borne the blow which had fallen so suddenly upon her? She it was who found me senseless upon my study floor; and she it was who hoped for returning consciousness after all others despaired. At last they told her I was dead, and shrouded me for burial. Learned men decided that the strange preservation of my frame was caused by the manner of my death, and at length my body was committed to the tomb.

I had often made my wife promise me that if I died she would take the watch into her own possession, and wear it while she lived; and so, now that all was over, she took it, voiceless as it was, and laid it next her bosom.

For three days and nights she never slept; but at last exhaustion did its work, and she fell into a heavy slumber. She was awakened by a sound as strange as it was unexpected. The watch, silent since that fatal day, had begun to tick—fast and furious, as it never ticked before, loud enough to arouse her—loud enough to make her spring from her pillow in agony of hope and fear.

Those about her thought she was a mad woman; and, nevertheless, the strength of her purpose bore all before her. Out into the night air she went, and they followed her. Through the streets of the deserted town she passed in her white night-gown, like a ghost, and they dared not hold her back. She reached the church-yard at last, and beat wildly on the old sexton's door.

"I am come to tell you to open my husband's vault," she said; "he is come to life again!"

He also thought her mad, and yet dared not disobey her; and all the while the furious ticking of the watch was heard by each man there. It softened, it stilled when the doors were opened and the dark coffin stood upon the turf. It grew musical when my wife bent over me and caught me to her heart—and corpse, but a living man; and it had no change in its regular beat since that moment.

It is before me now, battered and worn as it was when it first came into my possession; and you may laugh alike at the watch and the superstition with which it is connected. But my wife believes in it firmly, and loves it as though it were a living thing, and, for the matter of that, so do I.

MARY THORNE'S COUSIN.

"Mary, I am astonished!"

Of course the grave elder sister was astonished! In truth, and in fact, she lived in a chronic state of amazement, for Mary Thorne was always doing something to astonish her friends and relatives. Miss Ruth could hardly credit the evidence of her own senses, in the hazy glow of the August morning, when she came out of the clematis shadows of the little south porch, and discovered that yonder moving object half way up among the umbrageous branches of the huge old pear tree was not a spray of leaves, nor yet a russet-plumed robin, nor a cluster of sun-checked pears swinging in the blue empyrean, but—Miss Mary Thorne comfortably perched in the crook of the gnarled tree, her curls all flecked with the sifted rain of sunshine that came down through the shifting canopy of leaves, and a book in her lap!

"I don't care!" said the little damsel, laughing away defiance. "It's the nicest place in the world up here; I feel just like a bird, with the leaves fluttering against my face, and the wind blowing so softly—and I intend to stay here! Wouldn't you like to come up here, Ruthy? It's easily done—just put your foot on that knot, and a hundred and sixty pounds, bristled up with amazement."

"Mary Thorne! are you crazy? Come down this instant!"

"I shan't!" said the naughty Mary, tossing the silky shower of curls away from her forehead, and glancing down with eyes that shone and sparkled like two blue jewels.

"But we are all going—"

"Yes, I understand—you are all going in triumphal procession to the depot, to render an ovation to the great Professor La Place, the wisest, sagest and grandest of mankind, to whom the Thorne family have the unutterable honor of being second cousins, and to escort him solemnly to a month's sojourn at Thorne Hall! Oh, dear!" ejaculated Mary, "I wish I could run away somewhere and hide! I hate this paragon of prime precision! I shan't marry him if he asks, and I mean to behave so badly that he won't dream of it! No, I am not going with you—I hate the old baronche, and it's too warm to ride on horseback. I shall stay at home!"

And Miss Mary settled herself so snugly with one tiny slipped foot swinging down, and her pretty head close to a nest of blue speckled bird's eggs, that Ruth gave it up with a sigh of despair.

"Well then, have it your own way, you incorrigible rump! I wish you weren't too big to be shut up in a dark closet, or have your ears well boxed!"

"It is a pity, isn't it?" said Mary, demurely.

"Of course it is, Mary; if Cousin Tom Bradley comes this morning, be sure and explain to him why we are absent, and behave like a young lady, mind!"

"All right!" said Mary, dauntlessly. "I always liked Tom! We used to have grand romps together when we were children!"

She sat there in the old pear tree, prettier than any Hamadryad that ever might have haunted the mossy old veteran of the garden, her cheek touched with sunshine and ermine, her dimpled lips apart, now reading a line or two from the book in her lap, now looking up, wrapped in girlish reverie, into the blue sky as it sparkled down through ever-moving leaves, and now breaking into a soft little warble of song that made the very robins themselves put their heads on one side to listen! The carriage had driven away long since—she had watched it beyond the curve of the winding road; the dark mantle of shadow was slowly following the creeping sun-glow across the velvet lawn below, and the old church spire among the far-off woods had chimed out eleven! And still Mary Thorne sat there in the forked branches of the giant pear tree!

Suddenly there floated up into her leafy sanctuary a pungent, aromatic odor which made her lean curiously forward, shading her eyes with one hand, the better to penetrate the green foliage below. Not the late monthly roses—not the amethyst borders of heliotrope, nor the spiky geraniums—none of these blossoms distilled that peculiar smell!

"My patience!" said little Mary, "it's a cigar it was, and the owner thereof—"

She could just see a white linen coat and a tall head covered with black wavy curls—stood on the porch steps quietly smoking, and indulging in a lengthened view of the garden slopes.

"That's Tom Bradley!" said Mary to herself. "Now if he thinks I'm coming down out of this delicious cool place to sit up straight in the hot parlors, he's mistaken!" Tom? she called out, in a silver accent of imperious summons, and then burst into merry laughter at the evident amazement with which the stranger gazed round him, vainly trying to conjecture whence the call had proceeded.

"You dear, stupid Cousin Tom!" she ejaculated; "don't stare off towards the cabbage beds! Look straight up here! I guess you come up for both! You are Cousin Tom, aren't you?" she continued, as a sudden misgiving crossed her mind.

"Of course I am; and you are Mary, I suppose?"

"Mary herself! Up with you, Tom—"

catch hold of this branch—there. Now shake hands—you sunny fellow, I didn't say you might kiss me!"

"Well, I couldn't help it—and besides, aren't we cousins?" said Mr. Tom, swinging himself comfortably into a branch just above Mary.

"Why, Tom, how you have changed! I ejaculated the young lady, pushing back the curls with one hand, that she might the better view her playmate of childhood's days. "Your hair never curled so before; and what a nice moustache you've got! I shouldn't have known you, Tom!"

"No!" said Tom, roguishly.

"And you've grown so tall! I declare, Tom, you're splendid!"

The gentleman laughed. "I could return the compliment, if I dared! But where are all the rest of my relations? The house below is as empty as a haunted hall!"

"All gone to welcome that horrid pocky old Professor La Place, who has graciously indicated his willingness to pass a few weeks with us! Tom, I do hate that man!"

"Hate him! what for?"

"O, I don't know; I'm sure he is a snuff-dried, conceited old wretch, and I'll wager a box of gloves he wears spectacles!"

"Nonsense, Mary! why he is only twenty-six!"

"I don't care—I know he's rheumatic and wears spectacles for all that. And Tom—now if you'll never, never breathe a word of this—"

"I won't, upon my honor," said Tom.

"Well, then, papa has actually got the idea into his dear old head that I should make a nice wife for the professor, and—"

"Mary turned away with crimson indignation flashing in her cheeks.

"It is too bad of you to laugh, Tom! I never, never will marry the man!"

"I wouldn't if I were you!" consoled Tom.

"Before you decide. He may be quite a decent fellow."

"No!" said Mary, shaking her head and biting her cherry lips firmly; "I hate him before-hand!"

"What a spiteful little pussy you are!" said her companion, laughing.

"No indeed, Tom, I'm not!" and the blue eyes became misty. "I love papa and I hate dear—and I love almost everybody! I like you, Tom, but I hate Professor La Place! And I want you to promise, Tom, that you'll stand my friend, and not allow him to tease me into walks or rides, or tete-a-tetes of any kind! Will you?"

"Would he? If he had asked him to precipitate himself out of the pear tree upon the stone steps below, with those blue eyes fixed on his, he'd have done it! Any man of taste would!"

"I promise," he said; and they shook hands on it.

What a cozy place for a chat that gnarled old tree was! And when they had talked over every thing they could think of, it was the most natural thing in the world that Tom should recover the book which had slipped down into a network of tiny boughs, and read poetry to his pretty cousin in the deep unaltered voice that maidens love to listen to! And Mary sat there, watching the jolly curls blowing to and fro on his broad white brow, and the long black lashes almost touching his olive cheek. And she thought how very, very handsome Cousin Tom was, and how much he had changed in the ten years that had elapsed since she had seen him last, and she wondered whether Tom was engaged to any pretty girl—somehow she hoped not! Now, why couldn't Tom have been rich like that horrid Professor La Place, instead of a poor young medical student, and—

And when the large black eyes were suddenly lifted to hers, Mary felt as though he had read every thought of her mind, and blushed scarlet!

"Come, Tom," she chattered, to hide her confusion, "we've been up here long enough! Help me down, and I'll show you the old sun dial that we used to heap up with butter cups when we were children!"

What a tiny, insignificant, little Mary she felt, leaning on the arm of that tall cousin. And how nice it was to have the stately head bent down so courteously to catch her soft accents—for somehow Mary had forgotten her sauciness, and grown wondrously shy!

A rumble of wheels—it was the returning carriage, and Mary clung to Tom's arm.

"The awful professor!" she whispered.

"Now, Cousin Tom, be sure you stand by me through everything!"

"To my life's end!" was the whispered answer; and Mary felt herself crimsoning, much as she strove to repress the tell-tale blush.

But there was no one in the barouch, save Mr. Thorne and Ruth, as it drew up on the grand sweep, beside the two cousins.

"Where is the professor?" questioned Mary.

"He was not at the depot," said Ruth; "and—"

But Mr. Thorne had sprung from the carriage, and clasped both the stranger's hands in his.

"La Place! is it possible? Why, he has just been looking for you at Mill Station!"

"I am sorry to have inconvenienced you, sir," was the reply; "but I came by the way of Warton, and walked over this morning."

"Never mind now, so you are safely here," exclaimed the old gentleman. "Ruth, my dear—Mary—let me introduce you to your cousin, Professor La Place!"

Mary had dropped his arm and stood dismayed.

"You told me you were Cousin Tom!"

"So I am Cousin Tom! That is my name and relationship, now, Mary," and her black eyes sparkled brightly of deprecating archness. "don't be angry because I don't snuff, nor wear spectacles! I beg the other Cousin Tom's pardon, whoever he is; but I am very glad he isn't here! Mary be just, and don't hate Cousin Tom, because his other name happens to be La Place!"

He need not have been so apprehensive, for in their twilight walk besides the sundial that very evening, she confessed that she did not find Professor La Place such a terrible ogre after all; quite the contrary, in fact. And he succeeded in convincing her that he liked his impulsive little cousin Mary all the better for those pear tree escapades.

But, no doubt, it was a very perplexing thing to have two Cousin Toms; and so, about six months subsequently, Miss Mary contrived to obviate that inconvenience by allowing one of them to assume a nearer relationship, and in spite of all her assertions to the contrary, she is Mrs. Professor La Place.

For it's a solemn fact in this world, that whenever a girl says she "never, never" will do a thing, she is pretty sure to go and do it the first chance she gets, and Mary is no exception to the general rule!

TERRIFIC ADVENTURE WITH A BOA CONSTRICTOR.

One of the most thrilling incidents which has ever come to our knowledge occurred a few days since in a "side show" with Van Amburg & Co.'s Menagerie, where two enormous snakes—an anaconda and a boa constrictor—are on exhibition. Both of the huge reptiles are kept in the case with a glass top, opening at the side, and the keeper was engaged in the act of feeding them when the event occurred. The longer of the snakes, the boa constrictor, which is some thirty feet long and as large around the middle as a man's thigh, had just swallowed two rabbits when the keeper introduced his arm and body into the cage for the purpose of reaching a third to the anaconda, at the opposite corner. While in this position the boa, not satisfied with his share of the rations, made a spring, probably with the intention of securing the remaining rabbit, but, instead, fastened his jaws upon the keeper's hand, and with the rapidity of lightning, threw three coils around the poor fellow, thus rendering him entirely helpless. His shouts of distress at once brought several men to his assistance, and among them, fortunately, was a well known showman named Townsend a man of great muscular power, and what was of more importance, one who had been familiar with the habits of these repulsive monsters all his life, having owned some of the largest ones ever brought to this country. The situation of the keeper was now perilous in the extreme. The first thing to be done was to uncoil the snake from around him, but if in attempting this the reptile should become in the least degree angered, he would, in a second, contract his coils with a power sufficient to crush the life out of an ox. A single quick convulsion of the creature and the keeper's soul would be in eternity! This Townsend fully understood, so, without attempting to disturb the boa's hold upon the keeper's hand, he managed by powerful yet extremely cautious movements to uncoil the snake without exciting him, after which, by the united exertions of two strong men the jaws were prised open and the man released in a completely exhausted condition. The bite of the boa constrictor is not poisonous, and although the bitten hand was immensely swollen the next day, no serious results were apprehended. A more narrow escape from a most horrible death it would be difficult to imagine.

INTENDED BLOCKADE OF TAMPIO.—The Halifax Royal Gazette contains a letter from Admiral Milne, addressed to his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, conveying information of the intended blockade of the port of Tampico by a French naval force. Annexed to this letter is a translation of a note addressed to the commander of H.M.S. Puckton, by the captain commanding the French expeditionary division in the Gulf of Mexico, from which it appears that after the 15th of July, the port of Tampico was to be blockaded by a French naval force sufficient to ensure an efficient blockade. The blockade is to be continued until the end of hostilities; but the English packet which takes the European correspondence will be permitted to continue her monthly voyages to Tampico as heretofore.

UNPLEASANT OCCURRENCE.—The Canadian papers say that travelling on the Niagara River, and other places in Canada where British and American territory is only divided by narrow rivers, is becoming very insecure, on account of the spies or looking out parties being very numerous on the American side, and having instructions to fire on every boat in which they believe Americans fleeing from draft are concealed. Several boats have been fired into with ball, and much indignation is caused by such proceedings. One of these occurrences is thus detailed by the St. Catherine's, C. W., Journal:

On Friday evening last, Color-Sergeant Conroy and Corporal Cogan, of the Company of R. C. Rifles stationed at Niagara, were proceeding down the river from Queenstown (where they had been attending a picnic) and were by the action of the current carried a little nearer the American than the British shore, when they were surprised by having a gun loaded with buckshot fired at them. Thinking it was a fire on every boat in which they believe Americans fleeing from draft are concealed. Several boats have been fired into with ball, and much indignation is caused by such proceedings. One of these occurrences is thus detailed by the St. Catherine's, C. W., Journal:

The Comet is making an appearance quite becoming a comet of the first tail. It may be distinctly seen every clear night a little to the left of the North Star.

A RAIN-GLASS.—The following may be depended upon as a rain-glass: It may be used for months. Get a common pickle-bottle, such as is sold at every Italian warehouse; fill it with any kind of water, to within two or three inches of the top; plunge the neck of an empty Florence oil-bottle into the pickle-bottle. Before rain the water will rise two or three inches in the neck of the inverted flask—often in three or four hours. If the weather is settled for fair, the water will remain not more than half an inch high, in the neck of the flask. It never fails to foretell rain; and to-day, July 15, rose as high as the rim of the pickle-bottle, in the neck of the flask. It may stand in or out of doors, in sun or shade, and a water never needs changing so long as it can be seen through. Mine is now green through long standing. The oil-flask must be cleaned before the neck is plunged in the water. Soda and warm water will clear it of oil.—Corresp. Atheneum.

THE QUEBEC MERCURY (the organ of the Canadian Government) says that there is no reason to suppose that Ministers will depart from their intention, as expressed last Session, of summoning the Legislature for the despatch of business, until the beginning of the new year. The announcement of a meeting on the 28th of the present month, originated with the Montreal Witness, whose conductors mistaking a notice proroguing Parliament for the correct one, issued an extra calling members together for the despatch of business.