The Bedford Gazette.

BY MEYERS & MENGEL. BEDFORD, PA. THURSDAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1870. VOL. 65.---WHOLE No. 3,361.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

THE BEDFORD GAZETTE is published every Thursday morning by MEYERS & MENGEL, at $2.00 per annum, *if paid strictly in advance*; $2.50 if paid within six months; $3.00 if not paid within six months. *All subscription accounts MUST be settled annually.* No paper will be sent out the State unless paid for IN ADVANCE, and all such subscriptions will invariably be discontinued at the expiration of the time for which they are Paid.

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The Bedford Gazette.

A TERRIBLE ENCOUNTER.

Many years ago, my health having become much impaired by over study, I was recommended to pass a winter in the south of France. Of so agreeable a prescription I readily availed myself. I was without wife or child to encumber my departure; and, armed only with a portmantau, made a most delightful journey of it to the charming town of V——.

Shortly after my arrival, whilst sitting at the window of my hotel, a man passed by so very much like myself that, struck with the resemblance, I rose, and leaning forward, followed him with my eyes. His dress bespoke him an Englishman. He was tall, so was I. Slim; I am slim. His eyes were blue, his skin fair, his hair a deep auburn, his nose aquiline. All this was my portrait. When he reached the bottom of the street he paused, looked around, then slowly returned, crossing the road, however, and taking the opposite pavement. This enabled me to get a clearer view of the man.—I confess I was much impressed with the resemblance, and hardly liked it. The physiologist, I thought, may delight as much as he pleases in such coincidence; for my part I decidedly object to being made a portion of any sort of a phenomenon. I had read of very unpleasant consequences following personal resemblances, and earnestly hoped that this individual, whom nature, short of moulds at the time had undoubtedly cast in mine, would speedily clear the neighborhood of his presence.

A week or two after this, in taking a walk across a beautiful bit of adjacent country, I suddenly encountered my likeness, seated on a rustic bench beneath a tree, with his arm encircling the waist of a very beautiful peasant girl. Her skin, of a pure and cream-like tint, finely contrasted with the splendid luxuriance of black hair.—Her eyes flashed upon me as I passed, and I noticed her draw herself erect with rapid hauteur, as if indignant or impatient of detection. The man by her side, who would have passed very well for me to any other person but my mother and myself, still maintained his caressing attitude. He did not condescend to raise his eyes to me as I passed, but kept them fixed on the face of the girl, who, I could see, watch me with a species of sullen eagerness, as if wishing me well out of sight.

As I passed them, I must confess to having experienced a momentary sensation of envy of the man. Since nature has put him in my skin, I thought it seems only fair that I should put myself in his shoes. For all I know, I reflected, that beautiful peasant girl might have been originally destined for me; but the intention of nature has been defeated by her love of coincidence, I laughed at my thoughts as I walked on, and turning a corner, lost sight of the lovers.

On reaching the bottom of the lane, I found that I had fallen upon a *cul-de-sac*. The passage terminated in a series of fields, across which I could discover no footpath. I had no wish to be arrested for trespassing, so I decided on returning the way I had come.

On sighting the beach, I found it was deserted. I was not sorry. I would by no means have disliked another peep at the beautiful brunette; but I at the same time had no ambition to inspire the couple with the notion that I was watching them.

I had got to the top of the hill, and I was passing between a row of thick bushes, making a sort of natural heuge for a broad area of tress, like a gigantic peak, when I was suddenly startled by a report of a pistol discharged to my left. At the same time I heard the hollow sound of a ball striking my hat, and that article of dress rolled to the ground.

I looked round with a pale face.—The attack was horribly sudden. Who, in the name of heaven wanted my life? For what crime was my blood demanded? What had I done? I saw the blue smoke curling up from the densest portion of the bushes, and heard the crackling of the furze and twigs caused by the hasty flight of some one.

I picked up my hat. The ball had passed clear through it. Had it struck two inches lower, it would have entered my head.

I hastened toward town, possessed with much the same sort of enviable feelings as you might imagine a Tipperary landlord or agent would feel who sees threats of his life carved on every other tree. Bravery in a situation of this sort was quite out of the question. Of what use is pluck when you have to deal with invisible foes? I might also confess to having broken into a downright flight as I neared the town so extremely anxious was I to escape every sheltering bush, tree or hedge in the neighborhood.

On gaining my hotel I began to reflect on my narrow escape. I had been too much excited to attach to it the significance it demanded. But the hole in my hat conveyed the most shuddering evidence of my narrow escape. Beyond all reasonable doubt my life within that paltry hour had only been worth two inches.

I repeated the question to myself: Who wants my life! And, if anybody wants it, what are his claims?—What have I done to merit assassination?" Being wholly unable to answer these queries, I resolved to make a confidant of my host, the hotel-keeper. I called him to my room, and told him what had happened. He shrugged his shoulders, as he exclaimed:

"Monsieur, like the rest of mankind, must pay the penalty of love."

"But," said I, shocked by his sang-froid, "I have not made love. Since I have been here I am not conscious of having looked at a woman—much less spoken to one."

"Then it is an enigma," he replied. "The only solution I can offer you is—that you have been mistaken for some one else."

"Bon Dieu!" I exclaimed. You have undoubtedly hit the mark. I have been mistaken—and I know for whom. Have you not seen a man in this town bearing a striking resemblance to me?"

"No," was the answer.

"Well, my friend, I have. The moment when I saw him, I felt uncomfortable. I had a presentiment of evil. You will oblige me by letting me have your bill. I shall go to Paris to-night. If I stop here another day, my life, which I left England to fortify, will be snuffed like a candle."

The hotel keeper seeing matters come to a point that affected his interests, endeavored to laugh down my doubts. He argued that the ball I had received in my hat might have been destined for a bird; that it had been shot by some wretched marksman, who had mistaken my hat for a crow.

"That may all be very well," I answered; but suffer me to tell you that your excuse only makes me more resolute to leave this place; for of what value is a man's life in a district abounding with sportsmen who can mistake a hat for a crow?"

A train left for Paris at 2:35. It was an express, and I found it to be due at eight o'clock. I dispatched my portmanteau by a porter to the station, and having twenty minutes before me sat down to a slight repast of cold fowl and *vin ordinaire*. The position of my table enabled me to get a view of the street. As the porter strode away with my luggage, I observed a man cross the road and accost him. In reply to what was obviously a question, the porter, with the gesticulations of a Frenchman, pointed with his thumb to the hotel, and vigorously nodded his head. The man crossed over again to the pavement, came on until he was opposite the window, and abruptly turning on his heel, walked off in the direction taken by the porter.

I thought nothing of this. The man, I conjectured, probably wanted the job I had given to the porter. He was a common looking fellow, dressed in leather gaiters, a blouse, a slouched cap, and a belt. There was nothing singular in his face. He was dark, with a black beard and moustache.—He was a familiar type of the middle-aged peasant of southern France.

Having discharged my bill, I walk to the railway station. On one platform there was much tumult, a train from Paris having just arrived. But upon the platform against which stood the train which was to bear me to the north, I counted only five persons, exclusive of porters.

But I had little time for observation. The train would leave in three minutes. I saw my portmanteau stowed away in the luggage van, procured myself a first-class ticket, and took my seat.

The shrill whistle of the guard sounded. The engine gave a snort, and the line of carriages clanked to their chains as they tightened to the strain. Suddenly several voices cried "Stop! stop! Now, then, quick! Which class—first? Let's see your ticket. Right. Here you are—jump in!" The door of my carriage was opened, a form bounded in, the door was slammed, there was another shrill whistle, and off went the train.

I looked at my companion. He was the man whom I had noticed speak to the porter and stare in the window of my hotel.

A thrill passed over me. My recent escape had greatly shaken my nervous system; and the apparition of the man whom I felt I ought to suspect, sent a chill through my blood. As a peasant which he was—not expressed only in dress, but in his hands, which were dirty, rough and horny—what did he do in a first-class carriage? I would have given something to have exchanged carriages. But there was no communication with the guard. Morever, the train as I have told you was an express, and did not stop until a run of sixty-six miles had been accomplished. We were now blowing away with great rapidity.

The man sat screwed up in a corner away from me, immoveable. He appeared to be looking through the window at the country as it whirled by; but there was an abstracted expression in his gaze which indicated that he saw nothing. His arms were folded upon his breast. Though he must have been conscious of my scrutiny, he never turned his eyes upon me. His lips, I saw were tightly compressed and he breathed slowly but deeply through his nose, the nostrils of which dilated to the steady respiration.

I began after a little to regain my composure. I struggled to laugh down my fears. What, I thought had I to fear from a man I had never seen—who had never seen me! The thing was preposterous. I extracted a paper from my pocket and commenced to read. I might have spoken to him only I imagined that a man in his situation might have been embarassed at my French, which I did not speak with a good accent.—Besides there was something that repelled all approach in his immobility.

Half an hour passed away. All at once, over the edge of my newspaper, I saw him put his hand out of the window, as if to open the door. I had no time to conjecture his intention when, with a wild screaming whistle, we were hurled into the night of a long tunnel.

The rapid disappearance of daylight made the oil lamp suspended in the carriage emit but the dullest sight for some minutes.

I laid the newspaper down with my old fears revived in me. I had scarcely done so when I saw the outline of a man rise in the carriage. He leaped over to where I was seated. I saw the gleam of a knife in the air.

Mad with passion and surprise, I grasped the descending arm. A furious determination to preserve my life inspired me with the strength of a giant. The ferocity with which I seized the wrist forced the hand open. The knife fell; and then commenced a silent, furious struggle.

He seized me by the collar and clung with the tenacity of a tiger. I heard him snapping his teeth as if he were endeavoring to bite. We swayed from one end of the carriage to the other. I felt how weak ill health had left me and prayed to pass out into the light, that I might better see how to encounter the ruffian.

Suddenly I felt myself swung around with tremendous energy. I bounded against a door which opened, and we fell on the lines in the very centre of the tunnel.

The fall seemed to have stunned him, for he fell under me and remained there for a time motionless. For myself I received an indescribable shock, such as is experienced in a collision; but I retained my senses. I heard the roar of the train dying away in the distance. I saw the red gleam fading like the eye of a dying demon.

I still clutched him by the throat, nor did I dare relinquish it. My situation was frightful. I suspected that a down train would soon be passing, and in the intense blackness of the tunnel I could not see on which line we had fallen. I would have stretched forth my hand to grope for the rails; I might have found a place of safety by judging the distance between them; but I felt the form of my assailant beneath me. His struggles grew fiercer. He endeavored to rise, but with the fury of dispair I kept him pressed down, one hand on his throat the other on his breast. What I desired was to render him insensible. I would then leave him in darkness, and grope my way as I could

It never occurred to me at the time that there was no need to make him insensible in order to elude him. The darkness would have rendered my presence invisible to him.—But my mind was hopelessly confussed. I was breathing sulphurous air made thick and difficult by its blackness. My only thought was to keep the ruffian down. I was only capable indeed, of this thought.

A few minutes had elapsed when I heard distant rumbling like approaching thunder. It increased. I seemed to feel the wind blowing against my face. I tasted too a continuous draught of smoke and steam. I knew that a train was approaching, and my hair lifted on my head. What rails were we on? The suspense was frightful.

My assailant increased his struggles. He became furious. He was evidently fighting to throw me down, and over in the direction of that side of the tunnel along which came the roar of the train. I saw his object and madly pressed upon him. His body frantically writhed. He twisted under me as if he revolved upon a pivot. He endeavored to shriek some words to me, but my throttling grasp made his voice no more than a horrible hoarseness.

I saw the red and green lights of the engine approaching. They grew in size and lusture with hidious rapidity. There was a roar, a shower of dust, a wind that struck me down like a blow from a strong man's fist; then followed by the dying, rattle ending in a dull and sullen moan.

I rose to my feet. I crossed over to the wall, and, feeling along it, took a walk with all the speed my sinking frame would suffer me to put forth. How long I walked I know not. My passage seemed interminable. The damp of the wall against which my hand constantly pressed, froze my blood. Now and then I stumbled over piles of rubbish lying grouped against the side; and sometimes my groping was bewildered by coming across recesses into which my hands guided me.

At length I saw a star, tremulous, glorious, in the distance. It was daylight; the aperture of the tunnel, and I pushed forward with invigorated spirits. I neared it slowly; for this star seemed to maintain an inexorable distance and would not enlarge. How shall I describe my joy as I gained the twilight of its reflection—as I advanced and felt the pure air of Heaven upon my dry cheeks and burning lips—I saw the blue sky, and the dim vista of the pale green banks.

As I got into the light, a cry escaped my lips. My trousers were splashed with blood. There was one ensanguined line, as if a fountain of blood had play upon me.

I seated myself to recover my strength. I could see that I presentented a dismal and terrible spectacle. My coat was torn, my hands were black—so, too, I judged was my face—my collar had been torn from me and the skin at the ends of my fingers had been lacerated. After reposing myself I climbed the bank, and perceived at the distance of about a mile a small station. I made toward it, and gained it. A railway official, who was standing looking at two children playing in the back garden, uttered a loud cry of alarm as he spied me. I narrated my story as coherently as I could, and then sunk upon the ground in a fainting condition.

Of what happened after that I have no remembrance. When I come to my senses I discovered that I had been taken to the house of the station master, and carefully tended by his wife. From him I learnt the conclusion of this singular incident in my life. It seems that after my story had been told, two men were dispatched into the tunnel in search of my assailant. They discovered him lying dead with both his legs cut clean off a little above the knees. They bore the corpse to an adjacent dead house; and an inquiry into his death brought out particulars that are easily anticipated. The man who so closely resembled me at V——, had seduced the betrothed of a laborer one Theodore Vertot. This Theodore, reckless now of life, and resolutely bent on vengeance, swore to kill her seducer. Mistaking me for his enemy, he attempted to shoot me. This failing he hung about the hotel, armed with a stiletto, determined to stab me whenever I should appear in the street. Hearing, however, that I was about leaving for Paris, he perceived a better and safer means of prosecuting his design, by stabbing me in the tunnel through which he knew we would pass, and then escaping in the darkness. Reflection had obviously taught him that revenge would be none the less sweet because it did not entail his destruction by the law.

Such is the simple but tragical story. My prototype, who had been the means of twice imperiling my life, I have never seen since. I confess to no wish to see him. It is bad enough to have to bear the brunt of one's own follies; it is altogether miserable to suffer the follies of others. Ever since the occurrence of this small eposide, I have always thought there is a much wiser providence manifested in the dissimilarity between man and man than our philosophers suffer us to dream of.

Gentleman's Magazine.

Prince Arthur came down heavily on the dignitaries of Washington and the magnates of New York. This very great Prince Arthur William Patrick Ceasarea Philosola Bustamento Frederic Phillipl Augustus, whom the flunkies of Washington and New York danced, dined, wined and kissed for his mother, says: "The ball given in his honor at Ottawa was unequaled by anything he had seen this side of the Atlantic." How do the flunkies throughout the country like the compliment? How do the heads of department and other officials at Washington, with the thirty-six committee men and other New York todies, feel when told that they have been eclipsed by the rustics of a huckleberry town in Canada?

Havana dispatches contain the usual record of Spanish victories and the killing and surrendering of insurgents. No insurgent successes whatever are reported. The victories are invariably on one side. Captain-General De Rodas has authorized the release of the imprisoned Masons on bail. Mr. Phillips, late Acting American Consul, was waited upon in Havana by a gang of "regulators" and forced to sign a card repudiating the statements contained in the despatch alleged to have been sent by him to New York. The card has been published in the city papers, and Mr. Phillips has fled from the island by the first steamer leaving for a foreign port.

A home-made divorce has been ratified in Pittsburg between a man and his wife. An article of agreement was entered into between them, the man obligating to pay the woman fifteen dollars a week, and she stipulating never hereafter to interfere with him while he enjoys himself with another woman he has taken as a wife. The parties are now living in separate houses, and enjoying themselves hugely.

A colored man named Richardson has been surrendered by the Governor of Massachusetts on a requisition of the Governor of Maryland. He is charged with being implicated in the murder of William Gayles in Prince George county, in July, 1866. Five negroes, two of whom have been hanged, were concerned in the murder.

Advices from Panama predict the ratification of the treaty between the United States and Colombia. An American citizen, Mr. Ambrose Thompson, has obtained from the State of Chiriqui a contract to build an inter-oceanic rail road across the isthmus.—In Guatamala several important railroad contracts have been executed with the government.

The Venango *Spectator* reports a new paying oil well near Nickleville, in that county, an entirely new territory. The well is good for twenty barrels per day. The same paper peaks of a new well being struck in the Red Hot district, yielding two hundred barrels per day.

The Easton *Express* chronicles the arrest and imprisonment of a gay deceiver named Willoughby Greenwald. He has accomplished the ruin of three young women. From all accounts he is an accomplished, heartless scoundrel, and should be put out of the way of effecting the ruin of another girl.

The Doylestown *Democrat* reports a regularly organized gang of incendiaries in that county. There is no other plausible theory for the origin of the numerous fires which have occurred within a short time in that county.

A woman arrested in Troy, "struck out from the shoulder" knocking down the officer. Her sentence was doubled, and so was he—doubled up.

If you are going to visit at a house where a cross dog is kept, take a pistol along for company. Then when he snaps at you, you can snap at him.

We have discovered lately that health is most unquestionably a fluid. A friend drinks ours very often and not at his own expense either.

A young lady in Chicago laid a wager of a kiss, but the umpire declared all best off because she failed to put up the stakes.

HOUSE AND FARM.

Change of Cattle Feed Necessary.—Man, when confined for any considerable time to one kind of food, is more liable to disease than when his regimen is varied. The disease common among sailors on long voyages is an illustration of this. Now, what is true of man, is true of various species of domesticated animals. When confined for an undue period of time to one kind of feed they sicken and die. For cattle, nature has furnished a variety. In summer the different kinds of grasses, with their rich jucies tempt their taste and improve their flesh. Yet even then, we obtain an argument for a variety of feed, from the fact that cattle, feed with grain or other vegetables, put on flesh more rapidly then when they are kept on grass alone. But in the winter our ordinary dry food is not conductive to growth as are summer grasses.

"Fodder," as it is termed, has lost much of its original properties in curing. The defect, in part, may be supplied by roots of various kinds. Among these, turnips, carrots, beets, and the like, have their value. But these, or something of the kind, should be provided as a variety to winter stock. Farmers should look to this, and see if the best cattle, and the best folds of sheep, are not those which are furnished with a variety of feed during winter confinement. Would you have good stock? then have a variety of winter feed.—*Boston Cultivator.*

An Experiment with Potatoes.—The *Country Gentleman's Magazine* (London) gives details of several experiments made by M. H. Gilliodts of the administrative Council of France, to test the influence of flowering upon the yield of potatoes, the results of which have been so significant and conclusive, that he has come to the determination to "hold up the floral organs in the potatoe." He concludes that the buds should be removed as soon as possible, in order to prevent the fixing of the nourishing principles necessary to the complete formation of the floral organs, and that the removal should be done by hand rather than with any sickle or other sharp implement, as the latter would be liable to injure the vines or tops of the potato.

Lime for Plum Trees.—A correspondent of the *Rural New Yorker*, says: Having some plum trees that blossomed every year for several years, but did not bear; a year last fall I put a quart or so of lime on the ground around all except two, which I left on purpose to see if they would bear as well. These two were at the end of the rows. The soil gravelly, with soft water quite near, and I inferred that the soil did not contain enough lime to form the pit of the plum. Result—all the trees with lime around them, bore a good crop of plums, while the others blossomed but as usual bore no fruit.

What is more distressing than to see a roasted fowl coming to the table "flying" with outspread wings, and legs and looking as though the bird had been kicked before the fire. A turning of the wings, and a bit of string around the legs, would have converted the ridiculous looking object into a respectably dressed fowl.

Even so simple a thing as mutton chops may be neatly served or otherwise. Compare a dish of chops thrown into the plate "higgledy-piggledy," with one in which the small ends are laid one way, with the broad portions slightly overlapping, and the difference will be manifest at once.

Such matters may seem trivial to some, but much of our comfort is due to the observance of trifles.

Toast and Cheese.—Cut a slice of bread half an inch thick; pare off the crust, and toast it very slightly on one side. Cut a slice of cheese a quarter of an inch thick, not so big as the bread by half an inch on each side; pare off the rind, lay it on the toasted bread, place on a flat tin plate, and put in the oven for ten minutes or so. Mix a quarter of a teaspoonful of salt and mustard and sprinkle of pepper; stir it into the cheese, and you will have a delicious luncheon.

Lemon pie.—Grate one small or half a large lemon, mix with the yolks of two eggs, four tablespoonfuls of brown sugar; stir in one and a half tablespoonfuls of flour into half a teacup of water; beat the white of two eggs to a stiff froth; stir into it two tablespoonfuls of white sugar, put it over the pie crust after it is baked, and place it in an oven and brown nicely; be very careful, as it browns very easily. You will find it a superior pie.

Bread custard.—Take two or three slices of bread; cut them in little cube-shaped pieces. In a quart of sweet milk put some loaf sugar and ground cinnamon; in this soak the bread until it has absorbed as much of the milk as it is capable of. Then take the bread out. Into the remainder of the milk stir from four to six eggs, raisins, currants, sugar and nutmeg; butter a tin basin, put in the bread, pour over the custard and bake.

Welcome Cake.—Stir a cup and a half of sugar and half a cup of butter together with three well beaten eggs; sift a teaspoonful of cream of tartar and a half a teaspoonful of soda with three small cups of flour; this with a cup of milk, must be mixed with the above, and baked in a moderately quick oven. By adding raisins and currents, half pound of each, a very good fruit cake may be made.

Marble Cake.—Having never published in these columns a good recipe for marble cake, we now give the following: One cup of brown sugar, one half cup of molasses, one cup of butter, one-fourth cup of sour milk, one-half nutmeg, one spoon cinnaman, one-half spoon alspice, one half-spoon cloves, one-fourth spoon pepper, one-half teaspoon soda, yolks of four eggs.