The Columbian.

J. E. ELWELL, J. K. BITTENBENDER, } Proprietors.

BLOOMSBURG, PA., FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1887.

THE COLUMBIAN, VOL. XXI, NO 18
COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT, VOL LI, NO 7

PROFESSIONAL CARDS.

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Office over 1st. National Bank.

N. U. FUNK,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.
BLOOMSBURG, PA.
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Office over Moyer Bros. Drug Store.

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B. FRANK ZARR,
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Can be consulted in German.

GEO. E. ELWELL
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Office on First floor, front room of COLUMBIAN Building, Main street, below Exchange Hotel.

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Office in COLUMBIAN BUILDING, Room No. 2, second floor.
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H. V. WHITE,
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BLOOMSBURG, PA.
Office in Browers' Building, 2nd floor.
may 1-tf

S. KNORR. L. S. WINTERSTEEN.
KNORR & WINTERSTEEN,
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Office in 1st National Bank building, second floor, first door to the left. Corner of Main and Market streets Bloomsburg, Pa.
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ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.
Office over Dentler's shoe store, Bloomsburg, Pa. [apr-30.86

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W. Z. SMITH,
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SELECT STORY.

THE BOX IN THE CORNER.

It is some years since I was station-master, baggage-agent, telegraph-operator and ticket-seller at a little village near some valuable oil wells. The station-house was quite a distance from the unpretentious thoroughfare that had grown up in a day, and my duties were so arduous that I had scarcely leisure for a weekly flitting to a certain mansion on the hill where dwelt Ellen Morris, my promised wife. In fact, it was with the hope of lessening the distance between us that I had undertaken these quadruple duties.

The day had been gloomy, and toward the afternoon ominous rolls of thunder portended a storm.

Colonel Holloway, the well-known treasurer of the oil-company, had been in the village several days. About one o'clock he came hurriedly into the office with a package, which he laid upon my table, saying:

"Take care of that, Bowen, till to-morrow. I'm going up the road."

The commission was not an unusual one, and my safe was one of Marvin's best. I counted the money, which footed up into the thousands, placed it in the official evelope, affixed the seals, and deposited it in the safe. As I turned away from the lock, a voice at the door said:

"Say, mister, can you tell me the way to the post-office?"

A sort of shock went through me at the unexpected presence that seemed to have dropped down from nowhere, and I replied, irritably:

"You could not miss it if you tried. Keep straight ahead."

Soon large drops of rain came down then faster and more furiously, until the air was one vast sheet of water, and little rivers leaped madly along the gullies and culverts. Forked lightning kept pace with the pealing thunder, and heaven's own artillery seemed let loose. Anything more dismal or dreary could not well be imagined, and gradually the loneliness grew oppressive. Every straggler had fled to shelter, and the usual idlers had deserted the platform. But I resolutely set to work at the dry statistics of the station-books, with an occasional call to the wires, which were ticking like mad, so fierce was the electric current.

It was near five o'clock when a long freight train came lumbering by, switched off a car or two, then dragged its slow length onward. This created a brief diversion, then once more I was deserted.

The next passenger train was not due till ten o'clock. I lit the lamps and resigned myself with questionable patience to the intervening hours. An agreeable interruption came in the form of my supper, which was brought in a water-proof basket by a sort of jack-at-all trades whom we called Jake. Shaking himself like a great dog, he "howed there wa'n't much more water left up yonder nohow."

"I hope not, indeed," I said, glad of the sound of a human voice. "Jake!" I called, as he left the office, "come back as soon as you can—I may want you."

I had a vague idea of dispatching some sort of report to Ellen that I had not been entirely washed away, and obtaining similar comfort as to her own fate. I little thought I should really need him.

I think I am not by nature more timid than other men, but as the dismal evening closed in I took from my desk two revolvers kept ready for possible emergencies, and laid one upon the desk where I was making freight entries, and the other on the table where the electric battery stood. At intervals a fresh package for the night express was brought by some dripping carrier, who deposited it, got his receipt, hung about for a few moments, then hastened away to more comfortable quarters.

Still the rain poured in torrents. It must have been nearly nine o'clock when a wagon, hurriedly driven, suddenly stopped at the platform. In a moment the door was flung open, and I saw a small ambulance well known about the village. Two men sprang out, and, with the aid of the driver and his assistant, proceeded to lift out a box which from its dimensions could contain only one kind of freight, to-wit, the remains of a human being.

Carefully placing the box in a remote corner of the room, near other boxes awaiting transportation, the driver and his man returned to their wagon, while the two strangers approached the desk to enter their ghastly freight. They wore slouched hats and were very wet. They produced a death certificate of one John Slate, who had died at a farmhouse several miles away, of a non-contagious complaint, and was to be shipped to friends down the road. This was all. There was nothing singular about it, and yet, when the door closed upon the strangers and I was again alone, or worse than alone, a feeling of awe came over me. Clearly the storm had somewhat unstrung me.

Only one hour till the train was due, after which I could turn in for the night.

A louder peal of thunder shook the house, and fiercer flashed the lightning. Minute after minute went by, and each seemed an age. The roar and din of the elements only deepened the gloom inside, where the uncertain kerosene darkened the shadows.

Suddenly, to my overstrained nerves, the ceaseless clicking of the wires seemed to say: "Watch the box! Watch the box! Watch the box!" As a particular strain of melody will at times repeat itself in the mind, and obstinately keep time to every movement, till one is well nigh distracted, so this refrain began to enchain every sense: "Watch the box! Watch the box! Watch the box!" Till now my depressed spirits were due only to the solitude and the storm. No suspicion of evil or danger had tormented me.

Peering more closely into the dingy corner I saw only the ordinary pine box, with what seemed to be a square paper or placard, on the side facing me. Probably the address, bunglingly adjusted on the side instead of the top, or else a stain of mud from the late rough ride. At all events, I was not curious enough to approach more nearly the ghostly visitant.

Then minutes had crept by, when a muffled noise in the dark corner distinctly sounded above the pelting rain drops, while as if to mock at my quickened fears, the wires continued their monotonous warning: "Watch the box! Watch the box! Watch the box!" I did watch the box, and as by inspiration I grasped the situation. There was indeed a man in the box, but not a dead one. A living man, who had boldly lent himself to a plot to rob or murder me, perhaps both.

I remembered the straggler who had surprised me while at the safe, several hours before. He had doubtless followed Colonel Holloway and witnessed the money transaction. Quick and fast flew my thoughts in the startled endeavor to grasp some plan of action. Single-handed I was no match for any man, having recently recovered from an attack of malarial fever. This one in the box (if indeed there was one) must mean to secure his prize before the train was due, and escape the consequences. He must have accomplices, and these were doubtless on watch, waiting either to give or to receive a signal. At least it was not probable that he would undertake the job alone, and the fact that he had confederates had already appeared.

Perhaps the sight of my pistols had delayed the attack. Perhaps some part of their plan had miscarried and caused delay. At all events I must be cool. I fancied I saw his eyes through the dark patch on the box. I was almost sure he was slowly lifting the lid. There was no help near, and much might be done in the time still to elapse before the train was due.

Quietly walking to the battery, I feigned to take a message. In reality I sent one to the conductor of the oncoming express, as the only device whereby I could secure assistance, and this would doubtless be too late. Yet it was all that I could do just now.

With every sense on the alert, I arose to secrete my keys if possible, when the door burst open, and Frank Morris, my future brother-in-law, rushed in, followed by a huge dog that was Ellen's special pet and attendant.

"Confound you!" said Frank, spluttering about, and shaking himself as vigorously as the dog. "I'll be blowed if ever I go on such another fool's errand as this."

"Why, you are pretty well blowed, now," I said, with a poor attempt to be funny, but immensely relieved. "I never was so glad to see anybody in my life!" and I meant it.

"There it is," he said; "make much of it," as he cleverly flipped a little white missive over to me. "Such billing and cooing I never want to see again. Regular spoons, by Jove! Can't go to sleep till she knows you haven't been melted, or washed away, or something. And Cato must come along to see that her precious brother doesn't get lost. Ugh! Lie down, over there, old fellow!" Then to me he said: "Here, help me out of this wet thing."

But I was engrossed, just then, and ridding himself of the offending garment, the broad-shouldered young athlete strode about in mock impatience.

"Heavens! what a night!" he exclaimed. "What time does your train pass? Ten? Just three minutes. I guess I'll stay; but we'll have that young damsel floating down here if she doesn't hear pretty soon. Hello, Cato! What's the matter?" as the dog gave a low growl. "What's that in the corner, Bowen?"

The dog continued to growl and look suspiciously about as the young fellow rattled on.

"That," I said "is a dead man."

"Humph!" he laughed. "Jolly good company for such a night. I say, Bowen, you've got a nice toy there," and he took up the pistol that lay on the table. Meanwhile I had scrawled on a piece of paper, which I quietly placed near the pistol. "The man in the box is a burglar. Be ready for an attack."

"Ohio! that's the game!" he said, aloud, and instantly strode across the room, as Cato sprang up and barked furiously at the box. Simultaneously the top of the box flew up, and uttering a shrill whistle the man sprang to a sitting posture, while through the wide flung door the other two ruffians appeared with pistols cocked. At once there began a deadly struggle. The dog had leaped upon the box and knocked the "dead" man's pistol out of his hand, as Frank shouted, "Tsho, Cato!" unwilling that the dog should tear him to pieces, but wishing to keep him at bay.

"Your keys!" yelled the other men; "or by heavens you'll drop!"

Instantly closing in, man to man, the fierce struggle went on amid shouts, curses and pistol shots.

"Call off your cursed dog!" screamed the "dead" man continually.

The encounter, which had occupied scarcely a minute, was at its deadliest, both Frank and I endeavoring to disarm rather than kill, when the whistle of the train sounded and in another moment the conductor and his men were among us.

"Seize that scoundrel!" shouted Frank, breathlessly, indicating the man in the box. "Here, Cato!" and the obedient animal unwillingly retired, but continued his savage growls.

At this juncture my man fell heavily to the floor, wounded in the leg, and uttering groans and imprecations. It was quick work to secure the men, and Jake, who opportunely reappeared, was sent to summon the village police. Some of the passengers, impatient at the delay, had got wind of the adventure, and now crowded into the station in no little excitement. The box was found to have a false side piece, next the wall, which was easily pushed down by the man inside, for greater comfort in his cramped position; and there were beside a number of air holes. It was the moving of this side-panel that caused the muffled noise I had heard.

I was questioned in all possible ways, and the curiosity of the passengers was fully gratified amid the clamor of the prisoners who continually swore at each other.

"What did you wait so long for?" said one of them glaring at the "dead" man.

"What was your hurry?" retorted the other, sarcastically.

It was plain from the quarrel which ensued that the sight of my pistols, and my evident uneasiness, together with the effect of the fearful storm, had unsettled the fellow's plan and robbed him of his presence of mind. While puzzling as to the safest course, the sudden entrance of Frank and the dog had precipitated the catastrophe.

The men were conducted to the County Jail, and I was the hero of the hour, although I could not claim much credit for personal valor in the matter.

Was it fate or Providence that befriended me? But for my presentiment, or whatever it was, I should have urged Frank's immediate return to my anxious betrothed. But for her loving anxiety he never would have come down on such a night. But for the dog one of us must have been killed. And first of all, but for the instinctive sense of danger the telegraph wires would never have spoken a warning to my excited fancy; and this manifest feeling of apprehension, though I strove hard to conceal it, held the man in the box at bay.

The practical result of the episode was a more commodious station-house, and more men on duty. My salary was raised; but eventually I gave up the situation because my wife could never feel satisfied to have me perform night work after the fearful experience I have related.

As to Frank, he is not backward with explosive English whenever the subject is mentioned, and no amount of persuasion could ever reconcile Cato to the old station-house.—*Frank Leslie's.*

A Prairie of Pitch.

INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF THE WONDERFUL ASPHALT LAKE OF VENEZUELA.

I have just returned from a trip to the so-called "Pitch Lake," writes a correspondent from Port of Spain, Trinidad, to the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. Running south down the Parian Gulf to La Brea, some forty miles distant from this port, we there disembarked, and, climbing a gentle ascent of 140 feet, we found the lake, a little more than a mile inland. Strictly speaking, there is no lake, in the common acceptance of the term, but a level plain, composed of a concrete, though flexible, mass of pitch, covering an area of perhaps one hundred acres.

Bushes, patches of vegetation and occasional pools of brackish water diversify the surface here and there, giving it the appearance of a mud-swamp. There is no difficulty in walking or wading from one end to the other, for with the sole exception of several places where the pitch is in a state of ebullition in a soft and viscid consistency the "lake" is semi-solid. On it I found chestnut-colored men and women digging out large clods of the asphalt with ax and shovel and loading it upon donkey-carts.

Each lump of the asphalt exhibited small cavities, and we were informed by the diggers that they never dig deep enough to find the pitch at all softened. The roughened surface of the pits is exposed to the tropical sun, and within a few days the cavities are full again. From 30,000 to 40,000 tons of the asphalt are dug out every year, each cubic foot of the pitch weighing on an average 60 pounds. It is estimated that there are in the deposit not less than 10,000,000,000 pounds, which, at the present rate of digging, should last fully 8,000 years. This is on the basis that it lies four feet deep, but as it actually lies much deeper, and as there is more or less of it elsewhere, it is practically inexhaustible. The lake is a dead sea, and deserves the name quite as much as did the Lacus Asphaltites of Palestine in ancient times. This, however, is a more remarkable deposit—the most remarkable in the world—more so than the asphalt stone of Switzerland and Germany. For many scientific reasons it is superior to the latter, and is proving an able substitute for it. For what purpose, do you ask? For pavements, of course. It is a Yankee idea of European parentage, and not a bad idea by any means. It is a strangely interesting history that has to do with the matter. It may be of interest to relate the story of asphalt. In 1711 Elrinius, a German physician, discovered and first utilized the asphalt of the Val de Travers, near Neufchatel, and ten years later published his discovery. In 1849 the material was made use of for paving, and in 1854 the first asphalt pave was laid in the Rue Bergere, Paris. The result was satisfactory, and to-day there are in the French capital hardly less than 1,000,000 square yards of compressed asphalt paves and 5,000,000 yards of asphalt mastic sidewalk. London also has it, and so have other European cities.

Mighty Close Call.

A TRAVELING MAN'S NARROW ESCAPE FROM SUDDEN DESTRUCTION.

They were swapping experiences in the smoker, of the narrow escapes they had from death on the rail.

"You remember, don't you, when they were having such a succession of awful accidents down in New England a few years ago?" asked the lugubrious passenger.

They remembered it, certainly.

"Well, sir, it was just my infernal luck to strike one of those doomed trains. It was in the dusk of evening that the locomotive left the rails—as it happened, at a point where we were close to an iron bridge, across a small stream, that flowed at least forty feet below. My seat, all the way from Boston, was in the saloon end of the drawing-room car. As we left the track, plunging along at full forty miles an hour, the saloon end of the drawing-room car was hurled with such violence against the iron girders of the bridge as to crush it in, instantly killing the unfortunate person who occupied my seat."

"The occupant of *your* seat killed?"

"Yes, it so happened that I had left the train at the last station before, and the old lady who took my seat was plunged headlong into eternity."—*Drake's Traveler's Magazine.*

General Roger A. Pryor went to New York soon after the war without a dollar, and with no introduction save his reputation as a soldier in the lost cause. He acquired almost immediately a good practice, which has steadily grown, until it now brings him $20,000 a year.

Baker County, Oregon, is larger than any New England state.

Mercantile Appraiser.

The following Act has been passed and approved by the Governor, April 20th, 1887, in reference to the appointment of the Appraiser of Mercantile and other licenses, and requiring the publication of the same; we give it in full.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same,* That the county commissioners of the respective counties are hereby authorized and required to publish the mercantile appraiser's list of names and classifications of each person subject to license, in three papers of general circulation in each county of the Commonwealth, one of which shall represent the minority party of the two principal parties of the county, and one of which may be a German or Welsh paper. *Provided, however,* That such list shall not be published in more than two papers in any county should the county commissioners desire to limit such publication to that number. *And provided further,* That the Auditor General and city treasurer shall direct that said list and classification shall be published in four newspapers in cities of the first class.

SECTION 2. The Auditor General is hereby authorized and empowered to pay the respective newspapers for the publication of said mercantile appraiser's list, the usual rates of advertising charged by the same to private customers, and not exceeding thirty cents per line for four insertions. *Provided,* That in no case shall the amount paid for advertising in any city or county exceed ten per centum of the amount received by the treasury of the State from said city or county during the preceding year from the class of taxes to advertised, and all bills shall be certified to the county treasurers of the respective counties by the appraiser; and the county treasurers are hereby authorized to pay the same upon said bills being receipted by the respective publishers in proper form, and upon approval by the Auditor General they shall be entitled to receive credit for the amount so paid in the settlement of their accounts for licenses with the Commonwealth.

SECTION 3. The appointment of mercantile appraisers shall be made annually by the county commissioners, except in cities of the first class where the Auditor General and the treasurer of the city are authorized and required to appoint five suitably qualified citizens, all of whom shall not be of the same political party, and the term of office of said appraisers shall be for three years. The accounts for advertising mercantile lists and all other State accounts shall be audited by the Auditor General.

SECTION 4. There shall be no pay for advertising nor fee to any appraiser for fictitious names or the names of persons not residing at the place designated.

SECTION 5. All acts or parts of acts now in force in reference to the publication of mercantile, liquor and other licenses, except as hereinbefore provided, shall continue to be and remain in full force and virtue.

A Turpentine Farm.

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT IS CARRIED ON—GRADES OF TURPENTINE.

A turpentine farm in southeast Georgia consists of from five to forty crops of 10,000 boxes each. The work is sometimes carried on by the owners of the pine forests themselves; again the trees are leased out for a certain number of years, two or three being about the limit. Negro labor is principally employed in this section. The work commences in November, when the boxing of the trees begins. The boxes, which are cut sloping back into the trees about a foot from the ground, measure three inches back at bottom, four deep and about seventeen in length. In March they are cornered; that is, a chip is taken off on both sides just above the ends of the boxes. Next the faces for dripping are cut V-shaped between and above the places chipped. The number of faces on each tree depends upon its size, varying from one to three. Besides the original cutting of the faces, the trees are hacked once a week during the dripping season with a peculiarly shaped knife suitable to the purpose. The hacking increases the length of the faces, as one or two inches of bark are taken off above each time. The dipping of the crude into barrels begins about the middle of March, and the boxes are emptied seven or eight times during the season. They hold from one to two quarts each, and from 10,000 boxes 210 barrels is considered a fair, 250 a fine yield. The first year's dripping is called "virgin," the second "yearlings," and all after "old stuff." From eight barrels of crude they get two of spirits of turpentine, and five to five and a half of resin. Of the latter there are several grades; W. W., "water-white;" W. G., "window-glass;" M, next higher and so on up the alphabet, but down in quantity to A, the letter J being omitted. The first drippings, if not scorched in boiling, make beautifully white, transparent resin; hence the name "water-white." The crude producing this can never be obtained from the trees after the first month's running; that for W. G., "window glass," possibly into July or August.

Good Things that Don't Get In.

W. S. Gilbert, the composer, is good at repartee. One of the best of his repartees was hurled at Mr. F. C. Burnand, the editor of Punch. They were at a press dinner in London, and Burnand was responding to a toast. Gilbert who sat at the other end of the table kept talking while Burnand was speaking, and attracted the attention of a number of guests who were intent on what he was saying. Burnand was considerably annoyed, and finally said:

"Gilbert, what are you relating down there; some of the good things you send to Punch that don't get in?"

This thrust put the laugh on Gilbert, but he instantly retorted:

"Well, Burnand, I don't know who sends the good things to Punch, but they evidently do not get in.—*Atlanta Constitution.*

John Gomez, a Portuguese, has lived over fifty years among the 10,000 islands off the coast of Florida. He is one hundred and one years old.

Bric-a-Brac Burglars.

CURIO COLLECTORS WHO STEAL RARE WORKS OF ART.

From the New York Times.

"We have to keep our eyes open to prevent our stock from being carried off," said a Broadway bric-a-brac dealer the other day. "You have no idea what really respectable men and women are tempted to steal a valuable piece of porcelain or a curio or a rare coin when it is put so conveniently before them as the things are in this store. We display everything very freely, but there is always one of the employes idling around in an unconcerned sort of way who looks out for our interests."

"Are your customers ever tempted to pocket your wares?" he was asked.

"Well, now and then we have a case of that kind, but of course nothing can be done, and unless the article has some special artistic value we say nothing about it, for we should lose a good deal of custom if we did not overlook the eccentricities of the kleptomaniacs. The collectors are the worse kind we have to deal with. You see that old man over there," pointing in the direction of a very respectable old gentleman with white hair and a queer dried up face and clothed in a long and seedy ulster. He was shuffling along from one shelf to another, examining everything furtively with his sharp, little, ferret like eyes.

"That man," said the dealer, "has one of the finest porcelain collections in this city. He used to be rich, but now I guess he has to bustle to get his three meals a day properly. When he was well off I thought nothing of selling him $1,000 worth of goods every month, but he hasn't spent a cent here in years, and I have to watch the old chap half the time to see that he doesn't walk off with my best things, for there isn't a better judge of the value of a work of art than he in America."

At the Astor and Mercantile libraries numerous tricks and devices are used by unscrupulous collectors of prints to get possession of some rare picture or edition. They either cut the desired illustration out of the book, thus ruining it forever, or take the work away with them when they go, substituting another volume already prepared in its place. Since print collecting has come to be so popular some elegant works belonging to the New York libraries have been ruthlessly destroyed and very often stolen. The only way to put a stop to these depredations is to keep a constant watch, and even then so tricky are the thieves and so fertile of device that they carry on their practices beneath the very eyes of the librarians.

It was only a few weeks ago that a magnificent quarto was destroyed in a library by one of these vandals, armed with a sharp knife and a strong artistic desire to capture a rare print at the expense of his principles of honor. Artistic thieves are sometimes of very respectable families, which the following incident, well-known to most New York artists and Bohemians, will illustrate:

A gentleman living in West Forty-second street owned among other paintings a real Rembrandt which he had purchased in Europe at a good round price, and which was a very fair specimen of that artist's work. The other pictures were all light works by American painters, but this picture, on account of its value, occupied a room by itself, and its owner was very proud of his possession. When hard times struck that family and the collector was compelled to hand every thing over to the auctioneer it was then discovered that the Rembrandt, that much treasured painting to which all Murray Hill had bowed in reverence, was nothing but a clever forgery.

The gentleman who had owned it so many years, and who considered himself no mean judge of art, was dumbfounded and would not believe it. An investigation proved that the canvas on which the picture was painted had the stamp of a New York firm on it, and that a drying varnish had been mixed with the paint that was invented only twenty years ago. The fact that the picture was bogus was definitely settled by the arrival in town of a wealthy Brazilian who said he had purchased in Europe the original of the painting, and that all the critics in London and Paris had combined in saying that he had a genuine Rembrandt.

Detectives were finally set to work to ferret out the mystery and soon made everything clear. The son of the American collector, who was a wild and dissipated young man, had taken an artist friend into his confidence and together they plotted to exchange the genuine picture for a copy. The friend worked on the copy at night and soon produced a fair imitation, while the son with the real picture went to Europe and there succee