THE ERIE OBSERVER.

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Erie Weekly Observer.

A. P. DURLIN & CO. PROPRIETORS.

B. F. SLOAN, Editor.

OFFICE, CORNER STATE ST. AND PUBLIC SQUARE, ERIE.

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POWDER.—104 Kegs Rifle, Fowl and Blasting Powder, Just received and for sale by the keg or less quantity, by
R. T. Sterrett & Sons

Poetry and Miscellany.

KEEP IN STEP.

"Those who would Walk together must keep in Step."

Ar, the world keeps moving forward,
Lik an army marching by:
Hear you not its heavy footfall,
That resoundeth to the sky?
Some bold spirits bear the banner—
Souls of sweetness chant the song—
Lips of energy and fervor
Make the timid-hearted strong!
'Like brave soldiers we march forward;
If you linger or turn back,
You must look to get a jostling
While you stand upon the track.
Keep in step!

My goo l neighbor, Master Standstill,
Gazes on it as it goes;
Not quite sure that he is dreaming,
In his afternoon's repose!
"Nothing good," he says, "can issue
From this endless 'moving on,'
Ancient laws and institutions
Are decaying, or are gone.
We are rushing on to ruin,
With our mad, new fangled ways."
While he speaks, a thousand voices,
As the heart of one man, say—
"Keep in step!"

Gentle neighbor, will you join us,
Or return to "good old ways?"
Take again the fig-leaf apron
Of old Adam's ancient days.
Or become a hardy Briton—
Beard the lion in his lair,
And lie down in in dainty slumber
Wrapp'd in skin of shaggy bear—
Rear the hut amid the forest,
Skim the wave in light canoe?
Ay, I see! you do not like it.
Then, if these "old ways" wont do,
Keep in step!

Be assured, good Master Standstill,
All-wise Providence design'd
Aspiration and progression,
For the yearning human mind.
Generations left their blessings,
In the relics of their skill,
Generations yet are longing
For a greater glory still;
And the shades of our forefathers
Are not jealous of our deed—
We but follow where they beckon,
We but go where they do lead!
Keep in step!

One detachment of our army
May encamp upon the hill,
While another, in the valley,
May enjoy "its own sweet will;"
This, may answer to one watchword,
That, may echo to another;
But in unity and concord,
They discern that each is brother!
Breast to breast they resmarching onward,
In a good, now peaceful way,
You'll be jostled if you hinder,
So don't offer let or stay—
Keep in step.

THE MAIL ROBBER; A WESTERN SKETCH.

BY MRS. FRANCES D. GAGE.

From the Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter.

The clock chimed the hour of midnight. All was silent and still in the village. The busy tramp of the goers to and fro was no longer heard, and not a footfall disturbed the tomb-like silence of the streets. Did you ever pass through a town at night when every body was in bed—ever turn its corners and angles alone, and listen to the oft-repeated echoes of your own steps upon the pavement? I know of no place so solemn, so gloomy, so spectral—I never tried it except when I have been sitting up with the sick, and finished my watch at those hours when "tired nature's sweet restorer" held those who would have been my escort at other times, in her kind embrace; then I have wended my way alone, for when duty and necessity require it, I can do almost anything. But in that room, where the scene which I am going to describe was enacted, all was more still and death-like than even the deserted street. Not the quiver of a leaf, the creaking of a swaying bough, or even the barking of a far off watch dog startled the lone inmate from his midnight reveries, and save an occasional deep sigh that burst half suppressed, half-vented from the depths of an aching, disturbed heart, nothing disturbed the grave-like silence of that close room. A little bright fire burned in an old fashioned chimney, over which a small copper tea-kettle, as old fashioned as the chimney, was hung, and from its spout issued a column of steam which sent a vapory indistinctness into the small room, which vapor was penetrated but not dispelled, by the dim light of a tallow candle, which, though long neglected, carried a snuff so elongated as almost to obscure its own light. The pannel blinds without were closed and locked, and the curtains within arranged with scrupulous care, so that not one struggling beam of that dull candle light could reveal to the passer on the street that there was active life within. In the centre of the room, which was not large, stood a good sized table, upon which was thrown, in wild confusion, books, newspapers, opened and unopened, and letters without number. On one side of the table sat a man about thirty years of age—a tall symetrical form, a polished exterior, and a fair, broad brow, which rested upon his hand, while his long, delicate, tapered fingers extended up through his dark brown hair, and his keen, deep grey eye rested with a gaze of maddening intensity upon a large letter that lay before him. Those white hands, that undimmed face, those scrupulously neat habiliments told of a man all unused to toil, or at least unused to that kind of active labor which hardens the system, teaches every one his true strength, and secures without a failure to those who use it aright, an honest independence. Motionless as a statue he sat "deep pondering his way;" the great drops of sweat stood like beads upon his brow, and the gleam of his eye was one of fiendish agony.

"It must be! There is no other way" he exclaimed, and with a convulsive grasp he seized the letter and seemed about to break the seal: but he paused, dropped it again, and then proceeded with cool deliberation to arrange his work. He took a small crucible from a closet in the wall, filled it with glowing coals from the chimney, and set it on the table; then filled a little tin teapot from the boiling kettle over the fire, set it over the coals before him, and took up the letter and held it over the steam until the wafer was softened, without soiling or marring the surface of the envelop; then cautiously unclosed the seal and abstracted the contents, which seemed to be a number of bank bills. His next move was to put several slips of soft paper within, and to again close the letter and seal it as before; threw the coals from his crucible, the water from his teapot, both of which he set back into the closet and covered them ingeniously with old papers; covered up his fire closely, rolled up his bills and put them in his pocket book, blew out his candle, drew up his window curtains that all might seem as usual in the morning, cautiously unbolted the door, and after scanning the street with a close scrutiny for a few seconds, stepped out, and with a quick and noiseless pace sought his own home. Yes, trembling at every step, starting at every sound lest some one should see him, he sought his home—his home of affluence, luxury and splendor; aye and the bed-chamber of his wife and the cradle of his child; and the mail-robber, with blue, cold, quivering lips, kissed his innocent babe, and a tear of agony fell upon its rosy cheek, starting its quiet features into a smile that stung him to the soul, and then without speaking, he laid his guilty head by the side of his young wife, over whose child-like features even now perchance, bright and beautiful imaginings of the future were glancing.

"'Why, Henry,' she exclaimed, starting up as he blew out the light she had left burning for him, 'what kept you so late?'

"'Business, Carie; you know I never stay out when I can dispose of my work.'

"'I know, Henry; what time is it?'

"'I did not notice—I guess it's about eleven.'

"'Oh, that's not so late; I thought it was one—I was sure I heard the clock strike—I must have been dreaming.'

"'Nothing but a dream, Carie; nothing but a dream. Shut your eyes and go to sleep.'

"'But, Henry, said she, as she laid her soft hand on his cheek, with a start, 'what is the matter? You are as cold as ice, and how you tremble!'

"'Oh, nonsense! it's a cold frosty night; and of course I would chill, leaving my warm office and coming out into the night air. But go to sleep—go to sleep.'

"And Carie did go to sleep, for no dark thought disturbed her feelings; and yet she, the unsuspecting light-hearted wife, had been the indirect cause, all unwittingly of the dark deed that kept her husband's eyes fixed upon the ceiling, and his heart throbbing wildly with anguish while the long hours of that fearful morning dragged on. He dared not stir; he should wake her if he did, and again subject himself to interrogation.

"Henry Witherell was left an orphan at twenty-two; but with a fortune amply sufficent to sustain him and a younger sister in luxury and elegance for some years.—In the new state of society then existing out west, they stood, as they said, 'at the top of the heap;' that is, they were as well educated, as well dressed, and lived in as fine style as any body, and the growing town of M——boasted of none more aristocratic and genteel than Henry Witherell and his sister Sarah. Yet with all this the orphans were favorites with all the village, rich and poor, proud and lowly, for they both possessed that kindness of heart, and suavity of manner that won upon the affections of those about them. For a few years after the death of their parents, they boarded with their friends, lived within their means, and led the ton. Sarah was very delicate, often sick, and drew largely upon the sympathy of the village, and her gratitude and prompt generosity of nature for all favors received was an additional claim upon their love. She had been educated in a Catholic school at the east, and received all the accomplishments which those institutions are famous for bestowing. Her skill in needle-work of all kinds was the marvel of the western village, and no small help to the rustic beauties, and there was far more scheming and contention about who should be nurse by the sick bed of the sweet, kind, gentle Sarah Witherell, than who should be exempted from that duty, for that duty was always esteemed a pleasure.

"Henry was a college bred boy, and left old Andover with the highest honors of his class. Had his proud, aristocratic, misjudging father done wisely by him, he would have given him an honorable trade or profession. Had he done so, he would most likely have been an honorable man through life."

"Aunt Hannah, what do you call an honorable trade?" said Bell, with the least bit in the world of a sneer in her tone.

"Any trade, Miss Bell, I call honorable that is in and of itself right. The boot-black, who makes himself perfect master of his art, and lives by it honorably and comfortably, is an honorable man—far more honorable to my mind, than he who shrinks from his part and duty in life, and picks his living out of others without giving an equivalent for it; or even one who folds his hands idly and lives on the bones and sinews of his father. But Henry Witherell had no trade—no calling, and much of his time was idly spent, or if not idly, in a way that was of small pecuniary profit. But his fortune seemed ample and no one dreamed that it could come to an end. At 25 he married Carie, the daughter of a Newenglander, who had once like Henry, enjoyed an inheritance that his father had scraped together, but had not taught his son to save; and as his family increased his money diminished and at last he sought the west, hoping there to be able to curtail his expenses and retrieve his fortunes. Carie had been educated with all the refinements of a New England boarding school—could paint, play the piano, waltz, smatter French, write beautiful billetdoux, &c., but not one thing did she know of the practical duties of life.—She was a real beauty, just blushing into sweet seventeen, very well read and well taught, and very agreeable and fascinating as a parlor acquaintance.

"Old Mr. Miller was a shrewd man—his wife was a shrewd woman, & they knew as well as any other shrewd scheming pappas and mammas, and it would be quite a saving to get a fashionable, helpless daughter off their hands. Henry Witherell became a visiter in the family, and soon interested in the accomplished young beauty; and after a few months of flirtation, found himself deeply in love, for there was something very loveable in Carie Miller, even if she could not work. He pitied her for her very helplessness; and perhaps his love took its root in his pity, for he and every one else knew that the father could not long maintain his position in society, for in order to scare away the specre of poverty he took to his bosom the reality, or in other words, did as a great many other men do, to drown trouble, 'took to drink,' and left his wife and children to grapple with the monster without even as much as a cup of milk oftentimes to drown him in."

"That's because men are so much stronger and prouder, and better able to endure care and trouble and sorrow," said Bell again with a sneer.

"Oh, I suppose so. I once heard a woman say she should have gone crazy if she had sense enough. Of course, if we women were smart and wise and learned and strong like men, had power to reason, instead of being governed by instinct, as Mr. Walker says, we should do just as Mr. Miller and thousands of other men have done, go and get drunk to help us out of trouble, or smoke a pipe, or chew a half a pig tail of an evening to comfort our tried spirits. But we have not sense enough for that."

"Of course not, Aunt Hannah; instinct never taught anybody to do those things, and the few women that fall into those bad practices, I suppose have stolen a little of the godlike from man—have learned to reason."

"Be that as it may, Mr. Miller drank himself into a complete sot, and Mrs. Miller, who seemed to be endowed with neither instinct or reason, fretted herself into almost a maniac. An epidemic fever that about that time raged through the village, attacked them both, and both were swept within a few weeks of each other into the tomb, leaving their four children a helpless legacy for the public. Henry Witherell's sympathies could bear no more. He married Carie, and in marrying her of course married the whole family, and the public rewarded him for taking the burthen off its hands, by making him the postmaster of the town of M——, a distributing office. His accumulated family called for a home, and Henry had erected a family mansion, which loomed up among the humble villagers a very palace, at the same time the pride and envy of the inhabitants. It stood upon high ground, overlooking the valley below, and the tall, white pillars that supported the lofty dome could be seen far and wide. This extravagant house made heavy inroads upon Henry's capital; then came the finishing; Carie's taste was exquisite, and Henry had no objection whatever to making the inside of his palace correspond with the outside. The hillside must be terraced and adorned with the evergreens of the wood, and Henry, far wiser than Macbeth of old, had learned

"To impress the forest—bid the tree
Unfix its earth-bound roots,"

and remove unhurt to the terraced walls and gravelled walks that surrounded his beautiful home. His wealth evaporated like the dew before the sunshing. But there might be an end to this expense, if Carie had had one particle of common sense in money matters, or one particle of usefulness; but she had neither, and yet she was a loving, kind-hearted wife, and Henry dreaded nothing so much as curtailing her wishes, or cramping her enjoyments. Once or twice he dared to remonstrate, but the burst of feeling which followed frightened him into entire silence. He dared not tell Carie and her sister, or even his own sister, what they should have known long ago, that his means were not equal to his expenditures, and that without retrenchment he must soon be utterly bankrupt. How could he tell Sarah? Alas! he had already committed one great wrong—he had expended Sarah's fortune, which was in his hands for safe keeping, without consulting her. He hoped something might turn up for his relief, and went on a year or two longer. The salary of his office would have been ample sufficient for their wants if they had used industry, economy and care; but no one in the whole household was either careful, industrious or economical but Sarah; and Henry knowing that she might question him, always anticipated her wants. Carie noticed this, and was grieved, perhaps jealous of his love for his sister. Be this as it may, things were growing desperate with Henry, and he had not courage to do right. Carie was already a mother of two children, and the weak, effeminate mother must ere long give birth to a third. An eastern creditor was threatening daily. What was to be done? If the break was made by one creditor, it would be followed by others, till he should be stripped of all. A denouncement would kill Carie; Sarah would look upon him with horror for having beggared and deceived her; the ruined family would be turned into the streets, and the whole village would point the finger of scorn at him who had tried to outstrip them, and fallen so far short in the race.

"'Oh! if she had been trained in her childhood to some kind of usefulness—if she had strength to do any thing, even to make a loaf of bread, I would tell her all, and beseech her to help me in this my hour of need. But she can do nothing, and the sight of her helpless grief and frantic disappointment would drive me mad. My God! what shall I do?'

"Thus the wretched man talked to himself day after day, and yet came no nearer to the purpose that should have been at once decided upon than at the first. Indeed, every time he thought over the terrible state of his affairs he felt less and less inclined to do his duty as a man, and brave the worst.

"It is a custom too common with the men of the world to keep their families entirely ignorant of the situation of their business. The wife knows nothing—has not even an idea of the amount of her husband's fortune, whether it is to be counted by thousands or tens of thousands. What can a woman, kept in such ignorance, learn? She spends, as a matter of course, all that he gives her to spend, with the full confidence that when that is gone, and she asks for it, he will give her more. I have never been a dependent; but it does seem to me that there is nothing in all social regulations of society so calculated to break down a woman's independence of feeling; aye, even her honesty and truth, as the necessity of always asking her husband to supply her wants. If an unmarried woman works she may go with a bold and unblushing face and demand her wages; but a wife can demand nothing; her claim is only for bare necessity; and I have sometimes thought that generous men on that account often were too indulgent, too fearful of letting a wife know the exact state of their finances. It's all wrong. Husband and wife should have a mutual interest; every wife should know the exact state of her husband's finances, understand his plans, and aid him, if possible, with her councils, and then these fearible catastrophies would not so often happen. Many a wife who is plunging her husband deeper and deeper into debt through ignorance, would, if she knew his embarrassments, be the first to save, and with true womanly sympathy and generosity help him to the utmost extent of her ability to re-instate his falling fortunes.

"'Henry,' said Carie one evening as they sat at the tea table, 'have you seen Mrs. W.'s new shawl?'

"'No: is it anything unusual?'

"'Oh! it is perfectly beautiful; I have never seen such a shawl in the West. There is one more, and you must get it for me.'

"'How much will it cost?'

"'Only fifty dollars.'

"'Only fifty dollars, Carie, *only!* You talk as if fifty dollars were a trifle and could be grown on the cedars.'

"Fifty dollars is a trifle,' said Carie, a little touched by his manner; 'or it was a trifle last spring when Sarah wanted new shawls, bonnets and dresses."

"'This was a taunt that Henry could not well bear, nor yet could he well excuse himself from the imputation of partiality to Sarah. Hoping to soothe and soften all things as well as to turn aside the demand, he replied to Carie:

"Well, I know, Carie; but Sarah, you know, has some claims of her own, and I must furnish her with what she wants. I wish, dear, I was rich enough to buy you even a better shawl than Mrs. W.'s; but really, Carie, I can't afford it just now.'

"'Can't afford it?'

"'No, positively I can't.'

"Henry's manner, his voice, his words even were new and strange to poor Carie. There was a sternness, a coldness, a something that stung to the heart. She was not used to being refused anything, and now it all seemed so strange. Could she have looked into his galled and worried heart she would have wondered at his forbearance; but she only saw the outward; the inward to her, with all its conflicting emotions, with all its fears and agony, its struggles, its waverings, was as a sealed book.

"'No, Carie,' said he again, with cold emphasis, 'I can't afford to buy you such a shawl nor any other such expensive thing; I am almost a bankrupt now.'

"Carie turned as pale as a corpse; her eyelids trembled, her lips quivered. Henry sprang to her side, and spoke kindly to reassure her, wishing in the depths of his soul that he had not said that word. At last a flood of tears relieved her oppressed brain, but not her heart; and he, to soothe the agony of the present, injudiciously promised to get the shawl if he could, and then hurried away as quickly as possible, leaving her to dry her tears; and she took it all as a joke.

"All was wrong. He should have told her all, and both should have been trained to higher and better things—she than to waste the energies of her heart and soul, aye, of her body even, on such a thing as a fancy shawl; he than to have turned aside from a known duty; but both were wrong, and both, to gratify a perverted mind, continued wrong, for some time at least. At eve he came without the desired article; but Carie was too proud to ask again that day. But somehow in spite of themselves there was a kind of cold, sullen silence between them.—He did not dare approach her too closely, lest he should resume the dreaded subject; nor she to accost him too familiarly lest he should refer to the mortifying scene at the tea table; so Henry had one days longer respite from sin and sorrow.

"We must be patient with the petted, spoiled child that cries lustily for nuts and candy when denied for the firs time. It will take more than common human self-denial to say with calm peace, 'I don't care.' Even so we must be patient with those who, like Carie, have never known what it was to be refused anything, whose wants have been the law to all about them. But we must blame every parent who brings up a child, either boy or girl in this manner.

"Twenty-four hours went by, and Carie and Henry could not get over the shawl exactly. At tea Carie could stand it no longer, and while she turned her second cup, she said with an assumed indifference,

"'Well, Henry, what about that shawl?'

"'Do you think you really must have it?"

"'You said you'd get it for me,' said she darkening.

"'I said if I could; but I have not fifty dollars that I can command in the world, and I don't like to run in debt for a shawl.'

"He knew that such a proceedure would hasten his downfall.

"'Don't want to run in debt? When did you take that notion? I have never done anything but run in debt since we were married; I don't see why we can't now. I know I want the shawl, and I know too that you might get it for me if you would.'

"'Oh, Carie, Carie! you don't mean what you say!'

"'Yes, I do. Sister Ellen says, and I believe she is right, that Sarah don't want to see me dress and look as well as she does; she knows I am younger, and—'

"'Handsomer,' said Henry bitterly.

"'Yes, handsomer, if you will have it so; and I don't see why I can't be accommodated as well as she. If she would stay at home this winter instead of going to boarding in the city, we might soon save enough to buy me all that I need in the way of dress; but you always have, and I suppose always will, let her do as she pleases, and I shall have to stand aside.'

"By this time both were angry. A first quarrel is always a fearful one; such was this first quarrel. Henry sprang from the table, and caught his hat.

"'You shall have a shawl, Carie,' said he, 'if it has to come at the cost of my honor.'

"Agitated, angered and oppressed, he hurried to his office, locked himself in, and with heavy step paced its narrow bounds to and fro. His creditors were importunate, his domestic peace marred. Ellen, his wife's sister, a year or two older than herself, a proud, shrewd, politic girl, who had strong influence over Carie, was at work with his homepeace; Sarah would be beggared, and learn to know—Oh, the most terrible of all—that he had deceived her; she whom his father in his dying hour bequeathed to his care; she who was too feeble to work out her own destiny, would be a beggar as it were, and it would teach her to hate him—hate him because he had so wronged her. What should he do?

Wearied at length with the terrible excitement within and without, (for his nights had been sleepless for a long time) he sat down to arrange the letters and papers for the mail. Just then Mr. W——, the purchaser and owner of the coveted shawl, called to deposite a letter, which he said contained bills to a large amount, and wished Witherell to mail it himself, as he should then feel sure that all was right. His clerks might be honest for aught he knew; but it was not best to place temptation in the way of the young. Henry bowed assent, and Mr. W——left him; and now the first thought of wrong entered the mind of the oppressed man. He threw the letter from him once, exclaiming most aloud, 'No! I will not. God help me, that I should be tempted.' Then came the whirling rush of thought of all his own troubles. He was weak, wearied and worn with the loss of sleep; that mind, once firm and strong, had lost its balance.—For himself he could have borne all; but for those he loved. He clutched the letter again, and in his heart resolved to become the master of its contents. I say in his heart, but perhaps I am wrong; his head loathed, his heart loathed, his soul loathed, and yet it was done—done as we have described in the dark hour of midnight—done with a more than death agony upon his brow.

"And Carie, she who might, who would have saved him had he trusted her; she who might have soothed and comforted and drawn him away from crime and wrong, lay sleeping all unconscious of aught amiss; for she thought she had gained her point, and there would be an end of the whole matter. She had been taught to do so before, and did not know that a daughter of sixteen may not do what a wife of twenty must not dare. She had resolved to settle the difficulty when he came, by asking his forgiveness and receiving the shawl very lovingly. Alas! poor Carie—what girl of twenty is fit to be a wife? But did Henry sleep? Can guilt and crime close the eye in peaceful slumbers? Does fear and shame fit the heart for repose? Can the soul rest while conscience, like a canker-worm, is gnawing at the life chords? Tell me not that conscience can slumber—that the sinner's feelings are seared as with a red hot iron; tell me not that the smile that plays over the face of the villian comes up from the fountains of peace within; tell me not that the 'calm serene' that he strives to keep upon his brow, is the mirror of the inner man. Go search the record of your own life, and if their be a crime or shame upon its pages, tell me honestly if every time it comes back to your memory, it does not prick you with a burning point, that thrills silently, but none the less sorely, through every nervous fibre of your conscience?

"Henry slept not; but still, as though he was sleeping the sleep of death, lay the agonized man through that first fearful night of crime. With the first beams of morn he arose, put on his calm, cheerful look; cautiously and carefully he expended the stolen money; paid enough of his pressing claims to hold off the clutches of the law a few months. But his work was just begun; robbery after robbery was committed. Suspicion flashed here, there, everywhere but on Henry Witherell. Still no real clue could be gained as to the depredators. At last a robbery was traced back to his office, and suspicion fell upon his clerk, Mark Henderson, a young man of hitherto unexceptionable character.

"Henderson knew that the robberies were committed on their line—knew that every master and clerk would be watched, and fearful of his own honor, yet conscious of his own integrity, he determined, if possible to ferret out the mystery. He noticed that every few days Witherell remained at the office late at night after he thought the business was all done; that sometimes he made up the mails alone; that he seemed nervous and anxious whenever the subject of these frequent robberies was mentioned; and suspicion once aroused grows strong and vigorous with great rapidity. He determined to watch Witherell. It was now two years since the first robbery; every thing had gone on smoothly in the castle on the hill; one thing was especially observed by the neighbors, that there was a curtailment in expenses, more care and economy used. Henry worked day and night, had no help in his office but this one young man, although two years before it had taken three and four, and this was counted a sufficient reason for his renowned fortunes.—There was a small window in the office opening into a back yard, where the ground was so much lower than the front of the house as to make it a seconed story window, directly over the door of the room below, which was occupied by a family who objected to having it opened or uncovered, as it gave the men in the office a chance to observe their doings. This window was covered within by a paper curtain that hung against the glass. Henderson's suspicions were now fully aroused. While alone in the office one day, he tore a hole in the upper part of this curtain about as large as a dime, but large enough as it lay on the glass to let one eye from without note almost the whole of the room within. Here then, perched upon a long, light ladder, he placed himself—The first night that Witherell remained later than usual in the office after his plans were arranged, he saw without obstruction such a scene as we have attempted to describe in the beginning of our chapter. Henderson had seen enough; but he wished that others should see, and on the succeeding night he and a friend witnessed together the robbery of the mail. Both agreed to be silent until a fit time to make the arrest, and to claim the high reward offered for the discovery. Henderson was young, impulsive and kind-hearted; he loved Witherell for his many manly virtues, and in spite of himself he pitied him. When the letter from which the money was taken was about to be mailed the next day after the discovery, Henderson said to him.

"'Witherell, there is no money in this letter.'

"'What do you mean, sir?" said the post-master with mock indignation, while he trembled from head to foot.

"'I mean that there is no money in that letter, and that you took it out; I saw you last night at one o'clock through that hole in that back curtain, Harry W. and I; and you are a villian." Henderson's excitement had led him into this great indiscretion.

"'My God!' exclaimed Witherell, 'my time has come at last,' and he felled him senseless on the floor at his feet. He caught Henderson by the collar, dragged him into the inner room and turned the key ere the thoughtless boy knew what he was doing. His strength was the strength of a madman; his hair stood straight upon his head with agony, and his eye-balls were starting from their sockets.

"'Mark,' said he, 'you know all; I could take your life this moment if I choose, but I will not—I will not harm you; but save me, Mark—save me for the sake of my wife, my children, and more than all, my sister.—Say you will give me one half hour to escape, or by the gods—no, I will save myself,' and crushing Mark, almost lifeless with afright, into the little closet where he had before bestowed his tea-kettle, he turned the key upon him and left him. He hastened home, walking calmly, though as if only in a hurry; went directly to the stable, took out a fleet horse, told Carie he was going into the country, and deliberately rode off.

"The shouts of Mark soon aroused the inmates of the house below; but they could not get to him without unlocking three doors, nor could they hear distinctly what what was the matter, and for a few minutes supposed that Witherell had locked him in the inner office by mistake. The neighbors were summoned, and some half an hour elapsed before he was released. His story was told; but no one would believe it till Harry W. was found and affirmed all Mark had said. The closet was examined, and the tea-kettle, crucible and teapot all found there. Then came up a thousand corresponding testimonies all unthought of before; search and chase were instantly set on foot in every direction; but the mail robber was never caught. Some thought that the love the public bore him prevented vigorous search; be that as it may he was never found. His creditors took all his goods, chattels, rights and effects; and the weak wife and deceived sister, for whom he had sacrificed all, instead of dying in despair, as he thought they would, stood up bravely, and seemed to be crushed by nothing but his dishonor. Even that they tried to wipe out, by selling and giving up their jewelry, rich dresses, every thing that any one would take, even to the last article that they could live without and be comfortable. Oh! with what bitter anguish Carie remembered her importunities in the days that were past; weak and fainting in the sunshine, she proved strong and proud in the storm. Affects while the family passed silently away from their home; and the gossip, the rumor all passed away with them, and was forgotten, except by those who loved Henry, the misguided, erring criminal. They sighed as they passed the waving evergreens and tall, white columns, and wondered what had become of him. They were glad he got away—he was to good to go to the penitentiary.

"After ten long years the mystery was unravelled. He had flown to Canada, where fugitives now go, and there he made the work of repentance the work of reform. He learned the shoemaker's trade and set up for himself, sent for his family, who joined him in his habits of industry and economy. While working at his trade, he studied medicine, and at length became honored and respected among men as a physician, amassed property, and by trading, industry, economy, and strict honesty, laid up enough to return to Mr. W——the sum abstracted from his letter the first night of his entering upon his horrid career. Years have gone by, almost two score; he is wealthy and respected, all debts and dues have been paid; and he, an humble man, is striving still in his old age to wipe out the black stain of his youth by kindness and charity. Carie and Sarah both have gone to rest; but Carie's daughters have all learned the nobility of being useful—of being able to depend on themselves for bread. The fate of Henry Witherell was a daily warning with the good people of M——; to their children for years. They told his virtues, then set his crimes in dark array before them, drawing all their conclusions in favor of kindness and gentleness, honesty and industry, and against crime and wrong. His sin seemed atoned for by his thorough repentance, and more by his honest desire to return to every man his own. Such was the history of one mail-robber of the West.'

"And such," said Bell, "is the story embodied in this piece of white vesting, with the rose-leaf thrown up upon its surface!"

"Even so; and such repentance alone can be called true repentance, 'Ceasing to do evil, and learning to well.'"

A Broiled Owl Story.

It seems that the law in New York only allows partridges and quails to be sold, eaten, or held in possession in any way, from some time in October until January.—Yet there are persons who defy the law, and serve the birds under the name of "owls."

Well, not long ago, at one of these "lawless" places some three or four good fellows met accidentally, "with a view to a few." Just as they were about issuing the necessary orders, a gentleman from Tarrytown stepped in *He* was hungry, too; and hearing Tom, Dick and Harry each call for "broiled owl," he thought *he'd* try "owl." Owls were plenty about Tarrytown, and if they were a delicacy in New York, he could "get his man to shoot some, and pocket the cash for 'em."

The owls were served; delicious young pin-feathered partridges; hot—on buttered toast! I need not tell you, Louis that they were enjoyed. The Tarrytown gentleman was in ecstacies. A few weeks afterward he called at the same place, and very quietly taking the landlord aside, said to him, "