

THE COLUMBIA SPY.

SAMUEL WRIGHT, Editor and Proprietor.

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\$1.50 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE; \$2.00 IF NOT IN ADVANCE.

VOLUME XXXIV, NUMBER 11.]

COLUMBIA, PENNSYLVANIA, SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1862.

[WHOLE NUMBER 1,677.]

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY MORNING.

Office in Carpet Hall, North-west corner of Front and Locust streets.

Terms of Subscription.
One Copy per annum in advance, \$1 50
If not paid within three months, and no paper will be discontinued until all arrearages are paid unless the option of the publisher is exercised.
Money sent by mail or by express is at the risk of the sender.

Rates of Advertising.
Quarterly (3 insertions) \$0 38
Three weeks 75
Each subsequent insertion, 10
[12 insertions] 1 00
Three weeks 1 00
Each subsequent insertion, 25
Sargers' advertisements in proportion
All insertions will be made quarterly, but if desired by advertiser, who are strictly confined to their business.

Poetry.

The Battle Autumn of 1862.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

The flags of war like storm-birds fly,
The charging trumpets blow;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strikes below.
And calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise still,
Though o'er her bosom and her breast
The battle's breath of hell.
And still the wreath of golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms,
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.
What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn?
All eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with awe and joy;
But even peace around the years,
And Nature changes so.
She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
With songs our groans of pain;
She mocks with rust of flower and leaf
The war-field's crimson stain.
Still in the cannon's pause, we hear
Her sweetest thrumming pines;
Too near to God for doubt or fear,
She shares the eternal calm.
She knows the seed lies safe below
The fires that blast and burn;
For all the tears of blood we sow
She waits the rich return.
She sees with clearer eyes than ours
The good of suffering men;
The hearts that blossom like her flowers
And ripen like her corn.
Oh, give us, in times like these,
The vision of her eyes;
And make her fields and fruited trees
Our golden prophecies!
Oh, give us her fiercer ear!
Above this noisy din,
We, too, would hear the bells of cheer
Ring peace and freedom in—
—Atlantic Monthly.

Niagara.

BY HOWARD WORCESTER GILBERT.

Far stretching in the morning beams,
And blushing in the golden gleams,
The mingling of a thousand streams!
And trembling many-headed
Thy shifting mist, the rainbow, hung
Before thee, o'er thy gulf is hung;
Over thy wave of endless green
That falls forever down serene,
Then foams into the whirl of foam,
Its gassy veil the mid-air throws
Through which the shimmering sunlight glows
Down to thy deep of water snow.
The avalanche from mountain-height,
Sweeps, trembling in its awful might,
And clothed in mantle dim and white,
Slow-gathering in its downward sweep,
Into some gulf's unfathom'd deep,
With wild and long, and fearful fall,
And silence all the air doth fill,
Save of some moaning bird the trill,
Or trickling of the mountain rill.
But ever changing thou dost peer,
Yet still the same, with solemn roar,
O'er thy dim cliff forevermore,
And standing on the shore I seem
As one who, in a silent dream,
Is launched on some mysterious stream,
Is borne, from whence he knows not, higher,
And with vast sweep is hurled thither,
He knows not why, he knows not whither,
While through his brain, in sounding rhyme,
All thoughts eternal and sublime,
Course slow, the universe, and time,
And endless change that ceaselessly
Hymns of eternity through thee,
And I enter into infinity!

Selections.

The Eternal Fires of Baku.

A Traveller residing in the city of Shamakia, at the foot of Mount Caucasus, on the western shores of the Caspian Sea, is generally induced, by the representations of the natives, to visit those little known Phlegrean fields which eternally flame and smoulder in the vicinity of Baku. Probably no portion of the earth's surface is more replete with natural wonders. The summits and upper valleys of the Caucasus, in many parts as little known as the Mountains of the Moon, are said at times to emit flame and smoke, and to distil strange oleaginous substances, which, trickling down through rocky veins and crevices, ooze out of the earth at considerable distances, and are designated by various names. At the foot of the vast Peropamian range, on which the Arabs bestow the name of Kaf, and regard as the girdle of the earth, a small peninsula, about nine miles in length by four and a half in breadth, projects into the Caspian, and is known among the natives by the name of Okera. On this stands the city of Baku, whose origin is lost in remote antiquity. A body of legends, which would fill a volume, cling about the ruins of this antique dwelling of the Medes, and modified by credulity and superstition, has worked

its way into the Islamic mythology of Persia, and been carried by Parsee pilgrims to the shores of India, where it sparkles or glows about the hearth of the fire-worshippers, many of whom, at the hazard of their lives, have sought to obtain a glimpse of the sacred flame, ever burning clear and bright on the margin of the Caspian wave, around which their ancestors once knelt and worshipped in countless multitudes.

Along the neck of the peninsula runs a chain of mountain spurs, the valleys between which are fertile and carefully cultivated; but as you advance southwards, the ground becomes barren, consisting in some parts of shifting sand, in others, of dark mud, while elsewhere the naked rock, porous as pumice-stone, and almost entirely composed of the debris of sea-shells, crops out of the earth. Here and there are small conical hills, created sometimes with the tombs of saints in ruins, nodding over salt-lakes, or crumbling away particle by particle into the circumjacent marches. On one side, you behold a cone of black naphtha looking like a mountain of pitch; on another, a hill of fuller's-earth, through which, as through an artificial tube, nature forces up the clay in one huge cylinder, which when it attains a certain height in the air, bursts by its own weight, and falls in a shower over the hill, the height of which is thus incessantly augmented. Down yonder, in a spacious depression in the plain, you observe an expanse of whitish sand, interspersed with heaps of gray ashes, and here and there tall bright flames, like immense gas jets, surging upwards everlastingly, sometimes with a low crackling sound, but generally in profound silence. About these fires, men, more or less in number, are congregated day and night, some for secular purposes, others with motives of devotion. The industrial divisions of the crowd are cook-and lime-burners, the former repairing thither from all the neighboring villages to roast and boil, and prepare pilans for the wealthier children of El Islam; while the latter stack up over the flaming fissures heap of stone, which, when they have converted into lime, they bear down to the coast, to be shipped for Russia, Daghestan, and the country of the Ussak Tartars.

Near the largest of the salt-lakes stands a village, which, like many of the temples and cities of the ancient world, enjoys the privilege of sanctuary. Formerly, they say, while the calif of the race of Omar reigned in Bagdad, a prince of rare sanctity, but who entertained opinions somewhat different from those of the Commanders of the Faithful, fled from persecution, and took refuge beyond Kaf in the burning peninsula of Baku. Here, in a castle on the top of a rock, and surrounded by his attached followers, he lived to extreme old age; and when he died, was interred among the flags on the edge of the lake. Presently an arch of tomb, like those in which the traveller sits at night on the brink of the Upper Nile, rose over his remains, and by degrees a village was built about the tomb, with wall, and moat, and gates. Public opinion attached the idea of sanctity to this place, so that to pursue any one who took refuge in it was deemed an inexpiable offence. Nothing was required of the fugitive but to stoop and kiss the threshold of the gate, or to press his lips against the links of an iron chain which hung suspended from the archway within reach, and in time was almost worn away by the grasp and kisses of the pious refugees, aided perhaps a little by action of rust. O'er the walls the walls he might taste of the sweet waters, which, through respect for holiness of the dead saint, Heaven had bestowed upon the village. The good people of Okera, little versed in geography, could account no otherwise than by miracle for the existence of a well of fresh water in the midst of salt pools and springs, fountains of naphtha, black and white, rocks dripping with bitumen, and veins of fiery gasses bursting forth on all sides through cracks in the soil.

Persons of cool northern temperaments find it difficult to comprehend the state of mind which induces men to travel from the plains of Multan or the fertile valleys of Guzerat, expending large sums of money by the way merely to sit down for weeks and months by an opening in the rock, through which a clear white flame, from fifteen to twenty feet in height, ascends into the atmosphere. Here, however, their ancestors in the remotest ages did the same, and it is said so to act by that mighty legislator and philosopher, whose Oriental name of Zoroaster was transformed by the Greeks into Zoroaster. But the Parsees, wherever they reside, are only exiles in India; they may be beloved and honored for their charity, or knighted by the Queen of Great Britain for their wealth and enterprise, but the home of their spirit lies westward beyond the Sulimani range, beyond the desert of Khorasan, beyond the peaks and forests of the Elburz, in the lands of figs and pomogrates, of grapes and roses, of naphtha springs and eternal fires. To them, the followers of Mahomed are either sanguinary conquerors or base renegades, who may indeed be sufficiently powerful to keep them, the true rulers and owners of Persia, far away from their ancestral possessions, but who are dogs and infidels nevertheless, over whom they seem to triumph, when bearing their way through their child multitudes by the force of gold, they come back to the everlasting dwelling-place of fire, and bow and worship with inexpressible reverence before what to them is the visible, symbol

of God. If you go forth, therefore, at night from Baku, and approach the aldin of white sand, you will behold these disciples of Zoroaster either seated in deep meditation upon the earth, or bowing their turbaned head before the mounting flame. In the background towards the west, rises the peaks of Caucasus, enveloped in snow, and clustered round with stars; to the east extends the Caspian, heaving gently in summer, as all seas do, deriving, it may be, their tremulous uneasiness from the rotary motion of the earth on its axis.

Listen, and you will hear the accents of an unknown language—that which preceded the dialect of the Zondavesta—muttered by some banker or ship builder of Bombay, who in his own home on the Indian Ocean speaks English, and reads Milton and Shakspeare. But here in Okera, in face of the sacred fire, he is another being, agitated by feelings and sentiments which have been wafted down to him over the waves of time from far beyond the Deluge, perhaps from the pre-Adamite period, when, as the Chevalier Banson teaches, the countrymen of Gog and Magog founded and governed empires on the table lands of Central Asia.—To study Gibbon, Burke, and Bacon, to read our novels, our Journals, and our philosophical speculations, is found by the Parsee by no means incompatible with a firm and faithful acceptance of the ancient creed of the Medes. You may tell him what you please about civilization, about new faiths, and improvements in ethics; after attending politely to your discourse, his mind goes back to a bound to its belief in that formative principle, heat, caloric fire, which in his view created the world, and still constitutes the soul of all living things. According to his theory, warmth is life, and cold is death. He has never in intelligible language revealed to the profane the ideas which float over his mind, when having come wayward and weary from afar, he contemplates the surging and brilliant element, which escaping from the crust of our planet, points visibly to the stars, with whose substance it is obviously identical.—Yet these luminous phenomena are only the external manifestations of God to the Parsee, the elemental sheath, so to speak, in which he involves his invisible power and creative energy. The vulgar processes of lime-burning and cooking, the fire-worshipper regards as so many gross misapplications, though perhaps necessary, of the divine element which pervades and vivifies everything, and flashes upon him brilliantly as he reclines or kneels on the soft white sand of Okera. If you remain near at hand all night, you will behold a phenomenon never seen but in Persia, which the fire-worshipper considers in the light of a confirmation of the truth of his creed. About two hours before daybreak, a mimic dawn appears in the east, where the saffron rays rise in a vast arch, and shooting up to the zenith, expand and kindle the whole sky, rendering the stars pale, and lighting up the summits of the mountains with a glow and splendor like that of the early morning. This, however, is the false dawn, which after awakening the birds, and robing the earth with light, again fades away, and leaves the whole hemisphere above, and the face of our globe below, buried in darkness as before.

Generally, the Muslims are held to be a persecuting people—with good reason, perhaps, in one phase of their character—yet at times they are tolerant to a marvel. They despise the Hindus, they equally despise the Parsees; but they have traditions, more than half fabulous, which attribute to both these sections of mankind powers, acquired by rank or otherwise, which are denied, for good reasons, doubtless, to the believers in the Koran. When a Parsee, therefore, arrives at Baku, on his way to the eternal fires, all the true believers in the caravanary make place for him; first, because he inspires them with awe; and next, perhaps, because, wise as he may be in the wisdom of science, he is ignorant of that saving faith which belongs exclusively to their religion. Yet they have no objection to sell him food, or, in exchange, to take his fine Indian gold mohurs or English-minted rupees. As has been seen, moreover, they will repair with him to the place of flame, and convert his divinity into a kitchen-fire, or into the active agent of a lime-kiln. Still, they are not without a certain mysterious feeling on the subject of the inflammable gases, and have invented stories, too long and wild to be here related, about the place whence, according to their interpretation, the brilliant white jets ascend. It would be useless to explain to them that beneath the thin shell of rock which forms the surface of the Okera peninsula, there lie extensive lakes of naphtha, fed perpetually by subterranean streams from the Caucasus, inflammable exhalations from which, having made their way to upper air, were set on fire by accident, and have never since been extinguished. In certain places, however, where the springs below are small and shallow, you may play with the deity of the fire-worshipper with impunity. Of this the lime-burners are fully aware, and by way of amusing or surprising strangers, will pluck a few threads from their cotton garments, and putting them on the end of a long rake, and setting them on fire, will hold them over a cleft in the rock, through which they know by experience that invisible exhalations ascend. In an instant, the gases take fire, and shoot up to a great height in the atmosphere. The traveller perhaps imagines

that these flames also, like those he beholds elsewhere in the peninsula, will continue burning, but ere his amazement at their sudden appearance has ceased, they collapse and vanish. As a rule, these vapors are inodorous; but there is one hill, fortunately at some distance from the village, which emits a stench so unendurable, that travelers are constrained to hold their noses as they pass, which suggests to the Mahomedans the substance of many an offensive joke against the divinity of the Parsees, who, according to them, is anything but a desirable neighbor.

What perplexes them most, however, is the immense number of monuments of remote antiquity existing on all sides, especially the figures of lions, accompanied by inscriptions in an unknown tongue. Though they themselves are dwellers in Okera, it is past their comprehension that persons opulent enough to select their own places of abode, should ever have established themselves in their fiery peninsula, amid sand and fuller's earth, and fountains of black and white naphtha, and stagnant pools, fetid and noisome, and the crackling of flames, and the whirling about of dust and ashes by impetuous winds from the mountains.—In fact, it is by no means one of the least curious phenomena of this place, that it should be frequently exposed to tempests so violent that it is matter of wonder they have not long ago swept all Baku into the sea.—You stand perhaps on its battlements, enjoying the stillness of the air, and admiring the glassy surface of the Caspian, when suddenly a gust from the Caucasus fills your burnoose, tears off your turban, and lays your prone upon the earth, lashes up the waves into white foam, dashes the ships in the harbor against each other, and plunges up the sea in a straight line as far as the eye can reach. Then the clouds gather overhead, and lowering themselves gradually from the peaks of the mountains, canopy the whole peninsula, while the loudest thunder peals among the rocks, and lightning so vivid flashes from east to west, that the flames from the rocks are as little noticed as those of a few farthing tapers in the noonday sun. But the storms of Baku are of short continuance. Bursting unexpectedly, and raging with unexampled fury, they clear away and disappear in like manner. Something similar is observable at Nice, where the *bise* from the Maritime Alps chills the whole atmosphere in a few minutes, and send those home to put on their cloaks who came forth in the lightest attire to enjoy the sunshine, and the prospect of the calm sea. In spite of the changes of its climate, Baku, with all the surrounding country, was a favorite residence of the Medes, as well as of those fierce conquerors from Macedonia who subverted the Persian monarchy, and left so many traces of their rule over the whole of Asia, from the mouths of the Nile to the farthest waters of the Punjab. At Baku, the chisel of Greece was busily at work, and has left upon the face of rocks, and the facade of ruined palaces, numerous mementoes of its playful character, figures of men engaged in various amusements and games of chance. To the believers in El Islam, all these things are so many abominations. They hate images, they despise art and its creations, which to their minds suggest no ideas save those of gross idolatry. They can conceive no reason for fabricating the figure of man or beast, unless with the design to worship it. Occasionally, they account for the ruin of great cities in which statues are found, by observing that the inhabitants having been addicted to impure forms of worship, were changed by the wrath of heaven into stones, and in that state left forever above ground, to be a terror and warning to future generations. As to the lions who climb and grin on the walls of Baku, they were, say the Muslims, the gods of its ancient inhabitants, whom, when the day of trial came, they were found impotent to protect.

Like all regions impregnated with fire, this part of Persia produces exquisite fruit. Large and delicious figs have been still found on the trees as late as the month of December, and the pomogrates which nature brings to perfection in the hottest months seem to be fuller of refreshing juice than in almost any other part of the East. When you arrive, therefore, at a caravanary on a July noon, the first thing with which the attendant presents you, in a saucer of white porcelain, is a pomogrante—you break it, you inhale the delicious aroma, you sip the pinky juice, and your weariness vanishes like a dream. Along the volcanic rocks, the vine trails its tendrils, and early in summer is covered with heavy clusters, purple or golden. These the children of the Prophet, in spite of the Koran, often convert into wine, with which to regale themselves in their banishment beyond Kaf. Every one who has travelled in volcanic countries must have observed that the grape has there a far richer flavor than elsewhere, which appears at once to excite and allay thirst. This is particularly noticeable on the slopes of Etne and Vesuvius, but in the neighborhood of Baku it is perhaps more remarkable still. The wines made in this province are those chiefly celebrated by the Persian poets, who, because they drank them in the bowers of Shiraz or Isfahan, imagined they were the produce of the south. In the low marshy grounds close to the Caspian, you find water-melons, scarcely, if at all, inferior to those of Calamata in the Morea, which, when out into slices, look like sweet water held in suspen-

sion by a network of fibres. These, with the apples of Shirwan, and the dates of Irak and Diarbekir, the Parsees prefer to all the fruits of India, the anana, the mango, and the mangosteen, because they detect in them the flavour of their ancient fatherland. As they eat, they dream of the past, when the sword of the Mede was a terror to the world—when he disciplined the finest cavalry, and erected the finest structures in Asia—when he was victorious wherever he marched—and when his sacred fire threw its glare on one side over the Nile, on the other over the Indus. It may be that Bumseger Cursejee, as he prostrates himself before the eternal fires of Baku, dreams that days of equal glory may yet dawn upon his race, when he shall cease to twist ropes and build ships for white infidels from the West, when he shall be no longer a byword to the Brahman or the Moslem, but with the sword of victory in one hand, and the sacred fire in the other, shall drive the believers in the Book out of Iran; and enjoy a flaming millennium in the beautiful land which was the birthplace and cradle of his race.

Drafted.

BY GEORGE ARNOLD.

I have been very badly treated; very badly indeed, and I feel a powerful desire to have the finger of scorn pointed at certain persons whose full names I intend to expose in the public print.

I am not wanting in courage; when at school I licked several boys bigger than myself; but I have no especial fondness for the life of a soldier. The idea of drafting six or eight hours a day is distasteful to me; I do not fancy having a thick coat buttoned up tightly in this weather, and as for camps they are dirty places at best.

Then, again, I am confident that there are men enough to fight out this war without me. I know a great many who were crazy to go, when the Union uprising came off, but who haven't been yet. I never thirsted for glory. It isn't in my line. I am in the tallow-chandlery and soap business.

It takes a wary, nervous, lean sort of man to make a good soldier. I am inclined to be stoutish; indeed, I have overheard strangers referring to me as "that fat man." My figure is good, I think, but unquestionably with a tendency to *embonpoint*, as the French call it. [This is pronounced "ong-bong-pwong," I am told.]

To sum up what I have been driving at all this time, I didn't want to enlist. I don't want to now. I like to take life easy, and accumulate a little money against the time when I am old. Martial life doesn't suit me, and I always said I thought John Jacob Astor as great a man as Napoleon. That is my idea, at least. I want to the hospital the other day, and saw a soldier with a mortified leg. Ah! All I ask is to be let alone.

I don't know when I first heard about the drafting business, but it produced a great excitement down town. The young men in my establishment went right off and enlisted—lots of them. They knew there was a big bounty then, and that when drafting began, they might have to go without any bounty; so off they went. It gave me a great deal of trouble, getting new hands, and at much higher wages. I lost over three hundred dollars by it; and would you believe? they had the hardihood—impudence, I call it—to ask me to give them something for extra outfit, or, as least, to give them their situation again if they came back! Hah! if one of the rascals dares to show his face in my establishment again, I'll say something that will make him feel very badly.

As a rule, however, my employees are a worthless set. They don't seem to have any respect for me; so I'm not sorry to have got a new lot.

I will not disguise the fact that I was a good deal worried about the drafting business. I suppose I was nervous, or something, but I couldn't think of anything for several days, except being taken away from my business and made to go into the ranks to fight; and every time I sat down to a meal, I thought of that soldier at the hospital. That made me sick, and I couldn't eat. Everybody noticed that I wasn't well, and I presume I must have talked about my fears some. Anyhow, it came to be understood that I disliked the idea of being drafted.

There are some people in this world who act just like fools. Now, there's young Forsyth; he's a writer by trade, and ought to have brains enough, but he told me, with perfect sincerity, that the President was about to make a third call for five hundred thousand more men, and said that it would require a draft of every second man, in the United States, capable of bearing arms. I am surprised that an apparently intelligent young man should have been so misinformed, or should have made such reckless statements without being sure of their truth.—The idea was absurd, of course, but it did not happen to strike me so at the time, so my anxiety was greatly increased. Forsyth had the insolence, too, to joke me about my liability to conscription, and crowded over me on the ground that all men connected with newspapers were to be exempt; another statement which I hardly think true, now.

These newspaper-writers are terribly irregular sippant young persons, and really

seem to have hardly any respect for the virtues of prudence, regularity, method and propriety. I am considered one of the most thoroughly respectable and successful merchants in the tallow-chandlery line, yet here I was joked and ridiculed—chaffed as he would say—by this Forsyth, who hasn't a penny in bank, who associates on Broadway with actors and actresses and artists, and who drinks openly, in bar-rooms, as if he wasn't ashamed of anything he did!

He had the bad taste to allude to my figure, from a military point of view; and to draw ridiculous comparisons between myself and one of the creations of the Bard of Avon—*Sir John Falstaff*.

I went down town in very bad spirits, that morning. My desire to escape drafting was becoming stronger and stronger, and laboring, as I was, under the erroneous impression conveyed to me by Forsyth's news I was greatly depressed. It was just my luck, I thought, to be drawn as a conscript, and to receive on the gory field of battle, just such a leg as I had seen in the hospital.

My mind dwelt upon these things all day, and at night I determined to take some measures to render myself exempt. Physical inability, I know, is the best safeguard, so I went at once to a physician to be examined.

He took my fee, and proceeded to thump my ribs, holding a little wooden tube, shaped like a wine-glass, against my chest at the same time, and listening through it. "All right there," said he.

My spirits sank.

He then asked me a variety of questions, and finally pronounced me as sound a man, physically, as he had ever seen.

"A little fat," he said, coarsely, "but exercise would soon take that down. Bless you, by the time you've lived on rations a couple of months, and been through a fight or two, you'll be as lean as one of Abe Lincoln's rails!"

I was shocked at this. He evidently thought I wanted to enlist.

I then took steps to undeceive him, and suggested as delicately as I could, that he might have overlooked some trifling symptoms of a dangerous complaint; heart disease possibly; and that it might be worth his while to re-examine me a little.

He saw what I meant.

"I have an engagement," he said, looking at his watch; "but if you insist I will try it again, but I always charge more for a second examination—"

"Go on," I said.

The second time, as I had expected, he found decided indications of an *aneurism*, he called it, of the aorta.

"You are likely to drop dead in the street, sir, at any moment!" he said quite triumphantly.

A cold shudder ran down my back at these horrible words. I feared they might only be too true, and for the moment, wished I had not asked for another examination.

I said nothing, however, but took my hat and gloves.

"Ten dollars, sir," said the doctor.

I paid the money, and received a certificate to the effect that I was totally unfit for military service.

On my way home, I felt, or fancied I felt, a sharp sort of numbness in my breast. It quite upset me for some time, but when I reflected that I had a certificate of exemption from the draft, I became better humored, and went to my hotel to dinner without fears of Forsyth's ridicule, or forebodings of a mortified leg.

Forsyth was not at dinner that day. His habits are so irregular that one doesn't see him at his meals half the time. Probably he was off taking dinner with some actress, or other curious person. I was sorry not to meet him, for I still felt a little hurt at his jokes, and wished to crow in turn over the fact of being exempt as well as he. I ate a good dinner, however, and retired that night with quite a light-hearted sensation.

My step, as I entered my establishment, down town, on the following day, was really buoyant and elastic, compared to what it had been for several days before. I felt like a ship-wrecked sailor, who, after clinging to his mast, half despairing and terrified, all the night long, sees the cheering sight of a friendly sail approaching with the dawn. This figure of rhetoric, I am aware may be considered rather old, by young men of Forsyth's stamp, but it was a great favorite with me many years ago; and I like old things the best.

While busily engaged in looking over some samples of potash, I was called by one of the young men in the counting room.

"Mr. Quoby!"

"Very well!"

"Two gentlemen, sir."

I went with the potashes.

"Mr. Quoby!"

"Very well."

"Important business, sir."

"Very well."

I passed into the counting-house, and was much surprised to find two military persons, neither of whom could I recognize.

One of these persons rose, and said, "Mr. Quoby, I believe?"

"Yes sir."

"Proprietor?"

"Yes sir; chief proprietor."

He took a little book from the breast of his coat, and began writing with a pencil.

"How many men employed?"

"Twenty-eight here. One hundred and thirty-two at the factory."

"How many between the ages of eighteen and forty-five?"

"I don't know their ages, sir."

"Rough guess?"

"Well, I should say—perhaps a hundred: maybe more."

"Ah! A nice company, maybe. Now, would you like to command as captain? You'd make an excellent officer, eh? I'm making out drafting-lists, and I shall try to have the men taken from large business houses placed under their patrons as much as possible. The President and I both think they will fight better. If you're killed now, don't you see, these young fellows would sail in to revenge you!"

"I thought I had the upper hand of him. I passed him my physician's certificate, and gently tapped my bosom on the left side."

"O, bah! This isn't worth a pin! Every conscript is examined by the brigade surgeons. Bless you; any fool can buy a certificate from some young doctor! Allow me, to present my friend, Richard Chaffer, Assistant Surgeon of Brigade, Regular Army. Now, Dick, is this gentleman incapable of service?"

"The person thus introduced came forward and laughed very rudely.

"I'll bet my commission against a postage-stamp," said he, "that Mr. Quoby hasn't a sign of disease about him."

I began to be alarmed—very greatly alarmed in fact.

"Gentlemen," I said, warmly, "you have no reason to think I will be drafted, have you?"

"Yes, it is a dead certainty. The President is now preparing a new call for five hundred thousand additional men, and contemplates a further draft of four hundred thousand at Christmas if the Rebellion isn't dead then."

"But—but—"

"Never mind. The only way is to face it pluckily. Do you refuse? There are penalties." If I had thought for a minute, I should have seen the transparent absurdity of this; but I was, as I have said nervous on the subject, and my mind was cloudy.—Assistant-Surgeon Chaffer proceeded to examine me, and declared that I was in the best possible condition of body. Some of his questions were rather sippant, I thought, and, to say the least, not altogether delicate; but I was too much troubled to comprehend. The questions and answers were all taken down in the book. The first gentleman who called himself Captain Gardeory, was a very handsome and polite young man, though a little foppish, but he was, after all just as bad as the surgeon. He took down my name, age, place of residence (I might be called upon, he said, at any time in the middle of the night!) my business, the fact of my being unmarried, my height, and girth (I felt as if I were being measured for my coffin) and no body knows how many more personal items.

Then, with the abrupt information that I could consider it certain that I might have a captaincy if I could enlist a hundred of my employees, and with the advice that I had best study military works as much as possible, they departed, leaving me very weak. How I got through that day's business, and dragged myself home I'm sure I don't know. I was never so terrified and harassed in my life, and the state in which I arrived at the hotel that night, may be more easily imagined than described. As I took my seat at the dinner-table—which I did only for regularity; I hadn't the ghost of an appetite—who should I see, just opposite me, but Forsyth, seated between Captain Gardeory and Surgeon Chaffer!

I never heard three men laugh so outrageously before. They had been taking a good deal of wine I judged from the empty bottles about them, I suppose that made them merry, but they were certainly laughing at me.

"Good evening, Quoby," said Forsyth (he is shockingly familiar; I understand you're to be captain of the Tallow-candle Guards, in the Soap-fat Brigade!)

"He attends to the fat department," said Chaffer; "and by Jove, he wouldn't try out badly, himself!"

"Then they all laughed."

"What will you take for your certificate of heart-disease?" asked Gardeory; "I want it for an aunt of mine."

"Gentlemen," I said, as sverely as I could; "I don't see the fan of this. If you have no respect for yourselves, I beg you will have some for me."

They laughed still louder, and I left the table.

Of course, I learned very soon, that no steps had really been taken, up to that time, for drafting, anywhere, and that I had been the victim of a cruel deception.

I was pleased to see in the papers soon after, that Captain Gardeory and Lieutenant Chaffer, of General Hammer's staff, having concluded their business in New York, had returned to the peninsula. "So, it seems that Chaffer was not a surgeon, after all."

I should be much more pleased, however, to see both their names in one of those long lists of the newspapers publish after each heavy battle.

As for Forsyth, who evidently planned the whole thing, to tease me, I have not seen him for a week, and hear that he has left the hotel. I hope, for his share, that he will be really drafted, and join his friends down in Virginia.—*New York Sunday Mercury.*