Forty Years Ago.

Three gay little lads on a winter's night
Sat cracking their nuts by the pine-tops' light—
Sat cracking their nuts, and laughing with glee
At the wonderful things thay would go and see.
That was forty years ago,
Round the cot and pine-wood fen.
Now a noble city stands
There with many toiling hands,
And the little lads are men.

Said Harry: "I really don't know which is best,
To shoulder my rifle and go to the West,
Or to harpoon the whales in the Arctic seas;
But I shall be sure to do one of these."
That was forty years ago—
And the hunter never went.
He's a man of stocks and shares,
Great among the "bulls" and "bears,"
And a railroad president.

Little Willy said slowly: "I hate the noise
And crowd of cities; and I shall go, boys,
To some far Western prairie and pitch my tent,
And live like Robinson Crusoe, content."
That was forty years ago.
Willy is a merchant bold;
Willy's name's in every land;
Every market feels his hand,
And his word is good as gold.

Now Jack had been reading a wonderful tale,
And he said: "I shall go, if my plans do not fail,
To be Captain Al' Baba, and find me a cave,
With forty good robbers, all clever and brave.'
That was forty years ago.
Jack's a judge of sternest sort;
No one stands like him for law;
Thieves and gamblers stand in awe
Of his unrelenting court.

—*Mary A. Barr, in Harper's Weekly.*

A COOL SCOUNDREL.

My profession isn't a popular one. There is considerable prejudice against it. I don't myself think it's much worse than a good many others. However, that's nothing to do with my story. Some years ago me and the gentleman who was at that time connected with me in business—he's met with reverses since then, and at present isn't able to get out—was looking around for a job, being at that time rather hard up, as you might say. We struck a small country town—I ain't agoin' to give it away by telling where it was or what the name of it was. There was one bank there; the president was a rich old duffer; owned the mills; owned the bank; owned most of the town. There wasn't no other officer but the cashier, and they had a boy who used to sweep out and run on errands.

The bank was on the main street, pretty well up one end of it—nice, snug place, on the corner of a cross street, with nothing very near it. We took our observations, and found there wasn't no trouble at all about it. There was an old watchman that walked up and down the street nights, when he didn't fall asleep and forget it. The vault had two doors; the outside one was chilled iron and had a three-wheel combination lock; the inner door wasn't no door at all; you could kick it open. It didn't pretend to be nothing but fire proof, and it wasn't even that. The first thing we done, of course, was to fit a key to the outside door. As the lock on the outside door was an old-fashioned Bacon lock, any gentleman of my profession who chances to read this article will know just how easy that job was and how we done it. I may say here that the gentlemen in my line of business having at times a great deal of leisure on their hands, do considerable reading, and are particularly fond of a neat bit of writing. In fact, in the way of literature, I have found among them—however, this being digression, I drop it, and go on with the main job again.

This was our plan: After the key was fitted I was to go into the bank, and Jim—that wasn't his name, of course, but let it pass—was to keep watch on the outside. When any one passed he was to tip me a whistle, and then I doused the glim and lay low; after they got by, I goes on again. Simple and easy, you see. Well, the night as we selected, the president happened to be out of town; gone down to the city, as he often did. I got inside all right, with a slide lantern, a breast-drill, a small steel jimmy, a bunch of skeleton keys and a green baise bag to stow the swag. I fixed my light and rigged my breast-drill, and got to work on the door right over the lock.

Probably a great many of your readers is not so well posted as me about bank locks, and I may say for them that a three-wheel combination lock has three wheels in it and a slot in each wheel. In order to unlock the door you have got to get the three slots opposite to each other, at the top of the lock. Of course, if you know the number the lock is set on, you can do this; but if you don't, you have to depend on your ingenuity. There is in each of these wheels a small hole, through which you put a wire through the back of the lock, when you change the combination. Now, if you can bore a hole through the door, and pick up those wheels by running a wire through those holes, why you can open the door. I hope I make myself clear. I was boring that hole. The door was chilled iron; about the neatest stuff I ever worked on. I went on steady enough; only stopped when Jim—which, as I said, wasn't his real name—whistled outside, and the watchman toddled by. By-and-bye, when I'd got pretty near through I heard Jim—so to speak—whistle again. I stopped, and pretty soon heard footsteps outside, and I'm blowed if they didn't come right up the bank steps, and I heard a key in the lock. I was so dumbfounded when I heard that, that you could have slipped the bracelets right on me. I picked up my lantern, and I'll be hanged if I didn't let the lid slip down and throw the light right on to the door, and there was the president. Instead of calling for help, as I thought he would, he took a step inside the door, and shaded his eyes with his hands and looked at me. I knowed I ought to knock him down and cut out, but I'm blest if I could, I was that surprised.

"Who are you?" says he.

"Who are you?" says I, thinking that was an innocent remark as he commenced it, and a trying all the time to collect myself.

'I'm the president of the bank," says he, kinder short; "something's the matter with the lock?"

By George! the idea came to me then.

"Yes, sir," says I touching my cap; "Mr. Jennings, he telegraphed this morning as the lock was out of order and he couldn't get in, and I'm come on to open it for him."

"I told Jennings a week ago," says he, "that he ought to get that lock fixed. Where is he?"

"He's been a writing letters, and he's gone up to the house to get another letter he wanted to answer."

"Well, why don't you go right on?" says he.

"I've got almost through," says I; "and I didn't want to finish up and open the vault till there was somebody here."

"That's very creditable to you," says he; "a very proper sentiment, my man. You can't," he goes on, coming round by the door, "be too particular about avoiding the very suspicion of evil."

"No, sir," says I, kinder modest like.

"What do you suppose is the matter with the lock?" says he.

"I don't rightly know yet," says I; "but I rather think it's a little wore on account of not being oiled enough. These 'ere locks ought to be oiled about once a year."

"Well," says he, "you might as well go right on, now I'm here; I will stay till Jennings comes. Can't I help you?—hold your lantern, or something of that sort?"

The thought came to me like a flash, and I turned around and says:

"How do I know you're the president? I ain't ever seen you before, and you may be a-trying to crack this bank, for all I know?"

"That's a very proper inquiry, my man," said he, "and shows a most remarkable degree of discretion. I confess that I should not have thought of the position in which I was placing you. However, I can easily convince you that it's all right. Do you know what the president's name is?"

"No, I don't," says I, sorter surly.

"Well, you'll find it on that bill," said he, taking a bill out of his pocket, "and you see the same name on these letters," and he took some letters from his coat.

I suppose I ought to have gone right on then, but I was beginning to feel interested in making him prove who he was, so I says:

"You might have got them letters to put up a job on me."

"You're a very honest man," says he; "one among a thousand. Don't think I'm at all offended at your persistence. No, my good fellow, I like it, I like it," and he laid his hand on my shoulder. "Now here," says he, taking a bundle out of his pocket, "is a package of ten thousand dollars in bonds. A burglar wouldn't be apt to carry those around with him, would he? I bought them in the city yesterday, and I stopped here to-night on my way home to place them in the vault, and, I may add, that your simple and manly honesty has so touched me, that I would willingly leave them in your hands for safe-keeping. You needn't blush at my praise."

I suppose I did turn sorter red when I see them bonds.

"Are you satisfied now?" says he.

I told him I was, thoroughly, and so I was. So I picked up my drill again, and gave him my lantern to hold, so that I could see the door. I heard Jim, as I call him, outside once or twice, and I like to have burst out laughing, thinking how he must be wondering what was going on inside. I worked away and kept explaining to him what I was a trying to do. He was very much interested in mechanics, he said, and he knowed as I was a man as was up in my business by the way I went to work. He asked me about what wages I got, and how I liked my business, and said he took quite a fancy to me. I turned around once in a while and looked at him a setting up there as solemn as a biled owl, with my dark lantern in his blessed hand, and I'm blamed if I didn't think I should have to holler right out.

I got through the lock pretty soon, and put in my wire and opened it. Then he took hold of the door and opened the vault.

"I'll put my bonds in," said he, "and go home. You can lock up and wait till Mr. Jennings comes. I don't suppose you will try to fix the lock to-night."

I told him I shouldn't do anything more with it now, as we could get in before morning.

"Well, I'll bid you good-night, my man," said he, and I swung the door to again.

Just then I heard Jim, in name, whistle, and I guessed the watchman was a-coming up the street.

"Ah," says I, "you might speak to the watchman, if you see him, and tell him to keep an extra look-out to-night."

"I will," says he, and we both went to the front door.

"There comes the watchman up the street," says he. "Watchman, this man has been fixing the bank-lock, and I want you to keep a sharp lookout to-night. He will stay here until Mr. Jennings returns."

"Good-night, again," says he, and we shook hands, and he went up the street.

I saw Jim, so-called, in the shadow on the other side of the street, as I stood on the steps with the watchman.

"Well," says I to the watchman, "I'll go and pick up my tools and get ready to go."

I went back into the bank, and it didn't take long to throw the door open and stuff them bonds into the bag. There was some boxes lying around, and a safe as I should rather have liked to have tackled, but it seemed like tempting Providence after the luck we'd had. I looked at my watch and see it was just a quarter past twelve. There was an express went through at half-past twelve. I tucked my tools in the bag on top of the bonds, and walked out to the front door. The watchman was on the steps.

"I don't believe I'll wait for Mr. Jennings," says I. "I suppose it will be all right if I give you his key."

"That's all right," says the watchman.

"I wouldn't go away far from the bank," says I.

"No, I won't," says he; "I'll stay right about here all night."

"Good-night," says I, and I shook hands with him, and me and Jim—which wasn't his right name, you understand, took the 12:30 express, and the best part of that job was we never heard nothing of it. It never got into the papers."

Lincoln's Remains.

A Springfield (Ohio) letter says: The attempt to steal the remains of Mr. Lincoln about three years since is remembered by almost every one. Ever since then the public, in fact every body save a half dozen persons intimately connected with the Lincoln Monument association, supposed Mr. Lincoln's remains were inclosed in the marble sarcophagus which stands in the vestibule leading to the crypts, where other members of the family are entombed. This is not so, as your correspondent learned to-day for the first time. All that remains of Mr. Lincoln have been buried in the ground, under some portion of the immense granite pile forming his monument, ever since the attempted robbery, and are now in a complete state of petrifaction. This startling statement is from one who knows, and will be news to all but a very few persons, as it was understood at the time that the embalmers' work at Washington, immediately after the death of Mr. Lincoln, was not a success, but a bungle. Soon after the remains were entombed at this city in 1865-6, it was said they were in a bad state of decomposition, and that the embalming was not working. This seems to have been an error, as there is no doubt but that the statement that his remains have turned to stone is true.

A Tree of Iron.

A Columbia (S. C.) letter to the Syracuse *Standard* says: The iron palmetto is the greatest work of art in the State-house yard. This is a casting wholly of iron, commemorating the death of many of Carolina's slain, whose names are found in raised letters on two brass tablets at the base. The success of the casting consists in its perfect imitation of the living palmetto—the favorite tree of South Carolina. We had heard of this statue in other places, but had never been able to believe the stories of the flexible leaves bending in the breeze, supposing this phenomenon an optical delusion, but such is really the case. The long, thin leaves of iron, life-like even to the hair-like fibers of the twigs and branches, wave tremulously in every zephyr, and the whole tree, painted artistically, has so close a resemblance to the real tree as to deceive the acutest observer at the distance of five rods.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

Beautiful Answers.

A Persian pupil of Sicord gave the following extraordinary answers:

"What is gratitude?"

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart."

"What is hope?"

"Hope is the blossom of happiness."

"What is the difference between hope and desire?"

"Desire is a tree in leaf; hope is a tree in flower; and enjoyment is a tree in fruit."

"What is eternity?"

"A day without yesterday or to-morrow; a line that has no end."

"What is time?"

"A line that has two ends; a path which begins in the cradle and ends in the tomb."

"What is God?"

"The necessary being, the son of eternity, the merchant of nature, the eye of justice, the watchmaker of the universe, the soul of the world."

"Does God reason?"

"Man reasons because he doubts; he deliberates, he decides. God is omniscient; He never doubts, He therefore never reasons."

Religious News and Notes.

The negotiations for the union of the Associate Reformed and United Presbyterian churches have failed.

The Unitarians of Great Britain have just held a national conference at Liverpool, which is spoken of as "a grand success."

There has been a revival in Jaffna college, Ceylon, and fifty of the seventy-three students have renounced paganism for Christianity.

The receipts of the American Home Missionary society for the past year were $340,668, an increase of $30,641 over any previous year in the history of the society.

The Presbyterian church in New South Wales is in need of fifty more ministers for the supply of the churches there, and money has been forwarded to Mr. Morton, the agent in London, with which to send out any who may wish to labor at the antipodes.

The latest statistics of the Southern Methodist church state that there are 4,011 traveling and 5,865 local preachers, 844,367 white, 993 colored, and 5,451 Indian members, the total of ministers and members being 860,687, an increase of 12,984 the past year.

Bishop Fallows, of the Reformed Episcopal church, says that the Christian army in Chicago, of which he is the head, is now reaching at least two thousand different persons a week, and that during the few months since its organization not less than two hundred and fifty persons have been hopefully converted.

The ninety-eighth annual convention of the Episcopal diocese of Pennsylvania was held recently. Bishop Stevens, in his address, stated that during the year he had confirmed 1,949 persons, preached 129 sermons, delivered 121 addresses, received twenty-five candidates for holy orders, ordained seven deacons and four priests, and consecrated six churches. The number of clergy in the diocese is 293. The bishop represented the diocese as being in a flourishing condition.

A Mexican Mining Legend.

One of the most commonly believed Mexican tales is that one of the "Step Devil." The men tell you in some of the oldest mines there is a dwarf. A peculiarity about him is that he has immense long arms—arms so long that he can take off his sandals without stooping. This dwarf, when there is any danger in the mine, such as a cave, goes up the ladders, lifting himself by his arms, with his legs hanging free. As he passes each rung he stamps or kicks it out of the side pieces, so that the men, when they attempt to fly, find all means of climbing out of the mine are destroyed. In the very old mines, which were worked by the Indians, there were no ladders, but in their place trunks of trees in which notches had been cut, and the Indians climbed by inserting the big toe in the notches. When the Indians tell you of the "Step Devil" they say he has on each big toe an enormous nail, and that as he climbs the tree trunk he uses this to gouge the notches out by splitting off the part on which the toe rests. The story is evidently an Indian one, although altered by the Mexicans to suit the change in the means of going up and down the shafts.

The Biggest Sheep.

An Austin Sunday-school teacher wanted to make his pupils comprehend the parable of the good shepherd, so he said:

"Now, dear children, suppose you were all little sheep, and I had charge of you and led you about, what would I be?"

"A big sheep," was the unanimous response."—*Texas Siftings.*

Carrier-pigeons are being trained for use in the German army.

The Sunflower Rage.

"Have you, ahem, any, ah, any sunflower seeds?" asked a young lady, timidly, of a New York dealer in garden seeds the other day.

"Yes, madame, plenty," answered the young man in such a business-like way as to relieve the young lady's mind of any idea that it was a matter for ridicule. "Which do you want, the small or the large?" he asked with a pleasant smile, as he placed before her several small square envelopes filled with the seed. The lady took two packages, for which she paid thirty cents and departed.

"Do you sell much of that seed?" asked a reporter.

"Do we sell much of it? Well, now I guess. I never saw such a demand for one particular kind of flower seed since I've been in the business as there is this spring for sunflowers. There won't be a back yard in New York from Mott street to Harlem that won't have its clump of growing sunflowers this summer, judging from the demand there is for seed."

"And this is due to the æsthetic movement?"

"Why, cer—. Yes, of course; if it hadn't been for Oscar sunflower seeds would be as they have been for years, a drug in the market. People may talk as they like, but he has been the means of causing money to flow through a good many channels, and the seedsmen's turn to thank the advent has arrived."

"Is the flower a difficult one to raise?"

"Why, bless you no. It is the easiest of any. It requires no care, and will grow rapidly anywhere where there is plenty of sun."

"What have the seeds been used for heretofore?" the reporter asked.

"Oscar Wilde says in his lecture that the impression that the sunflower is used as an æsthetic diet is erroneous—he is mistaken. In Portugal meal is made from the seeds, from which bread is made; and when roasted they make an excellent substitute for coffee. The seed in its natural state is eagerly bought for by birds, and in the country sunflowers are raised for the seeds, which are used in large quantities for chicken food. It is very fattening, so if you are served with lean chickens at your boarding-house this summer you may thank Mr. Wilde and the more important demand he has created for the seed as a feast for the eyes. The seed contains a great quantity of oil, which is fit for burning in lamps and which is in some European countries made into a good substitute for olive oil. There won't be a garden or door-yard in Newport, Saratoga or any of the principal watering-places that won't have its Helianthus annuus tuberosus or multiflorus this summer," said the young man as he was called away to weigh out half a pound of cabbage seed.

A Mighty Power for Good.

Will the papers of thirty years hence show as great an improvement as have the papers of the last thirty years? They will undoubtedly improve. They are a rapidly growing power. Their influence was never greater than it is to-day. They mold public opinion. They make and unmake our rulers to a large extent. They shape and enforce our laws. They are the terror of evil-doers, and the guardians of the public interests. Their watchfulness excels official zeal. They give tone to the communities in which they are published, each according to the measure of its ability and standard. In this free land their power is greater than that of the king in his dominions, and more stable. They reach every nook and corner of the land, cheering the lonely, upholding the weak, advising the strong, helping all. A tremendous power indeed. How they smite the wrong and uphold the right! The press of the country is incorruptible. It is honest, independent and unpurchasable. Office-holders may fail in the discharge of duty, and congresses and legislatures may go astray, but the independent press remains, a faithful protector of the people's interests, a purifier of politics, a defender of the country, a teacher of sound morals, a mighty power for good. May it ever continue such.—*Northampton Gazette.*

Mosquitoes and Elephants.

Thick as is an elephant's skin, no living creature suffers more from flies, mosquitoes, leeches and other vermin than he. The pores are very large, and gadflies and mosquitoes, leeches, etc., worm themselves into the hollow and suck to repletion. Thus the whole day long they are constantly throwing up dirt, squirting saliva or water to get rid of the pests, to the great annoyance of their riders. They snore a good deal when asleep, and I have often seen them resting their heads on an outstretched foot when lying down. They are very human like in many of their ways. They scratch themselves with the tip of their proboscis, and if they cannot reach the place with that they take up a branch and use that. Natives say they plug up bullet holes with clay, but I never knew an instance of it myself.—*London Field.*

THE FAMILY DOCTOR.

Cheese.—The curd from which cheese is made is highly nutritious and easy of digestion, but the curing process—as in in all cases—mark the difference between dried apples and the green—impairs the digestibility. Old cheese, oftener than otherwise, is unfit for the weak stomach, if not for all. That which has become tainted—rotten or putrescent—or has become infested with vermin, or is moldy, is no more fit for the stomach than putrid meat, or any food which has undergone the process of decomposition. Such mold is an absolute poison and should never be eaten.

Corns.—The simplest and most natural cure of these troublesome things is prevention. This consists in wearing a well-fitting boot. They are caused by the chafing of the surface, the thickening of the cuticle, as one means of protecting the sensitive nerves beneath. If the boot is tight it is manifest that the evil is increased by this thickening of the skin, since the tightness is thus increased. It is proper to say that a bad fit, resulting in this chafing, produces the same result, that of thickening the cuticle. The remedy, therefore, consists in wearing well-fitting boots, avoiding the cause. But, if this is not done, the corn, being albuminous, may be dissolved by the application of almost any alkali, as soda, ammonia or potash. Muriatic acid will do the same, though it may cause more soreness. Of course several applications may be required. The same applications will also cure warts.

Poisoning.—If the poison swallowed is known to be a caustic or corrosive substance give sweet oil, melted butter or lard. If the nature of the poison is not known, try to cause vomiting by giving a teaspoonful each of salt and mustard in a glass of warm water, and afterward give the whites of eggs and strong coffee. Iodide of starch is also a useful remedy for many cases of poisoning.—*Dr. Foote's Health Monthly.*

Is Crime Hereditary?

The question of whether crime was hereditary came up in a New York police court, and Justice Patterson recalled two instances as follows:

"I knew a gentleman who was well-to-do in business. He was a church member, and stood high in the community. He had a most excellent wife, and one son and a daughter. After the birth of the daughter the father took to drink, left the church and became an inveterate drunkard. He had six children after this—three sons and three daughters. All six turned out bad. The three sons were sent to State prison, and two of the daughters' husbands were also sent to State prison, and they were bad themselves. The first son and daughter were models of rectitude, and the son did all he could for his unfortunate brothers.

"The other day I had 'Red Fogarty' and his wife before me at an examination in Jefferson Market court, about a silk dress which had been stolen from a house and sold by Mrs. Fogarty to the woman who was arrested in the street with the dress on. Well, Mrs. Fogarty carried a bouncing boy with her, a child of about two years—a noisy fellow. He did not cry, but roared, as if angry, and chattered. I was passing through the examination-room; Mrs. Fogarty was standing with the boy in her arms. As I passed my diamond stud glistened a little, and the little fellow made a grab at my shirt-front. I caught his hand and put it away, when he grew perfectly ill-natured and mad because I did so. The badness was born in him."

Honesty the Best Policy.

"Mister," began a small boy, as he entered a Woodward avenue grocery yesterday, "ma bought some mackerel here last night."

"Yes."

"And in making change you gave her—"

"No, I didn't! I haven't had a quarter with a hole in it for a month!"

"But ma says you gave her a—"

"Don't believe it—don't believe it! I remember now I gave her a half-dollar, a quarter and a nickel."

"Ma says you gave her a gold piece for a penny, and here it is."

"Good gracious alive! but so I did—so I did! I remember now that I gave her a dollar-bill and a lot of small change. Bub, what's your name, and do you think you can eat three sticks of lemon candy? Ah! it does me good to find honesty and reward it!"—*Free Press.*

The Worst Yet.

Austin can boast of the checkiest bore in Texas. He came into *Texas Siftings* office and was nosing about among the exchanges.

"Do I disturb you?" he asked.

"Yes, I am very busy; too busy to pay any attention to you."

"Well, then, perhaps you had better take a little walk while I look over the papers and write a few letters at your desk."—*Texas Siftings.*