

AS YEARS SLIP BY.

As years slip by, love's tendrils, o'er By one, that grew as life began, And, twining, wrapped themselves around The heart's deep center, are unbound And torn aloof ere set of sun. Our days with troubled griefs o'errun, Like sunbeams that seem golden spun, But cast their light 'mid shadows crowned, As years slip by. We shrink from fallen blows that shun; The cycled shaft of death we shun. Our loved are borne from mortal bound, From whence we catch no voice of sound; We list and wait mid gloomings dim, As years slip by. —M. F. B. Hansen, in Chicago Sun.

THE TRAP IN THE FLOOR.

BY A. G. CANFIELD.

On the 29th of December, 1845, I was traveling through the southwestern part of Virginia, and, owing to the violence of a sudden snow storm, was belated and forced to pass the night at a little wayside tavern remote from ordinary routes of travel. I don't mind confessing that I was then a good-looking bachelor on the sunny side of forty, nor that I was what I call a traveling merchant, but most folks denominated a pedler. Now, I am only a superannuated old man, fit for nothing but to tell tales of what happened to him in his younger days. That was before a network of railroads covered the country, and we "commercial gents" who could afford it traveled in light, covered wagons, carrying our goods with us. I had been making a longish stay in Norfolk, laying in my stock, and, when my business there was finished, I started west, intending to visit some of the inland villages and plantations. As I said before, I had got belated and bewildered by the storm, and stumbling on this little lonely house of entertainment, determined to put up there for the night. I can't say I was much pleased with the looks of things, for a more lonesome and desolate place I never held; nor were the countenances of mine host and his wife more prepossessing. I had some valuable goods in my wagon and a good horse, besides some money, so I was worth robbing and perhaps murdering. It was Hobson's choice, however, so I decided to make the best of it; and, after a supper of fried bacon and eggs and corn bread, I asked to be shown to my room. It was a truly wretched affair, that room, being nothing more than a shed attached to the rough, boarded cabin dignified by the title of tavern, with a single unglazed window closed by a heavy shutter. I was as cold as the dickens, and after having my packs placed in the room and seeing the door and window securely fastened, I tumbled into bed, not examining the sheets too closely, but praying that there might be cover enough to keep me from freezing. I soon fell asleep, for I was dead beat with driving so far in the cold, and over the vilest roads that ever mortal traveled. I must have slept for some time, for when I awoke all the lights were out and everything was profoundly quiet. What had awakened me I could not tell, but all of a sudden I found myself sitting up in bed, with my eyes staring wildly at the blank darkness, and my hair stirring and lifting on my head. A strange feeling possessed me that something uncanny, something dreadful, perhaps deadly, was near me, but I could neither see nor hear anything. After waiting for some moments in that state of intense suspense which follows a sudden shock from sleep, I regained sufficient self-possession to remember that I had a box of matches in my pocket, and I reached out my hand for my clothes, which I had left lying on a chair by my bedside. Something moist and warm touched it, licking it like the tongue of a dog. I felt immensely relieved. Of course it was a dog; a dog which had been sleeping under the bed and had crawled out to make acquaintance with the new inmate. I lay down, drew the bedclothes over me, and tried to sleep again; but I could not. The strange, eerie feeling grew stronger every moment. I could not persuade myself it was really a dog in the room. A dog would have made some noise; I should have heard it scratching or moving about, but everything was deadly still. While I lay vainly trying to reason myself into going to sleep, a soft, warm touch passed rapidly over my face. What on earth was it? What could it be? Nothing human, I was sure. Now, I really must strike a light and see what was in the room. With desperate determination I grabbed my clothes, got the matches and struck one. As it blazed, I cast a furtive glance around. What I expected to see I can't say, but something horrible. The match lasted so short a time, it was necessarily a brief and imperfect survey, and I struck another, and another, but could see nothing. There was an end of tallow candle on the unpainted washstand. But that was at the other side of the room, and to save my life I could not summon courage to get out of bed. I am ashamed to confess it, but an absolutely paralyzing terror had mastered me. I literally could not stir. I lay still, with closed eyes, trying desperately hard to go to sleep, but try as hard as I might that touch roused me again and again. "What is it?" I asked over and over. I could not be dreaming. I knew I was not asleep. I was broad awake, and every nerve in me was twitching and quivering with excitement. And now, as I opened my eyes and looked fearfully at the corners of the room, trying to pierce the shadows as people will do when badly scared in the dark, a strange thing happened, which I don't suppose anybody will believe, but it's as true as that I'm living.

The room, as I have said, was intensely dark, but as I looked toward the outside wall, it seemed to me it was not quite so dark there as elsewhere. A faint, lustrous haze seemed to grow out of the darkness, and as I gazed at it breathlessly, it gradually took form and substance, and grew into the pale likeness of a human being, with something, but I could not see what, crouching at its feet. I rubbed my eyes hard and stared at these strange appearances until I seemed dimly to perceive that the thing crouching on the floor was the shadowy presence of a dog. At the moment I fancied I had made this discovery, a long, low, mournful howl sounded through the room—the most doleful and lugubrious wail I ever heard. At the same instant, a shadowy hand from the human figure seemed to point to a spot on the floor over which it hovered. Then the apparitions vanished and all was darkness.

As will sometimes happen, extremity of fear now gave me courage. With a desperate determination to fathom these mysteries, if possible, I leaped from the bed, huddled on my clothes, and, lighting the candle, I approached the spot where I had seen, or fancied I had seen, these strange appearances. After as close a scrutiny as the wretched light would allow, I found something that looked suspicious.

In the floor, close by the outer wall, a space had been sawed, large enough to admit the body of a man, and the planks fitted in again closely enough to avoid attracting notice, yet so as to be easily raised from beneath. Locks and bars were useless with such a means of ingress as this, and my late supernatural terrors were now succeeded by more reasonable bodily fears. I recalled the villainous countenance of my landlord, the still more repulsive look of his wife, thought of my valuable possessions, and decided I was fairly trapped in a murderous den where, probably, many an unfortunate traveler had perished before me. Just as I made this pleasing discovery, the remnant of the candle expired and I was left in total darkness.

I am not a coward, though I don't set up for a hero, and, like many others who find themselves in a strait from which nothing but courage and presence of mind can deliver them, I suddenly developed hitherto unknown reserves of those admirable qualities. I resolved that, if I must be robbed and murdered, I would at least die hard. Among the goods purchased in Norfolk was a hunting knife bought on commission for a planter near Staunton. It was a splendid weapon, with richly carved handle and sheath, and a short, strong blade, sharp and true as Toledo steel. Luckily, I had not packed it in my bales, but had placed it in the valise which contained my clothes. I stole like a shadow across the room, trembling, lest the creaking of a plank in the crazy floor should betray me, opened the bag and seized the knife. With this in my hand, I did not feel entirely defenceless, and with renewed hope and confidence I took my stand close by the trap, determined if my room were entered, to do my utmost in defense of my life and property, and devoutly hoping the number of my assailants might be limited to the landlord and his wife.

I waited minute after minute, until my blood, so lately stirred by a sense of extreme peril, grew chill in my veins from the excessive cold. Suddenly I heard what seemed a stealthy step crunching the snow without. Directly after, the trap was very slowly and softly raised; a long boy hand, holding a tallow candle, protruded through the opening, and a gray, withered face appeared below, with widely staring eyes following the light of the candle around the room.

I shrank as close to the wall as I could, but I knew I could not remain long undiscovered, and as the light and the eyes approached me, I started forward and struck with all my force on the wrist that upheld the candle. The keen blade cut through bone and muscle, and hand and candle fell with a sickening thud on the floor, while a single shrill, agonized scream told that my victim was a woman. I shivered through all my body, and, breathless with horror, waited in the darkness for an instant attack. I heard nothing, however, except a stifled moaning, which gradually died away.

I waited and waited, half-frozen with cold and fear. Nothing happened. At last I could stand it no longer, and determined to get in bed at all hazards. Groping about in the dark, I managed to pile my heaviest bales on the trap, so that it could not be opened without noise; then, crouching on the bed, I wrapped the blankets around me to keep from freezing, and made up my mind to watch till morning.

I thought that night of horror would never end, but at last gray streaks of dawn shone through the cracks in the window-shutters, and I devoutly thanked God it was over and that I had lived to see daylight again.

As soon as I could see clearly, I got up and cautiously moved my bales, shuddering in anticipation of finding the hand I had cut off last night. But what was my astonishment to find neither hand nor candle, nor even a stain of blood on the floor; nothing, actually nothing, to tell of last night's horror. Had it then really been only a dreadful dream?

Ah, the knife! I eagerly snatched it up. Yes, there was the red witness, plain enough, still wet, and crimsoning the blade from point to handle. Yet on turning again to the floor there was no stain there, and on close inspection it looked solid plank from end to end. "Well!" thought I, "of all the queer places I ever heard of, this one takes the lead. But for this knife I should be tempted to believe the events of last night only a vivid dream. This, however, is indisputable evidence of what happened, and of one thing I am very certain—the sooner I get away from here, the better for my health."

I wiped the knife on the skirt of my coat, and placed it in my bosom, taking very good care to have the handle convenient for laying hold of. I then opened the door, not without many inward misgivings, and called to the landlord to bring out my wagon. He soon appeared, sullen and dogged as ever, but I saw no change in him since last night. He offered me breakfast, which I at once refused; not for worlds would I have eaten or drunk in that house. I was in a fever of impatience to be off, and after paying his bill in the smallest change I had, and without any unnecessary display of wealth, I stood by and watched him replace my packages in the wagon, and harness the horse. I did not offer to assist him; I was too much afraid of being taken at a disadvantage. I kept my hand on my trusty weapon, and never took my eyes off the surlly villain. His amiable helpmate did not make her appearance, and I thought I could give a shrewd guess at the reason. I made no inquiries after her health, but jumped in my wagon and drove off.

To this day I cannot account for my escape. The fellow must have seen that I suspected him, and must have guessed at the witness to his attempted crime which I carried with me, yet he made no effort to stop me. I can only suppose he was an arrant coward with all his brutality, and dared not attack me, knowing me to be armed and on my guard; especially after his accomplice was disabled.

It was nearly two years afterward that I was traveling the same road again, and passed by the scene of my memorable adventure. I had, I assure you, no intention of calling, but I found the appearance of the place so changed that I made sure it no longer belonged to my former friends, and curiosity tempted me to stop and ask what had become of them.

Everything about now wore a thrifty and cheerful look, and so did the comely dame who answered my knock. Upon inquiring after the former occupants, I heard, without surprise or regret, that they had at last received the punishment they so richly deserved. The disappearance of a traveler, who was known and expected in the neighboring town, led to suspicion, and suspicion to search.

"And would you believe, sir," continued the good woman, "they found a trap-door in that shed room there with a false floor, and under it was a deep hole with the traveler's body in it, and the skeleton of another man and a dog, poor thing! They killed him, I suppose, for trying to defend his master. And the wicked wretches was put in jail and hung, and we bought the place dirt cheap because it had such a bad name. Some folks says it's haunted, but laws! I ain't seed nothing, and I ain't scared of ghosts n'ow."

I did not disturb her comfortable skepticism by relating my experiences at that house, but I believed then, as I believe now, that a supernatural warning saved my life on that night of terror.—Romance.

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Saved by a Hymn. At the recent great meeting of Christian Endeavor Societies in New York, Rev. Lawrence Phelps, of Boston, in the course of a short address told this story:

"Some years ago a pleasure party was making a trip up the Potomac, and a part of the people sang that song, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul.' At the conclusion a gentleman who had been listening turned to the leading singer and said to him: 'We have met before.' Then he told where and when.

"Years before, during the war, the singer had been a Union soldier, and was one night on duty as sentinel. The listener at that time was a soldier on the other side. He went out to kill that treet, he hid behind a clump of trees, had a good aim, was all ready to shoot—and just then the moon came out from behind a cloud, and the sentry sang aloud a line of the hymn as though it had been in his mind all the time:

"Shelter my defenseless head With the shadow of Thy wing." "The man in ambush crept cautiously away, and the Union lines were not disturbed that night.

"The other man said he remembered the event perfectly—that he was thinking of holy things as he walked back and forth, and the words of the hymn were in his head. He sang that bit of it aloud unwittingly as he walked and thought."

Queer Pair of Calves. Joshua Patty has a curiosity out at his farm on Cane Creek, ten miles west of town, says the Poplar Bluff (Mo.) Citizen. It is a pair of twin calves which are slightly on the Siamese twins order. They are not handsome, but they are a little out of the usual line of bossy calves. From the brisket down half the length of their bodies the calves are one, their entire breasts being united solidly, the two bodies forming one well-rounded trunk. In order to travel they will have to stand on their hind legs and hitch along sideways as each will be in the other's way to move forward. If they can balance nicely on their hind legs one might back up while the other moves forward. The animals are very well matched, are perfectly developed in every other way, and are a curiosity which has attracted hundreds of people to the Patty farm to witness.

An Odd Fish. A fisherman on Bone Island, a small island off the Virginia coast, made an odd catch the other day. Seeing some strange-looking thing far out to sea swimming toward the shore he put out in a boat toward it. It proved to be a large steer. He assisted the animal as well as he could and managed to get it ashore, but more dead than alive. After getting rest and refreshments, however, the creature came around all right. Where it came from is not known, but it is supposed to have been washed off the deck of some passing vessel.—New Orleans Picayune.



PAYING FOR THE MILK'S QUALITY. The Vermont creameries have adopted the system of paying for milk according to quality, or rather, amount of butter fat in it. In June of last year the poorest dairy received fifty-six cents per hundred pounds for milk, and the best one eighty-one cents per hundred pounds. In October last, at this same creamery, the poorest milk brought ninety-two cents, and the best \$1.56 per hundred pounds. Does this not show that it pays the milk producer to keep good cows, feed well, and produce a fine quality of milk.—American Dairyman.

NITRATE OF SODA FOR TOMATOES. Three years' experiments with nitrate of soda by E. B. Voorhees, of the New Jersey Station (S.B. 1892), show that for tomatoes nitrate of soda alone is superior to either barnyard manure or mineral fertilizers, but is less effective than the complete manure. On land previously liberally fertilized with phosphoric acid and potash, nitrate of soda used alone, in small quantities, gave the best and most profitable results. With the small quantity of 160 pounds of nitrate per acre, the second application was advantageous, but 320 pounds per acre was most effective. The soils used were a sandy loam in Southern New Jersey, in a section largely devoted to raising tomatoes for the early markets, and a clay loam in Northern New Jersey. The maximum yields of tomatoes seem to depend upon a full supply of immediately available nitrogen, but as phosphoric acid and potash are also needed, the farmer should know the capacity of his soil for the crop in order to economically use commercial manure.—American Agriculturist.

THE SHEEP TAPEWORM. Sheep are infected by a species of tapeworm which exists in the brain, but in its larva stage only. The mature worm inhabits the dog, and it is due to the presence of the dog that sheep become infected. Indeed, both animals are necessary to the existence of this parasite, which is known as Conurus cerebri, and also as Hydatosy cerebralis, because it is enclosed in a watery bladder which is found in the sheep's brain just under the skull. This creature has several heads, each of which is armed with a circle of hooks by which it is attached to the covering membrane of the brain, and a sucking disk, by which it draws in its nutriment. As it increases in size it causes pressure on the brain, the result of which is a disturbance of the nervous functions and the irregular movements of the animal, which are well known to indicate the existence of the parasite in the sheep. The sheep turns around on one side or the other as either side of the brain may be affected by the injury, or if the centre of the brain is affected the sheep raises its head and stumbles forward. The sheep takes in the eggs of the tapeworm that are discharged by the dogs on the grass, and these being swallowed are hatched in the sheep's stomach. The young worms then penetrate the tissues into the veins, by which they find their way to the capillaries of the brain, where they lodge and grow to their intermediate stage, often attaining a size of two inches, including the bladder and its liquid contents. Some veterinarians who have had sufficient experience are able by the symptoms above mentioned to locate the bladder, and either puncture them, and so destroy the worm, when the bladder becomes absorbed without injury, or they open the skull by trepanning and remove the intruder. When a sheep thus diseased dies, which is the most frequent result, and the carcass is left to the dogs, the immature worms are swallowed, and mature in the dog, to be voided from time to time in the usual segments, that are filled with eggs, and these are picked up by the sheep. Those under two years old are most subject to the parasite.—New York Times.

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES. Among the best asters are Comet, Queen of the Market and the Diamond. There is a big demand for Newtown pippins, both at home and in the English market. Professor Deman protests against calling the pomelo "grape fruit," inasmuch as it bears no resemblance to the grape. Absolute cleanliness is a surer preventative of chicken cholera than all the medicines that have ever been invented. The Erie, Early Cluster and Kittatiny blackberries bring big figures in the New York market on account of their large size. It is told in American Gardening that persistent spraying will keep the red spider, which flourishes in a dry atmosphere, in check. The careful driver, who properly values his horse's feet, always uses the dirt road in summer time in preference to the hard turnpike. Grape vines may be trimmed any time during the season of rest, that is, when the foliage is off. Some prune in the fall, some in the early spring. A well bred colt should double its weight within forty days after foaling. If it does not do this it probably is not receiving sufficient nourishment. If you want to try an experiment next season, see how much you can make a single acre produce by expending brains, labor and fertilizer upon it without stint. It is a fact that well-bred animals are kept in good condition most easily, fatten more rapidly, and hence are the most economically fed. These are the points that make them of value. It is better financing to pay well for the service of a good sire, than to accept that of a poor one free. But because they follow the penny-wise policy, some farmers always have poor stock.

As land increases in value, better culture and better stock are required in order to earn a satisfactory interest. Unless you keep up in these particulars you will find that "farming don't pay." In certain sections alfalfa is the greatest of all fodder plants, unless it be Indian corn. We should be learning its climatic adaptability and methods of handling it more rapidly than we are. One of the best methods of counteracting the ravages of the potato beetle is to give the plants such a vigorous start, by heavy manuring and good cultivation, that they can keep ahead of the bugs. Many farmers delay cutting their hay until late, believing that early cutting means a loss in amount of crop. But late cut hay always has dry and woody stems, which are largely wasted in feeding.

If your sheep are rubbing their backs against every convenient tree or post it is evidence that they are troubled with scabmites. Treat them to a dip as soon as possible. It will be most effective if given just after shearing. By feeding crops at home a double profit is secured, one in growing the crop and one in feeding the stock. The manure will more than pay for the labor of feeding, and the stock can be marketed on the hoof with no expense for handling and hauling.

Little Plagues. It is a singular fact that the most formidable enemies of man are among the smallest of created things. A devastating storm extending over half a continent, a furious cyclone, an earthquake, seem more terrible than the work of an almost microscopic insect; yet the actual amount of injury done by any of these gigantic forces is often of very slight account compared with the damage wrought by one or more of the "infinitely little," but innumerable, hosts that do their fatal work unheard and unseen.

Consider, for example, what vast mischief has been done by the Hessian fly, the clineh bug, the army worm, the codlin moth and other pests of the field and orchard. And sometimes the utmost efforts of man are utterly without avail to stay the ravages of these tiny invaders. They march across his fields of waving grain like "an army with banners" and leave a waste behind. It is, in fact, the most serious of all agricultural problems which is presented by these insect foes. Fight them how we will they "come up smiling" every few seasons to plague the farmer's soul and deplete his pocket.

It is calculated that the Colorado beetle has cost the farmers of this country hundreds of millions of dollars since it began its eastward march. The clineh bug has frequently robbed the Western farmers of \$50,000,000 in a single year by its destructive work in the wheat and corn fields. The depredations of the wheat weevil have sometimes reached similar proportions, and for a series of years absolutely prevented the growing

The Amusing "Battle of the Boards"

It is no proof that a man is not a good historian simply because he knows nothing of the Battle of the Boards. The event belongs to Kentucky history, and Collins, quoting from the autobiography of Dr. J. J. Polk, in which Colonel James Ray is represented as telling this particular story, gives it as follows: "About 1783, when the Indians still roved the forests, plundering and murdering the whites, three men left Harrod's Station to search for horses which had strayed off. They pursued the trail through the rich pea-vine and cane for some miles. Frequently they saw signs of Indians in their vicinity, and moved with cautious steps. They continued to search until darkness, and a cold rain drove them to the shelter of a deserted log cabin, thickly surrounded by cane and matted over with grape vines. They determined not to strike a light, as the Indians knew the location of the cabin, and, like themselves, might seek its friendly shelter and dispute their right to possession. They concluded to ascend into the loft of the cabin, the floor of which was clap boards resting upon round poles. In their novel possession they lay down silently, side by side, each man holding his trusty rifle in his arms. They had not been in this perilous position long when six well armed Indians entered the cabin, placed their guns and other implements of war and hunting in a corner, struck a light and began to make the usual demonstration of joy on such occasions. One of our heroes determining to know the number of the Indians—he was the middle man of the three, and lying on his back—as hilarity and mirth grew noisier, attempted to turn over and get a peep at things below. His comrades held him, to keep him from turning over; in the struggle one of the poles broke, and with a tremendous crash the clapboards and the men fell into the midst of the affrighted Indians, who, with a yell of terror fled from the house, leaving their guns—never returned. The scarcely less terrified whites remained in quiet possession of the cabin, and in the morning returned to the station with their trophies. Whenever the three heroes met in after life they laughed immoderately over their strange deliverance, and what they called the Battle of the Boards."—Courier-Journal.

The article, "A Detroit Miracle," taken from a Detroit paper, is quite interesting reading. It tells how one of the best-known merchants of that city suddenly appeared at his business with apparently a new lease of life, which it was supposed that he was a very sick man. BEECHAM'S PILLS stimulate the system in the saliva, remove depression, give appetite, and make the sick well.

Scrofula In the Neck. The following is from Mrs. J. W. Tillbrook, wife of the Mayor of McKeesport, Penn.: "My little boy Willie, now 6 years old, 3 years ago had a scrofula lurch under one ear which the doctor lanced and it discharged for some time. We then began giving him Hood's Sarsaparilla and the sore healed up. His cure is due to HOOD'S SARSAPARILLA. He has never been very robust, but now grows healthy and daily growing stronger." HOOD'S PILLS do not weaken, but aid digestion and tone the stomach. Try them, 25c.

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