

THE BRADFORD REPORTER.

ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM, INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

"REGARDLESS OF DENUNCIATION FROM ANY QUARTER."

VOL. XV.—NO. 52.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY AT TOWANDA, BRADFORD COUNTY, PA., BY E. O'MEARA GOODRICH.

TOWANDA:

Saturday Morning, June 9, 1855.

Selected Poetry.

[From Putnam's Monthly, for May.]
ROBERT OF LINCOLN.

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Merrily swinging on briar and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name;

Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Song and safe is that merry note—
Hidden among the summer flowers,
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note—
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

Look what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there never was a bird so fine,
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here,
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note.
Beagart and prince of beagarts is he,
Pouting boasts from his little throat—
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

Never was I afraid of man;
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can,
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There are the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about,
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln betrays him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood,
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me,
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work and silent with care;
Of his holiday garment laid,
Half forgotten that merry air,
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

Nobody knows but my mate and I
Where our nest and nestlings lie,
Chee, chee, chee.

Summer waxes; the children are grown;
Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a husband grown;
Off he flies, and we sing as he goes
Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Spink, spank, spink;

When you can pipe that merry old strain
Robert of Lincoln come back again,
Chee, chee, chee.

Selected Tale.

THE IRON SHROUD.

The castle of the Prince of Toffi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Seylla, in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the Middle Ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined for whose ransom an enormous price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured when revenge pursued—the dark, here and unquenching revenge of an Italian baron.

Vivencio, the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace, the young, the brave, the proud Vivencio fell beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Toffi, and he languished in that rock-enclosed dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage; for the roof and floor, and sides, were of iron, solidly wrought, and spaciouly constructed. High above there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massive bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding doors beneath them, which occupied the centre, no chink, or chasm, or projection, broke the smooth black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead littered with straw, stood in one corner, and beside it a vessel with water, and a coarse dish filled with rancid food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivencio shrank with dismay as he entered this abode and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His senses and his entreaties, his impudent appeals for justice, and his impatient questioning of their intentions, were all vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue.

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps. And as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him; that never more the face, or voice, or tread of man would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time; and he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beam-

tiful world he loved, and whose minion he had been. Here he was to end his life—a life he had just begun to revel in. And by what means? By secret poison? Or by murderous assault? No; for then it had been needless to bring him hither. Famine, perhaps; a thousand deaths in one! It was terrible to think of it; but it was yet more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity, in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness, or stagnate into idleness.

He could not hope to escape unless he had the power, with his bare hands, of rending asunder the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Toffi, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance that could transcend in fiendish malice, either the slow death of famine, or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired, or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body.

It was evening when Vivencio entered his dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped his cell in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, nor from any neighboring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sunk within him, and he threw himself dejected on his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams waited his delighted spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him in whose ravishing illusions he soon forgot the remembrance that he was Toffi's prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight, but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be early noon, for he could measure time by no other note of its progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweet endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation, as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed around with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason shuddered at the task, lifting up before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overwhelmed him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truce, the bright visions that had vanished; and receding from the present which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered around and around, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy; but the other was positive. His pitcher of water, and the dish which contained his food, had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he even inclined to doubt this by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over night, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor color as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been thinking therefore during the night. But had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly, that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals, were effected without awaking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so, he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which he was convinced there existed none. It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish by hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food, seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his notice, was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of the prison. He felt confident that he had observed and counted; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances. It was so much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken, than that a portion of solid iron which formed the walls could have escaped from its position, that he soon dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivencio partook of the food that was before him without apprehension. It might be poisoned, but if it were he knew that he could not escape death, should should such be the design of Toffi, and the quickest death would be the speediest relief.

The day passed wearily and gloomily; 'till not without a faint hope that by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared, or preparing for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow if once more at liberty, and master of himself. Say he was armed. The worst that could befall, if neither bribe, nor

prayers, nor force prevailed, was a faithful blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate but it looked lovely in Vivencio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivencio watched; morning came, and Vivencio was confounded. He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose he had been baffled; for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal. Nor was this all. Casting his looks toward the windows of his dungeon, he counted but five! Here was no deception; and he was now convinced that there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious land had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery.

That it was so, he was satisfied. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A single circumstance convinced him they had not been opened.

A whip of straw which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must become secret machinery in the walls, by which a person could enter. He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or, joined, if joined they were, with such nice art that no mark of division was perceptible. Again and again he surveyed them; and the roof; and the range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them; he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts, or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance; that it surely looked smaller; but this he attributed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety Vivencio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till daylight, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearance that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge, (by the time that afterwards elapsed before the morning came in,) about two o'clock, there was a slight, tremulous motion of the floor. He stopped; the motion lasted nearly a minute; but it was so extremely gentle, that he almost doubted whether it was real or imaginary. Not a sound could be heard. Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him; and dashing toward the quarter which it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water over. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and as Vivencio stretched out his hands, he found himself close to the wall. He remained motionless for a considerable time; but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he continued to watch with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking with faint division of light the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivencio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, towards them. There were four! He could see only four; but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain, that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiseless. For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but both to sight and touch it appeared one even and uniform surface, while to repeated and violent blows, there were no reverberating sounds indicative of hollow-ness.

The perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing his eye again towards them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearance. The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying, at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of the four. But he could no longer doubt, what, on the preceding day he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon was smaller. The roof had lowered; and the opposite ends had contracted the immediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imagination to account for these things. Some frightful purpose; some diabolical torture of mind or body; some unheard-of device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place. Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of what ever fate impended, than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat rambling, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every bazaar fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. "Yes!" he exclaimed, looking wildly around

his dungeon, and shuddered as he spoke—"Yes! it must be so! I see it! I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God!—support me! Yes, yes, that is to be my fate! You roof will descend!—these walls will hem me round; and slowly, slowly crush me in their iron arms!—Lord! God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! Oh, fiend; oh, devil; is this your revenge?"

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony; tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face; he sobbed aloud; he tore his hair; he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Toffi, and the next moment passionate prayers to heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he arose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken no food. Not a drop of water had cooled the fever on his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for six and thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his emotions. He tasted of his food, he drank with avidity of water, and reeling like a drunken man to his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could, their approaches; and when at last enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams haunted him; ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination; he shouted and screamed as if he had already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him; he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing between its iron walls. Then would he spring up; stare wildly about him; stretch forth his hands to be sure that he had yet space enough to live; and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivencio. But it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed image of despair sat upon his pale features, as he cast his eye upwards, and gazed upon the three windows that now remained! The three! There were no more, and they seemed to have numbered his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as the gradual approximation of the latter.—The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivencio could put no cheat upon his reason, as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity was it contrived, that walls, and roof, and windows, should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise, and without motion almost, fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so, and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there, with the anticipation, merely, of a fate from which, in the crisis of his agony, he was to be relieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torment; to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the small privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alas! he was to perish; alone he was to wait a slow-coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be indicated by that very solitude, and that tardy coming.

"It is not death I fear," he exclaimed, "but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that, all horrible and revolting as it is, if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to carry till it comes? How can I endure the three long days and nights I am to live? There is no power in me to bid the hideous spectre hence; none to make it familiar to my thoughts; or myself, patient of its errand. My thoughts rather flee to me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh! for a deep sleep to fall upon me! that so, in death's likeness I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me, than my fainting spirit had already tasted."

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivencio noticed that his accustomed meal, with a pitcher of water, had been conveyed as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance; and there is no hope so feeble, as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had gently observed; and should he again feel the gentle, tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant the food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or, if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate was to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came; and as the hour approached when Vivencio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion if he stretched himself

along the floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position, when—yes, he was certain of it—the floor moved under him. He sprang up, and a voice suffocated nearly with emotion, called aloud. He paused; the motion ceased; he felt no stream of air; all was hushed; no voice answered to his; he burst into tears, and as he sunk to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed:—

"Oh, my God! my God! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit."

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. The windows! and two days; and all would be over! Fresh food! fresh water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw!—The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivencio shuddered as he gazed, and his steps traversed the narrow area. But his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wallings. With folded arms and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard, quick breathing, a hurried walk, strode backwards and forwards in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue shall utter, or what pen describe, the dark and terrible character of his thoughts? Like the fate that moulded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted on that part of the wall which was over his bed of straw. Words are inscribed here! A human language traced by a human hand! He rushed towards them, but his blood freezes as he reads:—

"I, Ludovico Sforze, tempted by the gold of the Prince of Toffi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Toffi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, he said, of its perfection, doomed me to be the first victim of my pernicious skill, lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will, that ministered to this unhallowed purpose! Miserable wretch, who ever thou art, fall on thy knees and invoke, as I have done, His sustaining mercy, who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Toffi, armed with his tremendous engine, which in a few hours must crush you as it will the needy wretch who made it."

A deep groan burst from Vivencio. He stood like one transfixed with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded in his ears. "Prepare!" Hope forsook him. There was his sentence recorded in those dismal words.—The future stood unveiled before him, appalling. His brain already feels the descending narrow; his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once, stares upon the walls, and his wavering spirit demands:—"Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?" An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims:—"Why should I? He was but a man who died first in their embrace; and I should be less than man not to do as much!"

The evening sun was descending, and Vivencio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link, that united him, for the moment, to the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought. As he gazed long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one single bound he was beneath them—with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but at the extremity of along vista, cut through the solid rock, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive groves, shady walks, and in the distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily burst upon his view. How exquisite was the cool breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance. He shuddered it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the ripples of the calm green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth.—How he gazed and panted, and still clung to his hold; sometimes hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bar with both, as if to quit the smiling paradise stretched out before him; till exhausted and his hand swollen and benumbed, he dropped down, and lay stunned for some time by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in the darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleepy fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes, he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendor of nature.—Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive tree, or the gentle sway of undulating waves. Oh, that he were a mariner, exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of the storm and tempest; or a wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gush out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered.

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time, in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him, for the whole night like one dragged with opium. He was equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on

the ground, sometimes standing, sometimes lying; at intervals sleeping heavily, and when not sleeping silently brooding what was to come, and talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his home, and of those he loved.

In this pitiable condition the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivencio, if dawn it might be called—the dim, obscure light which faintly struggled through the one solitary window of his dungeon. He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did not notice it; for, as he raised his eyes, and saw this portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance. But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change his iron had undergone. It was a bed no longer. It stood before him the visible semblance of a funeral couch or bier. When he beheld this he started from the ground, and in raising himself suddenly struck his head against the roof, which now was so low that he could no longer stand upright. "God's will be done," was all he said, as he crouched his body, and placed his hands upon the bier; for such it was.

The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforze, that as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously contrived machinery, that effected the transformation. The object was, of course, to heighten in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish which the preceding ones had aroused. For the same reason, the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivencio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush forth. The air seemed thick, and he breathed with difficulty; or it might be that he fancied it was so, from the hot and narrow limits of his dungeon, which were now so diminished that he could neither stand up nor lie down at his full length. But his wasted spirits, and oppressed mind no longer struggled within him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if thus revenge had struck its final blow; for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang. But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its fiercest passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Toffi, and the fell artificer of his designs had imagined a countering device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivencio. He started. It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning, that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder. This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivencio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless. Vivencio looked up and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat crouching beneath it; and he felt that a further contraction of but a few inches only must commence the frightful operation. Round as he had been now gasped for breath.—His body shook violently; he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front. Thus he remained for more than an hour, when that deafening bell sounded again and again, there came the crash of horrid death. But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivencio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent; crash succeeded crash; and on, came the mysterious engine of death till Vivencio's smothered groans were heard no more. He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides; and the flattened bier was his Iron Shroud.

SCENE IN A SCHOOL ROOM.—A new pupil entered of whom the pedagogue inquired—
"Can you read and spell?"
"Yes," said the orphan, I can read in the primer, and spell 'later and grayer.'"

Here the lad read and spelt in the most rapid manner.
"In Adam's fall, he sinned all—John Rogers burnt his steak for nine small children, and one at the breast—t-a-t-e—t-a-t-e and grayer—tater and grayer."
"You may take your seat. And if I hear any noise from you, I shall call you up and give you a flogging."

"Umph," said our hero, shrugging his shoulders as he went to his seat, "I wouldn't come, though, if you'd give me two."
"Do you know the prisoner, Mr. Jones?"
"Yes, to the bone." "What is his character?"
"Didn't know he had any." "Does he live near you?" "So near that he has only spent five shillings for fire wood in eight years."
"Did he ever come into collision with you in any matter?" "Only once, and that was when he was drunk and mistook me for a lamp-post!" "From what you know of him would you believe him under oath?" "That depends upon circumstances. If he was so much intoxicated that he did not know what he was doing, I would, if not, I wouldn't."

"We once heard of a young lady who was requested by a bachelor somewhat advanced in years to take a seat upon his knee while in a crowded sleigh."
"No, thank you," said she, "I am afraid such an old seat would break down with me."

"Truth is the brightest ornament youth can wear. At the same time, it is the most valuable treasure that can be laid up for declining years."

"Be diligent in study if you would be wise and great."