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A THRILLING SKETCH.
ONE of the most striking cases of presence of mind and self-possession of which we have any recollection, came to light on a trial which took place some years since in Ireland. The story looks like a fiction, but it is said to be strictly true. A woman travelling along a road to join her husband, who was a soldier quartered at Athlone, was joined by a pedlar, who was going the same way. They entered into conversation during a walk of some hours, and as the day began to wane, they agreed that they should stop for the night at a house of entertainment, and pursue their pedestrian journey the next day.

They reached an humble inn, situated in a lonely spot by the roadside, and fatigued by a long day's walk, they were glad to find themselves under a roof. Having refreshed themselves with the substantial supper set before them, they were shown into the travellers' room, and went to rest in their respective beds. The pedlar, before retiring, had called the landlord aside and given in his keeping the pack which he had unstrapped from his back till the morning, telling him that it contained a considerable sum of money and much valuable property. They were not long in bed before the pedlar fell into a sound sleep; but the poor woman, perhaps from over-fatigue, or from thoughts of meeting her husband next day, lay awake. A couple of hours might have passed, when she saw the door slowly opened, and a person entering holding a light, which he screened with his hand. She instantly recognized in him one of the young men she had seen below—son to the landlord.

He advanced with stealthy steps to the bedside of the pedlar, and watched him for a few seconds. He then went out, and entered again with his brother and father, who held in his hand a large pewter basin. They went on tiptoe to the bed-side where the pedlar lay in a deep sleep. One of the young men drew out a knife, and while the father held the basin so as to catch the blood, he cut the poor victim's throat from ear to ear. A slight half-audible groan, and all was still, save the cautious movements of the party engaged in the deed. They had brought with them a large sack, into which they quickly thrust the unresisting body. The poor woman lay silent in her bed fearing that her turn would come next. She heard low mutterings among the men from which she soon gathered that they were debating whether they should murder her, too, as they feared that she might have it in her power to betray them.

One of them said he was sure she was asleep, and that there was no occasion to trouble themselves more; but to make sure of this being the case one of them came to the bedside with the candle in his hand, and the other with a knife. She kept her eyes closed as if in sleep, and had such complete command over herself as not to betray in her countenance any sign that she was conscious of what was going on. The candle was placed close to her throat; she never winked or showed by any movement of feature or of limb that she apprehended danger. So the men whispered that she was sound asleep—that nothing was to be feared from her, and they went out of the room removing the sack which contained the body of the man.

How long must that night of horror have seemed to the poor lone woman—how frightful was its stillness and darkness! The presence of mind which had so astonishingly enabled her to act a part to which she owed her life, sustained her through all the trying scenes which she had yet to pass. She did not hurry from her room at an unreasonable hour but waited until she heard all the family astir for some time; she then went down and said she believed she had overslept herself in consequence of being greatly tired. She asked where the pedlar was, and was told that he was in too great a hurry to wait for her, but that he had left a sixpence to pay for her breakfast. She sat down composedly to that meal and forced herself to partake with apparent appetite of the food set before her. When the meal was over, she took leave of the family, and went on her way without the least appearance of discomposure or mistrust.

She had proceeded but a short way when she was joined by two strapping-looking women. One look was sufficient to convince her that they were the two young men, and one thought to assure her that she was yet in their power, and on the very verge of destruction. They walked side by side, entered into conver-

sation, asked her where she was going and told her that their road lay the same way; they questioned her as to where she had lodged the night before, and made most minute inquiries about the family inhabiting the house of entertainment. Her answers were quite unembarrassed, and she said the house had appeared to be decent and civil, and had treated her very well.

For two hours the young men continued by her side, watching with the most scrutinizing glances any change in her countenance, and asking questions which had she not been fully self possessed, might have put her off her guard. It was not till her dreaded companions had left her and till she saw her husband coming along the road to meet her, that she lost her self-command which she had so successfully exercised, and throwing herself into his arms fainted away.

A Bright Clown.
HENRY IV., of France, was fond of playing practical jokes on his subjects, but he sometimes found bright peasants who were quite ready to take off the joke on their side. Here is a specimen:

Henry IV., being out one day hunting lost his party and was riding alone. Observing a country fellow standing upon a gate, apparently on the watch, he asked him what he was looking for.

"I've come here," says he, "to see the king."

"Get up behind me," replied the monarch, "and I will soon conduct you to a place where you will be sure to see him."

Hodge, without any scruple, mounted, but as they were riding along he put the sagacious question:

"They tell me he's got a power of lords with him?"

The king replied that he would be able to distinguish him by seeing all his attendants take off their hats, while he himself remained uncovered.

Soon after they joined the hunt, when all the circle, as may well be expected, were greatly surprised to see the king so oddly attended.

When they were arrived, his majesty, turning to the clown, asked him if he thought he could tell which was the king.

"I don't know," said he; "but faith, it must be one of us two, for we've both got our hats on."

A Good Recommendation.
A PATENT medicine vender in one of our principal cities, was dilating to a large crowd upon the wonderful efficacy of his iron bitters, pronouncing them the great panacea and all-potent in building up an "iron constitution."

"That is so—that is so," said a bystander, "What he tells you is a fact, gentlemen—every word of it."

"Hear that, will you?" cried the delighted quack; "here is living testimony right before your eyes—a man who has used the bitters, and can recommend them."

"No," not exactly that," replied the fellow; "I have never used the stuff myself; but you see, Steve Jenkins did, and they saved his life."

"How's that?" questioned some one. "Well, you see, Steve had taken the bitters just one week before he was shovelled in prison for murder. He was stripped of everything in the shape of iron about him, and yet he made a bar and worked his way out."

"Probably he had whisky enough in him to furnish a bar," suggested a wag. "No, but he didn't," retorted the first. "He had been taking this man's iron bitters, d'ye mind? and what does Steve do but open a vein his arm, and took enough iron out of his blood to make a crowbar, and pried the gates open with it and let himself out. Fact!"

A Soft Toned Bell.
Rev. Azel Backus, D. D., was a graduate of Yale, and became President of Hamilton College. It was in the good old day when they had prayers and recitations before breakfast, so that early rising was in order. The chapel bell was moderate in size and feeble in utterance and became a standing excuse for "sleeping over," "I didn't hear the bell!" At last one morning, the President himself was late at morning prayers, and as he opened the Bible to commence the service, he delighted the boys by indorsing their own threadbare excuse: "The fact is, young gentlemen, that I didn't hear the bell. And no wonder, for it scarcely makes more noise than would the shaking of a fur cap, with a sheep's tail for a clapper?"

A Sharp Soldier.
THE struggle now going on between the French and Prussians recalls to mind an amusing anecdote of the wars of the first Napoleon. I will tell the tale as it was told me—making allowance for difference of style in the narrators:

A certain French soldier, whose name I know not, moved by the love of beer, pretzels, sauerkraut, or aught else, which also I know not, had deserted over to the German service. Twice he was retaken, and escaped punishment through some fortunate accident, but the third time it was resolved, with 'sacres' loud and deep—No mercy!

However, he had laid in a good stock of German—not bolognas, but gutturals. Possibly he had been taught by some fair Katherina, for who can talk if a woman can't? So our Frenchman resolved to pass for a good old Dutch Hans; no mistake about that. Of course his comrades loaded him with a shower of reproaches for his rascality or courage—take your choice—and he overwhelmed them with a torrent of High Dutch.

The trial came. Jean, Henri, Francois, and a dozen or two more testified to his identity. And such a host of questions was poured on him! Still he persisted he was a German, in German too—so much that the services of an interpreter had to be called into requisition.

So the trial had to be postponed that the wise heads might find some plan to entrap this imperturbable German.

It was agreed that at the next session of this most worthy court-martial, the interpreter should give questions and answers just the opposite of the real ones, hoping to stir up the French blood. Resolved, seconded—passed.

Well, the prisoner was once more brought before them. The game was a perfect failure. Not a muscle of the would-be German's face moved.

"Mon Dieu! What shall we do?" said the presiding officer.

Off our friend was paced to prison, and you may think how heads were scratched and scratched to devise some other plan. "I have it," said one. "So you have," said they all, when he made known his sagacious plan.

So this enterprising individual went at night to the prison with a single companion. Overpowering the guard—rather easy when the latter made no resistance they seized the keys, rushed to the prisoner's cell, shook him and awoke him.

"Come, now; we know you're so-and-so, but no matter, you're a good fellow.—Here's your only chance. Come along!"

Our deserter looks at them with a vacant stare, and thunders out a cart load of German jawbreakers. Failure No. 2. Then it was agreed, probably by the philosophical officers, to snare a real live German, and compare his *sprachen sie* with that of the pseudo Teuton—"Tres sein."

"Well, some poor countryman was found, probably cajoled by the promise of 'Zwei glass lager,' and brought before the august tribunal with his 'friend and brother.'

But the latter was not yet to be caught. As soon as he laid his eyes on the burly peasant, he cried out—in German, of course:—"O, my dear cousin! How are you! Don't you remember me?" etc., even affectionately inquiring after the health of the pigs and poultry.

This was too much; but the French character is magnanimous. The presiding officer turning to him said:

"Well, I know you're so-and-so, but your coolness, worthy of a soldier, merits your forgiveness. Go, but let this be your last offence."

One would think that here his presence of mind would fail him. No, indeed! Turning to the interpreter, he asked for an explanation. It was given him. Then, bowing respectfully to the officer, he thanked him in—German!

Talk of German relations and 'Dutch uncles' after that!

A Yankee having told an Englishman that he shot on one particular occasion nine hundred and ninety-nine snipes, the latter asked him why he didn't make it a thousand at once? "No," said he, "not likely I'm going to tell a lie for a snipe." Whereupon the Englishman rather "relied," and determined not to be outdone, began to tell a long story of a man having swam from Liverpool to Boston. "Did you see him," asked the Yankee suddenly, "Did you see him yourself?" "Why, yes, of course I did, I was coming across and our vessel passed him a mile out of Boston harbor." "Well, I'm glad ye saw him, stranger; 'cos yer a witness that I did it. That was me!

The German and the Census Taker.
AN episode that lightened the labors of an assistant marshal, was an interview with a German with but little of this world's goods, but blessed with eight children under his roof tree, and four married and living out. He was "interviewed" where he sat—on his bench—with a boot in one hand and an awl in the other. After considerable spelling and effort to write down a most unpronounceable name, the children were taken from the eldest down the ladder until the youngest, an infant of six months, was reached.

"What is her name?" said the interrogator.

"Well," said the cobbler, laying down his work, scratching his head, and looking blankly at the frau, "dat ish vot I don't know. She has got no name.—Now, old woman, you see vat it is; dat child go midout dot census."

"Yes," said the assistant, gravely, "it is very important that the child should have a name."

"Vell," said the frau, "I told you how it vas; my man he vant dot dis child sell have von name vat he likes; I like some oder name. We have talked much over mit dis ting and we have not shoose any name," she concluded helplessly.

"Ah," said the cobbler, rubbing his hands with glee, "I have some dings.—You put dot child down on dot book vid any name vot you like, an' dot ish de name vot she shall have. Is dot vot you gree mit me, old woman?"

"Yah, yah," said she eagerly, "you dot de first name vot you tink."

The marshal thought of Eva and wrote it down. When the old woman saw this she jumped for joy.

"Dat, is de name vot I wanted. You see, old man."

"Yah," said the cobbler, half vexed, "I vont dot child called Helena, but dot old woman will have her own way; 'but,' said he affectionately patting her head, 'she is de best woman vot I want.'"

Bidding them adieu, and promising to be present at the christening, the census taker left them.

Sharp's the Word.
Old Judge D———was an eccentric man of prompt action, and moreover, a bachelor. Being very rich, mammas and blooming girls of the period tried to ensnare his affections in hymen's fetters, though without success. Cupid's arrows had not reached the Judge's heart with any particular love for them. One day he entered a restaurant in Philadelphia and was waited on by a very pretty girl at whom he looked so hard that she noticed it and blushed deeply. He immediately desired her to sit down a minute informed her who he was, and asked her point blank to marry him, and told her he would give her till he had finished his dinner to decide what answer she would make. He then commenced his meal, the young woman waiting on him all the while. He never employed so long time to eat his dinner before or after, nor was he ever known to dispose of so much provender at one sitting. At length he could hold no more, so getting up he called the young lady, and in his usual short way, said:

"Time's up. Yes, or no, my dear."

"Yes, sir," blushed the maiden.

Without another word he slipped her arm through his, and walking up to the astonished proprietor, informed him that the young lady was to be married to him right away, and begged his company to witness the ceremony.

They were speedily joined together in wedlock, and what is most singular, they fell deeply in love with each other after marriage and made the best model couple to be found in the country. The Judge always held that at best, marriage was but a lottery, and he had drawn a prize.

Eugenie.
Many years ago there lived in an Andalusian town a German toy-maker, who had a charming daughter. This young maiden was famous for her beauty and virtue, both of which attracted the attention and won the love of the young son of Count Montijo. His affection for her was an honest one, and in spite of his father's obstinate refusal he married her. The count refused the young pair any assistance, so that their sufferings promised to be very great. But the two eldest brothers of the young husband dying the old count had but the prodigal child whom he took back to his heart and purse. This Countess of Montijo was the mother of Eugenie of France.