

Poetical Selections.

FALL.

THE season when the nights expand, Whose suns describe a narrowing arc, When Nature moves into the dark, Dim shadows of Death's silent land.

Creep stealthily and slow along: All day the murmurs of a breeze Jostle among the forest trees, And fill the air with muffled song.

From yonder distant hills ascends, Through which the morn a pathway broke, An atmosphere of misty smoke Mixed with the blue that there impends,

Into the dun and mellow sky The playful swallows dip and dart: Now in their reckless course apart, And now in various groups they fly.

To-morrow, on the old gray shed They gather twitterer and mute; Another day wise men dispute, But cannot tell where they have fled.

Now dimmer grows the butterfly, Sweeps lazily on his lagged way, Knowing that he hath had his day, And it is time for him to die.

At nightfall dusky shadows come, The cricket chirps his monody; You hear the silver brook's reply, But miss the drowsy beetle's hum.

Across the lawn the first dead leaf Goes winding on its devious way, I hear an old man yonder say, "How brief the summers, Ah, how brief!"

THE MONEY FINDER.

BY COLLEY CIBBER.

BUSINESS called me to New Orleans in the winter of 1836; I found the Crescent City alive with people, although the yellow fever and cholera of 1832-3 had nearly decimated it. It was now full of life, animation, and business. Crowds of people, of an evening, filled the hotels and theaters, while the practicing pickpockets were reaping golden harvests from their nefarious trade. I made it a rule both from the necessity of the case, and safety to carry very little money about me. On one occasion, however, thirty-five dollars mysteriously disappeared from my pocket. The fact I casually told a reporter of the Picayune, who having nothing of more importance to write about, placed the following in his city column:

"Our esteemed friend, Colley Cibber, was quietly robbed of his pocket-book last evening, leaving him minus thirty-five dollars. Colley is a philosopher and bears his loss with stoical indifference."

I felt somewhat angry upon reading the article, and in the course of the morning I intended to call at the office, and have some serious talk with the reporter.

As I approached the office on Camp street, I saw my man talking with a gentleman. The moment he saw me he shouted out, only as reporters shout when a little excited:

"Ah, here he is." "Yes," I replied, "here I am, and you are the—"

"No more words, Colley, this gentleman has found your pocket-book."

"Stop, sir," said the stranger; "not so fast. I found a pocket-book. It is for this gentleman to describe its contents.—I would observe, however, that the insinuation thrown out in the article by the writer, that you were quietly relieved of it, is entirely gratuitous. I found it sir."

"The money, sir, contained in the pocket-book was a twenty dollar note on the Canal Bank, and a five on the Planters' Bank of Louisiana, and a five on the Mechanics' Bank of Philadelphia."

"Sir, there is your property." And handing me the book, he remarked, "It affords me much pleasure to restore it."

The appearance of the man, well-dressed, well-spoken, and evidently well-educated, made me hesitate about offering him a reward. He seemed to understand my hesitation, as he quietly remarked with a smile:

"I see that you hesitate about paying me for my trouble—hesitate no longer.—Finding money and restoring it to the owner is my business."

I looked at the man in surprise. "Your business?"

"Yes, sir. But I have no fixed percentage. I leave that to the parties."

"Then, sir, as the amount is not a very large one, will that suffice?" handing him the ten dollar note.

"Fully, sir; the five would have been sufficient. Good-day, gentlemen," and away he went, whistling an air from the last opera.

"Well," exclaimed the reporter, "that is about the coolest piece of business I ever witnessed. What does it mean?"

"It means simply this—that he made

excuse of its being his business, to take the reward, nothing more.

So the matter rested, and I was minus ten dollars, which I was fully entitled to.

My business in New Orleans at that period was of a commercial nature, and which brought me in connection with business men. A large commercial house met with a most serious loss. One of the partners while at the post-office, dropped his pocket-book containing some fifteen thousand dollars in notes and checks. A reward of one thousand dollars was offered for its recovery; with its contents intact. On the morning after the loss I happened to be in the office. Be it understood that the advertisement was for the evening papers, consequently no one was yet acquainted with the liberal reward offered for honesty. We were speaking of the loss, when who should enter the store but the "Money Finder." He did not see me, as I was sitting somewhat back.

"Is Mr. Williams in?" he asked.

"That is my name, sir."

"And this, I presume, is your property," handing him a pocket-book.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Williams, opening the book. "All right, sir; I thank you sincerely; but how did you know—"

"Your name, sir, written there, and other papers."

"Ah, yes. Bob," calling the boy, "run immediately up to the Bulletin office, and stop the advertisement. Run quick! Now, sir, excuse me, take this seat," handing him a chair, "and I will write you a check for the reward offered."

"Reward, sir? I was not aware that you had offered one."

"True."

The young man quietly seated himself, took up a paper, and began to read.

"There, sir, is the check; it is the amount offered for the recovery of the book and its contents; don't hesitate."

"Hesitate!" exclaimed the recipient, "I never hesitate, for this, sir, is my business."

Raising his hat gracefully, and twirling a gold-headed cane, he went out, whistling the same air he did on a previous occasion.

"What did the fellow mean?" asked Mr. Williams, "By its being his business? He is not a pickpocket."

I then related my loss, and the return of the money, and we all came to the conclusion that it was really a very mysterious piece of business.

I frequently met the man, but never exchanged words with him, as I had serious doubts in regard to his mode of finding money. And yet if he were a rogue, why not retain the money? Here lay the mystery.

One of the most fashionable ladies of New Orleans, a Mrs. Whitney, lost a diamond ring valued at fifteen hundred dollars. It was returned to her by this man, for which he received one hundred and fifty dollars. Another lady lost a necklace equally valuable, and from the description she gave of the person who restored it, it was the same successful finder. Perhaps I was the only one who noticed the extraordinary coincidence in this man being the fortunate finder of so much valuable property. The reason probably was, that from the moment he made use of the expression, "it is my business," I connected him with subsequent cases of a similar character.

Can money-finding be made a business? If so, how? Here was a man returning property to its owners, valued at thousands, for which he received merely hundreds. He certainly was honest, but by what peculiar process did he arrive at the result of their carelessness, making it the source of his means of living? My curiosity was aroused. At the theater, opera, and other places of amusement I invariably met him, he was invariably alone. On the street he walked as if he had lost something.

On one occasion I met him in the reading room of the St. Charles Hotel. To my surprise, he was in warm dispute with several persons upon the subject of the crevasses, one of which had but recently occurred. I soon discovered that he was not only well read but perfectly conversant with hydraulics and mechanics. I remember one remark he made, which came very near, subsequently, being fearfully confirmed. He said: "The time is not far distant when your beautiful city will be at the mercy of the Mississippi River, and the bend at Carrollton will be the source of danger."

The very next day a large dry-goods house had its bank book returned, which a boy had dropped in the street, containing eighteen hundred dollars. The man who found it received two hundred dollars, and when the proprietor thanked him, in addition, he quietly remarked,

"it's my business," and left the store whistling, "There's no luck about the house."

It was evident that the man was in a fair way to make a fortune; and his extraordinary luck at finding valuables, while it astonished me for its singularity, satisfied me of his honesty. The mystery was, how came these things in his way?

Several years passed. I was once more in my native city of Philadelphia. The circumstances alluded to above had been almost forgotten, and the man and his peculiarities were things of the past.

I had some business to transact in the Girard Bank; this was in the year 1841. Just as I entered the main room, I perceived that something was wrong. Several men were standing at the paying teller's desk, and as I heard the teller say, "Sir, you must leave the package with me," I involuntarily stopped.

"Must!" exclaimed the other, the sound of whose voice caused me to start. "Must, sir! There is no such word in my vocabulary. I will not deliver up this money," emphasising the word, "to any man but the owner. You are not the party who lost it, and have no more claim to it than any one of these gentlemen."

"But, sir, you are a stranger."

"True, and being a stranger, I intend to remain here until the owner of the money returns. I found it on the pavement in front of your bank. You say the money was drawn from it. The amount is large—I have counted it—\$20,000."

"Is there any one here who knows this man?"

"Why ask the question? If I remain here—here, if you like, in custody—does it matter whether I am a stranger or not?"

At that moment he caught my eye.—A peculiar smile passed over his countenance, and without a moment's hesitation, he said:

"There stands a gentleman who can vouch for my being an honest man!"

Thus appealed to, I stated that, "I know the gentleman only in the way of business, and have reason to know that he is an honest man. Nor do I consider the question one to be discussed. The proof of his honesty is so apparent in this case, that I am somewhat surprised it should even be questioned."

At that moment a gentleman rushed into the bank in a state of great excitement, and loudly proclaimed his loss.—The bank clerk, in a very significant manner, pointing to my "friend," said:

"That man has found your money, sir, and will not give it up."

"That is false!" exclaimed the finder.

"I would not give it up to you, nor to any man unless his claim was fully established to my satisfaction. If this is the gentleman who lost it, I shall have much pleasure in delivering it up. I found it, sir, in the street."

"O, thanks! thanks! The loss would have been thy ruin. Give me your address, sir. I am agitated now, I am unable to act or say what I intend to do."

"There, sir, is my card." And as he turned to go out, he very politely handed me one, remarking, "I should be pleased to see you." And he left the bank, whistling, "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows." I looked at the card he handed me. It bore the name of "Thaddeus Middleton, United States Hotel."

"Shall I call?" was the first question that I mentally asked myself. However, my curiosity had something to do with my inclination, and I determined to pay him a visit.

We met. It was in his room—a room neatly furnished, as he said, at his own expense.

"I am somewhat particular," he observed, "and as I purpose to remain in this city several years, I had this room fitted up to suit me. There, for instance, is my book-case. There is my lounge.—Landlords never have such lounges; and this is my choice of a carpet. See it is covered with flowers."

"Why," I asked, "did you select such a pattern?"

"Well, I cannot say. I love flowers, but my time will not permit me to cultivate them in pots, so I have them beneath my feet."

"Not a poetical idea, I perceive, inasmuch as you trample on them."

"True, but the poets sometimes crush flowers by wretched attempts to apostrophise them. Now, I can use my woven angels, and imagine them the 'alphabet of angels.' A lady poet speaking of flowers, says:

"They write on hills and fields mysterious truths,"

Mine, you perceive, are written here."

"You are a philosopher."

"No—simply a poet. I write verses for amusement, only."

"When I first met you in New Orleans—"

"Ah, my dear sir, you anticipate me. Say nothing of our first meeting. It was a mere matter of business. There is something more in this world than mere labor and worryment. I am still young, and can now retire from business with an income of three thousand dollars per annum, for which I worked—aye, sir, worked!"

"But your business was to—"

"Find money."

"You surprise me!"

"No doubt. In the course of ten years I have realized, from finding money and returning it to the owners, upwards of twenty thousand dollars; thirty thousand I inherited from an uncle.

"But how is it possible, sir, to be so successful?"

"System, sir, and localities. In London, I returned to owners upwards of thirty thousand dollars. In Paris, about twenty thousand, and in Rome—well, in Rome I did less, but, what may appear strange to you, I made more. The Pope returning from a ride, lost a diamond cross. All eyes were upon his Holiness—mine were on the ground. No one but myself thought of what might be lost in such a crowd, hence my luck. The cross was set with brilliants, so that in an instant I suspected who was the owner.—Nor was I mistaken. His Holiness presented me with this ring. It is valued at eight hundred dollars.

"Strange!"

"What—my business? Yes, it is.—Sir, thousand of dollars are daily lost in large cities, which the owners never have returned to them. In no one instance, except small amounts not advertised, have I failed to find the owner. When I find a ten dollar note, I advertise it—so with all amounts above that. In many instances, as you know, I have returned the money before it was advertised at all."

"As I know! How and where? Ah! I recollect. I was in Mr. Williams' office when you returned his pocket-book. I did not think you saw me."

"Ah, my dear sir, if you had served ten years' apprenticeship to money finding, you would learn that the eye, like the human voice, can be cultivated. I did see you on that occasion."

"Have you heard from the gentleman who lost the money in front of the Girard Bank?"

Instead of answering me he opened a small writing desk and showed me a check for one thousand dollars.

"There, sir, was a good day's work?"

"It was."

"But I had still a better one last week, not in remuneration, befitting the pocket, but a more satisfactory one to the mind."

"How so?"

"I picked up a small pocket-book on Arch Street, containing ten dollars. It was evidently the property of a poor person. There was a memorandum in a woman's hand-writing, appropriating that amount to parties whom she owed. Landlord, six dollars; baker, one dollar and fifty cents; grocer, two dollars and fifty cents. On the inside leaf, I noticed the number of a house in Cresson's alley.—Inquiring my way to the place, I found the number—it was a small house. Just as I was in the act of knocking, I heard a female voice say, 'put it in the Ledger.' This was sufficient. I knocked, and the door was opened by a decent looking woman; the inmates, beside herself, were a young girl and a lad. 'I called, marm, in consequence of finding a small amount of money.'

"Oh, sir, have you found it? Ten dollars, sir; all the money I had in the world, and that owing to those who would turn me out of the house if the rent was not paid."

"There is the money, madam. I am happy in being enabled to save you from the power of a merciless landlord."

"I handed her the book and left."

"That was indeed kind."

"It was my duty as a man and a Christian, and more it was my business. I do not mention this for the purpose of boasting of an act of charity, or in a spirit of egotism, but when that poor woman opened her pocket-book she found twenty dollars."

"Middleton!" I exclaimed, springing up, "you are a noble fellow, and if I may ask it as a favor, permit me to be ranked among your friends."

"I thank you. My vocation is one that were it generally known, the

few who know me would probably shun me."

"Shun you! Why?"

"What is money-finding but a mere refined name for rag-picking? It is true I dress better than that class do, and carry a gold-headed cane instead of a stick with a hook."

"I do not take that view of it."

"Thanks—I accept your friendship—I am proud of it, for you are a man without prejudice."

"Sir, you are mistaken. I am full of prejudice."

"We are friends."

I cannot let the curtain fall on this little drama, in real life without relating one more incident in connection with the principal character. On walking down Chestnut street with him a short time back, I remarked, as we were in the act of parting at the corner of Chestnut and Third street:

"You have not practiced your peculiar art during our walk."

"Not to any extent," he observed; "still it has not been unprofitable," showing me a fifty dollar note which he had been twirling about in his hand.

He saw surprise expressed in my looks, and added:

"You trod on that note when you were opposite the Masonic Hall, and I picked it up. Such little pieces of paper are not to be trampled on with impunity. Come, dine with me to-day—nay, you must—so come along."

A Sell.

A CERTAIN constable, a short time since, espied a tin peddler pursuing his trade, and like a pickerel after a minnow, he rushed at him and inquired:

"Have you a license to sell?"

"No," replied the itinerant vender of pots and pans, "I haven't."

"Well, sir, I'll attend to your case," says the Dogberry.

"All right says the peddler, "do."

The eager official rushes off to the nearest trial justice and obtains a warrant, and armed and equipped with the awful document, starts on a chase after the offending itinerant. Some time, we believe, the next day, after a long chase, the representative Yankee was found, and hustled before the justice, who read to him the warrant, and as a matter of form, of course, asked him whether he was guilty or not guilty.

"Not guilty," says the unabashed peddler.

The justice and constable opened wide their eyes to such contumacy. They had not been in the habit of seeing such.

"Not guilty?" quoth the former.—

"Don't you peddle goods around here?"

"Yes," replied the alleged culprit. "Well have you a license?" asked Rhadamantus, in "sarcastical" tones.

"Oh, yes," says the traveling agent.

"Why," says the justice—quite another expression coming over his countenance—"didn't you tell this gentleman that you had no license?"

"No, sir."

"Yes, you did!" shouted Tipstaff.

"No, I didn't," quietly replies the peddler.

"I say you did," vociferated the constable.

"I swear I didn't," still persists the peddler.

"Well, what did you tell me, then?"

"You asked me if I had a license to sell, and I told you I hadn't, and I haven't a license to sell," continued the peddler, in an injured tone, "for I want it to peddle with."

Nothing Like Grammar.

Nothing like grammar! Better go without a cow than go without that.—There are numberless "professors" who go "tramp, tramp, tramp, my boys!" around the country, peddling a weak article, by which "in twenty days" they guarantee to set a man thoroughly up in the English language. An instance in point comes from Greenville, Alabama, where a "professor" had labored with the youth of that people and taught them to dote on grammar according to "Morris' system." During one of the lectures the sentence, "Mary milks the cow," was given to be parsed. Each word had been parsed save one, which fell to Bob L., a sixteen year old, near the foot of the class, who commenced thus: "Cow is a noun, feminine gender, singular number, third person, and stands for Mary." "Stands for Mary!" said the excited professor. "How do you make that out?" "Because," answered the noble pupil, "if the cow didn't stand for Mary, how could Mary milk her?"