The Somerset Herald.

ESTABLISHED 1827.

VOL. XXXV. NO. 12. SOMERSET, PA., SEPTEMBER 1, 1886. WHOLE NO. 1833.

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Terms of Publication.

Published every Wednesday morning at $2.00 per annum, if paid in advance; otherwise $2.50 will invariably be charged.

No subscription will be discontinued until all arrearages are paid up. Postmasters neglecting to notify us when subscribers do not take out their papers will be held responsible for the subscription.

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AN OPEN LETTER.

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A SEPTEMBER VIOLET.

For days the peaks wore hoods of cloud,
The slopes were veiled in chilly rain;
We said: It is the Summer's shroud,
And with the brooks we moaned aloud,—
Will sunshine never come again?

At last the west wind brought us one
Serene, warm, cloudless, crystal day,
As though September, having blown
A blast of tempest, now had thrown
A gauntlet to the favored May.

Backward to Spring our fancies flew,
And, careless of the course of Time,
The bloomy days began anew,
Then, as a happy dream comes true,
Or as a poet finds his rhyme—

Half wondered at, half unbelieved—
I found thee, friendliest of the flowers!
Then Summer's joys came back, green-leaved,
And its doomed dead, awhile reprieved,
First learned how truly they were ours.

Dear violet! Did the Autumn bring
Thee vernal dreams, till thou, like me,
Didst climb to thy imagining?
Or was it that the thoughtful Spring
Did come again, in search of thee?

—*Robert Underwood Johnson.*

THE MYSTERIOUS FORGERY.

It was a bleak October morning, and Mr. Walter Crump, cashier to the firm of Messrs. Livesey & Mason, quickened his pace as he made his way along Throgmorton street to the scene of his daily toil. It was not that he feared to be late that Mr. Crump was walking fast. During all the forty years that he had sat upon a high stool from ten to five, Mr. Crump had never been known to be late for his work. A more methodical, careful man never hung over ledger or balanced a cash-book.

At length he reached the well-known staircase, opened the office door, and stood still for a moment in surprise. Young Carter, the assistant book-keeper was there before him, already at his work. Mr. Crump smiled grimly.

"So you've made a beginning, young man," he said. "We'll see."

Carter's face flushed a little as he bade the older man good morning. The fact was that Crump, who had married rather late in life, had a bright eyed daughter named Annie, with whom Robert Carter had fallen very much in love. It was only on the preceding evening that things had come to a crisis, and somewhat to the young man's surprise, Mr. Crump had rejected the proposed engagement. He did not approve of the young man's fashionable collars, nor of his scarf-pin, nor of his cane. Such things Mr. Crump considered were signs of a frivolous disposition and unsteady habits. Nor did Mr. Crump approve of the snatches of comic songs which Carter was continually humming. He suspected that the young man frequented music halls and spent more money on cheap cigars, novels and outings than was proper for one in his position. Besides, Robert Carter was usually the last of all the clerks to make his appearance in the morning, and this was, in Mr. Crump's eyes, a very bad sign. It was plain to the old man that Carter was now making an attempt to earn his good opinion.

"Time will show, time will show," said Mr. Crump, in rather an aggravating way as he changed his coat, opened his desk, unlocked his safe and set about his work.

Soon the other clerks began to arrive, and then came Mr. Mason, the acting partner, a tall, pale man, with long, black whiskers. Mr. Livesey, the senior partner, only came to the office twice a week to examine the bank books and see how things were going on. Mr. Mason opened the letters, read them, and soon appeared at Mr. Crump's desk with a small sheaf of them in his hand. These were letters in response to which small sums of money had to be sent, and it belonged to Mr. Crump to attend to them, for he had authority to sign checks for the firm for sums up to £5.

Mr. Crump first made a list of the payments he had to make, and then went to his safe for his check-book. As he opened it to write the first check, he was surprised to find that the counterfoil belonging to the last check which had been taken from the book was not filled up. He could hardly believe his eyes. Never in all his life had he written a check without first filling up the counterfoil with particulars of the amount, the date, and the person to which the amount was sent. But his surprise changed to dismay when he took out his cash book and found that he had only drawn nine checks the day before, the counterfoils of which were all properly filled up, whereas a tenth check had been torn out of the book.

For a moment he sat as if stunned. Could any one have stolen the blank check? He always kept the key of his safe on his own bunch; but it was also just possible that some one might have got hold of the key, taken an impression of it in wax, and had a false one made. He had heard of such things. He leaned his head on his hands, and tried to think. When had he closed the safe last night? About four in the afternoon, before any one had left the office for the day, for he remembered that he had gone to the docks about four o'clock with some documents for a ship that was about to sail, and that when he got back at 7:30 everybody had left, and the place was in darkness.

If the blank check had been stolen, then the theft must have been committed last night—or this morning? Could the safe have been opened before his arrival? He knew Carter's unusually early appearance, and threw a suspicious glance at the young man.

Then a simpler solution of the matter occurred to him. It was very possible that, in tearing out the last check he had drawn the day before he had torn out two by mistake, folded them up and sent them off together. This would, of course, account for the appearance of the check book. He determined to write at once to Marshall & Co., merchants at Liverpool, to whom he had sent the last check, and ask whether a blank check had been sent them by mistake.

Then the question arose—should he mention the circumstance to Mr. Mason? On consideration, he thought that it was not necessary to do so. Mr. Mason was rather a hard man to deal with, and a confession would ruin the character for carefulness which the cashier had so long enjoyed. And he fully expected that in two days at most he would get a letter from Liverpool, including the slip of paper which had cost him so much anxiety.

The next day was Tuesday, and according to his invariable custom on that day of the week, Mr. Livesey made his appearance in the office. Business had not long commenced when everybody in the establishment was aware that something unusual had happened. Mr. Mason was closeted with his partner for a few minutes, and then hurried out of the office, returning shortly afterward with Mr. Jeffreys, Manager of the London an Lancashire branch, at which the firm kept their account.

Then Mr. Jeffreys left, and shortly returned, accompanied by one of the cashiers. Then a bell rang, and Mr. Crump was sent for.

With a beating heart and a cold sweat on his brow, the cashier obeyed the summons.

"Bring your check-book, Mr. Crump," said the senior partner.

This was done, and a tall man, whom Mr. Crump had not noticed up to that time, stepped up to the table and glanced at the check book along with Mr. Livesey.

"I thought so," exclaimed the old gentleman. "Here's the place from which the check was taken; here's the counterfoil. The numbers correspond. What made you do it, Crump? You are the last man in the world from whom I would have expected such conduct.

"Do what, sir?" faintly uttered Mr. Crump.

"Do what?" echoed his employer with a contemptuous smile. "Who did you get to do this little job for you?"

As he spoke Mr. Livesey tossed a check across the table. Crump read: "The London & Lancashire bank. Pay Joseph Beckman, Esq., or order, three thousand one hundred and seventy-two pounds.—Livesey & Mason."

He looked bewildered. The tall man in the frock coat watched him narrowly.

"Who is this Beckman?" asked Mr. Livesey.

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't know? You see that the check has come from your book?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you give it to any one?"

"No, sir."

"Did you miss it?"

"Yes, sir, I missed it yesterday; and I wrote to Marshall, to whom I had sent the one before that, thinking I had torn out two by mistake."

"That rather points to his innocence," whispered Livesey to the tall man at his elbow.

"It may be only a clever plant, sir," returned the other.

"You did not put that letter among the others to be copied in the letter-box," put in Mason.

Crump hung his head.

"Is the check"—he began after a pause.

"Of course it is forged," answered Mr. Livesey.

"And it was paid?"

"Yes; it was paid yesterday."

Crump shuddered, took a long breath, and waited.

"Now, Crump, you had better make a clean breast of it," said Livesey, after a few moments' silence. "Tell us who this man Beckman is; tell us where the money has gone—it can't be all spent already—and it will be none the worse for you."

Crump felt a choking sensation in his throat, but he mustered up courage enough to say, "I have told you already, sir, that I know nothing about it. It was only yesterday morning that I noticed that a check had been taken from the book."

"Why did you not mention it," said Mason.

"I thought I had torn it out myself, along with the one that I sent to Mr. Marshall."

"But it may have been torn out by any one in the office during the day before?"

"Yes, sir," replied Crump. "I don't see how any one could have got at the book, for I am very careful; but it is possible."

"The thief has probably got a professional forger to copy the signature from an old letter," said Mason, taking up the slip of paper. "It is beautifully imitated. I would not have detected it myself."

"It is plain that the thief must have some one in the office, though probably he had an accomplice outside," said Jeffries. "A stranger would not have known that the firm had so large a balance at the moment. Is there one of your fellow-clerks whom you think may have had a hand in it?" he added to the cashier.

"No, sir"

"Is there any one who keeps loose company, or one who is in the habit of spending too much money?"

Mr. Crump thought of Carter, and he hesitated for a moment.

"Speak sir, if you are wise," said Mr. Livesey, sternly.

"I have sometimes thought that Mr. Carter spent a great deal on dress, and so on, but not more than many younger men," replied Crump. But as he spoke he suddenly remembered Robert Carter's unusually early appearance on the preceding morning, and a suspicion arose in his mind. Without intending it he allowed his thoughts to appear in his face, so that his protest—"I know nothing against Mr. Carter"—had but little effect.

Crump was sent back to his desk, and Carter was sent for. He came back to the clerk's room in a state of great indignation, having strenuously denied any knowledge whatever of the forgery. The result of a consultation between the bank manager and the partner was that, as Crump could not account for the check, he had probably stolen it; and although there was not enough evidence to prosecute him, he must be discharged at once. As to Carter, they determined to allow him to remain where he was, and keep a close watch on his proceedings.

Poor Walter Crump went home that day like one in a dream. He was dismissed as the accomplice of a forger, and he could not say that under the circumstances he had been treated unjustly. The check had been intrusted to him, and he had lost it. It was at least his fault that the crime had been committed. He almost wondered that he had not been sent to prison.

When he reached his own house he sat down in front of the fire, without speaking, and even his favorite daughter Annie, could not make him say what troubled him. How could he tell his children that he, their father, had been dismissed from his situation on suspicion of having robbed his employers of £3,000?

About 8 o'clock in the evening a knock came to the old man's door. It was Robert Carter. Crump started to his feet in indignation. Was this fellow, whom he suspected to be the real criminal, to come and gloat over his misery?

But before he could speak Carter had come into the room and held out his hand.

"I came to tell you, Mr. Crump," said he, "How sorry we all are in the office about this. None of us believe that you had anything to do with it, of course. It will all come out, likely, in a day or two."

The old man stared at him for a minute or two without speaking, and without taking Carter's hand.

"Begone, sir!" he cried at last. "How dare you come here to insult me with your sympathy? You! I fancy you are the one who knows most about it."

Annie turned from one to the other with bewildered, terrified looks. Fortunately she was the only other one of the family in the room.

What is it, father?" she cried, clasping her hands. "What is it you say Robert knows more about than any one else? Oh, tell me what has happened!

"Go to your room, girl," said her father, sternly. "There is trouble enough without your meddling in it. Stop," he continued, as the girl slowly left the room. "You see that young man? I forbid you to see him, to write to him, to receive any letters from him. He—you will soon know enough."

"What, sir!" cried Carter, his eyes blazing with indignation. "Do you say that I—that I took the check? Why, it was an impossibility, even if I had wished to do such a thing."

"Leave my house, sir!" was the old man's reply, as he re-seated himself in his chair. He had by this time persuaded himself that in some unguarded moment he had left his key in the safe, that Carter had taken an impression of it and had a false key made, and that he had got some forger to imitate the firm's signature. But he knew that no one would believe him; that appearances were all against him; and that it would be impossible for him now even to earn his bread. He looked upon Carter as the man who had ruined him, and in his misery and unreasonableness, he fancied that one of the young man's objects was to throw suspicion upon him, to reduce him to poverty and make it impossible for him to refuse to accept him as Annie's husband. But in this the old man determined he would never yield.

Carter protested once more against the injustice of the cashier's suspicion, and left the room. At the street door he met Annie, who was waiting for him.

"Oh, Robert," she exclaimed in a low voice, "tell me what has happened."

"Somebody at the office has forged a check for £3,000 and more," he replied.

"It has been taken from your father's book, and—and—he fancied I took it—I, who had nothing to do with his safe whatever."

"And do they imagine it was—"

Robert was silent.

"And you came here to say you did not believe it? Oh, how good of you!"

"But he thinks I am the thief. You don't Annie?"

"No, Robert; I am very sure of that. Only, I can't see you so long as my father—"

Robert's only answer to this was a sigh, and with a hurried good-bye the lovers parted.

* * * * * *

Weeks and months went by, and the mystery of the forged check remained unsolved. Mr. Livesey insisted that the firm should bear the loss of £3,000, which Mr. Mason thought the bank ought to repay, as they were legally responsible for the money.

"No, said the old gentleman, "they may be legally responsible, but I don't see that they ought to suffer. The check itself was in our hands, and we allowed a thief to get hold of it. The bank did all they could. The forged signature is so like yours that no one could tell the difference; and the bank cashier tells me that the man who cashed it showed him letters addressed to himself as 'Joseph Beckman,' (the name on the check,) and showed him his card saying that he was a solicitor. Of course he wasn't. The thing had been most cleverly planned, and I am quite at a loss to think who put that poor fellow Crump up to it; but it seems to me we can't let the bank suffer. We could not afford to let it be known we had done so. No other bank would keep our account."

Of course poor Walter Crump could not find another situation, though he would have been glad to take the lowest place in an office. The wolf came to his door in earnest. Annie who had a situation in a boarding school, was the chief support of the family, and the poor girl was pale and thin from long hours and scanty meals.

It was about five months after the day when the cashier was dismissed in disgrace that one day Mr. Mason left his office at half past one, his usual hour for going out to lunch. Half-past one was also the time when it was Robert Carter's turn to go out for half an hour; and Mr. Mason had hardly had time to reach the street when the young man left his desk, went into Mr. Mason's room, entered a small closet in which the wash-hand basin was fitted up and proceeded to wash his hands. This was a high misdemeanor, especially as an accommodation was provided for clerks in another part of the building, but Robert Carter preferred Mr. Mason's closet, and always used it when he had a chance of doing so.

On this occasion however, he had barely begun his ablutions when he heard the outer door of the office slam, and then he heard some one, whom he judged to be his employer, come into the room.

Fortunately the door of the closet was nearly closed, so that the young man was invisible to any in the center of the room.

"He has only came back for his umbrella," said Robert to himself; "there is no need of my moving. If I keep quiet, he will be gone in a minute. No! Some one else has come in with him. What shall I do?"

Mr. Mason had already closed the double doors, which led from his room to the other office, and Carter was screwing up his courage to the point of confessing his presence when the first words spoken by the stranger fell upon his ear, and made him stand as still as a stone.

"You can take your choice, as I said in my letter. Hand me over another hundred or I'll split. What's one seventy-two out of three thousand? I had all the risk, and you—

"Silence—will you?" hissed out Mr. Mason in an angry whisper. "I can't give you a hundred pounds, for I have not got it. But I will give you fifty now and fifty next month. After that you can 'split' if you like, for you shall get no more out of me. Anything would be better than living as a slave to a man like you."

"Hand over the fifty, then," replied the other after a pause; and then there was a slight rustle of bank notes.

"You had better leave the country," said Mr. Mason in a low tone. "The bank cashier who cashed the check might meet you in the street."

"I'll take care of that," replied the stranger, and after a few more words had passed the two men left the office.

All this time Carter had been standing half paralyzed, first, by fear of discovery, and then by astonishment. But he understood this much, that this stranger was the man who had cashed the forged check, under the name of Beckman; that Mr. Mason knew it, and so far from denouncing him to the police, was giving him money to hold his tongue. yes; and more than this, the stranger was threatening to split upon Mr. Mason.

What it could all mean Carter could not comprehend; but he saw one thing plainly enough. The important point was to find out who this man was and where he lived. In a moment Carter ran out of the room, seized his hat and rushed down stairs.

He was just in time. Mr. Mason was leaving the foot of the stairs, going up the street, while a well-dressed man, who had evidently just parted from him, was walking in the opposite direction. Carter followed the stranger to the Mansion House, and saw him take a Bayswater omnibus. This suited Carter exactly. He went around to the front of the vehicle and got up beside the driver. Then he clambered along the roof and seated himself above the door.

At the Holborn restaurant the man whom he was following got out and stopped to refresh himself, while Carter waited patiently outside. At last he reappeared and Carter quietly followed him down Holborn, up Gray's Inn road into a dingy street in the neighborhood of King's Cross. Here the pretended solicitor stopped at a door, which he open with a latch key.

"Ah!" said Carter to himself, "I have you know!"

He waited a few moments and then knocked at the door.

It was answered by a dirty, slip-shod girl.

"Does Mr. Williamson live here?" inquired the young man.

"No, he doesn't."

"Wasn't that Mr. Williamson who came in just now—Mr. Williamson of Petersborough?"

"No, it wasn't. That was our first floor, Mr. Cromer. You have made a mistake."

"So I have. Beg your pardon, I'm sure—" and Carter turned away.

From King's Cross he went straight to Scotland Yard and narrated his experience. That night Mr. Livesey received a visit which caused him some surprise—and so did Mr. Cromer. No sooner was the latter gentleman in the hands of the police than he confessed the whole matter.

Mr. Mason had known Cromer, who was a scoundrel with a respectable appearance and a plausible manner, for some time, and had selected him to be his tool. He had sent poor Crump to the docks on the afternoon before the morning on which the check was missed; he had come back to the office after the clerks were gone, and then opened Crump's safe with his own key and abstracted the blank check. This he had himself filled up and signed with the firm's signature in the usual way, so there was little wonder that the cashier at the bank paid it without any suspicion. He had, no doubt calculated that the bank would have to bear the loss, but as it was he had cheated Mr. Livesey out of two thousand pounds, for, as he himself had but a third share in the business, only one thousand out of the three had come out of his own pocket.

Mr. Mason saved his partner the trouble of trying whether he could make him criminally responsible for what he had done; for when the police went to look for him he had disappeared. Probably he had seen Robert Carter following his accomplice, and, scenting danger, had saved himself while there was time. It turned out afterwards that he had been speculating largely on the stock exchange and was sorely in need of money to pay his losses. It was some consolation to Mr. Livesey to think that his dishonest partner had not profited much by his theft.

As for Walter Crump, he was offered his old place with an apology and a handsome present to boot; and he still keeps the books which he has had so long under his care. He has not quite overcome his prejudice against Robert Carter, and he always regarded it as a hard thing that he should have to owe his reputation and his deliverance from poverty to that particular young gentleman. However, as things were he could do no less than to inform Carter that he had done him an injustice, and that he would be happy to see him in the evening whenever it suited him to call. Color came back to Annie's cheeks and light to her eyes when she heard the good news; and it was not many weeks before she became the promised wife of the young man who discovered the secret of the mysterious forgery.—*Whitehall Review.*

A Large Sum Needed.

Tramp—Sir, a single moment.

Genial Man—Well, my good man?

Tramp—I will be frank with you. I am tired of life, and have determined to drink myself to death. I have exhausted my means, and I implore you to furnish the funds to complete my destruction.

G. M.—(After a careful survey)—My good man, I regret to say that I have not $10,000 to spare.

The proprietor of the Great Western Poultry Yard, Mr. James E. Goodkey, St. Louis, Mo., is enthusiastic in his praise of Red Star Cough Cure, which cured him after all other remedies failed. He says it neither constipates the bowels nor causes sick headache.

SOME SIMILES.

Language is Often a Slippery Thing to Deal With.

"The child of the past and the parent of the future" is not an unhappy simile for the—present. Happiness has been likened to a ghost; all talk about it, but few, if any, have ever seen it. Ambition's ladder rests against a star, remarks a clever writter, who also tells us that a proverb is a short truth sandwitched between wit and wisdom.

Eloquence is a coat of many colors judiciously blended. No one thing will make a man eloquent. Flattery has been termed a kind of bad money to which our vanity gives currency. Society, like shaded silk, must be viewed in all situations, or its colors will deceive us. Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together; and charity is an angel breathing on riches; while graves have been poetically called the footsteps of angels.

Language is a slippery thing to deal with, as some may find when selecting their similes. Says a writer: "Speak of a man's marble brow, and he will glow with conscious pride; but allude to his wooden hand, and he is mad in a minute." The young lecturer's "similes were gathered in a heap" when he expressed the whole body of his argument on deceit in the following: "O, my brethren, the snowiest shirt-front may conceal an aching bosom, and the stiffest of all collars encircle a throat that has perhaps a bitter pill to swallow."

Plagiarists are a species of purloiners who filch the fruit that others have gathered, and then throw away or attempt to destroy the basket.

It has been truly said that the abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a blanket when you are in bed; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered. The man, we are told, who has not anything to boast of but his illustrious ancestors, is like a potato—the only good belonging to him being under ground.

A man at dinner in evening dress has been likened to a conundrum; you can't tell whether he is a waiter or a guest. A Yankee, describing a lean opponent, said: "That man doesn't amount to a sum in arithmetic; add him up and there's nothing to carry." An American critic in reviewing a poem said: "The rhythm sounds like turnips rolling over a barn floor, while some lines appeared to have been measured with a yard-stick and others with a ten-foot pole."

An amusing illustration was given by a parent when asked by his boy, "What is understood by experimental and natural philosophy?" The answer was: "If any one wants to borrow money, that is experimental philosophy. If the other man knocks him down, that is natural philosophy." Curious and comical illustrations seem naturaly to many children. A little girl suffering from the mumps, she felt as though a headache had slipped down into her neck. "Mamma," said another youngster, alluding to a man whose neck was a series of great rolls of flesh, "that man's got a double chin on the back of his neck." A little 3-year-old, in admiring her baby brother, is said to have exclaimed: "He's got a boiled head, like papa."

Talking of curious similes—among the southern languages of India is the Teloogoo or Telinga, so rough in pronunciation that a traveler of the nation speaking it before a ruler of Bokhara, admitted that its sound resembled "the tossing of a lot of pebbles in a sack." A simile for scarlet stockings is fire hose—laughter is the sound you hear when your hat blows off—and trying to do business without advertising is said to be "like winking at a girl in the dark." An unpoetical Yankee has described ladies' lips as the glowing gateway of beans, pork, sauerkraut, and potatoes. This would provoke Merryat's exclamation of "Such a metaphor I never met afore." Much more complimentary was the old darkey's neat reply to a beautiful young lady when he offered to lift her over the gutter, and who insisted she was too heavy. "Lor, missy," said he, "I'se used to lifting barrels of sugar." Wit from a man's mouth is like a mouse in a hole; you may watch the hole all day, and no mouse will come out; but by-and-by, when no one is looking for it, out pops the mouse and streams across the parlor.

Marying a woman for money, says a philosopher, is very much like setting a rat-trap and baiting it with your own finger.

An American writer says: "A man with one idea always puts me in mind of an old goose trying to hatch out a paving stone."

An editor's simile of man's career is summoned up in the line: "Man's a vapor full of woes, and starts a paper, busts, and goes."

We all recollect how the Bath waters were associated in Weller's mind with the "flavor of warm flatirons." The humorist who created that character was often reminded of a printer's parenthesis by the appearance of a bowlegged child; and the elongated pupils of a cat's eyes before a bright light were likened by him to "two notes of admirtion."

Confederate Treasurer.

The following is from an article by General Duke, in the August *Bivouac*, on the fall of Richmond:

It was determined that we should resume our march that night for Washington, Ga., one or two days' march distant, and orders were issued by Gen. Breckinridge that we move at midnight. About 10 o'clock I received a message from Gen. Breckinridge that he desired to see me immediately. I went to his quarters, and he informed me that the treasure which had been brought from Richmond was at the railroad station, and that it was necessary to provide for its removal and transportation. He instructed me to procure a sufficient number of wagons to remove it, and to detail a guard of fifty men under a field officer for its protection. He further informed me that there was between $500,000 and $600,000 specie—he did not know the exact amount—the greater part in gold. I must, he said, personally superintend its transfer from the cars to the wagons. This was not a very agreeable duty. I represented that if no one knew just what sum was there it was rather an unpleasant responsibility to impose on the party who was to take charge of it. I would have no opportunity to count it nor possible means of ascertaining whether the entire amount was turned over to me. He responded that all had been considered, and bade me proceed to obey the order. I detailed fifty men as a picked guard and put them under command of Colonel Theophilus Steele and four of my best subalterns. I obtained six wagons, and, proceeding to the station, began at once to remove the treasure.

It was in charge of some of the former Treasury clerks, and was packed in money belts, shot bags, and a few small iron chests and all sorts of boxes, some of them of the frailest description. In this shape I found it loaded in open box cars. I stationed sentries at the doors, and, rummaging through the cars by the faint light of a few tallow candles, gathered up all that was shown me or all that I could find. Rather more than an hour was consumed in making the transfer from the cars to the wagons, and after the latter had started off and had got half a mile away Lieutenant John B. Cole, one of the officers of the guard, rode up to me with a pine box which may have held $2,000 or $3,000 in gold on the pommel of his saddle. He had remained after we had left, and, ferreting about in a car which we thought we had thoroughly searched, had discovered this box stuck in a corner and closely covered over with a piece of packing. On the next day General Breckinridge ordered me to increase the guard to 200 men and take charge of it in person. I suggested that instead of composing it entirely of men of my brigade it should be constituted of details from all five. I thought this the best plan to allay any feeling of jealousy that might arise and secure a more perfect vigilance, as I felt persuaded that these details would all carefully watch each other. My suggestion was adopted. Nearly the entire guard was kept constantly on duty, day and night, and a majority of the whole escort was generally about the wagons at every halt, closely inspecting the guard.

At the Savannah river Mr. Davis ordered that the silver coin, amounting to $108,000 or $110,000, be paid to the troops in partial discharge of the arrears of pay due them. The Quartermasters of the several brigades were engaged during the entire night in counting out the money, and a throng of soldiers surrounded the little cabin where they were dividing the "pile" into their respective quotas until early dawn. The sight of so much money seemed to banish sleep. My brigade received $32 per capita, officers and men sharing alike, for the purpose was borne on the roll of the brigade. On the next day at Washington I turned over the residue of the treasure to Mr. M. H. Clark, acting Treasurer of the Confederate States, and experienced a feeling of great relief.

A Balloon Experience.

From an article on "Amateur Ballooning" in the September *Century* we quote the following: "As nearly as could be judged, I was more than a mile high, and all sounds from the earth had ceased. There was a death-like silence which was simply awful. It seemed to my overstrained nerves to forbode disaster. The ticking of the watch in my pocket sounded like a trip-hammer. I could feel the blood as it shot through the veins of my head and arms. My straw hat and the willow car snapped and cracked, being contracted by the evaporation of the moisture in them and by the fast-cooling temperature. I was compelled to breathe a little quicker than usual on account of the rarity of the atmosphere. I became sensible of a loud, monotonous hum in my ears, pitched about on middle C of the piano, which seemed to bore into my head from each side, meeting in the center with a pop; then for an instant my head would be clear, when the same experience would be repeated. By throwing out small pieces of tissue paper I saw that the balloon was still rapidly ascending. While debating with myself as to the advisability of pulling the valve-rope (I was afraid to touch it for fear it would break) and discharging some gas, the earth was lost sight of, and the conviction was forced upon me that this must be the clouds! It made me dizzy to think of it. Above, below, and upon all sides was a dense damp, chilly fog. Upon looking closer, large drops of rain could be seen, silently falling down out of sight into what seemed bottomless space.

"I was alone, a mile from the earth, in the midst of a rain-cloud and the silence of the grave. Moreover, I had sole charge of the balloon; if it had not been for this fact I could have taken a little comfort, as I had no confidence in my ability to manage it. A rain-storm on earth is accompanied by noise; the patter of the rain upon the houses, trees, and walks always attends the storm; while here, although the drops were large, they could not be heard falling upon the balloon or its belongings. Silence reigned supreme. The quiet spoken of by Dr. Kane and other Arctic explorers as existing in the northern regions, was a hubbub beside this place. More tissue paper was thrown out; seeing that it seemed to ascend, I knew that the apparatus was slowly descending, being brought down by the weight of rain upon it. Soon the earth was in view. How peaceful and quiet it looked! Immediately the whistling of railroad trains could be heard.

Now mountains could be distinguished from valleys, and the cawing of frightened crows and the shouting of men could be heard. I passed immediately over Talcott Mountain tower, where some two hundred people were enjoying the day. I could plainly hear one of them blowing a horn. As the balloon slowly decended men could be seen running from all directions towards the place of landing. Now the hum of insects could be heard, and the grapnel, with a hundred feet of rope attached, was thrown out; it soon struck the ground, and dragged lazily along through the turf and stones without getting a secure hold. I approached a man weighing three hundred pounds, who was sitting upon a stone wall, all out of breath from running. Without the formality of an introduction I asked him to 'catch on to that anchor and stop the business.' With a woe-begone look upon his honest face and an ominous shake of his head he replied: 'It's no use, young fellow; I can't work my bellows.' But as the rope twitched along near him, he fell upon it, and my journey was ended."

On Picket.

I suppose I never will forget the first night on picket in the Chickahominy's swamp. I had been on an outpost during the day, and for fear that some guerrilla would pick me off at night I had drawn in my post, as it were—changed my base to one a little nearer headquarters. Before the Sergeant left me he very foolishly remarked that I must be very careful, as the swamp was full of guerrillas, and they were liable to shoot me at any time. Can you imagine my fellings when left alone? It was full moon, and everything seemed magnified to double its size. I was not allowed to walk about, and doubt whether I would have dared had I been allowed. The minutes seemed hours to me. It seemed as though I could see a guerrilla behind every log and stump. I was tempted to shoot a number of times, but should I do so I knew it would arouse the camp, and if they came and found that I had not shot any game I would be the laughing stock of the whole company. As the time dragged along the moon rose higher in the heavens and the shadows shortened, but still the bushes seemed alive with the dreaded bushwhackers. I felt my hair stand on end more than once. A whippoorwill had been singing for some time near by, but all of a sudden it ceased, when my hair stood out its longest. It stopped singing and uttered a chuckling noise that indicated the approach of something, and soon flew away. Now the excitement was about as high as it could get and let a man live. I was sure a bushwhacker was crawling up to me, and expected every minute to get a ball through me. But still I would not fire my gun, but kept it cocked in my hand, ready for immediate use; and although about as scared as a person usually gets, I think I was never so thoroughly scared that I couldn't shoot. What a relief it was to me when I heard the relief coming. The guard that relieved me offered to give me his whole month's pay if I would stand his two hours for him. Not any more for me just then. I would not have done it, unless abliged to, for any amount of money. I tell you that was the longest two hours' guard duty that I ever had the pleasure of performing. I came on again at two o'clock and stood until four. I could not sleep after going back to the reserve; the excitement had been too great. But when I had fairly settled down on a log the second time the moon was getting low down in the west and I began to feel sleepy. Time dragged along slowly, the hours seemed never so long. I began to feel drowsy, but I was on an outpost, and the whole army, perhaps, depended upon the vigilance of its pickets. I knew this, but could not shake off the drowsy feeling. It would not do to get up and walk about, as that would expose me to the eyes of any bushwhacker that might be prowling around. It seemed impossible for me to keep awake; the moment my eyes were closed I would fall to dreaming, and I could with the greatest difficulty shake off the drowsiness, even for a moment. I took off one of my suspenders and tied it around my gun and then to my wrist. I knew that when the officer of the guard found me asleep he would first take my gun away and then arrest me, and the result might be court martial and shot for sleeping on picket. Well, the officer of the guard found me asleep, and coming up behind reached for my gun. But he didn't get it. Pulling on the suspender awoke me. It was nearly daylight, and as I had been kept on my post half an hour over time, I made him believe I was only musing, and not sleeping at all. I have been scared a good many times in my life, but the night I stood on picket in the Chickahominy swamp was the "boss."—*Chicago Ledger.*

Brilliant Conversation.

The conversation of very young society people denote at times a broad catholicity of culture, a perfection of detail, and profundity of thought that cause outsiders to stand off, hat in hand, reverential, awe-stricken, intent, (writes Blakely in the Brooklyn *Eagle*.) A society woman of some position was in a box at the Casino the other night with her daughter. After the first act a tall, willowy and pale young man, with straw-colored whiskers, feeble eyes, and a national reputation as an amateur tennis-player, entered the box and said, with great animation and glee:

"Why, deah me! who expected to see you in town?"

"Why, Mr. Pommeroy-Smith!" said both the ladies.

"Te-he," said Mr. Pommeroy-Smith, happily,

Then the mother turned back to the gentleman at her side, while the daughter and Mr. P.-S. rattled on.

"How odd," said she.

"Indeed, I should say so! Thought you were in Newport, and here you are in a new port, te-he, ta-hah, te-he."

"O, what a shocking pun, te-he."

"Tuh-huh."

"Been away 'tall?"

"Orange, Munt Clar, Sten' Islan', an' all that, you know."

"Oh, indeed. How charming!"

"Done much tennis?"

"No; 'vyou?"

"Quite a bit. So glad to see you heah in midsummer, te-he."

"Yes. Had to come up town to see about the fire in our stable. So ridiculous, te-he."

"Too bad. Very glad to have seen you again. Good-by."

A shake of the hand, hilarious smiles, a cordial nod from mamma, and Mr. Pomeroy-Smith backs out of the box.

"What a clever fellow he is," said the mother, gazing after him fondly. "I must ask him down to stay for a week in August."

Fancy spending a whole week in the broiling month of August with Mr. Pommeroy-Smith, and locked up in the same house with him, at that.

Jube Early's Nigger Joe.

One of the best known characters in Lynchburgh, Va., is "Jube Early's nigger Joe." Joe is an old negro with all the dignity of a body servant of the slavery days, and his affection for the general amounts to worship. Jube owned Joe fore the war, and owns him still, Joe never having been freed, scorning to accept what he says does not belong to him, and saying as long as Massa Jube was alive Joe was his slave, and would shoot quicker in defence of the negro than anybody else. He has given Joe carte blanche to buy what he likes in the town, and has instructed storekeepers, no matter what Joe wants, or how much it will cost, to give it to him and send the bill to his master. Sometimes Early gets rather the worse for whisky, and then a comical sight is seen. Joe follows him like a dog, and when the general gets very drunk Joe will say:

"Massa Jube, you mus' come home."

"Why, you black rascal, what do you mean? I'm your master."

"Yes, Massa Jube, when you's sober; when you's drunk I's massa."

"Well, I reckon you are right, old man. I'll go with you."

The first silk hat is said to have been made for a French sea Captain in China, fifty years ago.