THE STAR AND BANNER.

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THE WITHERING LEAVES.

The Summer is gone and the Autumn is here,
And the flowers are strewing their earthly bier;
A dreary mist o'er the woodland skims,
While mute the mute from the wooly limbs
From bough to bough the squirrels run,
At the note of the hunter's sobbing gun,
And the hawk hunter where my footsteps fearless
Rustling from the withered leaves.

The flocks pursue their southern flight—
Song all day and song all night—
And mourn as the wooded marshes come
The sounds of the pheasant's feathery drum.
On the highest bough the mourner crow
Sits in his funeral suit of woe—
All nature saddens—and my spirit grieves
At the voice of my feet in the withered leaves.

Oh! I sight for the days that have passed away,
Which my life like the gearhed in season of May,
When the world was all sunshine, and beauty
And the dew hanged my feet in the valley of youth;
Then my heart felt its wings, and no bird of the
Sang over the flowers more joyous than I.
But youth is a fable, and beauty deceives—
For my footsteps are bound in the withering leaves.

And I sigh for the time when the reapers at morn
Came down from the hill at the sound of the horn,
Or when dragging the rake, I followed them out,
While they mused the light absence with their
laughter, shouts!
Through the field, with boy daring, bare-footed, I
Pit the stubbles foreshadowed the path of the
Now the uplands of life lie all barren of sheaves—
While my footsteps are loud in the withering
leaves!

Beautifully Expressed.—No man, however degraded, is utterly beyond reformation. Beautifully has Whittier, in one of his poems, expressed this truth:

"As on the White Sea's charmed shore,
The Parsee sees his holy hill
With dumbest snakes clouds curtained o'er,
Yet knows beneath them evermore
The low, pale fire is quivering still—
Smouldering in its clouds of sin,
The heart of man retaineth yet
Gleams of its holy origin;
And half quenched stars that never set,
Dim colors of its faded bow,
And early beauty lingers there,
And yet its wasted desert blow
Faint breathings of its morning air.
Oh! never yet upon the scroll
Of the sin-stained, but priceless, soul
Hath Heaven inscribed 'Despair!'
Cast not the clouded gem away,
Quench not the dim but living ray—
My brother man, beware!
With that deep voice which from the skies
Forbade the Patriarch's sacrifice,
God's angel cries, Forbear!"

NEVER BE POSITIVE.

"Very well, Morley, if that's all, *I'll* swear to the fellow's identity! I've not a shadow of doubt upon the subject—none!"

"What's that, Tom?—Do what? Swear to some man's identity?"

"Yes, sir; the poacher we seized yesterday crossing the park. Morley has some qualmish doubts whether he is the man who escaped from us in the scuffle, the other night, in the woods; and, as we took him without arms or game, merely in the path of the lower copice, he does not like to detain him unless he is quite certain of having the right man. After the mischief at Stanford, it might be awkward, you know."

"Ay, indeed! Sir John does well to pause; and if he is not as sure as that yonder bright sun now shines over us, he would do better to let the man go free."

"Go free! My dear uncle, only consider the game!—besides I have no doubt *at all* and I was present at the affray."

"Well, if you have *none*—no fraction of misgiving—no suspicion, the very faintest, that you *may* be wrong—then let justice take her course. But if you *have*, stop while you can, and, in God's great name, let the man go."

The speaker, a fine old man—one of a race now well nigh extinct, the English squire—rose, as he spoke, from the seat he had taken upon a fallen tree in his nephew's park, and laid a hand upon the shoulder of each young man who stood by him.

"You wonder, boys, to hear a veteran sportsman plead thus for a suspected poacher, and, I dare say, think me either dotard or mad. But I have a reason, the memory ever present when I hear the question of identity discussed; and when I tell you what it is, you will, I think, agree with me, that nothing less than a certainty so positive that it is impossible to testify, should make one man take that terrible oath which fastens upon another the perpetration of crime.

"Forty years ago, I was in the commission of the peace for this county, and, a healthy active fellow of thirty, I was considered a somewhat useful addition, even to a bench then boasting some of the clearest men in the division as its magistrates. About ten miles from my place was the family seat of the Whartons, occupied by the chief of the race, a stern old man, who, with the possessions of a prince, lived the life of the miser. He had one child, a daughter. A most beautiful creature was Minnie Wharton—gentle and generous, graceful as a fairy, and blithe as a bird, no one ever looked upon Minnie loving her; how came she to be the child of that miserable old man, Dame Nature has it among her secrets to answer for. I said every one loved Minnie, but I am wrong; her father did not. Conscious as a high-bred soldier of the ancient school he was of his race, prest to his ancestors pride only. But he never forgave Mr. Charles the crime of not being a son, and so letting the broad lands of Wharton pass away to a nephew unlicensed. Bitterly did Colonel Wharton the girl's fair abode each other; some mysterious bond in the deed of entail gave young Wharton a power of inquiry and supervision over the estates—a very baleful sight to a successor, and one needing to be most tenderly exercised; but exerting Colonel Wharton's rights did, stretching such an obnoxious authority to its utmost limit, even a milder man than his uncle must have detested him. At last, when his life was at its fullest, Minnie, who had been, for a few years, in Scotland, under the care of her mother's family, came back to the Abbey—from being the pet and darling of her aunts, to the cheerless home of a penurious father, who scarcely exchanged a dozen words to her at a time. In her wanderings about the grounds, she met her cousin, who, struck by her beauty, and guessing who she was, accosted her.—They walked on, talking of pleasant things, and the first hour of peace and happiness Minnie had spent for some months, now passed. When she returned to the Abbey she would have named her companion to her father, but he was in one of his coldest moods; so her heart failed her, and she was silent. In this way on glided the summer; and no wonder that, before autumn leaves began to change, Charles and Minnie Wharton were pledged lovers—while now, for the first time, when she confessed her innocent love, she learned the enmity subsisting between her father and lover.

"'Hate Charles, sir, Minnie, because all these wide acres must pass from you to me; but, oh, dearest and best! when I give them back to you, as their sweet mistress, burthened only with myself, he will learn to look kindly even upon me,' said Charles, as Minnie clung, shivering, to him when he described the colonel's aversion, and the stormy scenes he had roused and revelled in.

"'I have often wondered how so gentle a being as Minnie could give her heart to such a man as her cousin; but women are strange inconsistencies, and, I suppose, his handsome face and figure won her girlish fancy. He always seemed to me a poet's idea of a fallen angel—embodied—daring, haughty, bold and brave. Fearless in danger, reckless of peril, but gentle as a child to her, tuning his deep and commanding voice into low and musical words for her ear—perhaps there is little to marvel that she was fascinated. It was agreed that he should see her father, confess their love, and ask her from him.

"'Oh, I fear! I fear!' said Minnie, covering her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out the image of her terrible parent.

"'Why—why, my own love? Do you but say yes, and you shall be mine, in despite of father or fate! Minnie, be you but true, and you shall be my wife, though death stands in my path.' And he drew the trembling girl nearer and closer to him, while she shuddered in his embrace as if some horrible foreboding crept over her.

"The next day at a wild gallop, the pace always rode, young Wharton crossed his uncle's park, and—throwing the reins upon his horse's neck, to wander where he listed—entered the old Abbey Hall, and, in a few minutes, stood before the colonel. What was spoken at that stormy interview none can tell; but, that it was such, the loud tones of the speakers, and their faces ghastly with passion, too plainly revealed. At last, with a violence threatening destruction, the library door was thrown open, and Charles Wharton, passed out, saying, as he did so—'I have sworn it!'—and by the sky above me, Minnie is mine, though I win her with my blood!'

"When he was gone, Colonel Wharton sent for his daughter, and, trembling so piteously that she had no power to stand, she came before him. In the calm tones of concentrated rage, he spoke the horrible words of a father's curse; and, though she fell senseless at his feet, with a wild cry for mercy, he no otherwise noticed it than to bid her maid take her from his sight.—A brain fever—no unlikely consequence of such a shock—ensued, and Minnie's life was despaired of; yet no symptoms of softening did her father show, nor did he ever once—though her plaintive wailing rang sadly through the corridor—enter her room, or speak a single inquiry: that she lived, he only knew by the low moaning he could not help hearing as he passed her room.

"Minnie had been ill a fortnight, when one morning a gentle tap upon the window brought the nurse to it—and, his hair dank with the night-dew, his face pale with watching, and his powerful frame trembling with anxiety, Charles Wharton stood before her. She had never, till then, seen him, and the impression made upon her by his appearance at that hour, clad in the dress of one of his own keepers, was ever after firmly stamped upon her mind.

"'Let me see her, nurse—oh, for the love of Heaven, let me see her! do not refuse me,' he exclaimed, seeing her hesitate, 'for it will be useless. I will see her, even if her father and all the fiends stood in my way. Call him now, if you will; but in his face I will still see her.'

"He entered as he spoke, and went to the bed. There lay Minnie; her long, fair hair, which ought to have been cut off, but which had been spared in pity to its beauty, hung tossing on the pillow; her lips black with fever, her eyes wild, but unconscious, rambling hither and thither without recognition, and her arms bared of their covering by her constant restlessness, formed a sad contrast to his last interview.

"For a moment, all paused to such a scene, and perceiving that her eyes fell upon him, he fancied she knew him, and he exclaimed, in ecstacy: 'It is I, Minnie; my darling Minnie, speak to me!' But almost before the words were spoken, her brief notice had passed away and she was gazing upon the window. For nearly an hour he stayed in that melancholy room, listening to her wordless moaning. At first, the agony of her sufferings seemed to overpower him, but gradually his brow began to darken, his hands to clasp each other; and when the poor girl uttered another painful cry, he started, and the lips which had been silent, dared to speak, as if unconsciously, then he rose from his knees, and turning to the nurse, he said:

"'She does not know me—I see it now. I do not ask you if she will die; but do you say to that most unnatural old man, that if she does, from that hour vengeance will be my sole end in life, and I will take such a reckoning that men's breath shall stop for fear when they hear it—I swear it—here, by the bed of her he has killed.'

"He bent over, and pressed his lips upon her pale brow. 'Farewell, my own, my angel Minnie; fear nothing, for I will watch over you; if you could be moved, with safety, I would take you now, in his very teeth. If I lose you—rest, rest, Minnie, for tears of blood shall be wept to give your spirit peace. Take care of her, nurse; for every hour of ease your attention gives her, the minutes shall be paid in gold; it will not be for long—not very long, shall she be at his mercy.' And, as he passed out he shook his clenched hand in the air.

"Three hours after this, before the frightened nurse had well recovered from her panic, the whole house echoed with the terrible news that Colonel Wharton had been found murdered in a copice about a mile from the Abbey. One of the keepers, in going his rounds, had discovered the body; and in a few minutes from the first intelligence reaching the house, the murdered man was brought in. Medical aid was quickly procured, for people fled here and there, winged by terror and wonder, as if the angry spirit of the dead still ruled them; but it needed not the experienced eye of a surgeon to see that all skill was fruitless—the soul was gone. On the temple was the only mark of violence, yet that was enough to account for death; a heavy blow, dealt by some blunt instrument, had shattered the skull, and the brains were mingled with the gray hair. There appeared to have been but a slight struggle, if any, though the clothes of the deceased were wet with the blood oozing from a severed vein.

"'I can do no good,' said the surgeon, after carefully examining the body. 'Who can have done this?'

"'His nephew, Mr. Charles Wharton; who else so likely?'

"'Hush, woman!' exclaimed the startled doctor, as the nurse, who had entered the room, replied to his question, 'Do you know what you say?'

"'Yes, sir—'tis a horrid deed, bad as the old man used them; and it will have a horrid payment; 'twasn't for nothing he swore to day to have blood.'

"The vulgar are always lovers of the marvellous; and to her eager listeners the woman recounted Charles's visit of a few hours before, with her comments; till all, even the cool-headed surgeon, unable to separate the true from the false, decided he had done the ruthless deed they looked upon. Before night Charles was arrested; and the whole country, far and wide, had heard the hideous tale that Col. Wharton had been murdered, and that his nephew was in custody for the crime. At a game-keeper's cottage, where he had been at first denied to the officers, Charles was found; and upon the breast of the velveteen jacket he had worn in his visit to Minnie's sick room, were clots of blood, scarcely yet dry; the right risband of his shirt, too, was stained and torn. When first told of the murder, he seemed paralyzed and horror-stricken, and at once accounted for the blood upon his clothes, by saying, that on his way from the Abbey to the cottage where he then was, he had been attacked by a dog, which he had stunned, if not killed, by a blow from the but-end of a gun he had with him; and this explained the fact of his fowling-piece being discovered in the brew-house of the cottage, sticky, and red with gore. Upon going to the place he described, the dog was found, and so much of suspicion was removed; still the magistrates did not think themselves justified in setting him at liberty until the inquest had sat, and he was detained a prisoner at the Abbey.

"Angrily, almost defiantly, he repulsed the accusation of being the murderer; but when he saw the suspicions of his hitherto friends, and their constrained manners, he wrapped himself in the armor of his own pride and confidence, and neither answered or asked a question.

"The jury met, saw the body, the place where it had been found, and then heard the evidence. I was in the room, and closely watched the proceedings and the prisoner. His arms were folded, and his teeth set; not a nerve moved; and it was only by the starting muscles of the hand, caused by the grasp he held upon a book, we knew how intensely he was feeling; outwardly all was cold, moveless as marble. Once, only, he showed symptoms of suffering—it was when the nurse repeated, with exaggeration, his visit to Minnie's chamber: then the pale lips quivered, and the eyelids fell lower over the eye, but that was all. His solicitor was in attendance; and when all the evidence had been apparently given, he submitted that no case had been made out against his client; at any rate, nothing to justify his detention in custody. Just then, a loud sobbing was heard in the hall, and the door opening, admitted a constable, bringing in a young girl, about twenty, and a man not much older. On seeing them, Charles started, and his lip slightly curled.

"'Oh, Mr. Wharton, do not look so; indeed, I could not help coming—indeed, I could not;' and her tears fell faster. After much vain questioning, she sobbed out, 'that she was Miss Wharton's maid, and that she was engaged to the young man beside her, one of the Colonel's foresters; that early in the previous morning she had gone out to meet her lover in the park, and that they had walked together for some time, when at some distance they observed their master coming towards the spring coppice, where the body was afterwards found; that they concealed themselves until he should have passed through, when, just as they thought themselves out of sight, he turned and walked beside the coppice, instead of entering it, and the trees and brushwood intercepted their view; the next time they saw him he had been joined by the prisoner.' And here the witness sobbed so piteously that it was with great difficulty the coroner could induce her to proceed. 'They were very much frightened,' she said, 'when they saw Mr. Charles, for they knew the scene likely to follow, as it was she who had taken Miss Minnie from the floor on which she had fallen, when her father had cursed her so sadly. They were too far off to hear what was said, and too frightened at the idea of being found listening, to do so attentively; but they saw Col. Wharton turn back to the coppice, and the prisoner, after standing a moment or two, as if thinking, follow him. They then seized the opportunity to escape, and parted on leaving the wood; but after she had gone some way, she looked back and saw Charles rush from it across the park, and did not see him again till now, nor the Colonel till she saw him dead in the other room. Every word of the evidence confirmed by her lover, and the strictest cross-examination failed to shake their evidence. Charles looked surprised, but said nothing, merely raising his eyes when his attorney said:—

"'Look at Mr. Wharton, young woman. Are you sure he is the man you saw? Be careful. Remember how strong likenesses are.'

"Every eye turned upon him, and none of us but felt that a very cursory glance, indeed, would be sufficient to fix his features and figure in our memories, with little fear of mistaking them for others. So thought the witness, for, with a yet louder burst of sorrow, she exclaimed—'Oh, no! I could never mistake him! I have watched him and dear Miss Minnie too often.—God help her! God help her! She will now, surely, die!'

"The prisoner, started to his feet—his face flushed for a moment; but in another, all was calm, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. Yet, from that instant, I felt assured, as though I had seen the deed done, that Charles, overcome by anger and love, was the murderer. With whom else was the old man at such open war? Where had he been from the time he left the Abbey? And, if not prepared for some such deed, why and what were the strange threats he had used? Nor did I, till long afterwards, lose the conviction—though, as one of the visiting justices of the county jail, I saw him frequently. Once, as I was leaving his cell, after seeing, with a silent bow,—which was all that passed between us—that every thing was in due order, he called me back, and, after apologizing for doing so, he said:—'I have a request to make, that I can place in none but the hands of a gentleman. You are aware that I have no means of learning exactly the state of my plighted wife. I hear, indeed, daily reports from the surgeon; but he deals only with the body, and I pine to know truly how her mind bears up under this calamity. You know her, and she values and trusts you. Will you do me so much kindness as to see her, and cheer her, if she needs it? Tell her to trust me even now; and if she has a doubt—for sickness engenders mistrust and fancies, otherwise would not so insult her—tell her that I am innocent of the foul charge they make against me. As God lives in heaven—as I love her—as I believe in this book'—and his hand rested on the Bible—'I am utterly, wholly innocent. I never saw the murdered man from the hour I parted with him, in his library, to that I looked upon him dead.—You do not believe me. It matters not—*she* will! Tush, sir! do you think I love her? Should I add the bar of a slaughtered father to those already between us? Men devour the marvellous, or they would laugh at such a charge.'

"For an instant, his fine, proud tone and bearing shook my belief in his guilt—but only that it might return the stronger. I saw Minnie, as he requested; but, fortunately, she was still too ill to be made aware of the truth.

"Very soon after, the assizes came on; a true bill was found, and charged with his uncle's murder, Charles Wharton stood at the felon's bar. The trial was but a repetition of many another such; and although the first man on the circuit, with a leader retained and brought specially from town, exerted every nerve, I do believe the jury, long before the closing speech was over, had decided upon their verdict. It was as strong a case of circumstantial evidence as I ever heard; and, after the unwavering testimony of the girl, who swore most positively to the identity of the prisoner with the man she had seen in the park, there seemed no shadow of a doubt. Yet all our preconceived ideas of the appearance of guilt were at fault. Defiance, boldness might have been the veil with which a strongly-nerved man would choose to mask his consciousness of crime; but there was no such manner in the prisoner. Dauntless—as if, be the result what it would, he was fearless—scornful, with his haughty lip curling in a strange disdain, he looked upon the court. It was most puzzling. All we *heard* loudly proclaimed his guilt; all we *saw* as loudly spoke of innocence. He was asked the usual question; to which he answered, in tones clear and unfaltering as they had ever been on the cover's side:

"'I am innocent, my lord. I shall say nothing more, for I cannot prove it, while nothing less can satisfy justice. Only that this is a public record, I would not say so much; but that, with the chronicle of my death, may go forth the protest of my innocence.'

"The judge looked keenly at the glorious figure he was about to sentence to a frightful death; and, as if he read something in that dauntless brow he could not comprehend, turned over his notes again and again. The barristers leaned across the table to gaze upon the man who spoke so calmly of his fate, and the ladies wept loudly as the judge put on the fatal cap.—The sentence was passed, and doomed to die a felon's death, Charles Wharton left the dock. The next day I was dining at the house of the under-sheriff, when a note—every word of which I remember—was brought to me. It ran thus:

"'Come with the bearer instantly to me, and bring with you any other magistrate you can soonest find. Come instantly.'

"It was signed by the surgeon who had been attending Minnie. Referring this note at once to the case of Mr. Wharton, which we were even then discussing, Sir John Mostyn, (your father, my boy,) our host, and myself started up, and, in five minutes, were in the carriage Mr. Roberts had sent. We drove rapidly on, and, to our great surprise, turned out of the town into a lane of no good repute, where stood the coaches of some suspected poachers. We had but cried we were going to the jail. When we stopped, our conductor sprang from the box, and rushed into the house. We followed, and were met by Mr. Roberts. He was pale with anxiety and astonishment.

"'There lies in that room,' he said, pointing to an inner door, 'a man so like Charles Wharton, that, if I had not seen him in his cell two hours since, I should swear it was him. Not a feature, not a gesture, differs. He is dying from a wound occasioned by a fall from a horse. Something is on his mind. God knows whether that poor fellow's words may be true, and he is innocent of his uncle's murder. The very man may be here. At any rate, something is wrong, and I have sent for you to take any depositions he may be induced to make, for, as surely as the day dawns, he will never live to see it. Come with me.'

"We did, and entered a small low room, where, on a bed, in a dress just such as young Wharton had worn, his head bandaged and his face drawn aside with pain, a man was laid, so frightfully like him we had been sentenced to his death that one day before, that we started as if a spirit had met our gaze. Bending over the bed, her face hidden in the pillow, was a young girl, apparently about eighteen years of age. She never raised her head on our entrance, but as Mr. Roberts passed round to the side of the dying man, she looked up fearfully into his face, exclaiming as she did so, her own of such great beauty, that I have seldom seen its superior—'Will he die?' she asked, in a voice of agony. 'In less than four hours, I fear—probably before morning.' 'Oh, no, no, no, no,—oh, sweet Mother, no!' uncovered, without a prier, and this horrible weight upon his soul! Oh, sir, save him for his soul's sake, arouse him!' 'Philip, Philip!' and she tossed her long ringlets back, and placed her fair hands on which we now saw the marriage ring glittering on each side of her husband's head, and kissed him. He stirred faintly. 'Philip, do you hear me? Annie—it is Annie—I speak! do you know what I say? I may, I tell!—He moved his lips. 'Bless you, I God absolve and bless you!' she exclaimed, then turned to us with the grace of a princess:—

"'I do not understand the form of the law well,' she said, 'but you will instruct me. This man is my husband; he has been guilty of great crime, known only to myself and one other; for this deed another man is condemned to die. He came here to-day to make the prisoner's innocence known; but the horror has brought us reduced him to the state you see! He is perfectly sensible, I believe—is he not, sir?' (to Mr. Roberts) 'and God and our Blessed Lady will give him strength to sign the confession I will make for him. His name is Murray—Philip Murray—illegitimate son of the late Col. Wharton, by a most cruelly deceived mother, who, though her marriage had been a secret one, till within a week or two of death believed herself his wedded wife and Philip his heir. Knowledge of the truth killed her; fierce hatred sprang up between the father and his ill-used son, and they rarely met. There is no need to tell you the sad end that hits the deserted one fell into—the dead, whom God absolve! has these to answer for; but six months since we were married—(I have Ostiolico) and from that day he has striven to forgive. An opportunity of settling well offered to us, and Philip wrote to his father, requesting the means of doing so. No answer came, and he resolved to come here and see him. Borrowing a keeper's dress, that he might be unnoticed if seen in the park, he went there to meet the colonel—he did so—and angry words passed between them, all which Philip bore till the cruel old man spoke vile words of his dead mother, swearing no child of hers should have help from him; and raising his arm furiously to strike his son, that arm, in the impulse of ungovernable passion, swung round the gun he held, and his father fell dead at his feet. He fled; and in our first terror (for he told me all) we left the country, and know nothing of subsequent events, but when he heard that Mr. Wharton was accused, and likely to die, he returned at once, and would have confessed all to save him, had it not been for this accident. Now, gentlemen, put this into what language you will, only make the strongest evidence in my husband to spare the guilt of another man's blood, and God will strengthen his hand to sign it.'

"We did so, quickly; for by the gray shade gathering over the textured face we saw death was coming; and after a reviving draught given by the surgeon, he rallied sufficiently to hear the depositions read, and sign them.

"A Roman Catholic priest, who had been sent for, now arrived, and we left the room, stationing, as a mere form, a person in the ante-room as custodian of the dying man; but, with a lowly reverence, we bent to the brave and loving young wife, who had acted so heroically; for we saw in those exertions in the right the suffered had yielded.

"Now for London and the Home Secretary! said the carriage drove furiously back. And to tell an hour, as far as sixty miles by horses could get over the road, Sir John Mostyn and I were on our way to town, with Philip Murray's confession. Those were no rail-road days, but never had I travelled at such a pace before; and but for such another need, never will I again. That night's speed cost the life of four horses; I shot them with my own hand, to relieve them from the agony that killing pace had caused. But though my heart reproached me, as I watched their reeling, tottering frames, as they were led out from the traces, the horrible apparition of an innocent man dangling on the scaffold extinguished the rising pity—and on—on—faster, faster, we went, in incessant struggle, as that speed only, and barely, could save young Wharton's life. Rousing the secretary from his bed, we hurried him off to St. James's, where, happily, the king then was; who, after a brief consultation with his minister, signed with gladness the pardon we sought.

"A week after that, Charles (happy in the prospect of a speedy union with Minnie, now rapidly recovering) and I followed the body of Philip to the grave; and as the solemn service was read, and I looked from the coffin to the living man beside me, who, but for God's powerful interposition as by a miracle, would have occupied as narrow a bed, I vowed a solemn vow, never again to be sure of the identity of any human being, unless there was no possible room for even a reasonable doubt. Ever since then, the thought of what might have been, has come upon my memory, crying many a mea culpa—and YES, *be positive*, is engraved on my heart.

THE DRAGGED OUT DRAGGED.

"Talk about yer darned fast lines," said a Yankee to a Cockney, who was so impudent as to commence bragging on English railroads, while the couple were proceeding at the rate of forty miles per hour on the Birmingham railway. "Why mister, this ere road's pretty considerable for England, but it won't do for Mercy.—We ride a heap faster than this, when we're in a hurry—but when we aren't we take the railroad. Now them roads air slow, I'll tell you. I was comin' from Philadelphia to York, when seed I to a letter addressed by me—who on earth owns the big garden with white palings around it.

"'From, I see no white palins,' says he.

"'From, I see nothin' else,' says I, and a mighty sweet lot I too.'

"The feller thought a heap—why you darned fool,' says he, 'them's the telegraphic posts.'

"And sure enough, whenever a single telegraph stopped, I saw them posts a hundred feet apart, and we had been going so all darned fast, they looked for all the world like white palins.

"At this moment the bell rang as a signal for the Cockney and fifty others to return from Jonathan's rail road.

"What's the news right from Mobilized the latter of his English friend.

"We are approaching Hell,' said the Cockney, 'we'll there find out what does the Devil know.'

"'Hell!' exclaimed the other, 'Hell! Why, what do you mean by that?'

"'Hell, sir, I repeat,' said the Cockney, 'we are approaching Hell.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?'

"'Hell, sir, I repeat, is the name of a village before the house of the chief of the Cockneys.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?'

"'Hell, sir, I repeat, is the name of the village before the house of the chief of the Cockneys.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?'

"'Hell, sir, I repeat, does the Devil know.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?'

"'Hell, sir, I repeat, is the name of the village before the house of the chief of the Cockneys.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?' exclaimed the astonished Cockney.

"'Fact, sir, I repeat, by Jupiter!' said the other, with a wink, and the Cockney's whiskers were bristled. 'Hell, sir, I repeat, is the name of the village before the house of the chief of the Cockneys.'

"'Why, what do you mean by that?' exclaimed the astonished Cockney.

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"'Why, what do you mean by that?'