

WAITING.  
Aethos who, on some lonely mountain height,  
Watching through all the weary hours of  
night,  
Wait the pale roe of the morning light,  
I wait for thee.

As one who, waking on a bed of pain,  
And, helpless in his agony, is fain  
To wait the sweet return of sleep again,  
I wait for thee.

As he who, in some vast cathedral, dim  
With shadows, silent waits, on bended limb,  
The music of the Eucharistic hymn,  
I wait for thee.

As deaf men crave for song, and blind for  
sight,  
As weary souls of toil long for the night,  
And as the letter spirit craves for light,  
I long for thee.

—Arthur F. Frost, in the Spectator.

**Stealing a Policeman.**  
BY S. BARKING-GOULD.

UTLAND is the smallest county in England; it is but eighteen miles long, and its extent is only fifteen. The consequence of this contracted area is that whatever happens in one corner of the county is known to every part of it, and that the affairs of every person in the county are intimately known to every other.

In one of the fifty parishes, which should not be named, because to name it is unbecomingly and youth named Joseph Samuel Wardley. He was the son of a blacksmith, was an able-bodied, fine-looking fellow, broad-shouldered, broad-breasted, with light hair, and eyes that seemed to have fallen into the copper when his mother was washing, and to have had the color bled out of them, so light were they. Joseph Samuel Wardley was—virtually a blacksmith in a series of negatives—a most exemplary character. He didn't swear, he didn't drink, he didn't gamble with his fellow-men. If, however, virtue consists of positives, then it would be hard to say that Joseph Samuel Wardley was distinguished for his way of life; for, to be a blacksmith, he had to work on a farm, but he was so slow at the plow that the farmers would not retain him in their services. It was said that Joseph Samuel was always asleep. This was not exactly true. Joseph Samuel was so drowsy and indolent over his work by day, that he was never sufficiently exhausted by his efforts to enjoy a sound sleep at night. He was half asleep by day, he was half asleep at night. He did nothing so conducive to all-forgetting sleep as the exercise of his little energies by day. Joseph Samuel did not put forth even one-half of his energies by day. The other half remained to sustain the tranquillity of the night, and consequently he was a light sleeper, and sometimes it was as doubtful whether he were asleep at night, as it was doubtful whether he were awake by day.

As he was dismissed from the plow-tail, he returned to his father, who employed him to work the bellows which kept his fire going in the forge. "But," as the farmer said, "a chap can't go on like this for long. I must find some profession or trade for which he is suited."

Accident or Fate seemed to give the requisite indication. The father of Joseph Samuel had been an industrious man, and he had amassed money. He had no dealings with the bank at Oakham; that was well known. Where, then, did he keep his money? It was whispered that, singularly enough, whenever he had received payment of the night, Mr. Wardley was observed to mount a ladder to put straight, as he said, one of the tiles in his roof that was out of place and let the water through. That the coincidence was noticed, and a matter of discussion, never occurred to the blacksmith. The last time he brought in his bill to the Squire it was for the sum of five-and-twenty pounds and some odd shillings. No sooner had he received the money, however, it was remarked a tile was again loose in his roof.

One night that Joseph Samuel lay awake, unable by any means to induce sleep, such as by counting sheep going through a gap in the hedge, or repeating his catechism, listening to the snoring of his parents in an adjoining room—he thought he heard a sound on the tiles, as if some one was engaged repairing the roof. He got out of bed, crept through the window, and saw by the light of a crescent moon that a ladder was set against the house, and that a pair of legs were visible on the ladder.

As Joseph Samuel was inclined for activity all night, and was prompt then in his resolutions, which was not the case by day, he stole downstairs on tiptoe, and opened the back door softly. He was in his robe de nuit. That did not matter. The air was cool, and the rain was falling. He was at the back of the house—the opposite side to that at which the ladder was set up, and where he had never before been. He knew where the back door led to. He went barefooted to the spot, removed the ladder planted at the back of the house, climbed up it without causing the smallest noise, and succeeded in making his way cautiously up the tiles all he reached the ridge of his father's roof. Holding to the ridge tiles, he crept himself up, both hands raised high above his head.

Then he saw what was being done on the further side.

Two men were there. One was on a ladder and held another by the ankles who had scrambled onto the roof. The latter was lifting this after tile and seeing under each, obviously expecting to find and carry off the farrier's tools of savings.

Joseph Samuel Wardley did not hesitate for a moment what to do. With perfect presence of mind, and great energy as well as courage, he said, "Bo!"

The robbers were staggered. They looked up, saw a semi-white figure rising above the roof, glowing in them. Their nerve gave way. He who was on the ladder let go the ankles of the man on the roof; the latter slid down, and fell on the man with his feet on the ladder rungs, and both were precipitated to the bottom.

Joseph Samuel now aroused the house, and the burglars were arrested.

One man dislocated his hip, the other had concussion of the brain, his head having fallen on the brick. Had the brick been a little harder, it is believed it would have broken his head; as it was, the burglar's head broke the brick—split it into three pieces.

The two men were delivered over to the police, and were brought before the magistrates at the Petty Sessions, who consigned them to be tried at the Quarter Sessions for attempted burglary.

When the trial came on, the plea put in for the two men was that they had been bird nesting, and evidence was produced that they had been seen going up trees.

Nothing had been taken. The house had not been broken into, so that some difficulty was entertained as to the nature of their offence, and the amount of punishment to be awarded if found guilty. Finally, they were found guilty of an attempt at bird nesting with felonious intent, and were ordered nine months imprisonment with hard labor.

This incident determined the mind of the blacksmith as to the proper avocation of his son. Joseph Samuel must become a policeman. "A 'bobby' has to be about at night, and that was precisely what Joseph was calculated for, as he could not sleep at night.

He was so able bodied, was such a fine fellow, and so well fitted for the force, he accepted and put in the force. He assumed the not picturesque uniform of a county policeman, and believed that he had found his true occupation.

He was finally planted at a place on the opposite side of the little county. Of course, the fame of his exploit had preceded him. He was looked up to as a man of the greatest ability, energy and resolution, and it was concluded that with him in the parish everything was secure.

It was conjectured, rather than known, that the fear of Joseph Samuel had fallen on all the miscreants in the county of Rutland. It was high time that men of a superior order of intelligence should be engaged in the force, for a number of robberies had been committed of late on the graziers of Leicestershire. The low land, readily overflowed, serves for the rearing of young cattle till they are fit to kill, and then they are sent to the London market. There had been theft of calves and young bullocks. Sometimes the live beasts had been carried off, rapidly dispatched and dismissed to London before the day broke. Some graziers had lost severely. It was not possible to say where the next robbery would take place, consequently all were equally anxious and uneasy.

A small farm was one evening on his way to the nearest town. He had the carcass of a young bullock to dispose of. His ground was overflowed, and as he could no longer feed his bullock he killed it, and was taking the carcass to London, when he passed through Baxthorpe—the village which Joseph Samuel was quartered— he disposed of it to the village butcher, who at once removed the dead meat and paid the man for it.

The farmer had something to do in the town, and he had to go on his way, but he proceeded on his way, but drew up at a little tavern where he was fond of having his glass. He unharnessed his horse, ran the light cart under cover, and entered the public house. The man who was addicted to drink, he had the money in his pocket; he met there with some chums; and the end was that he resolved to make a night of it.

A spirit of perversity rules the blacksmith, and he was not likely to be Joseph Samuel was obliged to awake by day, he could not sleep at night; but now that he was a policeman, and had to make his excursions by night, he felt sleepy when he was out, and he did not sleep at night. He had his eyes open. It was so on this evening. He was coming along the road, beside which stood the public-house into which the farmer had gone. He was so weary, so heavy in his eyes, that he resolved to have a nap, and he fell asleep. He had a momentary glimpse of sleep to refresh him before he proceeded on his beat. Accordingly, he entered the shed attached to the tavern, and finding a light cart, crept into it, stretched himself on the straw in the bottom, and in a moment he was fast asleep. He slept so soundly that he did not stir—did not snore.

Not a quarter of an hour had elapsed before two men stole into the cart, and he awoke with a start. The other had a lump at the back of his head.

"You're sure of it?" asked the latter of these men.

"Certain. He killed his bullock this morning. He's drinking in the house."

"Well, we've got out of his hands it, and drive away with cart and carcass."

"The stable door is locked. I think we'd best draw the cart ourselves. It's light, and we shall get to the station by daylight."

The two men drew the cart forth.

"It's heavy," said the limping man.

"It's the bullock; it's a prime beast, isn't it?"

The two fellows drew the cart into the road, put themselves into the shafts, and started running as hard as they could, drawing the cart along with them. The night was dark, the moon was low, and the rain was falling. Joseph Samuel slept on peacefully, and dreamed of home.

A little after midnight, "I say, Tommas," said the short horse, "I'm tremendous hungry. What do you say about a bit of grub?"

"I wouldn't risk it," said the leader.

"The fire might betray us; we couldn't eat raw cutlets—we ain't savages."

"Well, cut along, Tommas."

And away centered the thieves with the cart and carcass. Toward dawn they neared the station.

Both were becoming fatigued.

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"And I'm so thirsty," said the leader, "I could drink his blood."

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