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Spirit Poetry.

SONG OF THE STEAMER.

BY JOHN G. SAGE.

Rushing through the ocean,
Rolling in the breeze,
Riding over billows,
Pitching into seas,
Shaking with the engine,
Screaming with the blast,
Mighty pleasant noise of
Going rather fast.

Staggering on deck be-
Cause you cannot stand,
Holding on the railing
With a shaky hand,
Now the floor is settling
Underneath your feet,
Now it heaves you up like
Tossing in a sheet.

Ladies looking pale,
Captain comes along, and
Says it's quite a gale;
Passengers inquire how
Long it's like to last;
Captain shakes his head—"It's
Rising very fast."

Gentleman in motion,
Looking quite distressed,
Says he'd give his house for
Half an hour's rest.
Fidgety old lady
Wonders he could sup,
Has a poor opinion
Of his prying up.

Involved complaint,
Not the slightest doubt
Another fit of straining
Will turn him inside out;
Lady on the sofa,
Lying dead almost,
Nothing more to give up,
Unless it be the ghost.

Gentleman in upper berth
Little sleep enjoys,
Gentleman beneath is
Making such a noise;
Gentleman in lower berth,
Timid sort of chap,
'Fraid to put his head out,
For fear of some mishap.

Cunning-visaged Yankee
Looking sharp and slim,
Says he guesses folks won't
Come to over him;
Means to save his dinners;
Prudent like a monk,
Got a pound of candles
Locked up in his trunk.

Swaggering western rowdy
Will do as he sees fit;
Means to go to Fenton's;
Means to smoke and spit;
Keep a pair of pistols,
Wear a bowie-knife;
Never took an insult,
Never in his life.

THE SECRETS OF THE CONFESSORIAL.

IMPORTANT CRIMINAL TRIAL IN VIRGINIA—INTERESTING DECISION.

A case involving points of unusual interest and novelty, has just been tried in the Superior Court of Richmond, Va., Judge John A. Meredith presiding. A man named John Cronin, a storekeeper in that city, was tried for the murder of his wife, having inflicted upon her, on the 28th of September, injuries which led to miscarriage and subsequent death. The cause of this treatment was her detection in adulterous cohabitation with a man named Thos. Byron, who to avoid the vengeance of the aggrieved husband, had immediately quit the city. For some days after the occurrence, the injured woman seemed comparatively well, and it was not till she had given birth to a still-born child, which was about the sixth day, that she manifested any alarming symptoms. She lingered until the 13th of October, and up to the moment of her death made the most solemn assertions of innocence in regard to the charge of adultery made against her by her husband.

Among the witnesses examined, was the Rev. John Teeling, Roman Catholic curate of Richmond, to whom the deceased, in the presence of her husband, had declared her innocence, and the defence now sought to obtain from him whatever of subsequent declaration she may have made, in her "confession," previous to receiving extrinsic aid, Mr. Gilmer, the counsel for the defence, contending that such confessions could be introduced as her dying declarations. After a lengthy examination, Mr. Gilmer propounded to witness this question.

Mr. Gilmer—Did she not confess to you before she received absolution what was contradictory, or rather the reverse of the statement made to you in presence of her husband? Witness—I cannot answer that question.

Ques—Any declaration made by her in the absence of her husband is inadmissible.

Mr. Gilmore here contended that he laid the foundation to justify the admission of any declaration which she may have made at the confessional, as a dying declaration. The Court seemed to be of a contrary opinion.

Subsequently the question was repeated: Mr. Gilmer—Did the deceased admit to you at any time, or under any circumstances, that she was guilty of adultery? Witness—Abstract from my capacity as a confessor she said nothing involving herself in guilt of that character; she denied her guilt, as I have already stated, in presence of her husband and myself; any statement made in her sacramental confession, whether inculpatory or exculpatory of the prisoner, I am not at liberty to reveal.

The question was argued at length by counsel on both sides, after which Mr. Teeling made the following statement to the Court:

Mr. Teeling having obtained leave of the Court, stated his reasons for not answering the questions put to him by Mr. Gilmer, as follows:—It is due to this honorable Court to state briefly my reasons for not answering the questions proposed by the counsel for the defence, as, to hesitate to do so, would argue a contempt for the majesty of the law. Were I asked any questions which I could answer from a knowledge obtained in my civil capacity, or as a private individual and citizen, I should not for a moment hesitate—nay, more: I would consider it my duty to lay before this honorable Court all the evidence I was in possession of, being mindful of the precept of the Apostle—"Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and those that are ordained by God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinances of God; and they that resist, purchase damnation to themselves."—Rom. xiii. 1, 2. But if required to answer any question in quality of Catholic minister of the sacrament of penance, where I believe God has imposed an inviolable and eternal secrecy, I am bound to be silent, although instant death were to be the penalty of my refusal. The question proposed by the counsel for the defence affects me in the latter capacity, and hence I must decline to answer it, whilst in so doing I most respectfully disclaim any intention of contempt or disrespect, directly or indirectly, to this Court. Is a Catholic priest ever justified, under any circumstances, in revealing the secrets of sacramental confession? I answer no; that no power, or authority, civil or ecclesiastical, spiritual or temporal, can ever, under any circumstances, dispense with this perpetual obligation of secrecy; so that were Pope Pius the Ninth in this Court, and if I saw suppose for a moment that he would so far abuse his sacred authority, and in the plenitude of that authority, as my first spiritual superior on earth, should request, admonish and command me to answer the question proposed, my answer would be to him what it was to Mr. Gilmer—I can say nothing about the matter. The law which prohibits my revealing what I learn in a sacramental confession, Catholics believe to be divine and to emanate from God himself. It is a secret of the Catholic Church that Christ instituted the seven sacraments—neither more nor less. *Conferentia in decreto ad Armerio*, A. D. 1599, Council of Trent, sept. 6, canon 1. It is also an article of Catholic faith that penance is one of these sacraments, instituted by Christ for the remission of sins committed after baptism—Council Trent, sept. 14, canon 1 and 6—that sacramental confession forms an essential and component part of this sacrament. Further, that the obligation of secrecy is essentially connected with the divine institution of confession: for if it would be lawful for a Catholic priest in any case to reveal what was

confided to him in confession, the divine precept of confession would become entirely nugatory, and there is no person who would be willing to disclose to a priest a secret which would be made public and blacken his fair fame. Such a revelation, if permitted, would be destructive of the divine precept of confession. But as we cannot suppose that Christ, the Eternal Wisdom of the Eternal Father, would pall down with one hand what he erected with the other, and, as we Catholics believe, instituted sacramental confession, and for the purpose of confession secrecy is absolutely necessary—we conclude that inviolable secrecy is commanded by our Lord in the obligation of secrecy. If it were then so far forgetful of the solemn obligations imposed by our ordination—an obligation not arising simply from ecclesiastical, but from a divine law—not from man, but directly from God—as to answer the question proposed, I should be forever degraded, rendered infamous in the eyes of the Catholic Church, shunned by every Catholic, and I believe by every honorable man, no matter how far his religious opinions and mine might differ; shunned and rendered infamous as a scurrilous wretch who trampled on his most holy and solemn obligation, and violated the sacred laws of nature, of his God, and of man. I would be forever deposed from the sacred ministry, and where the common law forms part of the civil law, be condemned to perpetual imprisonment in a monastery, there to repent during my life the horrid crime I would have committed. And what is still more important than all, I would violate the dictates of my conscience, that stubborn monitor whose voice would forever whisper to my soul black and dire sacrilege. I might endeavor to smother its cry, but all my attempts would only add strength to its terrible reproaches and warnings:—You have committed sacrilege of the deepest dye—sacrilege to be punished forever by the eternal vengeance of a just and offended Deity. I have endeavored thus to state my reasons as clearly and simply as I could for not answering the question proposed. I thank this honorable Court for the kind and patient hearing which it has extended to me. Whatever may be its decision, I shall receive it with respect.

This statement was listened to with the utmost attention. It evidently excited a great deal of astonishment in the Court.

The decision of the Judge occupied considerable time in its delivery, and is, therefore, too long to present in full. I shall, if necessary, furnish a full report of it. He decided, in the first place, that no foundation was laid for the introduction of the statement of the woman, as a dying declaration, and reviewed the testimony of Dr. Gavensel and Mr. Teeling, which were the most pertinent to this point, to show that a sense of impending dissolution or immediate death which could constitute her declaration a dying declaration did not exist. He, therefore, ruled the presentation of a declaration, made under such circumstances, illegal. This rule necessarily obviated any necessity to exact from Mr. Teeling the declaration made to him at the confessional. Yet, since the point was argued by both counsel, his Honor took occasion to pronounce upon it. He went very fully into this question, referring to decisions made in the English courts in cases of a somewhat similar character. He referred to two cases tried in England, in which declarations made by Catholics to Protestant ministers were held to be inadmissible, though the clergymen, not regarding the confession as sacramental, were willing to disclose all that was communicated to them. The confessions were regarded as made in a penitent spirit, in the hope of forgiveness for the sins disclosed, and hence sacred, though in the estimation of the clergymen, by no means sacramental. He said he regarded any infringement upon the tenets of any religious denomination as a violation of the fundamental law, which guarantees perfect freedom to all classes in the exercise of their religious duties. To encroach upon the confessional, which was well understood to be regarded as a fundamental tenet in the Catholic Church, would be to ignore the Bill of Rights, so far as it is applicable to that church. In view of these circumstances, as well as a series of other considerations connected with this subject, he felt no hesitation in ruling that a priest enjoys a privilege of exemption from revealing what is communicated to him at the confessional.

The court was crowded to excess during the delivery of this decision. Never, probably, was a judgement rendered in this court or in this city, which excited more interest, or was listened to with more attention. In fact, the court room was thronged during the hearing of the entire case. The counsel for the prisoner entered a bill of exceptions to the Judge's decision, with a view to have the points tested in the Court of Appeals.

Both counsel then addressed the jury—Mr. Gilmer for the prisoner, Mr. Johnson for the Commonwealth.

After a lucid charge from the learned Judge, the case was given to the jury, and at a late hour they returned to the court room and returned a verdict of "guilty of voluntary manslaughter," subjecting the prisoner to imprisonment for five years in the penitentiary. The counsel having filed a bill of exceptions, execution of the sentence will be suspended to allow time to take case before the Court of Appeals.

A GOOD REASON.—A grand jury down South ignored a bill against a large negro, for stealing chickens, and before discharging him from custody, the judge bade him stand reminded. He concluded as follows: "You may go now, John; but (shaking his finger at him) let me warn you never to appear here again."

John, with delight beaming from his big white eyes, and with a broad grin, displaying a row of beautiful ivory, replied: "I wouldn't bin 'em 'dime, only the constable foteh me!"

The Early Life of Sir Isaac Newton.

Mrs. of great learning and talents, whom all people admire and praise, are found to be more modest than persons not so wise and good. Sir Isaac Newton, was one of these great, and, at the same time, modest men. When a little boy at school, he surprised everybody by the curious little machines which he made with his own hands. He had a number of saws, hatchets, hammers, and other tools, which he used skillfully. A windmill being put up near the place where he lived, he frequently went to look at it, and prided into every part of it, till he became thoroughly acquainted with it, and the way in which it moved. He then began with his knife, and saws, and hammer, and made a small windmill, exactly like the large one; it was a very neat and curious piece of workmanship. He sometimes set it on the house-top, that the wind might turn it round. He also contrived to cause a mouse to turn his mill. This little animal being put inside a hollow wheel, it endeavors to get forward turned the wheel and set the machinery in motion. There was also some corn placed about the wheel when the mouse tried to get at the corn it made the wheel go round. Having got an old box from a friend, Isaac made it into a water-clock—that is a clock driven by a small fall of water. It is very much like our common clocks, and four feet high. At the top was a dial plate; with figures of the hours. The hour hand was turned by a piece of wood, which either fell or rose by water dropping upon it. This stood in the room where he lay, and he took care, every morning, to supply it with plenty of water. It pointed out the hour so well, that the people of the house would go to see what was the hour by it. It was kept in the house as a curiosity long after Isaac went to college. The room in which he lodged was full of drawings of birds, beasts, men, ships, and mathematical figures, all neatly made upon the wall with charcoal. When Isaac grew a little older and went to college, he had a great desire to know something about the air, the water, the tides, and the sun, moon, and stars. One day when he was sitting alone in his garden, an apple happened to fall to the ground. He then began to ask himself what is the cause of the apple falling down? Is it from some power or force in the apple itself, or is the power in the earth which draws the apple down? When he had long thought about this subject, he found out that it was the earth, that attracted or drew the apple down, and that this power of attraction is one of the laws of nature. By it, loose objects are retained upon the surface of the earth, instead of flying abroad through space. You have learned, that this earth is a globe, which turns over, day, after day. It is attraction, which gives weight to objects; hence it is sometimes called gravitation, which means nearly the same things as weight.—Isaac Newton also discovered that all objects whatever have an attraction for each other, and always in proportion to their size and the distance at which they are placed. Thus the moon, though a large globe, is under the attraction of the earth and the planets are under the attraction of the sun. And it is by attraction they are all made to keep their proper distance from one another.—These discoveries were justly considered as the most important ever made; and for his having made them reflecting men will ever venerate the name of Newton. He was also the first who showed that every ray of light from the sun consists of seven different colors; and he made known many other curious and wonderful things which were never known before.

He was of a mild and equal temper, and was seldom or never seen in a passion. He had a little dog which he called Diamond. He was one day called out of his study, where all his papers and writings were lying upon a table. His dog Diamond, happened to jump upon the table, and over-turned a lighted candle, which set fire to all his papers, and consumed them in a few moments. In this way Newton lost the labor of many years. But when he came into the study, and saw what had happened, he did not strike the little dog, but only said, "Ah, Diamond, Diamond! thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!"

Though Isaac Newton was a very wise and learned man, he was not proud of his learning, but was very meek and humble. He was kind to all, even to the poorest and meanest man. Though he was wiser than most other men, yet he said, a little before he died, that all his knowledge was as nothing when compared with what he had to learn. He was sometimes so much engaged in thinking, that his dinner was often three hours ready for him before he could be brought to the table. He died in the year 1727, at the age of eighty-five.

FULTON'S FIRST PASSENGER.—When Fulton's trial boat was returning to New York on the first trip, a single passenger was found on board. He went down into the cabin, and counting out six dollars, offered it to a sad and thoughtful man seated there. It was Fulton the inventor. As the latter thoughtfully looked at the money, the passenger, thinking he had made some mistake, asked if the amount was correct. At this question, Fulton raised his head, and the passenger saw that a large tear glistened in his eye. "Forgive me," he said, in a faltering voice. "I was thinking that these six dollars, were the first money I received for my long labor upon steam navigation. I should like," he added, taking the passenger's hand, "to consecrate the remembrance of this moment by asking you to share a bottle of wine with me, but I am too poor to offer it. But I hope to make up for it the next time we meet."

It is a pity that the name of Fulton's first passenger has been lost.

"Do you mistake me for a waiter?" said an illbred, vain and proud fellow, when some one asked him to pass a dish that was near him. "No, sir, I mistook you for a gentleman," was the prompt reply.

Melancholy Story.

Last spring, while the western emigration fever was at its height in this city, we met on board a steamboat at the wharf, a farmer from one of the Eastern States, on his way to the State of Iowa. He was a stout, healthy-looking man—a fair specimen of a well-to-do farmer—and was accompanied by his wife, a very handsome woman, and three interesting children, the oldest daughter just budding into womanhood. He was full of sanguine expectations of the happiness in store for himself and family, in his new home in the West, and left here buoyed up with high hopes and expectations.

Yesterday morning, while standing at the depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad, we were accosted by a poor, emaciated looking creature, apparently just on the verge of the grave, in whom, after some difficulty, we recognized the hearty, robust man, who had departed in the spring so full of hope. He was but the wreck of his former self, and his story, as related to us, was truly melancholy and heart-rending.

Arrived in Iowa, he settled on a claim previously selected, but had not been more than three or four weeks located, when his whole family were attacked with the ague. After suffering several months, his wife and daughter apparently recovered, but only to be seized with a still more terrible disease—the typhoid fever.

First, the loving partner of his bosom was carried off; next followed his youngest child, and in three months his whole family were laid under the ground. The father, almost broken hearted with these repeated misfortunes, essayed to leave the country, but was himself taken down with same malady; and after several weeks of agony, left his sick bed to find his constitution destroyed, and suffering from premature old age.

With only one object in view—to reach his former home—he left the accursed spot, and after some weeks arrived in this city, where he was fortunate enough to meet an old friend, who agreed to see him safely to his destination.

The poor man cried and groaned alternately as he related his miserable story, and at the close was so overcome as to be unable to stand. He was kindly soothed by his friend, who was to him a "good Samaritan" in his distress.

A more affecting tale of suffering and trouble we never heard, and hope never to hear again.—Pittsburg Post.

A Good Wife.

The good wife? How much of this world's happiness and prosperity, says Mr. Burnap, is contained in the compass of these two short words? Her influence is immense. The power of a wife, for good or for evil, is altogether irresistible. Home must be the seat of happiness, or it must be forever unknown. A good wife is to a man wisdom, and courage, and strength, and hope and endurance; a bad one is confusion, weakness, discomfiture, despair. No condition is hopeless when the wife possesses firmness, decision, energy, economy. There is no outward prosperity which can counteract indolence, folly, and extravagance at home. No spirit can long exist in domestic influences. Man is strong, but his heart is not adamant. He delights in enterprise and action, but to sustain him he needs a tranquil mind and a whole heart. He expends his moral force in the conflicts of the world. His feelings are easily lacerated to the utmost point of endurance by perpetual collision, irritation and disappointment. To recover his equanimity and composure, hours must be to him a place of repose, of cheerfulness, of comfort, and his soul renews his strength, and again goes forth with fresh vigor to encounter the labor and troubles of the world. But if at home he finds no rest, and is there met by a bad temper, sullenness, or gloom, or is assailed by discontent, complaint, and reproaches, the heart breaks, the spirits are crushed, hope vanishes, and the man sinks in total despair? Let woman know, then, that she ministers at the very fountain of life and happiness. It is her hand that deals out, with overflowing cup, its soul-refreshing waters, or casts in the branch of bitterness, which makes them poison and death. Her ardent spirit breathes the breath of life into all enterprise. Her patience and constancy are mainly instrumental in carrying forward to completion the best human designs. Her more delicate moral sensibility is the unseen power which is ever at work to purify and refine society. And the nearest glimpse of Heaven that mortals ever get on earth is that domestic circle which her hands have trained to intelligence, virtue, and love, which her gentle influence pervades, and of which her radiant presence is the centre and the sun.

DIMENSIONS OF THE AMERICAN LAKES.

The latest measurement of our fresh water seas is as follows: The greatest length of Lake Superior is 435 miles; its greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 988 feet; elevation, 627 feet; area, 32,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Michigan is 360 miles; its greatest breadth 108 miles; mean depth, 900 feet; elevation, 587 feet; and 28,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Huron is 306 miles; its greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 800 feet; elevation, 574 feet; area, 26,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Erie is 250 miles; its greatest breadth is 80 miles; its mean depth is 84 feet; elevation 554 feet; area 9,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Ontario is 180 miles; its greatest breadth is 65 miles; its mean depth 500 feet; elevation 262 feet; area 6,000 square miles. The total length of all five lakes is 1585 miles; covering an area altogether of upward of 90,000 square miles.

Nothing but a good life can fit a man for a better one.

The Three Jolly Husbands.

Three jolly husbands, out in the country, by the names of Tim Watson, Joe Brown and Bill Walker, sat late one evening drinking at the village tavern, until, being pretty well corned, they agreed that each one, on returning home, should do the first thing that his wife told him, in default of which he should the next morning pay the bill. They then separated for the night, engaging to meet again the next morning, and give an honest account of their proceedings at home, so far as they related to the bill.

The next morning Walker and Brown were early at their posts, but it was some time before Watson made his appearance. Walker began first:

"You see when I entered my house, the candle was out, and the fire giving but a glimmering of light, I came near walking into a pot of batter that the pancakes were to be made of in the morning. My wife, who was dreadfully out of humor, said to me sarcastically:—

"Bill, do you put your foot in the batter."

"Just as you say Maggy said I, and without the least hesitation I put my foot in the pot of batter and went to bed."

Next Joe Brown told his story:— "My wife who had already retired in our usual sleeping room which adjoins the kitchen, and the door of which was ajar; not being able to navigate perfectly, you know, I made a dreadful chattering among the household furniture, and my wife, in no very pleasant mood, bawled out:—

"Do break the porridge pot."

"No sooner said than done. I seized hold of the handle of the pot, and striking it against the chimney-jam, broke it into a thousand pieces. After this exploit I retired to rest, and got a curtain-lecture till I fell asleep."

It was now Tim Watson's turn to give an account of himself; which he did with a very long face, as follows:—

"My wife gave me the most unkindly command in the world; for I was blundering up stairs in the dark, when she cried out:—

"Now Tim break your neck."

"I'll be cursed if I do Kate," said I, gathering myself up the best way I could—'no, I'll sooner foot the bill."

"And so, landlord," continued Tim, "here's the cash for you. But by jingo, this is the last time I'll ever risk five dollars on the command of my wife."

Important Geographical Discovery.

A great inner sea is said to have been discovered in equatorial Africa by Dr. Rebmund, one of the travellers with whose pioneering labors in that remote region the newspaper public have become acquainted. He has sent to Europe a small map, on which the sea occupies the vast space between the equator and ten degrees of south latitude, and between twenty-three degrees and nearly thirty degrees longitude east from Greenwich, lying at its south-eastern extremity Lake Nyassa, attached to it like a tail piece. Mr. Augustus Pottersmann, in a letter to the London *Athenaeum* respecting the discovery, says:—

"This immense body of water, with an area about twice as the Black Sea, (with the Sea of Azoff,) is inscribed with the names of Ukewere, or Inner Sea of Unimemi, its narrow elongated south-eastern end bearing that of Lake Nyassa; and the discovery is said, in the accompanying letters, to have been arrived at by the concurrent testimony of various natives dwelling on or close to the lake, both on its eastern as well as on its western shores, with whom the missionaries came in contact. Some of these natives that came down to trade on the coast, at Tanga, in particular, gave a clear account of it, while at other points of the coast, from Tanga southwards for six degrees of latitude, corroborative information was obtained."

A QUEER REPEATER.—Gov. Morris, of New York, had a high respect for Bishop Moore, a man noted not only for the purity of his character, but also for the retiring modesty of his disposition, and for the general favor in which he was held.

A dinner was given by some of Gov. Morris' friends when he was about departing for Europe. Bishop Moore and his wife were of the party. Among other things that passed in conversation, Mr. Morris said that he had made his will in prospect of going abroad; and turning to Bishop Moore said to him:—

"My reverend friend, I have bequeathed to you my whole stock of impudence."

Bishop Moore replied:—

"Sir, you are not only very kind but very generous; you have left by far the largest portion of your estate."

Mr. Moore immediately added:—

"My dear, you have come in possession of your inheritance remarkably soon."

There is a family within eight miles of West Killingly, (Conn.) who are to all appearance in the full enjoyment of an uncivilized existence. The family consists of a man and wife, with four or five small children; and the habitations where they "stop" (for they cannot be said to live) is a mud and stone hotel, without window, and containing no furniture. The inmates sit on the bare earth, lie on the bare earth, eat on the bare earth with their fingers; nor do they seem aware of the existence of the slightest article of domestic comfort in a civilized life.—*Killingly Telegraph*.

Citizens of the United States, in common with all other foreign Christians, enjoy the privilege of exterritoriality in Turkey, including Egypt; the same in the Turkish regencies of Tripoli and Tunis; and also in the independent Arab States of Morocco and Muscat.

Misfortune adds lustre to the glory of great men.

Shower of Good Words.—We cut from an exchange paper the following remarks by Goethe. They contain very important practical suggestions, and ought to be read at least once by every one before he attempts to write for the benefit or instruction of the public:—

The grand secret of good writing seems to be in this very simple maxim:—Be sure you have an idea before you attempt to express it. If you clearly comprehend in your own mind what you wish to communicate, nature and reason together with a little practice, will most certainly teach you to say it in a most appropriate manner.

A single idea is sufficient for one mind to manage a lifetime. And it may be added that the idea is of much importance, it would be the most dignified by being honored with a private carriage.