

## Poet's Corner.

## The Secret.

In a fair lady's heart once a Secret was lurking,  
It tossed and it tumbled, it longed to get out,  
The lips half betrayed it by smiling and smirking,  
And tongue was impatient to blab it no doubt.

But honour looked gruff on the subject, and gave it  
In charge to the teeth, so enchantingly white—  
Should the captive attempt an elopement, to save it  
By giving the lips an admonishing bite.

'Twas said, and 'twas settled, and honor departed;  
Tongue quiver'd and trembl'd, but dare not rebel,

When right to its tip the Secret suddenly started,  
And half, in a whisper, escaped from its cell.

Quoth the teeth, in the pet, we'll be even for this,  
And they bit very smartly above and beneath,  
But the lips at that instant were bribed with a  
kiss,  
And they popt out the Secret in spite of the  
teeth.

## Select Tales.

[From Bentley's Miscellany.]

## A CALIFORNIA GAMBLING STORY.

A man in a black dress coat and dark trousers, very clean and respectable, had come for seven evenings in succession to the same table, had watched the game for a while, until at last he produced a small canvas bag from his vest pocket and laid it on a card. The card won on the first evening, and he emptied the bag on the table to count the money. It contained twenty-eight Spanish dollars, which the banker quietly paid him, and the gentleman quitted the table with his earnings, without deigning to tempt Dame Fortune again. On the second evening he returned, staked, and the card lost. With the greatest coolness he opened the bag, seized the corners, shook out the money—and it contained precisely the same sum as on the previous evening—and quitted the room. On the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth evenings the same story. The bankers began to know the man, and amused themselves at his strange behaviour. As usual he lost, took up the bag and left. The seventh evening arrived. It was just one minute after eight, and one banker said laughingly to the other, "We have treated him too badly and frightened him away," when his companion laughed, and the man in the black coat, without altering a feature, or paying any attention to the whispering and laughing, took his usual place, quietly watching the progress of the game, till a quarter past eight, and then laid the bag that all knew so well upon a deuce that had just turned up. A couple of cards were up, without the two making its appearance. At last the three fell to the left, and to the right—a scarcely perceptible smile played on the banker's lips—the two. The stranger turned deadly pale, but without uttering a syllable about the change in his luck, he stretched out his hand to the sack, and was on the point of opening it, in order to count the dollars, when the banker said, laughingly:

"Let it be; I know how many there are in it—eight-and-twenty. Am I not right?"

"Not exactly," said the man calmly, and shook the silver out on the table. He shook the bag still more, and a roll of bank notes slightly wrapped together, fell out.

"What's that?" the banker cried in alarm, and the audience pressed closely around.

"My stake!" the man said with apparent indifference, as he unfastened the thread that bound the notes.

"Stop, that will not do!" the banker cried, as he threw down his cards, "that's false play; you paid only eight-and-twenty dollars on the previous evening."

"False play!" the man shouted, and his eyebrows were menacingly contracted. Prove it you shufflers! Did I not lay the bag just as it is, on the card, and have you ever refused to pay it unopened?"

"No! that's all correct—quite right," said those around, who were always glad to oppose the banker, because they are firmly convinced that he does not play fairly, although they continually throw away their money. "He staked and won, and must be paid," others shouted.

"Count your money—how much is it?" said the banker, who had hurriedly exchanged a few words with his confederates seated opposite—"how much is it?"

"In the first place twenty-eight dollars in silver," said he calmly, while the bystanders laughed boisterously. "Then here in bank notes—two, three, four—yes, eight hundred dollars; and then—"

"What more?"

"A small bill on Dollsmith Brothers, as good as silver, accepted and all—the money need only be fetched—for—three thousand!"

"Three thousand!" the banker yelled, starting in dismay from his chair. "Why, that would make nearly four thousand dollars, altogether! Are you mad? Do you expect me to pay that?"

"Don't I?" the stranger asked in surprise. "Would you not have taken it if I had lost?"

"Of course he would—of course. Do you ask whether they would take it?—Everything they can get, and a little more too,"—shouted the voices round the table. "He must pay."

"Gentlemen," the banker protested with the poor prospect of turning their hearts—"Gentlemen, this person staked every evening for the entire week—"

"And lost every time," another interrupted him—"I have been present several times, and have heard so from others, and he never made the slightest objection."

"But that was only eight-and-twenty dollars."

"And if it had been so many thousand—all the same."

"But do let me finish!" the banker shrieked with aspen lips and furious glances; he only shook out twenty-eight dollars on the table, and kept the paper back."

"Prove that I ever had more than twenty-eight dollars in the bag," the stranger exclaimed, contemptuously; "you won't get off with any such excuses."

"Why did you not keep the bag as well, campanero?" laughed the Spaniard, who stood near. "He always stuck to everything that is staked."

"If he had lost again, no more than the counted dollars would have come out of the bag," the banker growled.

"Possible; but it can't be proved," the surrounding players laughed; "you must pay up."

"Hanged if I do!" the banker shouted, and struck the table with his fist. "This is a new sort of robbery you're trying upon me; but you've come to the wrong customer—I won't pay."

"I've lost two hundred dollars to you the last half hour," a tall Kentuckian shouted, as he elbowed his way to the table, "and was forced to pay up to the cent. If you refuse to pay that fellow you must fork over my money again."

"And mine too!" a multitude of voices ejaculated; "I've lost, too—I, too—ten dollars—fifty—five-and-twenty—a pound of gold—out with the money if he won't pay."

Another banker, from an adjoining table, had in the meantime come up, and had whispered a few words to his comrade during the height of the tumult. The loser for a time refused, but at last yielded to his persuasions, and took up the money to count it, while both examined the notes and bill. There could be no objection raised against either, and with a heavy sigh, the banker paid the money, which took all on his table, as well as several packages of gold dust—which the stranger carefully cut open, examined, and weighed at the bar. All was in order, and concealing the money in various pockets, he then quitted the room, after bowing his thanks to the surrounders, which were returned by a thundering hurrah and shouts of applause.

## THE LITTLE PEDDLAR.

BY MRS. C. H. GILDERSLEEVE.

ONE rainy afternoon in the early part of Autumn I heard a low knock at my back door, and upon opening it I found a peddlar. Now peddlars are a great vexation to me; they leave the gates open they never have any thing I want, and I don't like the faces that belong to most of them,—especially those of the strong men who go about with little packages of coarse goods, and I always close the door upon them, saying to myself—lazy.

This was a little boy, and he was pale and wet and looked so cold that I forgot he was a peddlar and asked him to come in by the fire. I thought he appeared as though he expected I was going to buy something, for he commenced opening his tin box, but I had no such intention. He looked up in my face very earnestly and sadly, when I told him I only wanted him to warm himself by the fire, and did not wish to purchase any thing. He slowly from his seat, and there was something in his air which reproached me, and I detained him to enquire why he was out in the rain. He replied—

"I am out every day, and can't stay in for a little rain; besides, most peddlars stay at home then, and I can sell more on rainy days."

"How much do you earn in a day?"

"Sometimes two shillings, and sometimes one, and once in a while I get nothing all day, and then, ma'am, I am very tired."

Here he gave a quick, dry cough, which started me.

"How long have you had that cough?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Does it hurt you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where does your mother live?"

"In heaven, ma'am," he said unmoved.

"Have you a father?"

"Yes, ma'am, he is with mother," he replied in the same tone.

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"I have a little sister, but she went to mother about a month ago."

"What ailed her?"

"She wanted to see mother, and so do I, and I guess that's why I cough so."

"Where do you live?"

"With Mrs. Brown on N. Street."

"Does she give you medicine for your cough?"

"Not doctor's medicine,—she is too poor; but she makes something for me to take."

"Will you take something, if I give it to you?"

"No, ma'am, I thank you; mother took medicine and it didn't help her, though she wanted to stay, and you see I want to go; it wouldn't stop my cough Good day, ma'am."

"Wait a minute," I said, "I want to see what you carry."

He opened his box, and for once I found what I wanted. Indeed, I didn't think it would have mattered what he had. I should have wanted it, for the little peddlar had changed in my eyes—he had a father and mother in heaven, and so had I. How strange that peddlars had never seemed like people—human, soul-filled beings, before. How thankful he was, and how his great sunken eyes looked into mine, when I paid him.

"You don't ask me to take a cent less," said he, after hesitation a minute; "I think you must be rich."

"Oh, no," I replied, "I am very far from that; and these things are worth more to me now than I gave you for them. Will you come again?"

"Yes ma'am, if I don't go to mother soon."

"Are you hungry?"

"No, ma'am, I am never hungry now, I sometimes think mother feeds me when I sleep, though I don't remember it when I am awake. I only know I don't wish to eat now, since my sister died."

"Did you feel very sad then?"

"I felt very big in my throat, and thought I was choked, but I didn't cry a bit, though I felt very lonely at night for a while; but I am glad she's up there now."

"Who told you you were going to die?"

"Nobody, but I know I am. Perhaps I'll go before Christmas."

I could not endure that and tried to make him stay, but he would run and tell Mrs. Brown what good luck he had met with. He bade me good day, again cheerfully, and went out into the cold rain, while I could only say "God be with you, my child!"

He never came again, though I looked for him every day. At length, about New Year's I went to the place he called home. Mrs. Brown was there but the little pilgrim! his weary feet were at rest, and never more would his gentle knock be heard at the door of those, who, like myself, forget that necessity and stern want often sent about these wanderers from house to house, and that their employment might be far more unseemly to them than annoying to us. I have learned a lesson, and I never see a peddlar bending with his load, but my heart softens to them, and I wonder if they too do not wish to lay aside their burden and be at rest.

**PUNISHMENT OF FRAUDULENT DEBTORS IN ENGLAND.**—In one of the English courts lately, a trader was tried on a charge of attempting to defraud his creditors. It appears that he went into bankruptcy, and, after the usual proceedings, received his discharge in due form. One night about a week afterwards, a police officer was attracted by an unusual light in the store of the accused and caught him in the act of removing to the store a large quantity of goods, which during the bankruptcy he had concealed in a cave in the rear of the store. The jury found him and also an accomplice guilty, recommending them to the mercy of the court, but the Judge did not think it a proper case for clemency, and sentenced both prisoners to fifteen years' transportation to Botany Bay.

**WHITEWASH.**—Poor whitewash is a serious injury to a wall or ceiling, and when once on it is difficult to get it off or properly cover it and produce a clear white appearance. This is the season for cleaning up, and we will give the receipt

for a first rate wash. Quick lime slacked by boiling water, stirring it until so slacked. Then dissolve in water, white vitriol (sulphate of zinc) which you get at the druggists, at the rate of two pounds of zinc to a half barrel of whitewash, making it of the constancy of rich milk. This sulphate of zinc will cause the wash to harden, and to prevent the lime from rubbing off, a pound of fine salt should be thrown into it.

## English and Foreign.

## AN ARMISTICE.

On the morning of the 24th ult., a flag of truce was sent to Sebastopol by the allies with a proposition to the Russians for an armistice, to bury the dead, which were lying in numbers—five or six Russians to every Frenchman and Englishman—in front of the Round Tower and Mamelon; after some delay, an answer in the affirmative was returned; and it was arranged that two hours should be granted for collecting and carrying away the dead on both sides. The news spread through the camps; and the races with the Chasseurs d'Afrique had got up in excellent style were much shorn of their attractions by the opportunity afforded to the French and English of meeting their enemies on neutral ground. All the ravines leading to the front trenches were crowded with officers hastening on horse and foot down to the scene of so much hard fighting. The crests of the hills and the slopes in front of the batteries were covered with men, and they dotted the deadly interval between the batteries, which had been before occupied alone by thousands of tons of shot and fragments of shell discharged by French and English and Russians during this protracted siege.

The day was beautifully bright and warm.—White flags waved gently in the faint spring breeze above the embrasures of our batteries, and from the Round Tower and Mamelon. Not a soul had been visible in front of the lines an instant before the emblems of peace were run up to the flagstaves, and a sudden gun from the Mamelon and a burst of smoke from Gordon's batteries had but a short time previously heralded the armistice. The instant the flags were hoisted friend and foe swarmed out of the embrasures. The riflemen of the allies and the enemy rose from their lairs in the rifle-pits, and sauntered towards each other to behold their grim handiwork. The whole of the space between the Russian lines and our own was filled by groups of unarmed soldiery. The sight was strange beyond description. French, English, and Russian officers were walking about, saluting each other courteously as they passed, and occasionally entering into conversation; and a constant interchange of little civilities, such as offering and receiving cigar lights, was going on in each little group. Some of the Russian officers were evidently men of high rank and breeding.—Their polished manners contrasted remarkably with their plain and rather coarse clothing. They wore, with few exceptions, the invariable long grey coat over their uniforms. The French officers were all *en grande tenue*, and offered a striking contrast to many of our English officers, who were dressed a *la Balacava*, and wore uncouth head-dresses, catskin coats, and nondescript pale-tots. Many of the Russians looked remarkably like English gentlemen in "style" of face and bearing. One tall, fine-looking old man, with a long grey beard, and strangely-shaped cap, was pointed out as Hetman of the Cossacks in the Crimea; but it did not appear as if there were many men of very high military rank present. The Russians were rather grave and reserved, but they seemed to fraternise with the French better than with the English, and the men certainly got on better with our allies than with the few privates of our own regiments who were down towards the front.

The Russians appeared to treat their dead with great respect. Most of the soldiers were white-faced and seemed ill-fed, though many of them had powerful frames, square shoulders, and broad chests. All their dead who fell within and near our lines were stripped of boots and stockings.—The cleanliness of their feet, and, in most cases, of their coarse linen shirts, was remarkable.—Several sailors of the "equipages" of the fleet of Sebastopol were killed in the attack.—They were generally fine muscular fellows, with rough, soldierly faces. The Russians carried off all the dead which lay outside our lines to the town, passing down between the Mamelon and the Round Tower. In the midst of all this stern evidence of war a certain amount of lively conversation began to spring up, in which the Russian officers indulged in a little badinage. Some of them asked our officers "when we were coming in to