

MARTIN'S CLOSE CALL.

STORIES OF EDITORIAL LIFE FROM "BUTLER'S JOURNAL."

"A Sonnet to a Brindle Cow." Advice to Subscribers and Other Items of Interest. The Editor Visits His Old Home, but Leaves It in a Hurry.

On a trip through my native county of Kings, N. B., some years ago, I came to a certain railway station from which ran a road leading to a settlement about three miles distant.

My parents had lived there a number of years before and, although on their leaving the place I was too young to remember anything about it, I had been there a year or two previous to this, my last visit and knew the place pretty well.

The family with whom I stopped had been next door neighbors to my parents and although lazy, dirty, and sullen, had treated me on the former occasion with friendliness and a great demonstration of affection, and, although not on the whole a very prepossessing lot, I did not consider that I had anything to fear from them.

They were four in number—an old man (the father, 80 years of age); two middle-aged sons, and a daughter something past middle age. I walked in from the station, reaching there early in the afternoon, there being no one at home but the girl and the old man, the boys being out haying. Everything went that night quietly and without incident, I sleeping with the two boys in the same bed in a room off the kitchen, and had it not been for the troublesome inhabitants on the bedclothes, I might have slept very well.

After breakfast I prepared to take my departure, but my entertainers would not listen to anything of the kind, and pressed me so hard that I agreed to stop another night. The boys were away through the day and having nothing to do the girl offered me the gun to go partridge shooting, which I did in the afternoon, returning to the house about midnight. As I entered I noticed the old man busily engaged in sharpening a razor. Not having any suspicions at the time, I asked him in a jocular manner "whose throat he was going to cut?" He made no answer, but the boys scolded him severely, calling him a d—d old fool, and several other pet names, and he put the razor away.

I thought no more of the affair, and shortly after supper the boys and I turned into bed. I was not sleepy, and laid for a long while thinking, when, presently I heard a whispered consultation between the boys, very little of which I could make out, but sufficient to establish the fact that it was concerning me.

I began to get interested and feigning sleep noticed that they spoke in louder tones and there was no mistaking what the subject of their discussion was about. By this time my suspicions were thoroughly aroused. I called to mind that through the day they had dropped several remarks; asking me how much money I had and several other questions which I laid to their ignorance and good will towards me, and I wishing to satisfy them, and perhaps gratify my own vanity (for I was young and inexperienced,) I took my wallet and counted out the money, which amounted to something like \$40, on the table. They appeared to be delighted at my success, and gave me great advice about "taking proper care of it" and enquired if I carried a revolver, to which I answered in the negative, saying that I never had any suspicions of anybody, and had never seen any cause for precautions, that I had faith in humanity, and would trust a thousand dollars, if I had it, in anybody's hands. They warned me again to be careful among strangers, as everybody was not as honest as they were. I thought, however, that I saw their eyes light up with greedy glare, but gave no further attention. The truth of it all flashed upon me now! I was to be robbed and perhaps murdered if I resisted, but I could see by the way they were working that they preferred to attack me when I was asleep.

We continued this game of "hide and seek" for some time. Whenever I would stir or cough they would pretend to be fast asleep; and whenever I leigned sleep they would begin to talk. Meanwhile the light still burned in the kitchen, and through the cracks in the unplastered wall I could see the girl walking backward and forward evidently preparing for something and could hear in one corner an ominous grating, which I took to be the old man whetting his razor. All at once I heard a noise as if a hundred tin pans had been knocked down from off the roof, and starting up in bed I enquired of the boys what the racket was about? One of them replied "that it was only the horse knocking down the milk-pans from the front of the door," and shortly after got up and went out into the kitchen, where he held a long conversation with the girl, after which he came back to bed assuring me that everything was all right, and telling me to go to sleep.

I was pretty well worked up by this time but disguised my feelings, and getting up started for the door. One of the boys called after me and asked me where I was going. I replied that I was only going as far as the door, and would be right back. It must have been all of 2 o'clock by this time and as I reached the kitchen I noticed that the light was burning, but not a soul was near. Luckily I had left my pack in a store about a mile from the station, and seizing my boots I prepared to make my self scarce, cutting through the fields at a 2.10 gallop, never stopping until I reached a barn about a mile and a half distant, where I crawled in and lay on the hay for the remainder of the night, too scared to sleep. Getting up at daylight I made my way to the store where I had left my valise and waiting around until the proprietor came, got it and struck for Hampton, and awaited the afternoon train for St. John. While in one of the stores who should come along but one of my bed fellows of the preceding night, who called me to one side and asked me the reason of my hasty departure. I told him that I had business of importance to attend to in St. John and after treating him to a cigar and a glass of beer, left and have never seen him since, nor do I want to.

A Notice to Subscribers.

We expect to make our next trip up the Nashua and hope to get a generous response from our subscribers in that section. We shall call on future trips up and down the river and in the back places where a

number are in arrears. Our friends will understand that prompt payment is a necessity as we have to pay regularly every month for the issue as soon as it is printed and the profits over and above the cost of publication would not keep a cat. As we have weeded out all the cranky ones we do not expect there will be any kicking.

Sonnet to a Brindle Cow.

O brindle cow, upon the grassy mead,
Chewing the cud of meditation sweet,
While blackbirds twitter 'round your stamping feet,
You on the timothy and clover feed;
For opera glasses one has not a need
To see that you enjoy the glorious treat;
Beside you I will take a quiet seat,
And try the lesson of your life to read.

Somewhere afar, in other meadows green,
You were a little caly, white and red,
And then a heifer; and your life was full
Of speechless joy and new-made hay, I ween—
Great Scott! she's knocked the top clean off my head!
Well, I'll be darned! That brindle cow's a bull.
—W. J. Henderson.

Would Rather Whistle Than Swear.

I stay here nearly a week and on the following Monday morning Cousin George took the time from a busy day to drive me within three miles of the village of Sussex, which I reached at dinner time. I peddle a little along and stop to a small house after I reach the village and order dinner. The occupant, a peculiar old woman, said she had no potatoes or meat, but she would give me bread and butter and tea for a pair of 35ct. towels, insisting on payment in advance. She also boiled an egg, and I thinking it not sufficient ordered another. She demurred a little, and muttered something about "having to pay for her eggs," but put it in the pot and when she went to take it out it was pretty hot. When she took it in her hand to take the shell off it caused her to whistle. "That is your way out of the difficulty," I remarked; "Yes," she replied, "It is better than saying G—d d—m; for if there is anything I hate it is swearing."

Beggars who Will Not Work.

A benevolently disposed Frenchman wished to know the amount of truth contained in the complaints of sturdy beggars, that they were willing to work if they could get anything to do or anyone to employ them. This gentleman entered into negotiations with some merchants and manufacturers, and induced them to offer work at the rate of four francs a day to every person presenting himself, furnished with a letter of recommendation from him. In eight months 727 sturdy beggars came under his notice, all complaining that they had no work. Each of them was asked to come the following day to receive a letter which would enable him to get employment at four francs a day in an industrial establishment.

More than one-half (415) never came for the letter; a good many others (138) returned for the letter but never presented it. Others who did present their letter worked half a day, demanding two francs, and were seen no more. A few worked a whole day and then disappeared.

In short, out of the whole 727 only eighteen were found at work at the end of the third day. As a result of this experiment M. Monod concludes that not more than one able-bodied beggar in forty is inclined to work, even if he is offered a fair remuneration for his services.

Trained Dogs for the Battlefield.

The Prussian Jager battalions have a number of dogs on trial, all of them being thoroughly trained to seek out wounded soldiers in the field. The experiments so far have had excellent results. A number of men hide in a wood or behind hedges, lying on the ground face downwards, and with orders not to move. As soon as the dogs are let loose they begin to search. When they find one of these men they place their forepaws upon the prostrate body and begin to bark, an exercise which is continued till the bearers appear and carry the man off, whereupon the dog starts afresh. Each company of the Luben Jager has about twelve of these dogs. Hunting dogs cannot be relied upon on account of their love of the chase, and therefore sheep dogs or Pomeranian spitzhunde are chosen for the work.

Maidenly Modesty.

In Mexico ladies of good repute and considerable culture do not consider it necessary to close the blinds or even the door when taking a bath. In Japan people of all ages, sexes and social conditions splash around together in the public bath houses naked as a lot of South Sea Islanders. In some Spanish-American countries a society belle thinks nothing of exposing her entire bosom. A Turkish woman, rather than have her face seen by a man, will cover it with her skirt, even if that be her only garment. American beauties appear in mixed assemblages in evening dresses that would make the front row at a burlesque opera blush. Modesty is inherent to women, but its method of expression is governed by customs, many of them ridiculous in the extreme.

A Dangerous Guest.

During a dreadful storm in Bengal, the estate of a Mr. Campbell, situate on the Island of Sangar, suffered so greatly that, out of three thousand living on his grounds, only six or seven hundred escaped, and these principally by clinging to the roofs of the houses. While Mr. Campbell's house was crammed so close as scarcely to admit another individual, what should come squeezing and pushing its way into the interior but an immense tiger. Having reached the room in which Mr. Campbell was sitting, he nestled himself down in one of the corners like a Newfoundland dog. Mr. Campbell then loaded his gun in a very quiet manner, and shot the dangerous guest dead upon the spot.

Queens in the Kitchen.

The Empress Elizabeth of Austria, that accomplished horsewoman, that sovereign of a court where aristocratic prejudices are of the strongest kind, glories in her talent as a pastry cook. Her daughter, the Archduchess Valeria, boasts of having penetrated all the secrets of the ancient and modern cuisine. Queen Victoria is fond of making omelets, and it seems she has several recipes. Her daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales, excels in preparing tea buttered toast. But princes of royal blood have more serious occupations, and time was when the heir to the throne of England devoted his leisure hours to the study of entomology, and when Prince Albert delved assiduously in works of paleontology.

A GRAVEYARD FAILURE.

Rocky Flat Had to Do Something and Old Bill Was a Willing Victim.

When we staked out claims on Chinaman Creek we had three camps within two miles of us, and everyone of them had a graveyard. Up the creek was Hoosiertown, and it had a graveyard with five graves in it. Down the creek was Nugget City, and it had a graveyard with four graves in it. Up on the side of the mountain was Jintown, and it had a graveyard with three graves in it. Hoosiertown felt justified in putting on airs over the other towns, while all three looked down upon us with supreme contempt. The idea may seem curious to you, but the fact was that no mining town felt itself to be anything or anybody until it had a graveyard. I've known a miner to quit his claim for a week to carve name, date, and verse on a headstone.

There were about a hundred of us in the new town, which we called Rocky Flat, and our feelings were awfully hurt by the way the people of the other towns used us. The citizens of Hoosiertown—being a five-grave town—were so insulting that we almost had a riot one day. A man would come down, look around and finally inquire of someone:

"Excuse me, mister, but would you be kind enough to show me your graveyard? I understand you've got something which takes the rag off the bush, and we want to get a pointer."

And when we had to admit that we had nothing of the sort, being still a young and struggling town, up would go his nose and he would walk away as if we were dust. The people of Nugget City and Jintown, having fewer graves, were not quite so stuck up, but they never came down amongst us without an effort to make us feel small and mean. I remember that I went up to Jintown one day to get a pick repaired by a blacksmith. He looked me over for a minute and then asked:

"Whar from?"
"Rocky Flat."
"Got a graveyard?"
"Not yet."

"Humph! I'd like to accommodate ye, stranger, but I've got more work on hand than I kin possibly turn off fur the next two weeks."

It's no use to say that we didn't feel cut up and shamed. We weren't to blame, of course, but it was our misfortune. One of our gang was an old fellow who had passed 60, and was no good except to cook and chore around. His name was Bill Preston, and he seemed to feel the situation rather more keenly than any one else. One day, after Hoosiertown had put still another insult upon us by refusing to sell us any soap, old Bill called a meeting at noon and said to the boys:

"This 'ere thing of havin' no graveyard cuts me to the quick. It's got so that I can't look one of them fellers in the face no more. Boys, I am old and shaky, and about ready to peg out anyhow, and I'll tell you what I'm willin' to do. I'll start a graveyard fur ye. Thar won't be but one grave, but it'll be somethin' fur ye to start on. I've bin thinkin' it over, and I'm firmly resolved to do it. I'll be already fur ye by mornin', and mebbe a committee had better lay out the ground this afternoon."

Old Bill's proposition was received with much enthusiasm, and no one attempted to dissuade him from carrying out his purpose. Indeed, Col. Jones shook his hand with great heartiness and said:

"Bill, you old cuss, you don't amount to shuckles as a livin' man, and you are doin' jest the right thing to make the boys love ye. I'll round up your grave with my own hands, I will, and I'll personally see to it that the epitaph is a buster."

That evening old Bill went around shaking hands and bidding folks good-by, and we all turned in hoping for the best. It was generally understood that he would hang himself on a tree up the side hill, and when daylight came everybody turned out with his face in that direction. A rope was dangling from a limb, but old Bill's neck wasn't in the noose. We began an investigation and the result was astounding. He had kept his word, but those Hoosiertown chaps had somehow got onto the racket, and after he was well hanged had come down and stolen the body! They even had the gall to invite us to come up and see their six-grave burying ground and have a good time! Poor old Bill had sacrificed himself for the benefit of our enemies, and knowing that luck was again us, we pulled up stakes and went over into Cinnamon Gulch and jumped a Chinese graveyard with eleven "plants" in it.—M. QUOD.

HOW PEOPLE COMMIT SUICIDE.

What a Man Says who Makes a Business of Selling Them.

Gaston Beaumont, formerly a seaman in the French merchant service, and now living in Paris, has received the Cross of the Legion of Honor for having saved from drowning upwards of one hundred and eighty persons, chiefly attempted suicides, his success in saving so many being due to his close study of the time and place chosen by these people, which would seem to be no matter of indifference.

Those choosing the Seine for their exit from life avoid the Pont-Neuf and the four lower bridges, where there is too much hurry and drive. One spot close by the gardens of the Tuilleries is an especial favorite with suicides. From this place Gaston Beaumont says he has rescued over a hundred. Besides a preference for particular spots, the choice of the season also is considered. The greatest number of suicides by drowning are in October, November, February and March, the fewest in December, May, June and September. Gloomy, dark weather is preferred, but not downright bad weather—there are few suicides in rain or snow, likewise if it is unusually high water in the Seine.

Many of these candidates for death come frequently to the spot they have selected, walk up and down for hours, scan the heavens, give searching glances at the water, then, suddenly startled by some slight sound—the twitter of a bird, the splash of a fish—resolution is shaken, and they hurry fearfully away. After a few days they return, and, as if ashamed of their cowardice, stand and gaze fixedly at the water. Suddenly they start, fling off hat and coat, and plunge in.

Most of them rise once before finally sinking. The determined, the genuine suicide, with closed eyes and clenched teeth, sinks again without a cry, but with others in this terrible moment the love of life returns; they cry and scream, fight with

hands and feet, and when saved, cling to their deliverer like a polypus. Dying is not so easy, after all, they find, and those saved rarely try it again.

The time of day generally chosen is the evening, just as daylight is fading. Those who wait till the morning have been hovering on the brink all night, fearful of taking the final plunge, and are often hopelessly destitute, friendless wretches, or broken, reckless gamblers.

But there is in Paris another class of suicides, who make every arrangement for studied effect. They are known to the police as *suicides a sensation*. To spite some persons, and make themselves shudderingly remembered, all the detail is thought out. Numberless letters of farewell are written, an elaborate will is prepared, the room is put in order, the best clothes donned. Poison or the fumes of charcoal are preferred by this class; the revolver and drowning disfigure the features too much, and spoil the effect. This form of suicide seems to be largely on the increase.

The Life of a Ship's Stoker.

"Don't," says a woman just home from a sea trip, "as you value your peace of mind, go down among the furnaces while aboard ship and get a sight of the stokers. I did, and took not a moment's comfort on deck afterwards. I could not keep the thought of the poor fellows out of my head a waking moment. Every breeze that blew fresh invigorating in my face brought with it a pitting sense of contrast with their condition."

"There they are, down in that fearful heat, with the furnace door always open—for into some of these fiery mouths coal is always being put—the red glare blinding them, and the fierce heat exhausting them; and anything may happen overhead, storm, collision, shipwreck, while they are penned helpless eighteen feet below the water line."

"Their hours are short, and so are their lives, the mortality among them being frightful. A stowaway was found when we were a day out from Liverpool, and the captain, having no work for him, set him to stoking. In three days he was dead, not being used to the terrible work. He was buried at sea. His name even was unknown, and I felt as I saw him lowered into the waves as if their cooling touch must be grateful."

"I had rather think of him dead than below in that furnace. It is wonderful in this age of invention and progress that nothing has been devised to mitigate the stoker's unhappy condition."

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