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Poetry.

THE FACE AGAINST THE PANE.

BY T. B. ALDRICH.

Mabel, little Mabel,
With her face against the pane,
Looks out upon the night,
And sees the beacon light
A trembling in the rain.
She hears the sea bird screech,
And the wreckers on the beach,
Making moan, making moan,
And the wind about the eaves
Of the cottage, sobs and grieves,
And the willow trees is blown
To and fro, to and fro,
Till it seems like some old crone
Standing out there, all alone with her woe;
Wringing as she stands
Her gaunt and palsied hands;
While Mabel, timid Mabel,
With her face against the pane,
Looks out across the night
And sees the beacon light
A trembling in the rain.

Set the table, maiden Mabel,
And keep the cabin warm;
Your little fisher lover
Is out there in the blow!
And your father—you are weeping—
Oh! Mabel, timid Mabel,
Go spread the supper table,
And set the tea a steeping.
Your lover's heart is brave,
His boat is stanch and tight,
And your father fully knows
The perilous reef,
That makes the waters white
But Mabel, Mabel darling
With her face against the pane,
Looks out across the night
At the beacon in the rain.

The heavens are veined with fire!
And the thunder how it rolls!
In the lulling of the storm,
The solemn church bell tolls
For lost souls;
But no sexton sounds the knell,
In that belfry old and high
Unseen fingers sway the bell,
As the wind goes tearing by!
How it tolls, for the souls
Of the sailors on the sea,
God pity them! God pity them!
Wherever they may be,
God pity wives and sweet-hearts
Who wait,—and wait in vain:
And pity little Mabel,
With her face against the pane!

Boom!—The light-house gun,
How it echo, rolls, and rolls;
'Tis to warn some home bound ship
Off the shoals,
See! as it fades, and fading leaves
Golden furrows on the night!
What makes Mabel's cheeks so pale?
What makes Mabel's lips so white?
Did she see the helpless sail
That, tossing here and there
Like a feather in the air,
Went down and out of sight?
Down—down—and out of sight?

Oh! watch no more—no more
With face against the pane,
You cannot see the men that drown
By the beacon in the rain!

From a shoal of richest rubies
Breaks the morning—clear and cold;
And the angel in the village spire,
Frost-touched, is bright as gold,
Four aged fishermen,
In the chilly morning air
Come toiling up the sands,
With something in their hands!
Two bodies,—stark and white,
Ah! so ghastly in the light!
With sea weed in their hair,
Oh! aged fishermen,
Go up to yonder cot,
You'll find a little child
With face against the pane
Who looks towards the beach
And looking sees it not,
She will never watch again,
Never watch and wake at night;
For those pretty saintly eyes
Look beyond the stormy skies
And they see the beacon light.

God in Christ is the soul's only rest.—Learnedly farmulated systems of human philosophy may answer for the day when the sun shines serenely in the sky, when Fortune favors, and the spirit is at ease;—but let the light die out of the heart, and the wild tempest arise and crack about its doors, and sift the cold sleet of doubt upon its helpless head, then where are the grand theories so boastfully framed and advocated! They are as nothing in the presence even of physical force, which proves superior to them. The soul must have the warm presence of a sympathizing, loving Christ, to hold it secure in such times of peril. As a Savior, it may rest upon Him, "though the earth can be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. How often in the experience of our heart-lives are our mountains carried into the midst of the sea! The strong-holds and the strong-souls, too, upon which we depend—how have we seen their strength prove weakness as they reeled and fell where the deep waters went over them! Our hearts must be anchored securely to the one safe place in all the universe—Mount Calvary!

Darwin still secretly believes in it, but he hates to have a man come up and say, "Good morning, Mr. Darwin; how's your old baboon of a grandfather, and how's the apess, your grandmother."

Death or Marriage.

The ancient clock in Deacon Shermer's old-fashioned kitchen was slowly chiming the hour of nine. It was no smart toy, no trifle or bronze or alabaster; but a tall, square, solid relic of the last century, looking not unlike a coffin case set on end, in the corner—a clock that had lasted through four generations, and judging from appearance was quite likely to last through several more. Deacon Shermer cherished the old heir-loom with a sort of pride which he himself would scarcely have confessed to.

There was a great, ruddy fire of chestnut logs in the red brick-paved fire place, and the candles in the highly polished brass sticks were winking merrily from the high wooden mantle, where they shared the post of honor with a curious sea shell and a couple of vases, each containing a fresh osage orange, from the hedge that skirted the clover field behind the barn. At the window, a curtain of gaudy chintz shut out the tens of thousands of stars that were shining brightly on that frostly autumnal night, and on the cosy rug of the particolored rags a fat tortoise-shell cat purred away the slowly lapsing minutes. But the tortoise-shell cat was not the only inhabitant of the snug kitchen.

"Timothy," said Mary Sherwood, decidedly, "if you don't behave yourself, I'll—"

What she would do, Mary did not say; the sentence was terminated by a laugh that set the dimples round her mouth in motion, just as a beam of June sunshine plays across a cluster of red ripe cherries. Mary Shermer was just seventeen, a plump rosy girl, with jet hair, brushed back from a low forehead, and perfectly arched eyebrows, that gave a bewitching expression of surprise to a pair of melting hazel eyes. She was rather dark, but the severe critic would not have found fault with the peach-like bloom upon her cheeks and the dewy red of her full, daintily curved lips. Evidently Mr. Timothy Marshall was quite satisfied with Mary's style of beauty.

"Come, Mary," said Tim, moving his chair where he could best watch the flush of the firelight upon her face, and picking up the thread of conversation where he had dropped it when it became necessary for Mary to bid him "behave himself—you might promise. It's nine o'clock, and your father will soon be home."

"What, Tim?" said Mary, demurely, fitting a square of red in her patch-work, and intently observing the fact.

"Nonesense, Mary! You know what very well. Promise to marry me before Christmas! I tell tell you what, Mary, it is all very well for you to keep putting it off, but I can't stand it. What with your father's forbidding me in the house and that romantic Stanley's coming here every Sunday night—"

Mary gave her pretty head a toss. "As if Mr. Stanley's coming here made any difference in my feelings, Tim!"

"No; but Mary, it isn't pleasant, you know. I'm as good a man as Tom Stanley, If I don't own railroad shares and keep an account at the Hamiltonville Bank; and I love you Mary, from the very bottom of my heart! Now this matter lies between you and me only; no other person in the world has a right to interfere between us. Come, promise me." He held both of her hands in his and looked earnestly into the liquid hazel eyes.

"Do you love me, Mary?"

"You know I love you, Tim."

"Then we may just as well——Hush! what's that?"

There was a portentous sound of drawing bolts and rattling latches in the porch room beyond—a scraping of heavy boots along the floor. Mary rose to her feet with suddenly scarlet suffusion on her brow and cheek.

"Oh, Tim, it is father!"

"Suppose it is!"

"But he musn't find you here, Tim!—Hide yourself somewhere, do!"

"What nonesense, Mary!" said the young man, resolutely standing his ground. "I haven't come to steal his spoons. Why should I creep away like a detective burglar?"

"For my sake Tim. Oh, Tim, if you ever loved me, do as I say! Not in that closet, it is too close to his bedroom; not through that window, it is nailed down tight; he's coming! Here, Tim, quick!"

In the drawing of a breath, she had pushed Timothy Marshall into the square pendulum case of the tall old clock and turned the key on him. It was not a pleasant place of refuge, inasmuch as his shoulders were squeezed on either side, and his head flattened against springs and wheels above, and the air was unpleasant and close; but Tim made the best of matters, and shook with suppressed laughter in his solitary prison cell.

"Well! a jolly scrape to be in," thought Tim, "and no knowing when I'll be out of it. Mary's a shrewd little puss, however, and I can't do better than to leave matters in her hands."

"So you haven't gone to bed yet, Mary?" said the Deacon Shermer, slowly unwinding the two yards of woolen scarf with which he generally encased his throat of an evening. "Not yet, father," said Mary picking up her scattered bits of patch-work with a glowing cheek. "Did you have a pleasant meeting?"

"Well, yes, quoth the Deacon, reflectively, sitting down before the fire, greatly to Mary's consternation—she had hoped he would have gone to bed at once according to his usual custom—"it was tol'bly pleasant. Deacon Huskier was there, and Elder Hoskins—and—well, all the church folks pretty much. Why, how red your cheeks are, Mary! Tired, ain't you?—Well, you needn't sit up for me, my dear; it must be getting late."

The Deacon glanced mechanically up at the clock. Mary felt the blood growing cold in her veins. "Twenty minutes past nine—why it must be later than that!—Why, land o' Cannaan, the old clock has stopped!" The old clock had stopped, nor was it at all wonderful under the circumstances. "I wound it up this morning, for sartin, said the Deacon, very much disturbed. "It never served me such a trick afore, all the years it's stood there. Your Aunt Jane used to say it was a sign of death or marriage in the family before the year was out."

There was a suppressed sound like a chuckle behind the clock-case as Deacon Shermer fumbled on the shelf for the key. "These springs must be out of order somehow," said the Deacon decisively. "How scared you look, child! There ain't no cause for being scared. I don't put much faith in your Aunt Jane's very old time superstitions. Where in the name of all possessed is the key? I could ha' declared I left it in the case."

"Isn't it on the shelf, father?" asked Mary, guiltily, conscious that it was snugly reposing in the pocket of her checked gingham dress.

"No, nor 'taint in my pocket neither." And down went the Deacon, stiffly enough on his knees, to examine the floor, lest perchance the missing key might have fallen there.

"Well, I never knowed anything so strange in all my life," said the Deacon.

"It is really strange," faltered hypocritical Mary.

"I'll have a reg'lar search to-morrow," said Deacon Shermer. "It must be somewhere around."

"Yes, it must,' said Mary tremulously.

"Only,' the Deacon went on, slowly, resuming his place before the fire, "I kind o' don't like to have the old clock stand still a single night. When I wake up, you know, it seems like it was sort o' talking to me in the stillness." The Deacon looked thoughtfully at the firery back log.—Mary figeted uneasily about the room, straightening table covers, setting back chairs and thinking—oh, if he would only go to bed!

As he sat there his eyelids began to droop and his head to nod somnolently. Mary's eyes brightened up with a sparkle something like hope.

"Child!" he said, suddenly straightening up in the stiff back chair, "you'd better go to bed. I'll sit up a while longer till the logs burn out!"

"But father I am not sleepy."

Go to bed, my child!" reiterated the Deacon, with a good humored authority to brook no opposition; and Mary crept out of the room, ready to cry with anxiety and mortification.

"If Tim will only keep quiet a little while longer,' she thought, sitting on the stairs while the newly risen moon streamed in in chilly splendor. "Father sleeps so soundly—and he is sure to go to sleep in his chair—I could just steal in and release him as quietly as possible. She sat there, her plump fingers interlaced, and her eyes fixed dreamily on the floor, while all the time her eyes were strained to the utmost capacity to catch every sound in the kitchen beyond. Hark! was that the wail of the wind, or was it something to her literally, "nearer and dearer?" Yes; she could not be mistaken now; it was actually a snore.

Mary rose softly to her feet with renewed hope. Surely now was the accepted time. Noiselessly as the floating shadow she crossed the hall, opened the kitchen door and stole across the creaking boards of the floor. The candles were burnt out, but the shifting lustre of the firelight revealed her father nodding before the fire with closed eyes and hands hanging at his sides.

"He's certainly asleep," thought Mary.

With a heart that beat quick and fast, she drew the key from her pocket and proceeded, in spite of the nervous trembling of her fingers, to lift it into the lock. So absorbed was she that she never noticed the cessation of the heavy breathing—never saw the Deacon start suddenly into wakefulness and look around him. Love is blind, and it is equally true that he is deaf. The Deacon rose quickly up with a shrewd twinkle in his eyes, and Mary gave a little frightened shriek, as a hand fell softly on her arm, possessing itself quietly of the key.

"Let me help you," said the Deacon.

"Father, I—I found the key," faltered Mary, "and—"

"Found the key, eh!" returned the Deacon. "Well, that's lucky; and now we can find out what's the matter with the clock."

Mary's heart throbbing so wildly a moment ago, seemed to stand still as her father turned the key and opened the door of the clock case.

"Hal-lo!" exclaimed the Deacon, as Mr. Timothy Marshall tumbled into the room. "So *you* was the matter with the clock, eh?"

"Yes sir," said Tim, composedly. "I hope I haven't seriously interfered with the works of the clock."

"You've seriously interfered with *me!*" said the Deacon, waxing indignant.—"What do you mean, sir, by hiding in my house like a thief?"

"Indeed! indeed, father!" cried Mary, bursting into tears, "it wasn't his fault. He didn't want to hide, but I put him there."

"You did eh! And may I ask what for?"

"Father," faltered Mary, rather irrelevantly, "I love him, and—he loves me!"

"Is that any reason why he should hide in the clock case, Miss?"

"No—but—father! Oh, father! I can never marry Mr. Stanley. He is so soft, and I—"

Mary's tears finished the sentence for her. The Deacon looked down (not unkindly) on her bowed head and the tender arm that supported it. Apparently, "the course of true love," roughly though it ran, was overwhelming all his own worldly-wise arrangements in its tide.

"And so you two young folks really think you love each other?" said the Deacon meditatively.

"I love her with all my heart and soul, sir," said Tim Marshall, earnestly. "I'm not rich, I know, but I can work for her!"

"And I can work for myself, too, father," interposed Mary, with eyes that shone like softened stars.

"And you said yourself, sir," went on Tim, "that the stopping of the clock meant either 'a death or a marriage.' Of course we don't want any deaths; so don't you think the most sensible thing we can do is to help on a marriage as soon as possible?"

The Deacon laughed in spite of himself. "It is late," he said. "Come around to-morrow morning and we'll talk about it.—No, Mary, I'm not angry with you, child. I s'pose young folks will be young folks, and there's no use tryin' to stop them."

As the Deacon rehung the pendulum and set the iron tongue of the old clock talking again, Tim Marshall paused on the door-step to whisper to Mary:

"What shall it be Mary, a death or a marriage?"

And she in turn whispered, "a marriage, I hope."

"My darling!" said Tim, "it's worth passing a lifetime behind the clock case to feel as I do now."

Grammar in Rhyme.

The annexed effusion has been published from time to time during the past twenty years. But the name of the author should not have been allowed to sink into oblivion. On the contrary, he deserves immortality, and the gratitude of generations yet unborn for we have never met with so complete a grammar to the English language in so small a space. Old, as well as young, should commit these lines to memory, for by their aid it will be difficult, if not impossible, for them to fall into errors concerning parts of speech:—

I.

Three little words you often see
Are articles, a, an, and the.

II.

A noun's the name of anything,
As school or garden, hoop or swing.

III.

Adjectives show the kind of noun,
As great, small, pretty, white, or brown.

IV.

Instead of nouns the pronouns stand,
Her head, his face, your arm, my hand.

V.

Verbs tell us something to be done,
To read, count, laugh, sing, jump, or run.

VI.

How things are done, the adverbs tell,
As slowly, quickly, ill, or well.

VII.

Conjunctions join the words together,
As men and women, wind or weather.

VIII.

The preposition stands before
A noun, as in, or through, the door.

IX.

The interjection shows surprise,
As oh! how pretty—ah! how wise.

The whole are called nine parts of speech.
Which reading, writing, speaking, teach.

A Postoffice Story.

Mr. John H. Hallett, one of the oldest public servants in the New York Postoffice remembers that in 1835, a young woman used to call every week for a letter addressed Miss Mary H. Russell, Postoffice." The Regularity of her visits, and her apparent unwillingness to give any account of herself, elicited much curiosity among the clerks, but their inquisitiveness was never gratified. Years passed away and grey hairs appeared on the women's head, but she made her calls as regular as ever, and the expected letter was always waiting for her. Nearly ten years has elapsed since her last visit, but the letters still come adressed to her name, although the intervals between them are longer than in the old time. These letters have, of course, been opened, but they contain no clue to the identity of either the writer or the recipient. Each contains a $5 bill with a few lines of writing to say when the next remittence would be made. No address, no date, no signature. The handwriting is that of a man apparently feeble with age, and another letter with the usual superscription is, at present writing, lying unopen in the postoffice. Mary H. Russel, an elderly woman ten years ago, is probably dead. The letters with their contents are sent to Washington, but no one can guess who the anonymous writer is who so faithfully maintained his correspondence. Postoffices are essentially practical places, but little bits of romance may sometimes be found even in their history.

[*From the Wilmington Commercial.*]

Papal Infallibility.

The Right Rev. Bishop Becker, of Wilmington, has been lecturing recently on the infallibility dogma of the Catholic Church and a writer in the *Commercial* thus reviews the lecture.

The good bishop goes to the extremest verge of Ultramontanism. He stands on the highest elevation—the Pike's peak—*in nubibus*—in the very clouds. It was something, indeed, for a doubter to hear his crisp, didactic words demanding for the church of Rome a lineal descent, and by this succession the sole right to enunciate a dogma,—a leading Christian truth, to which the whole world must adjust itself, or else, as he said, be damned and lost, claiming that "whilst good men outside the Romish Church—pure and conscientious men—had started sects," they were no other than mere benevolent societies; that a Merchants' Exchange, a Board of Trade, a bankers' or a brokers' association, the Supreme Court itself, were of such.

The bishop announced that he, Bishop Becker, might sin with the deepest guilt, "as numerous popes had sinned,—as St. Peter had sinned,"—and yet the very succession thus conferred upon his church gave to him, and to them, an uninterrupted continuance as a vicar of God—clean and unspotted. A very consoling doctrine, if accepted, one might say, for the atmosphere of Brooklyn—and for Plymouth Church in particular—just at this time.

Asking that we, his hearers, should receive the Pope as a plenary justification, as St. Peter incarnate, in succession, St. Peter himself in the very flesh, he remarked, "In a little while 'the castaways' would all be seeking the true fold," and that in time Gladstone, and even Bismarck himself might be numbered with the faithful. The context of the lecture was the sequel to the discourse,—infallibility was a prerogative derived from succession, and its sequence.

It will be confessed the bishop has scarcely shown himself equal to the breadth and depth of the great controversy. He must yet see that there are large bodies in his church who regard the church as administered, not in the interest of universal humanity, but for the benefit of a few Italian families. Is he willing to meet this issue and combat it where it is found to be a wilful obstructionist? He must know that the ecclesiastical spirit no longer inspires the policy of nations. Is he prepared as a shepherd of his flock to smooth the way for the change? In the pending contest between Science and Religion, where antiquity and legitimacy conflict with truth, can he accept the truth, let it lead him where it may?

His church,—in fact, all churches,—are being silently reformed. It is not the discussion of doctrines before synods and councils and presbyteries that the world now demands. The need is that we should forget church matters, and comprehend the solemn trial through which every creature has to pass, who is called to the exercise of liberty with its specific practical difficulties, its temptations, and its trials. We can well afford to hand over to the awful stillness of neglect all doubtful doctrines, that they may go down into an oblivion that knows no waking.

The Pope, a good and venerable man himself, must see—his successors will yet know—that the "true church" is measured by its pecuniary and political insignificance, and that there is no stability, secure and absolute, except in the depths of the conscience, where the moral sentiment is blended with the voice of God.

Neither did Bishop Becker, we think, properly interpret the Papal collison with European statesmanship, since its loss of temporal power. When the Pope divides territories and gives to the bishops local titles, the old leaven of Protestanism will arise. The hierarchy will encounter opposition, but this need not prevent the Papal institution from being established. Its members hold their civil and political rights equally with others, under the protection of the common law, and the bishops may bear their titles in tranquillity. The Pope himself has never been freer. He may apostrophize peoples, or governments, with all the majesty and haughtiness he ever possessed as a temporal sovereign. He is unassailable, and need fear nothing. There is no temptation to practice reprisals on his domains. The religion itself is part of the common society whilst it respects the civil law which protects it. It is certainly the highest statesmanship to declare that there is no more certain way of prolonging theological strifes than for state authority to decide upon them. Here is the extent of Bismark's and of Gladstone's offence, and of Count Cavour, Italy's greatest statesman.

It is plain that the religion of the future will be one of live issues; ever seeking something better. As each succeeding generations unfolds and relates the story of redemption, it will be simplified, and made simpler, until it is narrowed within the limits of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, instead of drawing his doctrine from the State or from the schools, was a living contradiction of all that surrounded him.—Then, clerical bodies, when dominant and powerful, were covetous and grasping. So they are to-day.

Great communities of Christians accept James—"a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus"—Matthew and John to be the rock of *their* salvation; the "cast away" all do. To such "the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well" is a priceless legacy. The well is dried up, but the well of living water springs eternal. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," is to them succession; it is their infallibility. "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world," is a hornbook to multitudes.

The church of the future will be an economical church. It will meet, face to face, women enfranchised, compulsory education as a part of the political system, freedom to think, free schools, freedom to talk.—Celibacy will be swept away, and the holy state of marriage accepted. Religious houses are of the past. The question must arise which Count Cavour settled in Italy. Can large bodies of stalwart, healthy men,—or women either,—properly live apart from the body politic, and draw subsistance from the sweat of other brows? Then there is a merchandise of the pulpit, sold in all temples, at auction and otherwise, which will in the future be overthrown and cast out. The coming church, accepted of God, and as the friend of man, will regard proselytism—religion measured by numbers—as a stratagem of the hierarchy utterly selfish. Christianity takes notice of the individual only as an immortal child, not as a fractional part of a multitude.

It is incredible how little standing room there is for the author of Christianity himself, within the portals of any church.—Clearly the sceptre of Jesus was the Divine moralities—conscience as the foundation of social life. Every believer needs only to be confident that a supernatural power dwells within him to direct him. It is the triumph of the soul over the senses. Its work will be rapid enough for him who wishes most good to the most.

Some one has said that in the future there will be but two roads—Rome and Quakerism. Well, if it is to be narrowed to this—if the covenant of grace is an Islamism to arrest all movement, writhing with the victim who seeks freedom from a brute force that crushes him—then the moral truths which constitute the life of Christ—the principles and ideas of the New Testament—its spiritual equality—a resistless force ever tending to its own realization—*will* conquer. If this is Quakerism, Rome may well afford to exchange for it an imperfect infallibility which inherits the seeds of its own dissolution.

Bishop Becker's address was scholarly and erudite, delivered with the impressiveness of entire conviction. Sitting facing the cherished emblems of his church—pictures, altar-pieces, candles in rows, lit,—the image,—transfixed in clay or wood,—of Him, the Divine Lawgiver, the Revealer, who loved, under the title of the Son of Man, to identify himself with humanity, one could not but ask himself how much of this sacerdotal display conflicts, not only with the spirit, but with the very letter of the New Testament,—how much is indirect, formal, unpractical,—how much of it will appear in the Republic of Virtues—the Coming Church, in which a religious man cannot be distinguished from a citizen.

It is a fitting conclusion to a review already too long, to commend to Bishop Becker, to those over him and under him in authority—to all those who claim to be teachers of the people,—the words of the great theologian of France: "The moral road is the royal road to Christ. Do not fetter your souls to the sensible form,—to the material framework. I rejoice that the great section to which I belong claims not an inch of the earth at the Holy Sepulchre, and that it cannot thus be tempted to seek amongst the dead for Him who is alive for ever more. The work of the invisible Christ continues that of the Christ visible."

Observing the Sabbath.

The following story is published by a Connecticut paper: "There lived in New Haven county, a few years ago, a man whose wife Tabathy was widely known for her strictness in observing the Christian Sabbath, as he was for his remarkable patience in bearing with some of her unpleasant ways. One Sabbath morning a barrel of flour stood in the front hall which had been left there late Saturday evening, which to the good man seemed to be in the way, and that it would not be very wrong to put it in its proper place before going to church. So after breakfast was over he proceeded quietly to roll the barrel to its place, which was up one flight of stairs.—No sooner had he reached the stairs and commenced to ascend, than his wife came and forbid him going any further, declaring if he did that God would withdraw his blessing from them, and the whole blame would rest upon his conscience. After pausing a moment to think he resolved to proceed, and let the consequences be what they would. Having succeeded in getting it half way up the stairs, Tabathy determined to have it her way, as usual, reached up and took hold of his feet, pulling them from under him, when he and his barrel of flour came to the bottom, causing the head of the barrel to come out, covering him with the contents. As soon as the poor man could remove the flour from his head sufficient to speak, he looked up to his wife meekly and patiently and said, 'Tabathy, let us pray.'"

THE clerk of a cockney church recently made the following announcement to the congregation: "You are desired to attend a meeting in the vestry at four o'clock, to consider on the best means of 'eating the church, and to digest other matters."

Peter Cooper's Locomotive.

THE FIRST STEAM ENGINE EVER RUN ON AMERICAN TRACKS.

Peter Cooper, the venerable millionaire, was found recently sitting at a little desk in his private office at his residence. "I built and ran the first railroad," said he.—He was in excellent spirits, and conversed as vivaciously as a man half his age. "I was in Baltimore at the time. I owned three thousand acres of land in that city—the same property now owned by the Canton Company. I sold it to them. It cost me 105,000, but I don't doubt it is valued at $15,000,000 to-day. Well as I was saying, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at that time—this was in 1829—and ran to Ellcott's Mills, at a distance of thirteen miles from Baltimore. The road didn't pay, and the stockholders were beginning to get frightened. They refused to invest any more money in the road. I was afraid it would stop running. I went to the directors and asked them to hold on awhile until I tried a steam locomotive that I had an idea would do for the road. You see in that short road there were a good many curves—short curves—for it ran through a rough, rocky valley. The opinion had come from England that no engine could be built to turn a curve of less than 900 feet, and some of these curves were only 200 feet.

"Ross Wynan's, an engineer on the railroad—Ross is the man who made so many millions out of the Russians, building locomotives for them. Well, he gave me an invention of his, and I built the locomotive. It was a little thing, and weighed only a ton. Why," and Mr. Cooper laughed the recollection, "the boiler wasn't as big as a barrel. But here, I will let you read what Mr. Latrobe says about it. He was councellor of the railroad, and I guess he is yet. He rode on the engine with me. Here read what he says."

While Mr. Cooper was speaking he had risen from his easy chair, and was examining several papers which he took from a desk in the corner, talking all the while.—"Ah, here it is!" said he, unfolding a printed chart and returning to his seat.—His aged hand trembled as he held out the sheet for the visitor's inspection. A rough wood-cut of a primitive engine and car adorned the top of the sheet; beneath, the page was filled with extracts from a lecture delivered by Counsellor Latrobe. The cut represented a vehicle as large as a hand-car, resting on four slight wheels, and containing an upright boiler and smoke-stack, and six persons. Nothing was visible except two upright bars meeting like the strokes of an inverted V in the front of the engine. Mr. Cooper explained that this was the machinery, and the man standing by it was himself. All the people wore low hats except Mr. Cooper (according to the cut,) and he was distinguished by a high, broad brimmed beaver. He was 39 years of age then, and Mr. Latrobe was a few years younger. "I had been a Common Councilman at that time," said Mr. Cooper. "I represented the 12th ward, when it extented from the Bible House to Kainsbridge."

At Mr. Cooper's suggestion the writer glanced over the printed matter which explained the engine and related its exploits. Mr. Cooper, it seems, invited the directors of the road, with a few others, to accompany him on his trial trip when the engine was completed. The party that accepted the invitation numbered about 41. Thirty-six were conveyed in one car—a great carryall wagon on four car wheels—and the other five rode with Mr. Cooper on the engine. The machinery of the locomotive did not differ from that of the time in which it was built. It was simply a combination of belts and cog wheels. The draught necessary to keep up steam in the little boiler was supplied with a blower, driven by a drum and cord attached to one of the car-wheels. On the day of the trial trip, in the summer of 1830, Mr. Cooper lighted the fire under the boiler, and when sufficient steam was generated and the company had taken their places in the train he pulled the lever, and the first locomotive engine began its first trip. The ride is described as most exciting. Grades were passed over with ease, curves were turned without slowing up, and with every moment the rate of speed increased. Ten miles an hour at first, then twelve, thirteen, fifteen, and even eighteen miles an hour were made. It is recorded that the enthusiastic passengers with one accord produced their note-books, and demonstrated the possibility of writing even at this speed.

We are not told how long it took to reach Ellcott's Mills, but the return trip was made in 57 minutes.

"Was the locomotive used upon the road afterwards?" the visitor asked when he read the description referred to.

"I sold it to a man named Ward," said Mr. Cooper, "and he ran it during the summer, carrying pleasure parties to and fro. The next year three or four locomotives, each one an improvement on the other, were procured, and every year afterwards locomotives were built and used in different parts of the country."

"What was the nature of your apparatus for turning a short curve?"

"On the ends of the car axle, outside the wheels, there was a ring in which the axle rested and moved sufficiently in rounding a curve to turn at a good rate of speed. Now the wheels are beneath a car on which the engine rests. The car turns on a central belt or pivot, you know."