THE EASTON GAZETTE.

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From Arthur's Home Gazette.

THE PILGRIM.

BY MARCUS H. TROWBRIDGE.

By the way-side, in a desert,
Sat a pilgrim faint and worn,
Who had fought the great life-battle,
And had felt the world's wild scorn.

Weak in heart, yet undejected
In the calm of life's great truth,
He was thinking of his boyhood,
And the memories of youth.

Then, unto his eyes, a vision,
Slowly, calmly was unrolled:
He beheld a band of angels,
Clad in robes of shining gold!

O, a band of holy angels,
And the glory of their brows,
Cast a shadow o'er the pilgrim,
Like the whiteness of the snows!

And an angel spake unto him,
Saying, "Pilgrim, be thou strong,
And amid this life's lone desert,
I will guard thee from all wrong."

The Midnight Prediction.

IN one of the defiles of the range of mountains which divides Valencia and New Castile, stands the ruins of an ancient monastery. Many years had elapsed since this monastery had been in prosperous splendor; but its crumbling walls had not been finally deserted until the ravages of war, during the French invasion, having reached even this barren and secluded spot, the few remaining monks were partly driven away by terror, and partly by force, from their spoliated cloisters and demolished cells. At the period when this tale commences, the edifice was not only quite deserted, but it was in a state of moldering delapidation and ruin. The grass was growing between the stone pavement of the church; the roof was blown off in many parts; the altar was dismantled and bare of ornament; and alone, amid the general solitude and decay of the building, a large figure of Christ, in black marble, yet stood, surveyed as it were the ruins and desolation that surrounded it on all sides.

On a gloomy evening, in the spring of 1822, a regiment of French hussars rode cautiously up the defile in which this deserted monastery stood. They had a long and weary march, and gladly hailed the sight of the ruins, as a convenient place and a more comfortable bivouac than the open air afforded. The troop drew up before the front of the church, surveyed its capabilities, and after some anxious deliberation, decided that the encampment for the night had better be arranged outside the tottering walls, as the bivouac fires would be better sheltered there than in the ruined church, through which gusts of wind rushed on all sides; as well as on account of the possibility of a surprise, should the ruins be already occupied by some of the enemy placed in ambush for that purpose. The night also threatened to be stormy, and the broken and demolished roof of the church did not look as if it could stand a tempest.

The fires were lighted in the most sheltered spot; the troop supped, wrapped themselves in their travelling cloaks, and such blankets as they had, extended themselves on the ground round the various fires, to take their night's rest. Leon Felner, the captain of the troop, was the last to lie down by the fire prepared for him. He had visited the sentinels, and the horse, and surveyed the environs, and seen to the general comfort of his men, before he thought of his own repose—Satisfied with every precaution he had taken, he, at length, wearied out, wrapped his cloak closely around him, and resting his head on his horse's saddle, prepared for sleep.

But sleep was not to be obtained. His busy thoughts rambled from scene to scene of his active life, and recollections of his home, family, and friends, arose vividly to his memory. Two years had he been away from all he most loved. Latterly even communication with them had been impossible. The image of Gabrielle, to whom he was betrothed, at length rose, in vivid distinctness, above his other thoughts. He could dwell with pleasure on this remembrance, for his loyalty to her had never swerved. The charms of the far-famed Spanish women had not shaken his fidelity; they might be more beautiful, but had not Gabrielle's candor and modest grace; and he longed for the conclusion of the war, that he might be once again by her side.

While thus pondering upon his country, home, and love, he began to doze; insensibly he was dropping asleep when a rude blast of wind, accompanied by a driving sleet, and a heavy peal of thunder, aroused him. The fire was nearly extinguished. Leon arose, and looked about for a shelter from the storm, which now no longer merely threatened. Opposite to him was the unclosed door of the ruined church. He pushed it wider open and entered.

The church was damp and gloomy; flashes of lightening illuminated, at intervals, the few painted glass that yet remained in the broken windows, and brought into view the stone toombs of ancient knights and abbots, as well as the dismantled altar. The black image of the Saviour stood out in bold relief during these transitory gleams and added to the sensation of awe and desolation that the whole scene called up. In spite of his better reason, the young soldier shuddered at the loneliness of this gloomy place; and even felt a slight emotion of terror at the sound of the echo of his own footsteps; the clank of his spurs and saber, sounded through the vast nave, disturbing the profound silence that otherwise reigned there. He did not advance far into the church, but stopped against the first column he met; for the cracking of the walls as the gusts of the tempest drove against them, added to the uneasiness that was beginning to creep over him, and caused him to doubt the prudence of the shelter he had sought. He began to retrace his steps, as well as the darkness would permit, when loud amid the howling of the wind, and clatter of the fierce rain, the old bell of the church sounded. Leon involuntarily stopped to count the strokes, and he numbered twelve.

As the last stroke resounded, a dim light prevaded the church, and the creaking of the hinges of a door slowly opening made Leon turn in the direction of the sound.—The door of the sacristy was opening, and a dark figure was seen emerging from it.—Leon fixed a steady gaze upon it, and saw, as it approached, that it was a priest dressed in a black chasuble with a white cross embroidered on the breast. In his hands he bore the sacramental cup and consecrated host. With very slow and solemn motion, he advanced in the direction of the altar. His tread was so light, that he passed across the pavement, and up the stone steps, without awakening any echo in the sonorous ruin. With solemn dignity he placed upon the altar the holy cup, and turned his pale emaciated face toward Leon, fixing a steady gaze upon him, and raising his finger, beckoned him to approach.

Instinctively the young soldier obeyed; he had not power to resist. The little reverence he had had for church performances when he quitted college for the army, had been quite obliterated by the painful scenes of the campaign in which he actively engaged. The mysterious influence, therefore, that drew him passively obedient to the steps of the altar confounded him. The nearer he approached the figure standing at the altar, the more solemn and shadowy it appeared. At a given sign Leon knelt, and covered his eyes with his hand. A deep sepulchral voice, in slow and measured accents, recited the Service of the Dead. The recollections of childhood vividly arose, and, as the service proceeded, the young officer found himself giving the responses almost as accurately as the deacons and sub deacons are wont to do. The sound of his own voice filling up the intervals of the awful looking priest's, formed such a strange contrast, as to make Leon's blood curdle. What was he doing? Whose funeral rites was he thus celebrating? All power of volition seemed annihilated, and as the ceremony proceeded the young man became in such a state of mental agony as to be a passive instrument in the hands of the mysterious influence which was commanding him. He almost doubted if he were alive.

When the ceremony was ended, the priest pronounced the farewell benediction, as if a numerous congregation filled the church; and then, for the first time, addressing Leon, he said to him, "Young stranger, the pious service you have just rendered has helped to redeem my soul from purgatory. For centuries, by this nocturnal penitence, have I been expiating a sin committed against the severe laws of our monastery. For centuries have I waited for the assistance of a living being to aid me in the holy sacrifice. For centuries the hour of midnight mass has tolled every night, but no human being has appeared. You alone have come to kneel before the altar of God, and have released me from some of the bonds which chained my soul in purgatory, and deterred its entering into the heavenly abode. Your piety shall have its reward. Ask any one question before I go, and I will answer you."

The unearthly tones of the speaker penetrated and roused the half paralyzed Leon. Shuddering, and shrinking from the gaze of the lusterless eye that was fixed upon him, the young man involuntarily asked—"Whose funeral service is this?"—"Alas! my son," returned the mysterious priest in a sad and subdued voice, "three years hence, and the same day, your departing spirit will restore your body to the dust. Be ready at the hour. The funeral service is THINE OWN!"

As he uttered these words, the old man disappeared without any noise, without leaving any trace of his presence, or indicating whether he had returned to the tomb, or mounted to heaven—and the church was again in total darkness.

Oppressed by amazement and awe, Leon remained at the altar. The words of the old priest were indelibly impressed upon his memory. The sensation that overwhelmed him was not fear of death.—Over and over again he had confronted the possibility of that catastrophe on the field of battle. The gallant deeds that had won his promotion, had not been performed ed without great personal risk of life.—Yet alone in this old gloomy church, the doom he had heard pronounced, had chilled him to the heart. He could not contemplate the annihilation of the golden promises and hopes of his youth with resignation.

By degrees the horror subsided into melancholy, and a furious blast of wind slamming the church-door, with violence, aroused him. He arose from his kneeling position, and fancying he might be under a delusion, stamped with his iron heeled boot on the pavement, to convince himself he was awake.

The darkness was becoming less intense; a faint, almost imperceptible, gray light began to steal gradually through the building. The dawn was breaking through the clouds of night, the storm without was evidently less violent. Leon strode down the aisle with nervous haste. Alas! he could no longer doubt his presence in the church. He had received a real warning.

With some difficulty he pulled open the church door, which the wind had violently closed, and inhaled the fresh breeze with feverish impatience. His men answered to his agitated call as he emerged from the church-porch. Leon joined them. The troop were preparing to depart, and, as soon as all was ready, left the inhospitable ruins where, without exception, the whole party had passed a most uncomfortable night. The hopes of soon reaching dry quarters and warm breakfast hastened their movements. The gloomy silence of their leader they attributed to the same causes as were affecting themselves—wet, cold, and hungry men are seldom disposed to be merry.

Animation, however, was ere long restored to the troop; for before they were able to reach the village where they expected to join the rest of the detachment, they fell in with the advanced guard of the opposing army, and a sharp skirmish ensued. Felner, with intrepidity and coolness, and at unsparing personal exposure, preserved his troop from destruction by effecting an adroit retreat.

The war continued with unabated rigor. But little time was left for reflection to men engaged, day by day, in the perils of the retreats which the French had to effect, as the successes of the English troops roused the natives also to action. Leon saw his friends fall, but himself seemed to bear a charmed life. His immunity from the fate of his comrades scarcely surprised him. The monk's prediction had taken such firm hold on his mind, that it was hardened with the conviction that he was safe for the rest of the three years. But in the intervals of active combat, a brooding melancholy took possession of him.—Life had lost its charms. He had almost hoped to die on the field; he would have preferred to end his existence amidst the horrors of the battle field, than to wait the slow coming of the death ordained.

On the return of peace, he delayed his journey homeward. The fatal visit to the monastic ruin had quenched his ardent desire to rejoin the nearest and dearest of his kindred. The many years of domestic happiness he had so long anticipated to pass with Gabrielle, were never, he believed, to be realized. He would only be united to her to be, in a short space, torn from her by death.

At length, the urgent solicitations of his friends grew into reproaches, and he could no longer refuse to return; but he turned his face towards his home with a heavy, aching heart, resolutely determined to keep his fatal secret to himself. The sight of that happy home, the old, dear, and familiar faces, the cordial reception of his beloved Gabrielle, made him doubly melancholy. Nothing aroused him to happiness, not even promotion, so dear to the soldier's heart. His military skill and undaunted courage were not unrequited.—Just before his marriage he had been made colonel, with the promise of having a responsible command confided to him when next called to the field.

Still his sufferings did not abate, but the cause no one could extract from him.—For some time Gabrielle doubted whether he did not repent his engagement to her. But he assured her that he loved her even more ardently than before; and to quiet her doubts, urged the preparations for his marriage, but in heavy-hearted tones more characteristic of the mourner than the bride-groom.

Two years had nearly passed since the fatal bivouac at the monastery. All things were arranged for the marriage. At the altar, when pronouncing the vow of life-long love and protection, Leon hesitated; for a conviction that the oath was a mockery—that it would be broken by death in a little more than a year—weighed heavily upon him.

Marriage caused no change in his habitual melancholy. People wondered; for Leon Felner ranked high in military honors, had ample fortune, and possessed a good and beautiful wife, whom he loved, and who was fondly attached to him. Wherefore this despondency and distaste of life?—Tears were often observed to fill his eyes, as he gazed upon the young bride from whom he felt he was soon to be parted.—He became more and more gloomy, and sadness fell upon the cherished wife.

A son was born. Gabrielle had hoped this event would restore his cheerfulness. Vain hope! His despondency increased, for only a month now remained—to live. As yet no persuasion had wrung from him the fatal secret. With surprise and unutterable grief, Gabrielle saw him making preparations for an early death. He arranged all his affairs, settled his property, declared his wishes. Was he intending suicide? Night and day his wife, or his mother, watched by him.

Meanwhile, history was crowding its page with great events. Napoleon's escape from Elba, Fontainebleau, the hundred days, the concentration of the grand army to the Belgian frontier. It had already been intimated to Leon, that his services would be required, and he only awaited final orders from headquarters—not to lead his old comrades as their colonel but to take the head of a division.

The excitement such news was calculated to produce took no effect upon Felner. He knew that the last day of life approached, and he awaited it with the despondency of despair. It came; and after sunset, Leon summoned his wife and mother to his chamber. Here he revealed the fatal secret, and took an affecting farewell of them. It is impossible to describe their anguish. The first part of the night was spent in bewailing the expected fulfilment of the warning; and then, exhausted by grief and watching, Leon, with his weeping wife, and with his desolate mother seated beside him, awaited the death that was to come with the dawn.

The first faint streak of day appeared in the eastern horizon! Leon shuddered convulsively—a cold shiver seized his limbs, and a confused murmur sounded in his ears. He tried to rise; but the effort seemed to overcome him, and he sank motionless in the arms of his wife.

Did he still breath? Madam Felner the elder who still retained her self-possession, could not ascertain. Her daughter did everything to restore consciousness that despair suggested.

Amidst this dreadful uncertainty, the blast of a trumpet, the hoofs of horses, and clanging of arms, was heard in the court-yard. To this, Gabrielle was insensible; she clung to her inanimate husband with frantic grief. Madam Felner, however ran to the window; a troop of hussars were drawn up in the form of a guard of honor. At the same instant an officer rushed into the room, and without heeding the ladies, shook the dying man by the hand with the rough energy of an old campaigner.

"Felner! Felner!" he shouted; "awake. You have not a moment to lose." A tremor passed over the prostrate man's frame. His wife shrieked for joy at this sign of animation.

The hussars in the court-yard now presented arms, and the "salute" was blown lustily by the trumpeters. This was followed by a loud shout, "Long live the General!"

At these words the dying man rose slowly as if still in a trance. He stood for a moment transfixed. He pressed his hands to his head; his eyes slowly opened.

"General Felner!" began the officer.

"General?" repeated Leon, like a man in a dream. His wife and mother looked on in much amazement.

"Yes; here is your commission, and the Emperor's orders under his own hand."

Leon took the paper like a somnambulist; but at the sight of Napolian's writing, consciousness appeared to return, and he began to give orders for his own immediate departure, with the habitual precision and promptitude of an officer on active service.

Meanwhile, the cause of Leon's malady was explained to Major Angarde. The major smiled.

"Why, that monk," he said, "is an old ally of *mine!* Four years ago I was in the hospital in the same monastery; and even then the same monk played the farce which so deluded the General. He carries it on to this day. He is stark mad. He is possessed by the idea that he is dead, and had, by an earthly penance, to redeem his soul from purgatory, by performing a certain number of services, in which he was continually asking us to help him, and as continually dooming whoever was wise enough to comply, to death in three years."

Leon was not slow in reviving from his delusion. Further explanations completely dispelled it, and he hid his shame in the embraces of his wife, whose grief was now awakened from another cause; that of his departure to the field of battle.

Leon Felner passed through the battle of Waterloo scatheless, although he performed his part bravely and well, and lives to this day to smile at having made himself for three whole years the hero of a Modern Monkish Legend. [Household Words.

SALE OF A WHITE MAN.—It is stated in a letter from Rushville, Illinois, that a white man, who was a blacksmith by trade, and having a large family of children, was arrested lately on account of inveterate habits of intemperance, and tried by a jury as a vagrant. He was convicted, and the judge sentenced him to be sold at public auction, for the term of four months.

[COMMUNICATED.]

A CHAPTER ON THE SLANDERER.

"He who steals my purse steals trash;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

SHAKESPEARE.

Of all the evils that are too often permitted to reign in the human heart, we think that there are none so heinous, none so treacherous against God and man, as that of wilful slander. It is a trait which is more generally found in none but those whose tongues are as venomous as serpents, and poisonous as asps, and whose greatest delight in life seems to be naught but misrepresentation and falsehood. Ignorance and a general want of *moral* refinement are but weak and feeble terms to employ in designating and marking out the dark and *damning* characteristics, which belong to those who commit this base and wilful crime against a just God, and his fellow-travellers to his bar. It cannot fail to inspire in the minds of any *truly moral* community, emotions other than those of disgust; always excepting those who coalese with them in giving publicity to their slanderous reports, among whom it is very evident, that

'A fellow-feeling makes them wondrous kind.'

Many who indulge in this practice at the expense of unsuspecting innocence, are often made to realize that their attempts thus to vilify and destroy the reputation of their neighbors, will prove abortive in the end, and the material they use for the purpose, serves but to blast their own, and stamp the mark of an insidious backbiter upon their foreheads. Many there are who profess to be followers of God, and live up to his commandments, who are found (and we say it with sorrow) thus persecuting the church of Christ, and bringing a reproach upon the cause, at the same time wearing religion as a mantle or outside show, to conceal their wicked deeds from the just frowns of the society in which they move. The tribunal of public opinion, before which every individual must either stand or fall, speaks loud against them. The still small voice of God, in tones of thunder, proclaims their condemnation in language that cannot be misunderstood.

We fain would entertain no other than feelings of sympathy for them. We pity them—*from our inmost souls*, we pity them—to see our fellow travellers to eternity thus wilfully giving utterance to fabrications which are calculated to ruin the characters of those who unfortunately have been made the subjects of their flattery, not thinking that their own reputations as well as their eternal well-being are at stake.

But while we pity them for their ignorance, we cannot but rejoice in the consolation that the day is coming, and perhaps is not far in the future, in which all shall be summoned to appear before the bar of Jehovah, there to give an account for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Then those who were prompt and faithful in the discharge of their duty as christians here, receive eternal life as their reward, and be forever freed from the snares that were laid so often in their way, to impede their march in the path of rectitude and peace. While, upon the other hand, those who "knew their duty and did it not," shall receive as their reward, the just frowns of an offended God, while he gives utterance to that awful denunciation; "depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Before we quit this subject, we would more particularly address ourself to those who have thus misused and abused the reputations of those who are innocent of their slang. The slander of which we write, and of which we hold you guilty, does not merely consist in great swelling words. Nay, nay. The smallest conceivable word, spoken with an intent to calumniate and blast the reputation of a fellow-being, may fitly be compared to the little ripple on the ocean, which, when first seen, is comparatively small, but continues to spread wider and wider, until finally, it extends over a vast portion of the great deep. Thus, a word thus spoken by you, to another, and still increasing in strength, is proclaimed trumpet-tongued, from the very house-top, until, as it were,

"On angels wings immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are born but to die."

Seeing, then, the blackness and enormity of the crime of which you have been guilty, and the awful doom which awaits you, oh! we entreat you, in the name and for the sake of *Him* who groaned upon Calvery's rugged tree to save the world, to pause and ponder well upon the course you are pursuing—retrace your steps—endeavor, you who have fallen from the eminence to which you once had happily attained, to "repent and do your first works over again," ere the door of mercy shall forever be closed, and pardon forever denied to you. We now leave you, indulging the hope that this note of warning which we have feebly endeavored to sound in your ears, (although it may emanate from one who is entirely incompetent to do it the justice which the subject richly merits) may be productive of the desired effect, and cause you for the future to look well at the door of your own hearts, and first eradicate all the guilty stains which remain there, before you charge knowingly and falsely upon those by whom you are surrounded. JUSTITIA.

IMPORTANT FROM NICARAGUA.

HIGH-HANDED BRITISH INTRIGUES.

Americans forced to leave the Country and Murdered.

The New Orleans Picayune has advices from Nicaragua to the 5th inst., through Mr. Hall, a merchant in Granada. It appears a deadly hostility has sprung up there and in the Mosquito Kingdom, against Americans—a hostility of so decided a character that the Americans on the Isthmus, from Realejo to San Juan, have thought it best for their interests and personal safety to leave. The Picayune says:—

About eight hundred of them, who had established themselves in the towns and villages, and who confided in the friendship and protection of the Nicaragua Government, have been so ill treated—the natives refusing to buy from them or sell them provisions—that they all broke up their business arrangements; many at much loss to themselves, came down to San Juan and embarked for this port or New York.—The few American merchants in San Juan (or Greytown) have on hand provisions and other stock for sixteen months, which they had made sure of selling, but are now forced to let remain in the warehouses useless, rotting and ruinous.

The main spring of this sudden revulsion or feeling lies in the continued intrigues of the Consul at San Juan and his colleague, Foster, at Realejo. The latter is materially assisted by a certain mysterious Count Dezaldo, a sort of Frenchified Spaniard, who is well known to be energetically forwarding British pretensions and interests on the Isthmus, whilst he pretends to remain neutral; and also by a Mr. Manning, a wealthy and influential English merchant in Realejo. The latter is a heavy creditor of the Nicaraguan Government, and exercises great influence in all of its movements. He and his fellows have at last succeeded in prejudicing the Nicaraguan authorities and citizens against the Americans.

The best proof of this sudden and decided hostility is the fact that fifteen of our countrymen have been murdered within the last twenty-five days, on the road from Realejo, on the Pacific, across to San Juan, where they formerly travelled without fear of harm or danger, and over which they were making their way as rapidly as possible out of the country to return home.

Our informant did not remember the names of all these unfortunates; he, however, cited those of two, one of whom was killed; the other was left for dead in the road. The first was Mr A. C. Maynard, from the western part of New York, where he leaves a family. He was travelling to San Juan, carrying with him several thousand dollars. On the morning of the 5th March, between 8 and 9 o'clock, he was attacked by an ambushed party a league this side of Materies, (a small town between Leon and Granada,) and literally cut in two with blows from *machetas*. His body was found in the road in this mangled and mutilated state. The money was stolen.

In the other instance, Daniel H. Mooney, of St. Louis, was attacked in a similar manner on the same road. He was left for dead, with his head dreadfully cut in several places. He regained his consciousness, however, and reached San Juan, bringing the news of Maynard's murder.

In these, as in the other cases, redress was sought for from the authorities, but they every where turned a cold shoulder to their petitioners, and answered their just demands with pretexts too gross to deceive the most ignorant.

The British naval force has not been withdrawn from San Juan.

An English stripling, about 20 or 21 years of age, named Grant, is captain of the port of San Juan. He is also one of the Supreme Judges of the Mosquito Kingdom, and the English Consul sitting with him on the bench, with two native Nicaraguans, not native Mosquitos, as associates. The fines they inflict are charged and collected in pounds, shillings and pence, the currency of the country never being heard of. They take possession of the papers of all vessels entering the port, keep them during detention there, and return them at departure, though San Juan, they assert, is a free port.

They have six strapping Jamaica negroes, dressed in blue and armed with clubs, acting as policemen. The poor Mosquito King has gone up the coast and will be absent for a year, leaving these sham subjects of his to manage things their own way.

CAN'T SHUCK CORN.—At the conclusion of the last concert of Jenny Lind in St. Louis, a worthy farmer of Jackson county, Missouri, thus expressed himself to an acquaintance:

"Well, she's an almighty screamer, and a darned pretty gal at that. She's the very image of Sally Jones, Parson Jones' daughter, who is counted the best singer in all Jackson. But Sally can beat her shucking corn, I warrant you. You never see Sally shuck?"

"No, I never did."

"Well, you ort'er."

RIOT IN CANADA.—Mr. Wm. Harris, formerly the editor of the Bytown Packet, having been appointed crown lands agent, in Rentrew county, the freeholders, dis-satisfied with the appointment, have memorialized the government, soliciting its revocation. At a meeting held for this purpose on the 29th ult, the friends of Mr. Harris created a riot which resulted in bloodshed, and great excitement has been caused. The feud is a religious one.

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