

The Morning Star.

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VOLUME I.

FREDERICTON, N. B., SATURDAY

SUBSCRIPTION—\$2.50 per Annum, Payable in Advance.

NUMBER 64.

The Chamber over the Gate.

BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.
Is it far from thee
Thou'st not longer see
In the chamber over the gate
That old man doleful,
Weeping and wallowing sore
For his son, who is no more?
Oh Absalom, my son!

Is it so long ago
That cry of human woe
From the walled city came,
Calling on his dear name,
That it has died away
In the distance of to-day?
Oh Absalom, my son!

There is no far nor near,
There is neither nor here,
There is neither nor late;
In that chamber over the gate
Nor any long ago
That human cry of woe—
Oh Absalom, my son!

From the ages that are past
The voice comes like a blast,
Over seas that wreck and drown,
Over tumult of traffic and town;
And from ages yet to be
Come the echoes back to me—
Oh Absalom, my son!

Somewhere at every hour
The watchman on the tower
Looks forth, and sees the fleet
Approach of the hurrying feet
Of messengers, that bear
The tidings of despair.
Oh Absalom, my son!

He goes forth from the door,
Who shall return no more,
With him our joy departed;
The light goes out in our hearts;
In the chamber over the gate
We sit disconsolate.
Oh Absalom, my son!

That 'tis a common grief
Bringing but slight relief,
Ours is the bitterest loss,
Ours is the heavier cross;
And forever we cry aloud
"Would God I had died for thee,
Oh Absalom, my son!"
—Atlantic Monthly.

DISAPPEARED.

"I can't finish it without a piece of copper wire, and a piece of copper wire can't be found short of Oldport. How vexations!"

The speaker was a fair young man, scarce twenty years of age. David Golden by name. He was sitting at the kitchen-table at work upon a curious, old-fashioned silver watch, which might be traced back through a series of Golden to the first Golden who ever set foot on American soil, which time his dying breath, and stopped, so tradition said, when his heart ceased to beat.

Not that David was a watchmaker. It was difficult to tell what he was. His father called him a "universal genius," and we all know what that means. It meant, in this particular case, that David could do anything he undertook, but that he was inclined to undertake so many things that it seemed little likely he would ever settle down upon any one in such a way as to make it of any practical use.

With Willie and Boyd there had been no trouble. They had sowed and reaped, fed the pigs and tended the cattle on their father's farm, in the good old way, till they came of age, and then he had set them up with snug little farms of their own.

He would have been glad to do the same for David, but though he loved every creature on the place like his brother, they might all have starved while he was hunting the woods for mosses and minerals, and little he recked of seed-time and harvest when lying under a shady tree reading the "Arabian Nights," or a book of foreign travels. Both were equally real to him, and both filled his head with visions of little in accord with the every-day life of a farmer.

Then nothing would do but he must go abroad and see some of the wonderful things of which he had read, and once his father allowed him to take a sea voyage, in the hope that it would cure him of his fancies. But unfortunately it did not; it only made him worse.

Being, however, a dutiful son in the main, he kept his wishes to himself, and plodded about on the farm as best he might, varying the scene by making toys for his little brothers, or for the neighbors' children.

These toys were almost always ships, or Chinese pagodas, or leaning towers of Pisa. Lately he had discovered that he could take a watch to pieces and put it together again, and now half the chronometers in the neighborhood were under his care.

"Why don't you set up the business and make money by it?" said his father, frowning at anything that looked like a reasonable means of earning a livelihood.

"I like to do it, father," said he; "I don't want to be paid for amusing myself." And this brings us to the beginning of our story again.

"I can't finish it without a piece of copper wire, and a piece of copper wire can't be found short of Oldport. How vexations!"

Plucking a rose which was nodding its head knowingly at the group, David flung it into Jessie's lap, saying—

"Keep that till I come." Then he strode away, and his tall, slender figure was soon lost behind the row of poplars that skirted the lane.

"Haven't David got back yet?" asked Mr. Golden, as he took his seat at the supper-table that night.

"No," said his wife. "The girls have been to the foot of the lane two or three times to meet him, but he wasn't in sight. I do hope he won't be out after dark with all that money."

"I most wish I hadn't sent him for it," said Mr. Golden. "But then he wouldn't let anybody know he had it; he's bright enough for that."

"Somebody might have been watching him unbeknown," suggested Mrs. Golden.

"Now don't you go to worrying about David," said Faith. "He's like a cat—always lights on his feet. I do wish he'd bring me my ribbon, though; I wanted you to put it on for me, Jess."

"Time enough for that before Sunday," said Jessie, with a lightness which belied her heart.

By-and-by the kitchen clock struck nine, and springing to her feet, Jessie exclaimed: "Oh, my! I didn't think it was so late! Mother will begin to think I am lost, too."

"I'll go with you, if you'll accept an old man's company instead of a young one's," said Mr. Golden.

"I'll go, too," said Faith. "Perhaps we shall meet David on the way."

But although more than once they thought they discerned his lithe form in the distance, it proved to be only the swaying shadow of a poplar.

"He means to show me that I was too forward in saying what I did," said Jessie to herself, when she had bade her friends good-night; "but when he does come, I'll show him that I meant nothing at all, that I will. As to the rose, I've a good mind to throw it away, snatching it from her belt. But perhaps he has a good excuse; and, anyhow, the rose isn't to blame, poor thing."

"I wish I knew where that boy was," said Mrs. Golden, taking a last look into the night, as her husband went to bat the front door preparatory to going to bed.

"I can tell you where he is," said Faith, confidently. "It isn't the first time, by good dea."

"I know he and Tom are great crooks," said Mrs. Golden. "It's singular, too, for they ain't a bit alike."

"I wish they were more alike in some things," said Mr. Golden.

"I hope you don't mean to say that Tom's superior to our David! Why, he can't shake a stick at him!"

"I mean to say that I wish David had some of Tom's prudence, and his careful saving ways."

"They say he's a dreadful mean critter," remarked Mrs. Golden.

He was on the eve of marriage with Jessie Wane.

Be so too hard upon the poor girl, for she firmly believed that David was dead. And do not even the scriptures affirm that a living dog is better than a dead lion?

But the Golden had rather gone behindhand, for the loss of the money was a serious one to David's father. He had withdrawn it from the bank for the purpose of purchasing certain lands adjoining his own called the "Orchard Farm," which he had long desired to possess, and he had not as much more in the world.

Such was the state of things when Tom and Jessie came to pass the evening with the Golden—the last evening before their marriage.

"So to-morrow is the wedding-day," said Mr. Golden, with an attempt at jocularity which ill harmonized with his careworn countenance.

"And to-morrow is four years since David went out that door and never came back," said Mrs. Golden; then, regarding the bride pair mournfully, "How strangely things come about! I used to hope that David—"

"Hush, mother! don't talk about that to-night!" whispered Faith, and immediately fell to rallying Tom and Jessie in a way which soon restored the mirth this allusion had interrupted.

By-and-by, a clattering of boots was heard on the porch, and Dick, the Golden's youngest hopeful, burst open the door impetuously, saying:

"Here's a man wants to stay all night. He says he's awful tired, and can't walk to the tavern."

"He's welcome," said Mr. Golden; for applications of this kind were not uncommon in those primitive days.

"How do you know but what he's a thief, father?" said Faith.

The amused glance the traveler, who now appeared in the doorway, cast on Faith, showed that he had heard her remark, but, nothing daunted, she continued:

"Well, you never can tell by a man's appearance what he is."

"Very true, but you can keep an eye on me," said he, laughing.

"Don't mind what our Faith says. She has a lawless tongue," said Mr. Golden. "Be seated, sir."

The traveler was a young man, with a beard which had never known the touch of a razor, between which and the crown curls on his forehead little could be seen save a pair of hazel eyes and a straight, handsome nose. He did not seem averse to conversation; but Faith, not relishing her father's introduction, devoted her lawless tongue to Tom and Jessie, turning her back on the stranger, and quite shutting him out of the group.

He discussed the usual theme of weather and politics with Mr. Golden; then, noticing that Dick was busily engaged with his jack-knife, he asked:

"What are you doing, bub?"

"I'm fixing my top. I made it myself. It's a good top, too, only it won't go," said Dick.

"That's a bad fault. Let me see what I can do," said the traveler; and taking his knife from his pocket, he whittled a little here and a little there.

"Now I guess it will keep its center of gravity," said he, and pulling the string, he sent it whirling across the floor in a manner that brought forth yells of delight from Dick.

"Why, it's nothing but a streak! There she goes!—under the table—under the chairs! Take care of your toes, girls!" As the gyrations grew slower, and finally, when it seemed about to topple over, he picked it up, drew a long breath, and ejaculated:

"That beats all!"

"Yes, she's all right now," said the young man. "It's a nice thing to know how to make your own tops. I suppose you made that little craft over the mantelpiece, too."

"Oh, no, I can't make ships. David made that."

"And who is David?"

"He was my brother, that got killed."

Here Dick's reply was brought to a sudden close by a thrust from Faith's elbow, accompanied by a "Hold your tongue!"

"I ain't a-goin' to hold my tongue," snapped Dick, rubbing the wounded place. "I've as good a right to talk as let you."

"There, there, be quiet," said Mr. Golden, soothingly. "It's a sad story, sir, and we don't often allude to it. David was our son, who was murdered three years ago."

"Murdered! How, pray?"

"Well, that we don't know, for his body was never found."

"But what motive could any one have for so foul a deed?"

"The usual motive, sir; money. He had quite a large amount just taken from the bank."

"And of this money you never found any trace?"

"None at all; the cunning villain looked out for that."

"And your son was—excuse me—quite trustworthy—not wild or roving at all; in short, he was entirely above suspicion?"

"He was, to everybody that knew him," said Mr. Golden, with dignity, "but an angel could not escape the tongue of slander."

"Then there were those who charged him falsely?"

"There were. They charged him with running off with the money."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the young man.

"We always hoped we might trace the villain by a curious old watch David had with him; and sometimes I think it will be the means of bringing him to light."

"What kind of watch?"

Mrs. Golden, who had all this time hardly taken her eyes off the stranger, now came forward, and said, eagerly—

"It was a large silver watch, a hundred years old, and it had a queer picture on the back—I never could quite make out what it was—but I should know that watch in Guinea."

"Was it anything like that—mother?" holding his own up before her.

"My son, my son!" cried she. "I knew it was David's watch, but I thought he was dead—dead!—and the poor, joyful mother covered her face with her apron and wept aloud."

Pale and trembling, Tom Penhallow leaned on the back of his chair for support.

"Then you were not lost in the Tempest?" said he.

"Wrecked, but not lost," said David. "When calmed was in some measure restored, they all sat down, and David told the story of his disappearance."

"When I left the watchmaker's," said he, "I chanced to meet an old friend, and we strolled together down to the wharf to see what was going on. The first person we saw there was my old captain, who was just about to sail for Liverpool. He was in great trouble because his clerk was taken sick at the last moment, and immediately offered the position to me."

"It was a first-rate chance, and I only hesitated because I could not come home and say good-by; but then it was a short voyage, and I was certain of your consent, so I trusted the package of money and a letter to my friend, who promised to deliver it that very night."

"I think now that I was hasty. I thought then that I was doing right. We set sail. The 'Tempest' was wrecked when ten days out; but I had the good fortune to be picked up by a vessel bound for Boston. It was long before we reached our destination, and when we did, I had nothing but the clothes on my back."

"I thought the wisest thing to do was to go to work and earn something. This I did, and succeeded so well that I got off my return from time to time far beyond my original intention. I wrote whenever an opportunity offered, but it seems no letter was ever received."

"The rest of the story must be told by another, and there sits the only man who can tell it, with a nod at Tom Penhallow."

"Don't be too hard on me," said Tom. "I mean to deliver the package safely when I look it; I did, on my soul, but I was busy that night, getting ready to go to Boston, and I thought it would not make any great odds whether I went then or not. You often stayed away over night, so I thought they wouldn't worry."

"Well, I hadn't all the money I wanted to buy my stores, and I used some of that; but I meant to replace it; but a man that was owing me did not pay, so I couldn't just then; and by-and-by I saw a notice that the Tempest was wrecked, and all aboard lost."

"So I said to myself, or Satan whispered it in my ear, 'Who'll be wiser if I keep the money?' The rest you know, so where's the use of going over it? I've played my game and lost it, so there's the end."

Yes, Tom had played his game and lost it—lost reputation, lost friends, lost his promise, and in a short time he had left Oldport for good, driven from thence by the force of public sentiment.

As to Jessie, when David asked her if she had kept the rose, she owned that she had, and she assured her that he had brought her back just what she requested—himself. So it was a bargain.

"Didn't I tell you our David always lit on his feet?" said Faith. —Ruth Chesterfield.

Carrying Secret Messages.

A curious list might be made of the strange methods employed in transmitting many important historical messages. The intelligence which enabled Cyrus to overthrow the Median monarchy was conveyed in the body of a hare sent him as a present. The instigator of the Ionian revolt against Persia sent his agent a trusty slave, with verbal orders to shave his head, when the necessary instructions appeared traced on the skin beneath. During Mohammed's wars letters of this kind were frequently placed in the long hair of female slaves.

The medieval fashion of writing in ink which only became visible when held to the fire is well known; and Cardinal Richelieu surpassed even this by his device of a dispatch whose alternate lines made an entirely different sense from that of the letter as a whole. One of the French chiefs of the French war concealed an important letter in a roasted crab. Warren Hastings, when blockaded in Benares by Chyeta Singh, apprised the English army of his situation by dispatches written upon rolled-up slips of parchment, which his messengers carried in their ears, instead of the quills usually worn there. The letter which recalled Gen. Kaufmann to the relief of Samarcand, when besieged by the Bokhariotes in June, 1868, was stitched up in the sandal of a loyal native. It even existed, though the story certainly savors of Mohammedanism, that a French spy, in 1870, carried a photographic dispatch through the German lines in the hollow of one of his false teeth!

Color in Lawn-Planting.

Mr. Samuel Parsons makes the following suggestions in a paper on "Lawn-Planting for Small Places," in *Saturday Review*. As a rule, also, never plant a large, dark evergreen in front of, and very near, a brilliant, light-colored, deciduous tree, for thus planted it will dwarf and weaken the effect of the latter. On some lawns, however, a few massive, dark evergreens may be used with effect in the extreme, and, if possible, northwest corner of the lot. They will protect and give character to the place, and heighten the effect of the deciduous trees. A striking contrast may be obtained by interspersing a few white birches among, and in front of, these evergreens. They will serve, in this case, to brighten the picture both winter and summer; though usually we prefer not to mix evergreen and deciduous trees. This harmonious and contrasting disposition of color requires careful study, and even perhaps of their different natures there will be always during the season a few gay points in the picture.

"Do hogs pay?" asks an agricultural correspondent. "We know some that don't. They subsist on whatever they find a few weeks ago, and then send it back to the market, and are refused."

A Book Agent Vanquished.

Yesterday evening Professor Stewart went into the Delmonico restaurant and asked Andy, the irrepressible head steward, to bring him some stuffed nutmeg and parsnips. No sooner had the professor fairly seated himself at one of the small tables than a book agent came and took the other side of the board. The two men were strangers, but as a matter of course this book peddler couldn't keep still, and presently made one conversational advance to Stewart.

"Are not these meteorological disturbances somewhat peculiar for these latitudes?"

The professor paused a moment as he was mashing a potato, and replied: "Guess it's about the same thing every year."

"In season's of atmospheric depression alternating with unexpected boreal incursions and rapid changes resultant upon sudden accumulations of moisture, such dispositions of the storm belt are not, in my opinion, entirely uncalculated."

"Exactly," remarked the professor, "fing a fly out of his coffee."

"But," continued the agent, delighted at the style in which he was crowding the professor; "I don't not but that your energetic polarizations of the molecules in the mineral deposits have a attraction for the electrically-charged ous."

At these points the professor, who had been knocked around the ring and bowled to the ropes, so to speak, became fairly roused to his position, and begged for the other's nose as once.

"Ah, exactly, my friend; in the ledge vast deposits of minerals. Found in oceanic matrices and disintegrated by the upheaval of plutonic rock and semi-eruptive chemical processes, mingled with homogeneous debris of porphyry, the molecules of kaolined drites, with a slight potash base, the composition of the feldspar is most affected along the line of the horizontal average and necessarily the liberated side of manganese combining with the proclination of the alkalis which permeate the entire mass, causes a pronounced state of polarization, which cannot fail account for the peculiar attraction in the vicinity. I might further explain intricate chemical properties of the salt by illustrating the—"

By this time, however, the book agent, who during the round had been rationally pated in the jaw, smashed in the nose and bled in the eye, rose from the seat, paid full price for his half-sten men, and shot out of the place. The professor examined the professor, and his pulse regular, no signs of perforation and his mind intact. —Virginia Ven's Chronicle.

The Pot of Gold.

A cobbler in Somersetshire dreamed at a person told him that if he would to London bridge he would meet something to his advantage. He came the same the next night, and a in the night after. He then determined to go to London bridge, and seek his fortune accordingly. When he awoke, he walked about the whole the first day without anything occurring; the next day was passed in a similar manner. He resumed his place the third day, and walked about till evening, when, giving it up as hopeless, he determined to leave London and return home. At this moment a stranger came and said to him: "I have seen you the last three days walking up and down this bridge; may I ask if you are sitting for any one?" "No!" "Then let me know your object in staying here?" "The cobbler then frankly told his reason for being there and the dream that had visited him three successive nights. The stranger then advised him to go some again to his work, and pay no more attention to dreams. "I may as well go," he said, "about six months ago, a dream. I dreamed three nights together that, if I would go into Somersetshire, in an orchard, under an apple tree, I should find a pot of gold; but I did no attention to my dream, and I remained quietly at my business."

"I immediately occurred to the cobbler at the stranger described his own orchard and his own apple tree. He immediately returned home, dug under the apple tree, and found a pot of gold. After this increase of fortune he was enabled to send his son to school, where he learned Latin. When he came home for the holidays, he one day examined the pot which had contained the gold, on which was some writing. He said: 'Father, I can show you what I have learned at school is of some use.' He then translated the Latin inscription on the pot thus: 'Look under, and you will find better.' They did look under, and a larger quantity of gold was found. As the story is a good one, it would be pleasant to fancy it could possibly be true. —The Saturday Review.

Words of Wisdom.

Adversity borrows its sharpest sting on our impatience.

He who adopts a just thought, participates in the merit that originated it.

Nowadays it is easier to believe in hoists than in delicate feelings.

Beauty is no local deity, like the Greek and Roman gods, but omnipresent.

We cannot have fertilizing showers in the earth without a clouded heaven above. It is thus with our trials.

What is the difference between hope and desire? Desire is a tree in leaf, hope is a tree in flower, and enjoyment is a tree in fruit.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Domestic cannibals—Back-biters. A thermometer gains notoriety by degrees.

The California Chinese have two newspapers.

The best known time made by a skater is a mile in 1.56.

When a stag takes to the water he swims for dear life.

Nothing has so many ties binding it to earth as a railroad.

Of course the horse marines are mounted on fleet horses.

Professional beggars look upon every dwelling as an almshouse.

The dentist will make more money per acher than any farmer we ever saw.

"I can beat you all hollow," as the machinist's hammer said to the boiler.

One-fourth of the United States national debt has been paid since the war.

A cemetery called Happy Valley, in Hong Kong, China, is said to be the finest in the world.

The French government has issued a decree that "La Marseillaise" shall be the national anthem.

Last year the United States produced 350,000,000 pounds of cheese and 1,500,000 pounds of butter.

It cannot be that "all flesh is grass." Grass gets its dew—about the only thing that does in this world.

Alabama pays thirty cents a day for feeding prisoners. The total thus paid out last year was \$58,810.92.

Bonquets for parties and balls are now made flat in New York, which prevents their being handed round.

No man ever regretted that he was virtuous and honest in his youth, and kept aloof from idle companions.

There is a very suggestive proverb which declares that "There are a great many asses with short ears."

A correspondent of the London Times says that celery cooked in milk and thickened with flour will cure the rheumatism.

An exchange thinks the time will certainly come when the men will go flying through the air. Well, that's a matter of time.

"Mary, have you given the goldfish fresh water?" "No, ma'am. 'What's the use?' They haven't drunk up what's in there yet."

The Baltimore Gazette says that the first "play house" lighted by gas in the United States was the "Mind Theater" in that city, in 1822 or '23.

There is a small community in Paris, France, calling themselves Mormons, who conform to the practices of the followers of the late Brigham Young.

One who knows says you may talk of your water cures, your movement cures, and your blue-glass cures, but there is nothing like the sinecure, after all.

Such is the universally charitable nature of women that when she finds a man who has no mind of his own she is always willing to give him a piece of hers.

The Chinese encyclopedia meets a long-felt want. No family should be without it. It is published in Peking, and has only 5,020 volumes; price, \$7,500.

A tea dealer in London, who gives away a large number of novels to his poorer purchasers, says that Dickens' works have a demand far ahead of any other stories.

A cowhide horseshoe has been introduced which promises to prove very useful. It is composed of three thick-nesses of cowhide, compressed into a steel mold, and then submitted to a chemical preparation.

In Germany a man who wishes to become a medical practitioner has to pass, some time in the course of his third year's study, an examination in chemistry and physics, botany, zoology, anatomy and physiology, and at the close of his studies he has to spend sometimes as much as a five months' session in passing a final examination in the practical departments.

If you wish to touch the feelings of others by the means of music, your heart must first have been touched by its thrilling power. If you wish to exasperate the other side in the village, you must first listen to the organ-grinder for twenty minutes before giving him two dollars to play the balance of the afternoon for your contemporary. —Utica Observer.

"They tell me Leadville is pretty high up," remarked a Denverite to a visitor from the carbonate field. "High up?" ejaculated the other. "Well, I should say. The air is so thin that you've got to fan it to a corner to get a square breath. Why, I live sorter in a valley, but many a time when I went home at night I had to push a cloud from the front door to get in." —Denver Tribune.

Kerosene for the Hair.

A Milwaukee correspondent of the Chicago Tribune writes in praise of common kerosene as a hair restorer. He says: "The objection to using the oil in its ordinary preparations is the odor. It so quickly evaporates, however, that in half an hour all traces of it will disappear, and the most delicate sense of smell will not be offended thereby. Kerosene certainly will, if used perseveringly, start new hair on places which for years have been as smooth as a glass globe, and when one has long since given up all hope of another crop, Gray hair it turns back to its original color, so no hair-dye could ever make it, and nothing would but kerosene. Use it two or three times a week, rubbing it in with the fingers, and wait patiently for the result. In a few weeks you will observe a fuzz, which is the new hair starting into life, and if the treatment is kept up for a few months you will wish you had known of it long before, and not been bald and gray for so long. When I look at my own head I cannot realize that it is the same old bald pate I have considered my own for so long, and I am so delighted over its renewed glories that I long for every one to go and try for themselves, and see if they too will not be happy in the use of

Kerosene.

This year there were sent through the New York postoffice 181,456 valentines.