

a Frenchman about him. Both were well, yet plainly dressed, but with an amazing profusion of rings on their fingers, set with diamonds, evidently of great value, or else of no value at all.

The survey was, on the whole then, satisfactory, and I buried myself in my paper once more, when to my astonishment, I heard the dark man say to his friend, in plain, unmistakable English: "It is fortunate that we have secured a compartment with so much room in it." I cannot tell you how much pleased I was once more to have the opportunity of speaking a little English, and I soon joined in the conversation. They seemed at first affable, but soon, no doubt, felt the natural distrust which is so characteristic of John Bull on his travels. However, it turned out that although they spoke English, it was here and there interspersed with a slight smattering of "Artemus Wardism." They both belonged to the Northern States, and our reserve soon wore off as we argued out the respective claims of Federals and Confederates. I need not tell you that both my companions had traveled a great deal. I never met an American who had not!

They had gone to the very extremity of the line of rail which was then being laid down from Moscow to the East. They had slept with the workmen in the open air, and snored away quite calmly among a horde of semi-barbarians. Of course, one of them had been to Jerusalem to see how they were getting on with the excavations there. We got on well together, and were on sufficiently intimate terms at the end of the day to agree to sleep in the same carriage. The windows were double, and only half of the double window would open; the seats were thickly cushioned. The sun had been shining in through the double glass upon our unfortunate heads, so that we were only too glad to solace ourselves with iced beer and claret, at the few stations we saw. For miles and miles we went on through thick forests, and without seeing a single house. And then the evening came; and after the sun had set, the air seemed almost as sultry as before. We dined together, and then adjourned to an end compartment of another carriage. A lamp had been lighted in it, and there was a curtain which, when drawn over the lamp, rendered the carriage almost dark. Soon after we left the station where we had dined, a sudden glare of light burst upon us; we felt the train quicken its speed, and in a moment or two we were overpowered by a suffocating smoke. We closed the windows, and found that the fires on each side of us were in flames. Long tongues of fire darted out here and there, and scorched the carriages. If I were an adept at word-painting, I would attempt to describe the scene, but it was far beyond anything I could make you feel or understand. A quarter of a mile or so of this, and we left the fire behind us, only too thankful to have escaped so easily.

And now we began to make our preparations for going to sleep. My two fellow-travelers were evidently old hands at this sort of thing. They took off their coats and folded them into pillows; their collars and ties were neatly pinned to the wall of the carriage; slippers replaced their boots, and after spreading a large silk handkerchief over their coats by way of pillow cases, and getting out their traveling rugs, they were ready for bed. In the netting over my head was placed a small carpet bag belonging to the larger man of the two, whom I will call Douglas. He and Brookes, his companion, lay down on the seat opposite to me, thus leaving me the other seat all to myself; Brookes with his head next to the window, and his face turned towards me, and I with my face turned towards him, so close that I could almost have touched him. Douglas lay on the opposite seat with his head next the other window, and also facing me. This prolix statement is necessary to make you understand my story. Under my head was an overcoat, in the pocket of which reposed a six-barrelled revolver, an old traveling companion, so that by merely putting my hand under my head, I could place my finger on the trigger. However, scarcely a feeling of suspicion crossed my mind. Douglas asked me if I objected to having the curtain drawn over the lamp. "Of course not." This done, we could just see one another, but very indistinctly. Then he lay down again, there was a dead silence.

The train went on and on, not a house to be seen through the thick forests. Suddenly a thought flashed upon me; "What would be easier than to rob a man, and throw him out of the window? He would lie in the forest, and soon the wolves would find him out, and disperse all traces of him, eating his seal-skin waistcoat with as much relish as his carcass." I laughed to myself. "How absurd this is," said I. "I have no reason for suspecting these men." True, they have been whispering together, and their rings were rather too numerous. "But what a fool I am. I will go to sleep; at any rate, I am tired enough."

I had scarcely closed my eyes, when in the stillness I heard a sharp quick sound—"click." I held my breath and listened; every nerve strained to the utmost. "That sounded to me very much like the sound of a pistol being cocked. Absurd; no one carries pistols now. Americans, especially, always carry revolvers." Again, click. "This is the second time," I thought. Still not a trace of any movement. The rug under which Douglas was sleeping at the other end of the carriage, and from which the sound came, did not move. I noiselessly passed my hand under my head, and felt for my six-shooter. Thank God, it was there. I grasped it and laid my hand on the

trigger; and thinking of the favorite plan of shooting a man through one's pocket, I turned the muzzle of my trusty friend towards Douglas. All this without speaking a word.

"He will have the first shot at any rate," thought I; "but I shall be able to return it before he has fired a second. But alone with two men who are doubtless armed, I shall have a poor chance." I cannot tell you the rapidity with which the thoughts went through my mind—thoughts of sin unabsolved strangely intermingled with others of calm, unpytching hate towards my enemy. But I remained silent. Once more a sharp click, I nearly fired—thank God I did not—and then again, click, click, click, in quick succession. "Ah, my friend," thought I, "I see what you are about? you are turning your revolver round, in order to place the caps on the nipples." And again, click, click. I could not help it. I strung myself up to the task, and asked with a cold calmness which makes me almost shudder to think of it: "What the devil is that noise?"

"I am only winding up my watch!" What an idiot I am, and doubtless you will all concur in the statement. Very well; wait a little. I immediately wound up my own watch which had been forgotten, and determined to go to sleep. "What is the use of all these absurd suspicions," I reasoned.

At last, with my hand on my revolver, I went to sleep. I slept well, but awoke suddenly. No! Yes! There, as plain as possible, stood Douglas by my side. The hammer of my revolver was raised within a hair's breadth of the point at which it would fall and strike the cap. Should I fire or not?

In the dead of night to be roused suddenly from one's sleep is startling, but to see a man stooping over you when you do awake, is decidedly very startling, indeed, especially if you have reason to suspect him of bad intentions.

And now, with my finger pressed firmly upon the trigger, but without any attempt to leap to my feet, as I had at first thought of doing, I watched him. He looked hard at me. I did not move, and then I saw him take out something which glittered in the moonlight: it was a key. And then he leaned over me. Then said I with a feeling of rage in my heart: "What on earth are you doing?"

He was so startled that he almost fell backwards. This sudden movement nearly made me fire; and then he answered: "I am only going to take something out of my bag."

This bag, as I told you, was in the netting over my head; hence he was obliged to lean over me to reach it. I said, very bad-temperedly: "Take it down then." He muttered to himself, and got the bag down. He little thought that there was a hair's breadth between him and death. If he could have looked through my rug, he would have seen the muzzle of my revolver pointed to his heart.

He turned aside, keeping an eye on me all the while, and took something from his bag. What it was, I could not see. Then he went back and lay down, and all was still. What was it he had taken from his bag? I could not sleep; I dared not turn my back to them both. They lay so quietly without a sound of breathing that I was sure they were not asleep. At length, by way of hastening matters, I pretended to sleep; I breathed heavily; I do not know whether I did not give a snore. However, nothing happened. I grew more and more sleepy; I was worn out, ill as I was, with the fatigue of my long journey. Soon, however, the train stopped. This was the only station at which we should pause for the next six or seven hours. I got a strong cup of coffee, and returned. I was determined not to change into another carriage; I was determined to conquer these foolish feelings, no doubt created by the wretched state of my nerves.

I opened the door of my compartment, and paused for a moment near to the seat, where Douglas was lying. That moment, as I afterwards found, nearly cost me my life. With a voice like thunder, Douglas leaped to his feet, and asked me what I was doing.

With inexpressible politeness, I answered that I had been into the station; I wondered if he wished to pick a quarrel with me.

He did not reply, except by a surly grumble. I went and lay down as before; I could not keep awake. At last, giving myself up to my fate, I turned my face to the wall of the carriage, and with my revolver in my hand, went off into a sound sleep. The next morning came. Went into the station and performed our scanty ablutions together. And then, all looking very tired and very thankful day had come, we gradually began to talk with civility to each other.

Douglas asked me what kind of a night I had passed.

I laughed and said: "Not a very good one." "For my part," said he, "I did not sleep a wink the whole night."

At last, the whole reason of these alarms came out. The night before, when we were getting ready for bed, he had noticed the butt of my revolver sticking out of my pocket. This aroused his suspicions. He began, as I had done, to think over what might happen. He thought of me at Baden-Baden with his bank-notes, and of himself lying out in the woods, and of the affection one of those wolves would have shown for a full-sized American; and so his nerves were shaky, just as mine had been. His suspicions were also aroused by the way in which I had asked what the noise was when he was winding up his watch.

At last he could not rest, and going very gently and with great caution, lest he should arouse the slumbering lion with his revolver,

he unlocked his bag, and drew out of it a formidable six-shooter also. He knew of the plan of firing without exposing one's weapon to sight, and expected, he said, to feel my bullet in his body every moment he stood exposed with his arms raised to the netting over my head. Then, when I came in from the station, he was suddenly aroused from a doze, and it was with the greatest difficulty, for a moment, that he refrained from firing. Had either of us given way to our first impulse, we should have probably gone on firing our six barrels at one another until one of us could fire no longer, and then the other would have had to pop the body through the window, and say no more about it, and whether confessing the fact or not, have run a good chance of being sent off to the mines of Siberia, without any more questions being asked. After a mutual explosion of laughter, we became excellent friends, and travelled together in much harmony to Berlin.

The moral I drew from this adventure is, a word and a blow, but the word first.

BIRTH-SONG.

BY WILLIAM FREELAND.

Let winds and waters murmur clear;
More sweet this infant voice to me,
That comes as from the golden sphere
Where thrills the soul of harmony:
Blow tempest, and let thunder roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

Let sceptres flash, and senates shake;
The war-steed neigh, the trumpet blow;
Let banners strike the wind, and make
A splendor where the warriors go;
What heed we? War may rage and roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

Let science glimmer on the brine,
Bind isle to isle, and clime to clime;
And on the ocean's lyric line,
Let lightning twang the psalms of time;
Triumph! Let the music roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

Or, in this soul, serene and clear,
All mortal and immortal shine:
Eternity, a single year,
Thought glowing into light divine:
And, bend the knee! let anthems roll
For God's sweet gift, a virgin soul!

BOOKSHELVES.

Lord Bacon speaks of a man who marries and children as one who has given hostages to time. The image is much more applicable to the man who frequents bookshops and collects in time a large and costly library. The largest family and the most incompetent wife are manageable, portable, and quite inconsiderable matters compared to a large and precious collection of books. Children and wives can mostly walk about more or less, in and out of a house, and into a carriage or train. And if they get wet and damp they can dry themselves, and they will not let the most jolting conveyance damage their backs—in all which particulars they differ from books. It is strange that Lord Bacon should not have given weight to these considerations. Perhaps the fact that his books were a comfort to him and his wife was very much the reverse accounts for his overlooking them. And men were more stationary in those days, and did not so often have to contemplate the removal of a houseful of books. In these locomotive times the feat has to be accomplished not infrequently; and a trial it is to a man's nerve, endurance, and stock of resignation.

It is on these occasions of removal, bad enough under any circumstances, that the whole value of bookshelves is revealed to us. Their silent, unobtrusive service, which we take for the most part without thought, is apt to make us ungratefully forget that without them we might have books but we could not have a library. The breaking-up of a library is the taking to pieces of an organized thing. It is dissection, almost vivisection. The library as library for the time being ceases to exist, and in place of it we have nothing but heaps, bundles, or boxes full of books. The ordered and disciplined array of a well-bound literary army has been exchanged for confusion, disorder, and almost mutiny. The picked corps in russia and morocco, the inferior forces in calf, have all been broken up; they compact and serried ranks, regular and imposing as the spears of a Macedonian phalanx, are dissolved into a demoralized and crestfallen mob of scattered volumes, a rout, a *source qui perd*, of the biblical host. The owner of the host sits amid ruins, more pensive than Marius amid the ruins of Carthage, for he has two reflections which the great consul had not; he is most likely the cause of the ruin himself, having brought it about by change of residence; secondly, he knows that he will have to re-edify the building which has been destroyed, to evolve a new cosmos out of the chaos before him, and he must be very buoyant or very inexperienced if he is not depressed. But before we come to the reconstruction of a library, its packing and transport deserves a few words. We never get a fair idea of the physical bulk of books till we take them from their shelves and begin to pack them up; we then also realize their enormous weight. How are they to be transferred when

their number and the distance they have to go are both considerable? Carpenters can no doubt make packing-cases; but this is not only somewhat costly, but the article supplied is generally needlessly bulky and heavy and the cases after the removal are at once useless and an intolerable lumber. The trade, which very likely knows the best thing to be done, uses discharged tea-chests, and perhaps there is nothing better attainable. The tea-chest has much to recommend it as a means for carrying books. It is made of very thin but very tough wood, such as no native carpenter could turn out. On the other hand, it is apt to present vicious nails which lacerate backs and bindings, and inflict ghastly wounds on margins and leaves, and it generally lacks a cover, which has to be supplied of brittle and flimsy deal. Still the demand for old tea-chests proves that up to the present time they have no rival in the transport of books, and sometimes it is difficult to procure them. Generally they can be had for a shilling each.

But painful as may be the dismantling of a library, it is nothing to its reconstruction. When books in large numbers have arrived at their new home, we realize the task before us of putting them up. We may have brought book-cases from the old house, but ten to one they will not fit the new rooms. And if by a miracle they do, in what "admirable disorder" are our treasures presented to us! Folios and pocket editions side by side, quartos and octavos in adulterous and forbidden conjunction. However, they must be got out and up somehow, or the house is not habitable, and then you are made aware of the tyranny of possession which books can display. That Plautus, which you put on shelf B merely because he was an octavo, and you happened to have come upon a run of octavos, and you must find a lodging for him somewhere, has no right to be there where he is. He is cheek by jowl with Kant and Hegel, and you vow he must find another place among the Latin classics of the dramatists, if you classify by subjects. Yet unless you are one of those overpoweringly energetic people who never put off anything, the chances are he will maintain his position against you for a long while. You can easily pull him out, doubtless, but where is he to go to? Your classical shelf is choked; and as for the dramatic shelf, Dyce's Shakespeare and recent curiosity about the Spanish drama have made it hopeless to seek a refuge there. Another trial awaits the bibliophile who has yielded to the too tempting attractions of small Pickering's, Dildots, or even of the Bibliothèque Elzévirienne. These gems of typography are the vermin of libraries. The tiny, imponderable tones easily escape the discipline which their heavier colleagues submit to. On any ordinary shelf they are lost. And then where is one to put them? The natural impulse is to send them up to the upper shelves—to the attics of the book mansion. We cannot have them on the convenient level where books in daily use are lodged. And yet, up aloft there, they are out of sight, and their minute beauties are wasted and disfigured by dust and cobwebs. Perhaps the best plan is to have them, like any other curiosities, in a cabinet or on the table, if the latter can be kept free from new publications.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

DOMESTIC USES OF GAS.

A recent number of *Land and Water* urged the more frequent use of gas for cooking purposes, and described some of the machines now manufactured. Besides this useful employment of gas, it may, with great economy, convenience and advantage, be resorted to for warming purposes. For rooms occasionally used, and in which a means of obtaining an agreeable warmth can be quickly resorted to, nothing is comparable to gas. For heating halls and small conservatories (the latter under certain reservations presently explained) gas-stoves are to be recommended, and as they can now be found in most shops, are free from the objections that have been found heretofore to exist. In selecting a gas-stove, the first essential is, that the combustion shall be on the atmospheric principle. The peculiarity of this is that the gas opens at a certain regulated distance from the burners, and when the pressure is turned on carries with it an admixture of atmospheric air before being ignited. When this adjustment has been properly made, the combustion is perfect, and all impurities are consumed. No smell whatever should arise from an atmospheric gas-burner, &c., from the gas itself; when effluvia is perceptible, it will have been caused by the material of which the stove is made, or by superheating its surface. The proper materials for the casing of a gas-stove are terra-cotta or wrought iron. Cast iron should under no circumstances whatever be allowed, for its properties when heated have been shown to be most deleterious. For a small stove terra-cotta is excellent, and moreover, is cheap and pleasant-looking. A very good atmospheric stove of small size, with terra-cotta casing, can be bought for 10s. 6d., and any gasfitter or smith can make the necessary attachments to the nearest gaspipe or burner. All gas-stoves should be supplied with a saucer or pan for evaporation of water; this should be kept full, and it will be found that the over dryness of hot air generally obtained from gas-stoves is thus prevented. A teaspoonful of Condry's fluid to the proportion of a gallon of water can be recommended as most healthful and pleasant, if used to replenish the evaporating saucer. The