

NATURAL GAS.

BY OZIAS MIDSUMMER.

The mistress and Marthy were taking a doze; The maid in the kitchen was mending her hose. The master was sleeping out under a tree, When Sarah Ann's Amos was bit by a flea. That was looking about for a place where he could be boring for natural gas.

The flea struck a vein that caused Amos to spout, It drew twenty-one of his corpuscles out; Then tried Sarah Ann for a mite of dessert, But carefully, so the supply not to hurt. So lit on the mouth of the dear little flit. On the seat of her natural gas.

It punctured the surface, it stuck in its drill, But drew it out quickly, but not at its will; For the well was a gusher, and blew it in haste From the hole it had dug in the powder and paste.

It got more than it wanted, more than a taste Of Miss Sarah Ann's natural gas.

The gas which escaped was a talk in a dream, And had for its subject, its object, and theme, The kisses of divers and sundry young men Which Sarah Ann's lips had kissed now and then, And seemed to lament that her Amos had been Slow in drilling for natural gas.

The joy of the maiden beamed bright as she spake, Her eyes were asleep, but her soul was awake. She thought that the hole which the little flea bored Was a kiss of her lover, her modest young lord, She thought that at least she had got Amos floored; He was boring for natural gas.

A moment sly Amos regretted the day The gas-inclined insect had jumped in their way, And then all his bashful declinings eschewed, His lips to her lips he cemented and glued, He fondled the beauty, her tiny ear chewed. He was boring for natural gas.

CHICAGO, Ill.

HE BEGGED FOR MERCY.

A WITNESS' STORY.

During the month of February, 1853, Seth Damon, of Acton, instituted an action at law against Gabriel Butterworth, of the same town, for the recovery of thirty thousand dollars, of which he claimed that said Butterworth had defrauded him. The circumstances were these;

Butterworth owned and kept the principal store in Acton, and though he had never been regarded as an exemplary gentleman, his honor in business had not been impugned. Those who had the faculty of looking upon the undercurrents of human actions decided that he was a man not bound by honor, but who understood the laws of self-interest too well to be guilty of small meannesses in business. What he was capable of doing on a grand scale was not mooted until the occurrence of which I am about to speak.

Seth Damon had removed from Edison to Acton in the fall, and had purchased the iron works. Shortly after concluding the purchase he had a payment of thirty thousand dollars to make, and late on a Saturday afternoon he arrived from New York with the money—part of it in bank notes and part of it in gold. When he arrived he found that the parties to whom the money was to be paid had left town, and would not return till Monday. Mr. Butterworth had the only reliable safety-vault in town, and to Mr. Butterworth Damon took the thirty thousand dollars, asking permission to lodge it in his vault over the Sabbath, which permission was readily and cheerfully granted.

During Sunday night the people of the village were aroused by the alarm of fire; and upon starting out it was found that the alarm came from Butterworth's store, but Mr. Butterworth had been active. He had discovered the fire in season, and, with the assistance of his boys, had put it out before much damage had been done. Upon looking over the premises it was found that the fire had not only been the evident work of an incendiary, but that it had been set in several different places.

"How fortunate," said the owner, "that I discovered it in season."

But very soon another discovery was made. The safety-vault had been broken open, and every dollar it had contained stolen away! Here was alarm and consternation. Gabriel Butterworth seemed fit to go crazy.

"For myself I care not," he cried. "A few hundreds were all I had in there; but my friend had a great sum!"

Immediate search for the robber, or robbers, was instituted, and word was sent far and near to all Sheriffs and their deputies, and to the police of the cities.

Now it had so happened that on that very Sunday evening—or, I may say, Sunday night, for it was near midnight—I, John Watson, had been returning from my brother's, in Dunstable. I had left my hired team at the stable, and on my way to my boarding-house I passed the store of Mr. Butterworth. In the back yard of the store was a horse trough, and, being thirsty, I stepped around that way to get a draught of water. As I stooped to drink at the spout of the fountain I saw a gleam of light through a crevice in the shutters of one of the store windows. Curiosity impelled me to go and peer through; for I wondered who could be in there at that hour of a Sunday night. The crevice was quite large, made by a wearing away of the edges of the shutters where they had been caught by the hooks that held them back when open, and through it I looked into the store. I looked upon the wall within which the safety-vault was built; and I saw the vault open, and I saw Gabriel Butterworth at work therein. I saw him put large packages into his breast pocket, and I saw him bring out two or three small canvas bags, and set them upon the floor by the door that opened toward his dwelling. As I saw him approaching this outer door a second time I thought he might come out, and I went away. It

was an hour afterward that I heard the alarm of fire. And it was not until the following morning that I heard of the robbery of the safe.

I was placed in a critical position; but I had a duty to perform. I went to Mr. Damon, and told him what I had seen; and also gave him liberty to call upon me for my testimony in public when he should need it. Until I should be so called upon I was to hold my silence.

While the officers were hunting hither and thither, Mr. Damon kept a strict watch upon the movements of Mr. Butterworth, and at length detected him in the act of depositing a large sum of money in a bank in Buffalo. His action immediately followed, and Butterworth was arrested.

This was the way matters stood when I was summoned to appear before the Grand Jury at Wiltonburg. I went there in company with Mr. Damon, and secured lodgings at the Sabine House. It was a small inn, well and comfortably kept, and frequented by patrons of moderate means. There were two public houses of more fashionable pretensions in the place.

It was on the afternoon of Monday, the 14th day of February, that I took quarters at the Sabine House, and after tea I requested the landlord to build a fire in my room, which he did, and he also furnished me with a good lamp. It was eight o'clock, and I sat at the table engaged in reading, when someone rapped upon my door. I said, "Come in," and a young man named Laban Shaw entered. This Shaw I had known very well as a clerk of Gabriel Butterworth, but I had never been intimate with him from the fact that I had never liked him. He must have seen the look of displeasure upon my face, for he quickly said:

"Pardon me, Mr. Watson. I don't mean to intrude. I have come down to be present at the examination tomorrow—summoned by Butterworth's man, of course—and I got here too late to get a room with a stove in it; and, worse still, I must take a room with another bed in it, and with a stranger for company. And so, may I just warm my fingers and toes by your fire, and leave my carpet bag under your bed?"

He laughed when he spoke of the carpet bag; but yet he did not know what sort of a faculty his stranger room-mate might have for getting up and walking off in the night.

Of course I granted him his request, and he put his carpet bag under my bed, and then sat down by my stove, and we chatted sociably enough for half an hour or more without once alluding to the business which had brought the pair of us to Wiltonburg. His conversation was pleasant, and I really came to like the fellow; and I thought to myself that I had been prejudiced against him without cause. At length he arose, and bade me good-night, and went away, and shortly afterward I retired.

I had been in bed but a little while, when another rap upon my door disturbed me; and to my demand of what was wanted I received answer from Laban Shaw. He bade me not to light a lamp. He had only come for his nightgown. He could get it in the dark. I arose and unlocked my door, and his apologies were many and earnest. He always slept, in winter, in a flannel nightgown, and he had thoughtlessly left it in his carpet-bag. He was sorry—very sorry. He had thought to try to sleep without it rather than disturb me, but his room was cold, and—

I cut him short, and told him there was no need of further apology; and while he fumbled over his bag, I went to the stove to make double assurance that the fire was all right. I offered to light a match for him, but he said he had got his dress and all was right. He then went out, and I closed and locked the door after him, and then got back into bed.

But I was not to sleep. I had been very sleepy when Shaw disturbed me; but an entirely different feeling possessed me now. First came a nervous twitching in my limbs—a "creepy" feeling, as some express it—that sensation which induces gaping and yawning, but which no amount of yawning could now subdue. By-and-by a sense of nightmare stole upon me; and, though perfectly awake, a sense as of impending danger possessed me. At length, so uncomfortably did I become in my recumbent position, that I arose and lighted my lamp, resolved to replenish my fire, and dress myself, and see if I could read away my nervous fit.

My lamp was lighted, and as I returned to the bedside for my slippers, my attention was attracted by a string which lay upon the carpet—a string leading from the bed to the door. I stooped to examine it, and found it fast at both ends. I brought the lamp and took a more careful survey. The string was a fine silken trout line, new and strong, one end of which disappeared beneath the bed and the other beneath the door. In my then present condition I was suspicious of evil, and my senses were painfully keen. Raising the hanging edge of the coverlet I looked under the bed. The carpet bag, which Laban Shaw had left lay there, partly open, with the silken line leading out from it. What could it mean? Had the man accidentally carried the end of the line away with his night-dress without noticing it? I drew the bag out from beneath the bed, and as I held its jaws apart I saw, within, a double-barreled pistol, both hammers cocked, bright percussion caps gleaming upon the tubes, while the silken line, with double end, was made fast to the triggers! And I saw that the muzzles of the pistol barrels were inserted into the end

of an oblong box, or case, of galvanized iron. And I comprehended, too, that a very slight pull upon that string might have discharged the pistols—and, furthermore, that a man outside of my door might have done that thing!

For a little time my hands trembled so that I dared not touch the infernal contrivance; but at length I composed myself, and went at work. First, I cut the string with my knife; and then, as carefully as possible, I eased down the hammer of the pistol, after which I drew it from the iron case. I had just done this when I heard a step in the hall outside my door. Quick as thought I sprang up, and turned the key, and threw the door open; and before me, revealed by the light of my lamp, stood Laban Shaw. He was frightened when he saw me, and trembled like an aspen. I was stronger than he at any time, and now he was as a child in my hands. I grasped him by the collar, and dragged him into my room; and I pointed the double-barreled pistol at his breast; and I told him I would shoot him as I would shoot a dog if he gave me occasion.

He was abject and terrified. Like a whipped cur he crawled at my feet, and begged for mercy. His master had hired him to do it with promise of great reward. It had transpired that my testimony before the jury would be conclusive of Butterworth's guilt, and Butterworth had taken this means to get rid of me. In his great terror, the poor accomplice made a full confession; and when he had told all I released my grasp. He begged that I would let him go; but I dared not—my duty would not allow it. I rang my bell, and in time the hostler, who slept in the office, answered my summons. I sent him for an officer, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing my prisoner led safely away.

On the following day the carpet-bag was taken before the Grand Jury and the iron case examined by an experienced chemist, assisted by an old armor from the arsenal. It was found to contain a fulminate of mercury, mixed with bits of iron; and it was the opinion of both the chemist and the armor that the power of the explosive agent, had it been ignited as it was placed, beneath my bed, would not only have been sufficient to blow me to atoms, but that it would also have literally stripped and shivered to fragments all of the house above it!

And a single pull of that silken string would have been sufficient to this horrible end! And but for my nervous waking—my incubus of foreboding—the destroyer would have come; the fatal cord would have been touched, the mine sprung, and I should have been launched into eternity as upon the lightning's bolt!

And so Gabriel Butterworth did not procure the destruction of my testimony, but through that testimony the Grand Jury found cause for indictment of far graver character than had at first been anticipated, and of those graver charges he was convicted. Seth Damon received back the full sum he had intrusted to the false man's care and shortly afterward I entered into business with him, and to-day Seth Damon and I are partners. Laban Shaw came out from prison and went to Idaho. I have not heard of him since. Gabriel Butterworth did not live to serve out his full term of sentence.

Dogs of High Degree.

ERILY, it is better to be a rich man's dog than a poor man's child, as far as care and creature comforts go, and it is probable there is more money spent upon fine dogs in this country than would

rear and educate ten thousand children. The dog is a noble animal and, doubtless the most intelligent of any; and possessed of much reasoning power, but dogs could dispense with some of the good things which fall to their lot and be the better off for it; for instance, gold, silver and jeweled collars, and satin and velvet and embroidered baskets, cushions, and blankets.

The style in dogs changes every six months for fashionable women, and just now the caprice runs toward black poodles, shaved in fantastic manner. This is the best kind of dogs to teach tricks, as they have a well-developed sense of humor, and this is the kind of a dog that always wears the white ruffie and plays clown in dog circuses, and they generally manage to keep up a circus wherever they are.

When men keep dogs it is done either from love of sport of some kind in which a dog is indispensable, or from loneliness, or lack of human sympathy, or downright cynicism, and a dog is a quiet, unobtrusive companion, true and faithful, and above all in perfect harmony with all his master's moods without a jarring note.

A woman keeps dogs for different reasons. For sport, if inclined that way; for fashion's sake, to make herself remarkable among the women, as a sort of shield against love-making on the part of her admirers, and as a sort of living object, a cross between a doll and a live baby, on which to expend her exuberant affection and her natural flow of endearing terms. A woman finds a dog an excellent foil, and a caress or a slap often turns an embarrassing situation into harmless channels.

SURROUNDINGS do not seem to mar the bliss of lovers, for a kiss in a cemetery is just as sweet as one in a seminary.

LETTERS FROM THE CORNERS.

NECK OR NOTHIN' HALL, KILKENNY CORNERS, 1889.

R. EDITUR: Es I was a sayin' in my last, Sally Boggs was there to go long with us. I warn't overly tickled to hev her, fur she often ses to me, ses she:

"Mis Scooper, you don't know what a good man you've got, fur you hain't never had no xperiance, but I tell you Willam Henery air one in a thousan, an I ort to no."

Good laws! I she'd think she ort, fur she has hed fore partners an is a lookin' around right smart fur number five, an if I were to die she'd try her best to ketch Willam Henery, but thank fortune, I'm pretty toable healthy an there haint no widder of fore men a goin to take my place rite off—no, not enways soon, they won't.

So when she were there ready to go long, I was a leetle mite cool, not clear cold and hotty, but jest moderate cool-like.

I were a leetle bit nervy fur feer the keers would run offen the track, or sumthin' else desperit id happen. I want no ways cumfertable at furst, an when I seen Willam Henery a talkin to a cupple of slick lookin' strangers I was afraid hed git into sum sort of a scrape.

An he did.

Sally had noticed the strangers to, an she hunched me an whispers:

"Sake's alive, Hester Ann, ain't them to men Mr. Scooper is a talkin to jest to hevly fur eny thing; an look, they air a cummin over this way. I feel that I hev met my fate! Is my hat on strait, an dew I look jest sad an sorrierful enough fur one that has been recently bereaved?" ses she, all of a twitter. I tol her she looked all right es fur es I cood see, and then Willam Henery he kin up an ses he, tickled an a little dog stuffed with taller:

"Hester Ann, I'll bet you kaint tell me who them two fellers is."

I looked the men camly in the eye, an I see that they were dressed fit to kill, an I see that I didn't know 'em, neither. At first I thot that one of 'em might be Lemuel Martin, but I see his eyes was black, while Lem's was gray.

"No," ses I; "I don't no 'es I've ever seen neither one of 'em."

"Well, thare old frens 'o yourn, though you havn't seen 'em sence they were chilid. This one is Sam Murphy, an' this one is Lemuel Martin." I coodn't make it seem natural, but I didn't like to say nothin' es long es Sally and Willam Henery was so talkin' up with 'im.

Well, purty soon Lemul says: "Well, Mr. Scooper, les hev a little game of guess," ses he, "like button-bottom," an he takes out three little boxes and a button, an' continues: "Now, I'll put this button in one of these boxes an' the rest of you kin guess which one it's in, an' the one that guesses it may hev a five dollar gold piece," an he laid one down.

"I'll bet \$5 I kin tell," ses Sam.

"An so'll I," ses Willam Henery, though I tred on his toe an shuk my head at him.

"Me too," ses Sally, a simperin; an when they guessed why Willam Henery he gessed it an then Lem sed hed bet twenty an they bet twenty all aroun me a trampin Willam Henery's toe an a shakin my hed at the widder. Well they didn't nobuddy gess it that time, an I jest rose up an collered Lem, an ses I: "Drap that munny" an he drapped it. "Now," ses I sturnly, a shakin him, "you haint no more Lemul Martin than I be an you no it. You git!"

An ye got.

Yes, Mister Editur, he went as fast as he cood an Willam Henery an the Widder Boggs was purty thankful I was there.

I read the papers, I do.

Well, an we got to Matilda Arrabellas that nite. So no more at present.

HESTER ANN SCOOPER.

Her Little Game.

Mrs. Gall (in dry-goods store)—I wish, if you please, that you'd give me samples of six or seven different patterns in surah silks and a few samples of colored velvet—a friend of mine would like them; and I'd like a sample of this green India silk. I want a dress of some kind, and a sample of this figured silk, too, please, and one of this pink satin. Thanks. I'll decide soon about the dress.

Mrs. Gall (outside the store)—One, two, three, five, eight, eleven, fifteen, nineteen perfectly lovely samples in all! Six or seven more as large as these will make a whole block for my new crazy quilt. I'll go around to Ribbon & Linnen's and get them before I go home.—Drake's Magazine.

He Silenced the Crowd.

A number of persons were talking about telescopes, and each professed to have looked through the "biggest in the world." One after another told of the powerful effect of the respective telescopes.

At last a quiet man said, mildly, "I once looked through a telescope. I don't know as it was the largest in the world. I hope it wasn't. But it brought the moon so near that we could see the man in it gesticulating and crying out, 'Don't shoot! Don't shoot!' The old fellow thought it was a big cannon that we were pointing at him."

The quiet man then subsided, and so did the rest of them.

OUR WHEAT AND CORN.

THE GOVERNMENT ESTIMATES ON THE YIELD OF GRAIN.

A Better Showing in Regard to Wheat and Corn—Wheat Yield by States—Dakota's Output of Grain and Vegetables.

The department of agriculture reports the general percentage of the condition of corn at 91.7, against 90.9 a month ago; potatoes, 77.9, against 86.8 last October; buckwheat, 90, against 92.1 last year; tobacco, 80.7, against 85.7 in 1882. The preliminary estimate of yield of an acre is 12.5 for wheat, 11.9 for rye, and 22.2 for barley.

The last month has been favorable for corn. Slight frost north of 40 degrees injured late corn, but the percentage of damage was generally very small, as the crop was well matured in the third week of September. Potatoes were injured east of the Alleghenies by excess of moisture