

AN OLD LADY'S CUNNING.

Near the small town of Decise, in Nivernois, France, the family of La Brienne had resided for many generations. After the Revolution they were greatly reduced, but lived in the old chateau, positively refusing to cast off their pride and engage in any occupation that might yield emolument.

Marguerite, one of the daughters, alienated her family from her forever by marrying a clerk in a mercantile house, and her name was never mentioned by any member of the family. But Marguerite's husband rose step by step, until he became a partner in his firm, and then planted himself in Paris, where he rapidly acquired an immense fortune. In 1865 he retired from business, and he and his wife—all their children having died—went to reside near Reims. In 1882 Monsieur Trevoux died, and his widow came into possession of all his estate, valued at many millions of francs.

It must not be supposed that the brothers and sisters of Mme. Trevoux had failed to watch with envy and regret the growing wealth of their relative—with envy, because it was an ingredient in their nature, and with regret, because they had cast her off and her prosperity would never benefit them. At the time of M. Trevoux's death—Henri—but his three children and the seven sons and daughters of two sisters were all occupants of the chateau, existing in the same way in which their predecessors had existed. Charles St. Dinan, a son of the sister, had studied medicine, but he was not allowed by his relatives to practice his profession, and, at the age of thirty, was passing his life in idleness at Decise.

When M. Trevoux died a consultation was held among the relatives of Mme. Trevoux as to the best course to pursue, so as to secure for themselves her wealth at her death. It was finally arranged that Charles St. Dinan should go to Champagne and see how the land lay. He was to take every means to preserve his incognito, and to return as soon as possible with a full and accurate account of all things pertaining to the widow, who was now verging on eighty and in the ordinary course of nature could not last long.

When Charles reached Reims he learned that she was avaricious and grasping and that she only thought was to hoard money and to live as long as possible. She lived in good style, but kept no company, and was seldom visited by any one except her lawyer. Her property, so far as could be ascertained, was chiefly in rents and stocks, though the estate on which she lived was worth probably a quarter of a million of francs.

When Charles returned home he reported that his aunt was likely to live for twenty years longer, that she had adopted a girl to whom all her property would descend, and that there was no chance of the La Brienne family profiting in any way by her demise. Shortly after this he made known his resolution of going to Paris and endeavoring to secure a position on an investigation commission which was going to explore certain parts of Africa.

He did not go to Paris, but he went to Reims instead. Here he began to practice his profession as physician. He called on Monsieur Jugon, Mme. Trevoux's lawyer, and consulted him as to a small property belonging to Mme. Trevoux which he thought of buying, and in which, of course, the lawyer was interested. He spoke to the lawyer as though he had a large sum of money at his command.

"I shall stay here if there is any likelihood of my succeeding," he said, "and if I resolve to stay I will buy this property." Now, the lawyer had asked three times as much for the house and land as they were worth, and Charles St. Dinan well knew it; but he was playing a bold game, and the lawyer's good offices were necessary to his success.

"If I could secure three or four wealthy patients," said Charles, "that would go a very great way toward insuring to me prosperity."

The lawyer acquiesced in this sentiment, and it didn't surprise Charles when, in the course of a week, he was summoned to prescribe for Mme. Trevoux. This was what he was aiming at all along. He was very successful in building up the old lady, who was in utter ignorance of his relationship to herself.

"Madame," said he, "you have a splendid constitution, and if you follow good medical advice, you may live for many, many years. I have no hesitation in saying that I can insure twenty more years of life for a certainty, though of course you may live much longer."

The old lady was greatly pleased with this kind of talk, and the result was that Dr. St. Dinan was a daily visitor at her residence, and being able to furnish her with many antidotes to growing feebleness which were not known to the old-fashioned doctor who had previously attended her, he soon obtained great influence over her.

If the remarkable incidents which follow had not been brought to light in a court of justice, they would have been incredible. St. Dinan soon spent most of his time at the chateau, and was freely consulted by Mme. Trevoux on business and other matters besides her health. She was a wonderfully able and acute woman, and somewhat astounded by St. Dinan's ready wit and cunning. He handled her with great judgment, however, and in due time began to put in operation those plans which he had long before formed.

Her valuables were stowed away in a large closet in her bedroom, and this she always kept locked. St. Dinan resolved to possess himself, as a first step, of some jewelry which he knew she possessed. First of all, he induced her to remove her bed into an adjoining room, as it had better ventilation, at the same time showing her that the connecting door could be open, and that all her property would be as safe as though in the room where she slept.

One day he brought a small portmanteau into her parlor and begged the use of her keys, as he said he had lost the one to the portmanteau. He managed to take an impression in wax of the key to the outer door of the room which she had formerly slept in and of the key of the closet.

On the morning preceding his intended raid on the closet, he put an ingredient in the old lady's medicine to make her sleep soundly. Instead of leaving the chateau, he secreted himself in the library, and, when all was still, went up stairs and listened at the old lady's bedroom door. He unlocked the door of the adjacent room with the duplicate key and entered. A faint light was

burning in the bedroom, sufficient to make him see what he was about.

While he was standing in the middle of the room, in a listening attitude, he heard a noise which indicated that Mme. Trevoux was arising from bed. He hastily hid himself behind the window curtains. The next moment Mme. Trevoux, in her nightdress, stalked into the room, with a bunch of keys in her hand. She went straight to the closet, opened it and rummaged about. Then she brought forth a large leather case. Laying it on the floor, she unlocked the door, and, lifting the case, returned to her room. St. Dinan heard her get into bed, and all was silent.

After waiting for about ten minutes St. Dinan stepped cautiously toward the bed and peered at the occupant. There was no doubt that she was asleep, and by her side lay the leather case. St. Dinan was then satisfied that she had walked in her sleep, and was still under the effects of the powerful soporific which he had given her.

He quit the room and left the chateau by a private door which led into the gardens. When he reached home he opened the case, which was simply clasped, and found it empty! Next day, on visiting Mme. Trevoux, he found her in a state of great nervous prostration. She told him that the previous night she had dreamed that some one was robbing her and that she must have arisen in her sleep and procured a certain leather case in which she had a large sum of money and notes. When she awoke in the morning, she found the bundle of notes lying in the bed beside her, but the case was gone. On examining the place where she usually kept it, it was not there.

St. Dinan expressed great surprise, but advised her to say nothing to any one about it, for he was afraid of her mentioning it to Lawyer Jugon, whose suspicions might be aroused.

Almost a month passed before St. Dinan ventured on another attempt at robbery. It was Mme. Trevoux's custom to keep her sleeping apartment and dressing room under lock and key all the time and never to let a domestic enter except in her presence. During the day she spent her time in a small suite of parlors on the ground floor overlooking the front garden, which was arranged in terraces, along which she occasionally strolled. St. Dinan, afraid of another experience similar to the former, and fearful of using a drug to stupefy the old lady, resolved to attempt to get at the valuable contents of the closet by daylight. While the domestics were at dinner he reached the room in safety. He ransacked the closet and stowed away in his pockets several valuable jewels and a large roll of notes of the Bank of France.

He unlocked the closet and was ready to quit the room, when he heard a click. Turning hastily he saw a panel in the wainscoted wall move inward, and the next moment Lawyer Jugon stepped into the room.

Both men were for a moment paralyzed with astonishment, and both grew first pale then red. St. Dinan recovered himself first.

"What means this?" he asked, looking at the lawyer sternly.

"I came to watch you," was the answer, but the lawyer's lips were very dry, and he found it hard to enunciate.

"You came hither by a secret door," said St. Dinan.

"And how did you come?" the lawyer asked.

St. Dinan could say nothing, and the two men looked at each other. The lawyer, who was the more accomplished villain, was the first to understand the situation.

"I think," said he, "we are both on the same mission. Let us work together."

"In what way?" asked St. Dinan, rapidly losing his assumed dignity.

"In making all we can out of Mme. Trevoux," was the reply.

"Agreed," said St. Dinan; "here is my hand upon it."

And the rogues shook hands upon their nefarious bargain.

"What have you got?" asked the lawyer.

"Let us get away from here," said St. Dinan; "we may be discovered or overheard."

"Follow me, then," said Jugon, and they passed through the open panel, which Jugon closed, and soon reached an underground passage, at the entrance to which stood a lamp.

Taking the lamp, Jugon led the way, and in a few minutes they reached a floor. On touching a spring the door opened, and they entered a small chamber of solid masonry.

"See," said Jugon, as the door closed, "you could not tell it from one of the huge blocks which form the wall. This is the ice house, and our way out is through that door."

He pointed to a thick wooden door, which he opened with a brass key, and they passed into a small copple.

"You have no hat," said Jugon.

"That is true," replied St. Dinan. "How far am I from the chateau?"

"Go up to the end of the copple, climb a low wall, and you will be in the garden," said Jugon. "No one will think it strange for you to be in the garden hatless. Then get a hat and come and join me."

It is not needful to recount all the conversation between these two rascals. Jugon recommended the return of what St. Dinan had stolen, as the loss might be discovered.

He disclosed to St. Dinan how he had become thoroughly acquainted with the secrets of the chateau, when a boy, as he was the son of the former steward, and how he had recently ascertained where Mme. Trevoux kept her valuable papers, etc. He had procured a duplicate key to the closet, and had within three months removed stocks of great value and replaced them with papers of no value. Now he thought it was nearly time to clear out what was left, then they could quit the country before the theft was discovered.

Ever since the circumstance of the missing leather case the mind of Mme. Trevoux had been on the rack. She had searched her closet and had discovered the fact that the stocks had been abstracted and worth less papers substituted. Some one, she knew, who had her confidence was robbing her, and her suspicions fell upon the doctor.

If she disclosed her mistrust in any way, how easy for him to poison her. True, she had never taken his medicine since that night, but then there might be many ways known to a physician of introducing poison into the human system of which she was ignorant. So she resolved to disarm all suspicion on the doctor's part by treating him with the utmost apparent confidence.

Then she secretly dispatched a letter to Ceylon, to a M. Leconte, who had formerly been a clerk in her husband's employment.

M. Leconte obeyed her urgent summons, and in due time secretly reached Reims.

When he was informed of the circumstances of the robbery he quietly waited on the chief of police and arranged with him to be at the chateau at a certain hour. When St. Dinan arrived, as usual, Mme. Trevoux received him graciously. Then entered Leconte and the chief. The business was brief.

"M. St. Dinan," said Leconte, "I am Mme. Trevoux's friend. This is the chief of police; Mme. Trevoux has been robbed of valuable property, and we have reason to suspect you? What have you to say?"

St. Dinan had nothing to say. He pleaded that he was Mme. Trevoux's nephew, and confessed his association with Jugon in the crime. Jugon was speedily captured and most of the stocks were recovered. Mme. Trevoux's nephew told the story in court as it is told here, and he and Jugon were sent to prison for ten years each.

SAM JONES' SAYINGS.

"Every man is a freeman until he reaches the boundary line of license. As soon as he passes that line is a slave of the deepest dye."

"I don't care what you preach in Boston, some one will be with you, for every belief and disbelief under the sun is there represented."

"I am not orthodox. I believe that man is a lost sinner and Jesus Christ a divine Saviour. If I talk with a man and he admits that two and two are four, I will undertake to teach him mathematics. If he says two and two are six, I won't argue with him."

"The great difference between Bob Ingersoll and many Methodists and Baptists is that Ingersoll says, 'I don't believe this and I won't have anything to do with it,' and the others say, 'I do believe this' and don't have anything to do with it. Another difference is that Ingersoll gets \$500 a night; the others get nothing and board themselves."

"There are too many men in this world trying to take a right cut on a straight road."

"Man's power to love determines his immortality."

"Show me a man who doesn't believe and I'll show you a weakling. Faith is the traces on a horse, pulling the load; doubt is the holding back straps. Infidelity is Mr. Nobody going nowhere. Just a great big mouth."

"About half the church is singing 'Oh to be nothing, nothing,' and it turns out mighty near God's truth."

"God's storehouses are all along the pathway of a good man. I go to church for marching orders, not for rations."

"I'd as soon try to make a circus tent out of my coat, as to try to get a suit of religion out of the spirit of some prayer meetings."

"I've thought sometimes that if a preacher were only sugar and milk I would fold his church about him; he would make some of the nicest ice cream in the world. They put a preacher in the ice box and then curse him because he won't sweat."

"The worst enemy God has to-day is whiskey, and the preacher that does not speak his mind on the subject is the most worthless preacher in the world."

"Stagnation is the last stage this side of damnation and most of you have got there. When you have a law on your statute books that you can't enforce you have anarchy already begun; when you have a law that you won't enforce communism is already established. A community that does not enforce one law may come to the time when it can't enforce one."

In speaking of a typical opponent of the laws requiring Sunday observance, he said: "Put a knife in him and four gallons of beer will run out."

"If I wanted to muster an army that the devil would not let into perdition until he had disbanded them and let them in one at a time, I would beat the long roll at the bar-rooms of the land."

"Ignorance is round as a ball and slick as a button; it has no handle on it and you'll never know where to find it next time."

"God bores through the brain, then down through the heart until he strikes the pocket-book. He doesn't begin at the bottom and bore up. What would he do with the dirt?"

"I have nothing against D.D.'s. I expect to be one myself one of these days. Not that I am going up but I think D.D.'s are coming down."

"You hypocrites, you! You are lying when you say you take liquor for your health. You drink it because you like it. If I were a doctor I would not prescribe whiskey for a man until he had been dead three hours."

"God pity a good, clever man who has a forked-tongued wife."

A Smart Allickutionist.

BY BILL NYE.

I have heard a great many people speak the piece, beginning, "To be or not to be," but Mr. Booth does it better than anyone I have ever heard. I once heard an elocutionist—kind of a smart Allickutionist, as my friend, the Hoosier poet, would say. This man recited "To be or not to be" in a manner which, he said, frequently brought tears to eyes unused to weep. He recited it with his right hand socked in his bosom up to the elbow, and his fair hair tossed about over his brow. His teeming brain, which claimed to be a kind of a four-horse teaming brain, as it were, seemed to be on fire, and to all appearances he was indeed mad. So were the people who listened to him. He hissed it through his clenched teeth and snorted it through his nose, and he wailed it up into the ceiling and bleated it down the aisles, rolled it over and over against the rafters of his reverberating mouth, handed it out in big capsules, or hissed it through the puckered atomizer of a mouth, wailed and bellowed like a wild and maddened tailless steer in fly time, darted across the stage like a headless hen, ripped the gentle atmosphere into shreds with his guinea hen voluntary, bowed to us, and teetered off the stage.

William Beach has been offered \$10,000 to come to America and row Hanlan and Gaudaur. It is thought that he will decline the offer. He prizes the championship so highly that he will take no extra chances with it. His favorite course is the Parramatta, where good luck came to him.—Turf, Field and Farm.

Hard is the fate of the New York Aldermanic corruptionists. The latest to go to Sing Sing, "Honest" John O'Neil, was fifty-six years of age. He has never used tobacco or liquor in any form, an abstinence which doesn't seem to have been morally beneficial. As he fell into line for the lock-step in the convict procession, now really a member of the gang, his hand rested on the shoulder of a burly negro. That to an O'Neil must have been the unkindest cut of all.

THE LATE HENRY WARD BEECHER.

His Own Account of his Early Life.

The history of Henry Ward Beecher is remarkable and worthy the man. His birth and early history can be no better told than in his own words, given not quite a year ago: "I was present, of course," he said, "when I was born, but I haven't the slightest recollection of the event. I learned subsequently that it was at Litchfield on June 24, 1813. My childhood was perhaps no different from that of others seventy years ago. The little ones in those days were not given the consideration that is now accorded them and properly so. I didn't have any jumping-jacks, nor tops, nor marbles, nor toys of any kind. It doesn't seem to me that I knew any boys to play with either. We lived in a part of the village where there didn't seem to be any boys, and so I was left alone. My father was kept busy with his pastoral duties, and my mother had so many other children to attend to that little attention was paid to me. Occasionally the parental government would reach me. Sometimes my father would whip me. I remember that he used to tell me that the whipping hurt him more than it did me. It was hard to believe, because he was a strong man, but I believed it, and it used to make me cry to be told so; then, of course, I had to cry when the whipping began, and all in all, those were very doleful times."

HIS SCHOOL DAYS.

About this time, he said in his droll way, his family woke up to the fact that he needed looking after, and he was sent to Hartford and was placed under charge of his sister, who was principal of a girls' school there. He was the only boy among forty girls, and this perhaps dampened his ardour for knowledge, for he declared that his time there was almost mispent. He was shortly sent to the Latin school and that oppressed him. He was restless and strangely unhappy. Of this period in his life he said:—"My father let me read the stories of Nelson and Capt. Cooke. The adventure fever that often seizes boys took hold of me. I had all sorts of fancy-drawn pictures of what I might do in the jungles and deserts of the Orient. I decided that I must run away to sea, and had actually made all arrangements when my father discovered my plan. He did not oppose me, strange as it may seem. He advised me to go to Mount Pleasant academy at Amherst, and prepare myself by the study of navigation and mathematics for seafaring life, and to Mount Pleasant I went, and in a little while I forgot all about my boyish freak. There I did study, and when I left I was fitted to enter Amherst College."

HIS FIRST CONGREGATION.

At the age of 21 Mr. Beecher received his degree and went to Lane Seminary at Cincinnati to study theology. Graduating from that institution he went to Lawrenceburg, a little place on the Ohio River, and preached to his first congregation. Of this dismal beginning of his illustrious career he said:—"How poor we were! There were only about twenty persons in the flock. I was janitor as well as pastor of the little white-washed church. I bought some lamps and filled them and lighted them. I swept the church and dusted the benches and kindled the fire, and I didn't ring the bell only because there wasn't any. Well, my next move was to Indianapolis. There I had a more considerable congregation, though I was still far from rich in the world's goods. I believe I was very happy during my eight years' stay out there. I liked the people. They were new people—unlearned and uncultured, like the land they lived on, but they were earnest and honest and strong. But the ague shook us out of the State. My wife's health gave way and we were forced to come East."

His wife to whom he here alludes, was born at West Sutton, Worcester, Co., Mass., in 1812. She was of English descent. Her father, Dr. Bullard, was a physician. Her maiden name was Eunice White Bullard. The lovers were engaged for seven years, and were married in 1837, when Mr. Beecher accepted his first call at Lawrenceburg. The issue of the marriage was ten children, of whom four are at present living.

CALL TO PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

It was almost by accident that Mr. Beecher came to Brooklyn. What is now Plymouth church had first been organized into a new Congregational church. The first services were to be held on the 16th of May, 1847. He happened to be in New York at the time, and was asked to preside at the opening of the new church. He did so. A few months later he was called to the pastorate, and on the 10th of October, in the same year, he entered upon his duties.

Of this all-important episode in his career, he said:—"I am the first and only minister that Plymouth church has had since the first day of its organization. Of my career since assuming this pastorate, I prefer not to talk. It is familiar to everyone, and I would rather be known by my words. How did I come to be a preacher? It was fate, I suppose; that's all. I do not think that I can honestly assign any other reason. I took to preaching, as did all of my brothers, simply because nobody ever dreamed of my father's boys doing anything else. That's all there is to it."

MR. BEECHER'S LAST LABOURS.

For the last month or so Mr. Beecher has been busily engaged in writing the second volume of the "Life of Christ." He has been closely confined at his work, as he wished to finish it for publication in early summer. He has not been away from his house since his return from Europe, except to run up to Peekskill and his country seat for a day at a time. The close confinement wore on him. Mrs. Beecher tried to induce him to take exercise but he refused. Mr. Beecher had frequent bilious attacks. On Sunday, February 27th, he preached two remarkably vigorous sermons. On Tuesday he went to Peekskill and returned on Wednesday. He had a slight headache, but thought nothing of it. He worked all day on his book and went out in the evening with Mrs. Beecher. On Thursday the two came over to New York together to buy furniture for the church parlour. After a day in the city they returned home, and during Thursday the venerable preacher was seized with the first symptoms of his illness as previously reported.

HIS LAST SERMON.

Mr. Beecher's last sermon was concluded in these words:—"We are all marching thither. We are going home. Men shiver at the idea that they are going to die; but this world is only a nest. We are scarcely hatched out of it here. We do not know ourselves. We have strange feelings that

do not interpret themselves. The mortal in us is crying out for the immortal. As in the night the child, waking with some vague and nameless terror, cries out to express its fear and dread, and its cry is interpreted in the mother's heart, who runs to the child and lays her hand upon it and quiets it to sleep again, so do you not suppose that the ear of God hears our disturbances and trials and tribulations in life? Do you not suppose that He who is goodness itself cares for you? Do you suppose that He whose royal name is Love has less sympathy for you than a mother has for her babe? Let the world rock. If the foot of God is on the cradle, fear not. Look up, take courage, hope, and hope to the end."

FIVE MINUTES FOR FUN.

A PHASE OF DEMENTIA.

"Prisoner, do you admit that you stole this purse of diamonds?"
"Yes, your Honor, but I do not believe I was then in my right mind. I know now that they were only imitation."—[New York Graphic.]

CAN HIS WIFE EXPLAIN?

"I understand," said the agent, "that you want a burglar alarm in your house."
"I did talk of having one awhile ago, but I've given it up."
"They are a nice thing."
"Yes, I suppose so; but they wouldn't help my case any. I am not losing anything now."

"You—you—?"

"I simply leave my pocketbook in the barn o' nights instead of my bedroom, and I haven't missed a dollar for weeks."

A WRONG LOOKOUT.

An innocent-looking old man was waiting at the Third Street Depot for a train the other day, and as he got ready for a little walk around the neighborhood, Special Officer Button cautioned him to look out for bad men,

"Yes—much obleeged—I'll do so," replied the old man, and off he went.

In about half an hour he returned and exhibited a bank check for \$25, and asked the officer where he could get it cashed.

"Nowhere. That check is worthless."

"No!"

"Yes, it is. Where did you get it?"

"Lent a man \$20 so that he could get off on his train, and he put on \$5 for interest."

"Didn't I warn you?"

"You told me to look out for bad men, but this fellow wasn't bad. He had over a dozen religious tracts in his pocket, and he never swore nor chewed tobacco nor drank whiskey."

"Well you've been swindled."

"And it's all your fault. If you'd said look out for good men I'd have my twenty in my pocket now. The railroad has got to make it up to me or I'll sue somebody. Where's the head foreman of the hull business?"

A Paris-ite—A native of the French capital.

High and dry—A thirsty individual in a seventh floor apartment.

How can the man who gives you his promise be expected to keep it?

Loose management of his business affairs will eventually get one into a tight place.

Is it to be assumed that parsimony is unknown among the members of a Liberal party?

One who delights in carrying a perfumed handkerchief is seldom without a scent in his pocket.

The employes of a "tied-up" street railway are frequently to be seen upon the streets in knots.

"This is the unkindest cut of awl," as the cobbler said when he carelessly wounded himself upon the finger.

Of course the problem of "fewer hours for wage workers" will sooner or later reach a satisfactory solution. It is only a question of time.

What funny things we see as we sit by the window, after the lamps have been lighted, and watch the shadow pantomimes on the curtains across the street.

A Peep at Mercury.

Mercury is evening star until March 21, and after that time becomes morning star. On the 5th of March, at 11 o'clock in the evening, he reaches his greatest eastern elongation, between eighteen degrees and fourteen minutes east of the sun. He is then at his greatest distance from the sun and under the most favorable conditions that will occur during the year for being seen with the naked eye. Intelligent and careful observers will be sure to find him, and a sight of the swift-footed planet is worth all the trouble it costs. Mercury sets on the 5th, an hour and a half after the sun. He must be looked for in the west, about three-quarters of an hour after sunset, and will be visible not only at his eastern elongation on the 5th, but for a week before and after that event, though swift of foot and fleet of wing, he changes his position at every appearance. Observers should note carefully the point of the horizon where the sun went down. Mercury will be found on the 5th nine degrees north of that point, and in a northeast direction of the sun. Venus will be an excellent guide in pointing out his position, for on the 5th she is less than five degrees southeast of him. An opera glass sweeping the sky northwest of Venus will be sure to bring Mercury into the field, and his position being thus fixed he will be readily visible to the unassisted eye. The western sky must be cloudless and the atmosphere clear to make the search successful.

ANOTHER DISEASE SPREADER.—At a meeting of the Caucasian Medical Society, Dr. A. P. Astvazturoff, of Tiflis, drew attention to the danger of infection arising from the promiscuous use of the mouth-pieces of public telephones. To prevent any accident of the kind, he recommends that the mouth-piece should be disinfected every time after, or, still better, before it is used. In other words, some disinfectant fluid should be kept at every telephone station; and the speaker should, first of all, dip the mouth-piece into the fluid, and then wipe it with a clean towel.

Seed grain is now being distributed by the Dominion Government among various portions of the North-West.