

at Mr Bain



POETRY.

"Are You a Mason?"

Rev. Mr. Magill, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Peru, Illinois, being asked the above question by a lady, responded as follows:

I am of a band
Who will faithfully stand;
In the bonds of affection and love;
I have knocked at the door
Once wretched and poor,
And there for admission I stood.

By the help of a friend,
Who assistance did lend,
I succeeded an entrance to gain.
Was received in the West,
By command from the East,
But not without feeling some pain.

Here my conscience was taught,
With a moral quite fraught;
With sentiments holy and true;
Then onward I traveled
To have it unraveled,
What I had intended to do.

Very soon to the East
I made known my request,
And "light" by command did attend;
When lo! I perceived,
In due form revealed,
A Master, and Brother, and Friend.

Thus far I have stated,
And simply related
What happened to me: I was made free;
But I've "passed" since then,
And was "raised" up again
To a sublime and ancient degree.

Then onward I marched,
That I might be "Arched,"
And find out the treasures long lost;
When behold! a bright flame,
From the midst of which came
A voice, which my ears did accost.

Through the "veils" I then went,
And succeeded at length
The "Sanctum Sanctorum" to find;
By the "Signet" I gained,
And quickly obtained,
Employment which suited my mind.

In the depth I then wrought,
And most cheerfully sought
For treasures long hidden there;
And by labor and toil
I discovered rich spoil
Which are kept by the craft with due care

Having thus far arrived,
I further contrived
Among valiant Knights to appear;
And as Pilgrim and knight,
I stood ready to fight,
Nor Saracen foe did I fear.

For the widow distressed
There's a cord in the breast
For the orphan and helpless I feel;
And my sword I could draw
To maintain the pure law
Which the duty of Masons reveal.

The Quaker Detective.

We were five passengers in all; two ladies on the back seat, a middle-aged gentleman, a Quaker and myself on the front. The two ladies might have been mother and daughter, aunt and niece, governess and charge, or might have sustained any other relationship which

makes it proper for two ladies to travel together unattended.

The middle-aged gentleman was sprightly and talkative, and soon struck up an acquaintance with the two ladies, toward whom, in his zeal to do the agreeable, he rather overdid it—bowing, smiling, and chattering in a most attentive manner. He was evidently a gay Lothario. The Quaker wore the usual garb of his sect, and confined his speech, as many an M. P. would save his credit by doing, to simple "yeas" and "nays." As for myself, I make it an invariable rule of the road to be merely a looker-on and listener.

Toward evening I was aroused from one of those reveries into which a young man, without either being a poet or a lover will sometimes fall, by the abrupt query from the talkative gentleman:

"Are you armed, sir?"
"I am not," I replied, astonished, no doubt, visibly, at the question.

"I am sorry to hear it," he said, "for before reaching our stopping place it will be nearly midnight, and we must pass over a portion of the road on which more than one robbery is reported to have been committed."

The ladies turned pale, but the stranger did his best to reassure them.

"Not that I think there is the slightest danger at present," he resumed; "only when one is responsible for the safety of ladies, you know, such a thing as a pistol in one's possession would materially add to one's confidence. Your principles, my friend," he said, addressing the Quaker, "I presume, are as much opposed to carrying as to using deadly weapons."

"Yea," was the response.
"Have the villains murdered any of their victims?" inquired the elder lady, nervously.

"Or have they contented themselves with—with plundering?" added the younger, in a timorous voice.

"Decidedly the latter," the amiable gentleman hastened to give assurance; "and as none of us are prepared to offer resistance in case of attack, nothing worse than robbery can befall us."

Then, after blaming his thoughtlessness in having unnecessarily introduced a disagreeable subject, the gentleman quite excelled himself in his efforts to raise the spirits of the company, and succeeded so well by the time night set in, that all had quite forgotten their fears, or only remembered them to laugh at them.

Our genial companion fairly talked himself hoarse. Perceiving which, he took from his pocket a package of newly-invented "cough candy," and after passing it first to the ladies, he helped himself to the remainder, and tossed the paper out of the window.

He was in the midst of high encomiums on the new nostrum, more than half the efficacy of which, he insisted, depended on its being taken by suction, when a shrill whistle was heard, and immediately the coach stopped, and two faces, hide-

ously blackened, presented themselves, one at each window.

"Sorry to trouble you," said the man on the right, acknowledging with a bow two lady-like screams from the back seat; "but 'business is business,' and ours will soon be over if things go smoothly."

"Of course, gentlemen, you will spare as far as may be consistent with your disagreeable duty, the feelings of these ladies?" appealed the polite passenger in the blandest manner.

"Oh, certainly," was the reply; "they shall be first attended to, and shall not be required to leave their places or submit to a search, unless their conduct renders it necessary."

"And now, ladies, continued the robber, the barrel of his pistol gleaming in the light of the coach-lamp, "be so good as to pass out your purses, watches, and such other trinkets as may be accessible without much trouble."

The ladies came down handsomely, and were no further molested.

One by one the rest of us were compelled to get out, the middle-aged gentleman's turn coming first. He submitted with a winning grace, and was robbed like a Chesterfield.

My own affair, like the sum I lost was scarcely worth mentioning. The Quaker's turn came next. He quietly handed over his pocket book and watch, and when asked if he had any other valuables, said "Nay."

A Quaker's word is good even among thieves; so, after a hasty "good night," the robber thrust his pistol into his pocket, and, with his two companions, one of whom held the reins of the leaders, was about to take his departure.

"Stop!" exclaimed the Quaker, in a tone more of command than request.

"Stop! what for?" returned the other, in evident surprise.

"For at least two good reasons," was the reply emphasized with a couple of pistols cocked and presented.

"Help!" shouted the robber.

"Stop!" again exclaimed the Quaker, "and if one of thy sinful companions advances a step to thy relief, the spirit will surely move me to blow thy brains out."

The robber at the opposite window and the one at the leaders' heads, thought it a good time to leave.

"Now get in, friend," said the Quaker, still covering his man, "and take the middle seat; but first deliver up thy pistol."

The other, however, hesitated.

"Thee had better not delay," said the Quaker; "I feel the spirit beginning to move my right forefinger."

The robber did as he was directed, and the Quaker then took his place by his side, giving the new comer the middle of the seat.

The driver who was half frightened out of his wits, now set forward at a rapid rate. The lively gentleman soon recovered his vivacity and was especially facetious on the Quaker's prowess; but the Quaker relapsing into his usual monosyl-

lables, the conversation soon flagged.

Time sped, and earlier than we expected, the coach stopped where we were to have supper and a change of horses. We had deferred a redistribution of our effects until we should reach this place, as the dim light of the coach lamp would have rendered the process somewhat difficult before. It was now necessary, however, that it should be attended to at once, as our jovial companion had previously announced his intention of leaving us at this point. He proposed a postponement till after supper, which he offered to go and order.

"Nay," urged the Quaker, with sudden abruptness, and laying his hand on the other's arm, "business before pleasure," and for business there is no time like the present. Will thee be good enough to search the prisoner?" he said to me, still keeping his hand in a friendly way on the passenger's arm.

I did so, but not one of the stolen articles could be found.

"He must have gotten rid of them in the coach," suggested the gay gentleman, and immediately offered to go and search.

"Stop!" thundered the Quaker, tightening his grasp.

The man turned pale, and struggled to release his arm. In an instant one of the pistols was leveled at his heart.

"Stir a hand or foot, and you are a dead man!" said the Quaker, who must have been awfully excited so to forget both the language and principles of his persuasion.

Placing the other pistol in my hand, with directions to fire on the first of the two men who made a suspicious movement, the Quaker went to work on Lothario, from whose pockets, in less time than it takes to tell it, he produced every item of the missing property, to the utter amazement of the ladies, who had begun in no measured terms to remonstrate against the shameful treatment the gentleman was receiving.

The Quaker, I need scarcely add, was no Quaker at all, but a shrewd detective, who had been set on the track of a band of desperadoes, of whom our middle-aged friend—who didn't look nearly so middle-aged with his wig off—was the chief.

The robbery had been adroitly planned. The leader of the band had taken possession of a seat in the coach, and after learning, as he supposed, our defenceless condition, had given the signal to his companions by throwing out the bit of paper already mentioned. After the unexpected capture of the first robber, an attempt was made to save the booty by secretly passing it to the accomplice, still believed to be unsuspected, who counted on being able to make off with it at the next stopping-place. The result was that both for a season, "did the State some service."

What is the difference between a girl of sixteen, and an old maid of sixty? One is careless and happy, the other hairless and cap-py,