

For the Watchman.
AN HISTORICAL INCIDENT.

About the middle of the fifth century, on the banks of the Loire, stood and flourished the fair city of Orleans. It was situated in a fertile and sunny province which centuries before had submitted to the conquering arms of the Roman Empire. This province had since then often suffered severely from the tumultuous irruptions of the Barbarians, those implacable enemies of Rome and of civilization. But a power far more to be feared now threatened Orleans. Attila with a countless host of savage followers was encompassing its gates and threatening ruin on its very ramparts. The fury of Gath and Bandal was harmless compared to the merciless cruelty of the Hunnish king who spread terror and destruction wherever he marched. As powerful as Pamphile, as fierce and revengeful as Zingar, he had already laid waste the fairest provinces and reduced to a heap of desolation the most beautiful cities of the Empire. To add to the terror of his name it was confidently believed that his power was equal to his cruelty and rapacity. His dominions stretched from the Danube to the Balsa, to the confines both of the Eastern and Western empires. Innumerable tribes and provinces had yielded to his victorious arms, and were bound to him by the faith of treaties or the power of conquest. And now, with a countless host of warriors, he had marched from the centre of his dominions to the confines of Gaul and laid in ruins the fairest portion of that sunny region. At length wishing to gain a position which should command the passage of the Loire, he drew up his savage and formidable legions before the gates of Orleans. The inhabitants though almost destitute of succor prepared for a vigorous resistance. The name of Attila, however dreaded, did not deprive them of the courage requisite to defy that power which had hitherto seemed invincible. The fate of Metz warned them of their own destruction should their implacable enemy succeed in his present purposes. That city had lately been laid in ruins and the lonely shrine of St. Stephens alone marked the site of the once proud and flourishing town of Metz. For many days the siege of Orleans continued. Without hope of assistance the inhabitants trusted to their own courage and to the power of the God of nations who had said that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Every man capable of bearing arms sprung to the rescue, and the ancient bishop bearing before him the holy symbols of religion, exhorted the people to remain faithful, to stand up with courage before the heathen host from which the Almighty, in due time would send their deliverance. But the days passed slowly away and no succor came from either man or the Lord of hosts. A foe more terrible even than Attila now began to press them within the city. Each their scanty supply of food diminished until gaunt hunger stalked through all the streets and slew more victims even than the sword of the Hun. Then the walls of the city began to give way. The battering rams of the enemy had shaken them in many places, and unless speedily relieved, Orleans must fall a prey to the merciless victor. The most undoubted courage, the most determined resolution will sometimes give way when opposed by equal valor and superior strength. The inhabitants beheld their approaching ruin with a feeling of terror impossible to describe. The men stand to their arms however, while the helpless crowd of women and children and aged men fall prostrate in the streets beseeching the favor and protection of the God of the Christians. Already the heathen army has entered the very suburbs of the city. The work of slaughter and rapine has begun and the trembling defenceless fugitives from without are pressing towards the gates of Orleans and crying for refuge from the merciless fury of the Hun. Despair seizes the stoutest hearts and many resign themselves to the fate they had vainly striven to avert. In this moment of suspense and horror there was one whose confidence remained unshaken, who still believed that the Almighty would yet send succor and deliverance to the trembling captives who supplicated his favor. He earnestly exhorted the people to wait in hope and patience for the salvation of the Lord. Upon the ramparts of the city were placed a sentry, sent thither by this Christian Bishop. All day they stood there gazing fixedly into the far horizon to catch the faintest sign of coming relief. It was now the close of evening and they should have to return to the trembling, eager crowd below with no word of cheer or encouragement. But lo! as sick with hope deferred they turned to depart, a strange object attracted their sight. In the far distance edge of the horizon, almost beyond the range of human vision, was a long dark line that seemed to be moving. Breathless with expectancy they gazed while it drew nearer, still nearer and until it was no longer just a speck upon the distant ray, but a mighty host in martial array and with banners floating in the evening air. It proved to be the confederate army of Goths and Romans hastening to the relief of Orleans. The joyful news flew rapidly through the city. "It is the aid of God! It is the aid of God!"

A New-Year's Caller.

Widow Van Dusenberry's Interview With the Personal D.—
THE WIDOW.
"Who wants to be half a millionaire?" she exclaimed pettishly. "Why not make it a round sum at once! A million dollars would put my poor boy on his feet and enable him to hold up his head among the millionaires."
"A million of dollars is a large sum," said the stranger, "and the millionaires are few in number."
"Oh! it is a mere trifle," said the widow. "I know a good many millionaires, and I have always thought it would be such a comfort to be one of them. I should so like to know what the feelings of a millionaire must be."
"Your wishes are not to be denied," said the magnificent visitor. "Here is the sum you ask for!" and, without more ado, he plumped a bundle of greenbacks into her lap, which she seized upon with as much avidity as a hungry cur would snap at a bone. But, strangely enough, the possession of this immense sum only produced a feeling of disappointment and regret, which must have reflected on her face, for the stranger exclaimed, with astonishment: "What! does not that satisfy you?"
"I don't like to appear ungrateful," said the widow; "but, after all, \$1,000,000 is but a small matter, compared with the fortunes of some of the mere upstarts that live on the avenue. I couldn't even afford to move further up town on such a sum; and I don't think that Balt could keep a yacht on it. If it were only \$10,000,000, now, I should be entirely satisfied."
The stranger fairly jumped in his seat when he heard the exorbitant demand. "Ten millions of dollars!" he exclaimed. "It is monstrous!" However, I cannot deny you!" and he smiled sweetly, the widow thought, as he piled up the great bundles of greenbacks before her.
The widow breathed short for a moment; and then, as the thought of all the good she might do if she only had a little more, and of the respect that would be paid to Balt when he should come back, and of the magnificent white-marble house she would like to build on Murry hill, of the charitable institutions she would endow, of the dinner parties she would give, and of the diamonds she might purchase—as the thought of these things flashed upon her mind, she had a feeling of unhappiness which she had never experienced before.
"You are still unsatisfied," said the stranger, impatiently. "Why did you not say at first what you wished? Why detain me all this while, when I have so many other calls to make, this morning? Let me know at once the limit of your wishes, that I may gratify them and be done with it."
"Well, then," said the widow, growing bolder as he spoke, "I do not think it would be at all beyond the bounds of a moderate ambition if I should say that I will be entirely content with a hundred millions. Properly invested, by the advice of my brokers in Exchange place, I think it would yield me an income of ten millions a year; and with that sum Balt and I could manage to rub along without help from anybody."
"The demand is preposterous, madam, but I cannot deny you!" said the stranger, with a graver expression than he had yet shown. And instantly the whole room was filled with bundles of greenbacks. They were stacked up against the walls and under the tables, and heaped upon the floor in every direction. And the widow looked around upon the treasure with a proud and lofty feeling, in which there was hardly a tinge of selfishness, for she thought only of the benefit that her darling son would derive from it. Don't call it selfishness. She was purely womanly.
"I must now mention the condition upon which this vast sum shall be yours," said the stranger.
"The condition!" exclaimed the widow, looking at him reproachfully. "I imagined it was all mine already."
"Wealth has its responsibilities," said the stranger, "and you surely could not expect to have a hundred millions of dollars and do nothing for it. But the condition on which this great treasure shall be left with you is very light. It is only that you shall commit a murder."
"Horror!" exclaimed the widow. "I can never do it."
"Very well, then, said the stranger. "I have nothing more to say." And he commenced putting the greenbacks into his bosom. And as the widow watched the lessening heaps she cried out: "Stop! Stop!"
The stranger stayed his hand, and the bundles of greenbacks were as numerous as before. They fell all around her like flakes of snow.
"How can I sully my hand and my conscience by committing a murder?" said the widow.
"Why, my dear madam," said the stranger, "your squeamishness is absurd. Do you not know that wealth of all kinds represents toil, and suffering, and agony, and murder? The jewels that sparkle in your ears were only obtained by the sacrifice of many lives, and you do not enjoy a luxury but at the cost of some-

body's existence. It is a frivolous mistake to feel a repugnance at committing a murder yourself, when you feel none while enjoying the results of murder committed by other people."
"But whom do you wish me to murder?" she asked.
"I do not ask you to murder any one in particular," said the stranger. "All that I would have you do is to throw a dart into a crowd. Whoever it may strike will be a long way off, and you may acquire yourself of any evil design or ill-natured feeling against any one in especial. Here is a little arrow. It has a very sharp point. Take it and throw it with all your force. It will take a long flight; but it will strike somebody."
"A good way off?" said she, and she took it in her trembling hand.
"A long way off," said the stranger, "Now, then, throw." And she lifted her arm and threw the arrow with all her might. As she did so, the stranger glanced at her with a fearful grin. The wall of the apartment suddenly fell away like a mist, and she saw the prostrate form of a young man lying beneath a palm tree, with the arrow lodged in his breast. And she heard him exclaim, in faint accents, as the life-blood flowed from his wound: "Oh! mother, mother!"
She shrieked: "I have murdered my dear Balt!"
There was a loud crash. The terrible vision disappeared. The stranger was gone. There was not a scrap of a greenback to be seen, while Bridget rushed into the parlor, exclaiming: "For dear sakes! What in the world is the matter?"
"Did anybody go out, just now?" said Mrs. Van Dusenberry, rubbing her eyes.
"Not a soul has been inside the house," said Bridget.
"Did you see any bundles of greenbacks lying about?" asked the widow.
"Not a rag," said Bridget.
"And don't you smell any brimstone?" asked the widow.
"Not a hair's-breadth," replied Bridget, "except the parlor-matches." "But who did this?" she asked, as she pointed at the little japanned table, that was overturned, while the glasses were broken and the flask of Charente was pouring its self out in a golden stream upon the Moquette carpet.
"It was the personal D.—himself!" said the widow, putting her hand upon her heart, which beat violently. "I see it all! O! I have had such an experience."
THE RESULT.
"Didn't you say there was a beggar-boy who came to the door, just now, Bridget?" asked the widow.
"I did, marm, replied Bridget; "and he is standing on the sidewalk, now, crying."
"Poor little fellow!" said the widow, as she wiped a tear from her eyes. "Go call him in."
"Call in a beggar!" exclaimed Bridget, lifting up her hands in amazement. "Call in a beggar-boy!"
"Yes, call him in. What if he is a beggar boy? He is somebody's son. He is the dear Balt of some fond old mother. Let me see him. I must do something for somebody."
In a few minutes Bridget pushed into the presence of the widow one of the worst-clad little ruffians she had ever beheld.
"Here he is," said Bridget. "He is a beauty for such a parlor as this. I don't think!" with scornful emphasis on her words.
"He is a human being," said the widow, scanning his ragged garments pityingly.
"I haven't been down' nothin'," said the boy, timidly.
"You need make no apologies, my poor child," said the widow. "Pray what is your name?"
"My name is Dennis," said the beggar.
"Poor boy! And why did your mother let you come out in such a plight, such a day as this?" said the widow, as she wiped a tear from her eye.
"My mother has been sent up to the Island for thirty days," said Dennis, hanging his head and blushing. "And she couldn't help it."
"Dear! dear! dear!" exclaimed the widow, tenderly.
"It wasn't no fault of me mother's," said Dennis, holding his head up again. "It was all along of that Mrs. Sullivan, who pulled me mother's hair."
"That's right. Always speak up for your mother, my child," said the widow. "Now give me your purse, Bridget."
And Mrs. Van Dusenberry, utterly disregarding the new leaf she had turned over but a few moments before, on which was recorded a resolution not to give anything to anybody again, actually counted out five new silver half-dollars, which she threw into the boy's hat, thinking, as she did it, how much more satisfactory it was to give to the needy than to receive presents from the rich.
"Is this for me?" asked the boy, opening his hazel eyes with wonder.
"It is all for you," said the widow, and I wish there was more of it. But I am afraid it would do no good if you had more."
The boy started to run; but Bridget caught him by his curly red hair, and said:

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And Mrs. Van Dusenberry, utterly disregarding the new leaf she had turned over but a few moments before, on which was recorded a resolution not to give anything to anybody again, actually counted out five new silver half-dollars, which she threw into the boy's hat, thinking, as she did it, how much more satisfactory it was to give to the needy than to receive presents from the rich.
"Is this for me?" asked the boy, opening his hazel eyes with wonder.
"It is all for you," said the widow, and I wish there was more of it. But I am afraid it would do no good if you had more."
The boy started to run; but Bridget caught him by his curly red hair, and said:

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"But whom do you wish me to murder?" she asked.
"I do not ask you to murder any one in particular," said the stranger. "All that I would have you do is to throw a dart into a crowd. Whoever it may strike will be a long way off, and you may acquire yourself of any evil design or ill-natured feeling against any one in especial. Here is a little arrow. It has a very sharp point. Take it and throw it with all your force. It will take a long flight; but it will strike somebody."
"A good way off?" said she, and she took it in her trembling hand.
"A long way off," said the stranger, "Now, then, throw." And she lifted her arm and threw the arrow with all her might. As she did so, the stranger glanced at her with a fearful grin. The wall of the apartment suddenly fell away like a mist, and she saw the prostrate form of a young man lying beneath a palm tree, with the arrow lodged in his breast. And she heard him exclaim, in faint accents, as the life-blood flowed from his wound: "Oh! mother, mother!"
She shrieked: "I have murdered my dear Balt!"
There was a loud crash. The terrible vision disappeared. The stranger was gone. There was not a scrap of a greenback to be seen, while Bridget rushed into the parlor, exclaiming: "For dear sakes! What in the world is the matter?"
"Did anybody go out, just now?" said Mrs. Van Dusenberry, rubbing her eyes.
"Not a soul has been inside the house," said Bridget.
"Did you see any bundles of greenbacks lying about?" asked the widow.
"Not a rag," said Bridget.
"And don't you smell any brimstone?" asked the widow.
"Not a hair's-breadth," replied Bridget, "except the parlor-matches." "But who did this?" she asked, as she pointed at the little japanned table, that was overturned, while the glasses were broken and the flask of Charente was pouring its self out in a golden stream upon the Moquette carpet.
"It was the personal D.—himself!" said the widow, putting her hand upon her heart, which beat violently. "I see it all! O! I have had such an experience."
THE RESULT.
"Didn't you say there was a beggar-boy who came to the door, just now, Bridget?" asked the widow.
"I did, marm, replied Bridget; "and he is standing on the sidewalk, now, crying."
"Poor little fellow!" said the widow, as she wiped a tear from her eyes. "Go call him in."
"Call in a beggar!" exclaimed Bridget, lifting up her hands in amazement. "Call in a beggar-boy!"
"Yes, call him in. What if he is a beggar boy? He is somebody's son. He is the dear Balt of some fond old mother. Let me see him. I must do something for somebody."
In a few minutes Bridget pushed into the presence of the widow one of the worst-clad little ruffians she had ever beheld.
"Here he is," said Bridget. "He is a beauty for such a parlor as this. I don't think!" with scornful emphasis on her words.
"He is a human being," said the widow, scanning his ragged garments pityingly.
"I haven't been down' nothin'," said the boy, timidly.
"You need make no apologies, my poor child," said the widow. "Pray what is your name?"
"My name is Dennis," said the beggar.
"Poor boy! And why did your mother let you come out in such a plight, such a day as this?" said the widow, as she wiped a tear from her eye.
"My mother has been sent up to the Island for thirty days," said Dennis, hanging his head and blushing. "And she couldn't help it."
"Dear! dear! dear!" exclaimed the widow, tenderly.
"It wasn't no fault of me mother's," said Dennis, holding his head up again. "It was all along of that Mrs. Sullivan, who pulled me mother's hair."
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