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WHOLE NO. 196

SELECT POETRY.

THE LONG AGO.

Oh! wonderful stream is the river TIME,
As it runs through the realms of years,
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,
And a broader sweep, and a surge sublime,
And bends with the ocean of years.

How the winters are drifting like flakes of snow,
And the summer like birds between,
And the year in its "shades" they compare they go,
On the river's breast, with its ebb and flow,
As it glides in the shadow and sheen.

There is a magical tale up the river TIME,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical climate,
And a song as sweet as the vesper chime,
And the June with the roses are staying.

And the name of this tale is the LONG AGO,
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of snow—
There are heaps of dust, but we loved them so!
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of an infant's prayer;
There's a lute unplayed, and a harp without strings,
There are broken vows, and pieces of rings,
And the garments that she used to wear.

There are hands that are waved when the fairy shore
By the mirage is lifted in air;
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh! remembered for aye be the blessed life,
All the day of life till night—
When the evening comes with its beautiful smile,
And our eyes closing to slumber awhile,
May that "greenwood" of soul be in sight.

SELECTED ARTICLES.

LIFE IN THE ARMY. —OR— REMINISCENCES OF THE MEXICAN WAR.

BY A NEW-YORK VOLUNTEER.

A NIGHT AFTER GUERRILLOS.

While surrounding the city of Vera Cruz, working all night in the trenches, building batteries, keeping a sharp look-out, lest the beleaguered city should receive a reinforcement, our regiment was frequently called upon to perform other duties. One of these was to take frequent excursions into the interior of the country, in a circuit of eight or ten miles, to prevent the enemy from concentrating in any considerable force within that distance from our camp; supply our regiment with fresh beef, and pick up such of our men whose roving propensities or enquiring disposition, might have led them to stray so far from camp as to render their return not only unsafe, but a matter of considerable difficulty. Sometimes but a few men, accompanied by an officer, would be sent on an expedition of this kind; at other times, one, two, three and four companies would be sent—the size of the force depending on the nature of the information that our Colonel might have received from those who were supposed to know the country for miles about us, and who were always "posted up" in what was going on. No affair invariably gave rise to numerous incidents—diversified in their character—some pleasing and others sad.

The incident that forms the subject of this article, occurred about two weeks after our landing at Vera Cruz. Early one morning a small party, under the command of a non-commissioned officer, was sent out after a supply of fresh beef. Plenty of cattle were roaming about the woods within a mile of the camp, therefore an expedition of the kind was not considered an unsafe one, and consequently but a few men at a time were generally sent. This party, I believe consisted of four men and a Corporal. They started about six o'clock in the morning. Three hours was time enough for them to consume, to enable them to secure as much beef as they could carry. But the three hours elapsed, and they did not make their appearance in camp. This, however, was not considered at all strange, for our men were generally disposed to take their time when on any such duty—when free from the usual restrictions. Three more hours elapsed, and they did not return! Now fears were expressed by some in regard to their safety. The Colonel was informed of their absence, when, with his characteristic promptness, he ordered that a party of twenty men, under the command of a Lieutenant, should be sent in search of the absent "beef party." I was the Lieutenant selected; the party was made up of detachments from the different companies.

We left camp about 1 o'clock, P. M., taking the same direction that the "beef party" had taken. Marching up the Orizaba road about a mile, we filed to the left and entered a dense wood. This we knew to be the usual beef-hunting ground, and of course was in momentary expectation of meeting some of the party of whom I was in pursuit. Knowing the habits, dispositions and inclinations of most soldiers, I was certain that I would find the party in the cool woods, huddling under the shade of some mammoth tree. But a half-hour's tramp through the thick woods elicited not the least information as to the whereabouts of those we were after. Not the slightest evidence was visible that they had been there,—not a foot print

could be seen, no blood of slaughtered animals—the latter generally an indication that a "beef party" had been around. After a rest of a few moments, and a drink at a cool stream, I ordered my men to advance further into the woods. Taking another direction, we groped our way through dense chapparal, tickets and swamps, and suddenly came out on an open plain. I was a short distance in advance of my party—the first to emerge from the woods. The instant I did so, I discovered a party of Mexicans, about one hundred and fifty yards distant, dismounted, the bridles of their horses thrown over their arms. On the ground in front of them I discovered the form of a man apparently lifeless. I could not make out whether he was an American or Mexican. I immediately ordered my men to halt, and cautioned them not to show themselves. I was anxious to surprise the Mexicans, capture them and bring them to camp. How to effect this I was debating with myself, when I saw two of them stoop down and attempt to raise the lifeless form of the man upon the back of a horse. This movement revealed to me what I first suspected—the dead body of one of the "beef party" we were in search of. I knew his uniform, and could not then fore be mistaken. They had not fairly got him on the horse's back, when I ordered my men to advance a few steps forward, in order that they might get a position that would enable them to make sure of their men—for I intended to fire upon them. They were creeping cautiously and noiselessly toward the spot I indicated, when the trigger of one of the muskets caught in the branch of a small bush, and the piece went off. In an instant the Mexicans dropped their horses, and dashed off with lightning speed. I ordered my men to fire—an order they promptly obeyed. One of the Mexicans fell from his saddle dead, three bullets having entered different parts of his body. The others succeeded in making their escape.

I immediately went up to the corpse that was lying upon the ground—and which the Mexican seemed so anxious to carry off with them—and discovered it to be that of the Corporal who had command of the "beef party." Poor fellow! He had been shot through the body, his throat cut, and his person otherwise shockingly mutilated.

After making an ineffectual search for the remainder of the party—consuming about an hour in so doing—a rifle litter was made, and the murdered Corporal was borne by his comrades back to camp, from whence he had departed that morning in the full enjoyment of health.

Alas! how uncertain is life—a soldier's life! I immediately reported the sad affair to the Colonel—the annihilation of the whole party, as I believed. But I was mistaken. One of the Corporal's party had succeeded in reaching camp about half an hour previous to my return, and was then detailing to the Colonel and several officers assembled in the former's marquee, the particulars of the attack and the death of every one of the small party but himself.

It appears—as the survivor himself acknowledged—that instead of the Corporal taking his men to the spot where he could have succeeded in getting his beef with but little trouble, and no danger whatever to himself and party, he had an excursion into the country about a mile farther than there was any necessity of going—that they were suddenly attacked by an unseen enemy, and the Corporal and all but one of the party shot down at the first fire. The survivor succeeded in making his escape.

"Now," said the Colonel after the relation of the affair, "have you anything to propose, gentlemen."

"Yes sir," replied one of the officers.

"What is it?"

"I believe, Colonel, that that rancho in the woods yonder is the resort of a gang of guerrillos."

"What rancho do you mean?"

The locality was explained, and the officer continued—

"About 9 o'clock that night—a bright, moonlight night—he started from camp, with a full company, each man armed with a musket, and with a full cartridge box. He took a different route from that generally pursued by the officers in their frequent visits—taking a more circuitous one—so that he could come upon the place where the inhabitants least expected him—that he might, too, avoid the look-outs that their watchfulness might have suggested. It took but a short time to reach the place; but instead of marching his company directly up to the rancho, he halted them about two hundred yards distant, secreted them in a dense chapparal, and cautioned them all to keep silence. Then taking one side—for I accompanied him—he commenced to me his plan of operations."

"First," said he, "I want to see rain who is in the place—if any one beside the women folk. Now, I want you to accompany me. We must approach the rancho as noiselessly as possible,—reach it unobserved and unheard, and then we can learn all we want to. Come, now, let's be off."

Taking our swords in our hands, to prevent them from dragging on the ground, we approached the rancho on our hands and knees. It was a calm, lovely night. Not a breath of air stirred the leaves of the trees, not a human voice or breathing was heard—all was still as death. Slowly and noiselessly we approached the rancho; about half the distance had been gained; then we paused a moment to recover our breath and take a rest, for our manner of traveling was tedious and quite laborious. We listened. Now we could hear the murmur of several confused voices, and as we approached nearer, we could distinctly hear the music of a guitar. The nearer we approached, the more audible the voices became; we could now distinctly hear the voice of a female, singing one of her native airs. We were now within thirty yards of the rancho; brilliant lights were burning, and we could discern through the half-open windows the forms of many men and three females who inhabited the place. Again we paused to rest; our position now was an advantageous one; we were enabled to see our own selves in a ditch, and at the same time keep our eyes upon the rancho—watch the movements of those within, and see any one who might pass. We had not remained in our present position more than a minute, before the door of the rancho opened, and the three females and a man emerged therefrom, and mounting horses that stood saddled at the door, rode off. As soon as they had got out of sight, we approached nearer to the rancho—were presently directly under its windows. We cautiously raised up, and peered in at the window, and there met a sight that fully substantiated what the Captain had previously said. About thirty Mexicans were there congregated—savagely-looking cut-throats, armed to the teeth, and all in the picturesque dress of the guerrillo. They appeared to be having a jocular time. Some were seated around tables sipping coffee, chocolate, and *aguardiente*; others were smoking *cigarillos* and playing cards. We did not remain long at the window; what we had already seen was sufficient to guide our future actions. We made our way as soon as possible back to our men, and the Captain hurriedly gave some orders, cautioning them how to act, and then we advanced in two separate parties upon the rancho. We succeeded in reaching it within fifty yards before its inmates discovered us. Instantly they made a rush for the door, but a moment sufficed to let them see that they were entrapped—that their escape from us was out of the question. They instantly retreated back, barricaded the door, and fired a volley at us through the window. Their fire was ineffective, nearly every shot passing over our heads—only one of our party receiving a very slight flesh wound. We instantly closed upon the rancho, both parties coming up at the same time. The door and windows were found strongly barricaded, resisting every effort we made to force them open. We then called upon them to surrender, but they refused to do so, treating the demand with apparent contempt—a large portion of them made brave, doubtless, but copious libations of *aguardiente*.

Another attempt was then made to force open the door. A large piece of timber was brought into requisition—used as a battering-ram. But it defied our most vigorous efforts. The guerrillos inside—two-thirds of them madly intoxicated—jested and laughed at our ineffectual attempts.

The Captain now seeing that all his efforts to dislodge the guerrillos were fruitless, determined to resort to another expedient—to set fire to the rancho. Ordering some of the men to gather a quantity of light brushwood, and other inflammable materials, the same was placed around the rancho. Another demand was made upon the guerrillos to surrender, but they treated it in the same manner that they had the previous

one—laughed and swore at us, and set up a defiant yell.

The Captain now became angry. I shall never forget his look and expression, when the guerrillos so tauntingly refused his last demand to surrender. Drawing up his tall, soldierly figure erect, nervously unsheathing his bright sword, and his dark eyes flashing anger, he exclaimed—

"Don't you boys get the place! By G—d, I'll burn every d—n of them!"

"The order was instantly obeyed—the light brushwood was readily ignited, and in a few seconds the rancho was surrounded by a full front of flame. The Capt. then drew his company off about sixty yards and awaited the egress of the guerrillos. Presently we heard blasphemous cursing and loud shouts within; the clashing of sabres, the ringing of ramrods, as they were inserted in the barrels of escopets; then confused and noisy voices—it was evident that they were preparing to leave the rancho."

"Be cautious, men," said the Captain, addressing his company, "make every shot tell." The company was drawn up to a full front, about sixty yards from the burning rancho. Each man had his musket firmly grasped and at a "ready," expecting every moment to see the enemy rush from their now insecure retreat.

"Don't a man fire till I give the word," said the Captain, again addressing his command. Now were voices heard, the barricade was removed, and the door of the rancho flew open, and with a demoniac yell that broke the stillness of the night, about forty of the guerrillos rushed out.

"Aim—fire!" commanded the captain in a loud voice, and instantly every musket was discharged among the guerrillos. The effect was terrible; at least twelve fell dead and as many wounded. The rest succeeded in making their escape.

The men, at the command of the Captain, instantly re-loaded their muskets, but no further use for them was required. Not an unharmed guerrillo was seen about the premises after the first fatal discharge.

The sight that presented itself to my eyes at this moment, will never be effaced from my recollection. A vast, glaring flame, were looming up from the burning rancho, reflecting their reddish light upon the tall trees around; lighting up with uncounted brilliancy the lurid landscape, made more gloomy by the sombre, shades of night, and revealing to the sight the ghastly, righted, distorted visages of the slain guerrillos as they were stretched out upon the ensanguined earth. Those who had escaped our murderous fire with frightful wounds, were stretched upon the ground, weltering in their own warm blood, and uttering the most impious curses—literate to thank of.

Like all Mexican ranches, this was composed of light, dry, and inflammable material; therefore but a short time sufficed to level it to the ground, a mere pile of light ashes. And not till these preparations were made to return to camp. While these were making, the dead being gathered together for the purpose of burial, and the wounded lifted upon biers preparatory to their being carried into camp, one of the latter a miserable, half-savage-looking wretch, whose leg had been shockingly mangled by a musket ball, and who apparently suffered the most excruciating agony, made known his desire to communicate something to the Captain. The latter went to him, and anxious to learn what he had to say, questioned him. It was with the greatest possible difficulty the poor wretch could articulate, so intense was the agony he was suffering. In answer to a question asked, he uttered a few unintelligible words, and then faintly.

In a few moments, however, he recovered; when some brandy, which I had the good fortune to have in my canteen was administered to him, which so revived him, he was enabled to talk.

In the first place, he prayed that the Captain would spare his life, and render him such aid as his present conditions required, promising to make a confession that he knew would be of great interest.

The Captain assured him that his life should be spared, and moreover, that proper care should be taken of him. The poor wretch then commenced a confession, acknowledging himself one of the party who had attacked the "beef party" that day, and killed four of the number; he pointed also to where the bodies were buried. Becoming again faint from loss of blood and excruciating pain, he was unable to talk, but pointing to a woods on the left of us, he made such gesticulations as induced us to suppose that more of the party might be found in that direction. Anxious to learn whether we were correct in our supposition, more liquor was administered to the sufferer. He recovered again, and then informed us that in the woods about a mile distant, was located a rancho, where several of the band, with their leader, were assembled; that they would probably remain there until daylight.

Instantly the Captain resolved to make an effort to capture them. Leaving four or five men, with a Corporal, to take care of the wounded man, we had marched about half an hour, when a feeble light was descried glimmering in the distance, like a solitary lamp or torch. As we advanced, the light became more brilliant. The party moved slowly, slyly and stealthily forward, until within about three hundred yards of a small hut, or rancho, that the light now revealed to us; a halt was then ordered, and the men charged to secret themselves and not to

make the slightest noise. The Captain and myself then advanced cautiously, in the same manner that we had previously done, for the purpose of reconnoitering the premises. We succeeded, after a short time, in reaching the rancho unobserved, and cautiously peering in at the half-open window, we were soon made acquainted with its contents. On a table in the middle of the floor was a light; an empty bottle, several tumblers, and a few purses lying scattered about—certain indications that some men folks had been enjoying themselves. Further observation discovered to us the sleeping forms of two powerful fellows lying on mats stretched upon the floor a short distance from the table. They appeared to sleep soundly, snoring lustily and give other indications that they did.

The Captain, in a whisper, ordered me to bring the company forward, and surround the house, as noiselessly as possible, while he remained in his present position, to "keep an eye on things," as he remarked at the time. I obeyed the order as promptly as possible, and without creating the least disturbance. Giving a few instructions to the non-commissioned officers, at the suggestion of the Captain, I took five files of men, and advanced towards the rancho. We found the door strongly barred, but it finally yielded to our combined efforts, and we entered, the Captain, myself, and four soldiers.

The noise consequent upon forcing open the door awoke the sleepers, and when we entered, they both stood erect, their escopets cocked, and firmly grasped in their hands, their fierce, swarthy countenances presenting the most perfect picture of amazement that I ever gazed at.

The Captain demanded them to surrender. They hesitated a moment, cast their piercing black eyes at us, and showing no disposition whatever to comply with the demand, the Captain ordered the soldiers to level their muskets at them. In an instant the four muskets were cocked and leveled at the two guerrillos. A word from the Captain, and both of them would, in an instant, be beyond the reach of bullets.—No violence, however, was found necessary—the two surrendered, gave up their weapons, and were marched out of the rancho, each one between a file of men.

"Come, Lieutenant," exclaimed the Captain "let's fire the place, and then be off." There was material enough in the room to satisfy our purposes. Two or three bunches of faggots and other light stuff lay on the broad earth. This we deposited in the middle of the floor, and applying the light to it, instantly it was in a blaze, a flame, a flame ascending from the floor to the ceiling. Just as we were stepping out of the door, the screaming of two or three females reached our ears. We heard the shrill sound again, and at the same moment we darted back into the rancho, where we were met by three females, who, apparently very much frightened, had just hastily emerged from an adjoining apartment that we had not discovered in our hurried search, into the main room, now filled with flame and smoke. We, of course, seized hold of the frightened creatures, and hurried them out. In two minutes after, the whole building was in flames. The three females were still under our protection. Who they were we did not, of course, know, not yet having had the curiosity to look into their faces. The bright flames, however, that arose from the burning rancho, illuminated everything around, soon revealing to our astonished sight the pretty faces of the two *serenas* and their mother, who occupied the rancho where we had made the first discovery, and where numerous officers of our regiment had so often sat and enjoyed themselves with a delicious cup of coffee or chocolate, as I have previously mentioned.

The ladies implored us to release them, denying that they were guilty of anything that the present circumstances or their suspicious night naturally impute to them. The old lady fell upon her knees, and with her hands clasped and eyes upraised, made the most piteous appeal that I ever listened to; while the daughters, and terror, seconded their mother's appeal with sobs and lamentations, the salt tears streaming from their sparkling black eyes over their plump cheeks, in a perfect torrent. Such appeals—and coming from women, too—were irresistible; the Captain assured them that no harm would befall them, promising to release them if they truthfully answered certain questions. This they promised to do, by all the saints that ever existed, in fact and imagination; and the following facts were afterwards elicited from them.

One of the last two prisoners that we had captured was a celebrated guerrillo captain, named Jose Rodriguez. The party that we had had the fight with previously, was a portion of his company. Previous to the war, it appears that this chief had been confined for a long time in prison, at Puebla, for some serious offence—that he obtained his release by promising to fight against the Americans as a guerrillo; means were given him to raise and equip a company, and he was ordered to confine his operations in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, until our army advanced into the interior. The old lady informed us that he made her home his rendezvous, that he did so forcibly, and that she could not prevent him; that he assembled his company there two, three, and four times a week; that always on such occasions she was compelled to leave the premises—was not permitted to listen to any of their deliberations.

At the conclusion of this confession, uttered amid sobs and lamentations, the old lady again made a piteous appeal for the release of herself and daughters. The Captain again assured her

that they should all be released after he got through questioning her. He then interrogated her in relation to the operations of the guerrillos that day—their participation in the murder of the "beef party," &c. The old lady hesitated—did not feel inclined to answer this last question. Finally, however, by threats, the Captain compelled her to answer. She informed him that the guerrillo captain had, previous to his departure from Jalapa, solemnly and publicly made a declaration that he would fill fifty graves with American soldiers, at every point the army halted for hostile purposes.

In answer to another question, the old lady replied—

"How many he has filled already, I do not know—go, look for yourself," at the same time informing the Captain where the guerrillo had buried his dead, which was but a short distance from her house.

The old lady and her daughter were then released. The three then mounting horses that were picketed at a short distance in the woods, rode off and were soon lost to sight.

The men had stacked arms and were lying about on the grass, with the exception of the four who were guarding the two prisoners.

"Sergeant, form the men," the Captain exclaimed, and in a moment after the company was formed. The Captain then turned to me for the purpose of saying something, and just at that moment we were startled by the sharp report of a pistol. Instantly turning around, we discovered one of the prisoners, the captain of band, swiftly emerging into the woods at the right. It appears that taking advantage of a favorable opportunity, he had freed himself from his captors, and drawing a pistol from his bosom, had discharged its contents at one of them, fortunately, however, without any serious result. He was immediately pursued, and every possible effort made to capture him, but he eluded them all. He escaped!

The Captain's rage was unbounded. He raved, swore, and acted like a madman. A bird had flown that was worth eating. The captain of a band of guerrillos was a prize worth keeping. The soldiers who had him in charge were censured, reprimanded, and cured. Finally the Captain cooled off—he became calm—and stepping to the right of his company, he gave the word, "Forward!" In half an hour after, we arrived at the place of our former operations, placed the wounded upon biers, and started for camp.

We reached camp at daylight next morning. After the wounded had been sent to the hospital, the Captain and myself, with a few men, returned to the scene of our recent encounter. A short distance from where the rancho formerly stood—on the exact spot mentioned by the woman and the wounded guerrillo, we found eleven graves, all occupied by American soldiers, three of whom were of the "beef party" that left camp that morning.

That night the affair was talked about in camp, the Captain's foresight and judgment commended, guerrillos cursed, and the fate of the dead lamented.

At Chalpattepec, a few months afterwards, at the head of his company, encouraging his men by his gallantry and fearlessness, Capt. Pearson was killed, mortally wounded. A few days after, in the city of Mexico, Death called him away.

Rest, honored soldier, rest! May the dews of the night distill in midness on your narrow dwelling, and the winds of heaven brush gently over it! Let the coward shrink from your fate, and the ignoble spirit undervalue your fortune! In the estimation of the brave, in the eye of Glory, the earth that forms a pillow for your head, is softer than "the thrice-driven bed of down."

Thus falls the brave, who sinks to rest,
With all his country's honors blest!
His turf shall form a greener sod
Than ever fairy footsteps trod;
And Faith and Love shall oft repair,
To hold their hallowed converse there;
And Valor's self be often seen,
A passive guardian o'er the green,
And oft exclaim with dewy eyes,
"Beneath that turf a soldier lies."

FARMER BURRITT AND HIS LIBRARY.
FARMER BURRITT was a plain, honest Pennsylvania husbandman, who had been brought up very much as his father and grandfather had been before him—that is, with just knowledge enough to make him a respectable tiller of the soil. For several winters when farm-work was slack, he had been sent to a county school, and having some aptitude, he learned to read and write tolerably well, and to cast up simple accounts. There his literary education ended, and henceforth his energies were devoted to that kind of labor which is so necessary to make a practical farmer. On the death of his thrifty father, he entered into possession of a large and good farm, and in due time married. At the time to which we now refer, he had six children, all young, who had come into the world alternately boys and girls, and their father never dreamed of their being brought up in any other way than he and his ancestors had been. Each one was destined to receive a little schooling, and to do a good deal of work, suited to their respective ages. As is unhappily the case with too many farm-houses, there was but a dim light in that dwelling. There was no thought of cultivating the higher faculties of its inmates.

They were to go through the dull, plodding life of those who had preceded them; and although the farmer had a good family Bible and Psalm-

book, his library consisted of some few ragged elementary school-books, with the necessary annual almanac. It was in this state of affairs that an intelligent neighbor, who had turned his attention from a city business to farming, with the view of recruiting his health, became acquainted with Mr. Burritt, and deeply interested in his family. The confidence he inspired, and the kindly feelings he manifested, made him a welcome visitor, and gave him no small influence. In the course of many conversations, he threw out occasional hints about the proper training of children, and the advantages resulting from cultivating their mental faculties and moral powers. Although he found farmer Burritt and his wife rather dull scholars, who with difficulty could look beyond the narrow sphere in which they themselves had been educated, he was nevertheless encouraged to give them line upon line and precept upon precept. Taking advantage of what he supposed a favorable opportunity, he engaged one day in the following conversation with the farmer:

"Neighbor Burritt, I was thinking to-day that you were one of our most substantial and thriving farmers."

"Thank you; I am pretty well to do in the world, but it is because I work my way. I have no idle folks about me."

"True, friend Burritt; and it is commendable in you; but you will excuse me if I say I have implements which a good farmer should have."

"Haven't I, though? I guess if you will look about you, you'll find I have all I need."

"Well, I have been looking about, and I have not found half-a-dozen good books in the house."

"Oh, that's it; and what do I want with books? What's the use of them? I guess they can't teach me farming. Your book farmers aren't worth much—always trying something new, and coming out with short crops."

"Ah! but, friend Burritt, books teach many good and useful things besides farming; and to tell you the truth, I really think they would be very useful to your children, whom I know you love, and would like a little more intelligent than their neighbors. Now, if you would spend fifty dollars in good books, I will make such a selection as I am sure would be instructive to your children."

"Whew! fifty dollars laid out in books! Why, you must be joking!"

"No, I am not; I never was more serious in my life. My only motive for suggesting it is, the interest I feel in your family; and I will promise you that if at the end of six years you repent of the purchase, I will refund the fifty dollars, with full interest for the whole time."

Farmer Burritt looked puzzled. He respected his neighbor; he knew him to be a good friend, and although he thought the suggestion a foolish one, yet he was touched at the kind interest expressed in his children. After a silence of some minutes, as if he knew not what to say, he replied—"Well, well, I will think of it."

A day or two afterwards, the same friend visited the farmer, and before he had time to return to the conversation, the farmer said, "I have been thinking of what you said, and out of respect for you, here are the fifty dollars for the books; it's a foolish affair, and I wouldn't like to have it get abroad; but," added he, laughing, "I'll hold you to your promise of paying principal and interest at the end of six years. I can't lose much by the investment."

His friend took the money with great pleasure, and he saw that a new light was about to dawn on farmer Burritt's household. The books were purchased. Besides some good religious books, including several biographies, he had selected a choice volume or two on agriculture and gardening, several on general history and natural history, a few good books of travels, and various other books, some to entertain and others to awaken thought. In due time they were properly disposed in a little case, and the kind friend, already familiar with the children, now carefully showed them how books were to be used, enticed them to read, and even made them promise to spend some of their leisure time in finding out what the books contained. After some difficulty, he got things into a right train; both boys and girls began to be interested.

We pass over two years. The seed had been sown, was there any prospect of a harvest? No one can pass Mr. Burritt's farm without receiving some improvement. The external aspect of the old homestead has a more cheerful and comfortable appearance. Instead of the straggling and unsightly objects which used to be seen around the house, everything has a tidy look. The grass is growing, the flowering shrubbery creeps up the walls and adorns the pathway, the vegetable garden is in better taste, the ornamental accompaniment the useful, and gives evidence that the youngsters in the family have been studying the books on gardening. A glance inside shows a better-regulated family, and more obedient and well-dressed children.—Farmer Burritt acknowledges that Thomas, his oldest boy, has got something out of his books which has saved labor and improved his crops.

Other years pass, and the improvement is still more visible. Mr. Burritt, rather ashamed of his deficiencies, has been reading, and, marvelous to tell, has spent an additional fifty dollars in books. His conversation has become more intelligent. He knows something besides farming, and his whole manner has undergone a favorable change. The religious books have accomplished their mission. Religion dwells in that household and has its altar there. There can be no complaint that books have rendered