

ISAAC AS A "REFORMER."

ALBANY, 1st Mo, 26th.

RESPECTED WIFE: These knows that I came here to represent

The upright and the pure in heart who on "Reform" are bent;

Yea, that I came as a picked man, resolved, come weal or woe,

That bribery and corruption should find in me a foe.

The tidings of my coming must have preceded me,

And caused the evil doers from the Capital to flee.

Yea, fled are all the carnal workers of iniquity—So true it is that sinners dread a good man's company.

But, in their stead, I find of courteous, honest men a swarm,

And every one, like me, a zealous champion of "reform."

Yea, many a private citizen hath left his own concerns,

To sojourn here and push "Reforms" until the House adjourns.

One of these unofficial, unpaid patriots lately sought

An interview with me, and much I marveled that each thought

And sentiment and maxim that he uttered, woke in me

A corresponding sentiment of perfect unity.

He said that upright men, like me, had long been needed here,

To stem corruption's swelling tide, and stay its mad career,

Indeed, he thought that vice would shrink appalled before my face—

That outward sign of inward peace and spiritual grace!

My spirit yearned toward that man, his views appeared so just!

And verily he seemed to place, in me, implicit trust,

He said a meritorious enterprise I might assist

By allowing him to put my name in its stockholders' list.

There was nothing in the project to offend the strictest Friends:

Indeed, he guaranteed the stock to pay good dividends,

The first of which the Banks would pay the day we passed the Act

For its incorporation. It was pending then in fact.

It is a foolish husbandman that knows not wheat from taes:

Wherefore, without ado, I said: "Go to, I'll take thy shares!"

And when the Act came to a vote, on the ensuing day,

My own communication, of a surety, was "Yea! Yea!"

I was reminded, when I got my dividend and shares,

Of what is said of entertaining angels unawares: Stay, Hannah! I adjure thee, with thy tongue be not too free,

Lest thou stir up the assessors to despoil and worry me!

POSTSCRIPT.

I am in tribulation! Yea, Hannah, I'm proscribed, By the backbiting newspapers, as one that has been bribed!

Now verily, "the counsels of the wicked are deceit,"

And I fear that stranger's flattery was a net spread for my feet.

Yea, I am born to trouble, as a spark that upward flies:

I'm to be investigated! Vanity of vanities!

I'll write, if peradventure I'm delivered from these snares—

But, Hannah, sink or swim, I'll keep my dividend and shares.—*Buffalo Courier.*

FRANK CLIFF.

THE DIVER'S PARTNER.

I was a diver as a young man. I may say I was born a diver, for my father was one before me. You may have heard of him—Bill Hurst was his name; he was pretty well known in his time, and almost the first that ever went down in the dress without a bell. Even when I started at it there were not many in the business. Father began to train me for it early, and consequently, from habit and experience, I got to be considered a first-rate hand, and got my share of employment.

When quite young I was injured at my work, and after my leg began to get better a fever set in, and I was taken to a farmer's house. The farmer's daughter, Polly, was my nurse. By-and-by I got a bit better, and was able to creep about the house with a stick, or sit outside in the sun. The farmer was mostly out looking after his crops and his cattle, except at meal times; so Polly and I saw a good deal of one another, and very naturally fell in love.

One afternoon the farmer came home unexpectedly. Polly and I, never

dreaming of such a chance, were on the settle by the fire—I with my arm round her waist, and she with her head on my shoulder. It was a very pretty picture, perhaps, but I can tell you it didn't suit his taste, anyhow.

Well, there was a pretty row, I can assure you. The old man would have struck me but for Polly. He ordered me out of the house at once as an ungrateful rogue and vagabond. Then Polly tried her powers of persuasion, for he wouldn't listen to a word from me. At first he wouldn't give much heed to her; but by degrees she got him to sit down and hear what I had to say.

It wasn't very much beyond that I loved Polly. I could only say I hoped I should get work, and save money, and that sort of thing. He laughed at the idea: "What could we live on if we married?" Polly jumped up and said she could and would work at needle-work, or she'd go into service—anything! and then she burst out crying, and went into hysterics. That touched the old man a bit, and somehow or other, after a long time, he consented to give me a twelvemonth's grace. If I could come back at the end of it with a prospect of earning a fair living, I might have Polly. But she declared that I shouldn't be fit to work for some months yet, and that the twelve month should begin from when I was well and strong. So her father said, "It's autumn now: I'll give him a twelvemonth from Christmas!"

In the spring I shipped on board a trader bound for Wales for copper ore. We had one passenger on board, a friend of the captain's. They were shareholders in several mines, and had done business together for years. The passenger—his name was Turton—was very rich, but very speculative. The captain used often to rate him for such gambling rashness, as he called it.

"You'll sink all your money some of these days as deep as the doubloons in the ships over there," said he to Turton one day as we were sailing along the Cornish coast.

"What ships?—where?" said the other.

"Do you see those breakers yonder," said the captain, "about half a mile to the windward of the southern point of that low, rocky little island? That's called Galleon Reef, and it is said that a fleet of Spanish treasure ships were sunk there, to prevent their falling into the hands of our men-of-war that were after them."

"Has any of the money ever been found?" asked Turton.

"Yes, a few pieces now and then. There was a company started once—by some such speculative madcaps as you—but somehow or another it all came to nothing."

"Egad! I don't see why it shouldn't be done nowadays, with all our modern diving inventions."

"Oh, if you're for diving," said the captain, "here's your man;" and he turned to me. I had come aft to relieve the man at the wheel. I was a bit of a favorite with the captain for steadiness and sobriety, and he had asked me questions, and I told him who and what I was.

"Are you a diver, my man?" said Turton.

"I believe you—John Hurst is one of the best and most skillful divers we have," said the captain, who then called for another hand to take the wheel in my place.

When the voyage was ended, at the request of Mr. Turton, I sent in what I estimated as necessary for the attempt of securing the treasure. I proposed to begin in as economical a manner as possible, and with a small staff. A couple of divers would be sufficient to examine the reef, and see what truth there was in the report, and if it proved true, to calculate what amount of money could be got out of the vessels. It would then be easy to send as many additional hands as necessary.

I only discovered one drawback in the affair. It turned out that my partner was a diver of the name of Bleggs—a quarrelsome, ill-conditioned fellow, with not the best of characters. I felt it my duty to tell Mr. Turton thus much, but he said it couldn't be helped, for Bleggs' patron was one of the largest and most influential share-holders, and that he wanted Bleggs appointed to the post I had; and Bleggs would have had it but for Mr. Turton's tact and energy, and the respect the other adventurers felt for him.

Bleggs knew this; for, the first time we met, he said something about my luck in having friends at court to get me above the heads of better men. "Well," he continued, gruffly, "it's no odds. We shall see soon who does best for the company, skipper or man."

In due time the island was reached

and our work began. We explored the ocean bed carefully. I meant to examine the hulk first, but in a weak moment allowed myself to be dissuaded by Bleggs, who urged that as what he wanted was to learn as quickly as possible if there was gold, we had better examine the ships which the sea had broken up for us and so save ourselves the trouble of breaking up the hulk.

The work was exhausting and fatiguing, and I found to my chagrin that Bleggs surpassed me in strength and endurance. My illness had shaken my constitution, and I suffered very severely from pain in the leg that had been fractured; but I made up my mind to persevere and do my best.

So far our search had been unsuccessful. At last I observed something that made me suspect that Bleggs was playing me tricks. Happening to make my descent after him somewhat more rapidly than usual, I found him emerging from the hulk. He assured me afterwards that he had only gone there for mussels, of which he was very fond, and which were very fine on the hulk.

A day or two afterward—Bleggs having meantime obtained leave to "go ashore," as we called visiting the mainland—I observed that a man was constantly hanging about the reef fishing in an open boat. It was not a very good fishing ground, and it was some distance from the shore for an open boat. But I noticed that this stranger always remained at his moorings till after dark. He was not very communicative—indeed, he growled at our manœuvres, saying that we drove the fish away. At the same time I discovered he was not a native, for he did not speak the local dialect, but what, for want of better definition, I may call London-English.

My suspicions were aroused at last, when turning round suddenly one day while preparing to descend, I saw Bleggs signaling to the solitary fisherman. I said nothing, but determined to investigate without delay.

All that night I lay awake thinking over this matter. I rose in the morning with a matured plan. When Bleggs and I had finished our midday meal, which was cooked upon the boat, I ordered him to take off his diving-dress, and go to the main land and get some paper, under the pretense that I had none in store, and must write my report to Mr. Turton that night. Bleggs did not seem to like the idea, but he was obliged to go. I sent one of the crew with him in one of our small punts; and as soon as I saw him disappear behind the island I jumped overboard to prosecute my search.

And I made my way to the hulk and entered it. A very short survey sufficed to show me that its hold had been visited, and that its contents had been recently disturbed. Making my way down, I was speedily engaged in clearing the sand and weed, beneath which I soon came upon some large wooden cases, so rotten and decayed that a very few blows of my ax shivered the lid of one, and revealed the contents.

There lay masses of what, in spite of being so oxidized and, as it were, fused together by the action of salt-water, I could see were gold and silver coins. The sight at first surprised me; and then came a thought of rage at the treachery of Bleggs, who had, it is clear, concealed the treasure from me, and was evidently helping himself to the contents of the chest—somehow, though how I knew not.

I began to search the hold narrowly for some trace of the manner in which he removed the coin. In a remote corner I came on a bundle of raw hide, and several coils of thin but strong line. Beside these lay a knife which I identified as his, and therefore took possession of as a bit of evidence against him. Then I ascended to the deck again, and looked about me. I could see a place where the bulwarks had evidently been cut away quite lately, and beyond it in the sand, which had drifted up almost level with the deck, I could see a trail as if heavy bodies had been dragged along. I followed it, and was guided to a nook in the upright wall of a rock, wherein I found two large packages, consisting of raw hide, and evidently full of coins. A line was attached to them. I followed it with my eye as it went up—up toward the surface of the water as far as I could see. I was just about to pull it, in order to discover whether it was attached to some fishing buoy, when I made out through the green haze of heaving water a dark object, which I immediately guessed was the boat of the uncommunicative fisherman.

Well might that morose personage

cast line after line into the sea if this was the sort of catching he made! I saw at once why he staid out until after dark. It was to haul in his prize unobserved. I determined he should have his labor for nothing this once, at any rate. I would tie his lines to a mass of rocks, and let him pull that up! I should want some cord for this purpose, and remembering the coil in the hold of the vessel, I went back to seek it.

While I was groping my way in the hold I felt a sudden jerk at my signal line, which, as you are aware, is attached round a diver's waist. I supposed it must have caught on some projection on the wreck. The next minute I found it must have broken, for it hung loose.

As I put my hand behind me to the not of the signal line to make sure that this was the case, I experienced a violent push from behind, which flung me down on my face. Before I could recover myself, or even wonder what was amiss, I felt my hands caught in a slip-noose, drawn forcibly together behind, and bound fast by the wrists.

By this time I had guessed who was my assailant. Bleggs had managed somehow to return very much sooner than he should have done, and had come down and surprised me.

As soon as he had finished tying my hands he turned me over on my back, and putting his foot on my chest, stood looking at me for a minute or two. Even at that moment it struck me how strange we must look—one man looking at the other with triumph and hatred, the other gazing at him with alarm and anxiety, but the countenance of each hidden from the other by the strange expressionless diving-helmets.

He raised me to my feet, when a violent struggle ensued. But he was my master: I was powerless with my hands so; he forced me back against an upright support, and lashed me to it.

I felt a sense of relief, for I knew that, although he had cut my single rope, my staying down long after he ascended would alarm the men in our boat, and some means would have been taken to free me. There were one or two men among the crew who could dive a little, and there were two spare dresses on the island, in case of accidents.

But I had miscalculated my enemy's malice. You may have observed in a diver's helmet two little brass disks, perforated like a nose of a watering pot. One of these is constantly in use allowing the superfluous or vitiated air to escape. The second is in use in case the other be clogged or damaged. Both are arranged so that on being turned half round they are closed, and shut in the air, whereupon the diver becomes so buoyant that he rises at once to the surface.

Bleggs came up to me, made a mocking bow as if to take farewell, and then closed both the escape valves of my helmet. All the horror of my situation flashed on me. He intended to murder me. With every stroke of the air pump would come a great pressure of air, which by its increasing weight would kill me after the most awful tortures.

Before I had recovered from the shock Bleggs had disappeared, and already the strokes of the air-pumps seemed to beat on my brain like sledge-hammers. I writhed and twisted and tore at my fastenings with the strength of a desperate and the fury of a mad man. The agony became intense. All of a sudden I felt I held some hard substance in my hand. It was the knife I had picked up. I had instinctively gripped it hard, even in my struggle with Bleggs. But it was closed. Still the pressure increased; I felt as if my hand would burst; my eyeballs seemed filled with fire; my breath was choked; my brain began to swim.

Now or never thought I. After some vain struggling I managed to hold the knife against the timber with the back of one hand, and with the other open its blade. Directly it was open and thrust into my diving-dress, which, with the pressure of the air, was distended like a balloon. With the bubbling sound that denoted the escape of the air through the hole thus made came an immediate sense of relief. The hope of escape from such imminent peril gave me new courage and fresh strength, and I speedily released myself from my bonds, and was saved.

The hole I made was in the leg of my trowsers. I took some of the cord that had bound me, and after tying it as tight as I could round my leg above the hole, was able to turn on my regular escape valve and breathe with comparative freedom.

In a few moments I had gained the deck, and, closing the valve was rapidly borne to the surface. I came up just