A DECOY LETTER.

Mr. C. B. Barrett, formerly Chief Inspector of the United States Secret Service, had a queer experience some time ago in a beautiful little town way down in Maryland. Mr. Barrett's long experience with this sort of work has taught him just how to dig a pit for his game, as the train neared the village he walked through the smoker to the mail car, asked for the mail clerk, showed his commission and said he had some thing which he wanted done.

"What is it?" asked the clerk nervously, eying the Chief Inspector.

"Where is the mail pouch you throw off at the next stop?"

It was produced.

"Open it."

It was opened, for an inspector has absolute authority, not only over mail clerks, but over the postmasters of the larger cities.

Here is a letter," said Mr. Barrett, "addressed to James Lancaster, a fictitious name. The letter contains a $10 bill. I want you to examine it, take the address, put it in that pouch and lock it with your own hands."

All this was done, and Mr. Barrett went back to his seat in one of the day coaches, confident that the next move in the game would answer his expectations.

The Secret Service agent stood upon the platform of the mail car when the train stopped and the pouch was thrown off, when he at once stepped to the platform. A boy, whose business it was to carry the mail, took the pouch over his shoulder and started up the village street, never dreaming that a Chief Inspector of the Postal Service was following him on the other side of the street and was watching him like a hawk, while seeming to watch nothing. It was a beautiful June day, the birds were singing, and although it was high noon the leafy, lofty trees lining the quiet street cast such deep, cool shadows that Mr. Barrett did not find walking unpleasant. For about a quarter of a mile the boy kept on, followed by the Inspector, and then turned into a small frame building, with a white and black sign over the door labelled "Postoffice."

"Now," said Mr. Barrett, inwardly, "my letter has reached its destination."

There was a crowd of visitors inside of the little Post-office and outside who swarmed towards the desk "to get their mail," and Mr. Barrett waited some fifteen minutes until they had all gone before he entered the place, and saw a handsome girl, about seventeen years old, dressed in an old-fashioned bodice and light colored skirt, sitting behind the wire grating in a rocking chair sewing.

"Is there a letter here for James Lancaster?" said the Inspector, and every one who knows his face and figure will not wonder that the girl took him for a well to do country man.

"No," she said, after sorting some letters in a case marked "L."

"Won't you look again?" and she did look, but with no better result.

"I am sure the letter must have come," said Mr. Barrett, and I, who know him well, can imagine how gently he said it.

"It's not here."

"Are you the Postmaster?"

"No. I am the assistant. My father is the Postmaster."

"Who opened the pouch that came bo the last train?"

"I did."

"No one to help you?"

"No, sir."

The girl's bright eyes looked as innocently at Mr. Barrett as any girl's bright eyes ever looked at any man.

"Maybe it stuck in the pouch. I've heard of such things," he said. "Won't you look?"

She took [illegible] it up- [illegible] down, s[illegible] inside. No letter.

"Won't y[illegible] n and help you lo[illegible] Barrett.

"No. No [illegible] here."

The Chie[illegible] m his pocket his c[illegible] Unit- ed States G[illegible] s offi- cial signatu[illegible] howed it to the gi[illegible] ad it, "Can I con[illegible]

"Yes," b[illegible] ar par- don."

"You di[illegible] child," said the ve[illegible] Secret Service.

There w[illegible] n six feet high [illegible] ndow, and a gat[illegible] parti- tion, tow[illegible] ster's daughter [illegible] arrett that eve[illegible] s?" At last she t[illegible] lock, entered the[illegible] itted the Inspe[illegible] rward a few feet [illegible]

There [illegible] but bare deal [illegible] box- es, and h[illegible] on there.

"I mail[illegible] James Lancast[illegible] "That is the [illegible] een is calling my [illegible] That letter w[illegible]

presence. When that pouch was put off at the station I followed it and kept it in sight until it was taken into the Postoffice. Now you say you opened it alone, that no one else touched it. Where is my letter?"

"I never saw it, sir. If you doubt me you can search me."

Mr. Barrett said that he would not do that, and that he had never done such a thing to a woman, and he began to pace the floor in deep thought. The girl, more beautiful than ever in her excitement, sat down in the rocking chair, crossed her limbs and began to rock.

"Call your mother, and she can search you in my presence," said he at length.

"My mother is dead."

Again the Secret Service agent paced the floor. He looked into an adjoining room, brightly and neatly furnished, and wondered whether the girl could have secreted the letter there while she pretended to be going to the gate to let him in. As he paced back and forth he noticed the swinging feet of the Postmaster's daughter, that one of her stockings had sagged down, and that under that stocking was the shape of an envelope.

"Your stocking has dropped," he said.

The girl turned scarlet and white, and stopped rocking. She caught her breath, as if to faint.

"Now, give me my letter," said the Inspector.

She took it from its hiding place, handed it to him and burst into a flood of passionate tears.

The decoy letter, as is usual in cases of this sort, had been fixed so that it would be apparent to anyone that money was enclosed. It had done its work.

"Where is your father?" asked Mr. Barrett.

"In the garden," sobbed the girl.

Mr. Barrett went out into the garden, found the old man hoeing and brought him in, and when he was told all he bowed his white head and sobbed with his child. The inspector learned that the girl had admirers, as was natural; that her father was very miserly, not giving her even the money needed for a bright bit of ribbon, a new hat or a new dress; that she had been tempted to take money from the mails for bits of finery, and had done so. Mr. Barrett bitterly accused the old man of being the one to blame, and he acknowledged it.

"I suppose you will arrest her?" said the girl's father.

"Will you make restitution of the sum (it was about $10), she has taken on account of your miserliness?"

"Yes; here it is," and it was handed over. "Will you arrest her?"

"If I did what would be her future? No. Unless you or she tells this it will never be known in the village."

Inspector Barrett left after forcing the old man to promise his daughter should never be compelled or allowed to handle the mails again, and when he submitted his full report to the head of the department at Washington his course was fully approved.

Patti and the Burglar.

It is said that shortly before Mme. Patti left Wales for her South American tour had a thrilling experience with a burglar. The songstress was alone in her chamber preparing to retire for the night, when she heard a sound in an adjoining room, as if someone were moving about. Patti hastily donned a wrapper, and walked boldly into the room from which the sounds came, and stood face to face with a gigantic burglar. He wore a mask to conceal his features, and in his hand he carried a heavy club. The plucky woman asked him what he was doing there.

"Don't you see," he replied in a broad Welsh dialect, "I am stealing your diamonds?"

And he held up to her astonished eyes the most beautiful bracelet which she possessed. Patti did not scream.

She simply walked across the room, pressed an electric button to summon the servant. Instead of the servant, however, Signor Nicolini appeared on the scene. The burglar attempted to strike him with his club, but his game was frustrated by Patti. She grasped the club as it was raised in the air. Nicolini and the burglar then clinched, and in the struggle that ensued the enterprising but altogether too candid thief was pitched out of a second story window. He descended gracefully and broke a leg. He was found to be a peasant whom Patti had frequently befriended.—London Cor. New York Press.

Two Great Curiosities.

A traveler once with great [illegible]ness related to a large company that he had traveled through all the world, and had seen at least one curiosity which had never yet been mentioned by any author.

This wonder, according to his assertion, was a cabbage-plant so large that under one single leaf fifty armed horsemen in battle array could station themselves and perform their evolutions. No one who heard this exaggeration deemed it worthy of refutation; but one said, with the utmost composure and coolness, that he, too, had been somewhat of a traveler, and had been as far as Japan, where, to his astonishment, he had seen more than three hundred coppersmiths at work upon an immense cauldron, and that five hundred men were to be employed to smooth and polish it. "For what purpose, then, would they wish to use this monstrous cauldron?" asked the first traveler, sneeringly. "For cooking the cabbage-plants, sir, such as you were telling us about just now," was the answer

Segato's Ghastly Table.

Fifty years ago or thereabouts Giuseppe Segato, a Florentine physician, announced that he had discovered a way of petrifying the human body so as to preserve its form without change of appearance. He submitted specimens of his work to the grand duke of Tuscany, who thought well of the discovery, and offered to buy it from Segato. The physician refused the offer, and while he waited for a higher bid died, either suddenly or after a very short illness. He never revealed his process, and his secret was buried with him.

The following description of Segato's best known specimen, first published about a year ago in a medical journal, has since appeared in almost every newspaper in the country:

In the Pitti palace, at Florence, is a table which for originality in the matter of construction, and ghastliness in conception, is probably without a rival. It was made by Guiseppe Segato, who passed several years of his life in its manufacture. To the casual observer it gives the impression of a curious mosaic of marbles of different shades and colors, for it looks like polished stone. In reality it is composed of human muscles and viscera. No less than a hundred bodies were requisitioned for the material. The table is round and about a yard in diameter, with a pedestal and four claw feet, the whole being formed of petrified human remains. The ornaments of the pedestal are made form the intestines, the claws with hearts, livers and lungs, the natural color of which is preserved. The table top is constructed of muscles artistically arranged, and it is bordered with upwards of a hundred eyes, the effect of which is said to be highly artistic, since they retain all their luster, and seem to follow the observer. Segato died about 50 years ago. He obtained bodies from the hospitals and indurated them by impregnation with mineral salts.

Curiosity led the present writer, when in Florence recently, to obtain a view of this curious piece of furniture. What he saw was so entirely different from what he had been led to expect, that he is moved to tell the readers of the Sun about it.

In the first place, the "table" is not in the Pitti palace, but in the anatomical collection of the new St. Mary's Hospital; there the present writer had an opportunity of examining it, in company with Dr. Stanislao Bianchi, who is in charge of the collection.

The "table" is oval, of what looks like mahogany; it is about 18 inches long by 12 wide, and consists of a top only, it has no appearance whatever of ever having had a pedestal. The human putrifactions on it consist or thin of small sections or slices about 1-64 of an inch thick, which are veneered upon it; some are diamond shaped, some oval, others square, with surface like fine grained wood, all arranged in a symmetrical rectangular oblong design; there is a border around it, presenting at first sight the appearance of a checker board. Some of these veneers, by the effects of dampness, have become detached; one or two have fallen off altogether. Prof. Bianchi pointed out that these were small bits of organisms of the human body, such as the loins, kidneys, liver, spleen, lungs, skin, all of natural color, and that probably, in order to get them of small size they had been taken from boys' cadavers. There were, however, no human eyes in the border or anywhere else.

Dr. Bianchi showed other specimens of Segato's process—a female scalp of perfectly natural color, with long flowing hair attached; a woman's breast, fair and white, perfectly life-like. In these cases the parts preserved were like medium pasteboard in thickness and firmness. He showed also petrified reptiles, fish, and separate parts of the human body, all prepared by Segato, and doubtless submitted by him when he offered to sell his secret to the Tuscan government.

It was difficult to get an expression of opinion from the doctor about the value of Segato's process, and the consequent importance to science of its loss. "It has not been discovered since; it is a pity that it still remains unknown," was all that the kind and courteous professor would say on the subject. "Segato asked rather a large price, perhaps, but he knew his own business, doubtless."

The "table" is not seen by many visitors to Florence, or even by many Florentines; the custodians of Segato's specimens, even if they do not discourage sightseers, certainly evince no great enthusiasm for the objects of their care.—New York Sun.

A Humorous Senator.

Senator Evarts has a command a contentious humor that is rarely hinted at in such of his oblong periods as are most familiar to the public. A correspondent says that he remarked of Rhode Island that "it was settled by the Dutch; the Yankees settled the Dutch;" and of certain Christians who landed in New England: "They praised God and fell upon their knees—then they fell upon the aborigi-nese." The ex-Secretary also sent to Bancroft this letter:

"Dear Bancroft: I am very glad to send you two products of my pen to-day—a fine bit of pickled pig pork and my eulogy on Chief Justice Chase. Yours,

"EVARTS."

The Judge and the Baby.

The Judge of the County Court was in trouble.

He had adjourned his court, the jurors had gone home, and he was left alone with the Sheriff.

No—not entirely alone—a sallow-faced woman in a limp and faded gingham sunbonnet and a limper and more faded homespun dress crouched down by the door of the Court House with a baby in her lap.

The Judge stepped outside for a moment and looked down the one straggling street which constituted the main thoroughfare of Blue Rock.

A dreary, drizzling rain was falling, and there was scarcely a sign of life in the little village.

"Jim!"

In response to the call the sheriff followed the Judge—he was a big, tall fellow, with a good natured face, and his shambling walk impressed one with an idea of his laziness and general incapacity.

"Jim," said the Judge, "I'll be durned if I know what to do with Sally Black."

The sheriff hitched up his baggy jeans trousers and then scratched his head.

"We're in a fix, Jedge," was his reply, and a broad grin spread over his face.

Undoubtedly the Judge was in a fix—he knew that well enough without hearing from the sheriff. Sally Black had been convicted of vagrancy in his court, and he had sentenced her to six months' imprisonment—a sentence which was to be carried out by knocking down the prisoner to the highest bidder.

As a rule, the prisoners disposed of in this manner were negroes, and the farmers of the country were always ready to bid for them and put them to work on their plantations, where they were treated like the other hands until their term of service expired.

The farmers around Blue Rock were a simple-minded, old-fashioned set of people, and the county court in their eyes was not a mill of criminal justice it was merely an agency through which they were supplied with laborers. They wanted Sally Black put through, as they expressed it, because she was the only regular tramp and beggar in the country—a good-for-nothing white woman, who had come from no one knew where, and was evidently going to the devil.

But when their wish was gratified—when the forlorn woman in her rags and desolation had been tried, convicted and sentenced, the honest countrymen slipped out of the court room with downcast faces and started homeward. Sheriff Jim spent an hour on a stump in front of the temple of justice vainly endeavoring to auction off his human merchandise, but nobody would offer a bid.

Of course it was no feeling of compassion for Sally Black that they held them back—it was the baby!

"Billy Betts would take her," said the Judge, coming out of a brown study. "I think, Jim, I'll send you down to the house."

"All right, Jedge," answered Jim. His Honor looked inside the door. Sally Black still sat on the floor leaning against the wall with her baby in her lap. She did not look up at the Judge's stern face, but the little girl did, and began to laugh and crow in a spasm of delight.

The Judge hastily beat a retreat.

"Jim," he said, "you needn't go after Betts.

"All right, Jedge."

"The fact is, Betts is not the right sort to have a convict; he's a hard man—too rough, you know."

"Jesso, Jedge."

"We'll lock her up in jail until to-morrow," said the other.

The Judge walked inside the court house and stooped down to tell the woman of his determination.

A pair of blue eyes flashed at him in riotous merriment, and a pair of pink fists struck at him and then the child's long fingers entwined themselves in his long beard.

"Oo's oo?" chirruped the baby.

His Honor pushed his captor back, very gently, and then looked at the Sheriff.

"She's a peart gal," remarked Jim.

The Judge bolted out of the door, followed by the faithful officer.

"Jim, this is getting serious."

"Looks like a tough old case," volunteered the Sheriff.

"I can't lock that baby up in our dirty old jail, and I won't."

"How will you fix it, Jedge?" asked the other. "Under the law we can't bid for the prisoner.

"I know what I'll do," said the Judge—"I say, Bob, come here!" he shouted to a man on the other side of the street.

Bob crossed over very reluctantly. He was a tenant on a small farm belonging to the judge, and he was behind with his rent.

He expected to be dunned, but he was mistaken.

In a word the situation was explained to him.

"But I can't bid," he objected. "I ain't able."

"D—n it, man!" shouted the Judge, "offer a dollar."

"But I can't pay that—I owe you fifty dollars now."

"Confound you!" roared the Judge. "Do as I tell you, and you shall have your own time about paying the back rent."

"All right," replied the fellow slowly, "but Sally Black cannot work, and I cannot afford to feed her."

"See here, Bob," growled the Judge, with a determined look, "you just put this woman and her baby in the little cabin on the hill. They won't starve. I'll send them enough to eat."

Bob had no more to say. It was a good bargain for him, and in less than five minutes he was marching down the street, followed by Sally Black and the baby.

The next day the Judge sent in his resignation to the Governor.

To his friends he made a very satisfactory explanation.

"Under our special act," he said, "I receive no salary. I am paid in fees, and I don't get any. Then I have to lend the prisoners money to pay their fines, and it is getting so that I will have to support some of the convicts. This court business will ruin me in debt if I stick to it, and that is why I resigned."

So Sally Black and the baby were quartered in a comfortable log cabin on the Judge's plantation, and their rations were sent to them every week from the big white house over the river.

What became of them after Sally's term was out?

The Blue Rock people would laugh at such a queston. They knew the Judge. Sally Black needs no written lease—no contract with witnesses. She will stay in the little cabin as long as she and the baby like it, and the neighbors think she is settled there for life.—Atlanta Constitution.

Cowboy and Spook.

Cheyenne Leader

This is hardly the season for ghost stories, but one which reached the ears of a reporter the other evening may entertain those fond of spooklore. The Leader can vouch for the reliability of all the persons mentioned, except the ghost itself. The narrative runs in this wise:

Joe Healey, a rollicking cowboy who rides the range for the Carlisle Cattle Company, was engaged in transferring a bunch of horses from one ranch on the Sweetwater to another and passed the historical Independence rock after nightfall. When near the noted landmark Joe was nearly scared out of his wits and his charges almost stampeded by the appearance of a ghastly apparition across the trail. The figure was that of a man and white in color. The outlines were clearly defined but the cowboy is unable to describe the costume of the unearthly tramp.

Healey, who is a quick-witted chap of great nerve, hurried his horse to a corral, about a mile distant, and returned to visit the uncanny thing. The goblin damned, like the village maiden, was over modest and kept its distance. At times it floated rapidly through the air and again locomoted steady by jerks, as the toad walks. The adventurous puncher proposed to drive the ghost into the horse herd and then rope it. He was unsuccessful, however, but exhausted his mount and emptied his six shooters in the attempt, and what more could be required of an honest cowboy?

As is usually the case the ghost finally melted away, leaving the pursuers completely mystified. Another cowboy met with a similar adventure in the same locality last year, and every range-rider in that region swears by the Chicago market that the place is "sure enough haunted."

Swagger in the Old Days.

From Besant's "Fifty Years Ago."

There is still swagger, even in these days; cavalry officers in garrison towns are still supposed to swagger. Eton boys swagger in their own little village: undergraduates swagger. The putting on of "side" by the way, is a peculiarly modern form of swagger; it is the assumption of certain qualities and powers which are considered as deserving of respect. Swagger, fifty years ago, was a coarser kind of thing. Officers swaggered; men of rank swaggered, gentlemen in military frogs—there are no longer any military frogs—swaggered in taverns, clubs, and in the streets. The adoption of quiet manners; the wearing of rank with unobtrusive dignity; the possession of wealth without ostentation; of wit without the desire to be always showing it—these are points in which we are decidedly in advance of our fathers There was a great deal of cuff and collar, stock and breastpin about the young fellows of the day. They were oppressive in their gallantry; in public places they asserted themselves; they were loud in their talk.

A Pike County Story.

The Paupack Creek, in Pike County, Pennsylvania, is the dwelling place of a monster more wonderful than the sea serpent, if one can believe the stories told by people in the vicinity. They describe the beast as having a head like an ape and square shoulders like a human being. From the shoulders of the creature there extend legs arms, which terminate in great claws. The body of the monster, which is fully six feet in length, is of a reddish brown tint, very like that of a lizard, and terminates in a tail like that of a fish. The creature's body is bare of any covering, but about the head and neck is a mane of reddish hair. It is needless to say that the county is excited over the strange animals. Various parties surround the creek each day in hopes of capturing the beast, but up to the present time their endeavors have not been crowned with success.

Newspaper Wit.

The dentist may not be much of a politican, but he knows how to take the stump.

"What is Sniggles running for?" "I didn't know he was running for anything." "Oh, but he is then. I saw him going to church last Sunday."—Boston Transcript.

"And what do you expect to make of your son when he comes of age, Mr. Smith?" "Oh I don't know," replied Mr. Smith, despondently; "I think he'd make a good husband for a rich girl."—Life.

Bashful youth: "Will you take this chair, Miss Ethel?" Miss Ethel: "Oh, no. It has no arm." Bashful youth (eagerly): "I shall be most happy—ah—to supply the deficiency, I assure you." And he did.—Judge.

"Hello, Jellycake, who cut your hair?" "My wife." "She made a horrible job of it." "Yes, I,m beginning to understand why Sampson lost his strength after consulting a female barber. I feel pretty weak myself." Lincoln Journal.

"I am glad your sister enjoyed her visit to us, Mr. Smith." "Oh, well, you know she is the sort of girl who can enjoy herself anywhere, you know."—

"Papa, where's Atoms?" "Atoms? I don't know, my boy. You mean Athens, probably." "No, I mean Atoms—the place where everything is blown to."

A young married woman who has just been presented with a second child was asked by a friend; "Don't you find it to much bother to take care of two babes?" "Oh, no," said the mother; "one baby used to keep me up all night and two can't keep me up any longer,"

Talk about your cigarette smoking! Here's a man over in Connecticut, who has died, that smoked over 2,000 herrings a day. It was his business.

"Bridget," said the mistress to the new hired girl, "you can go now and put the mackerel in soak." "Sure, ma'am, air ye rejuced to that?" asked Bridget, sympathetically.

Mother—"You look savage, Charlie." Charlie (fresh from school)—"Yes, ma. Fact is, the teacher rattaned me; the brand of Cain is on the antipode of my brow."

"Are you admiring the new moon, Miss Clara?" he said as he came softly up from the gate. "Yes, Mr. Sampson, I have been gazing at it so long that my neck fairly aches." "You shouldn't try to look at it alone," he said tenderly, and then he sat down and divided the labor.—New York Sun.

"Why, John, what is the matter with baby?" she said, as she came hastily into the house. "He is crying bitterly." "Yes," replied the old man, as he handed the infant over; "he is evidently thinking of what the governor of North Carolina said to the governor of South Carolina."—Epoch.

Brown; "I say, Dumley, you haven't forgotten that $10-bill you borrowed of me a long time ago, have you?" Dumley (in a hurt tone of voice): "Forgotten it, my dear boy?" Do you think I'm so weak-minded as all that?" I'd rather a man would impugn my credit any day than my memory."—Life.

Mrs. Dusenberry—"What nonsense these newspapers study out! Now here's a statement that widows are more likely to die than widowers." Mr. Dusenberry—"That's all bosh, my dear. The fact is that a man generally dies before his widow." Mrs. Dusenberry—"Is that really the case? How do you account for it?" Mr. Dusenberry—"I can't."

They had retired. Mrs. Dusenbury was talking a streak about Mr. D.'s foibles. "Gracious!" she suddenly exclaimed, "my foot's asleep." "Then keep quiet, my dear," said Mr. D., "and perhaps you'll fall asleep all over."

He: "I must break off my engagement, Violet." She: "Why should you do that?" He: "Well, your father has failed: how can he support a son-in-law in the style in which I have lived!" She: "Why, you goose, he failed on purpose to meet the extra expense!"—Harper's Bazar.

A Creditable Snake Story.

A farmer near Orlando, Fla., saw in the sand the trail of what he thought was a very big snake. He followed it, and after ten minutes' trailing came upon the largest serpent he had ever seen. It was engaged in swallowing a rabbit, and the farmer waited and watched the operation. After the rabbit had disappeared he walked foward to get a good shot at the monster, which according to his story, at once reared up its head as high as a good sized man and began racing back and forth before him, drawing nearer each time, hissing and darting out his tongue. The farmer shot and broke the snake's back, and another shot killed it. It was a "coach-whip" snake of the boa constrictor family, and measured sixteen feet and two inches in length and was four inches across the head.