That New Guest.

DURING July and August of last summer I was passing away the time with an old aunt of mine in the country. Her place was situated in the heart of the mining districts of Pennsylvania, and when I was not working on the farm like any day-laborer, I used to spend my time in going around the country visiting the various mines; going through them and learning as much about them as I could, for I intended to make mining engineering my profession. In this way I visited the coal mines at Pottsville, the great magnetite deposit at Cornwall, and many other places. Our farm was situated about seven miles from Reading, and as there were many blast-furnaces and rolling mills in that vicinity, I had the opportunity of visiting them all, which I enjoyed to the fullest extent.

The excursion which I shall longest remember was the one to Cornwall. The magnetite deposit there is something phenomenal, though I believe it is not unique, there being several other deposits of a similar character in the United States. A large hill rises to a height of about 300 feet above the level of the surrounding plain, and is divided by a railroad-cutting, which runs directly through it. The whole hill is one solid mass of ore, and the mine is worked as an open quarry, the expenses of mining being thus reduced to a minimum. The hill rises on each side of the railroad-cutting in a series of gigantic steps to a height of several hundred feet, each step being from 50 to 100 feet in height. Railroad-tracks run around the hill by the foot of each step, so that all that the miners have to do is to break up the ore which has been blasted off each face, and load it into the car. Borings in the lowest part of the mine have been made to a depth of nearly three hundred feet, and the drill had not yet passed out of the ore body.

But it was not of this deposit I intend to write about, but of a peculiar occurrence which happened to me, or, rather, which I witnessed at the little inn at the village of L—, where I put up for the night of the day of this excursion. This inn was kept by a very respectable elderly widow lady, who, not to speak disparagingly of, had a good eye for business, never losing sight of her own interests while looking out for those of others.

Soon after I had returned there, in the evening a stranger rode up, and giving his horse to the stable-boy, entered the inn and asked for a night's lodging. The old lady treated him very politely, but, I observed, seemed at the same time rather suspicious of him, and evidently determined in her own mind to keep a sharp watch on his doings.

Earl Townsend (so this new guest registered his name) was a young man of about nineteen, but seemingly several years older. He was one of those sad, dreamy, melancholy fellows, such as Gray in his Elegy has described as

"Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love."

The shades of evening fell, supper was bolted, and the new guest retired to his room,

"To muse in solitude on bygone days;"
or, perchance, to employ himself in some more profitable way; however, the room of the worthy hostess opened on the same hall, and almost directly opposite to that of her guest.

Leaving her door ajar, the good lady, at about nine o'clock, retired to her peaceful couch, satisfied from sundry not very melodic sounds proceeding from the room opposite, which certain vulgar, unlettered individuals have termed snoring, but which, from the very best authority, we can assert is merely "a difficulty in applying the nasal organism to its proper use"—satisfied from this that her boarder was (not to use a poetical phrase) sound asleep.

The wheel of time rolled on, and an hour passed by. Queen Mab was playing divers tricks with the imagination of our fair hostess, and she was dreaming of "joys departed," in blissful ignorance of the present, when of a sudden her quick ear caught the sound of a human voice, muttering in terms of concentrated wrath like the far-off thunder. Rising hastily from her bed she approached the door,