

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget  
Kemper Editor  
Nov 28<sup>th</sup>, 1885

### The Burglars That Infest Our Suburbs

My friend B. and his wife were sitting in their library after dinner the other evening when suddenly they were startled by a loud ring at the door bell. As the B's live in a very retired place in the suburbs a ringing of the bell in the evening aroused considerable interest. After a moment's delay the door was opened by the maid-servant, but after a short hurried conversation it was suddenly closed with a slam. The violence of the slam elicited more interest in the minds of B. and his wife which was intensified as the maidservant appeared at the library door evidently very much frightened. It required considerable questioning on the part of B. to discover the cause of all the disturbance, as the girl was so much terrified that she could not give any connected account of what had occurred at the door. Added to this terror of the girl soon communicated itself to Mrs. B. who, feeling that something was wrong soon worked herself up to a point of excitement equal to that of the girl. However it finally transpired that the girl in going to the door in answer to the summons found three men standing there whom she at once thought were burglars intent on gaining an entrance to the house. The three villains inquired for Mr. B, evidently expecting that girl would go upstairs to summon him and thereby allow them to gain an entrance into the house, and giving them an opportunity of shooting B. as he came downstairs.

The girl, however was equal to the occasion, and immediately saying that B. was not at home, she slammed the door in their faces. After B. had succeeded in quieting down the excitement of his wife and the girl he began to consider the matter very carefully.

The house in which they lived was very secluded and the neighbors were so far distant that an alarm in the case of an attack upon the house could not reach them. Still that men should be so daring as openly to approach the house at eight o'clock in the evening and ring the doorbell in order to gain admittance when an entrance unobserved by the inmates could be gained

with comparative ease during the night seemed such a height of daring and effrontery that B. was somewhat staggered. The girl was convinced that the men had evil designs. Their appearance was against them, and their actions and manners plainly stamped them as villains of the deepest dye.

B. After weighing the facts very carefully was unable to come to a conclusion in regard to his visitors, but finally instructed the girl in case the men came again, to tell them to wait on the porch, shut the door in their faces, then come and give him warning so that he could be prepared in case of danger.

On the very next evening about the same time of the evening, a similar ring of the bell was heard through the house. Mrs. B. turned pale. B. Looked anxious, and the baby began to cry in the next room, as if it too felt the danger of the moment. In a very short the girl again appeared and announced that the same men were at the door, and anxious to see B. She had told them to stand on the porch as she had been instructed to do, and shutting the door, had come to warn the family. As B. picked up an old-fashioned Colt's revolver loaded with powder and ball, and about two feet long, the only weapon in the house and one that had been his father's years before, his wife rushed to him screaming that he must not face those scoundrels who had come to take their lives. "Let the girl tell them to go; she could not bear to see her husband murdered before her eyes." And so on in this strain until poor B. was almost driven to distraction.

Finally he calmed her terrors and started down to meet the dread visitors. He told the girl to go in front of him, and standing behind the door to open it so that as it opened she would have the door between herself and the burglars and at the same time B. could be standing directly in front of the door ready to forestall any hostile demonstrations.

By the time they reached the door Mrs. B. had gone off into a fit of hysterics and refused to be comforted by the nurse whose attention was divided between the screaming baby and a half insane woman, already convinced that her husband was butchered, and bewailing and loud terms his sad fate and reproving herself for having at times failed to see all his many virtues. As B. heard her outcries, he felt that he would hardly know himself from her descriptions of him. Calling to her to encourage her, he ordered the girl to open the door, standing in the meanwhile directly in front of it himself.

As the door opened, he in a stern voice requested the burglars to walk in. In response to his order, three meek-looking young man stepped timorously in, who, after introducing themselves, stated that they were a committee appointed to solicit subscriptions for a Mission Sunday School which they wished to organize in the neighborhood. Such, gentlemen, are the burglars that infest our suburbs.

Charles Theodore Greve