

was about to happen out again, when he noticed E—— and exclaimed, —

“ Who is at the wheel, sir? ”

“ X. ”

“ Dart for the pilot-house, quicker than lightning! ”

The next moment both men were flying up the pilot-house companion-way, three steps at a jump! Nobody there! The great steamer was whistling down the middle of the river at her own sweet will! The watchman shot out of the place again; E—— seized the wheel, set an engine back with power, and held his breath while the boat reluctantly swung away from a “ towhead ” which she was about to knock into the middle of the Gulf of Mexico!

By and by the watchman came back and said, —

“ Did n't that lunatic tell you he was asleep, when he first came up here? ”

“ No. ”

“ Well, he was. I found him walking along on top of the railings, just as unconcerned as another man would walk a pavement; and I put him to bed; now just this minute there he was again, away astern, going through that sort of tight-rope deviltry the same as before. ”

“ Well, I think I 'll stay by, next time he has one of those fits. But I hope he'll have them often. You just ought to have seen him take this boat through Helena crossing. I never saw anything so gaudy before. And if he can do such gold-leaf, kid-glove, diamond-breastpin piloting when he is sound asleep, what *could n't* he do if he was dead! ”

Mark Twain.

ACROSS THE STREET.

I DO not know it if she knows
I watch her, as she comes and goes:
I wonder if she dreams of it.
Sitting and working at my rhymes,
I weave her sunny hair at times
Into my verse, or gleams of it.

Upon her window-ledge is set
A box of flowering mignonnette;
Morning and night she tends to them,
The senseless flowers, that do not care
To kiss that strand of loosened hair
As prettily she bends to them.

If I could once contrive to get
Into that box of mignonnette,
Some morning as she tends to them!—
Dear me! I see the sweet blood rise
And bloom about her cheeks and eyes
And bosom, as she bends to them!

T. B. Aldrich.

THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN OF JOHN BROWN.

IV.

THE TRUE NATURE OF HIS PLANS.

FROM the first moment of their disclosure to the public, by the midnight attack at Harper's Ferry in October, 1859, there has been a persistent mistake concerning the plans and purposes of Brown in making that attack. It was assumed at once that he struck his blow at that particular point in order to get possession of the arms stored in the national arsenal at Harper's Ferry; and although this was immediately denied by Brown, the denial was little heeded. It was next assumed that he wanted these thousands of arms in order to put them in the hands of thousands of men, whom he expected, it was said, to rally to his support, either from the North or from the South; and then the next assumption followed at once, as an inference, that he meant to excite a general insurrection of slaves, and thus bring on a servile war. This also Brown denied, again and again; but though his word was not doubted, it was hardly taken as evidence, and this fiction of his purposes having once gained currency, it seemed quite impossible to withstand it. Then came the next link in the chain of fallacies: if he was exciting a general insurrection he must have powerful supporters, who had contrived the whole conspiracy and were using Brown as their instrument in the work. This mistake at once fastened upon the public mind at the South, and in a large part of the North, and led to many of the proceedings taken in 1859-60 to inculcate leading statesmen of the North. Mr. Vallandigham, the Ohio democrat, was one of the first to declare that Brown could not have planned the campaign. Writing to the Cincinnati Gazette a week after the attack, he said:—

“Though engaged in a wicked, mad, and fanatical enterprise, Brown is the farthest possible remove from the ordi-

nary ruffian, fanatic, or madman; but his powers are rather executory than inventive, and he himself never had the depth or breadth of mind to originate and contrive the plan of insurrection which he undertook to carry out. The conspiracy was, unquestionably, far more extended than yet appears, numbering among the conspirators many more than the handful of followers who assailed Harper's Ferry, and having in the North and West, if not also in the South, as its counselors and abettors, men of intelligence, position, and wealth! Certainly, it was among the best planned and executed conspiracies that ever failed.”

I suppose it is now clear, as it soon became evident to the Southern leaders in Congress, that this opinion of Vallandigham was completely unfounded. The plan of Brown was wholly his own, so far as I know, both in its general scope and in its details; nor was it known, even in a vague way, to many persons at the North. There were thousands of persons who knew that Brown meant to do what he could against slavery; there were a few hundred, perhaps, who knew that he meant to harass the slave-holders in some part of the South, with an armed force; but of those who knew with any fullness the details of his Virginia enterprise, I suppose the number never at any one time exceeded a hundred,—perhaps they were not more than fifty,—and these were scattered over the whole country from Boston to Kansas, from Maryland to Canada. Many of them were fugitive slaves; indeed, the first person, out of his own family, to whom Brown communicated his purpose seems to have been a Maryland fugitive, Thomas Thomas, who was a porter in Brown's wool-warehouse at Springfield in 1846-48. Another Maryland fugitive, a woman named Harriet Tubman, was trusted with the secret ten years later, and was engaged in recruiting soldiers for Brown's company when he made his