

# The Altoona Tribune.

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[INDEPENDENT IN EVERYTHING.]

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## THE ALTOONA TRIBUNE.

M. C. McCRUM, Editor and Proprietor.

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## Choice Poetry.

### SONGS OF A THOUSAND YEARS.

BY HENRY C. WALKER.

Lift up your eyes desponding freemen!  
Fling to the winds your useless fears!  
Ho who unfurled your beauteous banner,  
Says it shall wave a thousand years!

A thousand years, my own Columbin!  
Tis the glad day so long foretold!  
Tis the glad morn'g whose early twilight  
Washington saw in times of old.

### What if the clouds one little moment,

Hide the blue sky where morn appears—  
When the bright sun that tints them crimson,  
Rises to shine a thousand years?

### Tell the great world these blessed tidings!

Yes, and be sure the bonman hears:  
Tell the oppressed of every nation,  
Jubilee lasts a thousand years!

### Envious foes beyond the ocean!

Little we heed your threaten'g sneers;  
Little will they—our children's children—  
When you are gone a thousand years.

### Rebels at home! go hide your faces—

Weep for your crimes with bitter tears;  
For could not bind the blessed daylight,  
Though you should strive a thousand years.

### Back to your dens, ye secret traitors!

Down to your own degraded spheres:  
Ere the first blaze of dazling sunshine  
Shortens your lives a thousand years.

### Haste thee along, thou glorious noonday!

Oh, for the eyes of ancient seers!  
Oh, for the faith of Him who reckons  
Each of his days a thousand years!

## Select Miscellany.

### THE LEFT-HANDED ASSASSIN.

#### A DETECTIVE STORY.

I was called down from London to Ipswich on an errand peculiar to one of my profession. I reached the inn where I was to meet a fellow detective, who had expended both time and patience in attempting to ferret out a mysterious murder. But it appeared to be one of those singular cases that defy human detection, and which are generally abandoned by those appointed to discover the culprit, and left to divine vengeance.

I met Mr. Croft, who formally resigned in my favor, and after taking a glass of rum punch with him, returned to the city, while I prepared for my journey.

I will now state how matters stood. Some three and a half miles from Ipswich stood a stone mansion, the property of Charles Simmonds, a retired barrister. He resigned his profession, owing to having bequeathed to him a handsome legacy by an only brother, who, after amassing a large fortune in Australia, took it into his head to die. Charles was his sole heir. Mr. Simmonds had practised law in Ipswich, but his health had never been very robust, and soon after entering into his legacy he purchased the mansion alluded to, and retired from business, seeking the quiet and rest one in his station so greatly needed.

He married when young, but he made a great mistake in selecting a partner for life. His wife was pretty, the snare that caught him, but wholly devoid of principle; illiterate and low in her tastes, she became the bane of his life.

She had a brother who occasionally visited the house, and who in-

grated himself into Mr. Simmonds's favor by his amiable manners, genteel address, and the frequent brotherly lectures he read to Mrs. Clara Simmonds, his sister.

Maurice Obdyke was always well dressed when he came to the house, and his conduct was unexceptionable, quite in contrast to that of his sister. What his profession was could not be ascertained by Mr. Simmonds. When he asked his wife, she replied she did not know, and she forebore questioning Mr. Obdyke himself, for the reason that the gentleman never spoke of having any business. All that could be learned was that he resided in Ipswich and remained there two or three days, then left again, whither no one could tell, or those who could would not.

When Mr. Simmonds retired from business and took possession of the mansion, Obdyke came more frequently and his visits more prolonged. In spite of his lectures he and his sister seemed to agree amazingly well, and to Mr. Simmonds' great satisfaction she grew more refined, or, more properly speaking, less vulgar every day. Refined she would probably never be—it was not in her nature to be so—but she managed, by some means, to render herself less obnoxious to her husband, and he conducted himself towards her accordingly. Matters stood thus five years, when Mrs. Clara Simmonds contracted a malignant fever and died in five days after the symptoms manifested themselves. This occurred during the absence of her brother, and she was interred before he even knew that she was sick.

When he heard of the sad event, his rage was terrible to behold. He accused Charles Simmonds of being the indirect cause of her death, and threatened to have the affair thoroughly investigated. But ascertaining that his sister died from natural causes, he suddenly disappeared from the neighborhood, and came to visit Charles Simmonds no more.

There were no children born to Mr. Simmonds; hence, in the event of his death, the estate would fall into the hands of distant relatives, who had gone to America years before. One day, some time after the death of his wife, Charles Simmonds examined her personal effects, and was surprised to find among her papers a will with her signature attached to it. Rather amused at this discovery he sat down to read it, and found that she had, in case of her death, bequeathed all her real and personal property to her brother, Maurice Obdyke. Her property, when she had none to bequeath.—She was as poor as a church mouse (to use a homely but quite forcible phrase) when Charles Simmonds married her. Where, then, was the legacy to her brother to come from? This reasoned the widower when he read the curious document; but presently the truth flashed upon his brain. This letter had been made in the expectation that she would survive him, then she and her brother would revel in his wealth, and after her death all would be his.

"Was this a conspiracy against him?" was his mental question; "had they calculated confidently on his demise? If so, is it not probable that they meditated using means to accomplish the desired object?" Horrible thought.

He turned to the will to see the date. It had been written six months previous to her death; the witnesses names were not familiar to him.—He communicated this discovery to his legal adviser, and mentioned the suspicion that had entered his breast. The attorney said that it looked remarkably suspicious, yet still they might have meant no harm. The attorney added:

"If such a plot did exist, it does so no longer, at least it cannot affect you; for what would Maurice Obdyke gain by your death?"

"True," replied Simmonds, "I need not fear anything from him. Yet in two weeks from this conversation, Charles Simmonds was found sitting in his chair in the library, stone dead. He had been shot through the heart, the ball entering his back. He must have been dead many hours before the servants discovered him, and the strangest

part of the affair was, that none of them heard the report of the pistol or gun.

He entered his library after supper, and, as was his usual custom, sat there reading, until the hour of retiring—which was eleven o'clock. They discovered his dead body in the morning, and at once gave the alarm.—All these particulars Mr. Croft related to me, and he had a little faith in my ability to make any more out of the affair than what he had done. I reached the mansion, and at once entered upon the business that had brought me there. I examined the room where the murder had been committed and discovered that Mr. Simmonds had been sitting with his back towards the window at the time he was shot, and so true had been the aim, that the ball sped through the heart, completely severing it in two, as was ascertained by a post mortem examination. A broken pane of glass in the library window attested whence the shot came. The library was on the second floor, and situated in the north wing of the mansion. To gain access to this window—the only one the room contained—the murderer must have encountered great difficulty, unless he used a ladder to reach it. There was but one other way, which was to climb to the window by the leaden water spout. I examined the ground beneath the window, and could see no sign of a ladder being placed there; not a trace of footsteps was visible, and I came to the conclusion that recourse was had to the spout. I procured a ladder, and placed it beside the water spout, and made a careful examination of it from up to the library window.

I was soon assured that the murderer had made use of that means to reach the window. The lead was soft and yielding, and bore the finger marks of the assassin—each finger having made an impression on this metal. When I had finished this part of the examination, I sat down and pondered well over the matter. I had made two very important discoveries; one was, the assassin must have fired the weapon with his left hand, for I was perfectly convinced that no man could have held himself by the water spout with the left hand, and reached the window with the right, so as to enable him to fire at an object in the middle of the room, where Mr. Simmonds invariably sat while reading, and where he was found seated when discovered in the morning.—Now, what could I deduce from this circumstance, but the fact that the assassin was left handed. My reason for this conviction was a good one. None but a left handed person could have made so fatal a shot from the position he must necessarily have occupied at the time; and that he knew how to use the weapon was also manifest, for no chance shot could have been so fatal in a thousand trials. This then was conclusive evidence, and though I made the discovery, I communicated it to no one.

The other discovery was no less important. The man who climbed up the spout had but three fingers on the right hand! This was plainly seen by the finger marks on the metal; the spout was marked but in four places by the right hand—the thumb and three fingers, the index finger was gone.

I gave instructions not to allow any one to meddle with the spout, and deputed a constable to see that my orders were strictly obeyed. I next questioned the servants of the late Mr. Simmonds, four in number, and elicited the following information: On the evening previous to the finding of the dead body of Mr. Simmonds, a female mendicant stopped at the mansion, and requested permission to stop over night. The woman, a delicate looking creature, seemed much worn out by her tramp during the day, and the kind hearted cook bade her stay, at the same time asking her to take a cup of tea and something to eat.

The poor creature was half starved, and ate ravenously; after satisfying her hunger she laid down on a bed the cook had prepared on the floor for her, and in a short time fell asleep.

The woman had a small black travelling valise with her, which

she placed under her head before lying down.

Next morning the woman had gone before any one else had arisen, and, strange to say, she had left the black valise lying in some bushes in the rear of the house. It was not discovered until the departure of Mr. Croft, the detective.

I instantly asked to see the valise; it was produced, and I broke the lock without hesitation, hoping I might get some further clue to the perpetrators that this (probably pretended) mendicant was an accomplice.

The valise contained absolutely nothing—it was empty. I was on the point of throwing it aside, when I felt the rustling of the paper in the lining; I fished it from its hiding place; it proved to be a letter—its date was three weeks old. The envelope had no address on it, nor had the letter any signature.—It ran thus:

Ipswich, June 3d, 1859.

"Call on me, No. 35 Hollings Court, and ask for me. I have a fat job for you and your girl.—Call between the hour of nine and ten in the evening. Burn this letter after you have read it."

This was all the letter contained; no names were mentioned. It was evident that the request to destroy the note had not been complied with—why, I could only conjecture. Either the recipient meant to keep it for future use, or it had been lost sight of; for when I found it, it was imbedded within the folds of the coarse lining of the valise in such a manner as almost to escape the notice of any one but that of a detective, bent upon getting every clue he possibly could to ferret out a murderer. The reader has seen how even I came very near throwing away this, perhaps important document.

I made strict inquiries whether anything had been pursued by this woman, and was answered in the negative; at least they supposed not, for nothing had yet been missed. The kitchen door leading out into the yard, as well as the gate, had been left unfastened by the woman. I followed the path she had probably taken when leaving the mansion, and came upon a clump of bushes, where were strewn some scraps of newspaper—these I examined, and saw they were pieces of a London paper.

While mechanically placing the pieces of newspaper in my pocket, I cast my eyes around the spot, and presently they alighted on a square cut glass bottle, of about four ounces capacity. I picked it up—the cork was in it, and the bottle contained a limpid liquid, perhaps two ounces. A label on it designated that it contained chloroform. I opened it, and was soon convinced that such was the case. The label had on it the business place of an apothecary well known to me. I concluded to keep the bottle, for the purpose of ascertaining who had purchased it and its contents.

I had no doubt now that the subtle drug had been used as a means to stupefy the inmates of the mansion while the murder was committed. The woman had probably put the servants to sleep, and her husband, from the outside, committed the dastardly deed. The reason he did not enter the house and do the deed while the servants were rendered insensible, was probably owing to the fact that Mr. Simmonds invariably barred the library door when he retired at night.—The fact must have been known to the assassin, hence the mode he adopted to accomplish his object.

I obtained no further clue; in fact I thought I had sufficient for my purpose. I came to the following conclusions, and contemplated acting upon them:

Some intelligent person who desired revenge on Mr. Simmonds, had hired another person and his wife to do the deed he himself probably shrank from; I had every reason to suspect Maurice Obdyke as the principal in this affair, and it was my object first to find out where he resided in London, and then to take measures to ferret out this left-handed murderer.

The reason I wished to see Maurice Obdyke was to discover whether he was left-handed or whether he was minus a finger on the other hand. I forebore questioning the servants on "this subject," probably

they might have informed me correctly, but then servants will talk, and my secrets would have been thrown to the winds, which might have wafted my suspicions into the ears of the culprit. To avoid this *contre temps* I held my tongue and started for London.

I called upon the apothecary, and handed him the bottle, I asked him if he recollected to whom he had sold the chloroform. He at once replied in the affirmative, and gave the name of Obdyke. I was quite surprised at this information, and could not speak for a moment, so unexpected was it. I had only hoped to get a partial description of the purchaser, and intended to compare it with that of Obdyke, a description of whom I had obtained from the legal adviser of the late Charles Simmonds.

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Obdyke?" I asked.

"No, sir."

"How, then, do you know that it was he who purchased the drug?"

"Because, just as he paid for it, another gentleman entered the shop and called him by name."

I here made the apothecary describe the personal appearance of Obdyke, and it tallied with that given me by Mr. Yates, the attorney at Ipswich. I had an advertisement inserted in the principal papers, by which means I ascertained the residence of Maurice Obdyke. He lived in fine style, and was presumed to be a gamester by vocation. He was unmarried, but entertained his acquaintances in a superb manner.—He had some half dozen servants to minister to his wishes. I managed to become acquainted with a person who had the *entree* of his house, and had the satisfaction of accompanying him one day to one of Obdyke's regal entertainments. To all casual observers I entered upon the enjoyments of the hour with great zest, but I nevertheless kept a keen eye upon that that inspired around me. I soon convinced myself that Obdyke was not left-handed, nor had he lost one of his fingers. It was then certain that he was not the actual perpetrator of the deed. I examined the hands of every guest, but could not discover my man. One, it is true, I took to be left-handed from the fact that he always took up his glass with that hand; but then that was nothing, for I knew right hand folks to do the same thing. I, however, looked at his right hand; the fingers were all there, or at least appeared to be, for the man wore kid gloves.

Suddenly a bright idea entered my brain, and I resolved to carry it out. I provided myself with a pin, and watched for an opportunity when he would lay his hand on a chair or table. In the meantime I had been introduced to him; he called himself David Jarret, and was a married man.

The opportunity presented itself; he rested his right hand on the table, when I directed his attention to a distant part of the room, and while he looked I drove the pin into his index finger, just above the first joint.

"He did not move his hand!" I withdrew the pin—it came out as easily as it had entered. The substance it had entered was not flesh, but cotton. I beheld the assassin of Charles Simmonds—of that I was firmly convinced. But I was resolved to try another test: I had the letter found in the valise in my possession. I went home, took an extract copy from it, then sent a copy in an envelope to Mr. Obdyke by a boy, after which I returned to the saloons of my host, excusing myself for the temporary absence.

According to my instructions, the lad entered the room and handed the envelope to Maurice Obdyke.—I had written nothing in it. I merely sent the copy. I wanted to see how it affected him.

The *ruse* was perfectly successful. As soon as he glanced at it he turned pale, and when he concluded it he cast a frightened glance around him, then leisurely sauntering towards the spot where Jarret sat playing cards, he handed him the note, then beckoned him to follow. Obdyke entered a side door, presently followed by his accomplice. Now was

the period for action. I had some half dozen of the boldest policemen stationed within hearing. I gave the signal, then entered, and in a very short time had my birds caged.

It was subsequently ascertained that Mr. Simmonds had been robbed of a very large amount of gold and bank notes. So the assassin must have entered the house after despatching his victim, and added robbery to that of murder. I could now account for the splendid manner in which Mr. Maurice Obdyke lived. He lived on his blood money. The evidence against the culprits was too strong to admit of any doubt of their guilt. They were duly arraigned, and their execution followed close upon their conviction.

I gained two things by my participation in the affair that Croft had abandoned in despair. The first was one thousand pounds, which was the reward offered for the apprehension of the assassin. The other was, I gained the reputation of being the shrewdest detective in the entire force, a title Croft envied me not a little.

### THE ROAD TO POOR FARMING.

As the road to poor farming is not generally understood, though it is crowded with travellers, we throw up the following landmarks, from the Springfield Republican, for the common benefit:

- 1st. Invest all your capital in hand and run in debt for more.
- 2d. Hire money to stock your farm.
- 3d. Have no faith in your own business and be always ready to sell out.
- 4th. Buy mean cows, spavined horses, poor oxen and cheap tools.
- 5th. Feed bog hay and mouldy cornstalk exclusively, in order to keep your stock tame; fire cattle are terribly hard on old, rickety wagons and plows.
- 6th. Use the oil of hickory freely whenever your oxen need strength; it is cheaper than hay or meal, keeps the hair lively, and pounds out all the grubs.
- 7th. Select such calves for stock as the butchers shun—beauties of runt, thin in the hams, and pot bellied; but be sure and keep their blood thin by scanty herbage.—Animals are safest to breed from that havn't strength to breed.
- 8th. Be cautious about manufacturing manure; it makes the fields look black and mournful about planting time; besides it is a deal of work to haul it.
- 9th. Never waste time by setting out fruit and shade trees; fruit and leaves rotting around a place make it unhealthy.

An elephant and bull fight took place lately at Saragossa, Spain. The elephant was walking quietly about the arena when the first bull was released, and rushed at it with all his might. The elephant received his antagonist with great coolness, and threw him down with the utmost ease. The bull rose again and made two more attacks, which the elephant resented by killing him with a thrust of his tusks. The conqueror did not seem in the least excited, but quietly drank some water offered by his keeper, and ate several ears of Indian corn. A second bull was then released, and, in a few minutes, suffered the same fate as the first.

DISAPPOINTED.—A man applied to Dr. Jackson, the celebrated chemist, with a box of specimens. "Can you tell me what this is, sir?"—"Certainly I can, sir; that is iron pyrites." "What sir? in a voice of thunder. "Iron pyrites! Iron pyrites! And what's that?"—"That's what it is," said the chemist, putting a lot on the shovel over the hot coals, where it disappeared. "Dross!"—"And what are iron pyrites worth?"—"Nothing."—"Nothing! Why there's a woman in our town who owns a whole hill of that—and I've married her!"

When things get to be worst they generally take a turn for the better. This proverb applies more particularly to a lady's silk dress, when she cannot afford to get a new one.