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A Select Story.

MY FIRST BRIEF.

A LEAF FROM A COUNSELLOR'S NOTE BOOK.
BY JOHN E. WILLIAMS, M. D.

With the exception of medicine, there is no profession so difficult to obtain a footing in as law. It frequently happens that the best years of a young man's life are passed in some obscure street waiting for a stepping stone which is to lead him to professional honor, and what is more important still, to money in his purse.

In 1846 I was admitted to the bar. I shall never forget my feelings of pride when I saw for the first time my name, HENRY MELTON, ATTORNEY AT LAW,

in all the glory of gilt letters on a black label, nailed to the front of a dingy looking house in Chambers street, in the city of New York. Know then, gentle reader, my offices were situated in that same house. They were two in number; the first being a kind of reception room, and the other my study.

Well I seated myself at my desk the same day that the before-mentioned shingle was exhibited outside, and expected that I should soon be overwhelmed with business, but I soon found myself deceived; day after day passed, and not a soul called. I was in despair, my small means were slowly ebbing away, and in spite of all my economy, I was obliged to eat.

Six months passed away and I had not a single client. One day I heard a ring at the bell, but I took no heed of it now; when I first occupied my office such a peal as that would have caused me to pass my hand through my hair, straighten down my vest and seize one of the pale, yellow bound books with red titles—but I had been so often deceived, that I scarcely noticed it now, and only expected my boy to enter stating that "a man wanted twenty-five cents for the Herald," or some other demand upon my purse.

"If you please, sir, there's a lady wants to speak to you." I started, and was completely dumfounded for a moment; but the boy looked at me with so curious a glance, which appeared to say "first client," that I immediately recovered myself, and assuming all the dignity I could command, I told the boy to inform the lady that I should be disengaged in a few minutes.

After having arranged some paper on my desk, and taken down one of the aforesaid sheepskin bound volumes, I requested the lad to show the lady in. Immediately afterwards she was ushered into the room. I had no opportunity of judging whether she was old or young, as she was closely veiled. It was evident she had recently suffered some loss in her family, or she was dressed in deep black. I invited her to be seated, and placed myself in a listening attitude.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Melton?" she asked in a musical voice. I bowed affirmatively. "I wish to consult you, sir," she continued in the same clear voice, on a matter which nearly concerns my happiness. I will at once lay the case before you for your opinion; I should first tell my name is M'Leod, Margaret M'Leod."

"M'Leod?" I interrupted, with a start—"Not any relation to the gentleman who was week was?" I hesitated to finish the sentence. "Murdered you were about to say," she continued. "Yes, sir, I am his daughter. And she lifted her veil from her face as she said this, revealing features of unsurpassed loveliness.

I gazed with increased interest on my visitor, for the fact is, the murder of James M'Leod had made a great noise. The papers had been filled with the details of it during the past week. "You are aware," continued Miss M'Leod "that a young man named Harvey Johnston is arrested on suspicion of having committed the deed; but I know him to be innocent."

"Indeed?" I returned, "how is that? Appearances are very much against him, I can judge by newspaper reports." "I tell you he is innocent, innocent!" she exclaimed, bursting into a flood of tears—"Harvey could never have committed a crime like that! O, you don't know him, sir, if you did, not the slightest shadow of suspicion would remain on your mind for a minute."

By the vehement tone in which she addressed me, I immediately penetrated her secret, that she was in love with Harvey Johnston. I gently hinted that such was the case to her; she immediately acknowledged it to be the truth.

The Globe.

WILLIAM LEWIS,

—PERSEVERE—

Editor and Proprietor.

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NO. 29.

I thought the young lady to lay the whole facts of the case before me as she knew them. This she proceeded to do, and the substance of her statement was as follows.

Mr. James M'Leod was a retired merchant living up town, as Bleeker street was then called. He was a widower, his family consisting of himself, his daughter—the only child he had, a middle aged lady who acted as a kind of governess, and two female servants.

Mr. M'Leod was a very stern man, who never changed an opinion, and who would be obeyed to the letter in the household. He scarcely ever smiled, but passed through the world unloving and unloved. It is true his only daughter, Margaret, sometimes appeared to soften him, but still he never seemed to regard her with the fondness of a parent. He was polite to her, and that was all. As for Margaret, she loved her father as much as his kind nature would allow her, but never being received any tokens of love from him, it scarcely being wondered that her affection was more a matter of duty than feeling.

Up to within a year from the date of this history, they had lived a very retired life, being little or no company. Their house in Bleeker street was a very large one, so they could only occupy a small portion of it, and I remember the impression of loneliness conveyed to my mind by Miss M'Leod, when she was describing the uninhabited part of the house.

One day her father informed her that he had made an engagement for her and himself to spend the evening with a former partner of his. It was here she first met Harvey Johnston, and they were soon attached to each other. They became fast friends, and the friendship soon ripened into love.

"This brings us down to the day of the murder. On that night Harvey paid Mr. M'Leod a visit, about 9 o'clock in the evening—high words were heard to pass between them, and soon there was a quarrel.

About eleven o'clock the same night a policeman was walking down Bleeker street, and discovering Mr. M'Leod's front door open, he mounted the steps in order to close it, when he fancied he heard the noise of footsteps in the house. He entered and ascended the stairs. When he reached the front drawing room a terrible sight met his gaze. Mr. M'Leod was lying all his length on the floor stone dead. A pool of blood was beside the body, as well as a knife with which the dead had evidently been committed, for it was proved upon a further examination that his throat had been cut from ear to ear.

"But the strangest part of the story was that Harvey Johnston was discovered in the room with the murdered man. When the policeman first entered the room he discovered him groping around the walls, for the apartment was quite dark until the policeman brought his lantern. Of course, Johnston was arrested, and the proof against him appeared overwhelming, for it was found that the knife with which the murder had been committed belonged to him. A coroner's jury was summoned, and Harvey Johnston was committed to take his trial at the ensuing assizes for the willful murder of Mr. M'Leod, and every one who read the details of the coroner's inquest appeared perfectly satisfied of his guilt.

Such was the substance of Miss M'Leod's statement to me, of course in her relation she frequently wept, and made repeated aspersions of her lover's innocence. "Now, Mr. Melton," she added, as she concluded, "I want you to undertake his case—and for Heaven's sake do everything you can for him, for I confess to you that all my hopes of happiness in this world are wrapped up in him. Spare no expense—I am certain it will be proved that he is innocent."

"But my dear young lady, I am afraid his case is desperate. What is his explanation?" "I have neither seen nor heard from him since his arrest, but I feel he is innocent."

"I am confident such evidence as that will be of but little avail to him in a court of justice; however, I will call and see him, and hear his statement; I will then let you know the result."

And for the murder of the father of my own dear girl? But no jury can bring me in guilty!"

"Mr. Johnston," I replied, "truth compels me to state that the evidence against you is fearfully strong."

"Why, Mr. Melton, you surely do not believe me guilty of this hideous crime?" said he, his face flushing with indignation.

"Let me hear your statement," I replied, and then I will answer your question. You are aware of the nature of the evidence against you. It can be summed up in a few words. A gentleman is found murdered in his drawing room—a policeman enters the apartment and discovers you there alone with the murdered man—and the deed is found to be committed with your bowie-knife, besides your clothes being sprinkled with the victim's blood."

"Mr. Melton," replied the prisoner, lifting up his hand to Heaven, "I swear before God that I know nothing of the murder until the policeman entered the room with his lantern. The discovery of the horrid deed inspired me with as much surprise and terror as it did him."

I looked at Johnston after he had uttered these words, to see if he were not deranged. But no, his countenance was perfectly calm and collected.

"Explain yourself," I exclaimed, "for the life of me, I cannot understand you. You appear to me to be speaking in paradoxes."

"I will give you a plain statement of what I know of the matter. You can form your own opinion as to how far I am implicated in it. On the night in question I went to pay M'Leod a visit, in order to obtain if possible his consent to my marriage to his daughter Margaret. I found him in the front drawing room. I suppose it was about nine o'clock when I visited the house. Mr. M'Leod received me very haughtily. I should say some months ago I had an interview with him on the same subject, which passed off very satisfactorily. The moment I broached the matter again to him, he became very violent, and used very harsh language to me—at length my blood was up, and I believe I retorted in very strong words. I have no idea how long this interview lasted; it must have been sometime, however, for I felt my duty to enter into a considerable explanation, and to free myself from various charges he brought against me. At last I took up my hat to go, and had already turned towards the door, when some one approached me from behind, and clapped a handkerchief to my mouth, saturated, I suppose, with chloroform, for in a moment I was senseless, and God knows I know not what happened after that."

"I know that I am utterly ignorant of all that passed in the room after that. I only recovered my senses a few minutes before the policeman entered with a light. And this is all I know about the matter."

"While Johnston was making this explanation, I scrutinized his face closely, but could not detect the slightest appearance of deception in his features. "But how do you account for the murder having been committed with your bowie knife?"

"It must have been taken from my pocket while I was senseless, for I acknowledge the knife is mine, and that I had been accustomed to carry it about me for some months past."

"Have you any idea who could have committed the deed?" I inquired after a pause. "None in the world," he replied; "it must have been some one from the outside, for there were none but women in the house."

After a little further conversation on the matter I took my departure, without giving him any decided opinion as to my belief in his innocence. When I reached my office, I seated myself in an easy chair, and pondered over the matter long and seriously. I was well aware that Johnston's statement was an impossible one, and would of course have no weight in a court of justice; but there was something in his manner of telling to me—something in his frank open countenance, which impressed me strongly in his favor, and after mature consideration I came to the conclusion that the statement might be true. But it is one thing to believe in a person's innocence, and another to prove it. The next question to be decided, was, if Johnston was innocent, who was the murderer? Here I must confess I was totally at fault; I had not the slightest clue to guide me. It appeared certain to me that none of the inhabitants of the house could have done it, for as I before said, they consisted only of Miss M'Leod, Miss Leroy, an old maid who acted as kind of governess to Margaret, and the two servant girls. I made up my mind that it must have been some one from without, and the door having been left open, favored the supposition. I began to invent a thousand different theories as to how the murder was effected, until my brain grew dizzy. The thought then entered my head to go and search the house where the deed had been committed, to see if I could discover any clue there. I immediately acted upon it, and in a few minutes found myself before the door of the late Mr. M'Leod's residence.

It was a large, gloomy looking house, bearing anything but an inviting aspect, and just such a place as one would imagine to be the theatre of some one deed. I knocked at the door, and requested to see Mr. M'Leod. I was immediately shown into a parlor, and in a few minutes she entered the room.

I then informed her as to the result of my interview with Harvey Johnston. I also told her that I believed in his innocence, but did not seek to disguise from her the fact that there was much to be done before we should be able to convince a jury such to be the case. I then requested permission to search the house. It was immediately granted.

My search did not amount to much. I noticed, however, one thing—the drawing room door was so situated that when any one stood on the threshold of it he could not see a portion of the room on account of the projecting fire-place. I was further satisfied that a person might easily have entered from without, ascended the stairs, stupefied one or both of the inmates of the drawing-room with chloroform, and then committed the deed. I was about leaving the house, when the thought

struck me I had not examined Mr. M'Leod's bed-room. I hastened to repair my forgetfulness. I found it to be an ordinary sized chamber, with nothing special in it except an old bureau, which immediately struck my attention from the fact of my father having possessed one exactly like it. I opened the top of it, and found that it contained two secret recesses like ours at home. I opened these recesses, and discovered one to be empty, the other contained a single paper which proved to be an old letter, yellow with age. I felt justified in opening and reading it. It ran as follows:

"ALBANY, N. Y., May 19, 1826. You have basely deserted me, and deceived me,—all my burning love is now turned to bitter hatred; but do not imagine that you shall escape with impunity. By the living God I swear to be revenged! I can wait years, ay, years, to accomplish my purpose. Think on it and tremble!"

HELEN MORRIS. On the outside I bore the inscription, "Mr. M'Leod, 52 Front street, New York." I read the letter over several times; it was to say the least of it, a curious document, and I decided to keep it in my possession, not expecting that it would lead to any discovery—it appeared to be written too long ago for that and the chances were that Helen Morris was long ago summoned to her long, last home.

I returned home, weary and unsatisfied. For the next three weeks I made every possible exertion to clear up the mystery without the slightest success. The day of trial approached, and I had not discovered the slightest evidence to corroborate the prisoner's statement. Scarcely a day passed but Miss M'Leod either called herself, or sent to know what progress I was making. I could give her but very slight hope of being able to save Harvey.

On the evening before the day fixed for the trial, I seated myself in my office, utterly despondent and worn out. I had no hope of being able to convince a jury of Johnston's innocence. I was well aware that his statement would be laughed at, and the only witness I could bring forward, would be as to character. I was miserable at the idea of bringing such a lame defence into court—and my first case, too.

I thought I would smoke a cigar, and try if that would have any effect in soothing my irritated nerves. I tore a piece from an old New York Herald, in order to light it, when by some strange circumstance, what, it is difficult to explain, the following advertisement among the "personals" caught my eye:

"The lady who purchased the chloroform of Messrs. R. & C., apothecaries, 201 Broadway, will call upon the latter she will have the purse restored which she left on the counter."

I snatched the other portion of the paper for the purpose of discovering the date, I found it to have been issued the very day after the murder.

To throw away my cigar, put on my hat, and rush from the house was the work of a moment. I had not far to go, and soon found myself in Messrs. R. & C's store.

"A lady bought Chloroform to you about two months ago," said I, to a gentlemanly looking clerk, behind the counter. "Yes, sir."

"She left a purse on the counter?" "Yes, sir."

"Will you be good enough to inform me if she has ever reclaimed that purse?" "She has not, although we advertised it several days."

"Who served her with the chloroform?" "I did."

"Did you notice her appearance?" "She was quite elderly. I was surprised at her buying so much at a time; but she stated she wanted it for her husband, who is a physician, and so I let her have it."

"Would you know her if you were to see her again?" "I believe I should. I noticed that she wore a blue shawl with a red fringe—it struck me particularly, because it had such an uncommon appearance."

I could obtain no further information from the clerk, and returned to my office with even less hope swept away.

tangle, and sent the blood coursing like fire through my veins; but I had sufficient command over myself to say nothing.

"Miss Leroy," said the prosecuting attorney, "you, I believe, were a friend of the deceased, and lived in the same house with him?"

"Yes, sir." "You opened the door for the prisoner on the night of the murder?"—"I did."

"Relate what passed." "I showed Mr. Johnston into the front drawing room where Mr. M'Leod was sitting, and I returned to the back drawing-room, where I was at work, sewing, when the prisoner rang the bell. The two drawing-rooms are only separated by folding doors, so I could hear nearly all that passed. Mr. M'Leod and the prisoner soon got to high words—and I heard the former call the latter a 'villain' and a 'scoundrel.' Mr. Johnston retaliated, and swore he would be revenged on him at some future day. And then their voices lowered, and I could not make out what they were talking about. I went to bed at ten o'clock, leaving them still in the room together, and was roused by half past eleven by the intelligence that Mr. M'Leod had been murdered. This is all I know about the matter."

"As I suppose the counsel for the prisoner will not cross-examine this witness," said the district attorney, seating himself, "this, your honor, closes the case for the prosecution."

"Stay," said I, rising, "I wish to ask the witness a few questions if she has no objections." The witness, who had already descended from the box, took her place again on the stand.

"Madam," said I, "you are unmarried, is it not?" "I am."

"What is your name?" "Julia Leroy."

"Would you have any objection to write it down for me on this piece of paper?" "None at all," she replied, doing as I had requested, and handing back the paper to me. I glanced at it and placed it before me.

"Miss Leroy," I exclaimed, slowly, "I am about to ask you rather an ungallant question, but you must forgive it. Will you be good enough to tell the Court your age?" She hesitated a moment, and then replied: "Certainly, I am forty-five next birth-day."

"Thank you," I returned. "Will you be good enough to answer the next question as explicitly as you ever had any use for chloroform?" She turned fearfully pale, and for a moment or two made as if to step back; but she said: "I appeal to the Court if I am to answer such stupid questions?"

"It appears to me," said the worthy judge, "that the cross-examination is entirely extraneous to the matter in question, but of course, if the counsel insists, the witness must answer the questions he propounds."

"I reiterate my question," I replied, quietly, "do you ever use chloroform?" "I do use it occasionally for the tooth-ache," was the sullen rejoinder.

"Now, Madam, listen to me and answer the question distinctly. Did you, or did you not, purchase four ounces of chloroform on the day of the murder, at Messrs. R. & C's Drug store, in Broadway?"

The witness recoiled in the box, and had to support herself by catching hold of the sides of it. She turned as pale as death, and could not speak for more than a minute. I kept my eyes fixed on her as if I would read her very soul. She partially recovered herself, and replied in a firm voice: "Well, I did buy four ounces of chloroform on the day mentioned—and what then?" "I simply wanted to know, that is all."

"Very well, I have answered your question. Have you anything more to ask me?" "Yes—were you ever known by any other name than Julia Leroy?" The woman glared at me and made no reply. "I insist on an answer," I continued.

In one month she was found guilty, and only saved herself from an ignominious death by taking poison. About three months after the events described, Harvey Johnston and Margaret M'Leod were married, and I have reason to know that they have lived happily ever since. As for myself, this case was the stepping stone to renown, and amid all the favors of fortune with which I am now surrounded, I always regard the hand of Providence in the success I experienced with Mr. First BREF.

Interesting Miscellany.

A Bill (Wm.) that promises to pay and does not, is a liar-Bill-ty. Pants procured on tick, may be considered "breaches of trust." Wanted—by an ancient lady, "a local habitation and a name." Censure is a tax that man pays to the public for being eminent.

Art possesses a language which speaks to all eyes, and is understood by all nations. The loan at a loan office is better left alone. The hunchback does not see the hump on his shoulder. It is the spirit of the age that directs and colors all the events of the world.

If a Cigar makes a man ill, will a cheroot make a Man-illa? Man—a bubble on the ocean's rolling wave. Life—a gleam of light extinguished by the grave. Fame—a meteor dazzling with its distant glare. Wealth—a source of trouble and consuming care.

Pleasure—a gleam of sunshine passing soon away. Love—a morning dream whose memory glides the day. Faith—an anchor dropped beyond the vale of death. Hope—a long star beaming o'er the barren heath. Charity—a stream meandering from the fount of love. Bible—a guide to realms of endless joy above.

Religion—a key which opens wide the gates of Heaven. Death—a knife by which the ties of earth are riven. Earth—a desert through which pilgrims wend their way. Grave—a place of rest when ends life's weary day.

Resurrection—a sudden waking from a quiet dream. Heaven—a land of joy, of light, and love supreme. The less weight a race horse carries, the quicker he runs and the same holds good with the human tongue.

Many women in rich ornaments look inviting, whose beauty when they undress, flies away with their apparel. Tom says when they won't trawl it a fellow for his drink long enough to swallow it, he thinks credit a little too short.

People turn up their noses at this world, as if they were in the habit of keeping company with the better one. A cultivated mind and good heart will give an intellectual and beautiful expression to the face.

Do nothing shameful either in the presence of others or alone—respect yourself, and others will respect you. A distinguished writer says that nothing is best achieved by indirection. The workings of a cork screw would seem to be a refutation of that plausible theory.

Why ought all the States in the Union to be worth one hundred cents on the dollar? Answer—because the sisters of a large family are always at par (p) for cash.

A Writer in Blackwood says that every man who is not a monster mathematician or a mad philosopher, is the slave of some woman or other. A militia officer in Texas boasts, thro' the papers, that his men "would rally at the tap of the drum." Perhaps they would rally still more promptly at the tapping of a keg.

An English writer says, in his advice to young married women, that their mother Eve married a gardener. It might be added that the gardener, in consequence of his match, lost his situation. A rather thick-headed witness in the police court at St. Louis was asked the question whether the party accused 'stood on the defensive.' He innocently replied, 'he stood on a bench.'

Bachelors are not entirely lost to the refinement of sentiment, for the following toast was given by one of them at a celebration. "The Ladies—sweet berries in the garden of life." An Episcopal clergyman in our vicinity, who rather loves a joke, was engaged to read the service for a brother minister, and was hurrying to church a little belated, on Sunday morning. A friend, struck by his uncommon speed, inquired—"Sir, why so fast?" "In order," said he, "that he who runs may read."

"Billy, do you remember the golden rule?" "Yes marm." "Then what makes you quarrel so with your brother?" "If you do not want me to whip you, you should not fight your brother."

"Rockin' ye'd better mind the golden rule for self; if you don't want me to lick you, you shouldn't lick me!" A clergyman in Connecticut was reading to his congregation the beautiful and poetic psalm of David where he says: "Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." At this point a little girl in the assembly manifested a great interest, and whispered to her mother—"That's as true as I live. I saw Righteous Hill kiss Peace Peabody behind the smoke-house, but how did the minister know it?"

Judge Claggott, of the first judicial district in Iowa, made a rule, that lawyers who had cases in court, should not leave without notice. This did not please them; and to put his honor out of countenance they would get up, one after another, and say with long faces and juvenile accent, "Please, thir, may I go out?" His honor bore this as long as he could, when he had them all put in jail. The Burlington Hawkeye says that "no public edifice, not excepting the penitentiary, ever contained so much latent rascality as the Madison jail when filled with the lawyers of the district."