

A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

"Ah, sir, see you're admiring my flowers. Well they are pretty—that they are—though I doubt as some would call the marigolds and carnations common and old fashioned. You don't see many of 'em now in your fine new-fangled gardens, do you? It's a pretty little place this, ain't it, sir? And it's my own, too—my very own—and will go to my grandson after me. He's a good lad, he is—it's him as looks after the garden. Mighty fond of flowers he is, and rarely proud he'll be, I know, when he hears as a fine town gentleman has taken notice of 'em! Ah, I was fond of gardening, too, in my time! But I'm getting an old man now—eighty-five I am come Christmas and I can't expect to be spared much longer, though I'm hale and hearty yet, thank heaven! Ah, times have altered, sir, since my young days! For the better, you say? Well things are grander now than they were then, but somehow I seem to like the old times best, perhaps because I was young and strong in 'em. And talking of old times reminds me of something that once happened to me. Like to here it, sir? Well, so you shall, and welcome, if you don't mind wasting an hour or so with an old chap like me. Sit down, then, on that bench and make yourself comfortable.

"You've been to Chelmsford perhaps? Then maybe you know the 'Saracen's Head'? Well, close to where that now stands there used to be an old inn called the 'Swan.' A queer old place it was to be sure, with its casement and windows and over hanging gables. I was living at Ralphin then—its night upon sixty years ago—a farmer I was, and had been married only a short time to a dear little wife as I loved well and true till she died, poor lass!

"One cold December day I started for Braintree, to look at some stock as I thought of buying. As it was a two days' journey, I meant to stop at Chelmsford for the night, and go on early the next day. I didn't leave home till about two, and I had a weary road to travel, so that the darkness came on before I reached the gibbet on the edge of the common; and I can tell you my flesh crawled, as the saying is, when I galloped past at full speed. It was a bleak cold night, and the road was bad so that it was late before I rode into Chelmsford.

"I put up at the 'Swan'—that being the first inn I came to and was standing watching the ostler rubbing down my good old mare—for I always attended to that first thing—when the landlord came slowly out to me; he was a short, sharp-faced man, with great black eyes that had an uneasy sort of look in 'em. I told him I'd had a long ride and was glad enough to get safe into his yard—for I'd gold about me and we'd heard horrible tales of the robberies the murders on the King's highway. Well, he showed me into a long low room—the kitchen it was—with a brick floor and a bright fire burning.

"There's a noisy lot in the parlor, sir," said he; you will be quiet and cosy here for make you're tired and chilly after your ride in the wind."

"I ordered a steak and, as I ate my supper, I thought to myself that I couldn't well have chosen a better place than the 'Swan' to stop at. After I had finished I called for pipes and grog and sat by the fire with the landlord, but I might as well have been alone for he never spoke a word, but sat staring into the fire with a wick look in his eyes that I didn't like, though I didn't take much notice of it then. Ah I know now what his thoughts were as he gazed moodily into the glowing coals! He was thinking of the disgrace brought upon his name by his only son; and wondering, where the money was to come from which must be procured somehow if his boy was to be saved from ruin. And then no doubt he planned to murder me—ah, it's all true, sir—I've got his confession by me now—and bury me down by the riverside, in the meadow behind the stable. Then he meant to turn my mare out before dawn so that the servants might think I had left early; and then, you see, when it was found, people would think something had happened to me on the road to Braintree. Well, my companion roused himself after a time and began asking me what I thought of the country, if I had ridden far, whether I had been advised to put up at the Swan, and such like questions. I answered them freely enough, never supposing that he asked them for any other purpose than just to keep up the conversation. I asked him to call me early and he promised he would do so.

"I'll do it myself," said he, "for the girl and the ostler will be abed."

"Then he called his wife and told her to bring me a candle, which she did. She was a coarse-looking, careworn woman, and I noticed when she showed me to my room that her hand was shaking and her voice sounded thick as she bade me a civil 'Goodnight.'

"My bedroom was a long low room with queer old furniture, quaint carved

chairs and a great four-post bedstead which seemed as big as a hearse. There was no lock to the door, and the bolts were rusty, so I could only put the latch down. I thought of putting a chair against it but that seemed childish and no protection after all. The night was wet and windy and the sky black as ink. Try as I would I couldn't get to sleep, and there I lay listening to the ghostly tapping of the ivy leaves against the window, and thinking of the evil look in the landlord's eyes, and all the horrid stories I had ever read came crowding into my mind, when suddenly I started up in bed, wide awake enough for I heard something or someone climbing up the ivy to my window. I lay with palpitating heart and straining eyes, listening to the horrible ghostly rustling which every moment sounded nearer.

"Suddenly a thought struck me; and I arose, hastily smoothing the bed clothes, as though the bed had not been slept in. I had just time to creep under the bed when the window was shaken open, and somebody softly slipped in. It was a man, and, listening intently, I heard him sigh wearily to himself, as if tired out. Then he got in bed, he drew the clothes over him, and in a few minutes I heard him snoring. You can imagine how pleasant I felt, and the scamp had my money—bag under his pillow too! What was to be done? I thought of my happy home and the dear little wife now perhaps dreaming of me and the thought of her gave me courage. I determined to snatch at my money and fight for it with the unseen visitor to the death, if need be. I was crawling from under the bed, when I heard another sound, nearing the door this time. In a minute the latch was quietly lifted, the door gently pushed open, and I saw the landlord glide into the room. Then a hand holding a candlestick in at the door—only a hand; but I knew those quivering fingers well enough. The man crept on tiptoe to the bed and leaning softly over the sleeper stabbed him to the heart. There was one deep groan and all was over. The murderer drew the money from under the pillow and crept stealthily to the door, glancing behind him as though he feared the dead man would get up and follow him.

"Shaking all over and with hair on end I crawled from my hiding-place groped about the room for my clothes, and after standing a moment, dazed with horror, followed the guilty couple. Their room was almost opposite mine, and I could see the light under their door, which was barely closed. I pushed it open and peeped in. The table faced the door, and there they stood with their backs to me, so intent upon the money that I crept close to them without being heard.

"Look, look," I heard the man whisper—"there is more than enough to save our boy. How they shine! And all our wife—ours!"

"No, mine 'murderer!' I shouted with a loud voice of thunder, and, snatching the bag from his nerveless grasp, I dashed the light from the woman's hand and fled back swiftly to the room where the dead man lay.

"Opening the window I groped about with one hand for an ivy bough, clinging somehow to the sill with the other, and at last managed to scramble down, reaching the ground bruised, shaken, breathless. As I rested a moment to get my breath, I heard from the room above an awful cry sung out in a woman's voice—

"My boy, my boy, my only son!"

"I clambered over the gate which led into the street. A watch-box stood close by in the square, and I hurriedly told my story to the watchman. He stared in horror, as well he might, and wanted to fetch his mate; but I told him we were more than a match for those we should find at the inn, so he came with me. A frightened servant opened the door to us, and I led the way to the room I had just quitted. The watchman bent down and peered into the dead man's face.

"Ah, he whispered, it's as I feared! It's their own son—they didn't know he was home, and so they mistook him for you, sir."

"I felt myself turn queer and giddy, for I knew the meaning of that pitiful cry, my only son!

"And what of the murderers? They had not so much as tried to escape, and the door wasn't even barred against us. The woman lay moaning on the floor; the man set huddled up in a chair by the bed. When we entered he held out his hands to be manacled without uttering a word. When I told him how it happened, that his son had fallen a victim instead of me, he just stared in my face and made no sign that he had heard the ghastly tale.

"Well, sir, that's about all. The mother, poor soul, died raving mad, and the man was hanged at Tyburn; but not another word did he speak from first to last, save once—and that was when the Judge passed sentence on him. Then he raised his head, and, with a look in his eyes which I can never forget, he said—

"An old, old man, my lord—my only son!"

"That's all, sir. The strangest story you ever heard? Well, I dare say it is; but it's all true, every word of it, for I've got the papers to prove it, and if you'll be pleased to come in and see 'em, you'll be welcome as flowers in May, that you will! Not now? Well then, I'll bid you good-day, and thank you kindly for letting me talk to you, for it does me good to chat a bit sometimes, that it do! Good-day, sir, and a pleasant walk to you!"

Right And Left.

M. Delaunay of Paris, has made an extended and careful investigation to ascertain if in the majority of cases the right, upper and lower extremity be crossed over the left or the left over the right, and which side most persons incline to when in the sitting posture. According to M. Delaunay certain breeds of dogs terriers, Newfoundlands and poodles, cross the right foot over the left. The Chinese and Japanese cross the left over the right: Europeans cross the right over the left. M. Delaunay observed, in the "creches and salles d'asiles," that infants under three years of age cross their left arm over the right, older children cross the right over the left, sixty per cent doing at six years of age. Robust children cross the right over the left; the idiotic and weak including those who are incapable of working, cross the left over the right. The Calmucks and Arabs cross the right over the left, like the Europeans. A great many women cross the left leg over the right. Robust children cross the right leg over the left earlier than their weaker playmates. Persons who cross the right leg over the left lean toward the left when sitting; those who place the left uppermost lean to the right.

Hence consistently, with what might have been expected from what is observed in children with regard to crossing legs, until six years of age children lean toward the right, and afterward toward the left. French schoolmasters, it would appear, try to prevent their pupils from assuming this position, believing that scoliosis results; hence they encourage or enforce the use of elbow rests (accouvoirs), which oblige the children to sit straight, a useless measure according to M. Delaunay, as the position they choose is in conformity with the process of evolution. Tailors affirm that the back of a pair of trousers is always more worn on the left side than on the right. Left-handed people always sit toward the right. M. Delaunay concludes from these observations that the left brain develops previously to the right, and finally the right predominates.—*British Medical Journal*

Notes of News.

The Democrats of the Tenth Ohio District on Wednesday nominated Frank Hurd for Congress.

Two sons of Isaac Beard, at Springfield, Ohio, set fire to their fathers house on Wednesday, while playing with matches, and one of them aged five years was burned to death.

In Andover, Vermont, on Tuesday Mrs. Ira Merrill, her son Sewell, and Mrs. Lucius Jacquith, were thrown from a wagon by the horse taking fright. Mrs. Merrill was killed, and the others were injured. Mrs. Jacquith perhaps fatally.

The Northwestern Lumbermen's Association met Wednesday, in Chicago to consider the advisability of shutting down the mills in curtailment production. Sixty manufacturers were present. The matter was referred to a committee of five.

A telegram from Shamokin, Penn., says the Back Ridge mine, owned by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company, is on fire, and it will be necessary to flood it through the Green-back colliery. The loss will be heavy at both collieries. The fire is supposed to have caught from the machinery.

The Republican State Convention of Connecticut met Wednesday in New Haven and nominated a ticket headed by Henry B. Harrison for Governor. Mr. Lounsbury, who was Harrison's principal competitor for the nomination was offered the nomination for Lieutenant Governor, but declined, and most of the Fairfield county delegates left the Convention.

The "Old Time Telegrapher's Association" met on Wednesday, in St. Louis. About fifty delegates were present, with George M. Dugan, the President, and S. B. Fairchild, the Secretary and Treasurer. Several new members were elected. Messrs Plum, Burnell and Taylor were appointed a Committee to solicit papers to supply matter for the history of the early days of telegraphy, and to secure specimens of old telegraphic apparatus.

John Devo, a butcher, left Jewett, New York, on Wednesday, for Albany to purchase cattle. He had considerable money with him. Two hours afterward his horse and wagon were found. The wagon was covered with blood, and near by lay a bloody necktie and an

empty pocket-book, but he body of Devo could not be found. It is supposed that he was robbed and murdered. The Sheriff and 100 men have scoured the country for miles, but no trace can be found of the missing man.

At Reading on Tuesday night, Christian Bowman entered the McClellan House and asked for a drink. The proprietor, George Kraemer, poured out a pint of whiskey and offered it free to Bowman if he would drink it all. Bowman drank it and was found dead in the yard of his residence on Wednesday morning. The Coroner's jury rendered a verdict that Bowman's death "was caused by excessive drinking, and censured Kraemer "for furnishing so large a quantity for a single drink."

The Chicago Breeders Gazette says that contagious pleuro-pneumonia has found a lodgment in Illinois. It is known to exist in five Jersey herds in that State, and the infection may be more widely spread. The Commissioners of Agriculture at Washington has issued a circular requesting, in view of the existence of the disease in Illinois, that owners of all herds of Jersey cattle in the United States into which the new animals have been introduced since January last, stop the shipment of cattle until after October 1st.

The Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias, in session at Lancaster, Penna., on Wednesday elected the following officers for the ensuing year: Grand Chancellor, John H. Carr, of Altoona; Grand Vice Chancellor, Edward V. O'Neil, of Philadelphia; Grand Prelate, H. W. Mohr, of Allentown; Grand Keeper of Records and Seal, George Hawkes, of Philadelphia; Grand Master of Arms, John Guard, Thomas Perry Wheatland, Grand Outer Guard, John Clapie, of New Castle; Grand Trustee, John W. Bebee, of Philadelphia.

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