PLAGUE-SCARRED.

Yes, I have met her face to face, says a German writer. By "her," I refer to the woman in black; she who of all women

I saw her in 1873, and am one of the few who have seen her, and lived to tell the tale. My poor mother saw her and was soon numbered with the dead.

My mother was dead and buried before I heard of her illness. I received a written message from my little brother, Julius. It was very short: "Mother is dead—don't come home."

Of course, I returned home as soon as kills the quickest and surest.

Of course, I returned home as soon as possible. I was in despair. I was not afraid of the cholera. What had I, in my state of mind, to dread? In fact, I al-

state of mind, to dread? In fact, I almost prayed for death.

When I arrived in the vicinity of our village, I shuddered to see on every hand signs of the desolation that had been wrought by the seourge. The church bells in the villages, at other times so musical, morning, noon and night, were dumb and silent as the grave itself. The wheat in the fields had ripened. The golden grain had fallen to the earth and sprouted again. There was nobody to gather the rich harvest. Wagons loaded with empty coffins were the only vehicles

gather the rich harvest. Wagons loaded with empty coffins were the only vehicles to be seen on the public highways.

I lost no time in reaching my native village. The nearer I approached my destination the more I was weighed down by a dreadful sense of desolation. White, fleecy clouds were drifting across the azure sky. My imagination transformed the clouds into weird shapes. To me they looked like troops of spectres in white winding sheets, carrying long scythes.

winding sheets, carrying long scythes.

As I passed the country house of a genleman, Mr. Nasay, with whom I was well acquainted, I saw him leaning over the gate. He stared at me without the slightest sign of recognition. There was an express on of intense weariness on his face. After I had passed the gate, he aroused himself and called out:

"When you get to Kisalva, stop a moment at the Sitky mansion and tell Sitky that my wife, who is his sister, is

I nodded assent and drove on. It was not long before I met the coachman of the Sitky family. He was on horseback.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I am going to inform Mrs. Nasay that her sister has just died."

I delivered my message to the coach-

"In that case I might as well go back," remarked the coachman, in a matter-offact sort of way, as if nothing unusual

had happened, adding:

"As they both are dead they can tell
each other so in the next world," and
turning his horse he rode slowly back.

At length I reached my parents' house,
and was surrounded by the scenes of my

boyhood. There was no hurrying to the gate to meet me, no waving of handker-chiefs, no signs of welcome. The windows did not greet me with their friendly eyes, for they were covered by the shutters.

No door opened as my carriage drove up. There did not seem to be a living human being on the premises. A face appeared above the fence of our next door neighbor. It was young Janos Kazi. He stared at me stupidly but said

" Good morning, Janos."

"H'm," he grunted, as he turned away.

I walked through the yard. The same deathlike stillness prevailed. I tried to open the doors, but in vain. They were all locked. I called aloud, but there was no answer. A white cat came out of the stable, looked at me curiously and passed on as if surprised to see me.

There was a peculiar smell of cooking

in the air, and going through the stable into the yard, I saw my young brother Julius. He was sitting or the ground in front of a small fire trying to broil a chicken on a stick. By his side was our house dog Hector. Julius!

The boy looked up, recognized me, shook hands, but he did not smile or show any indication of being glad to see me. I looked at him more attentively, and perceived that a wonderful change had taken place. There was a peculiar look of age about him. Between his eyes were three deep perpendicular lines, or rather furrows. "What are you doing, my boy?" I

asked. "I am getting dinner," he replied, in-

"Why do you attend to that? Is there nobody in the place to cook for you? "Nobody," he replied, dryly. "Where are they all?"

"The rest of the people belonging to the house.' They are dead."

" Most of them are dead, but some ran

"Why did you stay here? Why didn't

you go to our relatives?"
"They refused to see me. They were afraid of the cholera."

"Then there is nobody on the premises Nobody except Hector. I must feed

"Why don't you stay in the house in-stead of camping out here?"
"I don't like to go into the house.

Somebody died in every room."

I sat down on the box near the fire, and little Julius turned his attention to roasting the chicken on the stick. began to paw the ground with his fore-

"Down Hector!" exclaimed the boy, angrily, "we don't want any more graves. We have had enough of them."

"Do you think-"Yes, Hector knows beforehand when anybody is going to die."
There was a painful silence for a few minutes and then I remarked:
"He will not have to dig many more

My brother, whom I had left three weeks before a he py, romping, talkalive child. I have been a storing at the fit. Find it my hand on fiscurity, blend leaks, and mild.

My poor little brother, tell E.s. when "I don't know," he roplied, in the same indifferent tone of voice. "I can't keep the ran of the days. It seems to me that it was a long time ago."

"Why didn't you let me know in time to come to the funeral?"

"Funerals," who take of funerals?

"Funerals! who talks of funerals? The coachman took the coffin on his shoulder and carried it to the family

Tears rolled down my checks, and fell upon the not coals and a bes. "Don't cry," said the could in a grandoice. "Let us act like men come what

And this boy was only twelve years of

"What has become of our coachman. Klapka? I know that he did not run

away." He is in a corner of the stable on some straw, dying."

I went into the stable, and there lay the faithful old family servant. The color of his face was a bluish black, and he was shivering as if from cold.

The old man, who had formerly served as a hussar, had fought manfully against

the scourge. Two weeks previously, when he felt the cramps in his feet, he tied cord tightly around his legs above the knees, and thus stopped the circulation of the dread disease. It seemed as if he had carried the day, for the symptoms left him.

"Even the cholera can't down old Klap-ka," he said, boastfully, but he was mis-taken. The cholera had got him down at last. There he lay in a semi-comatose condition

condition.

"Kiapka!" I exclaimed, "brave, honest, Mihala Klapka! Wake up! I've come to see you. Don't you know me?"

With a great effort he opened his eyes. A gray shadow flitted across his dark face. Probably it was intended for a smile of recognition. He raised his hand as if to make a military salute. He tried to stagger to his feet but the cramps seized him, and he fell back again on the straw. straw.

straw.

I took my bottle of cholera medicine out of my pocket. His eyes were closed, but he seemed to know what I was doing, for he opened his blue mouth. I poured in a few drops and it seemed to do him good.

Then he shivered all over, and I heard a hearse growing sound. It was the

a hoarse, crowing sound. It was the death rattle. He fell back and died, dreaming that he had drunk brandy. He finished his dream on the other side of

the dark river.

I could not repress my tears at the death of the faithful old servant.

"Hector was right," I said, returning to the fire, "Klapka is dead."

"I told you the dog knew it," replied

the boy, with perfect composure.

The dreadful scenes through which he had passed had destroyed all feeling. He was an old man before he had ceased to

That very day I took him to the head-quarters of the sanitary committee in an

adjacent village, and put him in charge of his relatives. They fumigated the poor boy and put new clothes on him. He resisted with all his might. He fought like a tiger, and bit everybody who came

Twelve years have passed since that dreadful day, but nobody has ever seen him smile. The indifferent, stolld exhim smile. The indifferent, stolid expression, tinged with sadness, that was on his face when I saw him at the fire in the stable yard, is on his face

He grew up tall and handsome, and it is not impossible that gentle fingers have toyed with his curly locks and bright eyes have beamed on him, but they have not effaced the three deep furrows that the woman in black left upon his brow.

SHE FOUND HER MAMMA.

The north-bound train had left Austin, Tex., and Conductor Hughes was making his usual round collecting tickets. He stopped in front of a little girl who was crouched in a corner near the stove. Notwithstanding that a cold northwester was blowing, she was thinly clad in a torn calico dress, and her feet were destitute of shoes and stockings. Her appearance betokened neglect, if not har-her cruelty.

As she appeared to be alone, the conductor asked: "Have you got a ticket, little girl?" in a tone that was kindly, if it was official.

" What is that?"

"Didn't whoever put you on the car give you a ticket?"
"Nobody put us on the car. We came all by ourselves, didn't we, dolly?" she said, hugging a dilapidated old doll.
"Didn't your papa put you on the

car? " No. we didn't tell him we were coming : did we, dolly?"
The conductor took the little girl's hand

in his. It was burning hot. Her thin features were flushed, and her eyes were glistening with fever.
"Your clothes are thin. Don't you sel cold sometimes!"

"Yes, we feel so cold, but we per close together, don't we, dolly? Then I find mamma she'll give us some new clothes and some shoes."

" Where is your mamma?" "I don't know, but I'll find her. She came into my room last night and put her hands on me and kissed me—just as she used to before she went to sleep in a long box and went off on the railroad."

The conductor was puzzled. Had the fever affected the child's head? The good, kindly fellow took a matter-of-fact view of her speech.

"I think you are lost, little girl. What is your name?"
"My name is Fanny, but mamma used

to call me 'unie per."
"I'll send you back to your papa. You have got a papa, haven't you? in Austin?"

A look of terror was frozen on the
little pinched features. Two thin arms were thrown around the conductor's

"Please don't send me back to pa," she said in piteous accents. "My new mamma will whip me and lock me in the dark closet. Oh, please don't send me back! I'll be so good. I'll give you dolly. No; I can't give you dolly. Mamma gave me dolly, but I'll let you play with her. Please, let me stay with you until I find mamma." find mamma."

This is a bad case of stepmother, said the conductor to himself. "This is some poor, ne dected little creature. I've a notion to take her home and leave her with my kids. One more won't make much difference."

"I'll not send you home. Just lie down here," he said, fixing her up a place to lie on one of the seats, with all a woman's tenderness.

The little waif was contented and happy. She haid down and the conductor covered her up with his overcoat. Once or twice as he pas ed by he heard the little deadhead is senger talking to her dolly about what they would do when they found mainerant thusane.

At Taylor the north-bound and south-bound trains rost, and the passengers got supper. As soon as Conductor Hughes stepped on the platform the operator

"Here, Bill, here is a telegram for you." He opened the envelope and read the

ispatch that had been placed in his unit. It was as follows: onsinetor of south-bound triefs for

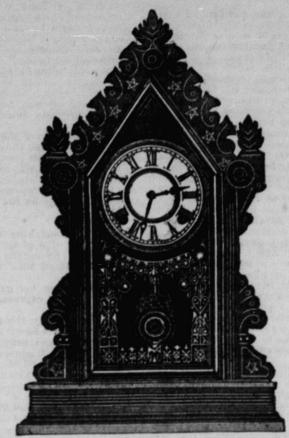
r little creature," he muttered, and I have to her top and give her some there of their fato the car and their

mek the overcom from the sleeping child, but a happy smile on her little pinched

" Little pet" had found her mamma.

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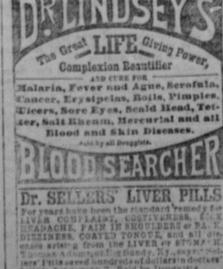
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