

A LUCKY LARCENY.

BY A LAWYER.

MR. COURTNEY was a rich old bachelor, and the uncle of a couple of nephews—the one a brother's, the other a sister's son. These two were his next of kin, legally entitled, in case he died intestate, to inherit his property.

Edward Horton, his deceased sister's son, was decidedly his favorite, and to him the old gentleman resolved to give the bulk of his estate.

Charles Courtney, the other nephew, had inherited a handsome fortune from his father, and moreover, by his uncle's will, was entitled to succeed to that left to his cousin, in event of the latter's dying without issue.

Old Mr. Courtney was one of the latest of bachelors, when it was suddenly announced, not only that he was dead, but that foul play was suspected. A post-mortem examination demonstrated that he had fallen a victim to poison; and it was given out that the hand that had administered it was that of his favorite nephew. The public mind was naturally both surprised and shocked.

It was not until Edward Horton had been fully committed for trial for his uncle's murder, that I was retained to get up the defence.

His own statement was, in substance, this:—A physician had been called in to see Mr. Courtney on the occasion of some apparently trifling illness requiring some simple remedy, for which a prescription was written and handed to the prisoner, to have made up. This the latter had carried to a well-known, competent druggist, who had put it up in his presence.

The medicine consisted of three white powders, each folded in a scrap of paper, and the whole enclosed in a single wrapper. They were to be administered at intervals of an hour and had remained continuously in the prisoner's possession till the first was administered, which was done by himself immediately upon his return from the druggist's. Mr. Courtney grew rapidly worse; and when at the expiration of an hour, a second powder was administered, the symptoms became so alarming that a messenger was despatched for the physician, who, on his arrival, declared that the patient was suffering from the effect of poison. An examination of the remaining powder disclosed the fact that it was pure arsenic.

It was too late for any antidote to be available; and in less than an hour death had relieved the sufferer. An autopsy of the body, and an analysis of the contents of the stomach, left no doubt as to the cause of death. The presence of arsenic, in a necessarily fatal quantity, was indicated by every known chemical test. It was further admitted by the prisoner, that he alone had access to his uncle's apartment, or had handled the medicine from the time it was compounded by the druggist, till the coming of the physician, after the second powder had been taken.

The druggist, who was known to be a man of extraordinary caution, and thoroughly skilled in his business, was ready to swear that by no possibility could any mistake have occurred in putting up the medicine. To make matters worse, it transpired that the amicable relations between the uncle and the nephew had been somewhat disturbed of late, by reason of an attachment of the latter, disapproved by the former, who had gone so far as to threaten to change his will, unless his wishes were respected.

"Who was in company with you from the time you received the medicine till you returned to your uncle's house?" I asked the prisoner, desperately groping after something to afford a ray of hope.

"No one," he answered, "but my cousin Charles, whom I met near the druggist's and who accompanied me in." I drew from Edward the fact that Charles saw the medicine put up; walked with him a little way; then went back for something, Edward awaiting his return; then walked arm in arm cheerily home, when Charles left. I also reminded Edward that, his uncle being dead, if he also should die childless, Charles would inherit the whole estate.

"He did it! he did it!" the young man cried in a paroxysm of excitement, too earnest to be counterfeited. "He went out to get the poison when he left me waiting. He put it up to resemble the druggist's parcel, for which he substituted it as we went along. Villain—I know it now! I carried the parcel in the right pocket of my overcoat, and it was on that side he walked!"

I was seated in my office on the day proceeding that fixed for the trial, indulging in anything but sanguine expectations, when a tap at the door announced a visitor. It was a detective whom I had employed.

"What is it?" I inquired, after closing the door.

"I made an arrest to-day," he answered, "and in the prisoner's possession I found this overcoat," undoing a package he had brought.

"Well?"

"In one of the pockets I found this," and he handed me a small parcel, which I opened. Inside were three papers, folded as druggists put up their prescriptions.

"The person with whom I found this

overcoat," the detective continued, "confess that he stole it from a billiard saloon, the owner having laid it aside while playing, and the date he fixes corresponds with Mr. Courtney's murder. But what is more important, I have ascertained that Charles Courtney is the owner of the coat!"

"Let us at once proceed to the druggist's!" I exclaimed, springing from my chair and snatching up my hat.

We were soon there.

"Please examine that parcel," I said, putting it into the druggist's hands.

He did so, carefully opening the papers, and inspecting their contents. They contained three white powders!

"How do they correspond with those you made up for Mr. Courtney?" I inquired, "and for which others seem to have been so mysteriously substituted?"

"They do not correspond at all," he answered, "they are the same."

"The same! How do you know that?"

"By these figures," he replied, pointing to the inside of one of the papers.

"I had made a calculation that day, on the sheet of paper, of which I used in putting up the prescription bought by Mr. Edward Horton. The remainder I have preserved, not knowing but it might become important. Here it is, and you see how this piece and the figures fit it!"

"They did exactly! the chain of evidence was complete!"

I need hardly tell how the trial ended. Charles Courtney was called by the prosecution, to prove some unimportant point. The counsel, whom I had retained for the defence, asked him but three questions on cross-examination:—

"Had he accompanied the prisoner from the druggist's?"

"Had he lost an overcoat that day?"

"Was that it?"

The questions were very simple, but the effect on the witness was most remarkable. He trembled and turned pale. He knew that his secret was out, and that lying was useless. He answered all three questions in the affirmative, but in a voice scarcely audible. Before the next witness was called, he slipped from the court, and was never heard of afterwards.

With the testimony of the detective and the druggist, not forgetting that of the thief, who stole the overcoat, we made short work of what had promised to be a beautiful case of circumstantial evidence.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

READERS of Miss Brandon's lurid fiction, Henry Dunbar, will remember that it turns on what seems to be the extravagant hypothesis that one man may murder another, assume his name and identity, enter into possession of his estate, and be unsuspectingly received by his family and the world at large for the individual he personates. This is so glaring an improbability as to tax the faith of the most credulous of novel-lovers. Nevertheless, in all its essential features, Miss Brandon's startling invention has been realized by a recent remarkable case in Chicago. The details of this curious and successful deception show so much perverted ingenuity and readiness of resource as to entitle it to take rank among celebrated crimes. As the story is now revealed, it begins with the arrival in New York of one Gumbleton, an Irishman of good family, in the spring of 1870. With him he brought a letter of credit for £1,600, which he soon sold, after his arrival, to a New York Banking-house, for a little less than \$9,000. He then went to Baltimore, where he made the acquaintance of a young German, named Alfred Ziegenmeyer, with whom he soon became intimate. Together the two friends, in November of last year, traveled to Chicago, where Gumbleton placed on deposit in the National Bank of Commerce the sum of \$300. Soon after, accompanied by Ziegenmeyer, he shipped two boxes containing clothing to Manhattan, Kansas. From that time nothing definite appears to be known of him, until the 2d of January of the present year, when his dead body was found in the lake, with a rope around his neck, and showing other indications of violence. Ever since that date, the detectives have been untiring in their efforts to unravel the mystery, which have at last culminated in fixing the crime on Ziegenmeyer and causing his arrest at Bremen, where he is now held to wait a requisition from Washington. If the police theory of his movements, subsequent to the murder, is correct, it is necessary to credit him with surprising coolness and cunning in villainy. Assuming the detective version to be true, it appears that Ziegenmeyer, immediately after the murder, presented himself at the bank with Gumbleton's certificate of deposit, and stated that he was his victim's partner, and that Gumbleton had gone to New York, leaving him full authority to draw the \$300. The bank refused to deliver the money without the owner's indorsement. This Ziegenmeyer promised to get from New York, and after an interval of six days for that pretended object, returned with a forged indorsement, which secured the money. This was apparently, his last appearance in the character of Ziegenmeyer. From that time forth he adopted the name and identity of the murdered man. Indeed, at his lodgings he was

already known as Gumbleton, although the two had lived there together under their proper names from the 16th to the 19th of November, when Gumbleton disappeared; moreover, in personal appearance the two men were as unlike as can well be conceived. Gumbleton being a man of forty-five, of about the middle height, with dark complexion, black hair and beard, and an Irishman; while Ziegenmeyer was but twenty-one, tall, light, fair-haired and beardless, and a German, speaking English only imperfectly. That under these circumstances the deception could have been successfully carried out, seems only less wonderful than the audacity which inspired it. As Gumbleton, Ziegenmeyer then procured the return of the boxes sent to Kansas, which he at once sold, and turned his attention to the great prize, the eight thousand and odd dollars in New York. To obtain this, he forged to the banking house, with whom the money was deposited, a letter so skillfully executed as to satisfy them that it was the genuine Gumbleton's handwriting. The balance was promptly forwarded to Ziegenmeyer in a draft on Chicago. There still remained the difficulty of identification, and the trick by which this was surmounted is not the least ingenious in this singular record of rascally astuteness. The pretended Gumbleton entered into negotiations to buy a farm, but when the time came to close the sale he had no money, but his draft, which he could not cash. The anxious seller took the bait, and obligingly identified him at his own bank, and even went so far as to add his own indorsement to the draft. The bank officials, to be quite secure, wrote to the New York house, and were assured there that every thing was right. So the draft was paid, but the farm was not bought, and within a day or two afterwards, on the 21st of December, Mr. Ziegenmeyer-Gumbleton vanished from Chicago, to be no more heard of until his arrest at Bremen on the charge of murder.

On the 20th inst., the detectives who made the arrest in Germany, arrived in New York with the prisoner in charge. He admits that he stole the property during the absence of his friend, but stoutly denies that he had any thing to do with the other more serious crime of murder.

**Sausage Tree.**

A Yankee stepped into a lager beer saloon the other day, and after preliminary skirmishing, asked the proprietor if there was any sausage trees growing in the suburbs of the city. The Teuton was astonished. He "never heard told of such things."

"Why," said the Yankee, "where I have been living they raise all their German sausages on trees."

"Mein Gott in Himmel, what you told me! How would I like such drees in mein garten, don't I? Duke some glasse of beer, stranger. I wants to know about dish."

So the stranger sat down, and began to absorb lager very rapidly.

"A sausage tree!" exclaimed Mynheer. "What goot ting must pe that! I dell you, sdranger, I have some gartens ground on those low grounds at the Skool-eykill, so rich you never was. I raise cabbages here so bigger as your head. Duke some more beers. Now tell me wherd these drees come to."

"Oh," said the stranger, "they'll grow on an apple tree, or a pear tree, for that matter."

"You don't told me that," exclaimed Dutchy. "What make bolognas grow on top my bear drees, out mine apple drees, eh?"

"Oh, it's very easy," said the stranger who had slaked his thirst, and was about to depart; "easy enough, my good friend. Only plant dogs around the roots of the tree, and the branches will sprout with sausages."

Thus saying he moved toward the street, but none too rapidly to avoid an assault from Gambrianus.

A Farmer's Blunder.

A farmer recently drove his old mare into Lexington, Kentucky, leaving her colt at home. On his return, which was after dark, he put her out in the lot where the colt was, and thought it was all right. In the course of an hour or two, a servant came in and told him the mare was fighting her colt and would not allow it to partake of the maternal fount. This irritated him so that he said he would fix her, and out he went to carry his threat into execution. He caught her and tied her head up to a tree as high as he could reach, and brought the colt up. But with all that he could do the obstinate nag would kick the colt away. At last after worrying for some time to no effect, and almost despairing of success, he happened to take another look at the beast, and found, to his astonishment, that he had inadvertently brought a horse, belonging to some other man, and it was no wonder that he did not succeed in his undertaking. He had to make the trip back to town that night to make the exchange, and he did not get to bed until after midnight.

One thousand dollars reward is offered by the citizens of Newbern, N. C. for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who on the night of the 10th, inst fired the city at two separate points.

A TRUE BUT TERRIBLE STORY.

The History and Career of a Female Adventuress.

IN the whole realm of fiction there is no more startling tragedy than that embraced in the life and history of Mrs. Laura B. Fair, recently sentenced to be hung in San Francisco, for the wilful murder of Judge Crittenden. We condense the most salient features, as time and space admit, of the terrible story:

At the age of sixteen Miss Laura B. Hunt was called the most beautiful girl in Alabama.

At this time the family, consisting of Mrs. Hunt, a widow, her two daughters, and a son, removed to New Orleans, where they lived in reduced circumstances.

Within a year Laura's charms won a husband, a wealthy wholesale grocer, by the name of Strong, from Massachusetts, old enough to be her grand-father.

Matters went on from bad to worse until a divorce threatened to bring some startling disclosures in regard to the peculiar relations existing between Mrs. Strong and her many sympathizing gentlemanly friends, prominent among whom was a remarkably handsome young man by the name of Grayson. Public curiosity, however, was never satisfied, for death stepped in just before the suit was brought to trial, and in the guise of that mild monster—delirium tremens—removed the grocer to another sphere, leaving the beautiful Laura by no means a disconsolate widow.

It was then that Grayson, infatuated by her charms, proposed ultimately to marry her. He placed her at a convent in Louisiana, where she remained for one year. There she became an excellent musician, and was enabled to add the superficial appearance of education to her other attractions. She then married the handsome Grayson. The first night of their bridal trip to Vicksburg, per steamer, the gay and festive bridegroom had so violent an attack of mania a pots, that it required two men to take care of him. Two weeks the bride nursed him at Vicksburg.

They returned to New Orleans where Laura flirted and intrigued, while Grayson drank and gambled until a divorce separated the wretched couple.

This separation was precipitated by the artful management of Laura's mother, whose malign influence has had much to do in making the daughter what she has been, and is.

Laura was but nineteen when she went with her mother and brother to California. The sister meanwhile had married a friend of Laura's first husband, and was estranged from her estimable relatives, who opened a boarding house in Virginia City, Nevada. This was in 1856.

The same year, W. D. Fair, a lawyer of Siskiyou, fell a victim to the charms of the adventuress. He sought the hand of the handsome but unprincipled woman who thus became Mrs. Fair. After years of infatuated devotion he committed suicide from a sense of shame for her depraved and shameless conduct.

In 1860, the year of her husband's death, Mrs. Fair under the "protection" of a wealthy California, visited Mexico and Lower California. She next made her debut on the stage at Sacramento, and afterwards appeared in San Francisco and several places on the coast. Returning at last to Virginia City, alone, rich with spoils, she formed a similar alliance with a Union man and they opened a hotel.

In 1863, Mr. Crittenden went to Virginia City, and remained until 1865, boarding at the Fair hotel. It was during the height of the rebellion, and Laura showed her Southern proclivities in various ways; at one time by carrying the Confederate flag through the streets.

Bitter words often passed between her and the Union man with whom she was living, and one day, when the latter endeavored to nail the stars and stripes to a flag-staff, Laura shot him on the spot.

In the trial which ensued, she was so ably defended by Mr. Crittenden, that a verdict of acquittal was rendered. From that time commenced the disgraceful liaison which terminated in the assassination of her victim.

In 1866, Laura Fair arrived at the New York Hotel. She had property amounting to \$7,000 with her, and this fortune was all invested in gold bearing bonds, and placed under her exclusive control.

Returning to San Francisco, she soon married a wealthy gentleman by the name of Snyder, with whom she lived but six weeks. When a divorce set her free once more, she then renewed, or perhaps continued, her liaison with Crittenden.

In 1868, she again appeared in New York City, at the Gramacy Park hotel, where she remained four months, vainly awaiting the arrival of a gentleman who had fallen desperately in love with her on the steamer from San Francisco to Panama. But this party never put in an appearance, and the "adventuress" once more sought the shores of the Pacific, where she re-met, re-intrigued with, and shot her last victim, Judge Crittenden—for whose deliberate murder she now stands condemned before the world.

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