THE MYSTERIOUS MURDER.

A SINGULAR STORY.

MRS. JANET MOWBRAY and her four sons lived in 1828 at Harwick Hall, in the county of Durham England. Mrs. Mowbray was a tall, powerful woman, of great energy and bravery, in her fifty-fourth year. Her sons were aged respectively thirty-four, twenty-seven, twenty-four and twenty-one. Her husband had been dead many years. Her two eldest sons were married, and their wives and families lived with her. The youngest, George, was wild and disipated, and had given his mother much trouble. He was deeply in debt, and had been repeatedly threatened with arrest. Mrs. Mowbray was wealthy, and kept in her bed-room, beside a quantity of valuable plate, a large sum of money.

On Christmas eve Mrs. Mowbray's son and daughter-in-law paid a visit to the residence of a relative, Mr. Chaker, of Chatersbaugh. The domestics, relieved from duty, were in their own portion of the dwelling, enjoying the festivities of the season. The watchman, who was ordinarily on duty in the kitchen garden, took a hasty survey of his beat and joined the revellers in the kitchen.

On Christmas night they were to have a small gathering of friends and neighbors, and Mrs. Mowbray began to consider the arrangements necessary. She would require the old punch-bowl and the ladles and goblets, which she kept in the closet of her bed-room. She would go and get them out at once. She went accordingly, and entering the closet took out the silver and laid it on the shelf, ready for removal next morning. At the same time she took out a large, old-fashioned carving-knife and fork of quaint pattern, and deposited them also on the shelf. She then returned to the parlor. After sitting and musing for some time, she took up the bible and fumbled for her spectacles. She could not find them, and at length remembered that she had left them on the shelf in the closet. She at once returned for them. Entering her bedroom, she placed the candle on the dressing table, and lighted a small lamp with which she entered the closet.

As she took the first step inside the closet, she heard the sound as of some one breathing heavily. She looked up, and saw before her the face of a man. She was a brave, resolute woman. She advanced a step, and observed that the man's head, arms and body were through the small window at the end, as though in the act of wriggling himself through the opening. In the man's right hand was a pistol, and his left hand hold of a shelf which ran along the side of the closet. The man raised the pistol and fired. Mrs. Mowbray in an instant seized the huge carving-knife which lay on the shelf, and advanced toward the ruffian. He was struggling to withdraw himself from the window. His hands were on the sill and his head somewhat raised, leaving his throat somewhat exposed.

Being unable to work himself out of the aperture, he raised the pistol as though to hurl it at Mrs. Mowbray. The courageous old lady made one step forward, and dashed the keen blade across the man's throat, laying it open from ear to ear. She then calmly retired, closed the closet door, blew ant the lamp, and taking up her candle returned to the parlor, first having satisfied herself that not a drop of blood had stained her dress or hands.

Half an hour after midnight her children returned home. They found their mother seated by the fire, serenely reading her bible. They greeted her affectionately, and prepared to retire for the night. Mrs. Mowbray said.

"Boys, remain behind a little. I wish to speak with you. You, my dear daughters, can retire."

When she was alone with her children, she said, with dignity and calmness:

"My children, I have killed a man. You will find his body fast in the small window of the closet off my bed-room."

Her sons stared at her in amazement.—They at first imagined that she must be laboring under some mental disorder. But when she related to them plainly and rationally, and in her own straightforward, terse fashion, the story as just told, they saw that she was telling them a simple fact.

"Go," said she, "and make what arrangements you please. I will wait here, and you can tell me what course it is best to pursue in this matter."

The sons took the lights and went to their mother's room. They opened the door, and there, sure enough, was the body of a man hanging half through the window. The floor was a pool of blood.—With difficulty the eldest son got near enough the body, without stepping into the gore, to raise the head, which was drooping on the chest. He grasped the hair, and lifted the head so that the light might fall upon the face. As he did so a cry of horror escaped from all.

"Great God! it is our brother George!"

"What do you say?" asked Mrs. Mowbray, in a voice horribly calm, from the doorway whither she had followed unperceived. "George! what do you mean?"

"The eldest son dropped the head to prevent, if possible, his mother recognizing it, and all of them endeavored to explain their exclamation, and to get their mother away from the spot. It was in vain.

"Boys," she said, in her old, well-known tone of authority, "stand aside. Let me see the face of the murderer I have slain."

With that she put her sons on one side as though they had been mere lads, and walked through the slippery gore that lay upon the floor up to the body. She took the candle from the unresisting grasp of her first-born, and with a hand that trembled not, lifted the head of the dead man so that the light shone full upon it. She gazed at it steadily for half a minute, then she said, gently lowering it until it rested upon his breast again:

"It is my boy George!"

Mrs. Mowbray was the only one in that household who remained calm and emotionless. The family were in the wildest state of sorrow. The three brothers with difficulty extricated the body from the window. The authorities were notified, and everything was kept as quiet as possible. The inquest was duly held, Mrs. Mowbray was fully exonerated, and the body was tenderly prepared for burial. The real story was known to few outside the family and the authorities. It was believed by them that George, instead of going to Devonshire, had remained lurking in the neighborhood, and had planned the robbery, and if need be the murder of his mother. He knew that she would be alone on that night, and that she had a large sum of money and valuable jewels in her room. The old nurse who had held George in her arms when he first saw the light, took care of the body and prepared it for the tomb.

She dwelt tenderly on the familiar marks upon the limbs and face which she knew so well, each of which had a story of youthful daring or folly connected with it. In due time the funeral took place. The corpse was laid in the family vault. Only the family and one or two relatives attended. Mrs. Mowbray spent the best part of each day by the side of her dead son. She showed externally no signs of emotion. Before the lid was closed she kissed the forehead, and cut off a lock of the hair.

The day after the burial she gave directions to her eldest son to pay all the dead man's debts, which was done at once, so far as known. Gloom settled over the hall. The wing of the building in which the tragedy occurred was closed up, and Mrs. Mowbray removed to a bedroom up stairs.

On the fifth day after the funeral, a post-chase drove up to the door of Harwick Hall, and from it stepped George Mowbray, looking better than he had looked for many along days before he had left home. The servant who opened the hall door started back, and almost dropped with fright. His exclamations caught the ears of Mrs. Mowbray and her sons, who hastened back into the entrance hall, only in their turn to be dumbfounded. George was as much astounded as any of them, and gazed from one to another, perfectly lost in bewildered surprise. There was no doubt about it. George Mowbray, whom every body believed dead and in the grave, was living and before them.

"Mother," said George, advancing toward her, "what is the matter? My return is easily accounted for. On reaching Tawvale, I found that my uncles family had been unexpectedly summoned to London, as my eldest cousin, Sir John Gray's wife, was thought to be dying. I took a night's repose and then started home again, and here I am!"

Mrs. Mowbray walked up to him, gazed into his face, and then, without a word, folded him in a passionate embrace. Each of his brothers grasped his hands and kissed him as they had been wont to do when he was a boy and the pet of the family. The old nurse, aroused from her noon-day slumber, embraced and wept over him, and the servants gathered round with wet eyes and congratulatory explanations.

All this time George knew nothing of the true reason of this singular reception. Soon, however, the my stery was explained to him. The effect upon him cannot be described.

Measures were immediately taken to have the body of the man who had been buried as George Mowbray disinterred. This was soon done, and as the living George Mowbray stood beside the dead man, the resemblance was seen to be the most extraordinary. The marks on the face and hands corresponded with those on George's. The scars on the legs were similar, also; and the hair, eyebrows and finger-nails were marvelously alike. Who the dead man was, was never ascertained. After George's return, however, inquiries were made, such as it was never deemed needful to make so long as the dead man was supposed to be Mrs. Mowbray's youngest son.

These inquries led to the discovery that the day before the tragedy three men, supposed to be from London, took up their quarters at an inn in a neighboring village, one of whom the landlord thought he recognized as having been in Mrs. Mowbray's service as a groom. The footsteps of three persons were also discovered in the garden, and some time after a rope-ladder and a horse-trough, which had apparently been used to lay upon the spikes at the top of the garden wall, were discovered in the neighboring copse. But the name of the dead man was never discovered.

ENIGMA DEPARTMENT.

Cross-Word Enigma.

I am composed eighteen letters.
My first is in fight but not in quarrel,
My second is in cry but not in bawl,
My third is in bang but not in blow,
My fourth is in sown but not in sow.
My fifth is kit but not in cat.
My sixth is in mouse but not in rat.
My seventh is in you but not in me.
My eighth is in run but not in flee.
My ninth is in weft but not in wove.
My tenth is in flit but not in move.
My eleventh is in wain but not in wound.
My twelfth is in bounce but not in bound.
My thirteenth is in rind but not in skin.
My fourteenth is in jaw but not in chin.
My fifteenth is in many but not in few.
My sixteenth is in stewed but not in stew.
My seventeenth is in crop but not in eat.
My eighteenth is in foot but not in feet.
My whole is a name you've often seen.

☞ On which side of the church should Willow trees be planted?

A Problem.

A. B. and C. start to travel 3 miles, and have a pair of shoes to carry. Each shoe is to be carried by different persons, and their several distances are to be equal. How can they arrange it?

The East River Bridge.

A Wonderful Undertaking.

VERY few persons comprehend what a wonderful undertaking is the building of a bridge over the East River to connect the cities of New York and Brooklyn. Last week while in New York we visited the foot of Rosevelt street where the caisson for the bridge to rest upon is being built. The following description from a recent visitor will be found interesting:

"Twelve air pumps were at work forcing air into the depths below, while two sand pumps were throwing out large streams of sand. Under charge of one of the engineers, a party were just starting to descend into the depths below. Two shafts afford access to the interior of the caisson, and down one of these the party descended by means of a spiral staircase. At the bottom of each shaft on one side is a small oval opening just large enough to admit the body of a man, and closed by an iron door. This affords entrance to a small circular chamber about eight feet in length and six feet in diameter, called, the "lock." At the bottom of the lock on the opposite side from the entrance is a similar opening, into the caisson, which gives access to its interior.

The pressure of air in the caisson is thirty pounds to the square inch, or double the ordinary atmosphere pressure. Once in the lock and the entrance closed, it becomes necessary to have an equal amount of pressure, before the door into the caisson can be opened. To this end air is forced into the lock until the right pressure is reached. It is here that the most unpleasant part of the journey is experienced, as the constantly increasing pressure acts upon the tympanum of the ear, and would rupture it, if it were not counteracted by closing the nostrils, and inflating the cheeks to their fullest extent, thus creating an artificial pressure upon the inside of the ear. This has to be done every few seconds, and even then the sensation is sometimes painful. The air rushes into the narrow chamber with a noise like the hissing of steam. Four or five minutes were needed to obtain the required pressure, when the air was turned off and the lower door opened. Descending a short ladder, the party found themselves standing upon a narrow plank walk in one of the chambers of the caisson, and seventy feet below the level of the water in the river. This great depth being required to get to a solid base, below the quick sand.

Once inside no discomfort is experienced from the compressed atmosphere. The interior is divided into six chambers by massive partitions of wood and iron, with passages through them into each chamber. In all directions are laid narrow plank walks for the convenience of wheeling the sand which forms the bed of the river to the discharge pipes. The chambers are about eight feet in height and lined throughout with a thin plating of iron. This is to guard against the wood-work catching fire. Such an act happened to the Brooklyn caisson, and very nearly destroyed it.

The chambers are well lighted with gas, but are dim with clouds of mist. In that compressed atmosphere a foot burner gives as much light as a four-foot burner would in ordinary air. It would naturally be supposed that in so confined a space, there would be a liability of the air becoming impure, but such is not the case. An analysis of the air in the excavation was made a short time ago, and it was found to contain a very small per centage of carbonic acid gas. A couple of pigeons were kept in a chamber nearly two weeks, and seemed to experience no discomfort. The sand excavated is forced out through the pipes by the simple pressure of the air. The pipes are about four inches in diameter, and operate upon the principle of a syphon. The sand is wheeled from the different chambers to the pipes, and there shoveled around them. The flow can be shut off at any time by means of a stop-cock worked by means of a huge wrench.

Between twenty and thirty men were at work in the chambers. The lowest point reached in the excavations is within nine feet of the bed of rock. The average depth of the sand, however, is about fifteen feet. Already boulders of trap rock are found imbedded in the quicksand; these are broken up and hoisted out by means of an apparatus similar to a dredging-machine, working in a huge shaft filled with water. The men work in relays, or "watches," each "watch" remaining in the caisson for three hours. The low dim-lighted chambers, filled with mist, the shining pools of water, and the men toiling in the flaming gas-light amid the rushing, rumbling noise of the sand syphons, combined to make up an interesting scene, not easily forgotten. "Try to whistle," suggested the conductor of the party, and try we did but without success. Pucker their lips, and blow as hard as they could, no sound approaching a whistle could be produced. The voice, too, had a strange unnatural sound, as though uttered in a high key, all due to the compressed atmosphere.

The interior of the sides of the caisson slopes outward, not unlike the lips of an enormous bell. In fact, the working of the structure is upon nearly the same principle as that of a diving-bell, the pressure of the air keeping out the water. When the bed rock is reached, and the caisson fairly settled upon it, the interior will be filled with concrete and masonry.

The return to the upper world was unattended with the unpleasant sensations of the descent. After re-entering the "lock" the door into the chambers was closed, and the compressed air allowed to escape, until the pressure was equal to that of the outside atmosphere. This was an operation of some five minutes duration, and produced in the ears of those in the lock a sound as of rushing water—as though the person were diving. A little unpleasant feeling was experienced when the open air was reached, but it soon passed off. Those making daily descents do not notice it.

Up to the present time the amount expended is over $2,000,000. The total cost of the bridge is expected to be twelve millions of dollars, and it will be high enough above water for ships to sail under, and strong enough to carry a railroad train at full speed.

Flint Soup.

A Zouave in the army of Italy billeted at the house of a Savoyard, whose wife was the most avaricious woman in the whole country around.

The Zouave had drank his pay on the march, and sold his bread for more drink, so as not to set out *sur une sene l' amble*. Now the host was compelled by law to give him but three things, that is, water, fire and salt—the whole insufficient to make a meal.

The Zouave was not discouraged. He lit a fire first, put a pot of water on the hearth, and then went to look for a large stone, which he carefully placed in the pot as though it were beef.

The good woman opened her eyes with astonishment.

"What are you making?" she said.

"Flint soup."

"And is it good?"

"So good you would lick your fingers. But, unfortunately, there is a trifle needed that I had forgotten."

"What is it?"

"Some vegetables to absorb the fat."

"They shall not be wanting; here are some carrots and cabbage."

The Zouave took the welcome vegetables and continued to blow the fire. From time to time he stirred the stone with a spoon.

"It is becoming tender," said he; "it is of good quality. What a pity there is not a little hog's lard to give it a flavor!"

"My faith, my boy," said the old woman, "I have never eaten flint soup; and if you promise me a plate, I will go and get some hog's lard.

"You shall have the first taste of the broth."

The lard is put in with the vegetables, and already it emits a savory smell.

"I do not know if it is true," said the Zouave, speaking to himself, "but they have affirmed to me that some garlic and a few cloves were not superfluous in this pottage."

The old woman had gone too far to stop at trifles. The accessories were brought; and ten minutes after the soldier served up an admirable Julien, which delighted his hostess.

The next day, when the soldier was ready to depart, the old waman found the stone entire in the pot, and wished to return it to her guest.

"Thanks," said he, with the most perfect coolness; "but I do not like meat heated over again."

☞ The Teutonic tailor of Pennsylvania village having married a second wife indecently soon after the funeral of his first, the young men of the place notified their disapproval by a tin serenade during the progress of the wedding feast. The vulgar fraction of a man expostulated in the following style: "I say boys, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to be making all dis noise ven dar vas a funeral here so soon!"