

The Bank Robbery, OR The Cashier's Story.

THERE was a great excitement in our town. The bank had been robbed, and the clerk who slept in the building murdered. He was found lying dead on the floor, one morning, with a stab in the breast. The robber, or robbers, had carried off thirty thousand dollars.

In a town like Starburg, with its three or four thousand inhabitants, such a tragedy was as unexpected as it was shocking, because it was not supposed there was a person within many a mile around capable of such a deed; and no suspicious strangers had been lurking about of late, so far as was known.

I was the cashier of the bank, and its president was an old merchant of Starburg, named Dale. He had seen the town grow from a mere hamlet, and was one of its most popular citizens.

There was a certain Dr. Reed in town. Only a few months prior to the murder he had made his appearance at Starburg, with the avowed intention of practicing his profession.

On the afternoon preceding the murder, Dr. Reed and I had some conversation in the bank, which proved to have an important bearing on the case, and which I will allude to by-and-by.

Two detectives came from the neighboring city of F—, and set about working up the case. They told me confidentially that the crime was that of experienced burglars—that it had been carefully planned, and the perpetrators had before the deed, made themselves familiar with the interior of the building.

A week past no clue was discovered, and one of the detectives Kean, by name, left. The other concluded to remain a few days longer. He, too, was ready to give up and go back to the city, when his colleague suddenly returned.

If I was surprised on learning this, I was more surprised by a visit the two officers paid me soon after. I was alone in the little back office when they came in, and I scarcely knew what to think, when one of them closed and locked the door.

"Ah, gentlemen," said I, "glad to see you. I had heard of your return, Mr. Kern. Have you made a discovery?"

"We have, Mr. Walters," replied Detective Kean; "and we come to you on a very unpleasant mission."

"Ah! What is it?"

"Well—it is—to arrest you. We—"

"To arrest me?" I exclaimed, interrupting him.

"Well, yes—in the course of duty. If we have made a mistake, I know you will pardon us when the thing is cleared up. The fact is Mr. Walters, there is something—that connects you with this crime."

"Me? What—are you not joking?"

"Not at all; it is too serious a matter."

"True," put in Mr. Terref, the other detective.

"But," said I, perceiving that they were in earnest, "what circumstances could possibly lead to so preposterous a conclusion as my being the robber of this bank?"

Both officers fixed their eyes upon my face with most searching scrutiny, and Mr. Kean drew from his pocket a soiled and crumpled news paper and partially unfolded it.

I recognized it as a copy of the F— Journal, a weekly paper, which I received regularly through the mail, my name always being stamped on the margin.

"Did you ever see that paper?" Mr. Kean asked.

"I think not. I take the Journal, but am in the habit of keeping all my copies at home on file."

"But here is your name," said Mr. Kean, smoothing out the margin and pointing to my name.

"Why," said I, somewhat surprised, "it would seem that that copy has passed through my hands. How came you by it? What connection has it with the robbery?"

"I have discovered the package," said Mr. Kean, significantly.

"Package! What package?"

"A certain package sent by express."

They both watched me narrowly.

"Gentlemen," said I somewhat annoyed, "I beg that you will explain. You have evidently fallen into some error, and the sooner you know it the better for the cause in which you are engaged. Now tell me what circumstances can possibly involve me in suspicion? None that I cannot explain, surely."

They hesitated; glanced at each other; then Mr. Kean said:

paper to Doctor Reed, when I saw him in the bank, on the afternoon preceding the murder. I had brought it from home purposely to show him the paragraph about the chemical experiment, and to ask him what he thought about it. I distinctly remember how that he spoke of trying the experiment; that I told him to take the paper home with him, and return it whenever convenient; that I took up a pen, and drew a single line close to the beginning of the paragraph, and that he folded the paper and placed it in his pocket. I related this to the detectives, and a new light burst upon them. Their suspicion of me vanished from that instant.

"Who is this Doctor Reed?" asked Mr. Kean.

"A stranger, who came here to settle a few months ago."

"Does any one here know his antecedents?"

"Not that I am aware of; but really, I advise you not to accuse him hastily. He may have lost the paper."

"Ah," replied Mr. Kean, "you have more confidence in mankind than we have. Remember how recently he was an entire stranger here. It seems more than probable that he has been concerned in this crime. He evidently has an accomplice in F— to whom he forwarded the valuable package. You see the package was addressed to a certain name in F—, and marked 'to be called for.' Its nature was discovered by accident. It was poorly done up, and with a little rough handling, burst open at the express office in the city. The matter was at once reported to the chief of police, and hence my return, depend on it, Doctor Reed is our man."

"I will lose all faith in mankind, should it prove so."

"You would do that sooner, or later, if you were in our business."

At this juncture a clerk came to the door leading from the private office to the interior of the enclosure in the main department, and said that Doctor Reed wished to see me.

"In a moment," said I.

The clerk withdrew.

"Stay!" said Mr. Kean, as I arose. "Call him in here."

Mr. Terref unlocked the door, and I called to Doctor Reed to come in.

He walked in with the quiet, easy air peculiar to him, and I introduced the two officers to him by name, but he was not aware of their character.

"I think I have seen you in F—," said Mr. Terref.

"No doubt," replied Doctor Reed. "For I have spent considerable time there. I do not remember you though, I believe."

"Well, it is part of my business to note faces carefully," said Mr. Terref, eyeing the doctor sharply, "being on the detective force."

I am confident Doctor Reed gave a start but he replied, composedly:

"Oh! Then, probably, you are here in connection with the late robbery?"

"Did you ever see that paper?" asked Mr. Kean, abruptly, holding up the silent witness.

Dr. Reed's face assumed a curious expression, the meaning of which I could not quite make out. Presently he replied:

"Not that I am aware of. Why do you ask?"

"Are you sure you never saw it?" persisted Mr. Kean.

"I cannot say positively. Let me see it," said Dr. Reed.

Mr. Kean handed him the paper, and both officers stood very near him while he examined it.

"Why—this, stammered the doctor, as his eye fell upon the marked paragraph, "this is the very—very paper you gave me Mr. Walters. What interest attaches to it, gentlemen?"

"Did you know," asked Mr. Kean, looking straight through the doctor's head—rather than only a little way into it—"did you know that this paper was very indiscreetly used in packing the valuable stuff that was sent away by express?"

"What do you mean?" asked the doctor rather uneasily.

"I mean," replied Mr. Kean, with an air of severity, "that the whole thing has been discovered, Mr. Terref."

He made a sign to his companion, who in a twinkling drew a pair of handcuffs from a pocket and clapped them upon Doctor Reed's wrists.

"Come, resistance is useless," said Mr. Terref, although the prisoner had made no show of offering any. "Sorry for you, but this is your last game. The money is all recovered, and your accomplice is no doubt arrested ere this."

Doctor Reed, turned pale, and trembled from head to foot, yet his emotion did not seem to be exactly that of fear. I especially thought this when he raised his manacled hands, and indignantly demanded:

"Mr. Walters, why am I thus insulted in your office?"

So different was his bearing from what one might have expected in a suddenly-detected criminal that I actually began to think that an unfortunate mistake had been made, and I felt quite mortified about it.

made apparent. Sit down, calm yourself, and explanations will be made."

"I will not sit down!" he replied, with vehemence. "I demand to know why I am treated in this way?"

"I will tell you," said Mr. Kean. "This paper, which you acknowledge to have in your possession, was found wrapped around the package of money stolen from this bank. The conclusion is that on the night of the murder, you hastily packed up the money in whatever came handy, and sent it off by express, next morning, to your confederate in F—. Mr. Walters it seems you gave the 'doctor' this paper on the very last afternoon before the murder."

Doctor Reed was silent. His face wore a very thoughtful expression, as if he were trying to recall something.

I fancied he was thinking how stupidly he had acted, and that he was saying to himself, "I'm caught nicely," but he grew calmer than he had been at first, finally sat down and said:

"Gentlemen, I have been too hasty. I am a stranger to you, and it is very natural under the circumstances, that I should fall under suspicion. I remember all about that paper now—how I came by it, and how I parted with it."

"And, pray, how was that?" asked Mr. Kean, incredulously.

"I gave it to Harry Dale, a son of the president of this bank. He will readily remember it. You know Mr. Walters, Harry is a student. He is greatly interested in chemistry. Well shortly after leaving you that day, I met him in his father's store—he was here on vacation then, you know?—and showed him this paragraph. Being called out, I forgot all about it, and left it in his possession. That was the last I saw of it till now."

This was a bold statement, and the detectives looked at each other with an air of perplexity. Should the story not be corroborated by Harry Dale it would be damaging to Doctor Reed.

Well, things do turn out strangely. Doctor Reed was confined in the county prison for the time, and Mr. Kean hastened to F—to find young Dale. But, strange to say, he had not returned to the college.

He was found elsewhere, however, and brought back to Starburg under arrest. Yes, for Harry Dale was the murderer and bank robber—Harry Dale, the son of the best old gentleman in the town, and about the last person whom any citizen of the place could have suspected of such a deed.

It transpired that he had contracted dissolute habits during his absence from home, and got into very bad company.

Among his acquaintances was one of the worst characters in F—; and this villain had planned the robbery, and his young pupil handsomely carried it out.

Doctor Reed, who proved to be the true gentleman I had always believed him, was at once released, and the perverse young man incarcerated in his stead.

But Harry Dale did not die on the gallows. He made a full confession to the jailor, one night, and next morning he was found dead in his cell.

What is Dirt?

Old Dr. Cooper of South Carolina, used to say to his students:

"Don't be afraid of dirt, young gentlemen. What is dirt? Why nothing at all offensive, when chemically viewed. Rub a little alkali upon a dirty grease spot on your coat, and it undergoes a chemical change and becomes soap; now rub it with a little water and it disappears. It is neither grease, soap, water nor dirt. That is not a very odorous pile of dirt you see yonder; well, scatter a little gypsum over it and it is no longer dirty. Everything like dirt is worth of our notice as students of chemistry. Analyze it; it will separate into very clean elements. Dirt makes corn, corn makes bread and meat, and that makes a very sweet young lady, that I saw one of you kissing last night. So after all you were kissing dirt, particularly if she whitened her face with chalk or fuller's earth; though I may say that rubbing such stuff upon the skin of a beautiful young lady is a dirty practice. Pearl powder I think is made of bismuth, nothing but dirt. Lord Palmerston's fine definition of dirt is 'matter in the wrong place.' Put it in the right place and we cease to think of it as dirt."

An inebriated individual was one evening discovered on the street busily engaged in throwing up the contents of an overloaded stomach, when a little dog which began smelling around, brought out the following remarks:

"I, (hic) remember where I ate those oysters, and know I (hic) ate that lobster salad, but (hic) I'm blamed if I remember of eating that yaller dog!"

A new way of getting rid of undesirable babies has been invented in Boston. A few days ago a girl with an infant in her arms hailed a passing horse car. Before stepping on the platform she handed the animated package to the conductor and then concluded not to get on at all, but disappeared through the crowd and was seen no more. This may have been a relief for the girl, but it put the conductor in an embarrassing position.

"Do you enjoy good health, Zachary?" "Why, yes; to be sure; who doesn't?"

SUNDAY READING.

Toleration.

When Abraham sat at his tent door according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age, he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, and caused him to sit down; but, observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged a blessing on his meat, asked why he did not worship the God of heaven.—The old man told him that he worshipped fire only; at which answer Abraham grew so zealous that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of night, in an unguarded condition. When the old man had gone, God called to Abraham, and asked where the stranger was. He replied, "I have thrust him away because he did not worship thee." God answered him, "I have borne with him these hundred years, although he dishonored me, and couldst thou not have endured with him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again and gave him hospitable entertainment; and wise instruction. "Go, though and do likewise, and thy charity shall be rewarded by the God of Abraham."

Sabbath Piety.

There is a mystery about this effect of the weather on piety. Sabbath heat seems hotter, Sabbath cold seems colder, and Sabbath rain wetter than that of any other day. For the same measure of heat or cold or rain on a week-day will not keep one from his usual business. We need a Sabbath Almanac, circulated for our churches, that will show by its weather scale when it will be safe for a vigorous Christian, a weak and sickly Christian, and a common Christian, to expose himself on the Sabbath by going to the house of God. Such an Almanac would enable pastors and superintendents of Sabbath schools to know whom they could depend on in church, Sabbath school and prayer meeting. I have recently been examining microscopic views of the different snow flakes, a hundred or so of them. I would suggest to our curious savans an examination of Sabbath snow, to see if it has a peculiarly sharp and injurious point.

A Beautiful Reply.

A pious old man was one day walking to the sanctuary, with a New Testament in his hand, when a friend who met him, said:

"Good morning, neighbor."

"Ah! good morning," replied he "I am reading my father's will as I walk along."

"Well, what has he left you?" said his friend.

"Why, he has bequeathed me a hundred fold more in this life; and in the world to come life everlasting."

It was a word in season; his Christian friend was in circumstances of affliction but went home comforted.

In most of our churches at the close of service an eager congregation await the benediction, hat in hand, and as the "amen" falls upon their ears, make for the door with unseemly haste. The Episcopal custom of spending a moment in silent prayer at the close of service, is appropriate, respectful and decent. It might be generally adopted with profit to the worshippers and edification to all who believe in doing things "decently and in order."

There is immense wisdom in the old proverb—"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty."

Hannah More said, "If I wished to punish an enemy, I should make him hate somebody."

To punish ourselves for others' faults is superlative folly. The arrow shot from another's bow is particularly harmless until our thought bars it. It is our pride that makes another's criticism rankle; our self-will that makes another's deeds offensive; our egotism that is hurt by another's self-assertion. Well may we be offended at faults of our own, but we can hardly afford to be miserable for the faults of others.

When Christian Gillert lay on his death bed, at Leipsic, in great agony, he said to one beside him, "I cannot understand much now. Only let me hear you pronounce the name of the Redeemer; the very mention of Him never fails to inspire me with fresh courage and joy." In the paroxysms of pain he was thus inspired with courage to bear up, for he knew Christ as a sufferer, suffering and dying for men, yet patient and uncomplaining.—Those who are called to visit the suffering believer may thus speak the name of Jesus and soothe and strengthen by a single word where longer discourse is tiresome, if not impossible.

The people of Peconia, Ill., heard that there was no sect in heaven, so they should there be in Peconia. Consequently they have consolidated all their creeds and churches, and are now children of one faith, rich, amiable and indivisible.

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