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The Miller's Maid.

A STORY OF FEMALE HEROISM
Near the hamlet of Udorf, on the banks of the Rhine, not far from Bonn, there yet stands the mill which was the scene of the following adventure:

"On Sunday morning the miller and his family set out as usual to attend divine service, at the nearest church in the village of Heasel, leaving the mill to which the dwelling house was attached, in charge of his servant maid, Hanchen, a bold-hearted girl, who had been some time in his service. The youngest child, who was still too little to go to church, remained also under her care.

"As Hanchen was busily engaged in preparing dinner for the family, she was interrupted by a visit from her admirer, Heinrich Boteler; he was an idle, graceless fellow, and her master, who knew his character well, had forbidden him the house; but Hanchen could not believe all the stories she heard against her lover, and was sincerely attached to him. On this occasion she treated him kindly, and not only got him something to eat at once, but found time in the midst of her business to sit down and have a gossip with him, while he did justice to the fare set before him. As he was eating he let fall his knife which he asked her to pick up for him; she playfully remonstrated, telling him she feared, from all she heard, he did little enough work, and ought at least to wait on himself; in the end however, she stooped down to pick up the knife, when the treacherous villain drew a dagger from under his coat and caught her by the nap of the neck, gripping her throat firmly with his fingers to prevent her screaming; then with an oath, he desired her to tell him where her master kept his money, threatening to kill her if she did not comply with his demand. The surprised and terrified girl in vain attempted to parley with him; he still held her tightly in his choking grasp, leaving her no choice but to die or betray her master. She saw there was no hope of softening him or changing his purpose, and with the full conviction of his treachery, all her native courage awoke in her bosom. Affecting, however, to yield to what was inevitable, she answered him in a resigned tone, that what must be, must; only, if he carried off her master's gold, he must take her with him, too; for she could never stay to hear their suspicions and reproaches, entreating him, at the same time to relax his grasp of her throat, for she could hardly speak, much less do what he bid her, while he held her so tight. At length he was induced to quit his hold, on her reminding him that he must lose no time, or the family would be returning from church. She then led the way to her master's bed-room, and showed him the coffer where he kept his money. 'Here,' she said, reaching to him an axe which lay in a corner of the room, 'you can open it with this, while I run up stairs to put all my things together, besides the money I have saved since I have been here.'

"Completely deceived by her apparent readiness to enter into his plans, he allowed her to leave the room only exhorting her to be quick as possible, and was immediately absorbed in his own operations; first opening the box, and then disposing of the money about his person. In the meanwhile, Hanchen, instead of going up stairs to her own room, crept softly along several passages till she again reached her master's chamber. It was the work of a moment to shut and bolt the door upon him; and this done

she rushed out to the outer door of the mill to give the alarm. The only being in sight was her master's boy, a child of five years old; to him she called with all her might, 'run, run to meet your father as he comes from church; tell him we shall all be murdered if he does not come back! The frightened child did as she bid him, and set off running on the road she pointed out.

"Somewhat relieved by seeing that the child understood her, and would make her case known she sank down for a moment on the stone seat before the door, and full of conflicting emotions of grief and thankfulness for her escape, she burst into tears. But at this moment a shrill whistle aroused her attention; it was from her prisoner, Heinrich, who opening the grated window above her head, shouted out to some accomplice without to catch the child that was running away so fast, and to kill the girl.—Hanchen looked around in great alarm, but saw no one. The child still continued to run with all his might, and she hoped that it was but a false alarm to excite her fear and overcome her resolution; when just as the child reached a hollow in the next field, (the channel of a natural drain) she saw a ruffian start up from the bed of the drain, and snatching up the child in his arms hastened with him towards the mill, in accordance with the directions of his accomplice. In a moment she perceived the full extent of her danger, and formed a plan for escaping it.

"Retreating into the mill, she double-locked and bolted the door, the only apparent entrance into the building, every other means of obvious access being prevented by strong iron gratings fixed up against all the windows, and then took her post at the upper casement determined to await patiently her master's return, and her consequent delivery from that dangerous position, or her own death, if indeed inevitable, for she was fully resolved to enter into no terms, and that nothing should induce her to give up her master's property into the robbers' hands. She had barely time to secure herself in her retreat, when the ruffian, holding the screaming child in his arms, and brandishing a knife in one hand came up and bid her open the door, or he would break it down, adding many awful oaths and threats; to which her only answer was, that she put her trust in God. Heinrich who from his window was witness of this colloquy, now called out to cut the child's throat before her eyes if she still persisted in her refusal. Poor Hanchen's heart quailed at this horrible threat; for a moment her resolutions failed, but only for a moment. The death of the child could be no gain to them, while her own death was positively certain if she admitted the assailant, and her master, too, would be robbed. She had no reason either to suppose that her compliance would save the life of the child. It was to risk all against nothing, and she resolved to hold out to the last, though the villain from without renewed his threats saying that if she would not open the door to him he would kill the child, and then set fire to the mill over her head. 'I put my trust in God,' was still the poor girl's answer.

"In the meanwhile, the ruffian set down the child for a moment, to look about for combustibles to carry out his threat. In this search, he discovered a mode of entering the mill unthought of by Hanchen. It was a large aperture in the wall, communicating with the great wheel and other machinery of the mill, and it was a point entirely unprotected, for it had never been contemplated that any one would seek to enter by so dangerous an inlet. Triumphant at such a discovery, he returned to tie the hands and feet of the poor child, to prevent its escape, and then stole back to the aperture by which he intended to affect an entrance. The situation of the building prevented Hanchen seeing anything of this, but a thought had meanwhile struck her. It was Sunday, when the mill was never at work; if therefore, the sails were set in motion, the whole neighborhood would know that something was the matter, and her master especially would hasten home to know the meaning of any thing so strange.

"Being all her life accustomed to the machinery of the mill, it was the work of a moment, to set it all in motion—a brisk breeze, which sprang up at once, set the sails flying. The

arms of the huge engine whirled round with fearful rapidity; the great wheel slowly revolving on its axle; the smaller gear turned, and creaked, and groaned, according as the machinery came into action; the machinery was in full operation. It was at this moment that the ruffian intruder had succeeded in squeezing himself through the aperture in the wall, and getting himself safely lodged in the interior of the great drum wheel. His dismay, however, was indescribable, when he found the wheel about with its rotation, and found that all his efforts to put a stop to the powerful machinery that set it in motion, or to extricate himself from his perilous situation, were fruitless. In his terror, he uttered shrieks and horrible imprecations. Astonished at the noise, Hanchen ran to the spot, and saw him caught like a rat, in his own trap, from which it was no part of her plan to liberate him. She knew that he would be more frightened than hurt, if he kept within this rotary prison, without any rash attempt to escape, and that even if he became insensible he could not fall out.

"In the meantime the wheel went round and round with its steady, unceasing motion; and round and round he went with it, while sense remained besieging Hanchen, with entreaties, promises, and wild impotent threats, which were all equally disregarded, till by degrees feeling and perception failed him, and he saw and heard no one. He fell senseless at the bottom of the engine, but even then his inanimate body continued to be whirled round as before; for Hanchen did not dare to trust to appearances in such a villain, and would not venture to suspend the working of the mill or stop the gear and tackle from running at their full speed.

"At length she heard a loud knocking at the door, and flew to open it. It was her master and his family, accompanied by several of his neighbors, all in the utmost excitement and wonder, at seeing the mill sails in full swing on Sunday; and still more so, when they found the poor child lying bound upon the grass who, however, was too terrified to give them any account of what had happened. Hanchen, in a few words, told all; and then her spirit, which had sustained her through such scenes of terror, gave way under the sense of safety and relief, and she fell fainting in their arms, and was with much difficulty recovered. The machinery of the mill was at once stopped, and the inanimate ruffian dragged from his dreadful prison. Heinrich too, was brought forth from the miller's chamber, and both were in a short time sent bound under a strong escort to Bonn, where they soon after met the reward of their crimes."

The story of this extraordinary act of presence of mind concludes by telling us that Hanchen, thus effectually cured of her penchant for her unworthy suitor, became eventually the wife of the miller's eldest son, and thus lived all her life in the scene of her imminent danger and happy deliverance.

The Nervous System.

There is no subject perhaps which is so often mentioned, but so little understood by the public in general, as that of the "nerves." How often do we hear all classes of the community refer any unpleasant sensation or fanciful ailment to their being nervous; little understanding, however, when they make use of this term, what possible connection there can be between their feelings and their nervous system. Perhaps we shall surprise them when we mention that they can neither eat nor drink, walk nor talk, nor perform any action whatever, either voluntary or involuntary, but through the medium of the nervous system—a "system," the nature and functions of which we shall here endeavor to explain.

In man and other vertebrate animals, the great centre of the functions is the brain and spinal marrow; the latter a prolongation of the brain, as it were, down the spine. Now the great centre of nervous matter is endowed with two distinct functions. 1. That of being able to convey motor power to the muscles, by whose agency we are enabled to perform all the ordinary actions of the body, all the movements of our limbs. 2. That of sensation, which is of two kinds—common sensation, or that feeling of pain which is produced on the injury of any part of our body; and special sensation, to which are to be referred the five senses—of feeling,

of sight, of hearing, of smelling, and of taste. From this mass of matter, capable of endowing the parts of our bodies with the power of motion, and of feeling or sensation, numerous trunks are sent to all parts of the human frame—ramifying over its structure to such an inconceivable state of minuteness, that we cannot touch any part of our body with even the point of a needle without being conscious of pain, proving that some part of this great nervous centre has been injured, or excited into action.

The great nervous trunk which supplies the lower extremity of man is equal in thickness to his little finger; divide it, and he loses all power of moving his limb, all sense of feeling; the limb, to all intents and purposes, is dead; and, deprived of its nervous influence, mortifies. This power of endowing parts with motion and sensation is situated in two distinct structures, of which the brain and spinal marrow are composed; and anatomists, from their color, are accustomed to call the white and the gray matter. In the brain, the gray matter, for the most part, is external, enclosing in its folds the white matter; whilst in the spinal marrow it is internal, being completely surrounded by the white.—Now, as a general rule, all the nervous trunks of the body and their branches, with the exception of nerves of special sensation, are composed of fibres derived from these two sources—that is from the white and the gray matter; and these nervous trunks are conductors of that change produced in the nervous centre by the influence of the mind, which gives rise either to motion or sensation. But a most extraordinary fact, and one which is capable of being proved by direct experiment; is, that the change which takes place, to give rise to the phenomena of motion, has its origin at the great nervous centre, the source from which the trunks arise; and further, that this change takes place in the white matter. On the other hand, the change which gives rise to the phenomena of sensation takes place at the extremities of the nervous trunks—that is, at their ultimate distribution; this change takes place in the gray matter.

The anatomist, in his dissections, is able to prove satisfactorily the origin of these nervous trunks; and he finds that all those arising from the spinal marrow, and most of those which are said to arise from the brain, do so by two roots, one of which is connected with the white matter, and the other with the gray. He can, and has still further proved by experiments performed on the living animal, that irritation by pinching or pricking of the root which arises from the white matter gives rise to no sensation, as the animal shows no signs of suffering whatever; but irritate the root arising from the gray matter, and evident signs of suffering are immediately induced. Again: if in the dead animal we excite muscular contraction by means of galvanism, we must send the charge of electricity through the limb by means of the root arising from white matter, as no effect would be produced if we attempted to do it by means of the root arising from the gray. Allowing, then, the fact, that these nervous trunks are composed of two sets of fibres, one conveying sensitive, the other motor influence, let us apply it to practice.

Some part of the body meets with an injury—a change is immediately effected in the extremities of the sentient fibres, sensation is developed, and the change thus induced is conveyed by the sentient fibre to the brain, and through its medium to the mind. Through the mysterious agency of the mind, then, the motor power of the great nervous centre is brought into action, and a change is induced; this change is conveyed by the trunks to the muscles supplying the injured parts, or to other muscles, by whose combined action it is removed from further injury. But it is not necessary that an injury should be inflicted that motor influence should be generated, as the mind has the power of inducing it at will. All the movements of our bodies are effected by muscular action, and through the agency of the will. We move not a hand or foot, nor look at an object, without the mind having first willed that it shall be done.

But there are many actions in the human body which are performed independently of the will, though evidently under the influence of the mind, and through the medium of a nervous system; and this system is called by the

anatomist the sympathetic. It consists of a number of little knot-like bodies called by the anatomist ganglia, which are extended along each side of the vertebral column—the whole of these ganglia being connected, by means of fibres, together. Now, it appears that each of these ganglia is capable of generating nervous influence, independently of the brain; hence each may be considered as a distinct nervous centre. The trunks arising from these ganglia are distributed principally to all those organs on which the vitality of the body depends, which are employed in secretion and its nutrition. It is the medium by which all parts of the body are brought into relation with each other, so that no one part shall become diseased or injured without the rest sympathizing with it, and indirectly, therefore, becoming affected as well. Familiar examples of this fact are of every-day occurrence; a violent blow on the head will produce vomiting, owing to the sympathy which exists between the brain and stomach; and vice versa, a blow on the stomach will produce fainting and even death, from the shock to the nervous system, and the arrest of its influence through the medium of the brain.

And now let us turn our attention once more to the influence of the mind over the functions of the body, through the agency of this part [the sympathetic] of the nervous system. We will here select a few familiar examples.—What is referred to when one's mouth is said to be "watering" at the sight of some favorite fruit or food, is dependent on the influence of the mind acting through the medium of the nervous system supplying the organs secreting the saliva. Tears, again, are abundantly secreted under the moderate exciting influence of the emotions of joy, grief, or tenderness. When, however, the exciting cause is violent, they are suppressed; hence, in excessive grief, the anguish of the mind is lessened on the flow of tears. Feet stop the flow of saliva; and it is a common practice in India to detect a thief among the native servants by putting rice into their mouths; and he whose mouth is driest after a short time is considered the culprit. Under mental anxiety, persons become thin; freedom from it favors deposit of fat. It would be an endless task, however, to recapitulate the many examples that could be brought forward proving this influence of the mind; so that nervous complaints must be looked upon as disorders of the mind, and not of the body; cure the one and you will cure the other.

Mental influence having then this power over the functions of the body, we cannot be surprised at many diseases being a consequence of its depraved or abnormal condition. Nor can we be surprised at many of the remarkable phenomena displayed by mesmerists; their patients on whom they exhibit are generally highly sensitive, with minds naturally liable to become excited under the manipulations of the operator. For this reason, also, homoeopathy, hydropathy, &c., have succeeded in curing many patients of their fancied ailments, because it only required some strong excitement to remove the morbid mental impression. Hence change of scene and diet, change of usual habits [for all the followers of these systems make it imperative on their patients to follow implicitly certain rules], and lastly, but not least, a full determination, desire, or will on the part of the patient himself to get better—have succeeded, in a variety of complaints arising from mental causes, in effecting a cure.

A country surgeon, who was bald, was on a visit at friend's house, whose servant wore a wig. After bantering him a considerable time, the Doctor said, "you see how bald I am, and yet I don't wear a wig." To which the servant replied, "True, sir, but an empty barn requires no thatch."

A DOCTOR FEE.—A doctor in Cincinnati, who had been attending a lady patient who died of the disease, was attacked and beaten with a hoop-pole, by the husband, on his next visit to the house.

A LADY IN THE CASE.—It was decided very properly in the Court of Common Pleas of Boston, on Friday, that lying the hand upon the shoulders of a lady, was an assault punishable by law. Mark that gentlemen!