

## Interesting Sketch.

## FRIGHTFUL NARRATIVE.

In the fall of 1846 I was traveling eastward in a stagecoach from Pittsburg over the mountains. My fellow passengers were two gentlemen and a lady. The elder gentleman's countenance interested me exceedingly. In years he seemed about thirty—in air and manner, he was calm, dignified and polished, and the contour of his features was singularly intellectual. He conversed freely on different topics until the road became more precipitous, but on my directing his attention to the great altitude of a precipice, on the verge of which our coach whirled were fearfully rolling. His eyes, lately filled with the light of intelligence became wild, restless and anxious—the mouth twitched spasmodically, and the forehead was beaded with a cold perspiration. With a sharp convulsive shudder, he turned his gaze from the giddy height and clutching my arm tightly with both hands, he hung to me like a drowning man.

"Use the cologne," said the lady, handing me a bottle, with the instinctive goodness of her sex.

I sprinkled a little on his face, and he soon became more composed—but it was not until we had entirely traversed the mountain, and descended into the country beneath, that his fine features relaxed from their perpetual look and assumed the placid, quiet dignity, that I had at first noticed.

"I owe an apology to the lady," said he, with a bland smile, and a gentle inclination of the head to our fair companion, "and some explanation to my fellow travellers, also; and perhaps I cannot better acquit myself of the double debt than recounting the cause of my recent agitation."

"It may pain your feelings," delicately urged the lady.

"On the contrary, it will relieve them," was the respectful reply.

Having signified our several desires to hear more, the traveller thus proceeded:

At the age of eighteen, I was light of heart, light of foot, and I fear, (he smiled) light of head. A fine property on the banks of the Ohio acknowledged me sole owner. I was hastening home to enjoy it, and delighted to get free from a college life. It was the month of October, the air bracing and mode of conveyance a stage coach like this, only cumbersome. The other passengers were few, only three in all; one an old grey-headed planter of Louisiana, his daughter, a joyous, bewitching creature of about seventeen, and his son about ten years of age.

They were just returning from France, of which country the young lady discoursed in terms so eloquent as to absorb my entire attention.

The father was taciturn, but the daughter vivacious by nature, and we soon became so mutually pleased with each other, she as the talker, I as the listener—that it was not until a sudden flash of lightning and a heavy dash of rain against the windows elicited an examination from my charming companion, that I knew how the night passed us.

Presently there came a low, rumbling sound and then several successive flashes of lightning, accompanied by tremendous peals of thunder. The rain descended in torrents, and an angry wind began to howl and moan through the forest trees.

"I looked through the window of our vehicle. The night was as dark as ebony, but the lightning shewed the danger of our road. We were on the edge of a frightful precipice. I could see, at intervals, huge jutting rocks far down its side, and the sight made me solicitous for the safety of my fair companion. I thought of the mere hair-breadths that were between us and eternity; a single little rock that was in the track of our coach wheels—a tiny billet of wood, a stray root of a tempest-torn tree, restive horses, or a careless driver—any of these might hurl us from our sublunary existence with the speed of thought.

"'Tis a perfect tempest," observed the lady as I withdrew my head from the window. "How I love a sudden storm!—there is something so grand among the winds when fairly loose among the hills. I never encountered a night like this, but Byron's magnificent description of a thunder storm in the Jura occurred to my mind. But are we on the mountains yet?"

"Yes, we have begun the ascent."

"Is it not said to be dangerous?"

"By no means," I replied, in as easy a tone as I could assume.

"I only wish it was daylight, that we might enjoy the mountain scenery. But what's that?" and she covered her eyes from the glare of a sheet of lightning that illuminated the rugged mountain with brilliant intensity. Next after peal of crashing thunder instantly succeeded; there was a heavy volume of rain coming down at such thunderburst, and with the deep meaning of an animal breaking upon our ears, I found the coach had come to a dead halt.

Louise, my beautiful fellow traveller became as pale as ashes. She fixed her searching eyes on mine with a look of anxious dread, and turning to her father hurriedly remarked:

"We are on the mountains."

With instinctive activity I put my head out of the window and called to the driver but the only answer was the moaning of an animal borne past me by the winds of the tempest. I seized the handle of the door, and strained in vain—it would not yield a jot. At that instant I felt a cold hand on mine, and heard Louise's voice faintly articulating in my ear the following appalling words:

"The coach is being moved backwards!"

Never shall I forget the fierce agony with which I tugged at the door, and called on the driver in a tone that rivalled the force of the blast, whilst the dreadful conviction was burning on my brain that the coach was being moved backwards!

What followed was of such swift occurrence that it seemed to me like a frightful dream.

I rushed against the door with all my force but it withstood my utmost efforts. One side of the vehicle was sensibly going down, down, down. The moaning of the agonized animal became deeper, and I knew from his desperate plunges against the traces that it was one of our horses. Crash after crash of coarse thunder rolled over the mountain, and vivid sheets of lightning played around our devoted carriage as if in glee at our misery. By its light I could see for a moment—only for a moment—the old planter standing erect, with his hands on his son and daughter, his eyes raised to heaven, and his lips moving like those in prayer.

I could see Louise turn her ashy cheek towards me as if imploring protection; and I see the bold glance of the young boy flashing indignant defiance at the descending carriage, the war of elements, and the awful danger that awaited him. There was a roll, a desperate plunge, as of an animal in the last throes of dissolution—a harsh grating jar—and I had but time to grasp Louise firmly with one hand around the waist, and seize the leather fastenings attached to the coach roof with the other, when we were precipitated over the precipice.

I can distinctly recollect preserving consciousness for a few seconds of time, how rapidly my breath was being exhausted, but of that tremendous descent I soon lost all further knowledge by a concussion so violent that I was instantly deprived of sense and motion.

The traveller paused. His features worked for a minute or two as they did when we were on the mountain; he pressed his hand across his forehead as if in pain, and then resumed his interesting narrative.

On a low couch in an humble room of a small country house, I next opened my eyes in this world of light and shade, joy and sorrow, of mirth and madness. Gentle hands smoothed my pillow, gentle feet glided across my chamber, and a gentle voice hushed for a time my questionings. I was carefully attended by a young girl of fifteen, who refused, for a length of time, to hold any discourse with me. At length, one morning, finding myself sufficiently recovered to sit up, I insisted on learning the result of the accident.

"You were discovered," said she, "sitting on a ledge of rocks amidst the branches of a shattered tree, clinging to the roof of your broken coach with one hand, and to the insensible form of a lady with the other."

"And the lady?" I gasped, scanning the girl's face with an earnestness that caused her to draw back and blush.

"She was saved, sir, by the means that saved you—the friendly tree."

"And her father and brother?" I impatiently demanded.

"We found them both crushed to pieces, at the bottom of the precipice, a great way below where my father and uncle Joe found you and the lady. We buried their bodies both in one grave, close by the clover patch, in our meadow-ground."

"Poor Louise! poor orphan! God pity you!" I muttered in broken tones, utterly unconscious that I had a listener.

"God pity her, indeed, sir," said the young girl, with a gush of heartfelt sympathy. "Would you like to see her?" she added.

I found the orphan bathed in tears, by the graves of her buried kindred. She received me with a sorrowful sweetness of manner. I need not detain your attention by detailing the efforts I made to win her from her grief, but briefly acquaint you that at last I succeeded in inducing her to leave her forlorn home in the sunny south, and that twelve months after the dreadful occurrence which I have related, we stood at the altar as man and wife. She still lives to bless my love with her smiles, and my children with good precepts; but on the anniversary of that dreadful night she secludes herself in her room and devotes the hours of darkness to solitary prayer. "As for me," added the traveller, while the faint flush tinged his noble brow at the avowal, "as for me, that accident has reduced me to the

condition of a physical coward at the sight of a mountain precipice."

"But the driver," asked our lady passenger, who had attended to the recital of the story with much attention, "what became of the driver, or did you ever learn the reason of his deserting his post?"

"His body was found on the road, within a few steps of the spot where the coach went over. He had been struck dead by the same flash of lightning that blinded the restive horses."

## Humorous.

## THE HERRING PIE.

It was a cold winter's evening; the rich banker Brounker had drawn his easy chair close into the corner by the stove, and sat smoking his long clay pipe with great complacency, while his intimate friend Van Grote, employed in exactly the same manner, occupied the opposite corner. All was quiet in the house, for Brounker's wife and children were gone to a masked ball, and secure from fear of interruption, the two friends indulged in a confidential conversation.

"I cannot think," said Van Grote, "why you should refuse your consent to the marriage. Berkenrode can give his daughter a good fortune, and you say that your son is desperately in love with her."

"I don't object to it," said Brounker. "It is my wife who will not hear of it."

"And what reason has she for refusing?"

"One which I cannot tell you," said his friend, sinking his voice.

"Oh! a mystery—come, out with it. You know I have always been frank and open with you, even to giving you my opinion of your absurd jealousy of your wife."

"Jealous of my wife? nonsense! Have I not just sent her to a masked ball?"

"I don't wonder you boast of it. I should like to have seen you do as much when you were first married. To be sure, you had reason to look sharply after her, for she was the prettiest woman in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, she has taken such advantage of your love, that the gray mare has become the better horse, and you refuse an advantageous match for your son, to gratify her caprice."

"You are quite wrong, my good friend. I never allow any one to be master here but myself; and in the present instance I cannot blame Clotilda. The secret of her refusal lies in a herring pie."

"A herring pie!" exclaimed Van Grote.

"Yes a herring pie. You may remember, it was a favorite dainty of mine, and that my wife could not endure the smell of it. Well, during the first year of our marriage, I must confess I was a little, a very little—jealous of Clotilda. My situation obliged me to keep open house, and among the young sparks that visited us, none gave me more uneasiness than the handsome Col. Berkenrode. The reputation that he had already acquired for gallantry was enough to create alarm, and the marked attention he paid my wife convinced me it was well founded. What could I do? It was impossible to forbid him the house, for he had it in his power to deprive me of the government contracts; in other words, to ruin me. After pondering deeply on the subject, I decided on doing nothing, until the danger should become imminent; all that was necessary was to know how things really stood. Having just purchased this house, I caused a secret closet to be made behind the stove here. It communicates with my private room, and from it I could overhear everything that passed in this apartment without risk of being discovered. Thank God, I have had no use for it for the last twenty years, and indeed, I do not even know what has become of the key. Satisfied with this precaution, I did not hesitate to leave Clotilda when any of the admirers paid her a visit, though I promise you that some of the Colonel's gallant speeches made me wince."

"Upon my word," interrupted his friend, "you showed a most commendable patience. In your place I should have contented myself with forbidding my wife to receive these visits."

"There spoke the old bachelor. But as I did not want to drive her headlong into his arms, I went a different way to work. Day after day I was forced to listen to the insidious arguments of the seducer. My wife—I must own she made a stout defence—at one time tried ridicule, at another entreaty, to deter him from his pursuit of her. He began to lose hope in proportion as I gained it, till one day he bethought himself of threatening to blow out his brains if she would not show him some compassion. Moved at this proof of the strength of his passion, she burst into tears, and pleaded that she was not free—in short, she gave him to understand that I was the obstacle to his happiness. Berkenrode was too well skilled in the art of seduction not to see that he had gained a point. He raved, cursed me as the cause of his misery, and tried to obtain a promise from her in case she should become a widow. She stopped him peremptorily; but I never closed an eye that night, and Clotilda, though she did not know I watched her, was as uneasy as myself. On the following

day, a circumstance occurred that in reared her agitation. While at breakfast, a message came from the cook asking to see me alone. I desired him to come in, (as I was not in the habit of interfering in domestic affairs) and communicate his business in my presence.

When the man entered he was pale as a ghost, and scarcely seemed to know what he was about. At last he told me he had received a packet containing a small bottle, three hundred guilders, and a note, in which he was requested to put the contents of the former into the first herring pie he should prepare for me. He was assured that he might do so without fear, as the contents of the bottle were quite harmless, and would give a delicious flavor to the pie. An additional reward was promised if he complied with the request and kept his own counsel. The honest fellow, who was really much attached to me, said he was convinced there must be something wrong in the affair, and should not be happy till the bottle and money were out of his hands. I poured a few drops of the liquid on a lump of sugar, and gave it to my wife's lap dog. It fell into convulsions, and died in a few minutes. The case was now plain; there had been an attempt to poison me. Never shall I forget Clotilda's pale face as she threw herself weeping into my arms—"Poison! A murderer!" she exclaimed, clasping me as if to shield me from danger: "Merciful Heaven, protect us both!" I consoled her with the assurance that I was thankful to my unknown enemy, who was the means of showing me how she loved me. That day Berkenrode came at the usual hour; but in vain did I take my seat in the hiding place, he was not admitted. "I afterwards found that she had sent him a letter, threatening if ever he came again that her husband should be informed of all that had passed. He made many attempts to soften her resolutions, but to no purpose, and a year afterwards he married. No acquaintance has ever existed between the families; and now you know why my wife refuses her consent to our son's marriage with Berkenrode's daughter."

"I cannot blame her," said Van Grote. "Who would have thought that Berkenrode, a soldier, and a man of honor, could have been capable of such a rascally deed?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Brounker, "and do you really think it was the General who sent the poison!"

"Why, who else?"

"Myself to be sure! The whole was my own contrivance, and it cost me three hundred guilders in a present to my cook; but it was money well laid out, for I saved my wife, and got rid of her troublesome lap-dog at the same time."

"Do you know, Brounker, I think it was rather a shabby trick to leave Berkenrode under such an imputation; and now that your son's happiness depends on your wife being undeceived—"

"I am aware of all that, but to undeceive her now is not so easy as you think. How can I expect her to disbelieve a circumstance, in which, for the last twenty years, she has put implicit faith?"

He was interrupted by the entrance of Vrow Brounker. Her cheeks were flushed, and she saluted Van Grote rather stiffly.

"What! not at the ball, Clotilda?" asked her husband.

"No! I had a bad headache," she replied, "and Maurice has promised to take charge of his sisters. But I have come to tell you that I have been thinking over his marriage with Mina Berkenrode, and have altered my mind on that subject. In short, I shall withdraw my opposition to the match."

The friends looked at each other in astonishment.

"By the by, love," she continued, "here is a key I found some time ago; I think it must belong to you."

"Well, Clotilda," said her husband, striving to hide his confusion as he took the key, "this is good news about the marriage—"

"Suppose you and your friend celebrate it by a supper. There is a herring pie in the house, and you need not fear that it is poisoned."

She left the room. Brounker looked foolish, and Van Grote rubbed his hands, as he exclaimed—"Caught in your own trap! He who digs a pit for his enemy, shall fall into it himself."

"Nevertheless," replied Brounker, "I think I have got well out of mine."

**THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIAN SENTIMENT.**—I can look to nothing but to the progress of Christian sentiment upon earth to arrest the strong current of its popular and prevailing partiality for war. Then only will an imperious sense of duty lay the check of severe principle on all the subordinate tastes and faculties of our nature. Then will glory be reduced to its right estimate; and the wakeful benevolence of the Gospel, chasing away every spell, will be turned by the treachery of no delusion whatever from its simple but sublime enterprises for the good of the species. Then the reign of truth and quietness will be ushered into the world, and war, cruel, atrocious, unrelenting war, will be strip of its many and bewildering fascinations.—Dr. Chalmers.

## An Amorous Aeronaut.

A late French journal relates the following story, which, it will be seen, is French all over, beside being immensely funny:

While Mons. Godard was filling an immense balloon in the *Champs de Mars*, he amused the spectators by sending up the small figure of a man, the perfect semblance of Mr. Thiers without the spectacles. The little man being filled with gas, rose majestically into the air, and was soon lost to view among the clouds. His adventures, which became known the next day, were curious. Thanks to a strong and favoring gale, which impelled him on his course, the little balloon man arrived the same afternoon, in the sight of a fine country house in the neighborhood of Bièvre. It was near the hour of dinner, and the lady of the mansion, who naturally thought herself perfectly safe, was occupied in the mysteries of her toilet. It was a warm day, and she had opened one of her windows which looked out upon the park, and was safe from any prying eyes. While tranquilly engaged by the assistance of a corset-lacing, in reducing her waist to a size and shape that would reflect credit on her husband's taste, she was suddenly started by a strange noise, and immediately the casement was thrown open, and our little balloon man entered her chamber unannounced. The lady utters a cry of terror, and throws a shawl over her shoulders. The little man, driven by the wind, throws himself upon the unhappy woman, who, screaming louder than ever, pushes him off, and he conceals himself under the bed.

Just as the wife, in a supplicating voice says to this novel Don Juan, "Ah! Monsieur, go away, or you will ruin me!" the husband furiously rushes in crying: "Ah! the wretch I have him now!" and goes in search of his sword to run him through the body.

The wife, more dead than alive, reiterates in the midst of sobs: "Fly! fly! Monsieur, save me the sight of a dreadful tragedy."

The husband arrives, armed to the teeth followed by the whole household, who seek to mollify his anger.

While two of his friends hold the husband, third, stooping down, perceives our little friend, who, for a good cause utters not a word, and catching him by the leg, draws him forth from his concealment, when lo! Monsieur balloon, no longer held down by the bedstead, raises himself erect, swells out, and rises majestically to the ceiling, to the immense amusement of the spectators, while the poor jealous husband sinks away, sword and all, heartily ashamed of his causeless wrath.

All Mankind cannot rejoice at the same circumstance, because "every sweet has its bitter." The heavy rain storm which dooms store clerks to a day of idleness and empty counters, creates a wilderness of mud that occupies the shoe dealers with customers and cheerfulness for the next fortnight, while at the same time it lays in such a stock of bronchitis, that Dr. Gammon will dispose of a great quantity of his "Anti-Phlogistic Elixir" than he has done two months previous. The poor rejoice at the inauguration of Spring that the sun will furnish gratuitous warmth to limbs that have been injured by chilling winds and biting frosts; the coal merchant on the contrary views it with a jaundiced eye, and considers April as synonymous with idleness and attenuated pocket-books. We know of no more beneficent dispensation of Providence than the fact that "one man's meat may be the poison of the other."

**HOW OUR BODIES ARE MADE UP.**—The following is a forcible illustration of the way we supply the natural waste of the body:

Let it be remembered that, to take food, is to make man. Eating is the process by which the noblest of terrestrial fabrics is constantly repaired. All our limbs and organs have been picked up from our plates. We have been served up at table many times over. Every individual is literally a mass of vivified viands; he is an epitome of innumerable meals; he has dined upon himself, supped upon himself, and in fact—paradoxical as it may appear—has again and again leaped down his own throat. Leibniz states that an adult pig weighing one hundred and twenty pounds will consume five thousand, one hundred and ten pounds of potatoes in the course of a year, and yet at the expiration of that period its weight may not have increased a single ounce.

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