

THE IRON VAULT.

A Tale of a San Francisco Locksmith.

I am a locksmith by trade. My calling is a strange one, and possesses a certain fascination rendering it one of the most agreeable pursuits. Many who follow it see nothing but labor—think of nothing in it but its returns of gold or silver. To me it has other charms than the money it produces. I am called upon, almost daily, to open doors and peer into long neglected apartments, to spring stubborn locks of safes, and gloat upon treasures piled within, to quietly enter the apartment of ladies with more beauty than discretion, and pick the locks of drawers containing peace-destroying missives that the dangerous evidence of wandering affection may not reach the eye of a husband, or father, in possession of the missing key; to force the fastening of cash boxes, and depositories of records, telling of men made rich of corporations plundered, of orchards robbed, of families ruined. Is there no charm in all this?—no food for speculation—no scope for the range of pleasant fancy? Then who would not be a locksmith, though his face is begrimed with the soot of the forge, and his hands are stained with rust.

But I have a story to tell—not exactly a story either—for a story implies the completion as well as the beginning of a narrative—and mine is scarcely the introduction to one. Let him who deals in things of fancy do the rest. In the spring of 1856—I think it was in April—I opened a little shop on Kearney street, and soon worked myself into a fair business. Late one evening, a lady, closely veiled, entered my shop, and pulled from beneath a cloak a small japanned box, requested me to open it. The lock was curiously constructed, and I was all of an hour fitting it. The lady seemed nervous at the delay, and at length requested me to shut the door. I was a little surprised at the suggestion, but of course complied. Shutting the door and returning to my work, the lady withdrew her veil, and disclosed as sweet a face as can be imagined. There was a restlessness in her eye and a pallor in the cheek which told a heart ill at ease, and in a moment every emotion for her had given place to that of pity.

"Perhaps you are not well, madam, and the night air is too chilly," said I, rather inquisitively. I felt a rebuke in her reply: "In requesting you to close the door, I had no other object than to escape the attention of the passers." I did not reply, but thoughtfully continued my work. She resumed— "That little box contains valuable papers, and I have lost the key, or it has been stolen. I should not wish to have you to remember that I ever came here on such an errand," she continued, with some hesitation, and giving me a look which was no difficult matter to understand.

"Certainly madame, if you desire it. If I cannot forget your face, I will at least attempt to lose the recollection of ever seeing it here." The lady bowed rather coldly at what I considered a fine compliment, and I proceeded with my work, satisfied that a suddenly discovered partiality for me had nothing to do with the visit. Having succeeded, after much filing and fitting, in turning the lock, I was seized with a curiosity to get a glimpse at the precious contents of the box, and suddenly raising the lid, discovered a bundle of letters and a daguerrotype, as I slowly passed the casket to its owner. She seized it hurriedly, and placing the letters and pictures in her pocket, locked the box, drawing the veil over her face, pointed to the door. I opened it, and as she passed into the street she merely whispered, "Remember!" We met again, and I have been thus particular in describing her visit to the shop, to render probable a subsequent recognition.

About two o'clock one morning, in the latter part of May following, I was awoke by a gentle tap on

the window of a little room back of the shop, in which I lodged. Thinking of burglars, I sprang out of bed, and in a moment was at the window with a heavy hammer in my hand, which I usually kept at that time within convenient reach of my bedside. "Who's there?" I inquired, raising the hammer and peering out into the darkness—for it was as dark as Egypt when under the curse of Israel's God. "Hist!" exclaimed the figure, stepping in front of the window; "open the door; I have business with you."

"Rather past business hours, I should say; but who are you?" "No one that would harm you," returned the voice which I imagined was rather feminine for a burglar. "Nor one that can!" I replied rather emphatically, as a warning, as I tightened my grip on the hammer, and proceeded to the door. I pushed back the bolt and slowly opening the door, discovered the stranger already on the steps.

"What do you want?" I abruptly inquired. "I will tell you," answered the same soft voice, "if you dare to open the door wide enough for me to enter."

"Come in," said I, throwing the door ajar, and proceeding to light a candle. Having succeeded, I turned to examine the visitor. He was a small and neatly dressed gentleman, with a heavy Raglan round his shoulders and a blue navy cap drawn suspiciously over his eyes. As I advanced toward him, he seemed to hesitate a moment then raised the cap from his forehead, and looked me curiously in the face. I did not drop the candle, but I acknowledge to a little nervousness as I hurriedly placed the light upon a table, and silently proceeded to invest myself with two or three articles of clothing. As the Lord liveth, my visitor was a lady, and the same for whom I had opened the little box about a month before! Having completed my hasty toilet, I attempted to stammer an apology for my rudeness, but utterly failed. The fact is, I was confounded.

Smiling at my discomfiture, she said— "Disguise is useless; I presume you know me?" "I believe I told you, madam, I should not forget your face. In what way can I serve you?" "By doing a half an hour's work before daylight—tomorrow and receiving five hundred dollars for your labor," was the reply. "Is it not ordinary work?" said I inquiringly, "that commands so munificent compensation?" "It is a labor common to your call," returned the lady. "The price is not so much for the labor as the condition under which it must be performed."

"And what is the condition?" I inquired. "That you will submit to being conveyed from and returned to your own door, blindfolded." Ideas of murder, burglary, and almost every other crime known to villiany, hurriedly presented themselves in succession as I politely bowed and said— "I must understand something more of the character of the employment, as well as the conditions, to accept your offer."

"Will not five hundred dollars answer in lieu of any explanation?" she inquired. "No, nor five thousand." She patted her foot nervously on the floor. I could see she had placed entirely too low an estimate on my honesty, and I felt some gratification in being able to convince her of the fact. "Well, then, if it is absolutely necessary for me to explain," she replied, "I must tell you that you are required to pick the lock of a vault, and—"

"You have gone quite far enough, madame, with the explanation," I interrupted; "I am not at your service." "As I said," she continued, you are required to pick the lock of a vault, and rescue from death a man who has been confined there for three days." "To whom does the vault belong?" I inquired. "My husband," was the somewhat reluctant reply. "Then why so much secrecy?"—or rather, how came a man in such a place?" "I secreted him there, to escape the observation of my husband. He suspected as much and closed the door upon him. Presuming he had left the vault and quitted the house by the back door, I did not dream, until today, that he was confined there. Certain suspicious acts of my husband, this afternoon convinced me that the man is there beyond human hearing, and will be starved to death by my barbarous husband unless immediately rescued. For three days he has not left the house. I drugged him less than an hour ago, and he is now so completely stupefied that the lock may be picked without his interference. I have searched his pockets, and cannot find the key; hence my application to you.—Now you understand, will you accompany us?"

"To the end of the world, madame, on such an errand." "Then prepare yourself, there is a cab waiting at the door." I was a little surprised, for I had not heard the sound of the wheels. Hastily drawing on a coat and providing myself with the requisite implements, I was soon at the door. There, sure enough, was a cab, with the driver in his seat ready for the mysterious journey—I entered the vehicle followed by the lady. As soon as I was seated she produced a heavy handkerchief which by the faint light of a street lamp, she carefully bound round my eyes. The lady seated herself beside me, and the cab started. In half an hour the vehicle stopped—in what part of the city I am entirely ignorant as it was evidently driven in anything but a direct course from the point of starting.

Examining the banding, to see that my vision was completely obscured, the lady handed me the tools with which I was provided, then taking me by the arm, led me through a gate into a house which I knew was brick and after taking me along a passage way that could not have been less than fifty feet in length, and down a flight of stairs into what was evidently an underground basement stopped beside a vault; removed the handkerchief from my eyes. "Here is the vault; open it," said she, springing the door of a dark lantern, and throwing a beam upon the lock.

I seized a bunch of skeleton keys, and after a few trials which the lady seemed to watch with the most intense anxiety, sprung the bolt. The door swung upon its hinges, and my companion, telling me not to close it, as it was self-locking, sprung into the vault I did not follow. I heard the murmur of low voices within, and the next moment the lady re-appeared, and leaning upon her arm was a man so pale and haggard that I started at the sight. How he must have suffered during the three long days of his confinement in that terrible vault!

"Remain here," she said handing me the lantern; "I will be back in a moment." The two slowly ascended the stairs, and I heard them enter immediately above where I was standing. In less than a minute the lady returned. "Shall I close it madame?" said I placing my hand upon the door of the vault. "Not no!" she exclaimed hastily seizing my arm, "it awaits another occupant!"

"Madame, you certainly do not intend to—"

"Are you ready?" she interrupted, holding the handkerchief before my eyes. The thought flashed across my mind that she intended to push me into the vault and bury me and my secret together. She seemed to read the suspicion, and continued: "Do not be alarmed; you are not the man!"

I could not mistake the truth of the fearful meaning of the remark, and I shuddered as I bent my head to the handkerchief. My eyes were as carefully bandaged as before, and I was led to a more circuitous route, if possible than the one by which we came. A purse of five hundred dollars was placed in my hand, and in a moment the cab and its mysterious occupant had turned a corner and were out of sight. I entered the shop, and the purse of gold was the only evidence I could summon, in my bewilderment, that all I had just done and witnessed was not a dream. A month after that I saw the lady and the gentleman taken from the vault, leisurely walking along Montgomery street. I do not know, but I believe the sleeping husband awoke within that vault, and his bones are there to-day! The wife is still a resident of San Francisco.

JUDGE'S OPINION OF WOMEN

Which is the truthful sex, or, to modify, which is the less truthful sex? Magistrate Mott says: "There's this difference between a man and a woman: When a woman thinks a thing is so, she is ready to swear to it. But it's different with a man. He doesn't swear to anything unless he knows it." Wait till you hear the howl that goes up from the all potential She when the full force of the magistrate's remarks strikes in. She willing to swear to a think! She not sure of her facts! She an untrustworthy witness! Wow!

Magistrate Mott has in the past said and done things which have caused the man among us to name him anathema, but until this utterance he hadn't succeeded in drawing down upon his aged head the wrath of the feminine. But a storm approacheth. One needs not to look at the barometer or to read the weather reports furnished by Brother Moore to be apprised of a disturbance en route. It comes right down to this: Is woman intentionally or unintentionally a liar? Let's hear from the sex.—New York Telegram.

He Took the Beer. Not long ago Professor N. R. Leonard, who was called recently to the presidency of the mining college at Butte, Mont., feeling indisposed, consulted his physician, a German, very scientific and acknowledged as one of the leading men in his profession in Montana. The doctor advised Mr. Leonard to work less at the desk, exercise more outdoors and take beer as a tonic, something the professor had never cared for.

The doctor met his patient a few days later as he was leaving the college and stopped to inquire how he was feeling. "About the same," replied the professor. "Did you take beer as I directed?" inquired the physician. "Yes," responded the professor; "I took it a few times, but it became so nauseous that I had to discontinue it." "How much did you take?" "Why, I bought a whole bottle and took a spoonful before each meal," answered the professor.

An Unsolved Problem. Mrs. Emmons Blaine of Chicago, whose scheme of employing servants by relays and only for certain prescribed hours attracted such attention a few months ago, has had to give it up. Report has it that after faithfully testing the plan Mrs. Blaine retired to the country this summer, a perfect wreck—utterly worn out through her efforts to solve the servant question in a way hailed by theorists as the only salvation both for maid and mistress. "Somewhat recuperated," says the New York Sun, "Mrs. Blaine will venture back to Chicago this winter, but her house, the scene of the late domestic experiments, will remain closed. She has taken an apartment. Her meals will be taken at a restaurant, and whatever service she requires will be performed by the attendants of the apartment house. It begins to look as if the only way to get rid of the servant question was to get rid of the servants."

The High Mountains. The reason, Signor Mosso tells us, why so few have attempted the ascent of the highest peaks on the face of the earth is the conviction that man cannot withstand the rarefied air of these altitudes. "Heroism shrinks from such prolonged sufferings as those due to lack of health." His own experiment and observations, however, give us assurance that man will be able slowly to accustom himself to the diminished barometric pressure of the Himalayas. "If birds," he says, "fly to the height of 20,000 feet, man ought to be able to reach the same altitude at a slow rate of progress."

Suited Them Best. Mr. Wilson Barrett often tells the following story of his appearance as Hamlet at the Princess' theater, London. The day after the first performance he overheard some old stage carpenters discussing the various performers of Hamlet they had seen in their day. "Well," said one of them, "you may talk of Irving and Booth and now Barrett, but give me Fechter's Hamlet. He was done twenty minutes sooner than any of 'em."

The Russian Way. An episode illustrative of Russian adherence to the letter of the law in the out of the way sections of the empire is told in a letter from the province of Archangel to a St. Petersburg daily. The hero of the story is an inventor who had completed the model of what he thought was a successful flying machine. He wanted to test it and applied to the local pristav (police captain) for "a permit to fly through the air." The pristav said he was curious to see the experiment and that he would let him know as soon as he had consulted the law on the subject. Three days later the police officer said to the inventor: "I am really sorry, old man, but I am compelled to refuse your request. I have spent three days in examining the lawbooks, but it's no use. There is no law bearing on the subject of flying through the air. I can't allow it. I am very, very sorry."

ALL OVER THE HOUSE.

Something About Rugs, Which Have Displaced Carpets. Rugs have largely displaced carpets in American homes of recent years. The modern hygienic housewife insists upon having movable floor coverings because they can be kept so much cleaner. For people who rent, too, rugs are found in the long run to be cheaper, because with a change of residence they can be more easily fitted than a carpet to the new floors.

There are a few facts which the woman who buys rugs for her house needs to know. Persian rugs lead all the rest in artistic design as well as coloring. Ten dollars is what a square foot of the best Persian rug is worth, and it took a single weaver twenty-three days to complete that portion. The Turkish rugs from Sivras are made of wool and are woven in almost every hamlet and home. Every poor family has as a part of their house furnishings rugs which are very valuable, but which they will not part with except in time of the direst need.

The Smyrna rugs are comparatively inferior in quality. Their name is derived from the mart to which they are brought for sale. They are made in the interior from the Angora goat's coarse hair. Yuruk rugs are made by a band of nomads in the mountains of Anatolia. These are rugs of firm, even texture woven from the wool of the fine flocks of sheep.

A Nut Pudding. A rich and delicious dessert and one easily served, which is a great consideration, is a nut pudding. To make it beat separately the yolks and whites of six eggs. To the yolks add one and a half cups of granulated sugar, and to the whites, beaten to the stiffest possible froth, add three cups of finely chopped or pounded nuts. Hazelnuts, pecans or almonds are equally good. Mix all together lightly and stir in one teaspoonful of vanilla. Then, last of all, sift in one teaspoonful of baking powder well mixed in one tablespoonful of flour.

This is to be baked quickly in jelly cake tins and when ready to serve is to be put together like layer cake with whipped cream. A pint of this thoroughly chilled and seasoned with flavoring or brandy will be sufficient to put between layers and over the top and sides.

Fruit For Rheumatism. The use of fruit diminishes acidity and antagonizes rheumatism. The acids in fruits undergo changes which diminish the acidity of the blood and aid in the elimination of rheumatic acid. The most digestible fruits are ripe grapes, peaches, strawberries, apricots, oranges, very ripe pears, figs, dates, baked apples and stewed fruits.

A dietary consisting wholly of fruits is a valuable means of overcoming biliousness. Such a dietary may be maintained for one or two days a week. A modified fruit dietary is highly beneficial. The most laxative fruits are apples, figs, prunes and peaches.—Family Doctor.

Preparing Glue For Ready Use. To any quantity of glue use common whisky instead of water. Put both together in a bottle, cork it tight and set it by for three or four days, when it will be fit for use without the application of heat. Glue thus prepared will keep for years and is at all times fit for use, except in very cold weather, when it should be set in warm water before using. To obviate the difficulty of the stopper getting tight by the glue drying in the mouth of the vessel use a tin vessel with the cover fitting tight on the outside to prevent the escape of the spirit by evaporation. A strong solution of isinglass made in the same manner is an excellent cement for leather.

Lemonade. If you have never tried making lemonade with boiling water, you have missed a valuable household hint. Try it now by squeezing the juice from three large lemons into an earthenware bowl. Add two tablespoonfuls of granulated sugar and the grated rind of one lemon, turn in four cupfuls of boiling water and cover closely. When cool, place it in the icebox to chill.

Philadelphia Pronunciation. "It is becoming more and more common in Philadelphia," says The Record of that city, "to give to words their English rather than their American pronunciation. When, some ten years ago, Professor Lambertson, coming to the University of Pennsylvania to teach Greek, pronounced clerk as though it were spelled 'clark,' people looked at one another and smiled, but nowadays the pronunciation is not uncommon. It is quite usual, too, to hear Berkeley pronounced in the English manner, 'Barkley,' and derby 'darby,' while the ultra-English are trying, with good promise of success, to make the prevailing pronunciation of patent 'paytent,' as it is in London."

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just half price—that are as good as the best—if we have your size. Come soon.

Respectfully, G. W. REISNER & CO.

CUMBERLAND VALLEY TIME TABLE—Nov 25, 1901. THE FULTON COUNTY NEWS Covers the Field. In every part of the County faithful reporters are located that gather the daily happenings. Then there is the State and National, News, War News, a Department for the Farmer and Mechanic, Latest Fashions for the Ladies. The latest New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia Markets. The Sunday School Lesson, Helps for Christian Endeavorers, and a Good Sermon for everybody. THE JOB DEPARTMENT IS COMPLETE. SALE BILLS, POSTERS, DODGERS, BILL HEADS, LETTER HEADS, ENVELOPES, CARDS, &c. KIDNEY DISEASES are the most fatal of all diseases. FOLEY'S KIDNEY CURE is a Guaranteed Remedy or money returned. Contains remedies recognized by eminent physicians as the best for Kidney and Bladder troubles. PRICE 50c. and \$1.00. ADVERTISE IN The Fulton County News.