

### THE BLOOD-STAIN ON THE FLOOR

(Concluded from last week.)

I heard them moving along the floor and then the scratching of a match. It gave a promise of burning and then went out, and an impatient voice exclaimed:

"Down the match! Give me another, Jim, this is gone out."

The voice sounded familiar. Surely I had heard it since I had come to Wicklow; but where I could not bring to mind.

The next match did its duty, and communicated its blaze to the candle which one of the men held, and a little while it was burning clearly, diffusing a bright light about the apartment. It revealed the faces of the two men to me and as I gazed upon one of them I was no longer in doubt as to where I had heard his voice before. It was the driver of the express wagon who had taken me from the depot, and who had first given me the history of the house in which we now stood. It was he who had addressed his companion as 'Jim,' and now they both moved along to the spot which had possessed such fascination in my eyes until I had solved the mystery connected with it.

Jim held the candle above it moving it to and fro, but taking care to shade the blaze with his hand, so that it might not shine out too brightly through the windows.

"Do you know whether any one has been here to-day, Sam?" asked the one who had not before spoken.

"Yes, one sure; that chap I brought over from the depot the other day was in here this forenoon."

I gave a start of surprise. How did he know this? Had my movements been watched, and, if so, did they know that I was even secreted some where about the house?

"He here! Then he must be a detective as we thought he was in the first place," said the other, in evident alarm.

"No, I don't think he is," returned my driver, "I've made all sorts of inquiries, and I have found that he is really an old friend of Tom Jones, and that prying his nose into other folks' affairs ain't in his line; but if he makes it so, he had better not have come to Wicklow, that's all."

"So I say," replied the other, emphatically; "we're too good a thing here to be blown on if we can help it."

"You are right, there, Jim; but let us go down. The rest of the boys will be along soon."

I held my breath as the two villains passed along to the cellar door which I had left standing open, and descended the stairs, leaving the old kitchen again in total darkness.

What was their errand below? I asked myself this question, and at once resolved that I would find out if possible. Noiselessly I gilded out from the closet and felt my way along to the cellar-door, where I paused and listened. A faint light came up from below, and the hum of distant voices.

Silently I descended the stairs. When I reached the bottom I found myself in total darkness. The light had disappeared, and the hum of voices had ceased.

What had become of them? It seemed as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up.

Suddenly I heard a sound above my head; others of the gang were crossing the kitchen door toward the entrance to the cellar, and in a moment more they would be coming down upon me.

Hastily I crept in beneath the stairs, knocking over the basin of paint with one hand, and dashing its contents over my hands and face.

Once under the stairs there was plenty of room, and I drew myself up into as small a compass as possible against the wall, and with my hand upon my revolver waited for what the next minutes would bring forth.

Tramp, tramp, about my head, sounded the footsteps, and by them I was assured that three more had entered the cellar, and were groping their way about in the darkness. Suddenly a voice exclaimed, impatiently:

"Why don't the boys show up the light? I shall break my neck over something that may be lying about here."

"Give the signal and they will show it," said another.

A short, sharp whistle cut the air like a knife, and it had not died away before a door in the wall,

which had escaped my notice on my previous visit, was thrown open and a bright light flashed out, revealing a room of considerable dimensions beyond, in which tables and benches ranged about. The light was too brilliant to proceed from a tallow candle, for it lighted up the cellar without revealing the forms of the three men distinctly; and had they chanced to have turned their heads they must have seen me crouching beneath the stairs. But as luck would have it they did not, but passed at once into the farther apartment, closing the door behind them, leaving me in darkness more profound than ever.

Three was this repeated, and I had seen ten men enter the secret chamber. Then came a long interval, which convinced me at last, that they had all arrived who would be there that night. I reflected upon what should be my next move.

To attempt to pry any further into their mystery that night, I thought would avail me nothing, and it might get me into difficulties. I had learned enough already to forever lay the ghost in the haunted house, and to bring a pack of villains to justice. That they were a gang of base coiners or counterfeiters, I had not the doubt, and I felt it would be my duty to unearth them to the authorities.

I felt considerable interest in the discoveries I had made, and I knew that I should be the lion of Wicklow for the next seven days, at least. People would say to one another:

"There goes the man who laid the ghost and I should also be an object of interest to the young ladies in the church the next Sabbath. At that moment I felt myself quite a hero; but it suddenly occurred to me that I should remember the old adage 'not to crow until you are out of the woods.' I had forgotten that."

I now came back to my immediate surroundings, and reflected on what I should do next. Should I remain where I was, and see them emerge from their den and take their departure, or should I leave at once, and return to Tom's mother, while the coast was clear?

I decided upon the latter, and was about to crawl out from my hiding-place, when I heard footsteps again in the kitchen. More of them were coming, so I shrank back into my corner to witness their descent.

The footsteps went around the room, and at last came to the cellar door, where they paused for a moment, while a light, as from a lantern, flashed down the stairs. Then the footsteps began slowly to descend. I counted them one by one until they reached the bottom, and the new comer stood close to, but with his back toward me. In one hand he carried a common lantern, and as he moved away from the foot of the stairs, I thought that his figure looked very familiar.

He held the lantern up as he went around, and from his motions I could not help deciding that he was a stranger to the spot, and not a member of the gang beyond the wall. At last his steps brought him close to the door, through which I had seen the members of the gang pass, and at this instant his face was turned by chance for a moment toward me, and I plainly saw his features. It was my friend, Tom Jones.

I hardly checked myself in time to prevent giving utterance to an exclamation of surprise at beholding him, for I had not supposed that he had returned. But here he was in flesh, and I knew his errand at once. His mother had told him where I had gone, and he had come in search of me.

I was about to call out to him in a low tone, but before I could do so he had seen the door, and, evidently with the intention of entering, he placed his hand upon the latch, and finding it fastened he gave it a violent shake. It produced no result, so he gave it another, and the next moment it flew open revealing nothing but a dark void beyond.

Taking a step forward, despite the low warning I gave him, he held his lantern out, that its light might show his way, but in a moment more it was dashed from his hands, and all was in total darkness.

"Villains, unhand me," I heard Tom cry; then there was a struggle, followed by a blow and a heavy fall, and then all was still.

Poor Tom! Had they taken his life, and I close by, without lifting a hand to prevent it? I heard the

door shut to with a clang, and then all was still.

What should I do? Should I fly to his assistance, and with my simple arm combat the whole gang and try to save his life? Or, should I make the best of my way out of the accursed spot, and run to the village and give the alarm? For a moment I was undecided. Either way it seemed that Tom's life was at stake.

At last I formed the resolution to go for help, and was edging my way out from beneath the stairs, when the door of the secret apartment was thrown open, and the brilliant light which I had seen before flashed out.

Hastily I fell back against the wall, fearing that I should be discovered; and there I lay, holding my breath, while three or four of my gang went peeping about the cellar and through the house seeking for any companions which Tom might have brought with him. At last they were apparently satisfied that he came alone, and returned to their den, leaving me undiscovered.

No sooner was the door shut than, having changed my mind as to the course of procedure, I emerged from my hiding place, and crept noiselessly up stairs, across the kitchen, out into the open air.

Here, in the thick shrubbery which grew close to the house, I secreted myself, and there remained motionless, until I counted as many leave the house as I had seen enter the cellar. Then, when I had given them a chance to get well clear of the premises, I re-entered the house, and hastened down to the cellar to hear, if possible, the fate of Tom. I carried with me a rusty iron bar, which I had stabled upon outside, with which I meant to break in the door, could I not open it in any other way.

Feeling my way to the door, which I tried and found securely fastened, I placed my ear to the crevice and listened intently. At first I heard nothing, and then a sound fell upon my ear which I was sure was a groan.

"Tom," I cried, through the crevice; "you are not dead, I hope?"

Another groan, and then a faint voice said:

"Not quite; can't you get to me?"

My only answer was a blow against the door with that bar, another and another I dealt upon it, till at last the bolt was broken, the door swung back, and rushed into the secret chamber.

"Tom, where are you?" I cried.

"Here," said a voice at my feet; and reaching down, I encountered the face of Tom, which, in another moment, I should have put my foot on.

"Thank God that you are alive, Tom; but are you much hurt?" I cried, searching for his hand, that I might give it a friendly pressure.

"Some, I am afraid; my head don't feel just right yet. You must find my hand there. The villains have fastened them behind me, and my legs are bound, too."

"The rascals! but they shall suffer for this," I said, as with my pocket-knife I set Tom free, and then helped him on his feet, where, for a minute he was unable to stand alone, his head was so dizzy.

"Lead me out of this room; the air is stifling. Get me out beneath the stairs and I shall feel better."

"Lean on me, and I will soon get you there, Tom," I replied; and, half-supporting him, I led him out through the cellar, up over the stairs, through the kitchen, and so had him out where the cool air could bathe his brow and bring him fairly to himself again.

In a little time he had, in a measure, recovered his strength, and we had set out for home.

"Did you recognize any of them, Tom? I said as we went along."

"No, not one," he replied. "It was not light enough."

"Why did they bind you hand and foot? Do you remember what they said about it?"

"Yes, plainly. They tried to make me take a horrid oath that I would never reveal what I had discovered of their hiding place, but I refused to do it. Then they told me that I should never leave the place alive until I had taken the oath, and that they would starve me to it, or to death. So they bound me and left me there till you came."

Then, in return, I told him of what I had witnessed, and by that time we were at his mother's. It was past midnight, and the

good woman was fearfully frightened. Tom had come home sooner than he had promised, and had gone at once to the haunted house for me. She had watched anxiously for our return, and when, at last, we did present ourselves, she was frightened more than ever. Tom's face and clothes were covered with blood, which had flowed from the wound in his head, while I presented an equally gory appearance on account of the red paint with which I was plentifully besprinkled.

Leaving Tom to acquaint his mother with the details of our adventures, I made my way to the village, and soon had the proper officers alert to their duty; for I knew if we wanted to make a haul we must do it before they would have a chance to return to see their prisoner. Quietly we proceeded to the old house, and there found that which I had expected to find, namely, tools, plates, and presses of a gang of counterfeiters, and a large amount of spurious currency, which they had all ready to send to their agents in various parts of the country.

It was near morning when we got around upon my old friend, the driver, and it must be confessed that we somewhat surprised that worthy when we accommodated him with a pair of bracelets. When he saw me, he was convinced that I was in reality a detective, and that I already knew all; so he made a clean breast of it, and implicated all of his companions, whereby we were enabled to secure the whole gang, and thus break up a combination which extended over a large area of territory to which no clue had before been obtained.

It was daylight when I got back to Tom's mother's, and found that neither of them had been abed, so anxious were they to know how it all turned out, and when I told my story they were of one mind, that I had done a good night's work, which conclusion I also coincided in.

I stayed in Wicklow until the villains had their examination and been carried away to jail, and I was all the lion that I had imagined I should be. Old ladies would stop to look at me in the street, and so would the boys; but the young ladies, I must confess, though it hurts my vanity to do so, only gave me a look, and then their eyes followed some other better-looking fellow who chanced to be going by.

I hear from Tom quite often now. He says the ghost no longer walks in the haunted house, and that the blood-stain retains its dark hue from one year's end to another. When it changes it spots again I shall make another trip to Wicklow.

### The Book Agent's Husband.

She came into the sanctum selling letter-files and patent bill-folders. She was pretty and sweet, and somewhat talkative.

"My life is hard," she said, "but I have a jolly lot of fun. When I was at St. Paul I stopped at the Science hotel. My husband is a traveling man and was in town at the same time. I happened to meet a bible agent, who was determined I should go to work for him—got mashed a little, I think. Anyway he followed me about until I got rather tired of it. He wanted to call and see me at the hotel, and I let him come."

"Now, my husband stands six feet two and is built like John L. Sullivan, and when that little bible peddler got into our room the sweet, sunny smile died out of his face, and when my husband took him on his knee and told him sweet little stories about good little children that had gone to heaven and had their pictures preserved in Sunday school books, I thought he would die. My husband told him he was real glad to find such a nice fellow and was so glad he liked me, and that when we got rich we would adopt him—but I must go. No, I don't flirt; but it is impossible to keep some cooed-up puppies from making fools of themselves," and gathering up her samples she went away.

Fifteen thousand ducks are said to have been shot in a single day recently in the Susquehanna field. William Dobson, of Havre de Grace, on the opening day eight years ago, killed 512 and bare his gut before he stopped. He kept two men busy all day picking up dead ducks. He has the highest single record.

According to a late report Minnesota and Dakota, with a population of a million and a half of people, produce in one year more wheat than Great Britain and Ireland with a population of thirty-five millions.

### OUR DEBT OF HONOR.

People have forgotten the nature of the services asked of and obtained from their soldiers. Let the reader think for a moment what sacrifices would be involved if he, now reading this magazine comfortably by his winter fireside, should feel it to have become his duty to drop his business wholly; to say good-bye to wife and children, knowing the grave risks that he never would see them again upon earth; to leave his pleasures and home comforts, don a private soldier's uniform, submit to rigorous physical discipline, march by night and by day, be homeless in rain and snow, often sleeping without shelter under a pouring sky; to live on the coarsest fare always, and frequently have an insufficient supply of that; to be posted as a picket by day and night in pestilential swamps and bottom lands; to risk the imminent peril of losing health and accepting the tender mercies of a field hospital; to enter upon campaign, skirmish, battle; to lay after day to see comrades drop down one by one; to take the chances of wounds by shell and bullet, of torture in a prison pen, and of death by any of these means—imagine all this, and then say whether he would consider that his country had redeemed a pledge of 'eternal gratitude' as soon as it had paid him the princely sum of \$192 a year for this services! There is no need of rhetoric. This possible experience is what hundreds of thousands of our brave boys actually endured. There is not a dash of added bombast to the coloring here, then, is precisely the question that is pleading for settlement at the hands of the American people to-day.—From 'Shall We Pension Our Soldiers,' by Col. E. H. Ropes, in The American Magazine.

### Debts on the Bank of Sense.

The way to have a good credit is to keep out of debt.

To be intelligent is to be honest, kind and good.

You have as much right to put your hand into another man's pocket as your nose into another man's business.

A kind word costs you nothing, and the return of it may come at a time when you need it most.

Trust no man's appearance. The roughest bark covers the smoothest surface.

He who longs after good precepts is quickened in his imagination and strengthened in his expression. The vine which grows in the sun is the fullest of sap and sweetest of fruit.

A good souled child is a fortress of strength between its parents and sin.

The barest stump is beautiful when overrun by the honeysuckle.

There is no such thing as hopeless life. The soul could no more exist without breath.

### An Entertaining, Reliable House.

G. M. Shindel can always be relied upon, not only to carry in stock the best of everything, but to secure the Agency for such articles as have well-known merit, and are popular with the people, thereby sustaining the reputation of being always enterprising, and ever reliable. Having secured the Agency for the celebrated Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption, will sell it on a positive guarantee. It will surely cure any and every affection of Throat, Lungs, and Chest, and to show our confidence, we invite you to call and get a Trial Bottle Free.

### WOMEN BROWN'S IRON BITTERS THE BEST TONIC.

Needless to say, it is the best tonic for women, and is the only one that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable.

### SALESMEN WANTED.

For the sale of our NEW FRUITS and SPECIALTIES, we want experienced and energetic men in all sections of the country. For particulars, apply to HOOPE'S, BROTHER & THOMAS, Philadelphia, Pa.

### WOMEN PATENTS.

After twenty years' experience in the patent business, I have secured the services of a first-class patent attorney, and am now prepared to take charge of the patent business of women. For particulars, apply to HOOPE'S, BROTHER & THOMAS, Philadelphia, Pa.

### PARKER'S HAIR BALM.

Changes and beautifies the hair, promotes its growth, cures itching humors, and keeps the hair soft and shining. It is the only hair balm that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable.

### Wanted.

Agents to sell the HISTORY of THE BLACK PHALANX. For particulars, apply to HOOPE'S, BROTHER & THOMAS, Philadelphia, Pa.

## CASTORIA

for Infants and Children.

Castoria is so well adapted to children that it is recommended to all parents. It is a safe and reliable remedy for all ailments of infants and children, and is the only one that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable.

## RUSSIAN RHEUMATISM CURE

Don't cure anything but Rheumatism, but it cures it every time. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable.

## BILIOUSNESS

Bilious symptoms invariably arise from indigestion, such as furred tongue, vomiting of bile, giddiness, sick headache, irregular bowels. The liver secretes the bile and sends it to the filter or sieve, to cleanse impurities of the blood. By irregularity in its action or suspensions of its functions, the bile is liable to overflow into the blood, causing jaundice, sallow complexion, yellow eyes, bilious diarrhoea, a large, heavy feeling and many other distressing symptoms. Biliousness may be properly termed an affection of the liver, and can be thoroughly cured by the grand regulator of the liver and biliary organs, BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS. Act upon the stomach, bowels and liver, making healthy bile and pure blood, and opens the culverts and sluiceways for the outlet of disease. Sold everywhere and guaranteed to cure.

## DR. SCHEWCH'S

Mandrake Pills have a value as a household remedy far beyond the power of language to describe. The family can hardly be too well provided with them, and they are the only one that is both pure and palatable. It is the only one that is both pure and palatable.

## PHYSICIAN & SURGEON.

Offers his professional services to the public in Wicklow, Pa. Office in the Court House, in a building done up opposite opposite Post Office.

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