A SINGULAR CASE

Where Circumstantial Evidence Played Justice False.

HANGED AN INNOCENT MAN.

Every Incident In the Remarkable Sequence of Events Seemed to Point Conclusively to the Guilt of Harry Blake, Who Was Accused of Murder.

It began in the Blue Horse tavern, on the highway leading to Albany.

Toward the close of an autumn day a half dozen men sat in the old barroom discussing events which then were leading to the outbreak of the American Revolution. At such a time arguments were very likely to be rather more vigorous than ordinarily would be the case. And this was no exception. Fearing that trouble might result, one of the men exclaimed: "Come, Wickliffe, stop this. Such a dispute is nonsense."

Wickliffe was an ugly looking fellow, short and stout, with a dark, sallow face, black eyes, low, wrinkled forehead and lips that bared his teeth on occasions like a dog preparing to bite.

"My quarrel is with Harry Blake," he snarled. "It is none of your affair."

"Well, Wickliffe," Blake cried good naturedly, "if you will quarrel, I won't. I'll say no more."

Evidently Wickliffe was bent on trouble, for he muttered something which brought a cry of "Shame!" from every one in the room. Blake's face became deadly pale. "Wickliffe," he said steadily, "I didn't hear what you said, but I dare you to repeat it. If you do and there's one improper word in it, this hour will be the bitterest of your life."

Once more the offensive words were flung at him, and in an instant Blake had seized Wickliffe and thrown him across the room. For a moment he lay stunned, but presently, his face dark with hatred, he rose and, shaking his fist at Blake, exclaimed:

"You may take your measure for a coffin. You will need one."

"Not before you," was Blake's reply.

Shortly after the quarrel Wickliffe left the Blue Horse for his home. Blake, whose road lay in the same direction, followed soon. Ten minutes later two more of the loiterers, also going over the highway taken by Wickliffe and Blake, started on their homeward way.

The last two travelers had ridden several miles, talking earnestly of the stirring events which then engaged men's minds, when a loud cry was heard at a little distance. In a moment it was repeated.

"Mercy!" the voice pleaded, and then, "Oh, Harry!"

"Can Blake be settling scores with Wickliffe?" exclaimed Grayson, one of the two riders.

In a moment they had galloped around a copse of trees at a bend in the road. Within twenty yards of them, on his back in the dust, lay Wickliffe dead. Bending over him stood Blake, grasping a knife driven to the haft in his bosom.

"Taken red handed," Grayson cried, while Walton, his companion, himself a magistrate, sprang from his horse, exclaiming, "Blake, I charge you with murder."

"Why, I didn't kill him," Blake said earnestly. "You are mad. I found Wickliffe lying dead and was about to pull this knife from the wound when you came up."

Grayson shook his head. "I wish I could believe you, Harry," he said, "but as I hope to be saved I saw you stab him. I did."

It would be hard to imagine a situation more likely to convince a jury of the prisoner's guilt. Conan Doyle in his wildest fancies in deduction never presented more damning evidence to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson—the quarrel in the Blue Horse tavern, the epithet resented, the fight, the counter-threat of death, the departure of both while their temper yet was warm and then the terrible tableau on the highway.

What might a man expect even now with the thousand loopholes that the law provides for escape? There could be only one conclusion now, as then, and that conclusion the jury reached without leaving the courtroom. Blake's protestations were vain. He died on the scaffold declaring his innocence.

Three months after the execution the judge who presided at the trial was summoned to Albany to see a prisoner under sentence of death. Grayson, whose testimony chiefly had convicted Blake, also was summoned. Much in wonder, they entered the cell together.

"You," the prisoner said to the judge, "presided at the trial of Harry Blake."

"I did."

"And you," turning to Grayson, "swore you saw him stab Wickliffe. On your testimony he was hung."

"I saw Blake stab him," Grayson said.

"You did not," the prisoner sneered, "for I killed Wickliffe. I sprang into the wood at Blake's approach. His story was true."

The confession was so clear and full that it left no doubt in the judge's mind that a fearful wrong had been done Blake. As for Grayson, the chief witness, he committed suicide. The records contain many instances of the law's mistakes, but few so pathetic as the case of Harry Blake.—Kansas City Star.

Method is like packing things in a box. A good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one.—Cecil.

THE "THIRD DEGREE."

Ethics of the Process as Defined by Inspector Byrnes.

"The 'third degree,'" said Inspector Byrnes, the former chief of detectives, "should be a psychic rather than a physical process. It is not remorse brought about by continual thought upon the heinousness of his crime that drives a guilty man to confession. It is the nervous strain involved in a long effort to maintain his pretense of innocence, while he is in constant fear that the police are in possession of evidence that may prove his guilt. Something like a parallel case would be that of a prizefighter who should surmise that his antagonist was playing with him in the ring while capable of sending in a knockout blow at any time he felt so inclined. Apprehension that he was dealing with conditions of the nature of which he was unaware would eventually weaken the man in that case. Tell a suspected man who is guilty that you have evidence of his guilt and that he will get nothing to eat or will not be permitted to sleep until he confesses, and unless he is a particularly stupid fellow he will know that you have no proof against him and are only trying to get it. For instance, show him ostentatiously the weapon with which he may have killed a man and tell him that you know all about the crime and he would better confess it. He will say to himself, 'They haven't got sufficient evidence to convict me and are trying to make me furnish it, for if they had the evidence they wouldn't care whether I confessed or not,' and thus he will be encouraged to hold out. Also, if he does confess under duress, he makes a false confession, which he knows it will be impossible to corroborate.

"Now, a guilty man in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is not sure that he has covered every trace of his crime, and he may readily be put into the state of mind of the man in Poe's story of 'The Telltale Heart,' wherein he could not help believing that proof of his guilt has been discovered and that his cross examiners are mocking him by pretending not to be aware of it. Let the guilty man catch sight of an implement with which his crime is associated in the possession of the police, which he believes has been unintentionally left where he sees it, and it throws him into a panic, because he does not know how they came by the weapon nor what else they may have discovered demonstrating his guilt in getting hold of it. Perhaps he has concocted a story in his mind which the discovery of this weapon renders implausible, and he mentally puts together and rejects one sequence of lies after another, wondering whether it is safe to take chances on this bit of information or that being not in the possession of the police. Then he is overwhelmed every few moments by the thought that everything is known and all his efforts are useless. The guilty man in this condition is no longer normal, and his collapse is only a matter of time." — Frank Marshall White in Harper's Weekly.

He Had Reformed.

A young man who was an enthusiastic lover of nature went to the seaside for a holiday and, approaching a typical fisherman, said:

"Ah, my friend, how well you must know the face of nature and know it in its many moods! Have you ever seen the sun sinking in such a glare of glory that it swallows up the horizon with fire? Have you not seen the mist gliding down the shrinking hillside like a specter?"

And, very excited and throwing out his arms, he continued:

"Have you never seen, my man, the moon struggling to shake off the ragged, rugged storm cloud?"

The fisherman replied, "No, sir; I have not since I signed the pledge."—Pearson's Weekly.

A Little Ambiguous.

The Ingrahams were entertaining two friends at dinner. After Mr. Ingraham had helped them to roast beef he happened to glance at the other end of the table, where his wife sat, and observed, to his horror, that the sugar bowl was the old one, with both handles broken off, that usually graced the dining table on wash days.

In vain he endeavored by mysterious nods and winks to direct Mrs. Ingraham's attention to it. She either did not see or would not see the mutilated piece of queensware, and his patience gave way at last.

"Cornelia," he said, with some sharpness, "do you think we ought to use a sugar bowl when we have company without ears on?"—Youth's Companion.

Suspicious.

"Let me show you 'Love Letters of Wise Men,'" said the clerk in the book emporium.

"Are they signed?" asked the cautious bookworm.

"Yes, indeed, every one of them."

"Then they must be forgeries. Wise men never sign their names to love letters."—Chicago News.

The High Water Mark.

Mrs. Robinson—And were you up the Rhine? Mrs. De Jones (just returned from a continental trip)—I should think so, right to the very top. What a splendid view there is from the summit!—New York World.

An Unwelcome Discovery.

Post—I discovered today that Parker and I have a common ancestor. Mrs. Post (a Colonial Dame)—For goodness' sake don't tell any one!—Brooklyn Life.

In the hands of many wealth is like a harp in the hoofs of an ass.—Martin Luther.

ATTACKED BY SHARKS.

A Swimmer's Plucky Encounter With Two Big Man Eaters.

John T. Clark, a well known swimmer, in 1882 had a narrow escape from serving as a meal for two hungry sharks while giving an exhibition at Pensacola, Fla. He had agreed to be sewed up in a big sack, heavily weighted with sand, and be thrown into the bay near the navy yard, from which bag he was to escape by cutting his way out with a knife and swimming ashore.

At an appointed time a flatboat took him out some distance from shore, and after being tied up in the sack he was thrown overboard. He had hardly got more than thirty feet below the surface when something bumped against the sack, and almost instantly the idea flashed through his mind that it was a shark. Before he could do anything there was a bump from the other side of the bag. In a moment or two he had cut his way out and was rising to the surface, still clutching the knife in his hand. Once something cold grazed his leg as he was rising.

On reaching the surface he was greeted with cheers, but noted with dismay that there were no boats near. He started to swim toward the nearest one when the water parted a few feet to one side and he could make out the long black fin of a shark. The monster headed at once for him, and as he was about to dive to escape its clutch another shark dashed in.

As the first shark turned over on its side in order to bite Clark dived below the surface, then up under the shark, and drove the knife time after time into its vitals, and it sank to the bottom. As he came to the surface gasping for breath a yawlboat manned by excited sailors from the navy yard ran alongside, and he was pulled aboard just in time to escape the second shark.—Detroit Free Press.

THE PEANUT.

It Starts Growing In the Open, but Finishes Under Ground.

Most people of the north suppose that peanuts grow, like potatoes, on the roots of the vine. Others with equal confidence state that they hang from the branches like pea pods. Both are right, and both are wrong. The peanut starts in the air and sunlight above ground in the shape of a flower growing at the end of a long tube. After the fall of blossoms this tube, or peduncle, elongates and bends downward, pushing itself inches into the ground. If for any reason it cannot do this it dies in a few hours. But if it succeeds in burying itself to its own satisfaction the ovary at the base of the peduncle slowly enlarges and forms the familiar pod, which is therefore dug out of the ground.

Scattered over the roots of the plant, however, are numerous warts or tubercles, in which, by the aid of a good microscope, can be seen myriads of minute organisms. These bacteria-like bodies, though they get their living from the plant, contribute materially to its supporting by collecting nitrogen from the air and holding it in storage, so to speak, supplying it to the plant as need requires. These wonderful little storehouses often contain, by analysis, a greater supply of this indispensable fertilizer than the surrounding soil.

The native country of the peanut has long been a matter of dispute, but the department of agriculture states that the weight of evidence seems to be in favor of Brazil. Thus the peanut is added to the four other plants of great importance that America has given to the world—namely, cotton, Indian corn, tobacco and the potato.

The Literary Squire.

Traveling Inspector (cross questioning the terrified class)—And now, boys, who wrote "Hamlet?"

Timid Boy—P-p-please, sir, it wasn't me.

Traveling Inspector (the same evening to his host, the squire of the village)—Most amusing thing happened today. I was questioning the class and asked a boy, "Who wrote 'Hamlet?'" and he answered tearfully, "P-p-please, sir, it wasn't me."

Squire (after loud and prolonged laughter)—Ha, ha! That's good, and I suppose the little devil had done it all the time.—London Answers.

Knocked Into a Cocked Hat.

The expression "knocked into a cocked hat" is familiar to every one, but perhaps its origin is not so generally known. Cocked hat was a variety of the game of bowls in which only three pins were used, set up at the angles of a triangle. When in bowling tenpins all were knocked down except the three at the corners the set was said to be "knocked into a cocked hat," whence the popular expression for depriving anything of its main body, character or purpose.

Perfect Happiness.

"Do you really believe there is such a thing in this world as 'perfect happiness?'"

"Of course, but some other fellow always has it."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Distinguishing Mark.

"How do you distinguish the waiters from the guests in this cafe? Both wear full dress."

"Yes, but the waiters keep sober."—Cleveland Leader.

The Jokes on the Men.

Mrs. A.—Do you ever read the jokes in the newspapers? Mrs. B.—Only the jokes on the men—the marriage notices, you know.—Boston Transcript.

The only wealth which will not decay is knowledge.—Langford.

A Sketch

By ETHAN ARBUCKLE

I was sketching in the country. With my portable easel before me, seated on my three legged stool, I was doing a bit of landscape when a girl came by who surely did not appear rural. Her dress was ragged, her hat, a straw, darkened by the weather and having a tawdry ornament, while over her shoulders she wore a faded shawl.

Had I not, with the habit of an artist, kept an eye open for models I might not have noticed a certain kind of beauty under these frayed garments. The girl took off her hat and displayed a wealth of hair, with just enough red in it to make it gold. The day was hot, and she threw back her shawl. Then I noticed that her bodice was cut low and revealed a superb neck set on a pair of well rounded shoulders.

"Why do you wear that kind of dress at this time of day?" I asked.

"Because I haven't any other."

"Do you live about here?"

"No. I don't live anywhere. I'm tramping."

Then she cried.

Not a slip in grammer, not an unrefined expression, escaped her. She had evidently seen better days. Indeed, she might have lived in luxury.

"If you will let me make a sketch of you," I said, "I will pay you well for doing so."

"What will you do with the sketch? Will everybody see it? I wouldn't wish them to see it at home."

"I will put it in my portfolio. I don't think any one who knows you will ever see it."

She consented, and I made the sketch, putting in the colors exactly as they were. I gave her a good price for the pose, which she clutched eagerly. I believe she was hungry. While I worked I was talking to her with a view to learning something about her. But she would tell me nothing willingly, and I was unable to induce her to give me any information by artifice. At last I was obliged to let her go her way.

But her picture—it was a fine representation of "From Affluence to Poverty"—remained with me, gazing out at me from the sad eyes, and I found myself constantly taking it out from among my other sketches and looking at it. Indeed, I found myself unfit for work, so complete a hold had it taken upon me. I slept that night at a farmhouse and woke in the night depressed by a feeling that the girl was wandering about with no home, no money, nothing to eat and obliged to wear anything she could get to cover her. What a selfish world! Why had I not taken her into my heart and provided for her wants?

Then I remembered that there is a barrier which prevents young men from assisting young women. As to taking her into my heart, that I had done, though I did not realize what a foothold she had gained there.

One thing about her was patent. She was pure. No such beauty as hers need go in rags except through purity. It was this doubtless that prevented my banishing her from my mind and drew me toward her.

I have always had a habit of reading the personals in newspapers. I do so because I like to have my fancy started in weaving stories that the few advertised words indicate. One day I read the following:

> Information wanted of Gladys Seymour, twenty years old. When last seen she wore a dark blue dress, cut low neck; eyes dark brown; hair the same, with a tinge of red in it.

I saw the subject of my sketch described in this personal. I called immediately on the advertiser and found a lawyer. I showed him my sketch, and he showed me a photograph. They were identical save as to dress. That of the photograph was silk, that of the sketch rags. He told me that the girl had been driven from home by the cruelty of a stepmother. She had gone vowing never to return. The stepmother had died, and the girl's father, who was alone, was anxious to find his daughter, but had little hope of doing so.

I determined to hunt for Gladys Seymour myself. Taking my sketch with me, I went to the place where I had made it, then started in the direction she had gone when she left me. I spent a day in discovering where she had slept that night. A farmer's wife had taken her in and given her a bed and a supper. Having learned the direction she had taken the next morning, I went on and tracked her in a direct line to a little town, where I lost her. But, showing my sketch and making inquiries, I traced her to a store, where she had been given work behind the counter. There I found her, though in a better costume than that in which I had met her.

I don't know which was more affected by the news I gave her, I at telling it or she at learning it. She went at once to her employer to say that she would like to go to her home, and he excused her from remaining. I furnished her with the means to get there—not as charity, but as a loan.

Gladys Seymour did not remain at home long with her father, for I stepped in and took her away from him. There was a bone of contention between me and my wife for a long while. She wished the sketch I had made of her when she was tramping destroyed. I loved it and wished to keep it. But the period was so painful to her that I finally consented to burn the picture.

TWAIN'S FIRST LECTURE.

Bret Harte Headed the Claque, but the Audience Swamped Them.

Mr. Clemens prepared a lecture for his San Francisco audience, giving a most extravagant account of what he had seen among the south sea islands. When Bret Harte and some other of his friends were told of his platform intention they agreed to go in a body to the old Mechanics' hall, where Twain was to deliver himself, and form a big claque that would insure the success of the affair.

Mark wrote his own handbills, which set the town agog with anticipation. One particularly inviting phrase printed at the bottom of the announcement was, "The trouble will begin at 8 p. m."

The hall was crowded, and the claque was uproarious when Clemens appeared upon the platform. The lecture was delivered with manifest effort in a slow, deliberate, drawling manner, and the lecturer paid no heed whatever to the inconsiderate demands of "Faster, faster! We can't stay here all night!" and other urgent calls.

Although Harte tried to steer the claquers, they insisted upon applauding and laughing in the wrong places, which may or may not have been intended as a joke on Twain, but at last the audience, which began to catch on to the unique style of the man and to appreciate his quaintly whimsical utterances, overwhelmed the claque and had things its own way.

An old timer who attended the lecture says of the effect of Twain upon his first audience: "His slow drawl, the anxious and perturbed expression of his visage, the apparently painful effort with which he framed his sentences and, above all, the surprise that spread over his face when the audience roared with delight or rapturously applauded the finer passages were unlike anything of the kind they had ever known. The lecture was a great success."—Bailey Millard in Hampton's Magazine.

GATHERING PRUNES.

The Fruit Is Never Picked, but Is Allowed to Fall to the Ground.

A peculiarity of prunes is that they are never picked from the trees, but are allowed to fall to the ground. The reason is that a prune must be dead ripe, with all its sugar developed, or it will not cure properly. Therefore the ground under the trees is carefully prepared and leveled to make a soft, smooth bed for the falling fruit. Gathering the fallen prunes is a staple industry in August and September. Boys and girls and often entire families are employed in it, camping in the orchards.

Being gathered, the prunes are rolled down troughs full of tiny needles that prick their skins. They are then dipped in a hot solution containing lye, which cleanses them, and rinsed in cold water. Next they are put in broad, shallow wooden trays and laid in the sun for two or three weeks. This sun drying practically converts them into the staple prunes of commerce and of boarding house jokes. At the packing house they are assorted as to size by a machine which shakes them over a huge sieve. The farther the prune travels over the sieve the larger the holes, and when it comes to a hole a little bigger than itself it drops through into the proper bin. It is then run through a vat containing hot water and finally rolls down a chute into a wooden packing box—the same box that you see at the grocer's. When the prunes pour from the chute, however, there is a removable frame about three inches high on top of the box. Box and frame go under a press, which promptly stamps down the contents so that they are no higher than the top of the box. The frame is lifted off, the cover is nailed on the box, and the prunes are ready to ship.—Will Payne in Saturday Evening Post.

More Serious.

"Mathilde Browne was very rude to an overdressed old woman she met on the street car the other day."

"I know the story. The old woman turned out to be Mathilde's very rich aunt, and now she's going to give all her money to a hospital for decrepit dogs."

"Nothing of the sort. In fact, it's worse. The old woman was the Brownes' new cook, and now they haven't any."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Mecca of the Buddhists.

Tibet lies between the latitude of Rome and Cairo, yet, owing to the fact that it is nearly all one series of lofty tablelands, its climate is purely arctic. There is hardly any rain, and biting dry winds send dust or dry snowstorms forever raging across its inhospitable uplands.

Lassa, its capital, is the Mecca of the Buddhist world, and pious Buddhists gain much merit by making the pilgrimage.

Expurgating It.

"Elfleda, what did your father say when he heard that I had been here calling on you?"

"He said you were a numskull, a mollycoddle and a jolterhead."

"Is that all?"

"That's all, Guy—except the adjectives."—Chicago Tribune.

He Countered.

"The position is yours, sir, if you will deposit $1,000 as security."

"I accept your offer, sir, if you will deposit $1,000 as a security for my security."—Exchange.

To Live Long.

If you wish to be a Methuselah you will have to quit doing all the things that make it worth while not to be one.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Retribution

By BERTHA D. ALSOP

He was from childhood a lady killer. As a boy in knickerbockers he had given the little girls of his acquaintance flowers and invited them to have ices with him. They were not old enough to quarrel about him, but they doted on him all the same. As a youth he resembled a young Byron with his large blue eyes, his negligee flaxen hair and round white throat. Then came young manhood. By this time he found more zest in his attentions to girls, though fewer pleased him. He and they were still young enough to feel the sweetness of a flirtation, and occasionally when the denouement came he was obliged to admit to himself that he had been singed.

He had no thought of marriage, a home, children. He didn't consider himself old enough for that. When he reached twenty-seven he began to look forward to it as something that would naturally come about. At thirty-five he wished that it would come about. At forty he began to fear that it would never come. Then it occurred to him that he had better try to bring it about.

But by this time young girls had begun to consider him an elderly man. And, as for those near his own age, he had no use for them. He knew that men of forty have on rare occasions married girls half their age and both husband and wife been very happy in each other. Why not he? He resolved to make an effort.

An effort in love! He had glided naturally into so many affairs of the heart that to try to get into one seemed repugnant to him. Why had he not taken advantage of some one of these affairs to preclude the possibility of the lonely old age that was overshadowing him—why? He knew well enough why. He had always considered the game, not the reality. To have taken one of the girls he might have had would have been to give up a conquest. At least so he had regarded it at the time.

Having lost his position at home of a young man and consequently not being thrown in with young girls, he determined to go elsewhere. It was the season of outing, and he determined to go wife hunting by the sea. He had made many conquests there. Moonlight shimmering on the dancing waves had called out that which had moved many a girl to love him. True, now there were gray hairs in his moustache, and his Byronic forehead was higher than it had been, but he thought with the same surroundings he might do the trick as he had often done it before.

It was sad to see a young girl pass him without looking at him, whereas twenty years agone another of her age could not have refrained from a glance. He became acquainted with several of them, but somehow there seemed a gulf between him and them that he could not cross. These were half or less than half his age. Finally he met one between twenty-five and thirty and set his cap for her. She was thirty, too, about her that he did not find in the younger ones—they surprised him by acting and talking in a way that seemed childish to him. They seemed to him to have grown nearer the nursery then their prototypes. Surely the girls he had associated with when he was under twenty-five were not as frivolous as these misses. The older girl, on the contrary, talked and acted like a woman. She could be a companion to him.

He made up his mind that if he could win her he would do so. He made a few abortive efforts to make love as he would have made it fifteen or twenty years before. What he would have said and looked and acted then now seemed insipid to him. He desisted, contenting himself with the girl's companionship and showing her little attentions.

One thing troubled him. Though she accepted his attentions and listened to his chat, she did not seem to be impressed with his superior wisdom. He felt that, while she attended to what he said, she occasionally let it be known that she knew more of the subject he was talking about than he knew himself. Surely there was nothing near the nursery here. He was uncomfortable at the thought that this young woman felt him intellectually beneath her. It was rather that he felt her to be his superior.

When the season was drawing to a close he wished to bring matters to a focus. This used to be easy enough when he was a youngster playing a game. But now that he was a middle aged man, intending to tell a mature young woman that he loved her and ask her to be his wife, it seemed that the many times he had done the same thing came up to mock him.

However, he got it out.

"How times change us!" she said. "A dozen years ago, when I was sixteen, you proposed to me, and you did it beautifully. I thought you a god. Now, being older, I know you for a very admirable and pleasant gentleman. I thank you for the honor done me, but I do not now mind to marry."

He looked at her with a dazed expression, vainly trying to recall her as she was. But about the time of that former meeting he had proposed to so many girls to enable him to distinguish her from the rest. He arose in silence and retired.

He returned disengaged and is still a bachelor. His forehead extends to the back of his neck, his teeth are going, and he is alone.