

FLOWERS OR WEEDS.

Upon the grave of him who dies In Wales they plant some flower, intended By nature or hue, to symbolize The life that now on earth is ended.

So, does a maiden die unwed, Of blameless deeds and fame unspotted, Her history is clearly read In the white rose to her allotted.

Or, is it one whose every day Was full of love's unselfish labors, Thence rose doth his grateful prayer, Placed on his grave by grateful neighbors.

And sometimes, though but seldom so, For man is everywhere forgiving, Are worthless weeds allowed to grow, Their tale to tell and warn the living.

Ah, reader, scanning now these lines, What would men plant—thy past disclosing Thus through such sure though simple signs— Where thou shalt lie so soon reposing? —[T. J. K.]

Heard in His Own Defence.

"Have I your honor's permission to make a statement?" "Your honor," cried Lawyer Lang, springing to his feet; "your honor, be for you pass on this request I should like to make a statement myself."

"What is it, Mr. Lang?" asked the judge. "It's just this," said Mr. Lang, with something more than his usual acidity; "you remember, of course, that when this man, Cephas Love, was first brought to trial he was without counsel; that he refused to secure any, and that you therefore peremptorily appointed me as such. The appointment was useless, for the defendant has absolutely and unconditionally refused to say a word to me concerning his case."

"I understand, however, that this silence of the defendant's has been maintained in the face of my most diligent efforts to break down his reserve, for while I first accepted your honor's injunction perfunctorily, I ended by becoming deeply interested in what is certainly a unique case—so far as any case goes. What I wish to state with particular stress is, that I am absolutely and entirely ignorant of the nature of the statement which Mr. Love has asked permission to make. In fact, sir, all I can officially claim to know of this man is, that on the 14th of this month of August, 1890, he was found in the very act of throttling another man to death at No. 893 Pine street, in this city and county of San Francisco; that he was arrested in flagrant delicto by Officer Thompson; and that he has been confined in this city prison ever since. He is no more a client of mine than is your honor, and it would be a gross misuse of terms to style him a defendant."

"As Mr. Lang sat down, the man referred to as Cephas Love shook hands with him cordially, and repeated his request for a hearing. "It is a rather unusual proceeding—at this stage of the trial," said the judge, "for a person in your position to make a statement, but the whole proceedings in this case have been unusual. Moreover, I have not the right to deny you. Do you wish your statement to appear as evidence?"

"Yes, sir." "Take your place on the witness-stand, then, and be sworn." He repeated the clerk's jumble-jumble of words with slow emphasis, and laid an intonation upon the concluding words, "So help me God," that gave them a reverential effect not often heard in that court-room.

The sketch which the artist of a morning paper was at this moment making, with crossed legs and sitting primly with a red silk handkerchief spread over his knees. His hands, face and scalp were of a false ruddiness that was caused by a net-work of small veins in the skin, and that was made all the more vivid by the contrast of a fringe of flax-white hair and two patches of close-cropped whiskers that lay on each cheek like small powder-puffs. His eyes were light-blue and moist; his lips were thin and straight; and the rest of his features ordinary and inexpressive. He was dressed in a suit of dark-gray clothes, and looked something between an upper servant and a small lawyer. There had been more than the usual interest felt in the case, the court-room was crowded, and when the prisoner began there was a strained attention to hear what he had to say, made all the more necessary because of the low and rather thick voice in which he spoke.

"My name is correctly given on the documents in the case, I believe," he began, "besides which, it has been on the city directory for the past thirty-two years. It is Cephas Claverling Love, although the middle name is very seldom used. I am sixty-three years of age, and was born at Memphis, Tenn., on the thirteenth of April, 1827. I came to San Francisco thirty-three years come next Christmas eve, and for twenty years thereafter I was a clerk for the law firm of Kirtledge & Shaw, as I believe your honor well knows. For the past twelve years I have been engaged in the law stationery department of Messrs. Rucker & Coe. These gentlemen, together with many others, I understand I have the right to summon as witnesses to testify as to my general good character, but I shall not name one of them to this inconvenience."

"Proceed, Mr. Love," said the judge, for the witness had stopped and was nervously rubbing the palms of his small, withered hands with his handkerchief. "Thank you, your honor," said the old man, "I'm not used to making long speeches. All I need further say in any preliminary way about myself is, that I am a widower, with one married daughter living in Norfolk, Virginia; that I am a member of Dr. Wall's church; that I live temperately, drinking but little and smoking less; and that I am a quiet, law-respecting, God-fearing old man. Yet I sit here to-day in this court a murderer."

"Your honor," exclaimed Mr. Lang, once more springing to his feet. "I must insist that the witness be instructed. Your honor knows that a plea of not guilty was entered in the court of arraignment, and a similar plea has been formally entered in this court of arraignment. This man is on trial; he has not been convicted, and I call upon your honor to instruct the witness that he must not use such terms of self-accusation, as well as to inform the jury that they pay no attention to the wild words of the witness."

"The witness is thoroughly conversant with legal phrases, I believe, Mr. Lang," said the judge, "and fully appreciates the gravity of his position and the necessity for carefully weighing what he has to say. Nevertheless if—"

"Excuse me, your honor," said the old man, Love, gently stretching out a soaking handkerchief toward the judge; "you need not caution me, your honor. I am, as you say, thoroughly aware of the gravity of my words—and position. What I say is simply the truth, and the truth can injure no one. I am a murderer, and I purpose telling the story of my crime without attempting any palliation."

"There was a stir in the court-room, and a veiled woman—the mother of the victim, it was said—leaned forward in her chair and sobbed. "Your honor," cried Mr. Lang, again on those ready feet of his; "there is an attempt at sensationalism here, and a vibrating foreigner pointed in the direction of the sobbing woman, 'and I ask that it be stopped.' "Well, now," said the prosecuting attorney with hot sarcasm; "we must say we like that. During the whole of these proceedings we have said 'blessed be the name of the Lord.' We've allowed you to put your man on the witness stand with all the stage-effect you wanted and without a bag; and now, because this poor, bereaved woman—this heart-stricken mother—gives way to her natural grief through the terrible crime that robbed her of her darling, is brought to her mind, you—you, sir, who should be the last man to make a sound, go to blabbing about sensationalism. Why, sir—"

"That will do, gentlemen," said the judge, quietly but firmly, for Mr. Lang was actually bounding about in his anxiety to make his report. "Go on, sir," he added, turning to the defendant, and during the discussion had bustled himself folding his red handkerchief into a neat, square package. "Since working for Messrs. Rucker & Coe," Cephas Love continued, "I have been in the habit of walking down to the store along Pine street each morning from my boarding-house, at the corner of Larkin and James' streets. On the sixteenth of June last, or it might have been the seventeenth, I noticed that No. 893, after having been vacant for many months, was about to be tenanted. The next morning, and it was a Friday, I remember, my attention was again attracted to No. 893, and this time by a very peculiar sight. The two windows on the ground floor, where the parlor was evidently situated, were draped with heavy curtains of some maroon-colored stuff, after a fashion which used to be in vogue for dining-rooms when I was a boy. As I was passing the house, the curtain nearer me was drawn aside, and a person of such a face as frightens a child in what are called its 'bad dreams,' "Describe it, Mr. Love," said the attorney Lang. "I can not," said the witness, putting out both hands in a gesture of repulsion that was strangely energetic in a man seemingly so placid and unemotional as he. "The man was of a dark complexion. Not one of these grotesque masks, you understand, but one of vacuity—a blank, an emptiness, a soulless nothing. The eyes were big, wide open, with the white showing all around the pupil beneath the fixed lids. The cheeks pale and flabby, the nose a line, and the mouth half open, with the lower lip drooping."

Here a strange thing happened, for while the prisoner described the face, his own took on that of the creature he was delineating, until in the place of the little old gentleman of semi-classical aspect there appeared the doddering head of a man of middle age. The red handkerchief had been snatched up from where it lay smoothly folded over on his knee, and was now grasped in both hands like a ball. "I could only see his face," said Love, dropping back, so to speak, into himself, "because he brought the curtains close up about his neck, like a garment—like a dressing-gown. After I had moved a few paces, I turned around, for so strange was the impression produced on me that I can liken it to little less than fascination. The face had not moved, but the great staring eyes were still fixed on me as the eyes of a portrait done in oil painting always seem to be, no matter where the observer may move. More than once during the day I found myself thinking of this vacant, thin face, and then toward the afternoon I managed to dilogise it with the resolution that it belonged to some poor, unfortunate being, whose friends preferred to take private charge of him rather than to send him to an asylum, and that his presence at the window was due to the temporary absence of those whose duty it was to look after him. But with all this common sense view of the matter, I found myself stupidly excited and nervous as I drew near the house next morning. Well, sir—I mean, your honor—the fellow must have been watching for me, for as I came opposite the windows again, a thin, white hand parted the curtains and the vacant face was turned once more upon me. This time I thought that the eyes, though fixed and wide open, had the light of a nasty smile in them and that the drooping lower lip was shot out in a grimace of contempt. I had a stout walking-cane in my hand," said the witness, jumping up, "and I threatened the fellow with it in this way. Here he shook out the red-silk handkerchief and waved it rapidly toward the jury-box as though it were a danger-signal. One of the jury-men drew back, with a little nervous start, and the judge looked curiously at the defendant-witness. "Control yourself, Mr. Love," said he, "and tell your story as calmly as possible."

"I will, your honor," he replied, with meekness and an instant change of demeanor, although it was noticed that great beads of perspiration had broken out on his forehead, and that, now and then, these merged themselves one in the other and then ran trickling down his face like an overcharged maindrop on a window-pane. "For two or three days I changed my way to the office," he continued, "and took another street, so as to escape the sight of this oppressive face. It was a useless precaution, however, for what had been a day-horror now became a nightmare. For the first time in my life, I became the victim of insomnia. The horrible blank features covered the walls like a patterned paper; they were as visible in the darkness as in the light; they kept my eyes open and stared into them; and they covered me like waves rolling over my bed. The wild, meaningless face was with me in a hundred fantastic and distressing shapes, and I felt that I could have strangled the beast of a possessor had he come within my grasp. "The little man's voice rose into a screech, the dull blue eyes flashed like a moving mirror, and his chest heaved, while he twisted the red-silk handkerchief into a scarlet rope. "On the morning of the third sleepless night," he said, "I was taking my voice into a house whisper, while the crowd in the court-room leaned forward as one man to hear what was being said. "On the third morning I got up and determined to put an end to it all. I took out a razor, threw back my collar,

In this way, and was going to cut my throat, when the idea entered my head that I would first go and squeeze the life out of my tormenting devil, and then come back and make away with myself. Dressing hurriedly, I ran down stairs and into the street. I was in front of 893, like a flash of public-pressed lightning. Quick as I was, the monstrous villain was just as quick. Back went the curtains, as though jerked by red Zamiel himself, and out shot the face—a scarecrow that would frighten the very blue-birds of heaven. No doubt about it, the ghost-like thing was mocking me now—mocking my misery, mocking poor old me, who had been cursed by for forty million years. I don't know what I said. Call them black, bad words. All the blood rushed to my head, until my ears rang like the seven bells of Kingdom Come. With a one, two, three, I was in the house; and with a four, five, six, was squeezing his wind pipe."

"Look out, judge!" yelled Mr. Lang, while a cry of horror rose from the people. The judge had been gently swinging himself around in a quarter-circle on his chair, looking keenly now at the curious witness, and now inquiringly at the prosecuting attorney. As he swung around the last time, the prisoner leaped out from his place, as though moved by a steel spring, and flung himself upon the judge like a cat. The shock threw the judge out of the chair, and both went down together. There were snarls and screams from behind the desk, and the prosecuting attorney, as if he swung around the last time, the prisoner leaped out from his place, as though moved by a steel spring, and flung himself upon the judge like a cat. The shock threw the judge out of the chair, and both went down together. 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