

THE LAW OF RECOMPENSE.

There is no wrong, by any one committed, But will recoil; Its sure return, with double ill repeated, No skill can foil.

A WELCOME GHOST.

Twenty years or more ago we lived in Fourteenth street, New York, in an old-fashioned house which has since been torn down to make way for shops.

One summer night about the first of August I sat reading until quite late and went to bed about midnight. I could not have slept long when I was awakened by a loud, piercing scream—another and another followed in quick succession.

Their departure was followed by perfect quiet and silence. Satisfied that the screams were probably the result of some drunken fight, I went to bed again with out further anxiety on the subject, soon fell asleep, and by the next morning had forgotten the whole affair.

In the afternoon of that day I arrived at the house from down town about five o'clock, and as I sat reading by the window in my room, Kate, the servant, came in and said: "There is a gentleman down stairs to see you, sir."

I went down and found in the hall an odd-looking man with a dark beard, although evidently a young man, he had a worn, old look in his face. He bowed and said: "I hardly know, Mr. Barton, how to ask the very great favor of I want you to grant."

He smiled and said: "To no one in particular, Mr. Barton, but I have heard a great deal about you from different people, and I thought if there was any one in the neighborhood who would help me you were the man."

I thanked him for his implied compliment, and then said: "You have not told me what it is you wish me to do. But come into the parlor, sit down, and let me hear all you have to say."

He continued: "I think the whole neighborhood must have been aroused by Mrs. Lamotte's screams. She was so overcome by the dreadful sight of her husband's body, and not having been prepared—"

"Well," he continued, "that was not all. Mrs. Lamotte went off into one fainting fit after another, and altogether it was the most dreadful night I ever spent in my life. To-day I have been making what arrangements I could to carry out Mrs. Lamotte's wishes as to the funeral."

place. I have to go out to-night to make arrangements for it, as the funeral is to take place to-morrow. I did not have a chance to go out to-day. I shall leave on the nine o'clock train this evening, and return on the very earliest train in the morning, probably soon after daylight. Of course during my absence the ladies next door would be alone, excepting for the two negro women-servants. Now, what I want to know is, will you be in there when I leave and stay until I come back?"

The man appeared grieved and perturbed by all he had gone through, and although I did not fancy his appearance nor manner, I was very much interested and distressed by what he had told me, and felt that I would like to help him, to say nothing of those two poor, lonely women. When I agreed to remain with them during his absence Pierson's face beamed with gratitude, and he thanked me again and again.

After he had gone I went to dinner, and there thought over the strange story I had heard, and with which I had become in a sort of a way identified. I must confess I half regretted having consented to the arrangement for remaining in the house during Pierson's absence, but at the same time reproached myself for the feeling.

About a quarter to eight Pierson returned, and I immediately went with him to the house next door. On the way over there he suddenly informed me that he had engaged before I went, that he was expected to be married to Miss Cooper. One of the married servants let us in, and we walked into the middle room on the first floor, where Pierson left me, saying that he would go upstairs and ask Miss Cooper to come down.

In a few moments he returned with her, and was greatly surprised and pleased with her appearance. She was very fair, with reddish-gold hair, and beautiful eyes of a most peculiar color. Pierson introduced us. Smiling sweetly, she said: "How very kind, indeed, of you, Mr. Barton, to take pity on us in our trouble and come over in this way to help us. I assure you no one can appreciate, until they have experienced it, what it is for two women to be left alone at a time like this."

Her manner and appearance were both charming, and her smile fascinating. But a glance about me rather chilled my admiration. The room we were sitting in was the middle room on the first floor, and the house was evidently three stories deep. There were folding-doors, which were closed, opening into a room in the rear—probably the dining-room—and there were also folding-doors leading into the front room. These last were not closed, but stood slightly open, sufficiently so as to reveal a dark, silent room within.

I think Miss Cooper noticed my wandering glances, for she presently said, with a rather odd smile: "I am sorry, Mr. Barton, that we cannot put you into a more cheerful room, but this is the most comfortable under the circumstances. The dining-room in the back is small and very dark. The front room is, of course," she hesitated, but presently resumed: "The poor, mutilated fellow was carried there, and the corner's inquest was held there, too. We have left him there after making all the necessary arrangements. My sister and I cannot see the young lady, 'are on the floor above. Sister is such a case of nervousness that the least sound throws her into hysterics, so I am obliged to stay on that floor alone with her, and only allow the servants to pass up and down stairs as noiselessly as possible."

At this point Pierson broke in with a brusque remark that he wished to say a few words to me before he went away, and, excusing himself to me, he led the way to the room. When she was gone Pierson said, with a short laugh: "I dare say, Mr. Barton, that Clara's apparent coolness over poor Lamotte's death seems a little strange to you, but the fact is, Lamotte was a queer, disconcerting fellow, and I don't think his wife had had very pleasant a life with him, and to Clara his conduct was simply unbearable at times. She only put up with him for her sister's sake."

I felt somewhat displeased with this disclosure, although I could not tell exactly why. Pierson talked a little further in the strain until Miss Cooper returned, followed by a colored woman carrying a tray, with the contents of which the young lady brewed what she called "an old-fashioned Mobile punch"—cooling, soothing, and invigorating.

We refreshed ourselves, and then Pierson bade me good-bye, thanking me over and over again for helping him out of his difficulties, and saying he would return at the earliest possible moment in the morning. Miss Cooper followed him to the door. When she returned we fell into a desultory sort of conversation, during which I found her even more fascinating than she had seemed at first.

room, I stood looking at that open space with mingled feelings of curiosity and astonishment, for I began to understand that sound. I walked to the doors and rolled them further open. The heavy, potent, sickly air struck me in the face, and I felt a very guiding power into the brightly lighted room where I stood. It seemed to me the lights and my senses at the same time; but still I heard the dripping of the water, drip-drip-drip. My eyes, becoming accustomed to the gloom into which I was looking, and aided by a streak of light coming in at one of the front windows from a street lamp, distinguished in the centre of the room a long, square, box-like arrangement. It took up the better part of the room, seeming to fill it almost, and as I stood looking at it I heard the water more distinctly, dripping slowly into something in the water, and the drip, drip, drip. With a shudder I advanced slowly to the room for a short distance and stood looking at that sad spectacle. Its sombre sides glistened with moisture, and a large knob or handle on the top enabled one, no doubt, to uncover its ghastly contents. I had no desire to do this, and was about to retreat, when from the interior of that very casket I heard a strange sound—something between a sigh and a groan.

For one moment I stood irresolute—hesitating whether to dash at the thing and throw it open, or (shall I confess it?) to rush for the door. The latter feeling overpowered the former, and in a second I was back in the lighted room, and, picking up my hat and stick, had started for the door, when I saw a dim form gliding down the staircase toward me.

Watching it with mingled curiosity and alarm, it appeared to me as if I was infinitely relieved to recognize it as Miss Cooper, to whom the darkness and the general strangeness of everything in that house lent an air of mystery and terror; but she came toward me, smiling.

Before I could speak, she said: "Sister is resting quietly, and so I stole down for a moment to see—"

Miss Cooper's voice suddenly died away, and her eyes gazed horror-stricken into mine, for at this moment the sound of a low groan fell upon our ears. Faint and hollow it sounded, as if suppressed, against the will of the sufferer. With a wild expression in their depths, my companion's eyes first sought the door leading into the front room, and then turned to my face with a puzzled look. God knows what horrible thoughts now chased each other through my brain; but, reaching forward and seizing Miss Cooper's hand, I said: "Will you go with me into that room?"

She regarded me again with a strange glow on her face, and with her lips set closely together, but with a firm voice she answered: "I will."

Without another word and still holding her hand in mine, I pushed the door open and entered the front room. I felt my fair companion's hand trembling, but she went forward with an unhesitating step into the room that was so dark, box-like affair in the centre of the room. Silently we stood there gazing upon it. I was now desperate and determined to know the worst.

Dropping Miss Cooper's hand I took hold of the handle of the box and tried to turn it. It moved stiffly and slowly around, showing that in some way it fastened on the top. If I then grasped it with both hands and, throwing all the strength I could command into the effort, endeavored to raise the top of the box. It slowly yielded to the pressure, and I had raised it about an inch or two, when I heard again that awful groan.

It was followed by a suppressed shriek from my companion, who clutched at my arm convulsively, and that loosening my hold of the handle, the top of the box fell back into place with a loud bang.

Miss Cooper suddenly released my arm, and I saw her clinging to the sliding-doors which opened into the room, her horrified gaze fixed first upon me and then upon the dark box. But I no longer wished to open that; what I sought was not there, for that last groan had sounded from another part of the room. One of the long front windows was partly raised. The light from the street flickered in through the opening, casting fantastic shadows in that corner of the room, and it was from there the groans came. Even as I stepped back and tried to peer into the black shadows lurking there, it sounded again with terrible distinctness, loud, prolonged, and agonized.

With an exclamation of amazement, I sprang forward and threw up the window as far as it could go, and as I did so out of that; yet can't be sleeper there, I and an answer came, in husky tones; "I ain't got strength ter move; I've got the asthma awful bad." Then followed one of those terrible groans, from the same source.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND BANKS.

The Greatest Fishing Place in the World—A Fishing Fleet. Two distinct kinds of fishery operations are, or until recent years have been, conducted from St. John's and from St. Pierre, Ontario, in the bank fishery, the other the shore fishery. Their names describe their character.

The Newfoundland banks are submarine plateaus distant less than a hundred miles from the island. The largest of them, the Grand Bank, an immense rocky elevation, extends over nine degrees of latitude and five of longitude. The depth of the water about it from 50 to 300 feet. Here the lordliest of the lordly cod reside, and here the fishing fleets of the United States, Newfoundland, France, and Canada ply their perilous trade.

At the present day the bank fishery alone can be depended on. Formerly the waters about the American coast, from Massachusetts to Labrador were prolific of cod and herring. But reckless and wasteful methods of fishing—the seine, the cod net, the cod trap, and the butlow—have gradually depleted the shore fisheries until they now supply but a precarious living to those who still engage in them. They are not yet wholly abandoned except by the French and Americans. The fishermen of these nations, being compelled to go a long distance to find a fishing-ground, whether on the banks or along the coasts, and therefore to fit out for a deep-sea voyage anyhow, naturally go where the fish are least and most numerous. But those Canadians and Newfoundlanders who live along the harbors and coasts still frequent by the fish not unusually make good catches. They have the advantage of not being required to furnish themselves with large vessels. A stanch vessel is all they need, so that, although at best their fishing is poor and unprofitable with those they once enjoyed, there is still a measure of profit in the business.

There is an essential difference between the craft employed on the banks and those used by the shore fishermen. A "banker" of the American type is by far the stanchest and swiftest of the fishing fleet. A spectacle more picturesque than is presented by this queerly creature, with her long low black hull and her vast reaches of snowy wing, standing in waters here blue in the shadow of the rocky cliff, there iridescent in the sunlight, and yonder, where the fleecy clouds are passing, empurpled, soft, and rich, would be hard indeed to find. Not the least of her beauty is her long, thin, and their conflicting currents, but the land, bold, rocky, often weird, and always majestic, seems to be the natural home of a free, brave-hearted people. The cliffs that rise sharply from the sea on either side of the harbor channel at St. John's are examples of the coast. Everywhere these massive rocks are found standing over against each other with grim, hard fronts, like giants in a moment's rest from battle. The banking fleet seem to be their fit companions. They suggest the same dauntless spirit, the same inherent power. All things that float look feeble on the brow of a dashing sea, but if there is a craft that literally makes sport of the waves—not gentle carressing waves, but mighty billows that tear along in nervous ferocity—it is one of these stiff, saucy bankers.

Very different is the fleet that may any time be seen in the shelter of Petty Harbor. As an illustration of life in an outport, every scene in Petty Harbor is typical. The village is far enough from St. John's to possess an independent fleet of its own, and near enough to a profitable shore fishery to insure employment and profit to all its people. The boats, mostly sloop-rigged, light but well built, at nightfall fill the harbor, moored close by the flakes on which the fish are drying. Before daybreak the boys are out to sea, and, like horses in a steeple-chase, off they dash through the inlet, a dozen abreast, often with no more than the room of a salted herring from rail to rail between them.

Many might be disposed to ask what American wears a shawl, just as long ago the scornful question was raised, "Who reads an American book?" Both these questions, however, simply reveal ignorance, as there is a steady and increasing demand for these articles of wearing apparel, though for ordinary purposes they may be said to be wholly out of fashion.

For the usual purposes of a costume, certainly for ladies who wish to conform to the reigning styles, the shawl has few attractions. And still, as a matter of fact, almost everywhere in the world, the shawl is worn. The superficial critic overlooks the numberless purposes to be served by its use as an item in a fashionable costume.

Take the function which they so often have of the rug. Here alone is a sphere of usefulness which makes them almost necessary. An indispensable adjunct for the traveler, either by land or sea. They are a very handy thing to have in the house where there are babies.

For picnic purposes the shawl is of most practical value, and nothing has ever been invented that is quite such a convenient article to throw over the head and shoulders when out upon a neighborhood errand.

Apart from these uses, incidental, indeed, but universal, there is a large trade, particularly among American citizens of foreign extraction and throughout the Northwest, in shawls as an ordinary article of dress. It is very difficult to keep in mind all the elements in our heterogeneous population.

The broadest mind are apt to forget that the demands of certain classes of the population in states like Wisconsin or the Dakotas may be altogether different from that to which the tradesman caters in Eastern centers.

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