

For The Bloomfield Times.
A SINGULAR FRAUD.

CONTINUED.

"IF HE felt any annoyance he never showed it. Mr. Waldron is one of those self-poised men that preserve their equanimity under all circumstances. Besides he had the free spending of the income of the estate; what more could he desire? And then he prospered in business—having plenty of capital at his back. If any ever doubted John Waldron's love for his wife they must have had their doubts dispelled when Mrs. Waldron, two years after her father's death, wilful as ever, attended a ball too thinly clad for the weather, caught a violent cold, which brought on a galloping consumption, and the physician pronounced her case hopeless. Her husband's grief was most heartrending. He watched her night and day, heedless of rest or food, until he was nearly worn to a skeleton, and when she died, as she did in a week they carried him out of the room in a dead faint. He struggled out for the funeral, and then took to his bed, and it was six months before he began to look like himself again. Then, as if a fatality shadowed the house, the little girl fell sick, and it was soon reported that she was dangerous. You ought to have seen the distant relatives flock around—for if she died, they would take all, leaving Mr. Waldron nothing."

"Yes, I see," said the sailor, smiling with a serenity rather out of keeping with the solemnity of the narrative he was listening to.

The shopman, however, intent upon his story, did not perceive this.

"Fortunately," he continued, "the child did not die; though the doctor gave her up at night, in the morning he was surprised to find a sudden and great change in her, and in a week she was running about the house as brisk as a bee. The sickness affected her brain for a while, and she was quite light-headed. Indeed, one of the servants told me she appeared to be quite another child altogether, and did not recognize those who used to pet her, and she kept continually crying for her mother; but that all wore off after a while, and she grew stouter and brighter every day, until she became what you now see her."

Thanking the shopman for his story, the sailor threw away the stump of his cigar, and bent his steps once more towards the Farrell estate, communing with himself as was his wont.

"Let me see," he muttered, "it is now about the time that your fashionable swells take their dinner. I think I shall find Mr. John Waldron at home. Guess I'll give him a call."

He reached the house—entered through the ornamented iron gate—strode heavily along the tresselated walk, up the white marble steps, and gave the bell knob a vigorous pull.

"Is Mr. Waldron at home?" he asked, when the door was opened.

"He is," answered the servant, with a look which seemed to say "you needn't have pulled quite so hard."

"Tell him a gentleman wishes to see him on very important business."

The easy assurance of the sailor awed the servant into respect, so she showed him into the parlor, and went to call Mr. Waldron. The sailor surveyed the luxuriant furnishings with a grim smile as he settled himself comfortably in an easy-chair.

"He'll come down handsomely, to stick to all this," he said, apostrophizing his own reflection in the splendid plate mirror that filled the space between the two windows opening upon the balcony.

The door opened, and Mr. John Waldron entered the room. Perhaps the reader may feel a little curious to know what kind of a man this Mr. John Waldron was of whom he has heard so much. He was tall in stature, full six feet, sinewy and well-proportioned, a frame combining grace and strength with the polish of well bred society. Delicate white hands, with long tapering fingers, a seal ring upon the little finger of the left hand—a topaz. Regular features, a large, straight nose, square chin, and small mouth. Deep blue eyes, with just a glint of steel in their expression—a broad white forehead, and a profusion of light curly brown hair, with full beard and whiskers two shades darker in color. A firm self-poised man, carrying dignity in every motion and compelling respect. A man to lead the masses, and one not easily turned aside from the settled purpose of his soul. A man of wealth—it was apparent in every movement. Looking at him, you could readily understand how he had won the heart of Lillian Farrell—you would wager that no woman could refuse him. There was but one defect in his whole appearance—the eye; it looked as if the man might be treacherous, yet no one had ever found him so. The sailor who knew the world, gauged him rightly, in one comprehensive glance, as he entered the room.

"A tough customer this," he muttered, pitifully.

"You wish to speak with me?" asked Mr. Waldron, urbanely, with a cursory look at the stranger.

"I do," answered the sailor. "I know who you are, and as I do not wish to take advantage of any man, let me tell you who I am. My name is Robert Nobbles, commonly called Bob Nobbles; 'praps you never heard of me before."

"I never did," answered Mr. Waldron with a smile. "What is the subject of your visit here?" Scarcely to beg, I should judge from your appearance."

"O, no, I've only come to borrow," answered Nobbles, drily.

"To borrow!" exclaimed Mr. Waldron, in some surprise. "My good man I am neither a pawnbroker nor a usurer; and moreover, this is my private residence, and I am not in the habit of transacting business here."

"Are you sure this is your residence," asked Nobbles unconcernedly.

Mr. Waldron colored slightly, "and his smooth forehead wrinkled into the least perceptible frown.

"It is mine to all intents and purposes," he answered haughtily, "although it nominally belongs to my daughter Lillian.

"Are you sure she is your daughter?" asked the imperturbable Nobbles.

Mr. Waldron started as though he had been stung.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Do you know the large elm tree that stands by the river's bank?" continued Nobbles in the same strain. "Do you know what is buried at the foot of that tree?"

Mr. Waldron grew ghastly pale; his limbs seemed to fail him, and he sank into a chair, grasping his back convulsively with his white fingers. Nobbles surveyed him with a grim smile of satisfaction.

"Who are you, and what do you know?" demanded Mr. Waldron, hoarsely, of his strange visitor.

"I have told you my name is Nobbles; rated on the ship's books as an able bodied sailor; and now I'll tell you what I know. Strange things sometimes happen in this world, and one of them once happened to me. Fourteen years ago"—Mr. Waldron shuddered—"ah! I see you have a good memory—I was mixed up with a party that used to visit vessels in the harbor at night, and help themselves to any trifles that might be lying around loose."

"River thieves!"

"Exactly. Well, one night the police chased us; our boat was captured after a long chase, but I escaped by swimming to shore, and hiding myself among some trees that grew near the water's edge. When the pursuit was over, and I had time to look about me, I discovered that I was in the grounds belonging to some fine estate. While I was thinking how I could make my way to the road, footsteps approached, and I crouched behind the trunk of a tree to escape observation. Just then, the moon, which had been obscured most of the night, broke away from the clouds and shone out brightly. By its light I saw a man approaching, carrying a spade in his right hand, and a bundle under his left arm. I thought at first it was the gardener, but the moon's light was quite strong, and I soon discovered that he wore a gentleman's dress, and not that of a laboring man. My curiosity was excited by this discovery, and I watched him closely. He proceeded to the foot of a large elm tree, laid down the bundle, and commenced digging a hole in the ground with the spade. He did this very hurriedly, glancing around nervously every time the wind rustled among the branches of the trees. When he had dug the hole deep enough to satisfy him, he placed the bundle carefully in it, bent over it with a strange action which I could not understand then, but comprehended afterwards, and hastily shoveled back the dirt, replaced the sod carefully, and hurried away."

"And you were there and saw all this?" demanded Mr. Waldron, restlessly.

"How else could I tell it to you?"

"True."

"I never was so surprised at anything in my life. My first thought was, that some valuable jewels had thus been hid away for safety, and as I was in the appropriating line in those days, I determined to possess them. I dug up the turf with the large knife I carried—a kind of safeguard against the police you know—and scooped out the dirt with my hands, trembling all the while in my eagerness to discover what had been buried there. I soon reached the bundle and drew it forth. It had a strange feel about it, which I didn't altogether like, and I shuddered as I unwrapped a soft kind of little blanket that was wound about it. It was neither gold nor jewels. I was younger then and unused to such sights, and my legs fairly shook under me and my hair stood on end as I looked at it. It was the dead body of a little child!"

John Waldron covered his face with

his hands and his strong frame quivered.

"What did you do with it?" he asked removing his hands after a short pause, and showing his face as unmoved and placid as ever.

"Returned it carefully to its grave, replaced the earth and turf as I had found them, and then made my way to the road, reached the ferry and returned to New York. But I treasured the circumstance in my memory."

"To make it profitable at some future time," said John Waldron drily.

"Exactly," responded Nobbles, in the same tone. "There was a girl in New York that I loved better than my own life, but she preferred another to me and married him. I met her the next day, and she, thinking I bore her ill will for the slight she had put upon me, accused me of stealing away her little girl. I thought nothing of the circumstance at the time, but it has come back to my mind with a significance lately. The city had got too hot to hold me on account of the river robberies, so I shipped on board a vessel bound for foreign parts, and sailed away. I've been back but twice in all this time, for the roving life pleased me—and strangely enough made an honest man of me—that is to say, honest as the world goes, for we are all rogues in the grain, you know I had almost forgotten that strange burial, when yesterday, scarcely two hours landed from Calcutta up steps the living image of my old sweetheart, Nance. I couldn't help speaking to her, and when I did she informed me that her name was Lillian Waldron, which quite flabbergasted me. But I was never slow in following up a wake, and putting my ideas together, I soon came to this conclusion: Lillian Waldron lies buried at the foot of the big elm in yonder grove, and to keep the Farrell estate in your hands, you stole the daughter of Nance Burke, and passed her off as your child!"

"You have made a very good story of it," said Mr. Waldron. "What do you seek to gain in this matter?"

"Five thousand dollars for silence," said Nobbles, resolutely.

"Ah! and if I should refuse to pay you this money—if I should treat your demand with the contempt it deserves?"

"I would denounce you."

"Possibly—but do you think your words would be believed? What proof can you advance?"

"The child's skeleton beneath the elm."

"It is no longer there."

"You have removed it?"

Mr. Waldron smiled placidly. Mr. Nobbles' countenance fell. He knew how little chance his words would have against a man of John Waldron's wealth and position. He pondered a moment and a sudden thought brightened the gleam of his face.

"The mother, Nance Burke, she is still alive, keeping an apple stand on the corner of Fulton Street and Broadway; she will recognize her and swear to her daughter. I saw her yesterday."

"She saw Lillian the same day you saw her, and did not recognize her as her daughter, though they conversed together for several moments," answered Mr. Waldron coldly.

Bob Nobbles looked bewildered.

"So you see, my good man, your case is not quite so strong as you fancied," continued Mr. Waldron, placidly. "Have you anything further to say?"

"Not a word," cried Nobbles, rising wrathfully; "but you'll see what I will do. I will bring Nance here to claim her daughter."

Angrily he strode into the hall, but he did not understand the catch of the front door, and Mr. Waldron came politely to his assistance and ushered him out, watching him as he hurried down the street.

"He can do nothing," he mused; "absolutely nothing but create a scandal, which will die away in a week. My darling's little skeleton lies upon her mother's breast in Greenwood; no one will think to look for it there. None knew what the box contained which I deposited there when I had the tomb opened. I would not have minded a thousand or two, to have kept the fellow's tongue still, but the possession of so much money would have only made him talk the more. You cannot buy the silence of such fellows. But I must be beforehand with him."

Calling his coachman, he ordered him to harness up as speedily as possible. Leaving his dinner untasted, much to Lillian's surprise, who never knew such an occurrence to take place before, he got into his carriage and was driven rapidly to the ferry.

Bob Nobbles' wrath, and the long story he had told, had made him dry, so he paused at a saloon on the way to refresh himself. Men of his temperament require quite a deal of refreshing when once they commence, so it was quite late in the evening when he got to New York and wended his way to Nance's apple stand on the corner of Fulton street and Broadway. To his great surprise he found the stand empty and Nance absent. He thought she must be

sick so he determined to call at her lodgings, which he had discovered the day before, as she had lived in the same old house for years. Her rooms were locked—Nance was not there. Her next door neighbor, however, afforded him some information, which was conclusive, but by no means satisfactory. A fine gentleman had brought her there in a carriage, and after packing up her dresses and what few valuables she had, she had gone away with him.

"Tricked by jingo!" growled Nobbles, as he stumped down into the street again. "He has bought her up instead of me. I am sold to a certainty. I cannot prove anything without her evidence, and he's fixed that by this time. He's a deep one—too deep for me. Well, I have found my match for once—no chance for that five thousand—guess I will let it slide—might get sent to Sing Sing on some old offence."

So Bob Nobbles floated around New York, sailor-like, until his money was all spent, and then shipped for a long voyage again. He was probably lost at sea, or died abroad, for he never again returned.

John Waldron's carriage stood before his office in Wall Street, and in his private room poor Nance sat beside him, bewildered at the strangeness of her position.

"You said you would restore my daughter to me," pleaded Nance, gazing wistfully around the room.

"So I will," answered John Waldron, "all in good time. Have patience; there is much to be told you. She is not here but at my house in Green Point. I wish to explain some matter to you before you see her because you must meet as strangers. You appear to be a woman of good sense, and one who would not wilfully destroy your daughter's prospects in life. Listen to me; let me acquaint you how you came to be deprived of your child, and beg of you to be guided by my advice."

"I will do whatever you say, sir," she answered, meekly, "for so good and great a gentleman like yourself would not advise me to do anything wrong."

"Great I am, no doubt," he responded with a proud smile, "but good—ah! that's another matter. I must tell you some of my history, my good woman, so that you will understand my position and I shall tell you things I never dreamed would pass my lips to mortal ears. I came from a proud family and as poor as they were proud. Reverses of fortune had reduced our once large estate to nothing, until at twenty-six I found myself alone in the world, with only a tolerable education and my quick wits to help me to the wealth I was determined to acquire. The road to fortune is a rough one, and few reach it without the aid of accident or influence. I had no influence, so I trusted to the chapter of accidents. Nature who had been so lavishly kind to me, pointed out the way. I was determined to marry an heiress; I had the good fortune to attract the attention of Miss Farrell. True, her reported wealth first drew me towards her and I spared no pains to gain her love. In this I was successful beyond my hopes. It was a great triumph for the poor broker's clerk to have gained the prize from his wealthy and aristocratic competitors. Nor was my love altogether mercenary, for though her fortune was the first incentive to seek her heart and hand, when that heart was mine, my love had become so intensified I would have married her without a penny."

It was strange that this strong and wise man of the world should thus pour out the very secrets of his soul to a simple and ignorant woman. It appeared to be a relief to John Waldron to let down the mask of placid reserve he had worn so long, and make a full confession. There had been a dreary monotony all these years in his mind, and it was like opening the windows of a long closed room and letting in the daylight—it purified his soul. She sat and listened without comment, too much astonished, indeed, to speak, and he continued:—Concluded next week.

All One to Him.

A Schleswig correspondent writes:—A little time back a country woman was buying various articles at a shop here, all of which seemed to indicate a projected immigration to America. The tradesman asked the woman if such was the case, and he received the following reply:

"You see, I have two daughters, and one of them was engaged to a man who is gone out to America, and who promised that as soon as he made money enough to support a wife, would send out money for the journey, and then they should be married. But several years had passed, and my daughter had found another sweetheart, when one day a letter comes from America with money to pay the passage. Well, now, I made up my mind to send my second daughter instead of the elder. The two lasses are as like as two blades of grass, and it will be all one to him which of 'em he gets for a wife."

VEGETINE

FOR DROPSY.

Central Falls, R. I., Oct. 10, 1877.

Dr. H. R. Stevens:—It is a pleasure to give my testimony for your valuable medicine. I was sick a long time with Dropsy, under the doctors care. He said it was Water between the heart and liver. I received no benefit until I commenced taking Vegetine; in fact, I was growing worse. I have tried many remedies; they did not help me. Vegetine is the medicine for Dropsy. I began to feel better after taking a few bottles. I have taken thirty bottles in all. I am perfectly well, never felt better. No one can feel more thankful than I do.

I am, dear sir, gratefully yours,
A. D. WHEELER.

VEGETINE.—When the blood becomes lifeless and stagnant, either from change of weather or of climate, want of exercise, irregular diet, or from any other cause, the Vegetine will renew the blood, carry on the putrid humors, cleanse the stomach, regulate the bowels, and impart a tone of vigor to the whole body.

VEGETINE.

For Kidney Complaint and Nervous Debility.

Essexboro, Me., Dec. 25, 1877.

Mr. Stevens:—Dear Sir, I had had a cough, for eighteen years, when I commenced taking the Vegetine. I was very low; my system was debilitated by disease. I had the Kidney Complaint, and was very nervous—cough bad, lungs sore. When I had taken one bottle I found it was helping me; it was helping me; it had helped my cough, and it strengthened me. I am now able to do my work. Never have found anything like the Vegetine. I know it is everything it is recommended to be.

MRS. A. J. PENDLETON.

VEGETINE is nourishing and strengthening; purifies the blood; regulates the bowels; quiets the nervous system; acts directly upon the secretions; and arouses the whole system to action.

VEGETINE.

FOR SICK HEADACHE.

Evansville, Ind., Jan. 1, 1878.

Mr. Stevens:—Dear Sir, I have used your Vegetine for Sick Headache, and have been greatly benefited thereby. I have every reason to believe it to be a good medicine.

Yours very respectfully,
MRS. JAMES CONNER,

411 Third St.

HEADACHE.—There are various causes for headache, as derangement of the circulating system, of the digestive organs, of the nervous system, &c. Vegetine can be said to be a sure remedy for the many kinds of headache, as it acts directly upon the various causes of this complaint. Nervousness, Indigestion, Costiveness, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Biliousness, &c. Try the Vegetine. You will never regret it.

VEGETINE.

DOCTOR'S REPORT.

Dr. Chas. M. Duddenhausen, Apothecary, Evansville, Ind.

The doctor writes: I have a large number of good customers who take Vegetine. They all speak well of it. I know it is a good medicine for the complaints for which it is recommended.

Dec. 27, 1877.

VEGETINE is a good panacea for our aged fathers and mothers; for it gives them strength, quiets their nerves, and gives them Nature's sweet sleep.

VEGETINE.

DOCTOR'S REPORT.

H. R. Stevens:—Dear Sir, We have been selling your valuable Vegetine for 3 years, and we find that it gives perfect satisfaction. We believe it to be the best blood purifier now sold. Very respectfully,
DR. J. E. BROWN & CO., Druggists,
Uniontown, Ky.

Vegetine has never failed to effect a cure, giving tone and strength to the system debilitated by disease.

VEGETINE

Prepared

H. R. STEVENS, Boston, Mass.

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