

A Startling Adventure.

DR. ELISHA HARRIS, late Registrar of Vital Statistics in New York, and now Secretary of the Prison Association of that city, made a special study of mysterious cases of supposed suicide for years, and in a conversation with the writer declared his belief that a large proportion of the cases of mysterious deaths that go on the records of the city as suicides were really skillfully planned murders by gangs of men and woman who make murder and robbery a business.

Along the streets bordering upon the river, or in adjacent streets, such as Water and Cherry, are located many vile hells.

Investigations made in a very large number of cases where bodies have been found floating in the water showed that the victims were last seen alive in the company of female frequenters of these hells of the metropolis or in the dance-houses. In most cases of this kind no valuable of any account were found upon the remains and rarely any external injuries were developed in a post-mortem.

These facts led Dr. Harris to the conclusion that many, if not all, had been inveigled into the low resorts by women, where they were drugged to death by some subtle poison administered in liquors, and then, in the silent hours of the night, the inanimate body, after being stripped of money and valuables, would be carried by the male murderers to an adjacent dock and quietly dumped into the river. In due time the remains would be carried to the surface and found by a boatman or the river police. The deadly drug had left no tell-tale mark. The police would investigate, and that was the end of the matter.

So impressed was I with the conclusions arrived at by Dr. Harris that I communicated with a personal friend on the detective force my suspicions that a certain house on Water street, which I had occasion to pass as late as 2 A. M. daily, was a den of thieves of this class. He readily consented to join me in an effort to discover something positive regarding the place, which was a resort of abandoned women, sailors and countrymen, with a bar attached.

One night at 11:30, dressed and disguised as Jersey countrymen, Detective T. and I entered the main room on the floor even with the street. In it were four or five half-drunken women and half-a-dozen sailors. In one corner was a small bar, presided over by a villainous-looking, peck-marked, ex-convict, and in another corner was a fiddler playing for the dancers. We spent money freely in treating all hands, talked about the price of country "truck" and the best market in which to sell, and promised to go around next day after we had sold our produce and have a good time all around, remarking that we wanted the fiddler, so we could have a dance.

The convict boss of this den chuckled at the proposition and readily assented to the further proposition that no "sailor fellers" should be admitted while we were guests, as we weren't used to "thar rough ways," and wanted to have "a clear swarth all to ourselves."

A little before noon on the following day, well disguised, we entered the resort. But two women and the proprietor were there, and an air of quietude—in striking contrast to the boisterous resort of the previous night—permeated the place.

Each of us had provided ourselves with a sponge, hidden away inside of our coat-sleeve, and, as we had previously arranged to drink nothing but "pony" glasses of wine, it was an easy matter by a dextrous movement to deposit the contents, after taking it from the glass, into the sponges. My companion drank freely, or at least appeared to drink, displayed considerable money, and after the fiddler had been sent for and the doors locked, indulged in several waltzes "between drinks."

An hour was thus passed, when, to all appearances, the "Jersey farmers" were "pretty well fuddled," so well had we simulated intoxicated men.

As our object was to see more of the premises we offered no resistance when the women urged us to retire to a rear room. There more drinks were called for, and in half an hour we were both apparently unconscious in a drugged and drunken stupor. The women retired from the room, which was dimly lighted by the kerosene lamp, and we were left side by side on a mattress in one corner for some time. There was a peculiar taste to the wine that satisfied us it contained a drug.

In a little while "Big Charley," the boss, returned with one of the women, who passed as his wife, and, stooping over us, he remarked: "I'm blowed, Hannah, if them fellers isn't good game. Now you hold the door an' hold the light, an' the fiddler an' me'll soon lay 'em away 'till night. They're well salt-

ed, and we'll fix them at midnight, when all's still."

The fiddler was called, and we, limp and apparently insensible, were carried down a rickety stairway to a sub-cellar and quietly deposited on the floor, which was of stone. Our entertainers retired, leaving the lamp burning dimly.

My detective friend got up and cautiously explored the place.

I confess I was not pleased with his report.

On one side he found a blind door leading into a dark passage-way, which, from the sound of running water, he supposed to be one of the city sewer, through which they carried their victims. I was so alarmed that I suggested we had seen enough, but he was inexorable.

"Let us see the end," he said. "We are well armed; we're enough for them. Why if I only showed my shield they'd beat a retreat. Keep quiet and watch me."

We did not wait long in suspense. "Charley" and his woman entered.

The former examined us critically, and, turning to the woman, said: "You go up and tend bar, if any one drops in; send Lize down to watch the clodhoppers, and have her pour a little more of the 'stuff' down 'em in half an hour. I must now go over the river and get Bob to come over and help me plant 'em after we close in the mornin'."

Again we were alone.

The detective whispered his plans to me, and a few minutes later the woman Lize came down with a bottle in her hand, and sitting down on the only chair in the cellar, engaged in the occupation of knitting.

Half an hour must have passed—to me it seemed two hours—when the woman picked the bottle up from a shelf and walked deliberately over to our corner. With closed eyes I felt her warm hand on my forehead; then she turned my head over, face upward, and forcing open my mouth when my companion, with a quick movement, threw himself over, and drawing a pistol, hissed, "Ah, Lize! I've got you! Now open your head, and I'll blow it off your lousy body! See this shield? Ha! ha! trapped at last, eh?"

So sudden was the thing done that the woman crouched down quietly, as the detective threw off a wig, and she identified him as one who had twice arrested her for shoplifting.

To be brief, the woman "Lize made a clean breast" of the fact that sailors and countrymen were drugged and taken to the sub-cellar, where they were visited by "Big Charley," his wife and two men.

What disposition was made of the victims she never knew, or professed to know not. The officer promised her protection if she would aid him in solving the mystery of the removal of the drugged victims who might visit the place in future, at the same time warning her that he would have her watched, and it would be useless for her to attempt to flee the city. It was also arranged that when the sub-cellar again had an occupant she was to find means to hang a white cloth from the front window as a signal, and at all events to meet him at a place appointed a week hence. She then released us through a side door.

Daily the house was watched—no signal. The trying time arrived, and Lize came not. Over another week passed without other news of the woman. It was supposed she had escaped the detective's vigilance.

Reading a description of the body of a drowned woman found at Fort Hamilton, the detective believed it was Lize. He went there and recognized her as the Water street woman.

The detective always maintained that he believed "Big Charley" and his gang, suspecting Lize of treachery, had murdered her and thrown her body into the river.

Shortly after this, my friend, who still had the house under surveillance, became insane, and a few months later died.

The Water street den has been demolished to make way for the Brooklyn bridge, and the inmates were scattered. Yet I still firmly believe that Dr. Harris was right, and that there still exists in this city, under the very eyes of the police, one or more organized gangs whose business is the inveigling of strangers into suspicious places, the robbing of their persons and the consigning of their bodies to the waters of the rivers and harbor.

Where is the Vidocq who will fathom the secrets of these malefactors?—N. Y. Police Gazette.

☞ We have the girl of the. If you would—her call early; she has no ill. Editors should not approach with a—, as she might look at a fellow, or make him see; but as Jeal visits may excite Jeal jealousy, we enjoin great caution. Use your \$\$ freely, and make the ?? pointed, heed not her !!, but get a & decisive answer. She may say, "put him on the—der and give an" to Autumn."

SUNDAY READING.

Fathers on the Skirmish Line.

"IF YOU wish to train up your child in the way he should go, just skirmish ahead on that line yourself," said wise Josh Billings, and if he was not addressing fathers and thinking of boys, he ought to have been. The writer was present once at a social religious meeting, when a very large man with a very large nose, and no doubt a very large heart, also, arose, and used his space of time to tell what a good mother he had and how her influence had guided him, and finished with an exhortation to all mothers to make good men of their boys.

The divines followed "in a similar strain and ended with the same exhortation. All the brethren settled themselves more comfortably into their seats, and all the sisters bowed their heads with meek faces, as if sweetly taking up the heavy burden thus flatteringly laid upon their frail shoulders. No, not all; for one sat bolt upright, too indignant for speech, to see those great broad-shouldered men thus calmly shirking the greatest responsibility God ever called them to bear.

Because some mothers, blessed with mighty faith and powerful will, have borne their sons triumphantly over the quicksands of youthful temptations and planted their feet firmly on the pleasant upland of righteous manhood, shall it be demanded of every frail woman to whom God has given a son, that she do the same? No; with equal justice it might be demanded of every woman that she write books like Mrs. Stowe, entrance large audiences like Miss Willard and Anna Dickinson, or be a brilliant newspaper correspondent like Mary Clemmer.

What weight has a mother's word when weighed against a father's example? The mother says, "My son, do not smoke; it is bad for your health, bad for the purse, bad for the morals, and the pleasure it affords is trifling compared to the evil it works."

"What does mother know about smoking?" reasons the boy; "she never smokes; father smokes, and I am going to."

"Don't spend your evenings about the bar room and village store," pleads the troubled mother; "the conversation there is not such as I wish you to listen to."

"What does mother know about bar-room talk?" questions the boy; "she is at home rocking the baby or darning stockings, father is there and I'm going."

One outspoken ten-year-old boy said, "I like my mother well enough; but I think father is a great deal smarter;" and he expressed the feelings of the average boy when he enters his teens. Now, which parent is likely to have most influence in forming the character of that son?

"I'll take what father takes," said the boy at the hotel dinner table, and boys are taking what their fathers take, all the world over.

A father and son were clambering up the rough, steep sides of a mountain, when the father stopped to decide which of many paths to take, the boy said, "Be careful to choose a good path, father, for I am coming right behind you."

Fathers upon the hillside of life, be sure you choose a "good path," for your sons are just behind and almost certain to follow in your footsteps. If the bewitching voice of pleasure entices you into the by-paths of self-indulgence and sin, remember that where you trip he will stumble, and the same foul mire that soils your raiment will engulf him. But if you choose to walk the pleasant highways of temperance, virtue and Christian manliness, he shall keep even step with you, and at last dwell in peace at your side.

"The just man walked in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."

FAITH.

I APPROACHED the clerk of a steamer, and asked, "Can I engage a state-room on this evening's boat?" "Yes," was the reply. I turned and looked at the diagram, or "plan" of the steamer's saloon, and selecting a room, asked that it be set down to my name. "I cannot promise you any room at the present, sir," replied the clerk; "our returns are not all in yet from the hotel, and I know not yet what numbers have been taken. But I will take your name and secure a good room for you." Feeling doubtful of the slim prospect, it being the season of midsummer, and the traveling heavy by this route, I ventured to suggest, "Perhaps it may be that all the rooms are taken up, sir; how then shall I know that I shall have a room?" The gentlemanly clerk looked up into my eyes, and with a friendly, firm voice, replied, "Because I tell you so." I could only answer, "Your word

is sufficient sir; excuse me for doubting you."

As I walked away, and through the crowded streets, I repeated several times within myself, "I have the state room, his promise is given to me; his honor requires that he should fulfill it." When, an hour before the boat started in the evening, I returned, the clerk at once recognized me, and pointing to a certain number on the diagram, observed, "I have retained that room for you; it is among the best." And I had all day cheerfully believed that "it would be even as it was told me."

It is not necessary to add even a word to apply this simple incident to God and his promise, or man and his duty to believe Him. It applies itself. If the promise of a man is to be taken at par, the word of God is greater and cannot fail. The "word of God" is come unto us in those exceeding great and precious promises, and shall we not joyfully trust in them?

Josh Billings on Beer.

I HAV finally cum to the conclusion that lager beer as a beverage is not intoxicating.

I have been told by a German who drunk it all nite long, just to try the experiment, and was obliged to go home sober in the morning. I have seen this same man drink eighteen glasses, and if he was drunk it was in German, and nobody could understand it.

It is proper enuff to state that this man kept a lager beer saloon, could have no object in stating what was not strictly true.

I believe him to the full extent of my ability. I never drank but three glasses of lager in my life, and that made my head outwist as tho it was hung on the end of a string, but I was told it was owing to my bile being out of place; and I guess that it was so, for I never bled over wus than I did when I got hom that nite. My wife thot I was goin to die, and I was afraid I shouldn't, for it seemed as tho everything I had ever eaten in my life was coming to the surface; and I believe that if my wife hadn't pulled off my boots just as she did, they would hav cum thundering up too.

O, how sick I wuz! 14 years ago, and I can taste it now.

I never had so much experience in so short a time.

If any man shud tell me that lager beer was not intoxicating, I shud believe him; but if he shud tell me that I wasn't drunk that nite but that my stummick was out of order, I shud ask him to state over a few words just how a man felt and acted when he was set up.

If I warn't drunk that nite, I had some ov the most natural simtums that a man ever had and kept sober.

In the first place it was about 80 rods from where I drank the lager beer to mi house, and I was jest over two hours on the road, and a hole busted thro each one of my pantaloons neez, and didn't hav any hat, and tried to open the door by the bell-pull and hiccuped awfully and saw everythin in the room trying to get round on the back side of me, and, sitting down on a chair, I did not wait long enough for it to get exactly under me when I wuz going round, and I set down a little too soon and missed the chair about twelve inches, and couldn't get up soon enough to take the next one that come along; and that ain't awl, my wife sed I wuz as drunk as a beest, and, az I sed before, I began to spin up things freely.

If lager beer is not intoxicating it used me most almighty mean, that I know.

Still I hardly think that lager beer iz intoxicating, for I have been told so; and I am probably the only man living who ever drunk eny when his liver was not plumb.

I don't want to say anything against a harmless temperance beverage, but if ever I drink eny more, it will be with mi hands tied behind and mi mouth pried open.

I don't think lager beer is intoxicating, but if I remember rite, I think it tasted to me like a glass of soap suds that a pickle had been put tew soak in.

No More Hard Times.

If you will stop spending so much on fine clothes, rich food and style, buy good healthy food, cheaper and better clothing; get more real and substantial things of life every way, and especially stop the foolish habit of employing expensive, quack doctors or using so much of the vile humbug medicine that does you only harm, but put your trust in that simple, pure remedy, Hop Bitters; that cures always at a trifling cost, and you will see good times and have good health. See another column. 2t 2

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