

AT FEARFUL COST.

“WHAT are your objections to my marrying your niece, Mr. Meredith? We love each other devotedly, and—”

“And love is stuff and nonsense!” exclaimed Miser Meredith, as many called him. “You are only a clerk, and you don't expect to support a wife and the family that would probably come after taking one, on affection, do you? My niece, provided, also, the man whom she chooses for a husband is worth at least five thousand pounds, will be my sole heiress. I have been father and mother to her since her parents died, so I think she would only be doing right by remaining single—for I need attention and care—while I live.”

“Selfish old brute!” mentally ejaculated Frank Waldron. Then he said aloud “you will never consent to our marriage ever taking place?”

“Certainly not. My niece shall never be a poor man's drudge, if I can help it. Good morning, sir!” and old Meredith abruptly left the room.

Hattie Meredith, a fine, handsome girl of twenty years, was standing at the garden gate, waiting for her lover, but the gloomy look on his face, as he left the house and came toward her, told plainly enough that her uncle had refused to allow her to become Frank's wife.

“Hattie,” he said bitterly, “I am too poor to be the nephew of Miser Meredith; and he says he will never consent to our marrying.”

Hattie soothed him by telling him that she would try to change her uncle's decision, and try she did, but it was in vain. He told her what he had told Frank—that he would never consent to her becoming a poor man's wife, nor any man's while he lived.

The following week much to the disgust and anger of old Meredith, Frank and Hattie were wedded, and they left Millville.

John Meredith told her never again to darken his doors with her presence, and that he would at once make a new will bequeathing his whole fortune to charitable institutions.

The commercial panic in 1857 told heavily on Frank and his wife, who were reduced by it from comparative ease to dire distress. In this extremity they resolved to seek John Meredith, though for years they had not communicated with him.

It was twenty miles from Millville to Middleton, and when Frank got back his wife and a Mrs. Jameson were awaiting his return. He looked ghastly and Mrs. Jameson retired to rest; but as she did so she heard him say that they were saved but at a fearful cost. Before day Mrs. Waldron was delirious.

Between 8 and 9 o'clock there was a knock at the door, and Frank on opening it, was confronted by a constable.

“Frank Waldron,” he said, “you are my prisoner. I arrest you for the murder and robbery of John Meredith.”

He seemed paralyzed by the fearful charge, and neither spoke or moved; but with a dazed look upon his face, and deadly pale, he gazed at the constable.

A moment passed before he awoke from the stupor into which the dreadful accusation had thrown him, and he then said, “I am innocent.”

“I hope so,” responded the constable, who had known Frank for many years; “but, nevertheless, you must accompany me immediately.”

Frank, without uttering another word, went to the room where his unconscious suffering wife and her sick child were lying, kissed them tenderly, and then told Mrs. Jameson the unfounded charge upon which he was arrested; but that he was guiltless of both crimes, as he surely would be able to prove.

“Mrs. Jameson,” he said tearfully, “my wife and children will need a friend now more than they ever did before, and will you be the friend to them? It may be weeks before I shall have been tried and prove my innocence, and if it should be so will you care for them till I shall have gained my liberty?”

“Though you were the greatest wretch on the face of the earth, Mr. Waldron, I would be but a poor uncharitable Christian if I refused to aid and care for them now, when they need aid and care most. Whether you are guilty or innocent, I will do all in my power for them.”

“Heaven bless and reward you,” he said, fervently; and then, in company with the constable, he left his home for Millville, where he was placed in prison to await his examination.

That morning Mr. Meredith had been found in his bed-room, cruelly stabbed to death, and lying in one corner of the apartment was his plundered strong-box, where he always kept a considerable

sum of money and some valuable jewelry.

For two or three hours on the preceding night, Frank Waldron had been seen prowling around the residence of Mr. Meredith, but nobody had perceived him enter the house. On being searched after arriving at Millville prison, a bag of gold was found on his person, and his hat was found lying on the floor of the room which opened out of Mr. Meredith's, and through which any person would have to pass to get out of the house on leaving the murdered man's sleeping apartment.

Such, including Mrs. Jameson's account of Frank's startled and peculiar appearance on his arrival home, and the words she heard him utter to his wife with which the reader is already acquainted, constituted the chief evidence against him; but circumstantially it could hardly have been more damaging.

Most people believed—even those who knew him well—that he was guilty of the horrible crime. The theory was, that driven to desperation by his poverty, he had resolved to only rob his wife's uncle; but that the gentleman had been aroused from his slumbers by the noise made by the robber, and the latter fearing arrest for his attempt at burglary, had rashly killed Mr. Meredith. It was well known that Mr. Meredith had been on bad terms with his niece and her husband since their marriage, and many persons had often heard Frank say that he hated the miserly, selfish old man.

Well, three weeks after Frank's arrest and committal, his trial took place. His testimony on his own behalf was as follows:

“Having but little faith in Mr. Meredith's assisting him and his family, and being depressed and low-spirited, he, on the evening in question, lounged about the former's house for two or three hours before he gained sufficient courage to enter. He at last went in by the front door and found Mr. Meredith in the library. The old man received him coldly, and when he stated his errand, Mr. Meredith said he would furnish the aid he solicited, but only on certain conditions. He must leave his wife and children, go to Australia, and stay there, while his wife and loved ones must live with Mr. Meredith. He had no choice, his family being now on the verge of extreme destitution; so he pledged his word and honor that he would comply with Mr. Meredith's heartless conditions. The latter gave him the bag of gold found on his person to pay his expenses to Australia, and to enable him to live there until he found employment. He had then hurriedly left the house; so it was not surprising that, being confused by what he had just done, he should forget his hat and walk home bareheaded; though it was a mystery to him how it had got into the room where it was found, for he had not been in the room at all. Was it not natural under the circumstances that he should arrive home looking startled and pale, and that he should use just such an expression in speaking to his wife as Mrs. Jameson had overheard? Yes, it was indeed a fearful cost at which he had procured bread for his starving family—at the cost of exiling himself for years, perhaps forever, from the ones he loved the best in all the world.

John Noble, Mr. Meredith's only servant, except an old charwoman, who came in the morning to do the housework and cooking, and then departed early in the evening, stated that, about 8 o'clock he had seen Frank walking up and down in front of the house. At 10 o'clock he (John Noble) after going to his master to see if he required anything, retired to rest; on looking out of his bedroom window, he saw that Frank was still pacing backward and forward in front of the house. The following morning on entering Mr. Meredith's apartment to assist him to dress he found him lying dead upon the floor.

The jury, after a few minutes private discussion of the case, returned to their seats in the court, and the foreman said that they had found a verdict of “wilful murder,” against the prisoner. When asked by the Judge if he had anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon he only replied, “I am innocent.”

Two or three days after Frank's conviction John Noble was arrested for intoxication. He was found lying beastly intoxicated in the street; and when the officer tried to arrest him a struggle ensued between them during which John Noble's coat was torn almost to threads.

There rolled out of the lining of the coat a watch and chain, some jewelry, and several bank notes. The watch and chain and jewelry were recognized as belonging to the late Mr. Meredith; and when questioned as to how he came to have such valuables, he said Mr. Meredith had given them to him. This was not believed, as Mr. Meredith was known to have been a very niggardly man, and the officials began to think

that perhaps Frank Waldron's story might be true. Well, at last a confession that he had wilfully killed Mr. Meredith was forced from John Noble.

It was he, of course that had placed Frank's hat in the apartment where it was found. Frank was at once released, and shortly afterward John Noble paid the penalty of his crime upon the scaffold.

Mr. Meredith had made no will, so Mrs. Waldron, being his only relative, inherited all his property. Though they had suffered much for the sake of the love they entertained for each other, the future of Frank and his wife, from the day she became an heiress, was bright and happy.

Wanted to Spread.

YESTERDAY, Solomon Glass, a colored man, whose experience in agricultural pursuits has enlightened his neighborhood, came to town with a view of getting a divorce from his wife. When asked upon what grounds he replied:

“Sufficient is de grounds ob dis occasion. When I rented ten acres and worked one mule I married a 'oman suitable for de occasion. Now I rent sixty acres of lan' and work five mules. My fust wife is a mighty good ten acre wife, but she don't suit de occasion ob sixty acres. I needs a 'oman that can spread more.”

When told by a lawyer that the grounds were not sufficient, he remarked:

“I kin produce de histry to show whar I'm careek. I's a learned man and kin read clear around de majority ob colored gentlemen an' a great many whitefellers. De reason belongs to de French histry, an' though I docen't speak French, I talks about it. You know Napoleon fust married Josephine de Beauharis.”

“Yes,” answered the lawyer, “but you may become a trifle too historically opulent if you proceed much further.”

“Dat's all right. An' you know dat when he got up to de head ob de gubernment, an' had charge ob all de commissaries, he wanted a wife who could spread more, and he got a dispensation from Josephine and hitched onto Maria Louisa, cose she could spread more. Dar's de histry, an' dar's de precedent, an' ef a man can't get a dispensation on dese groun's whar's yer court house, an' whar's yer law?”

A REAL ROMANCE.

ON a hot July day in summer of 1874, a boy of perhaps fifteen or sixteen years, weary and footsore, was making his way along the dusty highway that passes the farm of Ex-Representative David E. Croan, four miles north of Anderson, Indiana. Espying hands at work in a harvest field near by, he timidly approached and asked to work for something to eat. Mr. Croan's son William took him to the house, where his mother gave him a bountiful dinner. Mr. Croan then set him to work, and finding him willing and industrious, employed him to work. The boy could give but little account of himself. The first he remembered of himself was traveling from place to place with his parents, as he supposed them to be, called gypsies. After traveling about for five or six years the family finally settled down near Newcastle, Henry county, Indiana. There, after enduring hardships and cruelties, he determined to run away from his wretched surroundings. One evening after receiving a terrible beating from his father he grew desperate, and after dark stole away, going north, and sleeping the latter part of the night near the mounds. The next day he made his way to Croan's, and here found a comfortable home for several months. Since that time he has worked for several in the neighborhood; always being economical and saving in his habits, and laying up quite a sum of money.

A few weeks since he determined to go back to Newcastle and visit the home of his former miseries in order to see his sister, to whom he was warmly attached. From his sister, who was much older than him, he heard a wonderful story. She told him his name was not Hiram Britney, as he supposed, but Hiram Triford; that the Britneys had stolen him when he was but six or seven years of age from his mother, a widow, by the name of Triford, living near Angola, Steuben county, Indiana. His mother made every effort to find him. The country was scoured; the river was dragged; advertisements were inserted in the newspapers of the day, but all to no avail, and the mother finally gave up the search as hopeless, and settled down to endure as best she could the horrible agony and doubt surrounding her child's disappearance.

From that time on up to three weeks since, a period of sixteen years, no tidings had been received of the lost child. Young Britney or Triford, as we shall hereafter call him, on hearing the

strange story from his supposed sister, determined to go to Steuben county, at once and fathom the mystery. Arriving there, he inquired for a family of the name of Triford. He was directed to their residence. Knocking at the door, he was admitted and invited to take a seat. This he did, asking numerous questions regarding the surrounding country, the crops, etc., the lady eyeing him closely all the while. Finally he asked:

“Did you not lose a boy some years since?”

“Yes,” replied the lady, and tears unbidden came to her eyes, “and I would give anything in the world I possess to find him.” Another look at the stranger, and with a mother's quick instinct she threw her arms around him, folded him close in her loving arms, saying, “My child, my child! My long lost child, I have found you at last.”

When the lady had recovered her self-possession sufficiently, the boy's story was told, and his identity established beyond a doubt, one of the strongest proofs being a scar on his face. The news rapidly spread to the neighborhood, and hundreds of persons flocked to see him, and for some time he was the lion of the neighborhood.

Mr. Triford came back to this county a few days ago, settled up his business and returned to Steuben county, hereafter to live with his real mother and sister, from whom he was so long and cruelly separated, and to take charge of his mother's large farm, on which she resides. This is indeed a romance in real life, and we can truly say “the web of life is strangely woven.”—Indiana Exchange.

Took at His Word.

Many years ago an English voter who possessed influence asked the candidate to give his son a letter of recommendation to an official at the Admiralty. The request was granted, but when the youth called to deliver his credentials he found he had mislaid the precious epistle. However, he succeeded in obtaining a nomination, and some weeks after his return home discovered the lost “letter of recommendation” among some papers. Having done without it he had the curiosity to open it, and was startled to find it contained an earnest injunction to “throw every obstacle in his way,” for, as the writer added, “I cannot oblige this youth's father, and if he once enters the navy he will be plaguing my life out to get him a ship.” The young man was furious, but the father, a practical-minded man, coolly remarked, “It is not worth making a disturbance; we will take him at his word and plague for a ship,” which was done accordingly with success.

He Believed in the Old Fashioned Hell.

The Rev. Dr. Williamson, of the First Methodist Church of Chicago found that his congregation were relaxing their belief in a hell of literal fire. He therefore preached last Sunday on the subject, making the following points: 1. That if those Scriptures that relate with such apparent clearness to the fact of an endless hell are meaningless, no other part of the Bible can be depended upon; 2. That unless men dying in sin are doomed to awful and endless suffering, the humiliation of Pilate's court, the agony in the garden, and the final, bitter expiation on Calvary must be regarded as means utterly disproportioned to the end to be accomplished; 3. That, if Bible language was written to be read, and if, like all other speech, it means anything, so plain and so repeated are its statements on this subject there can be no doubt that an awful and eternal reality of punishment for unpardoned sinners exists in the universe of God; 4. That hell is a definite locality; 5. That the torture of hell is by literal and endless fire.

Fools That Buy Soap.

A Wisconsin peddler assured each purchaser of a cake of soap that, on using it until the centre was reached, a \$10 note would be found therein. The buyers cut the cakes open, and found no money. The swindler was arrested. He argued that the complainants, by cutting into the soap instead of using it in the ordinary way, had violated the terms of the sale, and therefore could not legally proceed against him. The Justice ruled that the defense was sound and discharged the prisoner.

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