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The Manhattan Well Mystery.

IN the year 1709 New York was not the sprawling monster of brick and mortar that it is to-day. There is many a country town in the land to day which can make a better showing for itself in homes and people to live in them than the great metropolis of the Western Continent could at the end of the last century.

The thickly-clustered houses lay all below Canal street, through which ran the stream by which the water of the Collect, a large pond over whose filled-up bed the Tombs now rises its grim walls, reached the North River. Beyond that were meadows and fields, gentlemen's country seats, dairy and kitchen farms, and Broadway and the Bowery were country roads.

At that time the Manhattan Company, now a bank, had the task of supplying New York City with pure and wholesome water, and some may be astonished to learn that it still has a large tank full of water in Centre street to supply any citizen who may prefer it to Croton, and will pay his yearly water rent.

Among the wells sunk by this company was one on Laurens street, or South Fifth avenue as it is to-day, near Spring, now enclosed within the walls of a house.

At the time we speak of, this Manhattan well stood in an open field, and parties out driving frequently stopped there to water their horses or take a cooling draught themselves from the bucket.

Among the well-known residents of that day was Mr. Elias Ring. He was a Quaker, a well-to-do business man, who lived with his family in a comfortable mansion which was not torn down until a few years ago, at the corner of Franklin and Greenwich streets.

The family of Elias Ring consisted of his wife, daughter and orphaned niece.

The name of this latter was Gullelma Elmore Sands. She was a beautiful and intelligent young girl, vivacious in temperament and of an amiable and lovable nature. Lovely as she was and conscious of her loveliness, she was very little of the coquette and in person and manner a model of propriety.

Still she had a sweetheart.

This person was a young man named Levi Weekes who boarded at her uncle's house. He was a handsome young fellow, who seemed to reciprocate Gullelma's affection for him. They were much together and were popularly looked upon as acknowledged lovers.

Consequently, when Gullelma, on Sunday, December 30, she informed her aunt and cousin that she was to be privately married that evening to Levi Weekes, they were not particularly astonished. They approved of the match, the more especially as Levi was a young man of some means and more expectations, and his fiance a poor girl, dependant on them for her support.

So she set out, if her words are to be believed, to be married.

Or rather she set out first to a neighbor to borrow a muff. She was to be driven to the minister's, she said, in a sleigh Levi had borrowed from his brother. While she was gone for the muff her lover remained in the entry of her uncle's house. She returned and the last seen of them together, Elma, as she was called for brief, and her sweetheart were standing in the hallway, criticising the muff she had succeeded in borrowing.

With nor kin of hers ever set eyes on her again, alive.

There are people who swore, long

afterwards, that they saw Levi Weekes hand her into the sleigh and others who said they saw him driving her off. But whether he did really hand her into the sleigh or whether the witnesses had even seen her in it no man knows.

What is known is that Mrs. Ring was just putting her workbasket back to retire to bed that night when the knocker at the door announced a visitor. To the good woman's no little amazement it was Levi Weekes. He had a sleigh, with the horse tied to the hitching post in front of the house, and asked for Elma.

"Elma?" repeated Mrs. Ring, "did thee say Elma, Levi?"

"Yes, I did," he replied, as the woman afterward thought with some nervousness; "What of it?"

"Why, she hath gone out."

"Gone out at this time of night?"

"Yes."

"But what should she go out for? who was she with?"

This remark puzzled Mrs. Ring more than ever and she could barely stammer:

"Indeed, Levi, to tell the truth, I believe she went with thee."

He answered promptly; "If she had gone out with me she would have come with me. I never saw her after she left the room."

To make a long story short, he swore he had left the girl standing in the hallway and had gone to obtain the sleigh at his brother's; that he had been detained there until now and that was all.

And so it turned out to be, so far as any admissions on his part were concerned. The girl not returning by morning, a hue-and-cry was raised and she was sought, but vainly. No sign or token of her could be found. Indeed, the very hour of her leaving the house and whether she left it alone or in the company of Weekes or anybody else was never discovered.

Two days after the muff Gullelma Sands had borrowed was found in Manhattan well, but even this and the disappearance of the girl led to no further examination till the 2d of January, 1800, when the uncle, Elias Ring, and another person dragged the well and brought up the poor girl's body, with the dress torn open above the waist, but without shawl, neck-handkerchief or shoes.—There were marks of strangulation on the neck.

It was no case of suicide, as she would not have thrown aside these articles and retained the muff. But who was the murderer?

Suspicion at once rested on Levi Weekes. He was arrested, indicted and on the last day of March put upon his trial.

The presiding judge was Chief Justice Lausing, who disappeared years after as mysteriously as did Gullelma Sands, leaving his hotel for the Albany boat, never to be seen or heard of. Cadwallader D. Colden was the prosecutor and on the side of Weekes were arrayed Alexander Hamilton and his future slayer Aaron Burr, and also Brockholst Livingston.

On the jury of solid New Yorkers sat, among others, Robert L. Sylburn, whose name has recently been brought up as the original purchaser from the city of the site of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

A great number of witnesses were produced, and the prosecution, adopting the theory that Weekes took Elma out in his brother's sleigh, choked her to death and threw her in the well. Several persons living near that spot heard cries of "Murder!" on the night of December 30th, but no special search was made. The track of a sleigh was noticed near the well, but quite a number passed there daily and there seemed to be no proof of any marks of a struggle.

There was no testimony that Weekes and the poor girl were seen to enter the sleigh, although in after years some professed to have seen it.

Several witnesses declared on oath that Weekes spent the evening, from 8 to 10, at his brother's house. The evidence of his having used his brother's sleigh was extremely weak, and when on the third day of the trial the counsel suddenly closed the case without any address to the jury from either side, Judge Lansing, somewhat annoyed at not having time to review the testimony, instructed the jury that there was not sufficient evidence to justify

them in bringing in a verdict of guilty.

Under this instruction the jury acquitted Weekes.

Public opinion, however, was strong against him, and he left New York.

Stories of all kinds prevailed as to Elma and her condition at the time, some saying that she was always cheerful—others that she was a prey to melancholy. A thrilling incident on the trial was often repeated, although there seems little foundation for it. Burr is said to have moved two candles suddenly, so as to throw the light on the face of a witness, also a boarder at the house, so as to give him from where the jury sat a ghastly and livid look.

His testimony is said to have weighed against Weekes, but from Hamilton's full notes of the trial, still preserved, it was evidently immaterial. But the story is that as he made the movement, Burr exclaimed, "Gentlemen, there is the murderer!" and that his guilty start saved the prisoner's life.

How Gullelma Sands came to her death was then a mystery, and though the saying goes that murder will out, we are nearing the end of the century with no light thrown on the case.

Had her shawl and shoes been found, the belief might be held that Elma expected Weekes to marry her that night, that he refused, and in her desperation she strolled off and put an end to her existence.

But they were not, and the supposition of a death by criminal violence remains good.

Levi Weekes was a lucky man.—Whether he killed his sweetheart or not no man can say. But men have gone to the gallows planks on less damatory circumstances than those whose evidence he managed to escape.—Police Gazette.

A Japanese Bill of Fare.

IN the last number of the Revue Britannique is published an interesting account of a modern Japanese dinner party, from which we extract the following extraordinary menu, recommending it to the attention of those who may desire to introduce some startling novelties into the art of dining, as practiced in those islands: Boiled ducks, chopped pigeons, bird's nest soup, roast mutton and bamboo buds, mussel and crabs, tea and cakes, turtle soup, minced dog, braised rats, macaroni soup, black rats roasted with sweet sauce, salt fish, roast pork with rice patties, preserved melon seeds, stuffed sea-frogs, walnuts stewed with betel leaves, ices and fruits. Various wines were served during this amazing entertainment. The centre of the table was occupied by a huge covered bowl, containing a good store of sea-fleas, set swimming in Burgundy just before the guests sat down to dinner. By the time the meal was over these vivacious insects had become sufficiently inebriated to exhibit an abnormal and eccentric activity, so that, when the cover restraining their salutory exercises was removed at dessert, they afforded excellent sport to the Japanese gentlemen present, who displayed remarkable smartness in catching them with ivory chop-sticks, and in subsequently eating them alive. To British apprehensions this may appear a somewhat revolting repast; but remembering that many dishes which they and the Chinese enjoy have ugly names, that misrepresent their real character, we should suspend our judgment until we hear what the delicacies mentioned actually are. Bird's nest soup, for instance, is a very different thing from what people who have never been in China suppose it to be, and it is quite possible that even the black rat may be a species of ground game unknown in this country, but not the less edible for all that. We confess, however, that the sea-frogs and sea-fleas require a good deal of explanation.

How Russian Exiles Live.

ON his arrival the prisoner is driven straight to the police ward, where he is inspected by a police officer who is absolute lord and master of the district. This representative of the Government requires of him to answer the following questions: His name? How old? Married or single? Where from? Address of parents, or relations, or friends? Answers to all, which are entered in the

books. A solemn written promise is then exacted of him that he will not give lessons of any kind, or try to teach any one; that every letter he writes will go through the Ispravnik's hands, and that he will follow no occupation except shoemaking, carpentering or field-labor. He is then told that he is free, but at the same time he is solemnly warned that, should he attempt to pass the limits of the town, he will be shot down like a dog rather than be allowed to escape; and, should he be taken alive, shall be sent off to Eastern Siberia without further formality than that of the Ispravnik's personal order.

The poor fellow takes up his little bundle, and, fully realizing that he has now bidden farewell to the culture and material comfort of his past life, he walks out into the cheerless street. A group of exiles, all pale and emaciated, are there to greet him, take him to some of their miserable lodgings, and feverishly demand news from home. The new-comer gazes on them as one in a dream; some are melancholy mad, others nervously irritable, and the remainder have evidently tried to find solace in drink. They live in communities of twos and threes, have food, a scanty provision of clothes, money and books in common, and consider it their sacred duty to help each other in every emergency, without distinction of sex, rank or age. The noble by birth get 16 shillings a month from the Government for their maintenance, and commoners only 10. Winter lasts eight months, a period during which the surrounding country presents the appearance of a noiseless, lifeless, frozen marsh—no roads, no communication with the outer world, no means of escape. In course of time almost every individual exile is attacked by nervous convulsions, followed by prolonged apathy and prostration. They begin to quarrel, and even to hate each other. Some of them contrive to forge false passports, and, by a miracle, as it were, make their escape; but the great majority of these victims of the Third Section either go mad, commit suicide or die of delirium tremens.

Lost in the Sky.

WHEN Mr. John Wise was lost in his balloon, called "The Pathfinder," several months ago, the newspapers printed many accounts of trips made into the air, some by brave men and some by foolish ones.

A lady who lives in the town of Centralia, in the State of Illinois, said nothing until all the rest were through talking. Then she told the editor of the St. Louis Republican to look into the number of his paper that was printed on the twenty-first day of September, 1858. The editor looked, and found an account of how two little children took a trip in a balloon all by themselves. On that day an aeronaut, or sailor of the air, named Brooks, filled his air-ship with gas on the farm of a Mr. Harvey, who lived near Centralia. He expected to sail in the afternoon. About noon-time Mr. Harvey put his two children into the balloon, just to please them, and not thinking for a moment of any danger. The balloon was tied to a tree by ropes. All at once a gust of wind broke the ropes, and the balloon shot up into the sky with nobody but the two children in the basket. Mr. Harvey was wild with grief, and shouted aloud: "They're lost! they're lost!" All the neighbors ran to the spot, only to see the balloon drifting off to the north, and more than a mile high.

One of the children was a girl, Nettie, eight years old, and the other was her little brother, Willie, four years old. Both cried when they found themselves leaving the ground and going on a very, very strange journey indeed. Nettie looked over the edge of the basket and saw her father wringing his hands away below. Soon the people looked to her smaller than babies, and the houses like toy houses. She and Willie were going up, up, up, all the time. "I expect we are going to heaven, Willie," said Nettie. Willie thought it would be very cold in heaven, then, for the higher they went the colder it grew. Nettie wrapped Willie in her apron, and held his head in her lap until he cried himself fast asleep. Then Nettie folded her hands and waited. She said: "I think we must be near the gate now." She

meant the gate of heaven, that she had heard about in Sunday school. But Nettie fell asleep too.

When she awoke, she found that some strange man was lifting her from the basket. The strange man was a farmer in northern Illinois, who had seen the balloon drifting low across his field. The rope was dragging, and so he caught it, and landed the children safely. The balloon had floated all night. Nettie and Willie's father soon learned that they had been found, and took them home two days afterward. Nettie is now a woman, the very same who told the Republican to look back in its files for the story.

Marrying an Editor.

YES, I'm Mrs. Snow, an editor's wife. I well remember the day when Mr. Snow asked me to become his wife. I confess I liked Mr. Snow, and, thinking it would be a fine thing to be the wife of an editor, I said "yes" as pretty as I knew how, and I became Mrs. Snow. I have seen ten years of married life, and find my husband to be an amiable, good-natured man. He always spends his evenings at home, and is in that respect a model man; but he always brings a pile of exchanges which is only limited by the length of his arms and reads while I patch the knees and elbows of his pantaloons and coat.—After we had a Quaker meeting of an hour's length, I broke the stillness by asking:

"Mr. Snow, did you order that coal I spoke to you about?"

"What did you say my dear?" he asked after a minute's silence.

"Did you order that coal I spoke to you about?"

"Indeed, my dear, I am sorry, but I forgot all about it. It shall come to-morrow."

Another hour's silence, which is relieved by the baby's crying, and rather liking a noise of that sort, I made no effort to quiet him.

"My dear," says Mr. Snow, after he has cried a minute or so, "you had better give the baby some catnip tea to quiet him; he troubles me."

The baby is still. Another hour passes without a breath of noise. Becoming tired, I take a lamp and retire for the night, leaving Mr. Snow, so engaged with his papers that he does not see me leave the room. Toward midnight he comes to bed, and just as he has fallen asleep the baby takes a notion to cry again. I rise as quietly as possible and try to still him. Then another baby begins to scream at the top of his lungs.—There is no other course but to awake Mr. Snow, so I say:

"Mr. Snow! Mr. Snow!"

The third time he starts up and cries.

"What, Tom, more copy?"

The captain of a Greenland whaler put a piece of meat in a rope noose, spread upon the snow, and waited for a bear. Bruin saw the bait, approached and seized it in his mouth, but at the same time got his foot entangled in the rope. He quietly pushed it off with his paw and retired, and sat down at a distance to dine. After finishing his meal he returned where another bait and the noose had been replaced. He pushed the rope aside, seized the beef, and again retired. A third noose was laid, but excited to more caution by the evident observation of the bear, the sailors buried the rope beneath the snow and laid the meat in a deep hole in the centre. Once more the bear approached and the sailors were hopeful of their success; but bruin, more sagacious than they expected, after snuffing about the place for a few moments, scraped the snow away with his paw, threw the rope aside and again escaped with his prize.

A tramp called upon us yesterday to state that he was prepared to sacrifice himself in the interest of science. He had heard that there was a great deal of difference of opinion in regard to the question: "Does cider intoxicate?" For the purpose of restoring harmony to the scientific world he was willing that the thing should be tested upon him. Here's self sacrifice for you!

We follow the world in approving others but we go before it in approving ourselves.