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MY FIRST MYSTERY.

I am going to relate an occurrence which some people will think very insignificant. In the even tenor of my homely life, however, it was what is termed an "event." It turned out for the best, as many bitter things do in this life of struggle. Many, I am told, are scourged by the affliction under which I unconsciously suffered.

I was always a staid, quiet fellow, who liked home and a punctual, comfortable life, but being a bachelor, I began at the age of nine-and-thirty, to feel a little lonely, and my income being nearly five hundred a year, and my house and appurtenances being quite enough for a modest family, I very secretly, and with much precaution, began to look out for a wife.

I believe people supposed me to be rather older than I actually was. My hair was a little thin at top; some people said I was bald; perhaps I was so. My face is not short and dumpty. I don't think there is anything vulgar about it. It is long and thin, not a smirking, impudent countenance, but very grave, and perhaps a little shy. I called young ladies "miss," and my mamma "madam," and treated both equally with the ceremonious respect that flatters their self-esteem, without for a moment violating that profound sense of decorum which is ever prominent in the mind of a young lady of delicate feelings and refined education.

I had no doubt that I should be fortunate enough, in consequence of the marked superiority, in the points I have indicated, of my manners over those of the young men who were then to be met—I say I had no doubt that I should be fortunate enough to please whatever young lady out of the eleven with whom I had the honor to be acquainted I should ultimately select for the partner of my life and the regulator of my household. I chose Miss Martha Fendles. She was tall and slender, had commanding black eyes, and was full of prudence. I knew I had only to speak. I did. She looked surprised. Her magnificent black eyes were fixed steadily upon me for nearly half a minute, while she meditated, and then she accepted me.

She came home, I resumed her of my undying affection, and I liked of culinary and household affairs. I asked her, among other things, how much wine—it was a subject I was sensitive upon—she thought would quite suffice her every week. She told me she never drank wine, beer, or any other exciting fluid; and at dinner, luncheon, and supper, her glass always stood empty, except when there was water in it. I loved her more and more every day.

I found her a twice most valuable. She recommended me strongly, for instance, to cultivate her cousin, Captain Thunder. He was all, loud, and had black whiskers. His name was Thomas Frisk Thunder, and his air was festive and military.

He was in delicate health, though he looked robust. He was threatened with consumption; but his color was florid, and his appetite excellent. But consumption is a treacherous complaint, and its advances, I am told, are insidious and disguised.

He had twenty thousand pounds in three per cent government stock, and had quarreled with all his relations except ourselves.

I quite agreed with my wife. Here kindness and prudence pointed in the same direction. We were very attentive to him. He almost lived at Poplar Hollow, that was the name of our house. We bore a great deal from him. He had that loose way of flinging his limbs about, which Martha detested as much as I; and he was totally destitute of the respectful deference and reserve which are found always so winning with the fair sex. I have seen him, when he thought I was not looking, chuck Martha under the chin. And, on both our sakes, she bore it like an angel. But when I talked of it to her, she requested me to tell him how it disgusted her; which I did, and begged of him to consider a lady's feelings, which he promised me he would.

Everything was going on thus happily, and he was growing to like us more and more, when his regiment was ordered to the West Indies, and in little more than a year and a half, poor fellow, he died of yellow fever.

The consuls did not turn up. I suppose he was extravagant. He must have sold his stock.

We had acted for the best, however, and did not regret it much, although he had been a very heavy item in the expenses of our little household for upwards of a year. He liked ducks and peas, and asparagus and oysters, and drank a ridiculous quantity of port.

I expressed to dear Martha's mother, when next I saw her in town, my surprise at the total disappearance of poor Thunder's twenty thousand pounds stock; and she looked at me for some seconds, as if I had two heads, and then, being one of those fat women who see something ridiculous in everything, she shook and wheezed with laughter, until a good stiff fit of coughing pulled her up.

Then drying her eyes, she croaked with a most unfeminine grin still panting: "Who on earth, my dear Jerry told you that poor Frisk had twenty thousand pounds? He never had twenty thousand pounds! And this was the secret of your hams and oysters, and port wine, and boarding and lodging poor penniless Frisk whenever he had a month's leave," and the cynical old creature laughed again, till the chair creaked and the floor trembled. I was disgusted, and could not help saying:

"Madam, it was from your daughter, who conceals nothing from me, that I learned that fact; who she may have learned it from I neither know nor care. But she it was who advised our little hospitalities to poor Frisk. It was her advice, and I followed it; and I mention the fact because, however ridiculous you may be disposed to think me, you can hardly laugh at your own daughter. You may treat the disappointment, if you please, as mine only, but you must feel that the ducks, and oysters, and ham, and other things you are so good as to remember with so much particularity, though proceeding from me, in the first instance, were nevertheless some little loss also to Martha, a loss which I might not unnaturally have expected him, in some trifling way, to have made good to her."

This rebuke, which I delivered sternly, had some little effect on her for a moment. For she "hemmed," and bridled up, and looked a little queerly along the carpet; but the old wretch, I regret to have to apply such a term to my Martha's mother, (but such a want of common sympathy in so near a relative is positively odious) burst out again into another peal of the same heartless and stupid laughter, though she was palpably a little ashamed of it; and in that un lady-like condition I left her.

I must now relate a painful occurrence: a mysterious state of things; a discovery; and an affliction, which I remember still with consternation.

Dear Martha had retired to rest, perfectly well, at ten o'clock. I had some letters to write, which detained me, for some hours later, in the drawing-room. While writing them, I had occasion twice to consult accounts, which were filed in a little press in our bedroom.

My first visit was at about a quarter to eleven. I found her in bed, but wide awake, and, apparently, perfectly well, except that her face was unusually flushed, and her eyes unnaturally brilliant. She said she felt very nervous, and complained of my stealing about the house, disturbing her.

I entreated her to compose herself to sleep. She answered that if I were good enough either to stay in the room, or to stay out of it, it would compose her more than anything she could do.

She had such a pointed way of putting things.

I was obliged to go up a second time on a similar errand, about an hour later. I put on my shoes lest I should disturb her, and I listened at the door. She was breathing so erroneously; or, in less technical language, snoring.

Dear Martha never admitted that she snored. It made her very angry that I should insinuate or believe any such thing.

On this occasion the sounds were welcome to me, because I could enter the room without fear of disturbing her, and on doing so, I found her still very much flushed, but in a profound sleep.

When I finally returned she was still snoring; but, to my horror, I found her lying on the floor. My terror increased, for, on endeavoring to get her up, I could not awaken her. With the assistance of the housemaid I got her into bed. But she continued insensible till five o'clock in the morning, when I found that on raising her head, by an additional pillow, she mumbled a little, and showed some signs of returning consciousness, and shortly after, to my great relief, I did succeed in waking her. After talking for a few minutes quite like herself, she fell into a natural and healthy sleep, and next morning was just as usual.

I became, in consequence of what I had witnessed, extremely uneasy about dear Martha's state of health.

I began to watch her more closely, and I found to my consternation, that these alarming seizures were of frequent occurrence, and always at the same time. She would go to bed perfectly well; we would both fall asleep; I would then, perhaps an hour or two later, be awakened by her persistent snoring, and find her in the state I have described.

I fell into a habit of waking at about one o'clock every morning, and I found that this state of coma had actually become of nightly recurrence.

I became so anxious to allow an affection of so formidable a kind to become incurably established without taking active measures for the restoration of my excellent wife.

Without a hint of my intention to her I made up my mind to consult Doctor Pelham, in whom I had implicit confidence, upon her case.

I was lucky. A chance would bring him by my house, on his way back to town, at about one o'clock the very next morning. He would then make me a quiet visit, and he would see the patient, and consider the case carefully.

I did not reach home till twelve o'clock. My wife, the servant told me, had gone to bed at her usual hour, and was quietly asleep. I knew nothing of my arrangement with Doctor Pelham.

I grew more nervous as the moment approached. The clock struck one, and I not very long after Doctor Pelham's brougham galed up to the little garden gate, and, leaving the hall-door open, I ran out to meet him at his carriage door, and to conduct him into the house.

Quietly we came in, he asking me a few questions as we did so. The hall-door was softly shut, and, at his request, I led him at once up to the patient's room.

There she lay, just as usual, in the same profound coma.

He felt her pulse. He stood by the side of the bed, candle in hand, and examined her face. He made me turn her in the bed, first on one side, and then on the other; then he made me shake her gently, then more briskly. Then he made me call her gently, then loudly, and finally I satisfied him that she was in a state of coma. He raised her eyelids, and looked at her eye, and stooped, as he did so, very close to her face. Then he stood again at the side of her bed, looking down on her, with his lips compressed and drawn down at the corners, and a hard frown, and he helded once or twice as he was thinking.

"That will do," said he. "Let us go down."

I was very much alarmed; his face frightened me. I led him again to the front room.

"Is it anything very serious, doctor?" I asked, very much afraid of the answer that was coming.

"Serious enough," said he. "Can you do something for it?"

"Nothing," he answered.

"Good Heaven! sir, what is it?" I exclaimed.

"You and your vicar may do her more good than I could," said Doctor Pelham.

"But what is it?" I exclaimed, in something bordering on distraction.

He smiled faintly, and nodded, and looked out through the window for a moment, and then, turning to me with a little shrug, he said:

"I see there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy. Have you read your Arabian Nights?"

"Genii?" I asked, thinking he meant thereby to indicate supernatural agency.

"You remember, then," he continued, "a story of a lady who had certain unaccountable peculiarities which puzzled her husband. He lay awake one night, pretending to be asleep, as usual; he watched her, saw her rise, and leave the room. He followed, keeping her in view, and tracked her to the tomb, where he saw her infernal repast, and discovered her to be a ghoul!"

"A ghoul!" I exclaimed.

"Now, in this case," he continued, "you must practice a similar stratagem. You must have nerve to follow it up."

"And what shall I see?" I said.

"Wonders," he replied.

"But what?" I insisted.

"Say nothing to put her on her guard, and your eyes will tell you that. I shall say a word more on the subject. Good-night," he said, and went quickly to the hall-door.

I followed him, and tried to slip his fee into his hand as he passed me. But he peremptorily declined it; and, repeating "Good-night," ran down the steps, through the garden, jumped into his carriage, and had driven away before I half recovered the stupor of what he had said.

I took a long walk next day. I kept as much as possible out of my wife's way. The doctor's mysterious conduct had given me vague and secret misgivings about her; and a sense of the espionage I meditated, a duplicity imposed upon me as a matter of conscience, and such as I had never practised before in all my life, combined to embarrass me in her presence.

I don't know whether it was fancy, but I thought her fine black eyes followed me about, with a steady but stealthy suspicion, all that evening, as if she were intuitively informed of the altered state of my thoughts, and knew, with a fearful anticipation, that light was about to break in upon me.

I did my best to appear unconcerned and easy. We played our short game of cards as usual after tea. I read aloud a chapter of Miss Burney's charming novel of Cecilia, and then our portion of the Pilgrim's Progress, and, lastly, our accustomed chapter of the Bible.

I saw her look at me, as I did so, in a marked and suspicious way, and before we went upstairs she asked it abruptly: "Are you quite well this evening, Jerry?"

I laughed (what a hypocrite I was becoming) as well as I was able, and assured her that nothing was amiss with me, that I never felt better, and only wished that she were half as well.

She seemed satisfied, and we went to rest.

It was my habit, ever since I had discovered her liability to the seizures which I have described, and which appeared to me since my secret interview with Doctor Pelham, the night before, unspeakably more awful than ever, to keep a light burning in the room all night. I was therefore furnished, without any departure from ordinary habits, with means and opportunity of observing all that should pass.

I affected to fall into a sound sleep; my wife appeared to me really to do so.

At about a quarter to twelve my wife sat up in the bed, and looked at me, I had closed my eyes, except the least bit in life. She sat as still as a wax image, looking at me. Then she leaned over me and listened. Then softly and lightly she slid out of bed at the far side, without a sound, unlocked a press in the wall, and applied a black bottle to her lips.

I had risen, followed her round the bed with a noiseless tread on the thick carpet, and before she had made three great gulps from her contents, stretched my hand over her shoulder, and seized the bottle by the neck.

"Give me that," I said, gently but firmly, withdrawing the bottle from her hand. The smell told me what it was before I

raised it, and read "best cognac brandy," on its scarlet and green label.

I peeped into the press, or rather closet, round which broad shelves ran. Whole regiments of empty bottles, similarly labelled, stood there beside some half-dozen next the door, with their seals unbroken. This I saw at a glance. My wife attempted a little swagger, and affected indignation, but it broke down. The case was too strong for her. She sat down on the side of the bed and cried; I cried also.

She said at last: "I'll be a better wife in future to you, Jerry."

I kissed her, and we cried together a great deal.

Poor thing! She made a noble effort. She was very much chagrined after that. I used to see her looking at me when she thought I was not minding, and her fine eyes fill up with tears. I never alluded to the occurrence. There was good in her; and I think my forbearance touched her. She resisted bravely; and, thank Heaven, quite mastered her fault.

About six months after she was attacked with inflammation of the lungs. It was an unspeakable comfort to me that our good old vicar happened to be a visitor at Lhyl at that time. Before she died, for it was her last illness, she became comparatively serene and hopeful.

My married life was of less than three years' duration, and I have never thought of marrying again.

AN ELOPING HUSBAND AND A DETERMINED WIFE.—The late Omaha *Tribune* publishes the following:—Passengers on a recent Western bound train on the B. and M. Railroad were treated to an immense sensation. In a first class coach were a man and woman—the former, judging from his appearance, was about forty-five years of age, and evidently a workman; the woman was a really pretty girl, not over twenty-one years old. Those two took the train at Chariton, Iowa. Soon after leaving that station, they commenced gradually to lean toward each other, and eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again, and for a while "all went merry as a marriage bell." She was reposing with her head on his shoulder, and their hands were clasped together, as if they feared they would lose each other during the night. Their overflowing affection attracted the attention of every other passenger in the car. They slept sweetly, and all unmindful that Mr. Man's true and legal wife was in the first car ahead of the one in which they were riding.

Right here we must say that Mr. Man was eloping with the handsome young girl. His neighbors in Chariton knew of the elopement before it came off, and they raised a sum of money, with which they purchased a revolver for Mrs. Man, and a railroad ticket which would enable her to follow her runaway husband. So when they stepped into a first-class coach at the station, she walked into a second-class car, and they left Chariton on the same train.

The situation can now be easily comprehended. Mrs. Man waited until the train had passed two stations, when she prepared for action, and firmly walked into the car where the elopers were firmly held by Morpheus. The first thing the guilty pair knew they were suddenly awakened, and there stood Mrs. Man with a revolver pointed straight at her husband's head. The girl jumped up, and rushed into the sleeping car, claiming protection from the Pullman conductor, who looked her up in the stateroom. At the stopping place Mrs. Man, who kept guard over her husband, walked him out of the train, and when they were on the platform of the depot, she actually kicked him, beat him, stamped on him, and thoroughly subdued him in much the same manner as a man gets a vicious horse under control.

HOW TWO CALIFORNIA BOYS KILLED A PANTHER.—The following story, narrating how two boys killed a panther and two cubs, is told the Sacramento *Union* by a subscriber, residing in Colusa County, Cal.: "Permit me to make known to you an incident which transpired during the Summer months at the north fork of Grindstone, in Colusa County. The particulars are related to me by Rowcroft, a gentleman residing in the vicinity of Newville, upon whose veracity you can safely rely. He says two young men, with whom he is personally acquainted, started on the mountains, as is customary, with a band of sheep. One was named Orlando Burris, aged fourteen years, and the other (has) Hull, aged eighteen. After getting thoroughly settled in their cabin and the sheep under good control, they started off one bright morning trout fishing, having with them a sheep dog and a jack-knife, the latter in the possession of young Hull, and the only weapon of defense in case of an attack from any wild animals. They had not gone far, when they came to an old moss grown log, and were about to step on it, when out sprang a large shepanther and her two cubs. Young Burris hissed the sheep dog on the panther. She immediately seized the dog by the head and was punishing him in a frightful manner when young Burris came to the rescue, catching the panther by the tail and endeavoring to pull her off the dog. In case the panther let go her hold it would have been sure death to the young adventurer. Just in the nick of time young Hull, seeing the danger his companion was in, drew his jack-knife and rushed to the scene of the conflict. Running his hand down over the panther until he felt the

pulsation of the heart, he raised the knife, and with unerring aim, drove it straight into the panther's heart. The animal fell dead between them. Thus, by the merest accident, the lives of the two young heroes were spared. A few days afterwards they hunted up the two cubs which escaped during the fight with the old one, and killed them also. Any person paying a visit to their father's residence can see the three skins hung up as a trophy of the victory they accomplished. The dog recovered and is as faithful as ever."

MISSOURI TIN MINES.—The Greenville, (Mo.) Reporter says:

The reduction and smelting works of the Missouri Tin Company, near Fredericktown, Madison County, are at last completed, and are pronounced by competent experts to be as complete in every respect as can be found anywhere—even in Cornwall. The machinery has been tested, and everything works satisfactorily. We understand the Company will in a few days commence the smelting of tin. Those who have investigated the subject most thoroughly have no doubt as to the result, and we hope soon to announce the receipt of pigs of tin of Missouri manufacture, thus adding another important product of industry to the already long list which has entitled Missouri to the name of being the richest mineral State in the Union. Tin is not an abundant metal, particularly in the United States, and it is not strange that statements respecting the mines in Missouri are received by the public with a great deal of allowance. But those who have satisfied themselves by careful and thorough investigation, have shown their faith by their works, by investing nearly \$200,000 in the mines and in the most perfect machinery and buildings for manipulating the ore.

RICH DEPOSIT OF MINERAL PAINT DISCOVERED.—Our attention is drawn to the Indiana Democrat has been called to the wonder of productions of silica, or mineral paint, found in large quantities upon the farm of John Cessna, in Banks Township, this county. This paint comes from a bank of rocks on Straight's Run, and is deposited in large quantities in a dam. It has been pronounced by competent judges a superior article, really better than the silica imported from France and Italy, for the reason that it is entirely without grit. According to the definitions, it is a silicate of iron, and is also called *terra sienna*. It is estimated that the deposit is inexhaustible, hundreds of thousands of tons being exposed; and this is increased every day by the quantities which flow from the rocks.

Candy.

In New York alone there are more than four hundred manufacturers of confectionery, some of whom make an average of four thousand pounds a day through the year. Places of sale are innumerable, almost every block has its candy store, sometimes several of them. It is pleasant to be assured by those who have carefully investigated the subject, that the use of poisonous materials in coloring candies has greatly diminished within a few years. Certain fancy bonbons, made more for show than for eating, are still colored with objectionable substances. Purchasers should understand this, and sweetmeats of this kind should never be given to children for eating. While there is no doubt that some kinds of candy are injurious—that which is made from pure sugar, with no adulteration, is usually regarded nowadays as harmless—provided it is eaten moderately and at a proper time. Candy should never be allowed to take the place of substantial food; it should bear the same relation to ordinary food as other condiments do; and the most wholesome time for taking it is after a meal. To be nibbling at it all day long will surely destroy the appetite and injure the health, just as constant nibbling of anything else would injure the health. Candy would not have to bear the blame of all the colics and headaches which befall children soon after Christmas gifts are bestowed, did they not so often carry a pocketful of it around with them. The common substances used for adulteration are starch, terra alba, and clay; and, unfortunately, some manufacturers who make pure confectionery make also an adulterated kind, which they sell to a certain class of customers. An adulteration may readily be detected by taking a tumbler of water and dissolving a piece of candy in it. If the candy is pure, it will completely dissolve; if one of the articles above mentioned is in it, there will be a precipitate.

One cannot learn everything; the objects of knowledge have multiplied beyond the powers of the strongest mind to keep pace with them all.

What we do for ourselves, will soon be forgotten; what we do for others, may be the vision to cheer the soul when the eye can no longer behold the loved ones.

Men are found to be vain on account of those qualities which they fondly believe they have than those of which they really have.

Nothing would fortify us more against all manner of accidents than to remember that we can never be hurt but by ourselves. If our reason be what it ought, and our actions according to it, we are invulnerable.

Humorous.

Paradoxical—In surgery the lancet is always applied in vein.

"Beware," said the potter to the clay, and it became ware.

The way to keep your silk umbrella.—Only lend your cotton one.

When is butter like Irish children?—When it is made into little Pats.

When is a lady's cheek not a cheek?—When it's a little pale (pall).

Why is a young girl like a music book?—Because she is full of airs.

Why are "cuddled pussies" first rate to whisper a secret to?—Because they always keep dark.

Why is John Bigger's boy larger than his father?—Because he is a little Bigger.

When is a skein of thread like the root of an oak?—When it is full of knots.

Many young men are so imprudent that they cannot keep anything but late hours.

What is that which has a mouth and never speaks, and a bed in which it never sleeps?—A river.

How would you express in two letters that you were twice the size of your companions?—I W (I double you).

What is the difference between a school master and an engine driver?—One trains the mind, the other minds the train, sometimes.

The following advertisement was in a New York paper recently:—"Wanted, by a boy, a situation in an eating-house. He is used to the business."

An Omaha paper advises the people "not to make such a fuss over the shooting of one constable, as there are over forty candidates for the office."

A Yankee down East has made the discovery, that a window glazed with old hats is a sure indication that the occupants have seen a rum bottle.

Mr. Speckles says the best vegetable pill yet invented is an apple dumpling; for destroying a gnawing in the stomach, it is a pill which may always be relied on.

An Indiana editor makes the following announcement:—"We positively decline to publish any anonymous communication in the future, unless it is accompanied with the name of the writer."

"My friend, don't you know that it is very dangerous to take a nap while the train is in motion?"—"Why no," exclaimed the astonished individual, waking up; "why no?"—"Because this train runs over sleepers."

A married friend of ours said he would always have remained single, but he couldn't afford it. What it cost him for "gals and ice cream," was more than he now pays to bring up a wife and eight children. Bachelors should think of this.

The pioneer Methodist, Peter Cartwright, uttered many wise and odd and witty sayings. He was often much annoyed at one sister, more noisy than pious, who would go off on a high key at every opportunity. At an animated class-meeting one day she broke out with, "If I had one more feather in the wing of my faith, I could fly away and be with the Saviour." "Stick in the feather, O Lord! and let her go," fervently responded Brother Cartwright.

Wisdom and Truths.

Kind words do not cost much.

He is good who does good to others.

One cannot always be a hero, but one may always be a man.

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.

A promise should be given with caution and kept with care.

Equity judgeth with lenity, laws with extremity.

He that will sell his fame, will also sell the public interest.

The prodigal robs his heir, the miser robs himself.

The great secret of success in life, is for a man to be ready when his opportunity comes.

The greatest men live unseen to view, while thousands are not qualified to express their influence.

One of the most important rules of the science of manners is an absolute silence to regard to yourself.

In proportion as we ascend the social scale, we find as much mud there as below, only it is hard and gilded.

True liberty consists in the privilege of enjoying our own rights—not in the destruction of the rights of others.

Disobedience excites the mind to the dignity which sustains and finally conquers misfortune, and the ordeal refines while it chastens.

Envy is strongly characteristic of little men of mind; a truly noble and generous man feels no enmity towards a successful rival.

By united effort, the theorist and the practical man may accomplish much, which neither could effect alone.

The wise man stands firm in all extremities, and bears the lot of his humanity with a divine temper.

Drunkenness is the parent of most other vices. It quenches the salutary power of reason, and makes us the sport of raging passion.

To be well spoken of, you must die. Even a pauper, when dead, is mentioned without asperity, and that is as much as any pauper can expect.