

IF!

Ah! dearest, if our tears were shed
Only for our beloved—dead;
Although our life's left incomplete,
Tears would not be so bitter, sweet,
As now!—ah! no.

Ah! dearest, if the friends who die
Alone were those who make us sigh;
Although life's current is so fleet,
Sighs would not be so weary, sweet,
As now!—ah! no.

If oft more pain it did not give
To know that our beloved live,
Than learn their hearts have ceased to beat,
Grief would not be so hopeless, sweet,
As now!—ah! no.

THE MANIAC DOCTOR.

An Adventure in a Railway Carriage.

It must be confessed that it is a very provoking thing to receive a letter on Christmas morning, calling you two hundred miles away on "immediate and important business." Yes, it is a very provoking thing, indeed—at least, so I found it, both in anticipation and in very deed; but there was no help for it. Snooks, my lawyer, wrote and told me that if, on the 25th, I was not at C——, I should probably lose—never mind what, but something which induced me to pack my portmanteau in all haste, send for a hansom, and drive to the X. Y. Z. station. When I arrived there, I found that I was just too late for the train I had come to catch, and that the next one did not start for three-quarters of an hour. Inwardly cursing my ill-fortune, I went to the waiting-room, and endeavored to make myself as comfortable as I could; but despite all my attempts, I think I never knew time to pass so slowly in all my life, except a certain twenty minutes about which I am going to tell.

Although, as I said, the time went very slowly, nevertheless, it did go; and, in process of time, I found myself snugly ensconced in a first class carriage, which had but one occupant besides myself, a cheerful looking, little, old man, with gray hair and a strange, restless look about the eyes. Directly I got into the carriage, he addressed me in a familiar way:

"A merry Christmas to you!"

"The same to you," said I, rather gruffly, as I was not in the best of humor, and did not feel inclined to be cheerful or neighborly.

"Why, bless me! sir," said the little old man, renewing the attack, "you haven't anything wherewith to keep yourself warm on this cold winter's day; allow me to offer you one of my traveling wrappers; I always take care to be well provided with such things when I go on a journey." And my companion took from his side a rolled-up rug, unrolled it, and taking a small mahogany box from the folds, threw the rug to me.

"Thank you, sir," said I, feeling in spite of myself a shade more cheerful.

"O, no thanks, no thanks; I do it for my own benefit, not for yours, I assure you."

"How do you make out that?"

"Why, I like to have a comfortable face opposite me; and, besides, the grand experiment you know."

"What grand experiment?" I said, somewhat startled by the man's excited manner.

"O, nothing, nothing," said he, coloring violently; "only that is to say—exactly, are you a Freemason?"

"No, sir."

"Not a Freemason? Why, bless me! you ought most certainly to become one."

"Why so?"

"Because you would then know that they've got a sort of—that is to say—in fact, a secret."

"I know that already."

"Really? I declare you are the most extraordinary man I have ever met; well I've got a secret too, and that's my grand experiment."

"As it's a secret, I suppose you will not tell me what it is?"

"O, yes, I will though, but—perhaps I had better not; never mind I'll tell you: it is simply this, to discover what are the different feelings of different persons on different occasions."

"I should hardly call that an experiment."

"Wouldn't you, now? Curious that; yes, very curious, for, to tell you the truth, I don't myself know whether I am quite justified in calling it an experiment. But enough of that matter for the present. May I ask where you are going to?"

"To C——."

"Have you friends there?"

"None, I am sorry to say. I am called there on some disagreeable, though important business."

"Then may I have the pleasure of your company to dinner when we arrive there?"

"Thank you; I shall have the greatest

pleasure in accepting your kind invitation."

"By-the-by, do you know how many times we stop before we reach C——?"

"Only twice, as this is an express train; once at M——, at 2 o'clock, and the second time at F——, at 5."

"And when are we due at C——?"

"At half past six, I believe."

"Thank you."

"Thus, for a time, our conversation ended, but we often renewed it again, and I began to regard my companion as a clever, kind-hearted, though rather eccentric old man."

Some time after we had passed M——, my eccentric friend composed himself for a sleep, and was soon snoring, and it was not long before I followed his example, but my dreams were troubled. First of all, I dreamt that I was being hung; then that I was being handcuffed; and, last of all, that a great weight was upon me, and that something was pressing heavily upon my chest. I then woke with a start, to find myself bound hand and foot, with a rope passed round my neck, and fastened to the umbrella-rack behind, in such a manner that, if I struggled in the least, I should inevitably choke myself; and my fellow traveller was standing over me, with one knee on my chest.

"What! are you going—" said I; but my sentence was cut short by a gag, which my eccentric friend thrust into my mouth and tied behind my head. He then stood away to look at his handiwork, with eyes glaring like those of a wild beast, and his whole frame trembling with excitement.

"Now," he said with a wild laugh, "now I shall be able to try my grand experiment! now I shall be able to find out whether the heart can be extracted while a man is alive without killing him! Twice I have failed, but the stars have told me that a third time I shall not fail. O fame, glory, immortality, I have you in my grasp! What! pitiful fool, do you turn pale and tremble? If you do die, you will die a glorious martyr to science; if you live, you and I will share the glory of this grand discovery!"

From this ridiculous rhodomontade I perceived that my pleasant eccentric traveling companion was a raving maniac. What was I to do? I could not move hand or foot, or even speak, and the madman was arranging on the seat in front of me a collection of bright steel instruments, which he took from the mahogany box which I have mentioned before. Was there any hope for me? I tried to remember how long it was after we left M—— before I went asleep, as I thought that if we only got to F—— the maniac would be discovered, and I should be relieved from the horrible death which now seemed imminent; but as I had been dozing sometime before I went regularly off to sleep, I found that I could not in the least remember what time had passed.

After some time spent in preparing his instruments, my persecutor began to prepare me by unbuttoning my waistcoat and baring my breast. At length everything seemed to be to his satisfaction, and he took up a sharp, keen-bladed knife. I shall never forget my sensations when I saw that little glittering instrument, so soon to be dyed with my blood. I felt a cold shudder run all through my body, and I longed to close my eyes, but they seemed to keep open by a sort of horrible fascination. After trying the edge of the knife, and preparing a cloth, and giving one final look to his instruments, my eccentric friend pressed his finger close above my heart, and said:

"This is how I am going to manage it, my friend; I am going to cut a circle in the flesh, about the heart, with this knife; it will not hurt much, as I shall only just cut through the skin, and the knife is exceedingly sharp. I shall then proceed to dig deeper with this instrument, and finally extract the heart with this!"

The reader may imagine my sensations during this cold-blooded recital, for I am utterly unable to describe them; but when the sharp steel first pierced my flesh, and I felt the warm blood flowing out, all my past life seemed to pass before my mind in a moment of time, only to make my desire of still living, and the horror of an ignominious death tenfold.

Slowly the sharp knife plowed in my flesh, making my blood freeze in the veins, and my eyeballs burn and feel ready to burst from their sockets, and now I felt my reason gradually leaving me; the strain upon my nerves was too much—they must give way; but I considered that, if they did, my only hope would be gone; for if I moved I should be choked with the rope round my neck.

Slowly the sharp knife, impelled by the steady hand, continued its deadly course; and now the circle was nearly accomplished, when I felt that the speed of the train was being gradually diminished. A ray of hope illumined my breast. I looked

into my companion's eyes to see if he, too, noticed that we were nearing F——; but he was too intent on his horrible work.

At length he leaned back, and said:

"There now, only about an inch more, and I shall commence the deep cutting!"

Only about an inch! And the station was yet some way off. Only about an inch! My life hung upon the merest thread.

It was not long that the experimenter admired his diabolical work, he soon fell to it again; but I saw the lights on F—— station flash past the window of the carriage. I saw a strange arm seize my tormentor; I heard a loud and appalling cry like that of a baffled wild beast, and I became insensible.

For weeks after this I lay between life and death, in a brain fever, brought on by the intense excitement and fear of those twenty minutes.

A True Love Story.

Cobbett tells us how an English yeoman loved and courted, and how he was loved in return; and a prettier episode does not exist in the English language. Talk of private memoirs of courts—the gossip of the cottage is worth them all. Cobbett, who was a sergeant-major in a regiment of foot, fell in love with the daughter of a sergeant of artillery, then in the same province of New Brunswick. He had not passed more than an hour in her company, when, noticing her modesty, quietude, and her sobriety, he said, "that's the girl for me." The next morning he was up early, and almost before it was light passed the sergeant's house. There she was on the snow scrubbing out a washing tub. "That's the girl for me," again cried Cobbett, although she was not more than fourteen, and he was nearly twenty-one.

"From the day I first spoke to her," he writes, "I had no more thought of her being the wife of any other man than I had the thought of her becoming a chest of drawers." He paid every attention to her, and, young as she was, treated her with all confidence. He spoke to her as his friend, his second self. But in six months the artillery were ordered to England, and her father with them. Here was indeed a blow. Cobbett knew what Woolwich was, and what temptation a young pretty girl would be sure to undergo. He therefore took to her his whole fortune, one hundred and fifty guineas, the savings of his pay and overwork, and wrote to tell her that if she did not find her place comfortable to take lodgings, and put herself to school, and not to work too hard, for he would be home in two years. "But," as he says, "as the malignity of the devil would have it, we were kept abroad two years longer than our time, Mr. Pitt having knocked up a dust with Spain about Nootka Sound. O, how I cursed Nootka Sound, and poor bawling Pitt." But at the end of four years Cobbett got his discharge.

He found his little girl a servant of all work, at five pounds a year, in the house of a Captain Brisac, and, without saying a word about the matter, she put into his hands the whole of the hundred and fifty guineas unbroken!

What a pretty, tender picture is that!—the young sergeant, and the little girl of eighteen, who had kept for four years the treasure untouched, waiting with patience her lover's return! What kindly, pure trust on both sides. The historical painters of our Royal Academy give us scenes from English history of intrigue and bloodshed. Why can they not give us a scene of true English courtship like that? Cobbett, who knew how to write sterling English better than any man of his own day, and most men of ours, does not forget to enlarge upon the scene, and dearly he loved his wife for her share of it; but he does not forget to add that with this love was mixed "self-gratulation on this indubitable proof of the soundness of his own judgment."

PRESERVE THE NEWSPAPERS.—We earnestly urge upon our readers the propriety of preserving the files of newspapers now published in a durable form. They contain an invaluable record of passing events, and shadow forth more truthfully than any subsequent history can do, the principles, feeling and opinions which affect the great conflict in which the nation is now involved.

Two gentlemen of the bar were vending their way home one night, when one drunker than the other, was nabbed by the Charlies and put in the lockup. A friend on learning the mishap, asked the other why he did not bail his companion out.

"Bail him out," said the lawyer, "you could not pump him out."

Mean souls, like mean pictures, are often found in good-looking frames.

Miscellaneous Items.

It is a fact creditable to barnyard nature, that while curses come home to roost, roosters never come home to curse.

Why would a battalion of ladies be perfectly safe in action? Because cotton breastworks are impenetrable to balls.

If the storm of adversity whistle around you, whistle as bravely yourself; perhaps the two whistles may make melody.

A Missouri paper says that the Digger Indians are never known to smile. They must be grave Diggers.

A New Orleans paper says: "A true Union woman is like the sugar we sometimes get—a combination of sweetness and grit."

A wise man thinks none his superior who has done him an injury, for he has it then in his power to make himself superior by forgiving it.

A lady editor in the east says that if the men want their children to look like them, the fewer jaunts they make to California the better.

Fire is a good thing in the house; but it should be in the chimney and not in the wife's temper—cooking the victuals, not roasting the husband.

Would you not have known this boy to be my son from his resemblance to me?" asked a gentleman. Mr. Curran answered: "Yes, sir; the maker's name is stamped upon the blade."

A preacher once said that ladies were very timid; they were afraid to sing when they were asked; afraid of taking cold; afraid of snails and spiders—but he never knew one afraid to get married.

A paper describing a counterfeit bank bill, says the vignette "is cattle and hogs, with a church in the distance." "A good illustration of the world," adds the Boston Transcript.

"My dear," said one of those mature husbands to his lovely young wife, "supposing I should be conscripted and could not find a substitute?" "Never mind, my love," replied the angel, "I could find a substitute, if you couldn't!"

A man advertises himself in a Philadelphia paper as "a great natural bone-setter." Vanity Fair remarks that what we want is a great national bone-breaker, to break the backbone of this rebellion.—Gen. Meade is the man.

Jones, since his marriage, has taken to talk slightly of the holy estate. Brown was telling him of the death of a mutual friend's wife whom "the disconsolate" had courted twenty-eight years and then married. She turned out to be a perfect virago, but died two years after the wedding. "There's luck!" said Jones; "see what the fellow escaped by a long courtship!"

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