

HERITAGE.

A lily raised its spotted head
Proudly above its natal bed.
A thing of beauty fair to see,
In all its peerless purity.
A wondrous beam, 'twixt heaven and earth,
Trailing veils of ether's light.
A straying bird in flight,
And aught in its own right.
An idle breeze in sportive play,
Twisted the stem and sped away.
This wrecked it bowed its tortured head
And sank into its natal bed.
"That which we sow, ye reap," 'tis said—
Another lily life is laid.

A HEADSMAN'S DEATH.

"For my part," declared the Lieutenant, lighting a cigar, "I am convinced that death by decapitation is instantaneous, and that the survival of feeling and thought, for even an instant, is but the dream of a rascal."

"I thoroughly agree with you," replied the young doctor, Herbelot, "and for the very reason that, with the cutting of the spinal cord, the communication between the nerve centers and the different parts of the body ceases, and no feeling is possible. But yet the terrible look which pierces me through and through as I laid my hand on his shoulder. For the first time in my life I was dumb and turned my head away. I felt a nameless terror strike to the marrow of my bones. I completed my duty and secured the condemned man's head."

"Ah," said Herbelot, with a sneer, "thou wishest my head, executioner. Take care, before a year it will eat thy heart."

"A sort of frenzy then seized me, and I threw the man upon his knees and struck again, a prey to a delirium, and only the shrieks of the furious crowd recalled me to the reality. The head had rolled at my feet. I stooped to grasp it, and then I perceived that the eyes followed me with a strange insistence, while the lips half parted, as if to utter a word. When my hand approached the head seemed reanimated, and boundless. The sharp teeth closed on my fingers and bit them to the bone. I uttered a cry of terror and anguish, and fell fainting."

"Jacobus," he took breath, and essayed with a movement of his hand to wipe away the sweat which had gathered in great drops upon his brow. Then he looked again towards the corner of the room, murmuring:

"It is not yet the hour."

"I had feared without interruption to the headman's tale, and I too was moved by the terror that seemed to really possess him. He continued:

"Since the life of the condemned man, I resigned my office and fled headless. I came here to hide myself, and try to blot from my mind the fearful recollection. But each night I see again that head, with its green eyes and sharp teeth. Ah! I am not mad. I am not a prey to hallucinations! I see it! It rolls upon my bed and upon the floor, leaving everywhere its bloody trail. I feel the contact of its icy lips; its teeth penetrate my flesh. I am powerless to move or utter a cry. My body is paralyzed, and is given over to unnamable torment."

"I tried to calm his excitement, but he interrupted me brutally.

"To drink! Some water, there, and he indicated a jug standing on a table. I refilled the carafe. After having drunk with avidity:

"You know all now," he said to me, "and you alone of all the world know the cause of my death. My life will be ended to-morrow. I thank you for having come."

Dr. D— stopped and relighted his cigar.

Dr. Herbelot, "Wait," replied the savant. "The next day at dawn I returned to the house of the executioner, Jacobus Todt, who was dead. His room was in the possible disorder, and the inn-keeper, who this time had accompanied me, called my attention to a spot of blood upon the bed-clothes; yet the body showed no wound."

"I perceived, however, on the left side of the bed, a small, dark, circular, caloric, preventing all the characteristics of a bite."

"That same evening I quitted Ludwigshurg, giving up my journey, and returned to France."

"And now, gentlemen, draw what conclusions you wish."

"What my dear master, you think then?"

"Permit me to think nothing for the present," responded Dr. D— with a smile. "Let me tell you of an adventure from which you may draw such conclusions as you please."

"An observation, rather, which I made in my youth, some 30 years ago, so to speak, so strange, that it has never found a place in my work, and I have always hesitated to relate it."

"When I had finished my studies I planned to visit England and Germany. The end I had in view was to study ethnographical work, which yet remains unfinished, you will soon know why. When this adventure took place, a rare occurrence, I found myself in Wittenberg, in Duke Eberhard's pretty town of Ludwigshurg. I had returned to my hotel one evening when a young man approached me with an embarrassed air, touching his cap in his fingers. With a gesture I encouraged him to speak."

"Mon Dieu, Doctor, he said to me in French, although I speak German in a satisfactory fashion, 'not far from here is Dr. Jacobus Todt, who is very ill, and as there is not a doctor in the country who will consent to see him, I thought—'

"How," I cried with indignation, 'the doctors refuse to visit a confere in danger of death! It is well. Show me where he lives, and I will go to him at once.'

"It is that—Doctor—' But Jacobus is not one of your confere. On the contrary, I fear when you will know—he was formerly a headman."

"A public executioner, I responded a little disconcerted. 'But you called him 'doctor'?'"

"True. It is usual to give this title to the headman after four successful operations."

"Without speaking further about their singular customs, I seized my hat and followed the innkeeper. In a little street in the outskirts of the town, we found the house of Jacobus Todt."

"I was struck by the miserable appearance of this wretched, which was of one story, surrounded and overtopped by a pointed gable forming a sort of garret. The outer plastering had fallen away from the walls, which were strengthened with heavy beams, and which showed the old methods of construction. The only openings were a door and a window. To the right was a small, low, pale, from which hung the flag of a cord. The moon shone pale through the clouds, giving to the executioner's dwelling a forbidding and ghastly appearance. The thought of an approach to the gallows."

"With the appearance of a man happy to have discharged his duty, and who did not care to undertake further risks, my guide led me when we approached the house. I walked rapidly and lightly, but little cultivated garden overgrown with weeds, and knocked at the door. No one answered at first. I was about to leave, when I heard a voice, heavy and slow, say in German:

smile, 'You can do nothing. Your science is human. It is powerless against the invisible. I am thirsty,' he murmured."

"And bearing to his lips a carafe of water which stood by his bedside, he emptied it at a draught."

"You have asked that some one entrust you to come," he continued, "not only to come, but to stay. I know it is useless, but to lighten my soul of a terrible anguish which oppresses it by confiding my sufferings to a man capable of such noble feelings. You are a stranger, and you cannot have for me the scorn and hate that others would have for me. I have wished to reveal to you, and to you alone, my horrible secret."

"His features contracted, a cold sweat started out on his forehead. His eyes, wide with terror—searched the obscurity. He began again with a hoarse voice:

"For 15 years I fulfilled the functions of public executioner at Z. I was successful, and had achieved a certain reputation. I was tired of carrying my days in some peaceful retreat, but fate decided otherwise. One day—it will be a year ago to-morrow—I was charged to put to death Hans Hertzog, whose history is perhaps known to you. This man—a vampire in human shape—had murdered a young girl in the most horrible manner. He pretended to have found the secrets of life and to have penetrated the mysteries of death. Oh! I remember yet the terrible look which pierced me through and through as I laid my hand on his shoulder. For the first time in my life I was dumb and turned my head away. I felt a nameless terror strike to the marrow of my bones. I completed my duty and secured the condemned man's head."

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"Enter," the door is open."

"I entered the house. There was a dim light, which scarcely permitted me to distinguish one object from another, and I had some difficulty in perceiving at one end of the room, a low table, on which lay a man. A woman, who I knew, lay a man. After making myself known, I took the light and placed it on a little table far from the sick man. I then examined him. Jacobus Todt was a man of vigorous frame, with enormous hands. His face was pale, his lips bloodless, and a considerable distention in the pupils of his eyes. I asked him the cause of his illness. He seemed at first to hesitate, then, raising his eyes above, he looked at me uneasily, as if wishing to assure himself that no one else was able to hear. Then he seized my hand nervously."

"Listen," he said, 'I am not ill. I am in full possession of my faculties, yet to-morrow I shall be dead.'

"Let us see," said I, "on an exaggeration without doubt the gravity of your case, and I shall not be able to help you."

"No," he replied, with a resigned

to marry a man whose eyes are not great," suggested the tutor.

"What a capital idea!" cried the princess, clapping her hands. "He can't be hurt at that, can he?"

The tutor's eyes were green; but the princess had never noticed that, because she never looked at him.

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grown so large that he did not now know how to get it down.

The landlord was named, he went up to Vivier's room and demanded: 'The tutor's eyes were green; but the princess had never noticed that, because she never looked at him.'

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