



LITERATURE.

[FOR THE CARLETON SENTINEL.]

TO MR. AND MRS. G., ON THE DEATH OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Fond parents, is it true you have lost,
Your pledges of mutual love;
Have your children—your pride and your boast,
Been translated to regions above?

Do you mourn for these children alone,
Do none sympathize in your woe;
Are there fraught with humanity, none,
To assist in supporting the blow?

Oh! yes, there are many who feel,
And who in your grief sympathize;
Such distress to our hearts must appeal,
And extract the hot tears from our eyes.

What voice do I inwardly hear?
Revelation and reason combin'd;
It bids us dry up every tear,
And solace each sorrowing mind.

Fond parents then I would address,
To you now this comforting voice;
Those tears, ah, how selfish! repress,
In raptures parental rejoice.

Their departure from you was their birth,
Into regions where bliss never fails,
Then would you recall them to earth?
Where sin—yea, where sorrow prevails!

Your children have mounted on high,
With wings of Celestial love;
And their parents invite through the sky,
To thrones in those realms above.

M. M.

Providential escape from death by Hanging.

A TALE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

BY G. P. R. JAMES.

(Concluded from our last.)

It seemed as if nature opposed herself to the hanging of an innocent man. The cart in which, loaded with heavy irons, and seated upon straw, he was drawn towards the moor, broke down at the end of the first five miles, and it took a long time to repair it. It was then discovered that the man who had undertaken the terrible office of executioner, and who—withstanding certain savage propensities of his nature which led him that way—was so much of a novice as to be nervous and uneasy, had slipped off secretly; nor was it till long search had been made, that he was found, drinking large draughts at a public house. He was then placed in the same cart with the prisoner, and the march re-commenced; but some way further on, in going up a very steep hill, the horse that drew the cart, fell down dead in the harness, and a new delay took place, while another horse was sent for. Thus the agony of that terrible journey was prolonged to poor Frederick Prevot for many hours; and his frame worn with imprisonment, with the struggle of hope and fear, with indignation, anguish, and despair, seemed ready to sink under the protracted suffering thus inflicted on him; so that many of those who accompanied the procession, seriously thought he would die before he reached the foot of the gallows. The clergyman who went with him to afford him spiritual consolation was of that opinion, and mentioned it to the sheriff, who rode by the side of the cart on horseback, adding, that the prisoner had tasted no food that day.

The Sheriff was a kind-hearted man, and instantly approaching the prisoner, he said, "You seem faint, sir; will you take a little wine at that public house, or some brandy, or anything that you like?"

"Sir," replied Frederick, "I will take nothing that can prolong my misery, even for a moment," and again he sunk into silence.

During the rest of the journey, the clergyman spoke to him from time to time, chiefly for the purpose of giving him what comfort he could; but as they at length approached the moor, and the dark line of the gallows was seen rising in the evening air, the good man, in a low tone, urged Frederick earnestly to confess his crime. The young prisoner turned slowly round upon him, and said, "Would you have me die with a lie in my mouth? I am innocent! and my innocence will some day be proved!"

Soon after this the fatal spot was reached, and as it was now beginning to grow twilight, all the rest of the terrible proceedings were hurried as much as possible. Frederick Prevot showed firmness and readiness in all, and more strength than people had believed he possessed. Though the crowd, which had been there from the morning, was somewhat diminished, the numbers were still considerable, and while the executioner was in the act of

adjusting the rope, the prisoner turned to the people, and said, in a loud, and clear voice, "Remember every one of you, that to the very last moment of my life, and with my very last breath, I declare that I am an innocent man!—Now," he continued turning to the hangman, "is all ready?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, drawing the cap over his face; and without waiting for any further word, Frederick Prevot threw himself violently off the ladder, and remained suspended between heaven and earth.

A low murmur ran through the people, and it was a sad one too; for there was something in the manner of his death which shook the conviction, even of those who had previously felt most sure of his guilt. Some indeed went away, saying that he died game, but the great majority of the multitude separated with a feeling, that, on the moor, an innocent man had been murdered.

Such was the conviction of a shepherd, an elderly man who fed the flock of a neighboring squire, the lord of the manor; and when he went home, he gave his wife an account of the whole proceedings, adding, "They may say what they like, but I am sure that poor gentleman did not kill the other one, and I should not wonder if the truth were found out some day."

As was usual with this old man, in the very gray of the dawning on the following day he led forth his sheep to pasture; and the feelings he had experienced on the preceding night naturally made him turn his steps towards the gallows on the moor. Though it was a terrible sight to see the body of a human being hanging there, loaded with heavy chains, yet the old man felt an interest in all that had occurred, which made him pause and look up. In the mean time, the sheep began to take a wrong direction, and he called to his dog to turn them back. What was his surprise, however, when he heard a faint voice, which seemed to come from the gibbet, inquire, "Is there any body there?" and then add, "For God's sake! take me down, or end my life, for this is very dreadful."

The voice evidently came from the man, who had been hanged, although the cap which was still over his face, prevented the shepherd from seeing his lips move. At first the old man had started with terror and nearly sunk to the earth; but now his natural exclamation was, "Good heavens! are you not dead yet?"

"No," replied the voice, "nor even hurt except by remaining so many hours here. The rope does not press upon my neck at all and somehow I am hanging by my legs and my arms."

"Stay, stay," cried the shepherd eagerly, "I will get a ladder and take you down; but do not speak to any one else, for fear they should hang you again."

Thus saying, the old shepherd ran faster than he had run for thirty years, to a detached barn and rick-yard at a short distance, in which were lying several thatching ladders. Taking the largest of these, he was speedily at the foot of the gibbet, and had soon placed the feet of poor Frederick Prevot firm upon one of the rounds of the ladder. It was now very evident how he had escaped death. The hangman, both inexperienced and half drunk, had twisted the rope round the chains in such a manner that the noose never slipped at all, and the lateness of the hour at which the sentence was executed, prevented the mistake from being discovered by others. The very suddenness of the spring which Frederick had given had entangled the cord more strongly than ever in the chains; and as the last strong exertion which he made had exhausted for the time, all his remaining corporeal powers, he fainted before he himself perceived that the anticipated death was warded off for the moment.

The shepherd went skillfully though cautiously to work to set him free. He first cut the cord that pinioned his hands, and having thus enabled him to grasp the ladder firmly, he loosened the noose from round his neck, and hastened to descend, leaving room for Frederick to follow. The poor young man, however, was so feeble, and so stiff, that it was with great difficulty he crept down, and even then could not support himself upon his feet, though the shepherd was in great agitation and terror lest any one should come up, the sun was now fully risen.

For Frederick to reach his cottage quickly was quite out of the question; and as the best thing he could do for him, the old man supported him to a deep hollow on the moor, filled with tall heath, and hid him from any much frequented path. There he made him lie down, covered him over as well as he could, and hastened home to get some hot milk and other restoratives, such as he thought best calculated to give him strength to complete his escape. His efforts were fully successful; Frederick recovered sufficiently to reach the old man's cottage as soon as it was dark, and, under cover of the subsequent night, he made his way towards the dwelling of her who was now weeping him as dead and lost to her forever.

The disappearance of the body from the gallows excited some conversation, but small surprise. Many people said the corpse had gone to the anatomists, and the chains to the old iron shop; others again, declared that the friends of the criminal had carried off the body to bury him; but no one entertained a suspicion of the truth. In the mean while, the shepherd, making some reasonable excuse, gave his flock into the charge of a neighbour for the time, and accompanied Frederick to the house of Mary Gore.

The old man undertook the task of breaking the news to her, and delicate indeed was that task; for, at the best the tidings had well nigh killed her with joy. The door of the neat, small house, which she had inhabited alone since her mother's death, about two years before, was soon open for Frederick Prevot, and their meeting was one on which it will not do to dwell. He found her in the dress of a widow; and though he would fain have lingered, and would almost have risked any thing rather than leave her again, yet Fanny's only anxiety was to get him beyond the shores of England as speedily as possible.

She promised, if he would go to the West Indies, to follow him immediately, and there to unite her fate to his. Though his property was, of course, lost forever, yet hers

was ample, according to all the calculations of love; and she proposed to sell every thing in England immediately, and to purchase property beyond the jurisdiction of the English law. The sum required to enable Frederick to proceed on his way was soon provided; and as there was no careful Bow Street officer watching the ports anxiously for a man who was supposed to be dead, Frederick Prevot was suffered to sail quietly away in a West India trader, and arrived safely at Jamaica, after the ordinary time occupied by a passage in those days. The captain and several of the passengers, indeed, during the voyage remarked about him a certain degree of anxiety and reserve, which the former, who was a good-humored soul, had striven to overcome by various little acts of kindness. When the vessel arrived, the captain took him on shore in his own boat, with another passenger, and promised to show them a house where they could get good lodging. As they were walking along, however, the captain and the other passenger perceived the blood rush into their companion's face, and with a leap like that of a maniac, he darted forward, and seized the arm of a gentleman, who was sauntering slowly on before them, talking to a negro.

The gentleman instantly turned round, and exclaimed, "Ha! Frederick Prevot!"

"Frederick Prevot!" cried the captain, running up and gazing upon his face, "why that is the man who was hanged for the murder of Mr. Gore."

"I am the man who was hanged for the murder of Mr. Gore," replied Frederick turning round, but still holding the other by the hand, "And this is Mr. Gore himself, for whose murder I was hanged."

"Well, this is the oddest story I ever heard," cried the captain; "how should two dead men happen to meet at Kingston, Jamaica?"

"Are you all joking, Frederick?" demanded William Gore with a sorrowful and grave face. "Is it possible that the accident which befell me at the inn has led to such misery and sorrow as your strange words seem to imply?"

"It is too true, indeed," replied Frederick.

"Why, I have got the newspaper in my pocket myself," said the captain, "with an account of the execution, and there is another in the ship containing all about the murder, and a woodcut of the bloody villain cutting his friend's throat in bed."

"The fools," said William Gore; "why the whole thing is as simple as possible. I ate and drank too much that night, Frederick, and I was awake by a violent bleeding at the nose. I searched about for some cold water and washed my face, thinking that would stop it; but finding that it did not succeed in so doing, I determined to go out into the air. I recollected, however, that I had not much liked the appearance of the people of the house, and as it was necessary to leave the door open, I tried to wake you; but you slept like a stone, and I thrust my pocket-book under your pillow. I then went down stairs and out into the orchard—intending to go down through the garden, which I had seen on the preceding night, to the top of the cliff—when suddenly I stumbled upon three or four men, who were dragging up what I now find were contraband West India goods, upon a little truck. At first they seemed inclined to murder me, declaring that I was a custom-house officer come down from London, and I could only obtain mercy upon the hard condition of suffering myself to be carried on board the ship, which was then lying off the coast. They promised to set me on shore again, or put me into the first fishing-boat they met with; but they either met with none, or were determined to keep their word in neither respect, for they brought me straight on to St. Lucie, and with difficulty have I found my way hither, having nothing in my pocket but a couple of stray guineas. I am now waiting here for remittances from England, but certainly had no idea of seeing you here, Frederick, though I took it for granted that your marriage with Mary would have been postponed in consequence of the uncertainty attending my fate."

It was not long after this interview, that Fanny Gore herself arrived, and strange indeed were her sensations, when a boat came out to welcome her, containing the brother and the lover, both of whom she had for a time believed to be dead.

The events which I have just detailed, made a great sensation at the time, and the captain of the packet still continued to declare that it was the oddest story he had ever heard. It is nevertheless a true one; and the gentleman from whom I heard the tale had seen the original record, and gave me the real names of all the persons concerned; for those herein assigned to the different characters in the book, are, to the best of my recollection the only fictitious part of the narrative.

Those of our dress-loving, church-going ladies, who see a likeness in the following hit, sent us by a correspondent who had seen a lady showing around a handsomely embroidered handkerchief in church, can clip it out and paste it on the cover of their hymn-books:

In church, eye e'en in holy church,
Her love of dress vain woman shows!
See how she passes round for view,
That rich appendage of her nose.
With what delight she feasts her eye
On each embroidered flower and leaf,
That some poor starving artist wrought
Upon that envied handkerchief!

DISINTERESTED BENEVOLENCE.—A youth, who, it is charitably presumed, had never "seen the elephant," recently found himself in the company of three young ladies, and generously divided an orange between them. "You will rob yourself," exclaimed one of the damsels. "Oh, no," replied our innocent, "I have three or four more in my pocket."

A contemporary says:—When we see a neat, pretty girl, with a free, but innocent air, with cheeks like roses, and heavenly blue eyes, which seem to repose in serenity beneath their silken lashes, we always wish that she was near a mud puddle, and we had to lift her over.