

LITERATURE. THE VICTIMS.

A true Tale of the London Resurrectionists.

BY A MEDICAL STUDENT.

Concluded.

To me she was as nothing, less than nothing; and though, from long habit I had almost brought myself to meet with indifference the objects that are found on the dissecting table, I could not gaze on one so young, so very fair, without feeling the springs of pity dissolve within me; and tears, fast and many, fell on those lips: I refrained not from kissing, notwithstanding mortality had set its seal upon them; as yet—

"Before decay's effacing fingers

Had swept the lines where beauty lingers"

Her eyes were closed beneath the long lashes. I lifted one lid: the orb beneath was large and blue—but "soul was wanting there." So great was the impression her beauty made upon me, that, stepping into the next room I took my materials, and made a drawing of the placid and unconscious form so hushed and still. I look upon it at this moment, and fancy recalls the deep and unaccountable emotions that shook me as I made it. It must have been an instinctive—But, to proceed, I saw but one figure in my sleep—the lovely but unburied dead. I awoke—what could it be that felt so moist and cold against my face?—Where was I?—what light was glimmering through the windows? it was the break of day. Worn with fatigue, I had fallen asleep over my drawing, while the candle had burnt out in the socket and my head was resting on the inanimate breast, which had been deprived to soon of existence to know the pure joy of pillowing a fellow-heart it loved. I arose and retired to a sleepless couch.—In the evening, while over my modicum of coffee, in came St. Clare. He appeared haggard and wild, whilst every now and then his eye would gaze on vacancy, and closing, seem to shut out some unpleasant thought, that haunted him in ideal reality.

"Well, St. Clare, what has detained you?"

"Death," said he, solemnly. "The sole remaining relative to whom Nature has given any claim on my affections, is no more. A sudden despatch called me down to soothe the expiring hours of my mother's sister, and not a soul is left me now on earth to love, save Emily and my friend. I feel most unaccountably oppressed—a dread sense of ill pervades me; but let me hope that ill is past."

"Well, think of it no more," I replied, and changed the conversation. "I have procured a subject—female, beautiful and young; but I feel more inclined to let it rest amidst its fellow-clods of clay, than bare so fair a bosom to the knife. It is well that the living hold a pre-occupancy of my heart, or such a beautiful form of death—"

"This note has just been left for you, sir, from Mr. Smith, who requests an immediate answer," said my servant, entering. I read aloud its contents:—

"Though unknown to you, save by name and the mention of another, I call upon you, as the friend of one who was my friend, to assist me in unravelling this horrid mystery. On Tuesday at two, my dearest Emily went out, with the intention of returning at four. Since that hour, I have been unable to obtain the slightest information respecting her. I have called in your absence for St. Clare twice; he was unexpectedly out. Surely I have not mistaken him. He cannot have filled up the measure of mankind's deceit, and abused the trust reposed in him! Let me pray you for the love of Heaven! to give me the least clue you are possessed of that may lead to her discovery

"I know not what I have written, but you can understand its meaning.

"Yours, &c.,

"JOHN SMITH."

Starting from his seat with the air of a maniac, St. Clare abstractedly gazed on empty air, as if to wait conviction. Too soon it came, and seizing a light, he dashed towards the closet where he knew the body was to be. For the first time a dark suspicion flashed upon me, and taking the other candle, I followed.

The face had been again covered, and Saint Clare, setting the light upon the table, stood transfixed, just as we feel the pressure of some night-mare dream,—without the power of drawing his eyes away, or by dashing aside the veil, to end this suspense of agony in the certainty of despair.

Every muscle of his body shook, while his pale lips could only mutter—"It must be so! it must be so!" and his finger pointing to the shrouded corpse, silently bade me to disclose the truth: mute motionless horror pervaded me throughout; when, springing from his trance, he tore away the linen from the features it concealed. One glance sufficed;—true, the last twenty-four hours had robbed them of much that was lovely, but they were cast in a mould of such sweet expression, that once seen, was to be remembered forever.

With indescribable wildness he flung himself upon the body, and embracing the pallid clay, seemed vainly trying to kiss it back to life. I watched his countenance till it became so pale, there was only one shade of difference between the two. In an instant, from the strained glare of his fixed glance, his eyes relaxed, and a lifeless, inanimate expression of nonentity succeeded their former tension, while with his hand still retaining the hair of the deceased in his grasp, he sunk upon the ground. Assistance was called, and from a state of insensibility he passed into one of depression.

All our efforts to disentangle the locks he had so warmly loved from his fingers were in vain; the locks were, therefore, cut off from the head. Through all the anguish of his soul he never spoke; the last words to which his lips gave utterance, were these—"It must be so, it must be so." For hours he would stare at one object, and his look was to me so full of horror and reproach, I could not meet it. Suddenly he would turn to the hair, and fastening his lips upon it, murmur some inarticulate sounds, and weep with all the bitterness of infantine sorrow.

The reader will remember it so chanced that I never was introduced to the heroine of my tale; but all doubt was now removed as to the identity of the subject for dissection with the unfortunate Emily Smith. How she came by her death was a mystery that nothing seemed likely to unravel.

Not the slightest marks of violence could be found about her person; the arms were certainly in an unnatural position, being bent with the palms upward, as if to support a weight; and seemed to have been somewhat pressed, but this might be accounted for by the packing of the body. All beside wore the appearance of quiescent death.

She was opened; and not the slightest trace of poison presented itself. Immediate search had been made for the men; they had absconded, and all apparent means of inquiry seemed hushed with the victim of science in its grave.

Some years passed—St. Clare was dead—the father of the unfortunate Emily was no more. Fortune had thriven with me, and being independent of practice, I had settled in the West-end of London, and married the object of my choice. I was soon occupied with the employments of my profession, and amongst the rest, that of surgeon to the — dispensary.

Seven years after my first commencement, I had to attend a poor man who was attacked with inflammation of the brain. The violence of the disease had been subdued, but some strange wanderings of delirium still haunted him. In a paroxysm of this sort he one day exclaimed to me, as I was feeling his pulse, "Cut it off! Cut it off! it says so: off with it!" Paying no attention to this, I replaced his arm within the coverlid, but dashing it out he seized mine and demanded, "Does it not say if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off?" "Yes, my man, but yours is a useful member; take my advice and keep it on."

"I will not; it has offended me, ay, damned me to eternity. It is a murderers right hand!" But I will not drag the reader through the incoherent ravings of guilty delirium; it suffices to say, that after some considerable pains I elicited the following story from him.

"It's just ten years to-morrow (that's Tuesday) since I was discharged from four months' im-

prisonment in the House of Correction. I was then just twenty. In the same place I met a gang of resurrection men, and they said what a jolly life they led, plenty of money, and all that; when one of 'em told the rest he knew a better way to get the rhino quickly than what they did, and if so be as they wouldn't split, he'd tell 'em. Well, after making me take an oath (I trembles now to think of it) that I wouldn't tell, they let me into it. This was to kidnap all the greenhorns, that didn't know their way about town, and carry them to a house the gang had in — alley, near Blackfriars, where they were to be suffocated, and sold to you doctors for cutting up, well it took a long time to bring my mind to such a thing, but they persuaded me we were all destined to go to heaven or hell, before we were born, and that our *a lions*, had nothing to do with it. So I agreed, when the time came round to enter the gang.

"On the day we were let loose there were four of us loitering near a coach stand in — street. A gentleman was walking up and down before an inn, looking at his watch every now and then, and casting his eyes round to see if a coach was coming which he seemed to expect. Presently he met some one who know'd 'un, and I saw him take a letter and read it, and then say to the other, 'I can't come this instant, because I expect a friend in half an hour and must wait for her; but stay, I can write a note, and put her off' when he stepped inside the inn, and came out in ten minutes, with a note in his hand. One of us had been servant in a cutting-up house in the Borough, and knowed him afore; stepping up, he asked if he could carry the note for him. The other was in a hurry and said, 'yes,' giving half a crown to take it into the borough, then got into the coach and drove off. Instead of going with it, he had learnt to read, and breaking the note open, found that some lady was coming to meet the gentleman by half-past two. 'I tell ye what, my boys,' says he, 'here's a fish come to our net without looking for it, so we'll have her first.' Shortly after, up comes the coach with a lady in it; meanwhile one of our gang had got another coach belonging to us for the purpose, which was in waiting; so the villain tells her that the gentleman had been obliged to go somewhere else, but he was an old servant, and if she would get into his coach, he would drive her to the house where the gentleman was waiting to receive her. She, never suspecting, got in, and was driven off to the slaughter house, as we called it. She entered by a back yard, and frightened by the dark, dirty way, and lonely-looking rooms, and not seeing him she expected, she attempted to run off, but that was of no use, and taking her to a room for the purpose, in the middle of the house, where no one could hear her screaming, she was locked up for the night. Well, I was uncommon struck with her beautiful looks, and begged very hard to let her go; they said it would not do, because as how they would all be found out. So die she must, the next order they had for a corpse. That very night came an order, and they swore I should have the killing of her, for being spooney enough to beg her life. I swore I would not do it; but they said if I didn't they would send me instead, and frightened at their threats, I agreed.

"In the room where she slept was a bed, with a sliding top to let down and smother the person who was lying beneath, while the chain which let it down was fastened to the room above. They had given her a small lamp, in order to look at her through a hole, that they might see what she was about. After locking the door inside, (for they left the key there to keep 'un easy, while it was bolted on the out,) and looking to see there was no one in the room, nor any other door, she knelt by the bedside, said her prayers, and then laid down in her clothes. This was at ten, they watched her till twelve; she was sleeping soundly, but crying too, they said, when they took me up into the room above, and with a drawn knife at my throat, insisted on my letting go the chain which was to smother her beneath—I did it! Oh, I did it!—hark!" starting up, "don't you hear that rustling of the clothes?—a stifled cry?—no, all is quiet! She is done for—take her and sell her!" and from that he fell into his old raving manner once more.

The next day he was again lucid, and pulling from his bosom an old purse, he said, "I managed to get these things without their knowledge." It contained a ring with a locket engraven "E. S." and the silver plate of a dog's collar, with the name of "Emily," on it; "that," he remarked, "came from a little spaniel which we sold."

I had made a finished miniature from the rough drawing taken on the first evening of my seeing Emily Smith. This had been set in the lid of a snuff-box, and anxious to see if he would recognise it, I brought it in my pocket. After looking an instant at the contents of the purse, I silently placed the snuff box in his hand. His mind but barely took time to comprehend and know the face, when flinging it from him with a loud cry, his spirit took its flight to final judgment—and I vowed from that day a renunciation of the scalpel forever.

THE CENTENARIES.

We translate from a French work, entitled *Hygiène Populaire* the following instances, in which the author shows that an active and temperate life is more favorable to health than one of luxury and repose, and also that a healthy and vigorous old age is less rare than we are generally disposed to think.

Henry Jenkins died in England, in 1670, aged 169 years. The registers of several Courts show that he appeared in court and took the oath of fealty during 150 years. He commenced life as a soldier. His last pursuit was that of a fisherman, and at the age of more than a hundred years he was yet sufficiently vigorous to swim in the strongest currents.

Thomas Parr, another Englishman, and a poor peasant, thrashed his wheat at the age of 130 years. At the age of 155, in 1635, the king induced him to visit London, where he soon after died. The fatigue of the journey, and the change of diet undoubtedly shortened his life; for, at the opening of his body, Dr. Harvey found all the organs in a healthy state.

C. J. Drakenberg, a Dane, served until he 90th year, as a sailor in the royal fleet. Taken prisoner by the Turks, he passed 15 years in slavery, married at the age of 111, and died at the age of 146 years, in 1772.

J. Essingham, died in England, aged 144, in 1757. Habituated to labor from infancy, after serving many years as a soldier and corporal, he retired to his native village and lived by the labor of his hands. Eight days before he died he performed a journey of 18 miles.

Edward Burrell, coachman to Charles II, of England, born the 2d of March, 1629, was living in 1772, and had preserved a remarkable sprightliness of disposition.

Jean Causeur, of Lower Brittany, France, a butcher by profession, died at the age of 126. His portrait was painted in 1771, at 120 years, and we read at the bottom of it—"Accustomed to a hard and laborious life, which has not a little contributed to give him a robust temperament, he is exempt from the ordinary infirmities of other men."

Annibal, of Marseilles, whose portrait was painted at 110 years, is represented as a man yet vigorous. He died in 1739, aged 121 years and 3 months.

Jean Jacobs, born in the Jura, at the age of 120 years was presented to Louis XVI, at the National Assembly, in 1789.

In 1772, a Prussian soldier, who had served during 67 years, died at the age of 112 years. He had not ceased to travel two leagues, upon foot, every month, to receive his little pension.

An English journal, of 1797, speaks of a Scotchman, a shoemaker near Philadelphia who had then reached the age of 111 years, worked at his trade all the week, and attended church every Sunday in Philadelphia.

J. Chiassich, born in Vienna, the 26th of December, 1702, died near Venice, the 22d of May, 1820. He had served during 87 years upon the land and the sea. His way of life was pure and simple, he was exempt from violent passions, and always cheerful. His father had reached 105 years, his uncle 107.

In 1816 there died at the *Hotel des Invalides*, at Paris, P. Huet, a sailor, aged 119 years, was standing talking with his comrades, when a fit of apoplexy terminated his career.

In 1841, there was living in a village of Ca-