

LITERATURE.

THE VICTIMS.

A true Tale of the London Resurrectionists.

BY A MEDICAL STUDENT.

Some years ago, myself and a fellow-student went to Dawlish for the summer months. An accident, which I need not narrate, and which was followed by a severe attack of pleurisy, chained me a prisoner to my room for several weeks. My companion, whose name was St. Clare, was a young man of high spirits and lively temper; and though naturally kind and affectionate, escaped, as often as he could, from the restraint of a sick room. In one of his walks, he chanced to encounter a young lady, whom he fell in love with, as the phrase is, at first sight, and whose beauty he dwelt upon with a warmth of enthusiasm not a little tantalizing to one, like myself, who could not even behold it. The lady, however, quitted Dawlish very suddenly, and left my friend in ignorance of every other particular concerning her than that her name was Smith and her residence was in London. So vague a direction he, however, resolved to follow up. We returned to town sooner than we otherwise should have done, in order that the lover might commence his enquiries. My friend was worthy of the romantic name that he bore—Melville St. Clare—a name that was the delight of all his boarding-school cousins, and a jest of all his acquaintances in the schools.

He was the sole son of Thomas St. Clare, of Clare Hall, in the county of —, in Hanover-square, and Banker, No. —, Lombard-street. An eccentric man did the world account him. "Very odd," remarked the heads of houses for wholesale brides, "that the old man should insist upon his son studying medicine and surgery, when every one knows that he will inherit at least ten thousand a-year." "Nothing to do with it," was the argument of the father; "who can tell what is to happen to funded or even landed property in England? The empire of disease takes in the world; and in all its quarters, medical knowledge may be made the key to competency and wealth."

While quietly discussing in my own mind the various relative merits between two modes of operation for political aneurism, at my lodgings in town, some three weeks after our return from the country of hills and rain (some ungalantly add, of thick ancles also), my studies were broken in upon by a messenger, who demanded my immediate compliance with the terms of a note he held in his hand. It ran thus:—

"Let me pray you to set off instantly with the bearer in my carriage to your distressed friend—
M. ST. CLARE."

On reaching the house the blinds were down and the shutters closed, while the knocker muffled, bespoke a note of ominous preparation. "How are you?" I inquired, somewhat relieved by seeing my friend up; and though looking wan, bearing no marks of severe illness. "I hope nothing has happened?"

"Yes, the deadliest arrow in Fortune's quiver has been shot, and found its mark. At three, this morning, my father's valet called me up, to say his master was in convulsions. Suspecting it to be a return of apoplexy, I despatched him off for Abercrombie,* and on reaching his room, I found my fears verified. Abercrombie arrived: he opened the temporal artery, and sense returned, when my unfortunate parent insisted on informing me what arrangements he had made in my favor respecting the property; and on my suggesting that his books might previously require to be looked over, he interrupted me by saying it was useless. "You are the son of a ruined man." I started. "Yes, such have I been for the last twenty years! I have secured to you a thousand pounds, to finish your education—and that is all that calamity has left it in my power to bestow." For some moments I was led to doubt his sanity.

"What then can be contained within those two massive chests, so carefully secured?" "Old parchment copies of my mortgages."

* Abercrombie is the chief surgical writer on diseases of the brain.

Your fortune has only changed in aspect; before you were in existence, the author of your being was a beggar! My credit alone has supported me. I have with difficulty been able to invest in the funds for your wants the paltry sum I mentioned. May you prosper better than your father, and the brightness of your day make up for the darkness of his closing scene. God's blessing—" His head sank on the pillow, and falling into a comatose state he slept for four or five hours, when his transition from time to eternity was as gentle as it was unnoticed.

"For my part, I merely remain here till the last offices are performed. All his affairs will be committed to his solicitors, when the fortune and residence which I looked forward to enjoying as my own must be left to others."

"Courage, my dear fellow," said I, "there is no space too great to allow of the sun's rays enlivening it—neither is that heart in existence which hope may not inhabit."

The funeral was over, the mansions of his father relinquished, and St. Clare himself duly forgotten by his friends. The profession, which he before looked on as optional in its pursuit, was now to become his means of existence; and in order to pursue it with greater comfort to ourselves, we took spacious rooms, which enabled us to live together, in — street, Borough, in the neighborhood of our hospital. One morning it so happened that I had something to detain me at home, and St. Clare proceeded by himself to his studies. From the brilliant complexion and handsome countenance of a former day, his appearance had degenerated into the pale and consumptive look of one about to follow the friend for whom his "sable livery of woe was worn."

"Give me joy, Dudley! Joy, I say, for life is bright once more!" exclaimed St. Clare, returning late in the evening, while his face was beaming with gladness.

"I rejoice to hear it," said I. "What has happened?" I inquired.

St. Clare explained. He had met his forgotten mistress of Dawlish: she had introduced him to her father, with whom she was walking, and whom he recognized as a Mr. Smith, an eccentric and wealthy acquaintance of his deceased parents. Mr. Smith invited him to dinner the next day. To cut short my story, St. Clare soon received permission to pay his addresses to the lady he had so long secretly loved; and Mr. Smith, who had originally been in trade, and was at once saving and generous, promised £16,000 to the young couple, on the condition that St. Clare should follow up his profession. The marriage was to be concluded immediately after St. Clare had passed the College of Surgeons, which he expected to do in six months.

"Dudley, I have an engagement to-day, and shall not be at home till evening," said St. Clare, returning from the Hospital one morning; "but as we must dissect the arteries of the neck somewhat more minutely before we go up for examination, I wish you would get a subject. I am told you can have one within two days, by applying to this man," giving me the card of an exhumator in the Borough.

"Very well," I returned, setting off.

"Which will you have, sir?" asked the trafficker in human clay, whose lineaments bespoke the total absence of every human feeling from his heart:—"a lady or a jemman?"

"Whichever you can procure with least trouble," I replied. "When can you bring it to my lodgings?"

"The day after to-morrow, sir."

"Good. What is your price?"

"Why, sir, the market's very high just now, as there's a terrible rout about those things; so I must have twelve guineas."

"Well, then, at eleven, the evening after to-morrow, I shall expect you."

The night passed, no St. Clare appeared;—the next, still he came not—and eleven, on the following evening, found him yet absent. Surrounded with books, bones, skulls and other requisites for surgical study, midnight surprised me, when a gentle tap at the door put my reveries to flight.

"Two men in the street, sir, wish to see you there."

"Very well," said I; and recollecting the

appointment, I descended, and found the exhumator and another.

"We call you down, sir, to get the woman out of the way; because you know these things don't do to gossip about. Shall we take it upstairs?"

"Yes, and I will follow behind. Make as little noise as possible."

"No, no, sir, trust us for that—we're pretty well used to this sort of work. Jem, give the signal;" when the party addressed, stepping into the street, gave a low whistle on his fingers, and something advanced with a dull rustling noise, which proved to be a wheelbarrow containing a sack. They had filled the gutter with straw, and over this driven the barrow. In an instant two of them seized the sack, and without making any more disturbance than if they had been simply walking up-stairs, they carried it into my apartment, and the vehicle it was brought in was rapidly wheeled off.

It is usual for students to carry on their dissections solely in the theatre to which they belong, but as there are many annoyances from the low and coarse set too often mixed up in these places, St. Clare and myself had determined to choose a lodging where we could pursue this necessary, but revolting, part of the profession in private. Within my bedroom was a dressing-closet, which, as it was well lighted, we devoted to this purpose. Having carried in their burden and laid it down, they returned to the sitting-room, through which was the only communication with the other.

"Couldn't get ye a jemman, sir; so we brought ye a lady this time," said the man.

"Very well. I hope the subject is a recent one, because I may not be able to make use of the body for a day or two."

"As to the time she has been buried, sir, that's none to speak of;" while a grin of dark expression gathered round his mouth; and tho' ignorant of its meaning it made me recoil, from the air of additional horror it flung over features already so revolting in expression. I went into the closet to take a glance at the subject, fearing they might attempt to deceive me. They had lain it on the table, and a linen cloth swathed round was the only covering. I drew aside the corner which concealed the face, and started; for never till that instant had I seen aught that came so near to my most ideal picture of female loveliness, even though the last touches had been painted by the hand of Death. As the light of the candle fell on the shrouded figure before me, it composed the very scene that Rembrandt would have loved to paint, and you, my reader, to have looked on. Her hair was loose and motionless, while its whole length, which had strayed over her neck and shoulders, nestled in a bosom white as snow, whose pure warm tides were now at rest for ever! One thing struck me as singular—her rich dark tresses still held within them a thin, slight comb.—An oath of impatience from the men I had left in the next room drew me from my survey.

"Where did you get the subject, my men?" I inquired, as I put the money into the man's hand.

"Oh, we hadn't it from a town churchyard, sir. It came up from the country, didn't it, Jem?"

"Yes," replied the man addressed, and both moved quickly to depart; while I returned to gaze on the beautiful object I had left, and which afforded me a pleasure, so mixed up with all that was horrid, that I sincerely hope it will never fall to my lot to have a second experience of the same feeling.

(Conclusion in our next.)

AN AWFUL SUSPENSE.

The following scene took place on board the "Stalkast," loaded with ordnance stores, three hundred tons of powder, and having on board some three hundred souls. It occurred about five days after leaving Bombay.

"It appeared that owing to the hurry in stowing, boxes of powder, tents, shot and provisions were all placed irregularly together, or rather not properly separated; and it happened that one afternoon as the officer whose duty it was to issue provisions, was getting out more from below, a native close by, let a cinder from his pipe fall down among the powder in the hold;

it passed between some of the boxes and could not be seen: an alarm was given that fire had gone amongst the powder, and the ship was expected every moment to be blown out of the water. Every hand was on deck—some screamed, some prayed—none knew what was to be done—each looked for that moment to be his last, and every voice uttered cries of appeal to the Great Giver of life. At such a time, or such a crisis, a million thoughts come into the mind. Every cheek lost its color, and many clung to the shrouds of the ship, unconsciously, as though that was safer than in the hold itself. There were several females and young children on board, and you may picture the situation of a mother then. I remember sitting on the step of the gangway, awaiting the look-for explosion of the powder, and imploring that mercy so bountifully promised and held out to us, wondering what had best be done. Several minutes elapsed: it was well known that the powder was covered with pitched canvass and a wrapper over that, and it was conjectured that the cinder had fired the wrapper, and that it was making its way; and although no explosion had taken place, I fully believed one would soon. Never was a scene so horribly depicted, or the career of human life so near its end! it would baffle all possibility to describe it, and I must, therefore, leave it to be imagined, which no doubt it can be, by my readers, who will naturally like to know the upshot of the affair. We waited for nearly twenty minutes, when I proposed, *nil desperandum*, to go down with the purser, and if possible, discover what was likely to be the result—at first it was negatived: if a draft was admitted, explosion was certain; but down we went, and after removing box after box, we discovered the cinder lying on the top of one, and on examining it, it appeared that when it fell and rested, it (as is usual with charcoal) became immediately covered with a white ash, and thus was almost harmless.

I carefully picked up the "Jeetel" thing that had caused so much uproar, brought it on deck, and found even then, on blowing it, that it revived, and was not harmless; but it was soon hurled overboard, and all hearts leaped for joy."

—Scenes in a Soldier's Life.

THE HISTORY OF A GLUTTON.

An incredible glutton, Joseph Krolonicker, died at Ilfeld in the year 1771, (born at Passau) who had shown his rapacity for gormandizing in many houses in Hanover. This wonderful man had as early as his third year eaten stones to appease his hunger. His parents, and even his grandmother had been stone-eaters. According to the judicial declaration of his wife, he was never satisfied, except when he mixed stones with his food of which he had constantly a supply about him. Yes, he was once about going to Holland, and having heard that stones were not plenty there, he took several hundred weight with him. This man was always hungry, and therefore ate the whole night. The longest interval from satiety to hunger again was one hour and a half. He was able to consume at one meal seventeen herring, as many quarts of beer, without taking into the account an equal portion of bread. At one time he ate two calves, one boiled, the other roasted, in the space of eight hours. At Brunswick, he ate at the castle, twenty-five pounds of roasted beef, besides having eaten before, five portions in a refectory. He also ate other things, such as metals and felt, yet he would not eat cat-fish, towards which he had an unconquerable aversion. Krolonicker, who was in his youth a soldier, when quartered, on account of his unheard of appetite, was counted as eight men. It is wonderful, but his passion for eating once saved his life! for in an engagement he was struck by a bullet in the abdomen, but this being full of stones, the ball rebounded, and he was but slightly wounded. After his death it was found by dissection, that his bowels contained a multitude of metals and some flesh; also a pound and a half of stones.

A gentleman in Virginia had a standing bet for twelve or fifteen years, that it would rain the first Saturday of every August, which he has won every year except one. Another gentleman bet that it would rain the twenty-fifth of July. He says that it has never failed to do so for the last sixteen years.