

LOCKED IN A HOUSE TO DIE.

A Tennessee Speculator's Experience.

A Chattanooga, Tenn., correspondent of the Boston Globe writes: It has been asserted that in the annals of modern crime nothing more atrocious or more diabolical is known than the wholesale murders now being attributed to Holmes, but that there is nothing new under the sun in plots and fiendish crimes is conclusively proven by the authentic story of a charnel house in the East Tennessee mountains, where men and women were murdered for years and years, and their bodies either burned or buried, while their murderers walked, not only unsuspected, but respected, through the land.

I heard it around a camp fire one summer night about three years ago, while hunting on the Cumberland mountains.

As the morning dawned I went with eagerness, at the invitation of our guide, to see the charnel house, where human lives had been ruthlessly sacrificed to appease the greed for gold.

With the windowless walls and severe style of architecture, the hotel was dreary and uninviting enough in itself.

The house was a low, one-storied structure, originally erected as a smoke house for the curing of country hams, but subsequently converted into a chamber of death.

At the time of the murders there was situated in front of it, but about fifty yards distant, a commodious frame house built in the old southern style of architecture, which secured roominess at the cost of coziness, but that dwelling was destroyed by fire, and only the blackened tottering chimneys remained to mark the antebellum home of the man who was probably guilty of more murders than any man who ever walked on Tennessee soil.

James Allen was this man's name. He settled in the neighborhood about 1840, and a few years after that began to run a road house for the accommodation of men travelling through the sparsely settled country. It so happened that the house was located at a spot which made it very convenient to travellers passing either north or south, or east or west by the two big roads that crossed each other near that point.

Allen's family consisted of a wife and two grown daughters, who were considered in those days of primitive education to be very accomplished girls, and were certainly attractive enough in face and form. In 1849 and 1850 considerable excitement was created in the neighborhood by the discovery of oil, and speculators began to pour into the section from Knoxville and Nashville hoping to find a gusher.

Among those who struck a paying well was one Dr. Hickman, of Nashville, and the product of his well, hauled forty miles over the mountains to McMinnville and thence by rail to Nashville, began to make him rich.

Every six months he made a trip to the capital of the State to receive payment for his shipments, the amount sometimes approaching \$10,000.

On each of these trips he made it convenient to stop, going and coming, at the Allen house, and as early as the second trip Hickman had fallen very much in love with one of Allen's fair daughters, and in a spirit of confidence he told the family what a rich thing he was making out of his oil fields and how he expected to come back from Nashville on the next trip loaded down with gold.

When the too-confiding gentleman stopped at the house about six months afterward on his third trip to Nashville he was literally received with open arms.

The young ladies were most attentive and almost affectionate, and the visitor was flattered beyond measure. When he drove away he promised with the greatest pleasure to stop with the family for several days on his return.

But the settlement of his business affairs in Nashville detained him for more than a week longer than expected, and the Allens were not expecting him when he arrived at the road house late one night.

After partaking of a cold lunch he was informed by the host that the house was crowded, and that it was now too late to make a place for him except in the store house, which had been fitted up specially for the accommodation of travellers in such emergencies.

Seeing no other alternative Hickman consented, and the host led the way with a lantern. The door was fastened by a padlock and clasp, which Allen unlocked, telling his companion that he would find a comfortable bed within, threw the door open and directed him to enter.

As soon as Hickman stepped inside the landlord pulled the door shut and quickly locked it. Seized with an awful fear of something, he knew not what, Hickman sprang to the door and yelled loudly to the landlord.

The heavy walls of the room merely echoed his cries in a mocking confusion of sounds, and all was dead silence without.

More and more crazed with fright, the imprisoned man pounded on the rough door with his fists until the blood came.

As time passed he grew quieter and began to think of some way to escape. Fortunately he had a box of matches, and he cautiously struck one of these. By its feeble light he made some startling discoveries. He saw that the strong walls of his prison were without windows, and the only opening to the place was the door

through which he had entered, now closed and securely fastened.

Not satisfied, however, Hickman struck another match and began to walk around the room close to the wall and this finally brought him up against a bed in the corner. As he held the sputtering match above him its flickering rays revealed a sight that literally froze the blood in his veins.

Lying in pools of clotted blood, their arms around each other, were the forms of a man and woman. By the light of another match Hickman discovered several small holes, or openings, in the walls of the room just above the bed, and on a dead line with the sleepers. He later saw that these ran all round the room at regular intervals and at once divined the purpose for which they were used.

Though appalled at the situation, Hickman resolved to escape the death for which he seemed doomed, if he could by any possible ingenuity or bravery.

Feeling that nothing more could be gained by an investigation of the apartment, he sat down in a corner to quietly await developments. Shortly after midnight he saw through the little portholes on the other side of the room the reflections from the rays of a lantern, and this warned him that his would-be murderers were approaching. The next instant the muzzle of a gun was cautiously slipped through one of the little holes, and the thunderous discharge that followed almost deafened him.

Another and another followed, each fired from a different point until every portion of the apartment was swept with the leaden hail. But the prisoner was on the alert, and by lying flat on his back close up in the fireplace, remained uninjured.

He uttered no sound or cry throughout the firing, but immediately after it stopped crawled noiselessly to the door, feeling sure that the fiends on the outside would enter as soon as they thought their dirty work completed.

He was not mistaken in that. Presently he heard a noise that indicated the door was being unlocked. Arising from his prostrate position, he prepared for a desperate struggle with his foes.

Slowly the door opened and swung inward. As it did so, Hickman stepped behind it, and saw the landlord enter with a gun in his hands, his wife following with a lantern to guide their footsteps. As they passed the portals of the door the quick-witted and desperate prisoner kicked the lantern from the woman's hand, throwing the room into total darkness, and, springing out of the room, pulled the door to and quickly locked it, with the murderous man and his wife on the inside.

He knew what to do, and there was no moment to lose.

Stealthily securing his horse from the stable, he mounted the animal and rode at break-neck speed to the nearest settlement three miles away.

In two hours he was back at the road-house with a dozen men behind him. The day had hardly dawned and the guests in the house were still sleeping when they were awakened by the screams of a woman and the curses of a man.

By the time they had jumped into their clothes and reached the scene Allen and his wife were swinging from the limb of a big oak in the backyard and writhing in the agonies of death.

This tree is still standing, and is pointed out to travellers and visitors as being one of the most interesting features of the county, which is rich with blood-curdling histories.

Beneath the floor of the stone house where Hickman had been entrapped were found the decomposed and mutilated bodies of six men and two women, not counting the bodies of the man and woman discovered on the bed by Hickman, and which Allen evidently had not had time to put away.

Aside from these bodies a pile of bones was discovered in a cellar beneath another corner of the house, indicating that more than a dozen people had been murdered in the apartment at some time between the years of 1840 and 1850, thus accounting for the large number of persons who had mysteriously disappeared in that section during those years.

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Rescued to Death.

LONDON, Sept. 15.—The steamer *Formosa*, plying between Leith and London, caught fire on her trip to Gravesend this morning. The fire started in the cabin. Five women and one child were burned to death and a number of others were badly and otherwise injured. At 2 o'clock this morning the fire was discovered in the ladies' compartment on port side. The flames spread so rapidly and the clouds of smoke were so stifling that the crew were prevented from rescuing all of the passengers, being several times driven away from the burning part of the ship. The fire was gotten under control about four o'clock when the charred bodies of seven persons were found in their berths or badly burned as to be unrecognizable.

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The Inventor of the Telephone.

Alexander Graham Bell was born at Edinburgh, Scotland, on March 3, 1847. His father and grandfather were both teachers of languages, and his father, Alexander Melville Bell, long enjoyed a reputation in the field of philology and linguistics, being the deviser of an ingenious system of "invisible speech." He intended that his son should follow his profession, and therefore early gave him instruction in the anatomy of the vocal organs, their various functions, and the various subjects belonging generally to the science of vocal physiology.

When quite a child, Bell was told by his father of an automaton speaking machine which he had seen. The boy was so interested that he determined to attempt the construction of such an apparatus himself, and he then and there invented a speaking machine, built it, and made it articulate one or two simple words. In 1865 the family removed from Scotland to London, and about 1866, at Bath, in England, Bell conceived the idea of following up Helmholtz's synthetical experience in the reproduction of sound, by attempting to transmit speech electrically.

Between the years of 1867 and 1870 he made numerous electrical inventions based on the Helmholtz's vowel apparatus, and, before he left England, had resolved to pursue one of these inventions, that of harmonic or multiple telegraphy, to a practical outcome. The idea of actual speech transmission was running in his mind all this time, like an undercurrent of thought that he could hardly formulate in definite expression, but it gradually took clearer shape, and Professor Bell has stated on the witness stand that to friends in England before 1870 he avowed his belief that we should "one day speak by telegraph." In August, 1870, the Bell family emigrated from England to Brantford, Canada, and in April, 1871, Bell went from there to Boston, on the invitation of the Boston school board, to carry on a series of experiments with his father's system of "visible speech," or physiological symbols of the deaf. He remained permanently in the neighbourhood of Boston from October 1, 1872, until he removed to Washington in 1881. From the very moment of his arrival in Canada, in 1870, up to the beginning of 1874, his mind was full of the scheme for the multiple transmission of telegraphic messages by means of musical tones, and he had other telegraphic inventions also in hand; but the old idea of speech transmission was persistent in claiming his attention, and gradually his thoughts and energies were narrowed down to this one field of investigation. He has himself narrated more than once the manner in which he proceeded, stage by stage, from his experiments with phonographic apparatus, human ear drums and apparatus for obtaining undulatory currents, up to the period when he and his assistant, Mr. T. A. Watson, were able to talk to each other telephonically over a short line in the Boston University, and when, by rapid strides, the apparatus was brought to a fair degree of efficiency.—Electrician (U. S.)

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.
When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

The October number of the *Delinquent* is called the autumn number and contains a choice and varied selection of timely articles. It gives authoritative exposition of Autumn Styles, illustrating a variety of novel, artistic and beautiful garments. Especially complete and valuable is its discussion of Mourning, Mrs. Roger A. Pyror's paper on Etiquette of Grief's outward showing being supplemented by an instructive article giving patterns and designs for Mourning Attire. Every mother with the responsibilities household should study what is said about *Fit-Out a Family*, the season's costume needs of herself and her little ones being fully treated. The progress of co-education in Great Britain is further explained by Amy Rayson. Bookbinding as an occupation for woman is entertainingly described by Evelyn Hunter Northcott. Lucia M. Robbins describes a new and amusing form of Entertainment. The reopening of the school is remembered in an account of things suitable for the children's *Handbook Basket*, while A. B. Longstreet contributes a practical exposition of how to *Carve*. The return of colder weather makes timely the admirably illustrated article of *Draperies*. The paper on the *Kindergarten* by Sara Miller Kelly, on *Bural work* for October by A. M. Stewart and the designs for *Bural Work* by Margaret Keith Forbes fully sustained the interest felt in these topics. Around the *Tea Table* has its usual admirable variety, and the *Novels* *Books* are sympathetically reviewed. Further contributions are given in *Knitting*, *Netting*, *Embroidery*, etc.

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A Delightful Theory.

"The strangest invention that ever came to my notice," said a patent agent to P. W., "was that recently brought out by an old German. His idea is to build a massive pillar in the center of the Atlantic Ocean and place upon it a revolving bridge, one end touching Liverpool and the other New York, so that people in England desiring to go to New York could get on at the Liverpool end of the bridge, and vice versa.

"By a semi-circular turn of the bridge passengers will be brought to their destination.

"When I asked him how he could get the pillar in the ocean, and where the power would come from to turn such a structure, he admitted that he had overlooked it, and when I told him, further, that there was danger of the ice in the Arctic regions being an obstruction to the turning of the bridge, he decided to carry the idea no farther."

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