Literature, &c.

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HARRY BLAKE. A TALE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

By John Quod, Esq.

Somewhere about the time when the illfeeling, which had long been gathering strength and venom between England and her American colonies, were ripening into a rebellion, there stood on the road between Albany and Sche-nectady a fantastic old building, whose style had been hatched in the foggy brain, and whose walls had been raised by the sturdy hand of some architect. It was a substantial, anti-quated house, time worn, grey, but not dilapidated; half-smothered in trees, with odd-loc ing wings stretching out in every imaginable direction, with little reference to uniformity or regularity. Sharp gables, with steps to the tops of them, jutted up among the green branches of the trees; crooked chimneys, forked for the benefit of stories, which never came there, and of all possible forms, were perched on the roof; some of them stiff and upright, like stark warriors on guard, and others twisting and bending, like so many inquisitive old fellows, endeavoring to peep into the narrow little windows which garnished the second story. But everything about it was solid, strong, and But everything about it was solid, strong, and old. The very barns had a generous lock. They were low, roomy, and extensive, with broad, wide doors and windows, and had a comfortable, liberal air, not unlike some sturdy short-legged fellow, with a large stomach and ample breeches pockets.

From the lowest branch of a large sycamore, in front of the house, hung a sign-board, ornamented with the figure of a horse, of a deep blue color—a variety of that animal possibly common in those days, but at present extinct—indicating that it was a place of public entertainment. Such an intimation, however,

entertainment. Such an intimation, however, was little needed in its own immediate neighborhood, for the Blue Horse was a place noted throughout the whole country for its good ale. its warm fireside, and its jolly, jovial old land lord, who told a story, drank his ale, and smoked his pipe with any man in the country, and so he could get a crony at his bar-room fire, he cared little whether the fellow had an empty pocket or not, or whether the ale which was making him mellow was ever to be paid for. It is no wonder, then, that the Blue Horse became the delight of the men, and the horror of their wives, who wondered that their hus-bands would wander off to old Garret Quackenboss's house, and listen to his roystering stories, when they could be so much more usefully employed in splitting wood or rocking the babies to sleep at home. Rumours of their venom reached the ears of old Garret; but he smoked his pipe, closed his eyes, and forgot them. His customers did the same, and in spite of conjugal opposition, the bar-room of the Blue Horse was rarely empty.

The bar-room was a large barn-like chamber, with a wide, gaping fireplace, and great sturdy fire-dogs squatting in front of it. Heavy rafters, blackened by time and smoke, crossed the top of the room, and from them projected hooks on which hung hams, hind quarters of smoked beef, baskets, kettles, and various articles of culinary use. Over the chimney were several guns covered with dust and cobwebs, and which probably had never been used since the landlord was a boy; but on which he now casts an anxious eye, as rumours of war and strife reached him from the more eastern colonies. Wooden chairs, wooden tables, a wooden dresser, gar-nished with pewter plates, shining like so many mirrors, and a huge arm chair in the chimney corner, with Garret Quankenboss's fat body and joly face in the misst of it, completed the furniture of the room.

It was about five o'clock in the aftereoon of

a fine bright day in autumn, and in this very room, and in the midst of a group of half-a-dozen men, with the face of the landlord shining out, like a red sun, from among them, that we open our narrative. They were all men of the same class as Garret—plain, sturdy, substantial -mostly farmers of the neighborhood, who had leitered into pick up the gossip of the day; or those who, on their way from Albany or Schenectady, had dropped in to have a chat with old Garret, before indulging in the same pleasure with their better halves at home.

The subject, however, which now engrossed them was far from a pleasant one. It seemed so even to the landlord, for he was silent, and turned a deaf ear to all that was going on; it being a fixed rule of his to interfere in no man's difficulties but his own. And as this, which was a hot dialogue between two of the party, was evidently fast verging into a quarrel, after eyeing the parties steadily for some time, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and quietly left the room. Before closing the door, he turned and looked solemnly at the disputants, to let them see that, owing to their misconduct they were about being deprived of the light of his countenance, and then shaking his head, and emitting from his throat a grumbling indicative of supreme discontent, he shut the door and

Come, come, stop this Wickliffe,' said an old man, one of the party, on whom at leest Garret's look had produced an effect. 'Don't you'see you've driven Garret off! This dispute

is mere nonsense. The person whom he addressed was a short square built man, with a dark sallow face, with a scar on the nose, and one crossing both his lips, as if he had been slashed there with a kaife; a dark black eye, that at times kindled and glowed, until it seemed a red hot ball in its sockets; a low wrinkled forehead, and lips that

worked and twitched, baring and showing his teeth, like a mastiff preparing to bite. And as he sat there, with his fingers working with anger, and his lips writhing, he was about as ugly a looking fellow as one would wish to

He turned slowly to the old man who spoke to him, and snapping his fingers in his face, said, 'D—old Garret! Let him go, let him go, let him; and as for this dispate with that boy, it's my affair, not your's; so don't meddle with what don't concern you.

The old man drew back abshed. But the opponent of Wickliffe, a young fellow of three or four and twenty, whose frank, handsome countenance, and glad eye, seemed a warrant of an onen generous disposition, now put in.

an open, generous disposition, now put in.
'Well, Wickliffe,' said he, if you will quar-

rel, I won't. I did'nt want to drive Garret out of his own bar-room and you know he never will stay where there's quarreling. So drink your ale, and we'll say no more about this

'But I will say more about it,' retorted the man, half rising from his seat, and at the same time shaking his fist at him, 'I will say more; and who'll hinder me, I'd like to knew that? And as for you, Mr. Harry Blake, I will say too, that in spite of your big carcase, you have no more spirit than a woman. That is what Pll

say.'
'Well, well, say it if you plesse,' replied Blake, going to the fire and setting himself on a bench, in front of it, 'I'm sure I don't care.'

As he spoke, he laughed; and leaning forward, he picked up a chip which lay on the hearth, and commenced stirring the fire with it, at the same time whistling, and paying no at-tention to what his opponent said, other than by an occasional laugh at his evident anger being thus foiled. At last, however, Wickliffe, turn-ing to a man who sat next to him, mutring something between his teeth, which drew the cry of 'Shame! shame!' from those around him, and of which Blake caught but the words 'Mary Lincoln.' But they brought him to his feet.

'What's that you say about Mary Lincoln?' said he, advancing towards the man who was looking at him with a grin of satisfaction at

having aroused him. 'Nothing, nothing, replied several, at the same time raising, and placing themselves be-tween him and, Wickliffe. Don't mind him Harry; don't mind him Harry; don't mind him; He's in a passion, and dosen't mean what he

says."

"But I do mean it," shouted Wickliffe. "I mean it; and repeat it, Mary Lincoln is —"

"What?" demanded Blake quickly, his eyes

glowing with anger.

Wickliffe eyed him for a moment with a fixed dogged stare; and it might have been shame, or it might have been a feeling of trepidation at kaving at length aroused him, and at seeing the powerful frame of Blake, with every muscle strung, ready to leap upon him, that deterred him; for he turned away his head.

No matter what. 'I've said it once, and

that's enough. They all heard it.'
Harry Blake's face, from a deep scarlet, became deadly pale, as he answered: ' Wickliffe, I did not hear what you said, but I dare you to repeat it.—If you do, and there is one word in it that should not be, this hour will be the bitterest of your whole life. I'm not the man to make a threat and not act up to it.'

He stood for a moment, waiting for him to repeat his remarks, and then turned on his heel and walked to the furthest end of the room; and as he did so, it was remarked by several who thought nothing of it at the time, but who remembered it long after, when every word then uttered, and every action done, became important, that he ground his teeth together, and seizing a large knife which lay on the table, with his teeth still set, drove it into the

Still his adversary did not seem disposed to give up a dispute which, it was evident, had already gone too far, for he demanded in an

already gone too far, for he demanded in impatient tone—
'What's Mary Lincoln to you, my young fellow, that you bristle up so at the very mention of her name? What is she to you,' continued he, becoming still more excited, 'be she pure as snow—or-or-or what I will not name! One would think you were a sweetheart. A glorious pair you'd make. Your red hot temper would be finely balanced against her sweet face and disposition. Sweet—very sweet-and so yielding-and dovelike-that she cannot resist importunity, however improper—ha! ha! It makes me laugh.

His laugh, however, was a short one; for before the words were fairly out of his mouth. Blake was upon him. Exerting his strength, now doubly increased by fury, he fairly swung the speaker from his feet, and flung him across the room, and against the opposite wall; striking which, he fell at full length on the floor. For a moment, Wickliffe Lay stunned; but recovering himself, he sprung up, and shak-ing his hand at Blake, and saying, 'My boy, you may take your measure for a coffin after this; for you'll need one,' darted from the room. A speedy opportunity might have been afforded him to put his threat into execution. had not several persons sprung forward seized Blake, as he was following, and held him back by main force.

'Don't stop me,' exclaimed he, struggling to get loose, and dragging the strong man who had held him, across the room. 'Let loose your hold Dick Wells, let loose your grip I say,' exclaimed he to one who held him by the shoulders with a strength nearly equal to his Let me go or I'll strike you. own.

'No you won't, Harry,' replied the other. But even if you do, I'll not let you go on a fool's errand. So there's no use in scuffling in

Blake saw that nothing was to be gained by

a struggle with so many, and so he said, 'Let me go. I'll promise not to follow him. But mark me,' said he, as they relinquished their hold, 'you have this night heard the scoundrel defame one of the purest girls that ever lived, because he had a grudge against me, and knew that she was to be my wife. He shall pay for it, if it cost me my life.'

'Come, come, Harry, don't be a boy,' said the old man, who had before interfered with Wickliffe. 'The man was half drunk and

quarrelsome, and saw that you could'nt stomach what he was saying, and so he said it. No one cares for him or his words. We all know that Mary Lincoln hasn't her equal in these parts. Mary Lincoln haen't her equal in these parts. God bless her; I only wish she was my own child. Not but that my poor Kate is a good girl, and affectionate too, poor little Kate is; but yet she's not Mary Lincoln: but Kate is a good girl, though; a very good girl.' And the old man shook his head repreachfully, as if

poor Kate next with Mary Lincoln.

Harry Blake's fine face brightened, as he leoked at the old man, and he took his hand and shook it warmly. 'You're right, Adams -you're right-Mary needs no eac to speak up for her. I see it. God bless you all for your kind feelings towards her. And now I think of it, Adams, tell Kate that Mary may not be Mary Lincoln long, and may soon want

there were a small voice whispering at his heart, that he should not have placed his own

her to stand up with her.
'I will do that Harry, I will, said the old farmer, rubbing his hands together, 'and right glad I am to hear it; but Harry, you'll not carry this quarrel further—promise me, I can trust you, I know.'

Blake, however, laughed and shook his head.
'Pll think of it,' said he, 'Beware of rash promises,' was what I learn't from my copy book. But now I must go. Five miles are between me and my home.' As he spoke he turned from them and left the room, and in a short time was heard galloping down the road.

Harry Blake had not been gone many mi-

nutes, when one of the company, an old man, dressed in a suit of grey homespun, who had been sitting at the fire, an active spectator of the alterestion, got up, and turning to a man who was leaving carelessly against the opposite side of the fire place, said, 'Come, Walton, let's follow Harry's example. Our paths are the same, and we'll go in company, and as you are the youngest you can get the horses.'
The person thus addressed seemed to agree to

the proposal, for after yawning and stretching himself, he went out, and in a fow moments was heard calling from without that the horses

The road which they pursued was the same already taken by Wickliffe and Blake, and as they had far to go, and it was late, they struck into a brisk trot, so as to pass a dreary portion of it which ran through waste and forest, before night set in. Part of it was sad and solitary enough, shrouded with tall trees, covered with long weeping moss, trailing from the branches to the earth, and resembling locks blanched by age.—Dense and tangled bushes with giant dead trees, stretching out their leafless branches over them, with here and there a solitary crow, pluming its feathers on them, crowded up to the very path ; and in other parts there were miles of pines and cedars, shooting up amidst dwarf bushes and sumachs.

They had passed that portion of the road, which had been here and there enlivened by farms and orchards, and were trotting briskly between two green walls of swamp and fores -a dreary spot-when suddenly a sharp, shrill cry rose in the air. It seemed to proceed from the wood a short distance in front of them. They were both old men; but their cheeks

grew pale, and they instinctively drew in their

'Was that a shout or a scream?' said Gray-son, instinctively turning his heavy whip in his hand, so as to have its loaded handle ready for

'It smacked of both,' replied Walton, Hark,' said old Caleb Grayson, there it is again Again the same piercing cry shot through the air, and went echoing through the woods,

until it seemed to die away in a low wail.

'There's foul play there,' shouted Walton, and striking his horse a heavy blow with his whip, the animal sprang forward at a full gallop. 'There it is again. By God! it's some

one begging for mercy.'
'Stop, Walton,' said old Caleb Grayson, suddenly reigning in his horse.

'Did you hear the name?'

'I did, and it was Harry. Can Harry Blake be settling scores with that braggart Wick-

"God of Heavan! I hope not?' exclaimed Walton. 'There was bad blood enough between them to lead to a dozen murders. Go it, Jack,' said he, again striking his horse, 'we'll be on them at the next turn of the road—the bushes hide them now.' bushes hide them now.'

A dozen leaps of their horses brought them round the copse of trees, which had shut out a sight that made them shudder. Within twenty yards of them, extended on his back on the ground, lay Wickliffe, stone dead. Bending over him was Blake, grasping a knife, which was driven to the haft in his bosom.

Good God! Harry Blake taken red-handed in a marder! exclaimed Grayson, seeing Blake endeavoring to pull the knife from the wound Don't stab him again. Oh! Harry, Harry, what have you done!'

Blake lat loose his hold on the knife, started up as they advanced. He looked has-tily about him: made one or two irresolute steps; but before he could make up his mind whether to fly or not, Walton sprang from his horse and flung himself upon him. Harry Blake, I charge you with the murder !"

Blake stared at him. Me with murder Are

you mad? Why, I didn't kill him.'
'It won't do, Harry; it won't do,' said Walgrasp—in his bosom—and him dead. Harry, this is a sad ending of this afternoon's quarrel.

' Will you hear me?' said Blake carne and less impetuous, listen to me. I came here but a moment before yourself. I heard a nerrous colling for held a person calling for help; and galloping up found Wickliffe dead, with this knife divent in his heart; and was endeavoring to pull it out when you came up. This is out when you came up. This is trous so help me God! Don't you beleive me, Go

Grayson shook his head, as he replied:
Would that I could, Harry: but as I hope to
be saved, I saw you stab him, I did.

Harry clasped his hands together, as he ked, And do you intend to swear to that and to charge me with this deed? 'There is no help for it as I see,' said Gra

son. 'The man is murdered. If you didn't murder him, who did? Answer me that. As he spoke, he proceeded to examine the body, to see if it retained any signs of life; but it was rigid and arrived and signs of life; it was rigid and motionless, with its open open staring at the sky, and the teeth hard set, as it the spirit had gone, in agony. The knile had been driven so truly, that it must have passed directly through the heart, and the blood which had gushed from the wound had already said.

had gushed from the wound, had already saturated the clothes through, and formed a small need to the s poolin the road.

'Harry Blake,' said the old man, as he drew
the knife from the wound 'this is a fearfal
deed, and the punishment is equally dreadful
You know that I am a magistrate, and musi

discharge my duty.' 'And will you send me to prison on such a charge as this?' repeated Blake bitterly.

The old man was silent.
Did you you ever know me to lie, Caleb?

'Never, Harry, never!'
'And do you think I'd lie now?'

'I don't know,' replied Grayson, 'I nevel before saw you when there was so great a risk happing over hanging over you. Oh! Harry, Harry, oh tinued he, clasping his hands together and low ing at the young man, with an expression in which terror and sorrow were strongly blended. which terror and sorrow were strongly blender.

I had rather met any man than you, filt will make many a sad heart in this neighborhood. Why did you not promise what Adams asked! or rather, why did you leave us then!

Blake shook his head, as he answered: Car leb, what can I say more than I have! If Ire peat what I have just told you, you will not be leive me. I was coming along this road; heard the screams of this way. the screams of this man; galloped to the spot, and found him dead with a knife in his breat I got off my horse to see what could be does for him, and was drawn to knife when for him, and was drawing out the knife when you came up. Had you been two minutes oner, and I one minute later, I should have made the same charge against a big you now the same charge against you, which you now

make against me.'

But the cry—the words: 'Mercy, mercy,
Harry!' He uttered your name.'

'He did indeed,' replied Blake. 'ke did indeed; I heard it myself. But he did not say
Harry Blake. Harry, you know, is not an usual name.'

'It may be—it may be,' said Grayson, 'ha'
still we must deliver you up; and if you innocent, God grant that you may prove your self so; but unless my eyes deceive me, I saw
you stab that man.'

self so; but unless my eyes deceive me, you stab that man?

'If that is your belisf, God help me! said Blake solemnly, 'for you must be a winds against me. If I am charged with Butyon such a fact sworn to would hang me. Butyon have not even looked for another mudere have not even looked for another mudere than me. He may be hid somewhere about than me. State in the brushes, and you may find him yet. Fill not stir.'

find him yet. I'll not stir.'

With a strange reliance on the word of the man, whom they would not believe, when he asserted his innocence, they left him, and one asserted his innocence, they left him, and their menced a search along the road. And their stood the culprit motionless—making no he stood the culprit motionless—making no he at the earnestness, only accounted for by the fact had con their success his life depended. At a control of the distance from the spot, and in a part of the distance from the spot, and in a part of the bank, on the road side, where Blake said it he had not been, there was a foot print. Was indistinct, but as far as could be judged when constants. was indistinct, but as far as could be judged, when compared with Blake's foot, it coincided in size and form in size and form. A little further on, was and ther, and also the ther, and also the marks of a struggle in the road. Here, too, were the same footprints, and these too, in dimensions, correspond 'It's singularly like mine, 'said Blake, place the foot of Blake.

ing his foot on the track.

'It had ought to be,' said Walton gravely, within unless your foot has altered its shape, within

Blake made no reply to this insinuation, but stood looking with an expression of deep the ble at the foot print. In the meantime, the others continued the cont others continued their search up and down the road, and in the hundred to a search up and down the road, and in the bushes. The marks of the struggle were numerous; but there was no trace of a murderer others. of a murderer, other than Harry Blake. At last they both came out and stood in the road. Do you find nothing?' inquired Blake ear,

Grayson shook his head, as he said:

'I didn't expect to; but you wished
look, Harry, and I had a hard duty to perform;
and so I thought lid harmar you first. I knew it and so I thought I'd humor you first.

Well, well, 'said Blake; 'every thing goes sadly against me. You must do your duty.
am your prisoner. 'But,' said he, seeing them
moving to where the horses were, 'what

you intend to the dead seid Walto out of him eoroner's here. Cor you must c Blake, v horse; and direction t trate, when delivered of

About fi in reach of dows, perodecond storold house, amid the game bout it, be retaining a ling vines. ng vines, the windor ing a green stealing up formed the of the top high aloft, song, seen and sky. trees, that

man's hear which was gether, it wand in it was up with line with sn
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