

The Haunted Chamber.

It was a sombre, haughty looking old mansion, wearing its strange air of desolation and ruin.

I stole into the wide dusty hall, with timid steps and loud-beating heart.

A feeling of awe, not altogether unlike terror, crept over me as the heavy door which I had pushed open when I entered, swung to on its creaking hinges, leaving me alone in the breathless silence and hushed gloom of the haunted house.

There was a dark and fearful story connected with that old deserted mansion, and it stood there among the shadows, with all the superstitious and unreasoning credulity of an untaught childhood rising up to combat my naturally courageous spirit and heighten the effect of an imagination which at all times was too daring and too active for a well balanced mind, it seemed as if the stately walls were lowering down upon me a terrible repetition of that tale of horrors.

I clasped my hands instinctively across my eyes lest I should see spectral faces leering at me over the oaken banisters, or ghostly figures gliding up and down the broad stairs with restless step and unholy laughter.

Years before, a proud old English gentleman had brought a young wife there to brighten up the gloomy grandeur of his ancestral home. She was of Spanish birth and stately beautiful.

Her husband was old enough to be her grandfather, they said—a stern, upright, relentless man, and very proud, but loving his childish bride with all the strength and passion of which such natures are capable.

But his young wife was false of heart as she was beautiful in person. She had coveted the old man's wealth and rank, and exchanged for them her youth and her maidenly charms, caring little for the passionate love which his great heart squandered upon her so prodigally.

The seals of her own heart had never been broken by the subtle touch of magical Love, or else, perhaps, its sweet waters might have swept through and cleansed her nature, washing away the worldliness and selfish pride which made her life a wreck.

But there came a time when the dormant affections of her heart germinated, and, taking root in an unnatural soil, as if to revenge themselves upon her for the wrong she had done them, blossomed into shame and guilt.

With the spell of that unholy passion strong upon her she fled from England, and left the shadow of her sin lying like a black phantom across the threshold of her dishonored husband's home and heart.

It she thought to escape his vengeance, she knew not the man whose name she had disgraced and made a byword for a gossiping world to scoff at.

Sir Richard Mordaunt was an implacable and cruel an enemy as he was a generous friend.

If he could love fervently, he could hate as well. She had held a lion couchant at her feet by a silken thread; but, if she thought to strike the kingly creature in the face without rousing all the hot, bad blood of his passionate heart, she overrated her power.

Every evil attribute of his nature was roused and stung to action by her ingratitude, and the foul stain it had left upon his haughty name.

One night, the Lady Inez slept long and soundly.

But, when she woke, her rich night robes were stained with blood.

On the pillow beside her was the ghastly trackless head of her lover, dripping blood over the velvet counterpane, and in among the rich masses of her raven hair.

Sir Richard Mordaunt was never heard of afterwards, but the arch fiend himself might have gloated over the success of that terrible retribution!

From the moment of that awful awakening, the Lady Inez was a gibbering maniac, and months after, wild eyed, haggard, and dusty with travel, she crept back to her old home to die.

There, in the very room which had been her nuptial chamber, she gave birth to a disgraced and fatherless babe.

A young, kind hearted peasant woman adopted the little orphan, and the dead mother's name was never taught to her.

The old mansion was deserted, and the simple people round about told strange stories by their firesides of the ghostly tenants that flitted through its rooms with jering laughter and unbalanced mirth.

They said there was one door that no human force could open—that of the chamber where Lady Inez died, and where the unquiet spirits of the sinful woman and her murdered lover kept unearthly tryst together.

This was the story that had come to my childish ears, and one night, climbing to my father's knee, as he sat smoking his evening pipe in the rude, old-fashioned kitchen of our peasant home, I had asked him to tell me if it was true.

With a quick gesture, which betokened neither anger nor impatience, but an emotion stronger than either, he put me down and said, in a hoarse hurried voice—

"Hush, girl! These things are not for you or such as you to meddle with. Get me my tobacco from the shelf yonder, and let me hear no more of this."

But I was not satisfied. My quick, childish eyes had noticed the sudden pallor that overspread his rough sunburned face, and the tremor that shook his strong hands as he pushed me from him.

I was a fearless, a venturesome child, with a dash of recklessness in my composition, and the fearful story of the haunted Hall, took strong hold of my imagination.

My father's agitation strengthened the power which it had gained over my mind, and day by day, the fascination deepened, until curiosity overcame whatever prudence my impulsive nature possessed, and led me where the strongest and bravest man in the whole neighborhood could scarcely have been induced to enter alone—into the very gloom and mystery of Mordaunt Hall itself.

I have described the first spell which fell upon me as I entered the great lonely hall and heard the ponderous door shutting heavily, with a dull, almost human, shriek of its rusty hinges.

For a few moments I stood paralyzed, holding my hands across my eyes, and listening trembling to the audible throb, throb, throb, of my scared heart.

But the feeling of spasmodic fear died away as suddenly and unaccountably as it came, and with a reckless laugh at my weakness, I sprang up over the echoing stairs, and dashed—with a kind of mad glee at my new-found courage—through the upper hall.

I stood up on tiptoe, and tried the rusty latch on one by one, as I ran along, experiencing a vivid disappointment as each one yielded to my touch.

I was in search of the room; I had no desire to penetrate the others.

I found it at last.

At the further end of the shadowy corridor there was a door that would not yield, though I pushed, and strained, and beat against it with all my might.

My mad, unnatural curiosity—for I think I must have been mad—rose to fever-height at this discovery.

I struck my slender hands against the stubborn latch, bruising them at every blow, and then crying out with rage, more because my efforts were so futile than from any pain they caused me.

I know not what devil tempted me, but at last, moved by an irresistible impulse, I put my lips to the keyhole, and shouted, in a voice so loud and shrill that its echoes rang through the oppressive silence as though a thousand fiendish voices had caught up my words—

"Lady Inez! Lady Inez! Let me in!"

Again I tried the latch.

It yielded to my lightest touch, and back on noiseless hinges swung the great oaken door.

Startled and horrified by my success, and yet nerved by it to a pitch of daring and wild eagerness which would not allow me to retreat, I stepped across the threshold.

I stood in a large, dim chamber, gloomy with antique furniture and oppressive in its deathlike silence.

On the wall opposite me, reflecting my slight figure, and imparting weird look to my wild, pale face and dilated eyes, hung a great, full-length mirror.

The frame was of carved wood, massive and costly, and all over it spiders had festooned their grey, clinging webs.

The dust of years had settled thick on the velvet chairs and rosewood toilet-table, and the rich coverlet and downy pillows of the great grand-looking bed in the corner were blue with mould.

"Agatha!"

Who whispered my name?

Had anyone followed me?

I glanced back towards the entrance, but the door had closed as noiselessly as it opened, and no one was with me.

Could any person be concealed in the room?

I peered around among the shadows, and even went forward and lifted the damp, mildewed drapery of the bed.

No—I was alone.

It must have been a freak of my distempered fancy, I thought, yet how strangely distinct my name had sounded.

I turned again and looked about the room.

One window, half-way between the bed and the mirror, was broken, and through the fragments of shattered wood and stained glass, a straggling vine had crawled in and was trailing on the discoloured matting beneath.

Its leaves wore their autumnal tinge of scarlet, and to me they looked like little pools of blood, staining their indelible crimson upon the floor.

"Agatha!"

Again that whisper, louder and more distinct.

I could not be mistaken. Something, whether of good or evil I cannot say, told that neither human voice nor any agency of earth or nature was in the sound.

And yet I was not afraid, or, if I was, I was unconscious of the fact.

There was a fascination in that ghostly solitude, and that mysterious pronunciation of my name, which acted like magic

upon my overwrought nerves and buoyed up my spirit with unnatural courage.

"Agatha! Agatha Mordaunt!"

Strong and clear, and oh, how fearfully sweet was that silvery whisper!

A chill ran over me, making my blood like ice.

And yet, fool that I was, I laughed.

Agatha Miller was my name—not Agatha Mordaunt.

And so, with a burst of derisive merriment, I mocked the phantom voice, and bade the ghosts, if there were any, to come out and face me, not make such strange mistakes with honest people's names, and skulk away among the shadows like cowards.

Heaven above! was my challenge to be accepted?

Why had I not noticed before, that beautiful portrait on the wall, that was looking down on me with such life-like eyes, sneering at me with its cold, exquisite mouth?

"Lady Inez!"

I spoke the name as though it had been the living and tangled form of the dead woman that was there beside me in that haunted chamber, for I knew at once whose dark, southern loveliness that rare painting represented.

Those great, passionate, slumberous eyes the rich black hair braided up with pearls, the line of fine white teeth just visible through the rare redness of the parted lips, the ruby cross lying on the swell of her white bosom, as though still trembling with the pulsations of a living heart, the exquisitely moulded throat and arms, the satin bodice laced together with strings of pearls, and, floating over all, the misty whiteness of a bridal-veil, all burned upon my memory in characters of fire.

"Agatha! Agatha Mordaunt!"

The red, cold, sneering lips did not stir or alter from their expression of stony scorn, and yet I could have sworn that those hissing syllables issued thence, and that the great, haughty eyes put on a malignant look, while I stood staring into them, with my hands locked rigidly across my breast.

Like one to whom delay is fatal, I struggled with the fearful fascination that was upon me, and, by a spasmodic effort of my will, withdrew my charmed gaze from the beautiful picture face, whose eyes were burning into my very soul. But I only turned from one horror to another.

Reflected from the dusty surface of the great mirror, about whose worm eaten frame the thick grey spider-webs were tangled, all alive with the crawling of their loathsome tenants, was a face so like the pictured one upon the wall, that I screamed with terror, thinking that it had left its place to mock me.

A face so like and yet so unlike! So like in the dark beauty of the delicate features, the splendor of the great impassioned eyes, the rich bloom breaking up through the olive cheeks, and the haughty curve of the small red mouth; yet so unlike, because there were pearls showered in like a storm of snowflakes among the black masses of braided hair, because the arms were brown and sunburned, and not round enough for perfect symmetry, and because, instead of a satin bodice, there were the coarse garments of a peasant girl.

"Merciful Heaven! Was that my face, mine, Agatha Miller's?"

What terrible resemblance linked it to that other one sneering down upon me from its costly frame?

Why could I not have a fair face like the rest of my father's children?

Why had my brothers and sisters inherited the bright blue eyes and sunny hair of their English parents, and I alone been excepted, the one dark, southern complexioned lamb of their northern flock?

And why had they called me Agatha Inez Miller?

The horrible truth flashed over me all at once, and I fled from it as from a demon.

Rather, I attempted to fly, for my feet were chained to the accursed spot.

It seemed ages that I stood there, keeping the phantoms at bay with my outstretched, imploring hands.

I watched the twilight gather slowly, and saw the first ghostly glimmer of light that the new moon cast into the chamber.

With the moonlight came that voice again, and it almost maddened me, for this time it said—

"Agatha! Agatha, my child!"

It broke the bewildering horror that was upon me, and gave the strength of fear to my paralyzed limbs.

With a cry of unearthly terror, I sprang across the dark chamber to the door.

It was close shut, and I could not open it.

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Behind me—close behind—I could hear—what? Something that told me the evil thing had left its station on the wall to pursue my flying steps.

Mad with fear, I cast myself down on the shadowy floor, and screamed till the whole hateful mansion rang with my shrieks.

And then there came a hideous thought, an involuntary and electric knowledge that, as I came, so must I go—that only one hand could open for me that door, and, acting upon it, I called aloud, with desperate eagerness—

"Lady Inez! Lady Inez! Let me out!"

There was a burst of derisive laughter, an embrace like the clasping of skeleton arms about my waist, a caress as if clammy lips had touched my forehead, a shock, a burst of light, and then I stood, not in the fearful chamber, with the moonlight glimmering around me, but down in the wide dusty hall, with my hands across my eyes, listening to the audible throb, throb, throb, of my scared heart, the ponderous outer door just swinging open on its hinges, and a gleam of afternoon sunshine streaming in and lying like a bar of gold across the oaken banisters.

I opened the door and fled wildly from the spot, but I knew it was the unquiet spirit of my dead and sinful mother that called after, as I dashed down the wooded avenue with the recklessness of desperate terror—

"Agatha! Agatha! my child!"

Carpet Rags.

How to Dye Them so That They Will Never Fade.

To color cotton or wool carpet rags so they will not fade, one should be sure to get the Fast Diamond Dyes. There are some twelve fast and special colors for cotton, while for wool there are about thirty.

It is impossible to get satisfactory colors on both wool and cotton with the same dye, although the makers of some cheap dyes, that are able to make but a few colors, claim their dyes will color both cotton and wool. A trial soon shows by ruined goods the falsity of such claims. Use nothing but the Diamond Dyes that have been used in millions of homes for the last twenty years.

CORK LEGS ARE MYTHS.

Information From an Expert who has Been in the Artificial Limb Business.

"The term 'cork leg' is a misnomer," said a man who used to be in the artificial limb business. "There never was such a thing, and a leg actually made of cork would be as unwieldy as a sawlog. The up-to-date artificial limb is a very thin shell of weeping willow, covered with rawhide, and some of them that come clear up to the hip have been built as light as three pounds."

It is a singular fact that a first-class leg, which is supposed to have a life of about five years, will be more than paid for in the saving of shoes. Of course, the false foot wears a shoe, just the same as the real one, but for some reason that has never been fully explained, it isn't as hard on leather. A flash and-blood leg will wear out one, due perhaps to the foot-gear never being removed at night and the lack of elasticity in the tread. The best customer of the makers is the Government, which pays for a new artificial limb once every five years for pensioners maimed in war. The price fixed by law is \$75, but scores of old soldiers simply draw the money and make the same leg do for as long as fifteen years at a stretch.

Artificial arms are made very successful nowadays, and a certain amount of action is secured in the hand, even when the stump reaches only a few inches from the shoulder. With one of the styles, for example, a man can lift his hat and replace it on his head with a surprisingly natural movement. The mechanism by which the false hand is made to open and close is controlled by a strap, which reaches to the opposite shoulder. A slight shrug does the work, and a little practice renders it imperceptible.

There has been a wonderful improvement in limb making during the last ten years, and a properly constructed artificial leg cannot be detected by the casual observer. The chief difficulty with the old style was its tendency to swing outward in an arc of a circle at every step. That has

been entirely overcome. Some years ago, when I was in the business in Chicago, I fitted out a man who had lost both arms in a Dakota blizzard. When I first saw him he was simply a helpless trunk lying on a cot in the hospital, and his deplorable condition had reduced him to a state of despair bordering on insanity. I took a great deal of interest in the case, and I flatter myself that I did a fairly good job. When I got through with him he was able to get up without assistance, walk about, feed himself, and do a hundred and one little things that change life from a mere blank to something really endurable. When he found himself emancipated from total helplessness he improved mentally and now I dare say he wants to live as long as anybody.

One of the great obstacles to successful limb-fitting is the carelessness of surgeons in performing amputations. An operating may be entirely successful from a surgical standpoint, yet leave a stump upon which a false leg can never be worn with comfort. I know of a number of cases in which a reamputation has been submitted to for the express purpose of correcting such difficulties. Every medical college course ought to include at least one lecture with practical demonstrations by a thoroughly scientific maker of artificial limbs. It would be of inestimable value to the students in after practice.

THE ALASKAN EARTHQUAKES.

A Larger Extent of Coastline Affected Than Ever Before Reported There.

The severe earthquakes that shook the coasts of Alaska on Sept. 3 and 10 were unequalled with the historic period of that region for the extent of coast line affected. Reports of the shock have been received from various points between Juneau and the Aleutian chain, a distance of over 600 miles. It is well known that the effects of earthquakes originating on the coasts are often felt in the far interior of continents and it is not at all unlikely that these shocks extended hundred of miles inland. In a region like Alaska where large areas are uninhabited severe earthquakes may sometimes occur without the facts ever becoming known.

It is said that a number of islands along the coast near Yakutat Bay, in the neighborhood of Mount St. Elias, have become submerged or have settled in the water, and that the adjoining coast line has perceptibly sunk, while a little distance out at sea the ocean bed appears to have risen.

While these reports need confirmation, it may be said that it is not uncommon for considerable areas of the crust of the earth to sink as the result of an earthquake. One example that may be cited from our history is the New Madrid earthquake of 1811, when the subterranean disturbances resulted in the subsidence of about 5,000 square miles of alluvial lands along the Mississippi River in what is now southeastern Missouri and northeastern Arkansas. The subsidence was about ten feet and the river poured into some of the depressions forming a series of lakes.

A few hundred miles north of the region where this subsidence and elevation is said to have occurred in Alaska the earth's crust has been rising for a considerable period. Bering Sea is slowly becoming shallower. If this tendency is continued, the time will come when Behring Sea or large parts of it will be dry land, and thus Asia and North America may yet be united above the level.

The known earthquakes in Alaska, as in the present instance, have occurred along the line of volcano cones, and particularly in the Aleutian chain. Over thirty of these shocks have been recorded by the Russians and our own people. When we bought Alaska, we acquired an addition to our earthquake territory. Canada throughout its great domain has comparative immunity from this sort of visitation, while we record from thirty to forty earthquakes in a year, most of which, however do very little damage, if any.

She—Suppose I didn't dress as well as I do now, would you love me as much?

He—Certainly, dear. Why, that is as much as to say that I won't care for you after we are married.

Stubb.—"This would be a fine place to go nutting." Penn.—"Nutting in a theatre?" Stubb.—"Yes; there are peanuts in the gallery, polished cocoanuts in the front row and chestnuts on the stage."



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