

STORIES WITH A SHIVER

THEY ARE MORE THAN QUEER COINCIDENCES.

Instances Related by Men and Women of Standing and Conceded Sanity.

Queer coincidences are always interesting and the London Psychological Society thinks that they are worth studying from a scientific point of view. Hence the opportunity recently embraced by the London Daily Graphic to gather in from reliable quarters a great number of curiosities of coincidence. The Graphic's symposium includes all sorts of coincidences, some supplied by persons of high repute in literature and science. The appended specimens will serve to indicate the character of the stories:

Mrs. Katherine Tynan, the well-known novelist, sends the following: This may be a coincidence. On the other hand, it may be a ghost story. It happened to one near and dear to me. It was in his college days; and it was a long vacation, during which he had elected to stay in his college rooms and work. The rooms were at the top of the highest houses in the ancient foundation of Queen Elizabeth, T. C. D. There was not a soul in the house but himself, and the quads and buildings were full of echoing emptiness after nightfall. He was not nervous in the ordinary sense of the word, and did not object to his solitude in this eyrie, although an impressionable Celtic visitor calling on him one afternoon remarked that he would not occupy the empty college for a single night, no matter what inducements were offered to him to do it. It was a night or two later. The sole occupant of No. — awoke in the dark. He had been awakened by an unusual sound at such a time—the sound of a foot on his stairs. He heard the foot ascend and pause outside his door. He sprang out of bed and

FUMBLE FOR A LIGHT.

By the time he had got it he heard the foot going downstairs again. He hurried to his door, opened it, and listened. All was silent as the grave in the empty house. He returned to bed mystified, and slept till morning. In the morning, as he made his own breakfast and thought of his mysterious visitor of the night before, he glanced toward the door and noticed something white half-way under the door—a visiting card. He picked it up. It was the card of a man he knew—a college acquaintance, whom we shall call Roland White. In the corner of the card was written in pencil, "Just passing through." The mystery was not cleared. Why on earth should Roland White have called in the dead waste and middle of the night? He heard of him a few days ago as enjoying himself, thoroughly, grouse shooting in the West. A day or two passed. As he came into college one afternoon he was stopped by one of the porters. "Very sad about poor Mr. White?" "Haven't you heard, sir? It's in the evening papers." It was the familiar accident of the trigger of a gun catching in a twig as the sportsman scrambled through a fence. Shot in the head, Roland White had died within a few minutes of the accident.

On a recent occasion, writes Mme. Sarah Grand, I was driving from Charing Cross to Dover street, and on the pavement in Piccadilly, strolling along through the crowd with a detached air, I saw a kinsman of mine whom I had not met for some time. I was not surprised to see him, but what did strike me as odd was that he should be wearing in London, in the height of the season, an overcoat green with age, and a bowler hat which he used to wear in the depths of the country in bad weather. I tried to catch his attention as I passed, but he

DID NOT LOOK MY WAY.

A few days later I was walking from Dover street with another kinsman, a cousin of mine, to have tea with him at his club in Pall Mall, and again I saw, quite close to me in Piccadilly, my young kinsman in the old overcoat and bowler hat. "Oh! there's L—" I exclaimed; "I must speak to him," and I ran on to overtake him; but he had disappeared in the crowd. My cousin, who had also seen him, remarked: "Well, I should certainly have said it was L—" "But it was L—" I protested. "Well, I should have said to myself," he resumed dispassionately, but for three things. L— at the present moment is the father of a family, a senior officer, and a middle-aged man. That was L— at eighteen."

So it was; but there is neither time nor space in the flush of vivid recollection, and the impossibility of seeing him again as he was when I knew him best had not struck me.

That evening I went home, and there, to my surprise, I found awaiting me a letter from L—. It was the last thing I should have expected, so long had the correspondence ceased. Some meddling women had made mischief for purposes of their own, in consequence of which three lives had been wrecked, and the blame of it all had been ingeniously cast upon me. My kinsman had by accident discovered the truth, and had written at once to express his deep regret for ever having doubted me; and he went on to recall

the time when we were young together, and the old great coat tinged with green and the bowler hat that had played a conspicuous part in our outdoor life in the country.

Part of my youth, writes Forbes Phillips, vicar of Gorleston, was spent at Goole, a port on the River Ouse, in Yorkshire. A huge bridge spans the river, which continues the railway from Doncaster to Hull, and this structure is about two miles from Goole. My father was in the revenue, and his duty took him out at all hours, day and night. An absence, therefore, of twenty or thirty hours called for no remark in his family.

It was when I was fourteen years of age that what I am about to relate took place. I had been out in the country, came home late, and, being tired, I went straight to bed. I dreamt I saw my father on what was called the Hook Bridge, to which I have referred already. I saw him advancing through a fog, and in front of him was

A CLOUD OF STEAM.

I ran to meet him, and found that between him and myself was a gap caused by the removal of several plates between the rails; a cloud of steam from an engine blew up through the opening to which my father was advancing, unconscious of the danger, and advancing to what looked like a certain death, for there was a drop into the river of something like 30 feet, with a rushing tide below. I awoke, very much frightened, and immediately went to his room, only to find that he had not come home. No one in the house knew where he was. I dressed and went to the Custom house. It was in darkness. The junior officer in charge of the outdoor department of the customs was a man called Lockwood. I went to his house and rang him up, told him my story, and insisted upon his dressing. He knew nothing of my father's whereabouts, but on my expressing my determination to go to the bridge he said: "Well, if you will go on this wild goose chase I suppose I had better go and look after you," or words to that effect. When we got on to the Hook Road there was a dense mist arising from the river. We made our way to the bridge, and we had not walked far before we heard steps coming in our direction. I ran forward, and there was before me the whole picture of my dream. A cloud of steam was coming through a wide opening in the bridge and my father was within twenty feet of it, coming to his doom, with his swinging, quick stride that I knew so well.

May I add I had never been on the bridge before. No one was allowed to cross save the officials of the company and the officers of customs, who did so at their own risk. There was never a doubt in my father's mind that my appearance saved him from death, as it was impossible to see the opening because of the fog and the steam; and, never expecting part of the bridge to be taken up, he would have continued walking on throughout the length of the bridge.

Some unknown influence caused a picture of that bridge to appear in my mind, and, stranger still, to project in my mind also a situation of immediate danger while my father was some three or four miles distant from the scene, and we ask:

"WAS IT CHANCE?"

About ten years ago, writes a woman, my husband was in Africa, and we had parted in great sorrow and distress, for it was uncertain whether we should ever meet again, and we were greatly attached to one another. It has been our custom for some years previously to go to a "watch-night service" together on New Year's Eve. When the day of the year came round my thought naturally reverted to this, and I retired to rest feeling intensely sad and lonely, and longing for his presence. Some hours after—I cannot fix the time—I suddenly awakened from something utterly different from an ordinary dream—as different from dreaming as dreaming is from waking, is the nearest description I can give. I was absolutely convinced that my husband had been there with me. I had seen him, spoken to him, felt his arms round me. Leagues of stormy ocean had been annihilated somehow, that were rolling between us, and of course, we were overjoyed to be together again. I said: "This does not look like being parted forever, does it?" But I do not remember all we said; but I know he asked me: "Is this too exciting for you? Can you bear it?" and I answered, "Oh, no, no! Don't go back yet." On waking I at once made a pencil entry in a little book of texts that is always on my table, and I have it now. But the most curious part is this: Next day, January 1st, I wrote and told him of this strange visit, and asked him had he dreamt anything of this sort that night. Now, he wrote to me on January 8th, and our letters crossed, asking me the same thing. Both letters are now in my possession. Naturally, they are of too intimate a nature for publication; but I would show them to any accredited member of the Psychological Society if considered of sufficient interest. As long as my husband lived, and later, there seemed to be some occult link or communication between us. We were not Spiritualists in the ordinary sense of the word, nor what one would call very religious in everyday phrase, but we both thought the

foregoing experience was allowed by a kind Providence to comfort us in

AN ENFORCED ABSENCE.

I was on my way through town with my daughter in the beginning of July for a few weeks' holiday, says another contributor, when she suggested that we should stay there a few days and see some of the theatres. We were not far from the Gaiety at the time, and on inquiry there we were told that all the seats had been booked for that evening. As we were leaving, however, two seats were sent in, Nos. 15 and 16, in the upper circle, which we gladly availed ourselves of. We then went on to the Prince of Wales, and were again told that the good seats for Friday evening (the seventh) were taken, but they suddenly discovered that Nos. 15 and 16 in the upper circle were available for that evening. We looked on this as a piece of great good luck, but thought it very odd that the seats were in the same part of the house as the Gaiety, and the same numbers.

We then tried our luck at the Garrick for Saturday evening (the eighth), and were again told that all the seats had been taken, but almost immediately afterward it was discovered that there were two seats in the upper circle to be had, Nos. 15 and 16.

THE NEW OCEAN QUEEN.

The Steamship Amerika—Largest Steamship Afloat.

The Amerika, the last new steamship of the Hamburg-American Company, eclipses the record in the line of palatial steamships. There is no steamship on any other line that approaches her in size, in fittings or in general magnificence. The North German Lloyd boats, such as the Kaiser Wilhelm, are the only ones afloat in the same class as the Amerika. The consequence is that while steamships on other lines, even in the busy season, have vacant space, those of German lines are always full and to overflowing.

The Amerika arrived the other day at New York from Cherbourg, and covered a distance of 3,050 knots in 7 days, 17 hours 12 minutes. This of course, is not rapid time, because the Amerika is not a flyer. But although there was rough weather most all the way and high head wind the vessel was very steady, and one would have supposed her to be sailing through some inland lake.

This vessel has many prominent characteristics. She is really unsinkable owing to the large number of transverse bulkheads and system of water-tight doors. The doors are worked automatically, and are closed by turning a handle from the bridge. There is great steadiness when in motion owing to the huge displacement of the ship, which is the largest afloat. There are submarine bell signals to give warning of approaching dangers—wireless telegraphy as on other ships. Perfectly balanced engines, therefore no vibration. Ventilation on a new system, so that the air in all the rooms is automatically changed every few minutes. She has excellent promenade decks, with special space for dancing. There are two fine promenade decks for the second-class passengers, and also promenade decks for the third and fourth-class passengers. Telephones connecting all the staterooms with a central station, an information office, gymnasium, electric elevators and a medical staff with nurses.

An innovation on this vessel is the a la carte restaurant. This feature is so successful that the capacity of the kitchen has to be doubled. You can buy your ticket as formerly, including both meals and berth, or berth alone, and pay for what you eat at the restaurant.

There are several decks in the steamer, each known by names, such as Kaiser, Washington, Roosevelt and Cleveland. Evidently the company desire to cater to the American crowd, which of course is their largest customer.

The vessel has accommodation for 3,057 passengers and a crew of 520. Her displacement is 42,000 tons. She is 687 feet long, 74 feet 6 inches broad and 53 feet deep. She has a greater displacement than any other ship in the world. Her gross tonnage is 23,000, and when loaded carries 16,000 tons of cargo, which if placed on freight cars would reach a distance of more than ten miles.

HIGH TIME.

Every one knows that nerves are delicate things, easily disturbed and difficult to keep in order. Mr. Underfoot, loyal husband that he was, had learned this lesson.

"Yes, the doctor said Jenny ought to have a change of air, and she's gone to a kind of a rest-cure place for a while," said Mr. Underfoot to one of his old friends, while his gaze was carefully fixed on the distant landscape.

"Tired out?" inquired the friend. "No," said Mr. Underfoot, slowly, "she wasn't tired out, for she hadn't done anything to tire her. But she was always kind of high-strung, and toward the last of it she got real nervous. One day I just happened to inquire what time dinner was to be,—for it had varied about two hours one way or another,—and she was making molasses gingerbread, and my asking that question upset her nerves so that she poured the batter right over me before I could move off. So next day she went to the rest-cure."

GREYNA GREEN WEDDINGS

HALCYON DAYS OF ROMANTIC MATCHES.

An Erstwhile Carpenter Is Playing the Role of the Blacksmith of Tradition.

Greytna Green, the little Scotch village just across the border from Cumberland, is witnessing a revival of the weddings which made it famous in the romantic days of yore, writes an Edinburgh correspondent. One Peter Dixon, a carpenter, is playing the role of the blacksmith of tradition, and so well does it pay him that he has abandoned his trade to devote himself exclusively to the tying of nuptial knots for couples who are in a hurry to get spliced.

I found Dixon in a public house, the center of an admiring throng of villagers. He is a good type of the canny Scot of middle age, with shrewd eyes, iron-gray hair and a mouth screened by a full beard that can well keep its owner's own counsel. He was not at all averse to drinking at a stranger's expense, but not even Scotch whisky, that most potent encourager of loquacity, could induce him to be communicative about his singular occupation.

"I don't want anything published in the papers about my business," he said.

"But publicity would increase your business," I suggested. "It might," he admitted, "but it might also increase competition and I don't want any other folks getting up in the same line here. There ain't any more in it than just keeps me going comfortably, and as I started it I think I'm entitled to all there is in it."

The assembled villagers nodded their heads approvingly.

"Are you a minister?" I asked.

"No I ain't," he answered. "You don't have to be a parson to marry folk in Scotland. I can tie 'em together just as hard and fast as any minister in the land. If you are thinking of getting married, young man, just fetch along the girl and I'll do the job for you. You'll find it'll cost you a lot more than I charge you to get it undone."

UNDER SCOTCH LAW

A marriage can be celebrated anywhere and at any hour of the day or night, for the ceremony in its simplest form consists in merely a couple agreeing before witnesses to take each other for husband and wife. One of the contracting parties is required to have resided in Scotland for 21 days before the marriage, but it is doubtful if steps are taken to compel proof of this, though the enactment was specially aimed at the runaway Greytna Green matches. I judged from Dixon's offer to marry me off hand that he does not bother himself about the matter.

I ascertained by inquiry in the village that in the course of the preceding week he had married half a dozen couples, but it is probable that most of the loving swains were attracted more by the romantic associations of the place and the unconventional form of marriage than by any necessity for defeating the machinations of hostile relatives. Most of these modern Greytna Green weddings take place at Dixon's own house, a small tenement in the main street of the village, but those who want a little more style have the ceremony performed at the Queen's Head Hotel. Dixon keeps a marriage register which he declines to show anyone. Nor will he tell what his fees are. He is not giving away any one of the secrets of his "business."

It is just about half a century since the little Dumfries village of Greytna Green fell back into the native obscurity out of which a most singular fortune had temporarily lifted it, and from which it is now emerging. Up to the year 1754, there was no need for a couple of English lovers to be scampering off to Scotland to get married. Ever since the Reformation had repudiated the Council of Trent, and most of its doings, English practices in the matter of marriages had been growing more and more lax and irregular. To put an end to the scandal the marriage act of 1754 was passed. It required all persons

EXCEPT JEWS AND QUAKERS

to get married—if at all—in a Church of England and according to the Church of England ritual. A great many people resented the new law, and as it did not apply to Scotland, the most obvious way to escape it was to fly across the border. But flight was not always easy. Numerous stories were told of sensational chases, of broken down vehicles, of barricaded roads, and of the horses of pursuing carriages being shot to give gay Lotharios in front just time to get over the bridge into the land of liberty. When the names of great lords and ladies began to be mixed up with such romances, weddings at Greytna Green began to be almost as fashionable as are those at Saint George's, Hanover Square.

Fifty such marriages in the course of a month were by no means unusual at one time. Among the earliest recorded marriages at Greytna Green was that of Richard Aynell Edgworth who, in the course of his eccentric career married four wives—one of them a deceased wife's sister—and had nineteen children, among Maria Edgworth, the novelist. Then followed several lords, among whom were Brougham, Eldon, Dundonald and Erskine, besides many scions of noble and distinguished houses.

The little Dumfries village to which these infatuated folk made a dash, some of them with indignant parents

and guardians at their heels, is a dull little place at the head of the Solway Firth, about ten miles north-west of Carlisle. The railway drops its passengers there now, but in its palmy days of romance panting young couples sped furiously along the road through the fir plantations and over the dreary "debatable land" of bog and peat, in earlier days the scene of so many desperate encounters between Picts and Northumbrians. The beginning of the end of the journey was the bridge over the broad English Esk, then came two level miles over the debatable land and finally the actual Scotch and English boundary, the little stone bridge over the Sark, beyond which lay

THE HAPPY HEREAFTER.

On occasions of great emergency it was necessary only to flog the laboring horses over this bridge and to make a dash for the little tollhouse on the other side, and if papa could be barricaded out while somebody—no matter who—hurried through some form of ceremony—no matter what so long as it was an agreement to marriage in the presence of witnesses—all was well and the marriage held good in spite of the worst that papa could do.

Until 1826 these marriages were mostly conducted at the little tollhouse. Who first officiated seems to be quite doubtful, and the only reason for supposing that a blacksmith had anything to do with it is the existence of the tradition itself. The first marriage of which any record exists was conducted by K. John Paisley, a tobaccoist. But there is a legend that Paisley himself was initiated by a Solway fisherman. At one time there were four establishments in which these irregular ceremonies were conducted. One John Linto, dissatisfied with this state of affairs, made a bold bid for a monopoly of the swell portion of the matrimonial patronage by building Greytna Hall, a large square hotel with a special bridal chamber sumptuously fitted up. In this apartment the proprietor officiated and his son after him until the runaway marriage business declined to such an extent that it ceased to be profitable. Peter Dixon will never succeed in making it anything like what it used to be.

REBUILDING OF LONDON.

Many Inartistic Structures Are Being Erected.

Mr. E. Guy Dawber, the president of the British Architectural Association, recently delivered an address to the members of the association on the rebuilding of London. There was a large attendance, and Mr. Dawber was warmly congratulated upon his election to the chair for the second time. He said the subject was especially appropriate, inasmuch as a large portion of London was being rebuilt, and the public were forced to notice what was proceeding on every side. People were inclined to throw the blame for the condition of things upon the architects, but until the public was made to understand the difference between good and bad architecture, and urged the citizens to take a pride in the beautifying of their cities, the indiscriminate disfigurement of the streets and thoroughfares would continue.

Familiarity bred not only contempt but indifference. The monotonous rows of jerry-built villas at seaside resorts or on the outskirts of large cities, the pretentious and vulgar houses at many country towns and villages, the railway stations, the work houses, the factories—all of these things were accepted as necessary evils just the same as an increase of rates and taxes.

At the present time, however, work was being done in England, not only in architecture, but in painting and sculpture and the subsidiary arts which equalled and even surpassed that of other nations. It must be recognized, therefore, that the lack of appreciation of architecture in this country was due, not to apathy or indifference, but simply to a want of knowledge. On the Continent it was the custom for an architect to "sign" the buildings which he had designed and erected, and he could not help thinking that if that were done in England it would tend to make architects more careful of what they produced.

LOSS OF LIFE AND MONEY.

One Year's Disasters on United States Railroads.

According to figures furnished by the United States Interstate Commerce Commission, 537 passengers were killed and 10,040 injured, and 3,261 employes were killed and 45,426 injured on the railroads in the fiscal year.

The total number of passengers killed in train accidents was 350; passengers injured in train accidents, 6,498. The total number of employes killed in train accidents was 798; injured, 7,052. There were 187 passengers killed in other than train accidents, and 3,542 injured, and 2,463 employes killed in other than train accidents, and 28,374 injured; a grand total of all classes of 537 passengers killed and 10,040 injured, and 3,261 employes killed and 45,426 injured.

This shows an increase of 117 passengers killed and 1,963 injured, and a decrease of 2,160 employes injured. There were 6,224 collisions during the year, with a money loss of \$4,849,054, and 5,371 derailments, with a money loss of \$1,862,602; a total of 11,595 collisions and derailments, and a total money loss of \$3,711,656 being damage to cars, engines and roadway.