

STRANGE COINCIDENCES.

SOME OF THEM MORE REMARKABLE THAN FICTION.

Incidents That Would be Considered Incredible in a Novel—Are as Extraordinary and as Intrinsically Probable as Any Dream of Romance.

Donald MacLeod, D.D., writing in Good Words, says: "Writers of fiction are the recognized holders of briefs for the improbable, if not the impossible, and yet there are few persons who, in they take the trouble to note such matters, will not find occurrences in actual life stranger than the most unlikely dreams of the novelist. Mr. Rider Haggard has doubtless a lively imagination, and even Louis Stevenson sometimes puts a strain upon fancy; but I am about to relate some incidents which are not fictions but facts—things which came either within my own observation or that of persons for whose good faith I can vouch; and which are yet as extraordinary and as intrinsically probable as any dream of romance.

PICKED FROM THE SEA.

Robert Thom, Esq., the present proprietor of the Island of Canna in the far Hebrides, can with many others guarantee the truth of the following curious coincidence: In September, 1892, the daughter of the blacksmith in Canna was wandering on the shore gathering drift-wood for fuel, when in a small bay, about a hundred yards distant from her father's house, she picked up a piece of wood bearing the inscription, cut with a knife, "Lachlan Campbell, Bilbao, March 23rd, 1892." On taking it to her mother she became much concerned, as this was the name of her own son, who was a boiler-maker in Spain, and, as would be the case with most people—certainly with Highlanders—she could not get over the superstitious dread that this message from the sea was the harbinger of evil tidings regarding her son. The family of the proprietor did their best to calm her terror, exhorting her to wait for an explanation. When writing to her son she told him of what had happened, and was greatly relieved on receiving a reply assuring her of his well-being, but was astonished to learn that he perfectly remembered how when on a holiday, he had written as described, on a piece of wood and had flung it into the sea from a rock near Bilbao. We all know the power of ocean currents, and need not be surprised at the piece of wood being carried about for six months, but the marvellous—and except for undoubted evidence—the incredible circumstance in this case is that this piece of wood, after its long wandering, should have been washed on shore within a hundred yards of where the writer's mother lived, and that it should be picked up by one of his own family and taken home. Had any novelist dared to picture a message delivered as this was by means of an ocean current, every reader, and certainly every critic, would have denounced the outrageous demand on faith. And yet the apparently impossible actually occurred in Canna.

IN THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA.

Mr. David R., a well-known merchant in Glasgow, was several years ago traveling in Canada. On a Sunday evening, far away in the backwoods, he was interested by hearing from a humble "abanty" the words of a Scottish "paraphrase," sung to a familiar air. After a little he thought he would visit this countryman, whose family worship had thus recalled to him other scenes. After chatting for a while, the man asked him where he was from. On being told that he was from Glasgow, he asked his name, and on being informed he became much excited. "I always expected some one of your family to come. My name is ——" As my friend had never heard of his name, he asked for an explanation, and the man proceeded to tell him that he was the clerk who had stolen a considerable sum from the firm to which R. belonged; that he had been miserable ever since, feeling sure that at any hour he might be discovered; that he was now doing well, and that it was his intention in a short time to repay all he had taken. My friend had been in the West Indies at the time the theft took place, and it was not till after his return to Scotland that he learned the particulars. It is however, somewhat disappointing to hear the statement with which he used to end the recital of the strange story. In spite of his promise, we have never yet heard of any payment!

STORY OF A RING.

Andrew Maxwell, another well-known merchant in Glasgow, was in the Island of Arran some years ago with his mother and sisters. The weather was unusually warm, and his venerable mother suffered so much from the heat that her hands became swollen, and as her marriage ring was fretting her finger, one of her daughters, after no little coaxing, persuaded her to allow its removal. To the dismay of her daughter the ring was lost, but she procured another so like the old one that the change was not noticed when it was placed on her finger. Next year the family went back to the same house, and in the autumn, when the farm servant in a neighboring building having boiled potatoes for the pigs, was crushing a potato in her hand, she felt something hard, and on looking at this thing inside the potato, she exclaimed to one of the Maxwell's servants who was beside her: "Here's a ring in the potato," and showed a thin, worn marriage hoop. "I believe," said the other, "it is my mistress' ring, and we can find that out because her initials were inside the hoop." On examining it, there were the initials, and the lost ring was identified! It had evidently been swept out among the ashes, the ashes thrown out among the ash-pit, the contents of the ash-pit on the potato field, and the ring absorbed by the potato, inside of which it was found a year after it had been lost!

FOUND THE SON.

When my brother, Norman MacLeod, and I went to Palestine in 1864, he was asked

by an old woman in his congregation to discover her son—an engineer on a steamer somewhere in the Levant—and to persuade him to send help to his mother. Wherever he went my brother enquired for this man. Now he was told he was trading in the Black Sea; again that he was in some ship on the Syrian Coast; but he failed to find him. When we were weighing anchor in the Golden Horn before proceeding up the Black Sea on our way home, he and I were sitting aft on the port-side when our steamer drifted against another. A man came to let a "buffer" down between the two ships just where we were sitting. On speaking to him and recognizing his unmistakable accent, my brother asked if he knew anything of the engineer he was in search of. "I am the man!" was the reply, and so his last words spoken to any one before leaving the East were exchanged with the very man he had been searching for, and as the two ships parted he had said all he wished to say! It was a coincidence, but one of the greatest improbability.

THE RAVEN AND THE FUNGUS.

The Duke of Argyll, when strolling on a stormy afternoon in the woods at Inverary, noticed a raven flying over the shoulder of Dunquoich—the hill which forms a picturesque feature in the landscape. When passing over some trees under which His Grace was standing, he, seeing it had something in its bill, shouted and clapped his hands suddenly. It dropped what it was carrying, which proved to be a cone of the spruce-fir, with all its scales reverted and on the surface of each scale there was the reticulated pattern of some dark stuff, the nature of which the Duke could not determine. He sent it to Sir William Hooker at Kew, who replied that the pattern was due to a fungus called *Parichene Strobilina*, which infested spruce cones, and was only known in that mode of occurrence. Sir William added that this fungus was so rare that only one specimen had been found previously in Scotland. The Duke adds: "I saw this find of mine many years later duly ticketed in the Museum at Kew. Professor Owen suggested that the raven had been attracted by the smell of the fungus, which is 'meaty,' and as ravens are curious and inquisitive, it had lifted this cone to play with in the air and hide it. Perhaps it had a museum of its own!" Another interesting incident is related by the Duke. Castle Campbell, the picturesque ruin near Dollar, belonged at one time to the Argyll family, but was taken and destroyed by Montrose. Some years ago a picture was picked up in a cottage near Castle Campbell by a Mr. Ellis, a well-known collector of antiques in Edinburgh and was by him presented to the Duke. The picture was in a very bad condition, but when cleaned it turned out to be a splendid bit of art—and also proved to be the only extant portrait of the famous Marquis of Argyll. Sad to relate—it was destroyed in the great fire at Inverary Castle a few years ago.

THE GIRL WITH THE WOODEN LEG.

Many years ago a poor lame girl called on me for assistance. She was from Rose-shire, and had a sweet accent and a sweet face—quiet and sad. She had been cruelly used by her grandparents, who had refused to keep her, and so she had come to Glasgow to get work as a "tailoress"—in other words, she had been employed by some sweater, and had not enough to live on. Her Highland innocence and religious principles had received a painful shock from what she had seen in the great city. She often came to me for help, and on one occasion her distress was great, because her wooden leg had become so short that she found it an encumbrance. I was able to procure a new leg for her, but the battle of life proved too much, and one day she came beseeching me to send her home. The Messrs. MacBrayne kindly gave me a pass and she was to leave next day. To my surprise, four or five days afterwards I met her on the street, when she told me she had been home and had been forced back by her grandmother in the steamer on its return journey. My faith failed me, for it was so unlike any Highlander to disown her own grandchild, that I did not believe her, and I told her so, and I was distressed to find her untrue. It was cruel, and I repented of it, for within a few days an agent of the Charity Organization Society, who called for me about another case, assured me that the girl had told the truth, and that she had been forced back as she described. I was glad when the opportunity occurred of making an ample apology to her.

MARRIED A RICH MAN.

A considerable time after this I was officiating at a marriage, and to my surprise I found my Highland friend in the wealthy home, acting as maid to the bride. On speaking about her to the lady of the house, she said: "That is a most extraordinary girl. A rich man has fallen in love with her and sent her to a boarding-school, hoping to marry her in a year or two; but she will not hear of it, and has left the school, saying she will not marry any one whom she does not love or cherish. Unfortunately the gentleman told her that it was her resemblance to one he had once been engaged to and had died, which had led to his interest in her, and she was determined to have a husband who would love her for her own sake."

After some years I met this lady again, and heard the subsequent history of the interesting girl. It seems that the gentleman managed to trace her out in Glasgow, and having cleared away all her doubts as to his affection, he won her consent to be married to him in London. As she was then an inmate of the Home of the Young Women's Christian Institute in Glasgow, she arranged to go to the similar home in London and remain there until she was married. Her intended husband met her at the railway station and took her to the Home, but the ma. ron, foolishly suspecting foul play, told the girl that no gentleman in the evident position of her friend could really intend to marry a poor lame creature like her; and in spite of the girl's tears and entreaties, she packed her off in the train to Scotland next day. The gentleman's anger may be imagined when he found what had been done, but the girl, filled with shame, would not go back to Glasgow, but went to Edinburgh and communicated with the lady in whose house I had found her. It ended in the gentleman coming for her, and after a few days she was married to him and taken to his luxurious home in London. But her adventures were not over. A friend of his, a Scottish lawyer, came with his wife to visit the happy pair in England, and so strong a friendship arose between the two wives, that when the lawyer's lady died not long after, she

left her jewels and a sum of money to my old friend. In a short time her own husband died, leaving her his fortune, but on his death-bed he warned her against a brother, who, he feared, would try to dispossess her, but told her in that case to take the advice of the Scottish lawyer, whom they both trusted. It happened as he had anticipated, and the Scotsman was put in charge of her interests. The case was a protracted one, but finally the lawyer, assuring her that the best solution would be acceptance of his hand as her second husband, it ended in her becoming the mistress of another home, where she more than once entertained the lady on whose daughter she had formerly waited! She has now been dead some years, but I often think of her strange career, while I do not wonder at the attraction which that sweet, pure face had for both of the men who loved her.

STORY OF A RING.

Professor MacCunn gives me the following: "My informant was, when a youth, of a literary turn and contributed to newspapers and periodicals under the signature of 'Heather.' In this way certain small sums came into his possession, and, wishing to commemorate his pleasant successes, he spent the money, or some of it, upon a signet ring. This he made according to a design of his own, and, among other unique devices, there was engraved the word 'Heather.' One day its owner went to bathe on the shores of the Clyde, and before entering the water he took off his ring and placed it on a rock beside his clothes. On his way home he, remembering that he had forgotten to put on his ring, hurried back in full expectation of finding it where it had been left. He was quite certain he knew the exact spot where it had been laid, and had little fear that in so unfrequented a place any one could have discovered it. But the ring was gone, and search as he may, not a trace could be found of it. Years afterwards, among the letters that had reached his office there was one from Australia, sealed with wax; on looking at the seal he was filled with astonishment at seeing the impression of his own lost signet ring. Excited and interested he at once wrote to his friend in Australia. In due time the answer came. His friend told him how somewhere up-country, in a remote region, he went into a store to write his letter, or to add something to what had already been written. Upon finishing it, he was making some awkward attempts to improvise a seal, when a man quite a stranger to him, thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out a signet ring and said, 'There try that!' Having sealed the letter with the ring he handed it back. This was all, and no further light has ever been thrown upon the story of the ring or its possessor."

New York to Chicago by Electricity.

A despatch from Chicago, says:—Regarding the story that an electric road between New York and Chicago, with an average speed of 150 miles an hour, is now being promoted by Chicago and eastern capitalists, Assistant Manager Theo. P. Bailey, of the General Electric Company, said on Friday:—"That the great trunk lines of the country will eventually be operated by electricity few doubt, but there is no immediate prospect for such a company between the points named. It is true, however, that several of the eastern lines are now considering the feasibility of putting in an electrical equipment, and at no very distant day I am sure at least some of them will abandon steam power. It is an open secret that the New York, New Haven, and Hartford road will soon equip its entire system with electricity, and I see no reason why the roads between Chicago and the east should not do the same. It is not in the least wild guess work to say that the trip from Chicago to New York by way of Buffalo can be made in eight to ten hours with electrical motors."

Many Religions.

The Czar of Russia belongs to the Greek Catholic Church; the Sultan of Turkey is a Mohammedan; the Emperor of Austria, the King of Italy, the Queen Regent of Spain, the King of Portugal, the King of Belgium, and the President of the French Republic are Roman Catholics; the Emperor of Germany belongs to the Evangelical, Protestant Church; the Queen of England is an Episcopalian; the King of Denmark and the King of Sweden are Lutherans; the royal family of the Netherlands belong to the Reformed Church; the Mikado of Japan is very liberal in his respect for both Shintoism and Buddhism; the Emperor of China is a follower of Confucius; the Shah of Persia is a Mohammedan; the Queen of Madagascar professes the Christian faith of the London Missionary Society; the President of the Mexican Republic is a liberal Roman Catholic, as are each of the Presidents of the Spanish-American Republics and the President of Brazil; most of the lesser rulers in Africa and Asia are Mohammedans; the King of Siam is a Buddhist; the Presidents of the United States have all been Protestants.

The Dairy Maids of West Prussia.

The management of the great Elbing dairies in West Prussia has adopted for its dairymaids the knickerbocker costume; no corsets are allowed. There are different grades of dairy maids distinguished by their caps; the milkmaids wear white caps, the pupils white caps with black velvet bands, and the dairy teachers caps with silver lace. Among the apprentices are many daughters of the landed nobility, but all must don the new costume, which is not only very becoming but cleanly and comfortable, and saves many disasters.

Rather Rough.

Ragged Robert (at Stony Point)—It's poor Christians these folks is.
Jagged Jake—When ye ask for bread they give ye a stone.
Ragged Robert—I wouldn't mind if they'd just give th' stone to me; but they throw it.

in His Line.

"Who was the first man to make a mountain out of a mole hill?"
"Oh, some real-estate dealer, I suppose."

CASE OF SELF-TORTURE.

THE REMARKABLE PENANCE A GIRL IMPOSED ON HERSELF.

Forty-one Pins and Needles Taken From Nellie Thomas's Limbs—she is an Orphan and an Inmate of a Convent—A Strange Case.

Probably the strangest patient that ever entered the Cincinnati Hospital was admitted to that institution the other morning in the person of Nellie Thomas, a bright, prepossessing girl of 21 years, who until recently was an inmate of the Baum Street Convent. She was brought to the hospital by the mother superior of the convent, who explained to Superintendent Hendley that the girl had been complaining of extreme pains in her limbs, her condition for the past few days being such that she was unable to stand.

She was taken to the ward, and Drs. Heidichfeld and Ludlow assigned on the case. Both physicians made a thorough examination, and found both limbs from the knee downward very much swollen and discolored in places. To the touch the flesh was extremely hard and unyielding to pressure. These symptoms were extremely puzzling and Dr. Heidichfeld began to question the girl with the purpose of ascertaining if anything in the mode of life of the patient might throw any light upon the enigmatical condition. To all the questions the girl gave monosyllabic answers and the doctor continued in his examination.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Suddenly he discovered what appeared to be a small pimple near the big toe of the right foot. More out of curiosity than with any thought that here lay the solution of the trouble, he made an incision into it. The point of the knife encountered some hard substance, and as the doctor made a closer examination he discovered the head of a pin protruding. Taking a pair of pincers he had no trouble in extracting it. Again he questioned the girl as to her recollection of how the pin got into her foot. She replied that some time ago she stepped on a pin which probably had entered her foot. This explanation was so transparently an untruth that the doctor smiled, and called her attention to the fact that if such had been the case the point, and not the head, would have been uppermost. At this the girl relapsed into silence and the doctor went on with his examination. Other protuberances on both limbs or a needle was found deeply imbedded in the flesh. In this manner 30 needles and pins were removed within the space of an hour and a half, both doctors working hard at the task.

When these had been removed the physicians rested a moment from their task and made another attempt to draw from the girl the story of how the pins came to be in her limbs. At first the patient maintained a stubborn silence, but finally burst into tears and made a partial confession.

SELF IMPOSED PENANCE.

She said that two years ago she had committed a great wrong; something she would never divulge except upon her death bed, and that in order to gain absolution for that wrong she had determined to inflict a penance upon herself. For a long time she was undecided as to just what form that penance should take.

She had read about the early Christian martyrs, and finally determined to emulate them. Fearing that if she inflicted open torture upon herself her attempt might be frustrated, she decided to adopt some plan to gain the same end and still preserve the secret. Her purpose became fixed, and for two whole years every pin or needle she found she would drive into her limbs until the head was below the skin. At first, she said, the pain was almost unbearable, especially after the pins had been imbedded for some time. But she soon became accustomed to the pain and bore it with stoic indifference, feeling all the while that she was atoning for her sins.

Being pressed for further details concerning the cause which led her to inflict this horrible self-torture, Nellie would say no more, and the physicians again went to their task of extracting pins and needles. For one more hour they labored until they had taken out 29 pins and needles from the right leg and 12 from the left, and only desisted when darkness overtook them at their task. The doctors, however, feel confident that there are at least three times the number still left in both legs, and they will make another search.

PHYSICIANS DEEPLY INTERESTED.

The details of the strange case soon became the sole topic of conversation about the hospital, and in order to learn whether he had an insane person to deal with, Superintendent Hendley took pains to learn something of the past of the girl. The Mother Superior of the convent was made acquainted with the facts in the case. She was as much surprised as the hospital physicians, and said that the girl had never breathed a word to her about it. She had been an inmate of the convent for over two years, being an orphan, without any relative in the city. Her disposition was cheerful, although she was of a deeply religious nature, given much to prayer and strict in the observance of all rules of the convent and the Church. Her education was also superior to girls of her age, she being a great reader, although her reading was mostly confined to religious works.

The girl's condition has very much improved, although the physicians fear that blood-poisoning is imminent, and the remote danger lies in rotting or necrosis of the bone, as some of the pins have penetrated as far as the tibia creating suppuration.

An Unappreciated Suitor.

Re—Your-er-father and mother have noticed that I am-er-calling on you quite frequently, haven't they?
She—They couldn't very well help it.
Are they mad?
Not a bit.
Truly?
Certainly. They know it isn't my fault that you come so much.

IS PARALYSIS CURABLE?

MR. GEORGE LITTLE, OF ESSEX COUNTY, SAYS IT IS.

He Gives His Own Terrible Experience to Prove the Truth of His Assertion—Suffered for Over Two Years—Both Himself and Family Thought That Only Death Could End His Sufferings—Again Enjoying the Blessing of Sound Health.

From the Essex Free Press.

Life is truly a burden to those not blessed with a full measure of health and strength, but when a strong man is brought to the verge of almost utter helplessness, when doctors fail, and there is apparently nothing left to do but wait the dread summons that comes but once to all, the case assumes an aspect of extreme sadness. In such a condition as this did Mr. George Little, of the township of Colchester North, find himself, and recently the Free Press, hearing incidentally that he had recovered health and strength, a reporter was sent to investigate. When seen, Mr. Little expressed a willingness to state the nature of his case, and his story is as follows:—



"HAD TO SIT WITH FEET IN A HOT OVEN."

Some four years ago Mr. Little suffered from a severe attack of a gripple which left his lower limbs partially paralyzed. He called in one of the best known physicians of Essex county, who appeared to do all that lay in his power for the relief of Mr. Little, but to no avail. For two and a half years he suffered the most intense pain and was confined to his bed for the greater part of the time. The doctor was puzzled with his case and as he seemed to obtain no relief, he changed doctors for a period. The second doctor did no better than the other, and Mr. Little returned to the one he had first called in. Finally, despairing of ever obtaining relief, he told the physician that he did not see any further use of taking his medicines, and believed he should die if he did not obtain relief in a short time. He had wasted away to little more than a mere skeleton, and was an object of pity to his neighbors, and felt himself a burden to his family. His wife and family had given up hope, and his neighbors all thought it was merely a question of time when Mr. Little's death would relieve his sufferings. While his limbs were partially paralyzed he could use them sufficient to hobble about the house and door yard, but if he undertook to walk to the stable he would be confined to his bed for a week after. His limbs grew numb and cold. During the hottest summer days he was obliged to sit with his feet and legs in a hot oven, wrapped in flannels and hot cloths until the skin would come off in scales. Mr. Little believed that his physician was doing all that could be done, and has nothing but kindly feelings for the treatment he received at his hand but he is certain that the doctor had no hope of his recovery. He had tried an advertised mineral water, taking in all seven gallons of it, but failed to obtain relief. After suffering for two and a half years, Mr. Little, in the summer of 1893, read of a case similar to his own, that had been cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Grasping at this last hope, he sent for a few boxes and began taking them. Before the second box was all used, Mr. Little was satisfied that he had found a remedy that would cure him of his exceedingly painful and mysterious ailment. Mr. Little continued the use of the Pink Pills for several months and was able to get out and do light work about his farm, which he had not been able to do for over two years. He continued taking Pink Pills a while longer, when he was fully recovered and was able to do any of the hardest work on his farm, and in the winter time worked almost steadily at saw-logging and wood-chopping. During the past fall, he says, he was frequently caught out in heavy rain storms when away from home, but he had so far recovered that his exposures have not brought any bad results. During the very cold weather of the past winter he was hauling wood to Windsor, a distance of fifteen miles. He looks at present as if he had hardly seen a sick day in his life time. Mr. Little feels deeply grateful to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and claims that his complete recovery is entirely due to the use of the pills. He gives his testimony for the benefit of others who may be similarly afflicted. Mr. Little's wife, who was present at the interview, corroborated Mr. Little's testimony and believes he owes his entire recovery to the use of Pink Pills. The entire family look upon the husband and father as one rescued from the grave by the timely use of Pink Pills.

On inquiry among Mr. Little's neighbors, we find that he is a man of undoubted veracity. He has lived in Essex county all his lifetime, and on his present farm in Colchester North, about four years. He is the superintendent of the Edgar Mills Sunday school, and his case is too well known in that district to be disputed. His neighbors looked upon his case as a most miraculous one, his death having been expected among them for many months before he began the use of Pink Pills.

For twenty-five years

DUNN'S BAKING POWDER
THE COOK'S BEST FRIEND
LARGEST SALE IN CANADA.