

"Influence of the York Herald & The Examiner!"

M. TEEFY, Esq.

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THE person who is to form the object of our hero-worship for a short time—not for his virtues or achievements, but rather for the interest he draws to himself from one remarkable act of his life, round which almost all his future acts and feelings revolved—was one William Wilson, the son of a butcher, resident in the Canongate of Edinburgh.

He had not gone home to dinner, nor would he. The horror of that thing so haunted him that it made his hair stand on end—it thrilled through him and made his eyes roll wildly like the maniac swirl of epilepsy.

Not a moment was now to be lost. He sprang again to the floor. He had been a fearless youth, but he felt now, for the first time, that his hand had accomplished something which awed and stupefied him.

He had committed murder—the murder of a human creature, and the instinct which guards our common nature wrought within him, indicating the distinction between an immortal being and a brute.

It was a miserable place, damp walls, rat holes, intolerable smells, a small bed in the corner, and a chair. He cast off his clothes, with no more light than was afforded by a moonbeam, and jumped in—scarcely amongst clothes, and only under a coarse covering.

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Poetry. HOME AND FRIENDS.

Oh, there's a power to make each hour As sweet as heaven designed it; Nor need we roam to bring it home, Though fond there he that find it!

Whit flowers as sweet bloom at our feet, If we'd but stoop to raise them! For things afar still sweeter are When youth's bright spell hath bound us; But soon we're taught that earth hath nought Like Home and Friends around us!

The friends that speed in time of need, When Hope's last seed is shaken, To show us still, that come what will, We are not quite forsaken; Though all were high; if but the light From Friendship's altar glow'd us, 'T would prove the bliss of earth was this—Our Home and Friends around us!

Literature. A STAB IN THE DARK.

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he stood on the bed. In doing this he looked up and saw, at one or two parts, openings in the planks, through which escaped slight glimmerings of light.

He lay down again, and was soon asleep, when he was once more aroused by a noise resembling wrestling and bumping on the floor, with occasional moans and groans.

The thought occurred to him that some terrible struggle was going on between contending parties, and he was confirmed in this by some broken words, when he put them together, seemed to indicate that some unfortunate wretch was being overpowered and bound, thereafter, as Willie supposed, to be robbed and perhaps murdered.

In any other situation he would have felt pity for the poor wretch who was thus being maltreated, had he been suddenly placed in the middle of the fray, he would have taken up arms on the side of the victim, but as matters stood with him, he only felt engaged at being twice aroused from that rest which freed him from the miserable thoughts of his situation.

The whole world he would have given for relief from the gnawing worm within, and this one cause kept him in the torture which nature was doing her best to relieve him from. Again he knocked and again he was unheeded.

'Deuce take you!' at length he uttered, 'but I will silence you!' And the next moment he was on the floor, searching for a long butcher's knife, which it was his delight to carry around with him, and with which he had cut the throat of many an unfortunate grimaldin.

The touch of his father's professional instrument—made so to himself by habit and inclination—was like that of the tomahawk to the Indian, seeming to collect together his distracted feelings, his anger, and his fevered palpitations, into one energy. Getting hold of it, he re-joined in the glances it gave, as he waved it high in the light of the moon, which now shone full into the cellar.

He sprang on the bed, which creaked with the sudden leap, and it just so happened that the noise was at its climax. The glimmering of the light through the openings, now rendered faint by the moonlight, yet enabled him to find a chink, along which he ran his finger till he came to the spot where it seemed that the downward individual was resisting his opponents.

The dull sound in the wood directed him, and feeling for a continuation of the chink, he thrust in the point of the knife—a stern thrust—up went the knife to the hilt—a cry of agony like nothing he ever heard before, and a dropping, drooping of blood, which increased to a gush, warm as it fell on his face, blinding him and saturating his shirt.

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And now the sticky shirt annoyed him. It might have been that he could not bear the blood, and that he felt the shirt as a damning evidence against him. Yet he confessed afterwards that the feeling that ruled him at the moment was a wish to be relieved from the irksomeness of the adhesion. He pulled off his jacket and vest, drew his shirt over his head, and having proceeded thus far, he resolved on washing away from his body all traces of the blood. His trousers and stockings followed, and he stood naked, ready to wade in.

At that moment he heard a voice behind him shouting—'Stop there, boy.'

On looking round, he saw two dark figures running towards him, from the direction of Baltic street. Fear in certain states is folly. He snatched up his clothes, all but the bloody shirt, which he felt himself restrained from touching, and took to his heels along the sands toward Bathfield. Nor did he slacken his pace for an instant in answer to the halloo, which reached his ears only to quicken his energies.

Although the sounds ceased, and there was no indication of the figures having continued their pursuit, he still ran as if for a wager, and slackened only when he was well on to Fig gate. In all this course, it could not be but that he had been seen.—The moon was still bright, and it was now three o'clock in the morning.

Such was his agitation in this extraordinary flight, that he never thought of the shirt, which was so sure, as a white object on the sands, to be picked up by the individuals from Baltic street, who, he was satisfied, had only followed him a short distance, and would return.—When he stopped at Figgate, the act was the result of utter exhaustion, but seating himself on the boulders common on the beach there, contrived to get himself clothed. This process he got through as hurriedly as his shivering limbs and benumbed fingers allowed, and then made for the road between Leith and Portobello, yet still unresolved as to what refuge he would betake himself to.

The abatement of his terror allowed of something like forecast, and it occurred to him that he might venture back on the road to Leith, and ascertain whether it was now too late to get hold of his shirt, which probably had not been noticed by his pursuers. The resolution had some of his natural foolhardiness in it. Looking about and seeing nobody, he commenced his return.—On reaching the spot the shirt was gone, and he shuddered as he recollected that his name was marked upon it.

The flash of recollection as to his name being on the shirt was followed by putting his hand into the pocket to see if the butcher knife was there. It had fallen out, probably in his flight, at least he could not find it at the place where he had deposited his clothes. This alarmed him still more, in consequence of his having, like other youths, carved his name on the handle. The shirt and the knife together found on the sands, would settle any question regarding the author of the murder. Whether should he now go? He resolved to go forward to Musselburgh, where he had an uncle whom he thought he could trust—A Mr. Gilmour. He arrived there before five o'clock. The night had been beautiful, and the morning promised to break in sunshine.—Reaching a shaded place he lay down and fell fast asleep.

When he opened his eyes the sun was far above the horizon, it was well on to nine o'clock. He had overslept his intentions, and shuddered on awaking to his troubles.—He rose, and on he went, and reached the east end of the town, which he had no sooner reached than he heard a newsboy bawling out at the top of his voice, the intelligence of a horrible and bloody murder committed on the person of a bank porter who had been barbarously stabbed on the previous night in one of the darkest lanes in Edinburgh. And it was then a man whom he had murdered! He shrank within himself, and would have fled from the gaze of the people, who, no doubt, were looking at him.

Terribly alarmed, he held on till he came to his uncle's door. The servant opened the door with a face

occupied by the old welcome smile to Bill.

'But, good Lord! what ails ye?' she said, as she looked wildly in his face, 'the lad's all covered with blood. Here, master, look here.'

'What's the meaning of all this?' said the uncle, who came out.—'Whose blood is that on your face? your own, or one of your father's calves, or of that man who was killed last night.'

'Let me in—let me in,' cried Bill.

'And you've nothing to say?' again inquired his uncle. 'Barbary, bring water and a towel, we'll clean him of the blood at any rate.'

And then Mr. Gilmour observed—'Has he no shirt on?—speak, man, what is the meaning of all this?'

'The lad was silent, while Barbary, with the wet end of a towel, was rubbing his face.

'No answer?'

'I cannot—will not—dare not,' was the reply.

'Has your father struck you?'

'No.'

'Have you cut yourself?'

'No.'

'Have you been fighting?'

'No.'

'Have you been to the killing-house?'

'No.'

'And you cannot tell where your shirt is?'

'No.'

'The lad's frightened,' said the woman sympathetically.

'Not he, returned the master.—'There is something wrong. I'll go in to Gabriel and find out. Take care and keep him till I return. He was always a wild boy, and I fear this is something serious. I'll be back to dinner.'

'Oh, I'm so glad to see you,' said Mrs. Wilson, as she opened the door to him. 'Have you heard anything of Bill? We have two policemen in the house, and I'm distracted.'

'Be calm,' he said as he went into the parlor where the policeman were sitting.

Meanwhile the father himself entered the room.

'Has your son been with you all last night?' asked the detective.

'No,' replied Mr. Wilson.

'Has he been in the habit of staying out at night?' asked the detective.

'He never was out a night before since he was born.'

'Have you any reason for supposing why he has been absent?'

'Why, I believed he feared I was intending to punish him, replied the father.

'Does he ever go among the shambles?' asked the detective.

'Too fond of it.'

'But was he known to be there yesterday?'

'It was not a killing day, and the door was not opened.'

'Have you any of his shirts?'

At this question Mr. Gilmour felt uneasy.

'Ay,' replied his mother, 'a dozen—I made them, and spun them too.'

'Let me see one of them.'

Mrs. Wilson produced one from a drawer.

'This does you great credit, Mrs. Wilson,' said the officer. 'I see his name on it, and the figure 6.'

'Ay, sir, I always mark them.'

The officer now produced a blood-stained shirt, and pointed to the mark.

'That is Bill's shirt, he got it from me yesterday morning.'

The shirt having been examined, Mr. Gilmour said—

'How can you account for the blood on the back, seeming as if it had run down his neck?'

'The officer was puzzled.

'The blow given the murdered man,' he remarked, 'ran right into the heart, and we only have to suppose the murderer to have been stooping a little to account for such a circumstance.'

He then rolled up the shirt and produced a knife.

'Do you know that instrument?' he said to the father. 'Do not rub it—there are blotches of blood on the white handle.'

'I know it too well—my son's name is on it.'

'They were found on Leith sands,' said the officer.

Mr. Gilmour here arose from his seat, slipped out, and running across the street, entered the shop where

he found Joe White, a confidential servant of the butcher.

'Joe,' said he, 'there is something the matter with your friend Bill. Take the pony and ride over to my house and tell Barbary to take Bill west to her brother William's house, and get him concealed there.'

The alarmed Joe was off instantly, and Mr. Gilmour returned to the house, now vacated by the officers.

'Bill came to me this morning,' said he, 'all covered with blood, and without his shirt. His shoes were covered with sand.'

'What did he say?' inquired the mother.

'Nothing.'

Mr. Gilmour then told them how he had sent off Joe White, and left the unfortunate parents, to return home.

Some short time after these occurrences, Jenny Morrison, being questioned by the butcher, recounted all the circumstances of the night when Bill slept in her cellar—how she went in in the morning and found him gone—how she wondered at the bed soaked with blood—how she flew to the room above where some lodgers slept and told them that a lad had cut his throat in his bed, and then ran away to die somewhere else—how the lodgers laughed as she spoke, and how she cursed them for unfeeling wretches, till she saw on the floor a dead sheep, lying in its own blood, which was soaking down through between the planks.

'Ay, sis,' she added, 'the sheep-stealers winked when they saw I had discovered them, and gave me a dram to bribe me not to tell that the poor boy had stuck the beast with a knife driven up into its body.'

'A sheep!' ejaculated Mr. Gilmour.

'A sheep!' responded the butcher. 'Ay, a sheep!' roared Joe White, 'and more—one of our own.'

'Well, now,' said the butcher, 'I always did suspect Jenny Morrison's lodgers.'

'And all this,' said Barbary, when she heard of it, holding up her hands—'and all this has been about the killing of a sheep!'

A Scotch farmer celebrated in his neighborhood for his immense strength and skill in athletic exercises, very frequently had the pleasure of fighting people who, led by curiosity, came to try if they could settle him or not. Lord D—, a great pugilist amateur, had come from London on purpose to fight the athletic Scot. The latter was working in an enclosure at a little distance from his house when the noble lord arrived. His lordship tied his horse to a tree, and addressed the farmer.

'Friend I have heard a great deal of talk about you, and I've come a great way to see which of us is the best man.' The Scotchman, without answering, seized the noble lord by the middle of the body, pitched him over the hedge, and then set about working again. When his lordship had got up—'Well,' said the farmer.

'I have you anything more to say to me?