

What Happened To Jones.

I.

On the morning of September 28th, 1900, Mr. Harding awoke with a start out of an oppressed sleep, which had not overtaken him until towards daybreak, after hours of tossing in extreme nervous agitation.

His face was very pale, and his haggard, unseeing eyes sent a roving glance around the room, that encountered objects without seeing them, and plainly attested the terrors of some recent nightmare.

But, even after the revival of consciousness of external things, the pallor of his face remained the same, and it was in a voice entirely unlike his own that he muttered: "To-day I must die!"

After a few moments of anguished torpor he arose. In spite of the distress written on his countenance, there was nothing in Mr. Harding's appearance to indicate the imminent demise he had announced. His person was sound and robust, and his step assured, as he crossed the room.

Complete lucidity came to him under the influence of his cold ablutions, and he set to going over in his mind, with extreme exactness, the circumstances which had led to the utterance of his sombre phrase.

Forty years before, at a social gathering of which he formed a part, the topic of astrology had arisen. An old gentleman, who for a long time had held the entire company under the spell of his learned and enthusiastic discourse on this subject, had offered to illustrate his own powers of divination, by foretelling the exact date of his death to anyone who cared to submit himself for the experiment.

Harding was a youth of twenty-three. In order to give proof of courage to the ladies present, he stepped forward, and solicited a prophecy of the seer. This date, September 28, 1900, had been categorically specified to him as the day on which he was to die. He had laughed heartily at the time; the term of further existence accorded to him had been sufficiently reassuring.

And in later years, the endeavor first to create a position for himself, then a fortune in his chosen mercantile pursuit, had left him little leisure in which to consider the prediction; and, in any case, his sixtieth year seemed so remote, so buried out of sight, under ages of future existence! Nevertheless, the date remained indelibly written on his brain—September 28th, 1900.

The years went by. Harding worked, prospered, amassed wealth. Everything smiled upon him. Never once had a halt been called in his steady march to fortune. He finally came to be a person to be considered, to be envied; but, egotistical by nature, he had never married.

Towards 1884, when the striven-for million had become an accomplished fact, Harding decided to realize the dream of his industrious life, and purchased in Devonshire a harbour for his declining years, which, by virtue of its pocket-handkerchief garden towards the south, was entitled to the name of "villa."

Here his incorrigible old bachelorhood, jealous of its case, and intolerant of outside intrusion, struck steadfast roots of peace and habits. Copious hygienic repasts, morning walks, a little gardening, and a little angling—such was the wise and felicitous intermixture of needs and pastimes that he had devised.

Now, it is just this condition of happy quietude that is the one most favorable to thought, and the remembrance of the vital foreclosure that had been predicted to him failed not too soon to obtrude itself upon Harding, the more persistently as his mind had no enforced occupation with which to combat it.

In the beginning certainly the good gentleman had felt no fear. He even found gratification in uttering witticisms against soothsayers and their kind. "A lot of swindlers, trying to pull the wool over honest people's eyes," was his verdict.

But after the lapse of eleven years, Mr. Harding had completely lost the spirit of mockery that had sustained and diverted him. The progress of a fixed idea in his brain began to assert itself more and more. These devils of magicians had been known to prophecy correctly, after all!

Impelled by the human propensity to further irritate a throbbing nerve, he took to poring over books on occultism, and set going endless conversations on mystical topics among his friends. He took a morbid pleasure in accumulating proofs of the late lamentable conviction that was growing upon him. Yes, yes, it was true! Any number of these wretched predictions had been known to come to exact fulfillment.

At last fear, a sheer unreasoning terror, took possession of him—a panic without reprieve that chilled and fettered him in every act of his daily life. He did not fall ill; scarcely did his ruddy color fade, or his hearty rotundity diminish. He kept multiplying his hygienic measures, to the end of so fortifying all his organs as to enable them to resist any affection capable of bringing about the predicted event. He gave up wine, Fate in its malignity being quite capable of striking at him through this his favorite sin. He even consulted physicians, who, one and all, pronounced him without a flaw.

The last few months before the terrible date brought this mental tor-

ture to its keenest—Mr. Harding feared that he was going mad. But instinctively carrying with it a menace of death, he contrived to keep up some semblance of a calm, although it was long since he had had restful sleep and his digestion was becoming impaired. Had it not been for his superb constitution, fortified by years of regular living, he would have sunk under the strain he was enduring.

So on the morning of September 28th, 1900, he awoke, to await death. There wasn't the least heroism in his attitude of expectancy; the only glimmer of courageousness to which the poor man could enforce himself had its origin in the fear that he might die of fright.

II.

It was eight o'clock. His toilet finished, he took a few turns about the room. This action procured him a pleasure in movement, for its own sake, that he had never before experienced. A reminiscence of early, romantic reading evoked a comparison in his mind to the awakening of a felon on the morning of his execution. Why was it that he, an honest man, who had all his life conformed to the principles of human morality, should be forced to live through such moments as these? Fate was horribly unjust!

He descended into his garden to breathe the air. The day had announced itself as warm. This was unfortunate. Heat is not favorable to sanguine temperament, often being the determining cause of apoplexy. He resolved to shut himself up, after a light midday meal, in a cool chamber, for the whole afternoon.

His wakeful night had made him languid, and, concluding, after partaking of his coffee, that to go about much would be injurious, he betook himself to his study. There he strove to apply himself to the perusal of the morning paper. Impossible. The lines danced before his mist-dimmed eyes.

All sorts of lugubrious ideas crowded in upon him. Ought he not, to look over his will; attend to any number of such final preparations? Then the thought that, according to popular superstition, such a course would simply be to invite disaster, deterred him.

It was noon. He took his seat at the table for breakfast. He could scarcely bring himself to more than taste the various dishes that were set before him. Then he deeply considered the matter of taking or leaving his daily cigar. Why, even a murderer is accorded a few little luxuries at his last meal! Still, he decided not to smoke.

He passed the first hours of the afternoon in the cool sombreness of his drawing-room, putting the query to himself: What form was the approaching calamity to take—crime, accident, disease? He felt his pulse. It beat a little feverishly. In intense anxiety he hastened to swallow a dose of quinine. This restored it to normal regularity.

Towards four o'clock he was made to experience a lively shock. The bell rang. He imagined it to herald the irruption of assassins. Incapable of any attempt at defence or flight, he collapsed back into his chair and waited. The maid entered to announce that his friend, Mr. Smythe, was there, inquiring if he would not come out for a walk. On no account. The whole outside world was terrifying to him for its suggestions of perilous possibilities.

This alarm suggested to Mr. Harding the advisability of arming himself for protection in case of criminal assault. But for nothing in the world would he have laid finger on a weapon that day; so he contented himself with giving orders that all his outer doors be double-locked and bolted, and that not a soul be admitted on any pretence to the house. The hours passed.

His evening meal was gone through with like the first. He could not eat. At one point the servant broke two costly plates. Contrary to his usual custom in such occurrences, her master did not scold. He feared too much the evil consequences of hasty anger. The last bite choked down, Mr. Harding looked at the clock. Half-past eight. The fact of the lateness of the hour bore not the slightest assurance with it. The preceding hours had flown by with a speed that indicated, to his despair, the brevity of the few remaining to him.

Shortly before ten o'clock a violent thunderstorm—the aftermath of the extreme heat of the day—arose, and turned the peace of the evening into dire confusion. The lightning's flashes were of savage vividness, and the thunder roared in unchained fury. Mr. Harding at once recognized in this the means chosen by Heaven for his destruction.

One terrific clap almost sent him into a swoon. Oh, if he were now to die of fear! After an hour of indescribable suffering, the perception that quiet had succeeded to tumult gave him courage to venture to a window and look out. The storm had passed; stars were twinkling peacefully out of a clear sky. The elements had spared him, yet his fear was not removed.

Eleven o'clock. There was now only left to him a maximum of sixty minutes. A turbulence began to seize him that shook his very soul. Was ever a human being in such a situation before? To follow around the dial of a clock the march of the seconds that were to tell off the single remaining hour of his life!

A half-hour more passed uneventfully.

Mr. Harding now came to the consciousness of a wild exultation sur-

ging up within him. What if the next half-hour should spare him also!—if the oracle's prediction should prove false! Visions of future felicity swam through his dizzied brain. What if, after all these years of agonized suspense, a new era were really about to open to him!

Ten minutes gone—fifteen, twenty! It was now to the sorely-trying man as though he were being born anew into the world.

At five minutes to midnight this exultation had risen to a higher pitch. The 28th of September was virtually at an end. The old seer had been, after all, but a maker of sorry jests. Mr. Harding's face was growing flushed, his eyes were glowing like live coals. He set to pacing violently up and down the room.

To him the hands of the clock seemed to move—oh, so slowly! Two minutes more—only two!

He cast aside all restraint. He tore open his collar and his shirt. The happiness was suffocating him after all the suffering he had endured.

At one minute to midnight, in a very intoxication of delight, he started to execute a dancing-step, in celebration of his deliverance when—

Down he fell upon the floor, stricken with apoplexy, at the precise moment when the clock was sounding the first stroke of the midnight that brought to a close the 28th of September, 1900.—London Answers.

ODD CUSTOMS IN SWEDEN.

Garments Worn by the Old and Young Differ Slightly.

The costumes of the Dalecarlian women are unique, a dark blue woolen skirt, very full and gathered in tucks at the waist; a white blouse, a vest of red or green cloth, beautifully embroidered in colors and often with gold and silver threads; a broad red belt of knitted wool; a long apron of red woolen, with stripes of black, white and green; a kerchief folded three-cornerwise about the neck and fastened with a gold or silver pin, with many glistening pendants, and a headdress in the shape of a cornucopia made of black felt with red trimmings and streamers. Long earrings of gold or silver and bracelets of curious forms are common.

The men wear long blue frock coats with full skirts, faced with red broadcloth and edged with red cord. Hooks and eyes are used instead of buttons of a Church of England parson. The and the collar is cut similar to that vest is made of the same material and is also edged and faced with red. The knee breeches are of yellow buckskin, ornamented with red cord and tassels at the garter, which holds up thick woolen stockings. Broad silver buckles are worn upon the shoes. The hat is of black felt, with a low crown and broad brim resembling those worn by Quakers in the United States.

Small boys are dressed exactly like their fathers. A coat with a long skirt is the ambition of every youngster, like the first pair of trousers of American boys, and he usually attains that honor when he is ten years old. The little chaps you see going about in long-tailed coats and buckskin breeches looked as if they were dressed for the stage. Little girls in the same way imitate their mothers with skirts reaching to their ankles and quaint home-made jewellery of silver and gold. Every little girl hopes to have a brooch with jingling pendants. The jewellery is of simple pattern the gold or silver being hammered into thin sheets, cut into squares and diamonds and fastened together with rings.

The costumes of the Dalecarlian women differ according to locality. In some of the parishes red is the prevailing color and in others green and blue. Their hats are shaped and trimmed differently also, and in one of the parishes a sort of "tam o' shanter" is worn, with a band fitting closely around the head and a broad top. In the Mora country the men wear jackets of white felt cut square at the corners and fitting closely to the neck, with white buckskin knickerbockers and leather aprons to keep them clean. The ordinary overcoat is made of sheepskin, with the wool on the inside, like Bryan o' Lynn's, held to the waist with a belt and with long skirts reaching to the heels—a very comfortable garment for this climate and not unbecoming.

UNLUCKY LARKINS.

An African millionaire recently invited to his Scotch shooting a party of friends whose familiarity with the gun was not excessive.

He met his guests after they had been out for an hour or two and asked them what sport they had.

"Oh, we have shot twenty brace," was the reply.

"Twenty brace is not much," he said, "considering I was assured that this was the best shooting in Scotland."

"Well," was the answer, "we didn't exactly shoot anything; but Larkins, the gamekeeper, did."

He met his friends again an hour or two later and asked them how they had got on.

"Oh! we have shot nothing further," he was told.

"How is that? Didn't Larkins shoot anything?"

"No; but one of our party shot Larkins," was the response.

Germany has 21 Universities, with over 200 students each.

Seventy-one per cent. of British land is uncultivated, 57 per cent. of French, 53 per cent. of German, 96 per cent. of Norwegian.

GREAT SEA YACHT RACES.

COLUMBIA—SHAMROCK RACE
NOT THE FIRST.

Across the Ocean From New York to Queenstown Harbor.

In March '87, the Coronet, a fine schooner yacht, under the command of that veteran racing skipper, Captain Carter, was pitted against the American schooner Dauntless. The latter was an old stager, but had proved her mettle in many a stiff contest.

The race in this instance was from New York to Roche's Point, at the entrance of Queenstown harbor. On March 12th the two yachts sped away upon their long ocean voyage, a cheer following them as they flew past the lightship at Sandy Hook and disappeared into the broad reaches of the Atlantic. No sooner were they off than a small army of American journalists raced across in one of the swiftest liners to await the arrival of the yachts at Queenstown. On landing they had to possess their souls in patience for a whole week.

The days went by until a fortnight had elapsed since the start from New York, but as yet there was no sign of either the Coronet or the Dauntless.

At last, late in the evening of the 28th, word was flashed from a signal station on the coast that one of the yachts was in sight. The excitement was intense, for as yet no one knew which of the two vessels it might prove to be.

The newspaper men, who had a tug in waiting, hurried on board in a body and steamed off outside the harbor, where they lay in wait for the winner. Shortly after midnight the leading yacht hove in sight. It proved to be the Coronet.

She came abreast of the lighthouse on Roche's Point at ten minutes to one, beating her opponent by eighteen hours, for the Dauntless did not turn up till 6:45 the following evening. The voyage occupied more than sixteen days, not a very striking performance when compared to the feat of the Henrietta in '65.

In the same year, 1887, the great Jubilee yacht race took place. Though

CONFINED TO HOME WATERS.

it was none the less an ocean race, the course being right round England and Scotland.

No fewer than twelve yachts entered for this contest. The start was made from Scotland on June 14th, and only two boats finished up within the fortnight. The prize—a very substantial one of a thousand guineas—fell to the lot of Sir Richard Sutton's racer, the Genesta, which reached Dover at 5 a. m. on June 27th. The second yacht to arrive, the Sleuthhound, did not put in an appearance until 11:45 that night.

Ocean racing has from time immemorial been a feature among the China and Australian clippers. The most famous racer of her day—or, indeed, of the past century—was the Thermopylae, of Aberdeen. She was a full-rigger, heavily sparred ship, with a hull like a big yacht, and renowned for her speed.

On her maiden voyage from London to Melbourne in '68, she simply ran away from all competitors. Within sixty days after leaving the Thames she dropped anchor in the Australian port, a record which, so far as is known, has never been beaten. She accounted for 2,000 miles in one week, and her fastest day's run was 380 miles. These figures would not discredit many a steamship even at the present day.

A remarkable ocean race took place some years ago between two Liverpool ships, the Lorton and another, the course being something like 15,000 miles. Both were bound for San Francisco, and

A KEEN RIVALRY.

existed as to which should be the first to reach that distant port. Heavy wagers were laid on both sides, almost every soul on board from captain to cabin boy having a "bit on."

They were towed out of the Mersey one after the other, the Lorton having a few hours' start. When the tugs cast them off in the Irish Channel morning, though she did not and away they went upon their long three months' race.

Those on board the Lorton flattered themselves that they had shown their rival a clean pair of heels when they failed to discover any sign of her Brazilian coast, and then commenced show up again on this side of the equator, she hove in sight off the each other. During this pause in the exciting, neck-to-neck struggle which lasted for some thousands of miles. Down the coast they raced side by side, rounded the Horn in company, and stood up in the Pacific until the wind forsook them, and left them becalmed within a mile or so of each other. During the pause in the contest, the captains exchanged friendly visits, and even the crews fraternized at times. When the breeze sprang up again, the vessels were driven asunder once more. But weeks later, as the Lorton was standing in towards San Francisco, she discovered her opponent making for the harbor at the same time. The former vessel won, though by a very narrow margin. It was certainly remarkable that a race of 15,000 miles lasting somewhat over three months, should have ended on the same day and almost

AT THE SAME HOUR.

An equally exciting contest was that which took place quite recently between four homeward bound vessels, three British and one German, over a still longer course. The race, in this instance, was from Astoria—ten degrees north of San Francisco—to England, a distance of 18,000 miles. The British vessels were all four-masted barques, clippers every one of them, while the German was a full-rigged ship belonging to the North-German Lloyd, and manned by eighty-four fellows in training for the company's fleet.

All four left Astoria within a week of each other, wagers being freely laid upon the result. One of the first to get away was the British ship Muskoka, a racer which already held the record for a voyage from Cardiff to Hong-Kong in eighty-five days. Crowding on all sail, she soon shook off her rivals, never sighting them again throughout the long voyage. Indeed, for months together, not a solitary sailing ship of any kind appeared upon the horizon. Off the River Plate, when fifty days out, she ran into a belt of calm, and for nearly a fortnight it was merely a case of idle drifting. This delay sent the hopes of the crew down considerably; but, when on April 11th, she reached Queenstown, and the first eager inquiries revealed the fact that none of the other competitors had yet been reported, three ringing cheers broke out from those on board. For the next few days both captain and crew were kept in anxious suspense, the vessels which started subsequently being accorded time allowance, of course. But as they failed to arrive before their days of grace had expired, the Muskoka was declared the winner. The actual time she took to accomplish the voyage was 101 days, 20 hours; her quickest run in any single day being 332 miles.

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CHANCE FOR INVENTORS.

Great Fortunes Waiting for Every One.

The person who is gifted with a fair allowance of brains need not go abroad to make a fortune, for vast sums of money are awaiting those of an inventive turn of mind who can supply one of the many requirements of the populace. In some cases wealthy men have offered large fortunes for simple inventions, but it is seldom anyone comes forward to claim them.

Smoke is one of the necessary evils of the winter months, and is at all times a nuisance in London, England. Some years ago a wealthy man named Newling offered \$500,000 to the person who would invent a method of banishing all smoke from the metropolis, but as yet no candidate has applied for the sum. Possibly when the genius who can abolish smoke comes along he will tackle the fog problem also. If he could chase the fogs away he would earn the thanks of millions, and a fortune beside.

Most men smoke, but the smoker's ideal pipe has yet to be invented, for although many patents have been taken out in this direction from time to time, not one has reached perfection. In the cigar department there are also a number of unfulfilled wants. The man who supplies these will speedily become a millionaire.

There is no doubt that the Post Office would handsomely reward the man who could design a pillar-box incapable of being pilfered; a form of thieving that costs the authorities

MANY THOUSANDS every year. Many inventors have tried this, but so far none of the ideas have been adopted by the authorities. The self-winding watch is a puzzle for the brainy clock-maker, and the lucky solver of the secret would coin money faster than he could spend it, as would the individual who produced a writing ink that dried immediately upon touching the paper, thereby abolishing the use of the blotting-pad.

Vast fortunes have been made over cycle inventions, but there are plenty more waiting to be claimed. The absolutely unpuncturable tire is a discovery of the future, and the man who is to make a million or two thereby is probably yet unborn. Cyclists would also richly reward the person who could devise a method of repairing a tire without having to take it off and kneel for a quarter of an hour on a damp road while it was mended, and the self-inflating tire would also prove a gold-mine to its inventor. Cheap motors will, no doubt, in the future spell millions to somebody.

We want a soap that will cleanse without the application of water, and which could be carried in the pocket and used at such times when water is not to be obtained for love or money. Shaving, too, is a painful operation on a cold winter's morning, and the person who wishes to possess wealth beyond the dreams of avarice has only to conceive some method that will enable a man to shave in half a minute without water and will make it impossible for him to cut himself, no matter how careless he may be.

WHAT'S IN A DREAM?

He was young and bashful. She was—ahem!—not thirty.

Miss Robinson, he began diffidently, I am—er—a little superstitious, and I dreamed last night that I—er—proposed to you. Is that a sign of anything?

It's a sign, she said desperately, that you've got a deal more sense when asleep than when you're awake!

John—Was Mabel offended when you called on her with your face unshaven? Jim—Yes, she said she felt it very much.