A WOMAN'S CRIME.

BY AN EX-DETECTIVE.

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"I don't understand you, sir!"

"Allow me to explain," interrupted Neil Bathurst. "If Aura Durand is arrested here for the murder of Clarence Arteveldt, it will be most unpleasant for Mr. Durand and his lady—and have you ever thought what it must be to Mrs. Arteveldt? She longs, naturally, for revenge upon her son's murderess. But a court of law will drag to light facts concerning that case that will cover their memory with dishonor. Not only will the infamous measures he took to ensnare Lenore Armyn be brought forward and enlarged upon, but the fact that he was the acknowledged lover, not only of Aura Durand, but of others, be dwelt upon; letters will be produced in court, shameful, unmanly letters, that should never see daylight. Even a man's wealth will not protect him in his grave, and the popular verdict will be that Clarence Arteveldt, after all, did not get his full deserts. Even his beautiful wronged wife will testify, because she must; and every word that tells against him will mitigate in favor of his murderess; for she, too, is beautiful, is a woman, and has been wronged by her victim. If she is tried here, she will be lightly sentenced, or else entirely acquitted. You see that I feel free to speak my mind now. My duty is done, the murderess is found. I have never been in sympathy with the murdered man. If Mrs. Arteveldt takes her son's reputation into a court it will be torn to tatters; she had better let the dead rest."

Mr. Hale looked puzzled. "I acknowledge the truth of what you say," he replied, slowly and very gravely. "But—I do not understand your motive. Do you want this murderess to go free? To escape justice?"

"No!" broke in Mr. Durand, sternly. "He wants justice done; and so do I!"

"I want," said the detective, "to see her where she can do no more mischief; I don't want to trust her to be tried on this charge. Mr. Hale, if I could prove to you that she was guilty of an older and even worse crime, one for which she would surely be punished, would you consent to let her be arrested for that crime? Would you be responsible for Mrs. Arteveldt? I ask you in confidence. But for me she would be under arrest, and out of your reach now. But I deal honorably, she shall not be arrested until you have decided the matter."

"Let us hear Miss Annin," said the wary lawyer. "I will answer you then."

CHAPTER XLIX.—NINA'S STORY.

They found the imprisoned lady counterfeiter reading the morning papers, and making the best of the situation, like the female philosopher she was. She was a little taken aback for just a moment, at sight of Mr. Durand. Then she turned to Neil Bathurst.

"Does Mr. Durand know?" she asked.

"Yes. He has come to hear your statement; as also has Mrs. Arteveldt's lawyer and Miss Army's guardian. You know why Mr. Ferrars has come."

"Yes," with a short laugh. "He need have no fear; I do not love Aura Durand overmuch, and I do love—myself. Tell me," in a tone so low that it was inaudible to the others, "what has turned that doting old man against Aura?"

"I will tell you," in the same low tone, "and then we must waste no more words. She tried to poison Mrs. Durand."

"Good heavens! The she-fiend! Well, I am ready to begin."

Miss Annin seated herself with as much composure as if in a drawing-room, and said, looking from one questioning face to another:

"Gentlemen, Mr. Bathurst desires that I tell you all that I know concerning the lady whom you call Aura Durand, and I am quite ready to oblige him. He wishes me to be brief, and I will not draw out my story.

"A little more than two years ago I came over from Liverpool in the steamer D'Orsay," here she cast a sidelong glance at Francis Ferrars; "I am by birth a Canadian, but had lived in Europe since my early girlhood; I was then coming to America to remain, being," with another glance at Ferrars, "alone in the world. On board this same steamer were Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Durand. You look surprised Mr. Durand, but I was your fellow-passenger; the state of my finances made it necessary for me to travel second class, and this is why you saw so little of me that you could hardly be expected to remember. I saw Miss Aura, however, and she saw me. Perhaps she looked in scorn upon the woman in the shabby dress. I think she did, but she saw me, and when we met again she remembered. I may have envied her then; but I never dreamed how soon fate was to place her in my power. Well, I arrived in New York, and, being friendless and without occupation, I attached myself to a variety theater in that great city.

"One day, while out with a friend, I saw, in the street, the fine young lady who had been my fellow-passenger. It was in a portion of the city not much frequented by the aristocracy, and I thought it might be well to follow her. Presently she was joined by a gentleman, and then entered a disreputable sort of a restaurant. I waited and managed to track the young lady home. The next morning I called upon her; and I freely confess, that I never before found my equal in coolness or downright impudence. Then she might (had she been a trifle more resolute) have shaken me off, but she had much at stake; she gave me, as my blackmailing fee, a diamond ring so magnificent that I have never ventured to wear it.

"Of course, after this, I posted myself as well as I could. I learned that she was Miss Aura Durand, that she resided in Chicago, that she was the only child of wealthy parents. I have since learned that she is only an adopted child. Miss Durand was paying a visit to New York, and after a time she returned home.

"Some months after this I became acquainted with Mr. George Fordham, and—I became very much attached to him. I met him while on a business visit to New York, and when he came back to Chicago I accompanied him. One night, at a theater, I again saw Aura Durand, she was with the same young man who had met her on the street in New York City—Mr. Arteveldt.

"Well, I played my game to the best of my ability, and I instructed Fordham to form the acquaintance of Clarence Arteveldt. This was easy; and before long I had all the information that I needed, enough to put Miss Durand in my power if she valued her reputation. Well, I made her give me large sums at various times. At last my influence over Fordham began to grow less kind, and then I made a different move. I knew that he aimed at an ostentatious display of respectability, and desired the entree of the first houses. If I could aid him in this, I should not lose him, and I had resolved to keep my lover. So I went to Aura Durand and told her she must take me into the family as her companion and equal. Of course she objected at first, but I knew how to overcome all her objections.

She paused, and laughed, a low, soft laugh.

"It will always cause me to smile, when I think of my sojourn under the same roof with Aura Durand," she said. "She hated me as only a baffled woman can hate her tormenter. As for me, of course, I did not love her, but I had no cause for such hatred as she felt for me. She was my orange that I squeezed at will I rather enjoyed her hatred.

"Well, after a time, of course, Clarence Arteveldt began to sigh for a new sweetheart, and then the tigress in Aura Durand began to display itself. Contrary to my expectations, Fordham did not profit much by my residence with the Durands. He was wise enough to see that Mr. Durand could not appreciate him. But he came sometimes, and he soon became the chosen friend of Clarence Arteveldt. When Arteveldt began to show signs of dissatisfaction, Aura Durand commenced to hold private interviews with George Fordham, and then I began, in earnest to hate her.

"I knew Fordham better than he knew me, better than he knew himself. I could see just what was going on in his mind. He would stand as a peacemaker between Aura and Arteveldt, until the latter had entangled himself in some other direction, and then he would present himself as a new candidate for the smiles of the heiress. He held the same power over the girl that I did, and, of course, he knew her for a hypocrite; but what cared he for that—she moved among the proudest, a belle of society; and George Fordham is one of the men to-day who have a profound regard for the surface of things, and care little about the inner lining. Bah! this is a world of shams! George Fordham, the literary counterfeiter, is, after all, no worse than scores of doctors, lawyers, deacons and divines. As the acknowledged lover of Miss Aura Durand he knew that he would ascend a step or two in the social scale; what if she were a hypocrite, he would use her as he did everything, as a means toward an end.

"When I understood the position I said to myself, 'Now it is a battle for self alone, they shall not render me powerless;' and for the first time I began to work against George Fordham.

"I goaded and exasperated Aura Durand beyond her powers of endurance, and then she began to negotiate to get rid of me. I told her I would take $10,000 and and leave her. But I never dreamed that she could raise so much money. About this time Fordham became much more kind and attentive than usual; I suspected this sudden growth of affection, but I feigned blindness. After a little he proposed to me to leave Aura, and assist him in the counterfeiting scheme, which the gentlemen," nodding toward Bathurst and Ferrars, "put a summary stop to last night. I accepted the proposition. I may as well state here, that it was in the house of a small counterfeiting gang in New York, that I first met Fordham, and—that I have had some—experience in the business.

At this a smile played about the lips of Francis Ferrars.

"The woman is impudence in the flesh," he thought.

"I did not see how Aura was to find the ten thousand dollars," resumed Miss Annin. "But one morning it was discovered that Mr. Durand here had been robbed and then I was enlightened. I was in the drawing-room when Mr. Bathurst came with Clarence Arteveldt. I knew him instantly, having seen him in New York. Mr. Bathurst, do you remember arresting the diamond stealing ballet dancer at H——'s theater?"

The detective nodded.

"Well! I was on the stage at the time, and I remembered your reputation, and I trembled for—my ten thousand dollars. When you sent a man to make an ostentatious search of the premises, I scared Aura Durand into remaining upstairs, for I dreaded your cunning. But when we were told that you were coming to dine, I was doubly alarmed; then I told Aura that the expected guest was the very shrewdest of detectives. She is a coward at heart; when she becomes alarmed she flies to her dressing-case and takes a few drops of some strange drug; then she is as brave and as self-possessed as one could wish. I used to despise this practice, for I am by nature courageous; I have lived all my life in more or less danger, and I enjoy it.

"Well, I felt uneasy for a long time about Mr. Bathurst. I did not know when he might renew his investigations, nor in what way. This made me more willing to give up the shelter of the Durand roof. She paid me the ten thousand dollars, and paid lesser sums to Fordham. In one way and another I gained possession of some notes she had written him, and all these I carefully preserved.

"Before I left her, came the news of Arteveldt's approaching marriage. She had had stormy scenes with him; had coaxed and threatened, I knew, and finally when she settled suddenly down to calmness, I might have known what was coming.

"One stormy evening she stole out and went to see Miss Armyn. She thought I was sick, in my own room, but I followed her, and I knew where she went. After that visit came her sudden wonderful calmness. The taking of the house next door to that of the bride and groom to be, was all her work, managed through Fordham. They did not intend that I should know how she was managing affairs, bribing him to delay preparations, and arranging things to suit her convenience. Fordham thought, and so did I, that she chose this house for us in order to have a chance to watch the newly married pair. I looked upon it as a jealous woman's whim. We never dreamed of the tragedy so soon to be enacted.

"One day I went to look at the house, and I brought the keys home with me. I went into Aura's room for a little while, with the keys in my cloak pocket. When I went to my own room they were missing. I looked, and I inquired, but no one had seen such keys. Aura was out more or less that day, and the next morning she came to my room, bringing my keys. She had found them behind the curtain, she said. I did not believe this; but I said nothing. A day or two after, while in her room, some packages were brought in. With my usual freedom I pounced upon them to examine their contents, as they were evidently 'dry goods' of some sort. One bundle contained a long, dark gray, water-proof cloak. I wondered at her buying such a thing, and being a judge of clothes, pronounced it shoddy."

At the mention of this cloak the men cast significant glances at each other.

"We were to have been in our house a week before the wedding, but, as I said, Aura caused Fordham to delay. We were all to witness the ceremony, of course, but the night before the wedding Aura contrived to sprain her ankle, so, of course, she remained at home; and Mr. and Mrs. Durand and myself went, taking with us Miss Aura's 'regrets.'

"I was delivering these regrets after the most approved fashion, when the bride put her hand upon my arm and said, in a tone audible only to myself, and giving me such a queer look as she said it: 'I have not the pleasure of Miss Durand's acquaintance; nevertheless, tell her that I trust her injury can be amended—in time.' I knew she did not refer to Aura's lameness, and I instantly connected the speech with Aura's secret visit to her. But I could not understand it then. When the news came that Clarence Arteveldt had been murdered, it was still more of a mystery, just for a moment, then I understood it. I remembered her words, as who does not that was present at that bridal supper. And I knew that her message meant this: 'She would leave Clarence Arteveldt, and Aura Durand might console him if she could.' From the first I did not believe that Lenore Armyn had killed him. From the first I suspected Aura. I went to her room; I was the first to tell her of the murder, and—she baffled me. I could not help but see that she was shocked at the news. I should know what was acting is, and she was not acting. I could explain it to myself in only one way: Perhaps she had taken an overdose of her drug, and committed the deed in a state of temporary insanity. But I did not believe this—I did not know what to believe.

"The keys of the house were in the hands of Mrs. Rogers. I went to her and got them, and the day of the funeral I visited the house—our house, you know. I went through it, and up to the very roof. A part of our 'kit' had been smuggled in and stored away in the attic rooms. I found one of these attic doors ajar, and I knew that no door had been left thus by one of our people. Then I began to look about me carefully. The stairway had been partitioned off, and so was dark. I opened the attic doors, and last, got up on a box and unfastened the trap in the roof, lifting it up, and letting in a flood of light. The box on which I stood was directly under the trap, and looking down at it I saw hanging to a nail a little piece of cloth. I knew it; it was the gray waterproof lately bought by Aura Durand. One corner had caught on the nail and torn out. My theory is that she tore it in coming back through the trap after committing the deed. I looked closely all about, and on the stairs, and in the room where lay our counterfeiting tools. I found small drops of white wax, as if dropped from a wax taper. Miss Durand will have nothing but wax lights in her rooms.

"I think I have told you enough. There is no need to ask why we did not denounce Aura Durand. We might have got the reward, but we could not produce our proof without exposing our business; and—we knew that we could bleed Aura to any extent. She, or some one, contrived, recently, to rob me of my purse containing the scrap of cloth and the notes to Fordham about the house, so I can not show you these."

"Give yourself no uneasiness on that score," said Neil Bathurst, with more brusqueness than was usual to him. "Your pocket-book, with all it contained, is safe in my possession."

She turned upon him with a cold stare.

"What a men you are," she exclaimed. "If I am set at liberty again I shall keep the width of the continent between us, if I have any secrets to hide."

"As doubtless you would have," retorted Neil, smiling in spite of himself at her matchless audacity.

"Yes; as doubtless I should," she replied, coolly. "Shall you appear against me in court, Mr. Bathurst?"

"Assuredly."

"And you, Mr. Ferrars?"

"As a witness on this case, yes," answered Ferrars, significantly.

"Will they let me see Fordham, do you think?" she asked, again turning to Bathurst.

"I think not, madame. The doctor says Fordham will live to serve out a term in the penitentiary."

"I'm glad of that," said this remarkable woman. "I prefer to have him near me, even there."

When they were once more seated in Mr. Hale's office that gentleman turned to Bathurst and exclaimed:

"Great heavens! sir, do you not suppose that Miss Durand will take fright when she hears of this woman's arrest and effect her escape?"

"Miss Durand is under close surveillance, sir. If she attempts to escape she will be promptly stopped," replied the detective.

Mr. Hale sat for a long time in thoughtful silence, and then he again looked up.

"You intimated that another grave charge would be brought against her," he said. "I agree with Mr. Durand, such a woman should have no light punishment. What will be the probable punishment for this other crime?"

Bathurst pointed to Francis Ferrars. "She will be tried in his country," he replied; "ask him."

The lawyer turned his questioning face toward the English detective.

"What will be her punishment if she is tried in England?" he asked.

With an iron look upon his face Francis Ferrars answered:

"Death!"

"Then in heaven's name let her be taken to England," cried lawyer Hale. "Bathurst, what is the crime?"

"Do you remember my mention of Jocelyn's search of Elsie Schwartz, who killed her husband and his sister?" asked Bathurst.

"Yes."

"Well — Aura Durand is Elsie Schwartz."

"Good God! Man don't lose any more time; don't stop to explain, go and seize the woman fiend."

"Wait!" said Neil Bathurst. "Elsie Schwartz is ready for another crime, we must give her a little more rope."

CHAPTER L.—THE CONFESSION OF A MURDERESS.

It is midnight. In the splendid mansion of James Durand, all is quiet; as quiet as earth, and sea, and sky, before the first breaking of the hurricane. Such a strange quiet! In the housekeeper's room sits Mrs. Richards, silent, motionless, alert. The room is very dark; the door is locked, and she sits near it, listening. In the rooms of "Cousin Charles" something still more strange might be seen. Yes, seen; for there is some light, a very little, here.

On the bed in the sleeping room lies the young man who has so suddenly deposed Aura Durand. The light is too dim to enable one to distinguish his features, but the blonde hair, and the blonde whiskers, are unmistakable, they belong to "Cousin Charles." He lies very still. He must be sleeping soundly. Beyond the bed is an open door, the door of the drawing-room, but it is dark, very dark within. Nothing can be seen from the dimly lighted chamber, and yet—something is there. Between the door of entrance and the bed is a lofty window, heavily curtained. A moment the curtains are drawn aside, and the face of a man looks out, then they fall together in somber folds, and all is still.

Five minutes, ten, and then the outer door opens softly, and a figure with loose flowing blonde hair, and softly trailing dark garments glides in. The figure turns, closes the door cautiously, and glides straight to the bedside. It is a woman—it is Aura Durand. Straight to the bedside she goes, and then she takes something from her pocket, there is the slightest possible clicking of glass, a glimmer of something white in her hand, something white which she bends down and lays upon the half averted face of the sleeper; and then there is a strong, sickening odor of chloroform in the room. She has adjusted the white thing carefully, and now she turns and rests herself in an easy chair not far from the bed. Great heavens! is this woman iron, or marble, or ice, that she can sit there beside her victim? She sits calm, immovable; moment after moment passes, and at last she rises and goes again to the bed. Again she lifts the handkerchief, again it is saturated with the deadly liquid, and laid upon the face of the sleeper. Again she seats herself and waits. After a time she seems satisfied with her work; life must be extinct under that long suffocation; she rises, once more she goes to the bed and removes the handkerchief from the still face.

"Elise Schwartz! I arrest you in the name of the law."

What has happened? Has she gone mad?

A strong hand closes upon her arm, a stern voice is sounding in her ear. Merciful heavens! the room is full of people! the lights are turned on; it is like a transformation scene, only that she holds in her hands the hideous evidence of her guilt, and there upon the bed lies—that!

Is she going mad? everything reels about her; everything is seen through a vapor; everything taunts and tantalizes her; she hears voices that seem distant, and then near; the lights dance to and fro, everything seems unreal, save that clasp upon her arm, that voice in her ear, and that which lies upon the bed.

After a time the mist clears away, the voices resolve themselves to sounds that she can comprehend. The forms stand out distinct and recognizable, and she knows that Mr. Durand, Mr. Hale, Neil Bathurst, and a man she does now, are standing opposite, on the other side the bed. Then she knows that a tall, strong man stands beside her, she hears again the words:

"Elise Schwartz, you are my prisoner."

She realizes that all is lost; she has been hunted down. With a cry like that of some wild animal, she turns upon her captor, and strives to wrench herself from his grasp, but it is useless. She ceases to struggle, and stands sullenly beside the bed; she will say no word, the name that has fallen from the lips of her captor has told her that words are useless; she is Elise Schwartz, and she has been hunted down.

"Girl!" Mr. Durand moves forward, "the mercy you have had for others I will show to you. I give you up to the hands of the law you have outraged. Expect nothing from me save that I will do my utmost to bring to justice, one, who would have been, but for Neil Bathurst, my wife's murderess. Robert Jocelyn, the detective, in whose hands you are now, has followed you from the scene of your earlier crimes; he shall take you back to England; you have no friends here."

The captive shivered under the hand that restrained her, but she said no word, and Neil Bathurst moved a step nearer.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

POETICAL LAW.

The Lawyer Was Weak on Rhymes, but He Got a Verdict.

An eccentric Irishman named Broone, who lived in Queen's county, and owned an estate valued at $600,000, has made Mr. Towns one of four heirs, and his share will be $150,000, says an old copy of the Troy Times. About ten years ago an old man entered his office and requested an interview.

He stated that he had long been interested in reading of litigations, and he had seen the name of Mr. Towns in the newspapers as a lawyer who did not take the law too seriously; so Broone came to Mr. Towns saying he had decided to give him the first case that he was interested in, on condition that he would sum up the case in rhyme.

The case was that of Mrs. Bridget Rowan against John Bedell for damages for being bitten by a dog and drenched with water from a hose. To comply with Mr. Broone's request Mr. Towns summed up the case as desired. After reciting how Bedell, who

> Keeps near the park, oh, sad to tell,
> A low resort of vice and sin,
> Where he dispenses rum and gin,
> Yet not content with deadly cups,
> He keeps two wild ferocious pups
> To slay those who escape his lair
> With deadly hydrophobi-air.

the poet went on to say that Bedell,

> Seeing she was but a woman,
> Set his puppies on Mrs. Rowan,
> And as he saw her race with fright,
> Trying to save herself by flight,
> He shouted, "Bill, before she goes,
> Just play upon her with the hose."
> Cursed, assaulted, all but drowned,
> Bleeding from the puppies' wound,
> The plaintiff, gentlemen of the jury
> At last escaped this blackguard's fury.
> And comes in court to see if you
> Will do as you'd have others do.

These atrocities, the Albany Law Journal says, resulted in a verdict of $575 for his client. His patron was so pleased that he gave him another case, in which he recovered $9,583 against the Long Island Railway Company for injuries to a woman's knee. This case he summed up in rhyme, remarking among other things deserving death:

> The fairest thing on earth to see
> Is lovely woman's beauteous knee.

His Title to Distinction.

"The major is a distinguished man, is he not?"

"You bet!"

"Ever been to congress?"

"No; but he don't live ten miles from whar the legislature meets!"

THE LADY OF THE PORTRAIT.

IN the summer of '88 I was employed to look after some legal business at Boone Court House, W. Va. Leaving the railroad at Brownstone and taking directions and a horse from my landlord at that point, I set out through the mountains early in the afternoon, expecting to reach Racine in time for supper.

As the afternoon waned, however, I noticed that the road became constantly rougher and apparently more unfrequented, until it was little more than a deserted pathway that crossed and recrossed the gravelly bed of dry creek, in a mad effort to remain in the narrow valley that wound circuitously among the mountains whose black timbered summits seemed to stretch higher and higher above me in the gathering twilight. It being a cloudy day I was completely mystified as to the points of the compass, and it now became evident to me that I had in some manner missed my way. I had already gone too far to retrace my steps before nightfall, so that unless I speedily found shelter I would be obliged to pass the night in the open air.

Being in no wise pleased with this prospect I concluded to press on a little farther before abandoning the quest, and had barely formed this resolution when a bend in the pathway brought me into full view of what appeared to be a large, square southern mansion surrounded by trees and situated a little way up the slope of a remarkably lofty mountain that rose precipitously behind it.

A nearer approach revealed an outward appearance of overgrowth and dilapidation. The fence had fallen down in several places; the open gate was barely supported by its rusty hinges; the yard was a mass of weeds. The condition of the house I could not determine in the dim light made dimmer by the heavy shadows of the trees. Between the tall weeds and briars there was a wide stone walk leading from the gate to the front door.

The prospect was not an inviting one, but as my situation had become somewhat desperate I determined if possible to obtain accommodations for the night.

My repeated knocks elicited no response beyond a hollow echo, and concluding the place to be deserted, I tried the door. Somewhat to my surprise it yielded, the rusty hinges creaking terribly as I pushed it wide open. As I entered I was greeted by that musty, lifeless odor common to places long closed and uninhabited. I had matches with me, and striking one I looked about me.

I was in a wide hall. Before me a dark staircase, partially whitened with dust, led to rooms above. To the left and right were closed doors, and attached to the white casement of the latter was a little bracket candelabra containing a cluster of six half-consumed wax candles. Lighting two of these, I took one of them from the holder and opening the door at my right, entered.

The room in which I found myself was apparently the parlor of the deserted mansion. The dust-covered haircloth furniture which had evidently been for many years undisturbed was of a style massive and once much in vogue. A number of paintings and engravings were upon the walls in tarnished gilt frames. A large chandelier suspended in the center of the room was of elaborate workmanship. The floor was covered with a heavy matting, the exact nature of which I could hardly determine, owing to the thick covering of dust. Passing on to the adjoining room, I was not disappointed in finding it to be a large bedroom with all the appointments peculiar to an old-time southern home of wealth. I approached the tall canopied bed in the opposite corner and drew back the curtains; it was ready for the guests for which it had so long waited. The bedding was yellow with age, but the canopy had protected it from the dust. It had not been occupied for years.

I confess I was possessed with a sense of awe amid these surroundings, but not being of a timid nature I determined to pass the night beneath this roof in preference to enduring the heavy fog that always gathers at night in these mountains. Leaving my candle lighted, I now returned to my horse and arranged his bridle-rein so that he could eat the grass for a considerable space about him; then removing the saddle I returned with it to my strange quarters.

Prying open one of the creaking windows and its heavy shutters to let fresh air into the musty apartment, I fastened back the draperies of the tall bed and threw back the long unused bedding, the odor of which reminded me of cerements. To relieve this somewhat I covered the pillow with my coat, and removing only my outer garments I lay down, for I was greatly fatigued with riding, an exercise to which I was totally unaccustomed.

My candle I had, with a few drops of melted wax, affixed to a small table near the center of the room, and having no desire to remain in darknsss in this lonely place, I left it burning.

As I lay there wondering at my strange surroundings, and not altogether free from a sense of fear at the silence and shadows of the deserted place, I now noticed for the first time that beyond my candle and a little to the left there hung against the partition wall separating the two rooms a full length portrait of a lady. The picture was an oil painting and the execution admirable. It was fully life size, and the frame that inclosed it wide and elaborate, although now tarnished and dusty.

But it was the figure itself that most attracted me. The face was that of a woman not beyond twenty years of age, and beautiful in the extreme. Her hair was a wealth of glistening gold; her dress that of a bride. The picture appeared to have suffered but little from age, and the light as it fell upon it made the view from my position remarkably good. As I lay there in silent contemplation of this beautiful portrait I forgot any insipient fears that had hovered about me, and fell to speculating upon the history of this deserted house, and the story of that fair bride.

I was too tired to muse long; my eyelids grew heavier and I caught myself mingling fact and fancy without being able to distinguish them. Then I fell asleep.

I do not know what time it was when I woke, but it must have been very late for I noticed that the candle had burned low and was flaring wildly as from draught. At that moment a fear came upon me such as I had never known. An iciness seemed creeping over my body, beginning at my feet and extending rapidly upwards. I was trembling as with an ague.

A slight rustling sound from the next room attracted me, and turning my eyes involuntarily in that direction I almost expired from fear, for into the chamber, her head bowed, and wringing her hands in evident distress of mind, there entered the lady of the portrait. The counterpart was exact; the dress, the pattern of the lace, even the rings upon her slender white fingers. That it was a spirit I never for a moment doubted.

Slowly she approached the bedside without noticing me at first, and seated herself in a heavy armchair a few feet away, still moaning and wringing her beautiful hands. Raising her eyes at last she seemed to become conscious of my presence, and spoke.

"Oh, pray for me," she moaned, "pray for my soul. Oh, pray for me, pray for me."

I know not what power possessed me at that moment, but suddenly, in spite of my abject terror, I found myself upright upon my knees in the bed, pouring forth a prayer for the beutiful, distressed spirit before me. As the words fell from my lips—words which appeared to be uttered through her rather than by me—I noticed that she appeared to grow calmer and at last turned her terror-stricken face full upon me. I noticed, too, and with the utmost terror, that the candle had burned down to the wood and that in another moment we would be in darkness. Still the earnest words poured from my lips, and the face before me seemed to be growing misty in the flickering light of the expiring candle. Suddenly the figure rose from the chair and taking one step toward me, stretched forth her exquisite arms above mine and vanished. As she did so I distinctly felt something hot like wax from a dripping candle fall upon the back of my right hand. At that instant, too, the candle gave one final flare and went out.

When consciousness returned I was lying across the bed and the sun was streaming in at the open window. For a moment I was a little dazed at my surroundings, then it all came back to me. Seized with a wild panic—such panic as possesses stampeding cattle—I caught up my clothes and my horse's saddle and fled. As I passed the portrait its eyes seemed to follow me, and added to my terrors. Through the dusty rooms, out of the weed-grown yard, I tore as one distrought to where my horse was quietly waiting. A moment later I was urging him down the unfrequented path.

Not until I was far away did I pause in my frantic flight. Then, suddenly remembering, I glanced at the back of my right hand, and there—round, red and dry, like a crimson wafer—was a drop of blood.

NO IDLE TEARS.

The Eyes Weep for Reasons That Are Clearly Defined.

Tears are never idle. Tennyson was using a poet's hyperbole when he said so. They have their functional duty to accomplish, like every other organ of the body, and the lachrymal gland is not placed behind the eye simply to fill space or to give expression to emotion.

It is usual for the laity to believe the latter theory, for tears are indissolubly connected with sorrow, although eye specialists assert that there is no scientific explanation for this acceptance.

The only reason is this: the tear sac is formed of many sympathetic nerve fibers, that in any emotional condition of the body discharge the gland's secretions. One may weep for joy and the expression is not paradoxical, though commonly so considered. The psychic action of tears is purely a nervous one; the reflex action is produced from physical reasons. Tickling the nose on facing the wind may cause a shower of tears as abundant as the result of deepest grief or greatest pleasure.

The chemical properties of tears consist of phosphate of lime and soda, making them very salty, but never bitter. Their action on the eye is very beneficial, and here consists their prescribed duty to the body, washing thoroughly that sensitive organ, which allows no foreign fluid to do the same work. Nothing cleanses the eye like a good, salty, shower bath, and medical art has followed nature's law in this respect, advocating the invigorating solution for any distressed condition of the optics. Tears do not weaken the sight, but improve it. They act as a tonic to the muscular vision, keeping the eye soft and limpid, and it will be noticed that women in whose eyes sympathetic tears gather quickly, have brighter, tenderer orbs than others. When the pupils are hard and cold, the world attributes it to one's disposition which is a mere figure of speech, implying the lack of balmy tears that are to the cornea what salve is to the skin or nourishment to the blood.

The effect of tears on the skin about the eyes, however, is intensely irritating and inflaming. They keep the epidermis in a dark, puffy condition, and in legends only do weeping women preserve the beauty of their broad white lids. Niobe, all tears, may have had clear eyes, but she could not have been a comely sight when she was indulging in her favorite pastime.

The reason some women weep more easily than others, and all more readily than the sterner sex, has not its difference in the strength of the tear gland, but in the possession of a more delicate nerve system. The nerve fibers about the glands vibrate more easily, causing a downpour from the watery sac. Men are not nearly so sensitive to emotion; their sympathetic nature—the term is used in a medical sense—is less developed, and the eye gland is, therefore, protected from shocks. Consequently, a man should thank the formation of his nerve nature when he contemptuously scorns tears as a woman's practice.

Why facial distortions should be the usual accompaniment to the sobbing of the gentler sex, there seems no satisfactory solution. It may be that the nerves which lead to the muscles as wires to marionettes, twitch and pull them in this fashion, while they are at work emptying the tear gland of its contents.

That the copious shedding of tears "which break the ice-bound fetters of the heart" is a healthful action, all physicians assert. In some cases it is even thought to avert insanity. Even here the reason is scientific, for it is a sign of relaxation of the brain nerves from a tenseness that was congestion.

Between man and monkey there is this essential difference of tears. An ape cannot weep, not so much because his emotional powers are undeveloped, as the fact that the lachrymal gland was omitted in his optical make-up.

Not a Square Deal.

Queerby—Don't you regard Miss Jones as very fair?

Lefty—No, siree. She wasn't fair with me. She kept me on the string until she got a Christmas present out of me, and then she gave me the long farewell.

Many Roman bracelets had the form of serpents coiled about the arm.