

BROWNIE

By George Gissing

Now first reprinted from The Chicago Tribune together with six other stories attributed to him

With Introductions by

GEORGE EVERETT HASTINGS

VINCENT STARRETT

THOMAS OLLIVE MABBOTT

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Introductions

Part One

IN the year 1876 the brilliant career of George Robert Gissing at Owens College, Manchester, was terminated by his expulsion under circumstances more disgraceful than those which usually attend such displays of academic authority. He had had the misfortune to fall in love with a girl of worse than doubtful reputation, whom, by the way, he later made his wife. To satisfy her demands for money, he had been stealing and selling articles belonging to his fellow students, until finally he was caught. After his expulsion, he served a short sentence in prison, from which he emerged in his nineteenth year without reputation, prospects, or means of subsistence.

The problem of what he was to do next was settled by friends of his family, who gave him money with which to go to America and begin life anew. He came to New York by steerage, and from there went to Boston, where he supported himself for a time by private tutoring. Next he visited Niagara Falls, the sight of which is said to have suggested suicide as a cure for his troubles (and the end of the hero of *Workers in the Dawn*), and from there he went on to Chicago. He arrived in the western city early in 1877 with less than five dollars in his pocket, and immediately invested the bulk of his capital in a week's room and board at a cheap lodging house on Wabash Avenue.

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As soon as he had taken a look around Chicago, which he found “very like Hell or Glasgow,” he set about looking for work. A happy intuition took him to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, but on his arrival at the office he was obliged to walk back and forth in front of the building for a long while before he could summon courage to enter. He had no trouble in securing an interview with the editor who, of course, asked what journalistic experience he had had. With desperate boldness Gissing replied that he had had none whatever. The editor then kindly asked what he had in mind, and Gissing told him that he would like to write some fiction for the Saturday supplement. The editor, who seems to have had a good many of the qualities of a fairy godmother, promised that if Gissing would write him a good story he would buy it, and the boy went away elated.

Gissing composed his first story for the *Tribune* as he walked along the lake shore in the bitter wind. Then he bought writing materials and went back to his boarding house and began to write. The weather was cold and his room was unheated; therefore he was compelled to write in the common room surrounded by his noisy fellow boarders. He finished the story in two days, and a day or two after submitting it had the satisfaction of learning that it had been accepted. In *New Grub Street*, in which this experience appears as a plot incident, the hero receives eighteen dollars for the story, but Mr. Morley Roberts thinks that Gissing received hardly that much for his first effort.

Gissing stayed in Chicago until he grew tired of his work, or until the editor of the *Tribune* grew tired of his stories. He then returned to the Atlantic coast, where he had various adventures which need not be mentioned here. In the autumn of 1877 he returned to England.

I first heard of Gissing’s Chicago experience in the summer

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of 1920 while visiting a course in contemporary literature taught by Miss Edith Rickert at the University of Chicago. Next I read Mr. Morley Roberts’ *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, in which I found most of the facts given above, and a suggestion that some American scholar should go through the old files of the *Tribune* and rescue Gissing’s earliest stories from oblivion -- a task which I had already resolved to undertake.

I remembered having read somewhere that Thackeray’s biographers identified many of his early miscellanies by examining the accounts of the various magazines to which he contributed, and I had hopes of discovering Gissing’s contributions to the *Tribune* by the same method. Accordingly, like Gissing himself, I sought the office of the *Tribune*, but unlike him I met with no success, for I was told that the accounts for 1877 were no longer in existence.

I then went to the files of the *Tribune* and was soon rewarded by finding three stories signed “G. R. G.,” the signature of most of Gissing’s early letters. These are “Too Dearly Bought,” published on April 14, 1877; “Gretchen,” published on May 12 and “Brownie,” published on July 29. The

Tribune printed a story or two almost every week, but it borrowed most of its fiction from English magazines. Usually acknowledgment was made to the magazine from which the story was taken, but occasionally the source was given merely as "English Magazine," or "Exchange." The use of new material was so unusual that Gissing's first two signed contributions were accompanied by notes informing readers that the stories were written especially for the *Tribune*.

I examined several volumes of the paper and found, besides "Too Dearly Bought," "Gretchen" and "Brownie," five other stories that I was inclined to attribute to Gissing. Two of these, "'The Sins of the Fathers,'" published on March 10, and

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"R. I. P.," published on March 31, I thought certainly his. Both are unsigned, but both resemble the signed stories in having unhappy endings, and both have the somber tone that tinges much of Gissing's work, early and late. Of the other three stories the first, "The Death-Clock," published on April 21, is signed "Felix Browne"; and the others, "The Serpent-Charm," published on April 28, and "Dead and Alive," published on July 14, are both signed "Dr. Vargrave"; but since the three form a trilogy, and since Dr. Vargrave is the name of one of the characters in the stories, the signatures are evidently pseudonymous. These tales, which introduce such devices as an infernal machine and a woman charmed by a rattlesnake, seemed hardly in the Gissing vein, but they could not be dismissed merely because they are sensational, since the signed story "Brownie," in which a wild, elfish child avenges the murder of her sister by dogging the murderer to his death, is equally melodramatic.

The first step in my search for the author of the five tales was suggested by Mr. Swinnerton's *George Gissing*, which states (as does Whelpdale in *New Grub Street*) that one of Gissing's *Tribune* stories was copied by a paper in Troy, New York. Following this clue, I enlisted the help of the Troy Public Library. Miss Edith S. Wade, then assistant librarian, made a search for me and found "The Sins of the Fathers," under the title "The Sins of the Father," in the *Troy Times* of July 14, 1877.

I next took up the study of the trilogy, because the identification of Gissing as the author of one of the three stories would establish his authorship of the other two. The first of the series introduces several quotations in verse. It begins with the sad refrain of Poe's "Raven" and contains lines from "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Lotus Eaters." The last two quotations are significant, because at least two of Gissing's biographers,

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Mr. Swinnerton and Miss Yates, have mentioned his admiration for Shelley and Tennyson. Moreover, the lines from "Prometheus Unbound" are not accurately quoted, a fact that might be explained by

the unfavorable circumstances under which Gissing was obliged to write.

In addition to the quotations that have been mentioned, "The Death-Clock" contains three other bits of verse that I have never been able to identify, though I have been on the lookout for them for nine years and have made a line-by-line examination of the works of many poets. I have also enlisted the help of library schools, college professors, and newspapers and magazines that assist their readers to recover lost gems of poetry and song, but their combined efforts have been as fruitless as my own.

This unsolved puzzle is all the more interesting in view of the fact that Gissing's signed story "Brownie" also contains verse of uncertain origin. The little heroine of this tale goes about singing what the author calls an "old song," one stanza of which is quoted. I myself have not been able to find the source of this stanza, and eminent authorities on old songs and ballads whom I have consulted are unable to give me any assistance. I realize that it is hazardous to draw any conclusions from the fact that both of these stories contain verses that no one has been able to identify, yet I cannot resist the suspicion that the supposed quotations are not quotations at all but improvisations by the authors of the tales. If this surmise is correct, the presence of pseudoquotations in two stories, one of which is known to be by Gissing, makes Gissing's authorship of the other the more probable.

While I was still puzzling over the authorship of the mysterious verses, two disasters overtook me. In the spring of 1924 a fire consumed the apartment house in which I lived, and incidentally destroyed most of my Gissing notes. This loss was

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particularly serious because I was living in Fayetteville, Arkansas, far from my sources of information. In the fall of the same year Mr. Pascal Covici published in Chicago a volume containing "The Sins of the Fathers," "R. I. P.," "Too Dearly Bought," and "Gretchen." These misfortunes caused me to bring my investigation to an abrupt conclusion.

At the meeting of the Modern Language Association, held at Louisville, Kentucky, in December, 1927, I happened to tell Dr. Thomas O. Mabbott the experiences related above. A few weeks later he wrote informing me that he had found a publisher for "Brownie," the one certainly identified story that Mr. Covici's volume had omitted, and asking me to furnish him a photostat copy of the tale and a brief introductory note. This of course, I did. The discovery was announced briefly in *Notes and Queries*, April 5, 1930 (clviii, 235). The rest of the history of this volume, I leave to my collaborators.

GEORGE EVERETT HASTINGS

The University of Arkansas

Fayetteville, Arkansas

October, 1930

Part Two

GISSING'S own account of his unhappy Chicago adventure, as placed in the mouth of Whelpdale, a minor figure in his most famous novel, *New Grub Street*, is not strictly accurate, according to his friend and biographer, Mr. Morley Roberts. It is accurate enough, however, varying from the facts of the case only in the measure of Whelpdale's desperation. The truth, as usual, was more hideous than the fiction, or so I suppose. The story as summarized by Professor Hastings is substantially the story told by Whelpdale, in *New Grub Street*, (Chapter 28, "Interim") and the latter is almost certainly

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Gissing's first-hand account of what occurred. He visited the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, as narrated, received his commission, and wrote his first story, as described, in the general room of his "dirty little boarding house in Wabash Avenue" -- a landmark now impossible to identify.

The story was that known as "The Sins of the Fathers"; in its dreary denouement there is, perhaps, just a hint of the icy storm in which it was conceived. It was published in the *Tribune* of March 10, 1877, unsigned, and other stories followed until the homesick youth had written himself out. Exactly how many were produced is not known; but there is the testimony of Whelpdale, in *New Grub Street*, that "for some months I supported myself in Chicago, writing for that same paper, and for others." The plural -- "other" -- I take to be significant.

Shortly after the War, my friend, Christopher Hagerup, found the *Tribune* stories -- all of them, as he supposed -- after a number of other investigators, including myself, had failed. Actually, he found the four tales later reprinted by Pascal Covoci in a book entitled *Sins of the Fathers* (Chicago, 1924, 550 copies). These were, chronologically, "The Sins of the Fathers" (March 10), "R. I. P." (March 31), "Too Dearly Bought" (April 14), and "Gretchen" (May 12). The first two tie unsigned; the last two were signed with Gissing's initials -- "G. R. G." For years the fortunate discoverer contemplated private publication, then decided against it, and in 1924 I edited the volume noted, for Mr. Covoci.

I have now to congratulate Professor Hastings -- of whose activities in the field I had had no hint -- upon his discovery of a fifth story that is indubitably Gissing's. "Brownie," as he sets forth, was published in the *Chicago Tribune* of July 29, 1877, and was signed with the initials "G. R. G."

The signature would have been unnecessary. The tale is as certainly by

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Gissing as are the two *unsigned* contributions discovered and recognized by Mr. Hagerup. I have also to congratulate Professor Hastings and Professor Mabbott upon their further investigations and discoveries, which have produced six other tales of the period, less certainly Gissing's than the rest, for which a formidable Gissing claim is now advanced. These include a tale from the *Chicago Evening Post*, and two from the *Chicago Journal*, resurrected by Professor Mabbott as his contribution to the quest. He was led to them by the Gissing Chicago tradition (established by the *New Grub Street* revelations) and by his own smart thinking. Whelpdale had said "others," argued the professor, and Gissing was Whelpdale, for the nonce, talking about himself.

I am quite willing to believe that these other stories -- all six of them -- are specimens of the early work of George Gissing, products of that desperate Chicago winter of 1877. They are sorry enough, in all conscience, to be precisely that. They are quite as poor as the five stories that are positively identified. But it would be unsafe, I think, and certainly unkind, to argue that no other writer of that day could have been turning out such paltry stories, and that, therefore, *ipso facto*, the tales are Gissing's. No such reckless argument shall be advanced. There are other and better arguments. Professor Mabbott's contribution to this hydra-headed Introduction -- which immediately follows these paragraphs of my own -- seems to me very ingenious and very plausible, even when he pleads in behalf of the more questionable possibilities. I have the highest admiration for his prescience in all matters of auctorial attribution. On the whole, I think, I subscribe to his conclusions.

Nevertheless, as a confirmed doubter, I should like to venture a cautious question mark or two. Am I right, I wonder, in sensing a more competent workmanship in such a tale as "Twenty Pounds" than in the other attributed stories? Even

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than in "Brownie" and the four identified tales not here collected? More competent, I mean, in the sense of more practiced -- more glib -- more orderly' and compact. Bad as the story is -- and it is pretty bad -- there is a certain crispness in the telling that one does not associate with the tortured early manner of Gissing, who (as later developed) really required a novel in which to turn around. There is a prompt and brisk use of dialogue and of short sentences that is similarly untypical. There is even a quaint sprightliness in certain of the lines that is disturbingly unfamiliar; as, for instance, in this: *There are objections to standing in the public highway with a bank-note in your hand and a puzzled expression on your face.* Could the Gissing of 1877 have written such a line?

It must be admitted, however, that there are other lines in the same story that are very good -- or very bad -- Gissing indeed.

And, too, I entertain vague doubts about the "Dr. Vargrave" trilogy, so to call it. Both manner and matter here seem foreign to one's notion of that unhappy young man in the dirty Wabash Avenue boarding house. I even wonder, sometimes, if the sequel to "The Death-Clock" was written by the same hand that wrote "The Death-Clock." In "The Warden's Daughter" and "Joseph Yates' Temptation," I feel all these doubts less strongly. The latter in particular, in spite of un-Gissing-like passages, is curiously in the flavor of the "G. R. G." who wrote under the spell of Dickens. It is quite blatantly sentimental and melodramatic. One thing is certain: whoever wrote "The Warden's Daughter" and "Joseph Yates' Temptation," Charles Dickens has a lot to answer for.

Doubts aside, it is perhaps to be remembered that Gissing was in straits, that he was writing desperately for a living. He could not constantly rewrite himself. What more natural, it might be asked, than that he should attempt to vary his

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thought and manner? In the five identified Chicago tales, it is true, there are similarities of form and outlook, indications of later tendencies, that incline one to question the stories in which these signs are lacking; but since, at the time, no style could actually have been formed, no outlook actually crystalized, is it fair to draw such conclusions? These were Gissing's *first* productions, after all, if they were his productions at all. No doubt he did not scruple to experiment. And about stories written in 1877 it is perhaps fatuous to argue that they do not resemble other stories which more nearly approximate the work of the mature novelist.

In view of all the circumstances, I am content to say with my associates in this production that, not too improbably, these six attributed tales are the work of George Gissing. Happily, save in facetious mood, one does not have to criticize them. It is not for their literary or philosophical merit that they are being preserved, but as the probable beginnings of a great realistic novelist.

VINCENT STARRETT

Chicago

February 2, 1931

Part Three

It was some time after I met Professor Hastings that I came to know Vincent Starrett in person -- we had corresponded before -- and one day he mentioned to me that there was a rumor or tradition among newspaper men in Chicago that Gissing had also written for the *Journal*. Such a tradition, as anyone who has dealt with such things knows, is the kind that may represent much or nothing. It may be a twisting of the truth about the Tribune stories, or aim expansion for little reason

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of that truth, or it may be an actual memory of fact, filtered down through forty odd years. But it happened that in this case the printed source for our knowledge of the Chicago period in Gissing's life, the narrative of Whelpdale, indicated that our author had contributed to the *Tribune*, and *other Chicago papers*. This tradition was a clue to at least one of them. Whelpdale's narrative, where it had been tested, had proved true as far as the literary details were concerned; the peculiar details seemed neither changed nor expanded. The first contributions *were* to the largest paper; one story *had* been reprinted at Troy, New York. The phrase "for that paper and for others" should measure up to the facts. Forthwith I searched the files of the *Journal*, with the results already indicated. Two stories seemed to fit the requirements, "Twenty Pounds" and "The Warden's Daughter." It should be made plain that I did not merely pick the most likely stories; I found nothing else that anyone could imagine to be Gissing's work. But here were two English stories, "Twenty Pounds" emphasizing poverty; and bearing in plot a remote kinship to the circling of an object back to an original possessor that forms the theme of a later tale of Gissing's, "A Poet's Portmanteau" in the volume known as *Human Odds and Ends*. "The Warden's Daughter," which also appeared at the right period, was the only other likely tale in the columns of the *Journal*, and perhaps significant, though we must not stress this, for its prison setting. The internal evidence fitted the external beautifully.

But unless Gissing wrote for a third paper, Whelpdale should have said only "and another paper." His plural "papers" suggested a search of the other big dailies for the period of Gissing's stay in Chicago. Of course his third paper might have been some obscure sheet, but the probabilities of the case and the practical possibility of searching the greater papers

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made me go through the files of the *Times*, the *Inter-Ocean*, and the *Post*. The two former papers contained nothing even remotely suggesting Gissing. But in the *Post* for June 2, just when Gissing was writing himself out, planning to get away, and likely to seek to get rid of all he had to sell even by trying a new market, appeared the only story which was in his typical manner. It is called "Joseph Yates' Temptation." It is a story of shabby-genteel English life, done in the manner of Dickens, the

favorite author and model of Gissing. The chief emphasis is on the evils of poverty, just as it is in so many of the later novels, nay in most of the serious work of our author. Actually the main incident finds a close parallel to the rescue of Arthur Golding from a dying and ruined father (who as a clerk once stole some cash) which is the opening incident in Gissing's first novel, the rare, chaotic, characteristic, and partly autobiographic *Workers in the Dawn* (Book I, Chapter II). There, too, incidentally, a fondness is shown for having important actions occur at that truly Dickensian time for a story, Christmas Eve. Although some of the *Tribune* tales contain autobiographic allusions (the hero of "The Sins of the Fathers" is a teacher or tutor as Gissing himself had been when first he reached this country), yet this is the only story quite in the manner of the later Gissing, both in theme and treatment. And while the external evidence is indirect and unguided by tradition, the internal evidence here has real weight. Were there a dozen possible stories to choose from as explanation of that phrase "other papers," there might be hesitation about this. But I found nothing else to suspect. Apparently my discoveries in the old papers were at an end. But it seemed to me that enough stories had been turned up to account for Gissing's time in Chicago, and to justify the recollections of Whelpdale. His letter "s" had been curiously eloquent.

The trilogy of wild adventure stories has been placed last

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because the evidence for Gissing's authorship is circumstantial, and it is not impossible that a case might be made out against our ascription, on the ground that this is not the kind of tale Gissing would have written. Obviously the author had read the works of Poe and was less successful in this line than his master -- or Fitz James O'Brien. Yet most young authors at some time toy with the themes of German romance -- burials alive, works of art endowed with life, and dreamy or trance views of the future life -- all strangely out of place in a Chicago boarding house in the seventies, where the shivering artist is supposed to have evoked them. That the artist was Gissing seems to be indicated by the Shelley quotations and by the fact that he was the only regular fiction writer for the *Tribune* at the time, and must have done a fair number of stories to have lived several months on the proceeds. If he did write the tales they may indicate why he did not later attempt to rival Rider Haggard. Yet the ascription is admittedly provisional, and we are reprinting the stories because it seems the fairest way to set their claims before students.

As mine is the last portion of this triple introduction, it seems to be a fitting place to sum up the conclusions reached about the seven stories here collected. About the authenticity of "Brownie" there is no question at all and, as an undoubted production of Gissing's earliest period of authorship, it is the real reason for the issue of this book. But in a day in which a few writers have made it a practice to ascribe to their favorite writers unsigned works which nobody could really feel any

confidence in attributing to anyone, our guarded phraseology should not be misinterpreted. We all believe that the first three stories are the work of Gissing, and that the trilogy may be his. But we do not claim that the facts and arguments which establish our opinion are of equal weight. To discuss the weakest case first, that for the trilogy, the stories are absurd and

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the use of an entirely unrevealing signature does not help the student to an implicit faith that nobody else could have happened to be writing this stuff in Chicago in 1877. But the choice of quotations is peculiar, and the established fact that Gissing did live somehow on the fiction he contributed to the Chicago papers, together with the exceedingly small number of stories which can possibly be his -- all this certainly justifies our reprinting the stories, and we feel it justifies our ascribing them provisionally to Gissing. He did contribute to the paper stories both signed and unsigned, and we find nothing to indicate that he did not also write for it under a pseudonym. A professional writer of newspaper fiction was an unusual thing in Chicago at that time.

When we leave the columns of the *Tribune*, we come again to the acknowledgment of stories in "other papers" by Gissing himself. That curiously difficult matter of a verbal tradition is always worth a careful examination. A verbal tradition which falls in with what is definitely acknowledged by the author and which is supported by the discovery of exactly fitting material, like the stories in the *Journal*, is evidence almost incontrovertible, especially since no contrary evidence is adduced. While it is dangerous to argue too much from style, in brief stories and articles, the two stories do seem to be from the same pen. The contents are what may be expected from Gissing at the time, and no other stories suggesting him were found in the *Journal* during the period of Gissing's stay in Chicago. The case for the authorship of the stories is extremely strong, and could only be strengthened by direct acknowledgment of authorship, since exact repetition of phrasing is not a common phenomenon in Gissing, and we have an indirect acknowledgment. The stories we accept almost unreservedly.

In the case of the story from the *Post*, the arguments are from the elimination of other possibilities, and from the

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characteristic subject and treatment of the story itself. In this story alone is the internal evidence to be emphasized. Does not the reader who knows Gissing feel that here is the immature but characteristic work of the author? And again we have the indirect acknowledgment to be fully explained only by the existence of some such story in some third paper. Other papers may hide tales

by Gissing. But if they do, we have at present no clues to them. We have followed out the leads as far as we can see them, and reprint our collection of what we believe is the body of Gissing's hitherto uncollected writings for Chicago papers in 1877.

We present our three classes of stories, one certain, three accepted on the basis of overwhelming evidence, and the trilogy which is considered probably Gissing's. No claim of literary excellence is made for the tales, but they are presented as valuable documents for the biographer, student, or collector, who may be interested in the development of that author's art or in the extraordinary adventure that included so typical an English writer among the literati of Chicago.

THOMAS OLLIVE MABBOTT

Hunter College of the City of New York
February, 1931

Part Four

WE take this opportunity of thanking the authorities of the several libraries in which we have worked, and the staffs of the newspapers, who showed us every courtesy in answering inquiries about Gissing. In particular, we are indebted to Mr. Richard J. Finnegan, who made special efforts, though without success, to locate records or reminiscences of the *Journal* for Gissing's day. And Mr. E. M. Peterson, Chief of

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the Newspaper Room of the Chicago Public Library, has verified the dates of the papers; and has assisted us in having photostats made, with official permission, of the tales as preserved in that library's files of the *Tribune*, *Post* and *Journal*. Our text is printed from those photostats, with the correction of a few obvious misprints, as recorded in the notes.

THE EDITORS

August, 1931

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BROWNIE

THIS story by Gissing appeared in THE CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE, Sunday, July 29, 1877, page 11, columns 5-8. In the text of the third paragraph "weird bursts" is corrected from "wired bursts." Save for the home country of the heroine, "Brownie" has nothing in common with the little story by Gissing, A YORKSHIRE LASS, Privately Printed, New York, 1929.

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Brownie

WRITTEN FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

BROWNIE was not her real name; but the country folks had long called her so, partly on account of the thick masses of beautiful chestnut-colored hair that always hung loosely down her back, seeming almost to envelop her in their luxuriance; but perhaps rather more on account of her wild, frolicsome, mischievous nature, which was supposed strongly to resemble that of the hobgoblin of popular superstition known as the Brownie. Brownie and her elder sister Mary, a quiet and tolerably good-looking girl, had long ago lost their father and mother, and had been left to the care of their uncle, William Denby. According to the provisions of his brother's will, Denby held the farm on which they lived together (a cosy whitewashed dwelling with barns and out-houses, lying in the midst of broad and fertile acres in one of the Yorkshire dales) in trust for Mary till the day of her marriage, when it was to become her own. Denby was not a man to contemplate with much pleasure the prospect of his niece's enrichment at his own expense. He was grasping and cold, if not cruel, in his nature; and watched with the keen eye of jealous suspicion all poor Mary's doings, though, at the same time he always contrived to make all around him think that his every act was prompted by zeal for the girl's welfare. So satisfied did he feel with the results of his surveillance hitherto,

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that of late his diligence had somewhat relaxed. Mary was already 19, and had never shown any

signs of affection for any one save her relations. Her uncle, who viewed daily her timid, retiring manners, rubbed his hands with satisfaction and thought hopefully of the future.

But, shrewd as he thought himself, William Denby was allowing himself to be deceived by false hopes, and I think Brownie was the first to discover the secret.

Brownie was rather more than 17 years old, but a stranger would certainly have put her down for very much less. In figure she was very short, did not come up to her sister's shoulder; but she possessed physical strength superior even to that of most boys of her age. Close by the farm flowed a swift and deep, though not very broad, river, and to swim across this was an every-day amusement for her. She certainly was far from good-looking; her little green eyes sparkled and winked in an eerie way that was positively unpleasant, suggesting all sorts of old wives' tales about bewitchment and the evil eye. In early childhood she had been the unconscious cause of laughter and wonderment; but, as she grew up, she became aware of the impression she produced, and seemed to find a mischievous delight in doing all she could to promote it. She had a quick memory and wonderful powers of observation, and she early contracted a habit, fully in keeping with her other elvish properties, of going about singing snatches of old ballads; the ghostlier they were the more she liked them. Once or twice she had frightened a few country clowns almost out of their wits by secretly taking one of her uncle's foals out of the stable at night and careering over the field on its back with a large lantern in her hand, now and then uttering weird bursts of song or shrieks of laughter. In company she was very quiet, and indeed on all occasions had so little to say for herself that many did not scruple to call her hail witted. Her uncle, for reasons of his

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own, loved to foster this idea; and Brownie herself seemed rather to like the imputation, feeling, perhaps, that it allowed her greater scope for the indulgence of her wanton frolics. Her sister, too, shared in the general belief, but it only went to increase her affection for the strange, wayward girl. Brownie was not demonstrative in returning this love, but she herself alone knew how truly she felt it.

Farmer Denby's acres, as I have said, were wide-stretching, but those of his neighbor, Farmer Drew, were of still greater extent. It was partly on this account, partly because of an old lawsuit which Drew had gained against him, that Brownie's uncle hated his neighbor like poison; felt towards him as only a depraved nature is capable of feeling. Long ago Denby had forbidden all intercourse between his people and those of the neighboring farm, and, to all appearances, the interdict was strictly obeyed; but Fate, in bitter irony, had willed it that the two families should become connected by the closest of bonds. Mary Denby was renowned all over the country for her beautiful voice, and every Sunday was to be seen heading the choir in the village church. There it

must have been that Farmer Drew's eldest son, Philip, first conceived a passion for the modest, sweet-voiced girl; and this once felt, there were no arbitrary interdicts that could prevent Philip from meeting Mary and confessing to her, tenderly and manfully, his love. These were the days of haymaking, and it was not difficult for the two to find an opportunity of meeting for a few moments each day on the limits of their respective farms; and on one such occasion it was that Brownie became possessed of her sister's secret.

Brownie was sitting musingly in the shadow of a thick hedge, when her quick little ears all at once became aware of whispering on the other side, and it was not long before her keen little eyes had descried her sister Mary talking earnestly

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to Philip. Brownie listened eagerly, and at length, when she saw the lovers draw close to each other and their lips meet, the color fled from her bronzed cheeks and she rose with her sister's name on her lips.

The two heard her and turned in the direction of the sound with fright on their countenances. They could see no one, but Brownie repeated the call in a louder tone.

"Is that you, Brownie?" asked Mary, as she looked through the hedge, tremblingly.

"Yes, sister," replied Brownie; "and remember that other people have eyes besides me. Oh, pray, don't let me interrupt you, sis! I only wanted to warn you, dear. Ta-ta!"

And she turned off into the hay-field, singing in her shrill tones a favorite verse, which ran thus:

Oh, cold is the river, and dark, and deep,
And stony the bed where the maid doth sleep;
Upward she stares with her wide blue eyes,
But the sun never wakes her or bids her arise.

From that day Brownie began to watch on behalf of her sis-ter. Owing to that superior shrewdness and quickness of observation which she concealed under the garb of half-idiocy, she had long ago become aware of the way in which Mary was spied upon by her uncle. Brownie had never liked this man, and her evident aversion, which she did not try to conceal, was returned with no lack of interest by Denby. The greedy, narrow-minded farmer was no stranger to the terrors of superstition, and the sense of something "uncanny" in Brownie had always led him to avoid her as much as possible. Like all knaves, he could not help feeling that those bright little green eyes looked into his very soul and read all its secrets, whilst the girl, for her part, experienced a half-malicious delight in seeing him shrink before her steady gaze, and start with

sudden fright when she now and then drew near to him unobserved and burst all at once into a wild strain. If he dogged her sister, she was determined that she would dog him, and it was often with positive terror that Denby found her looking at him at times when he had fancied her far away off.

As the lovers grew more and more fond of each other they naturally began to be less cautious with regard to secrecy in their meetings; and at length Mary's uncle found them together, and discovered their secret. They did not know, however, that he had seen them, and it was far from his purposes to let them know it. He observed them from a secret hiding place, he listened for some moments to the childish, heart-felt confession of love that fell from their lips, he heard them vow eternal constancy, and then turned away with bitter hatred and desire for vengeance in his heart. As he turned, he saw Brownie standing before him. She looked into his eyes for a moment, seemed unconscious, however, of anything unusual, and, twirling about on her heel, in a fairy-like manner peculiar to her, ran off singing. Denby's brow grew darker and darker as he walked homewards; but when he gained the farmyard gate his face was smooth. He had taken his resolve.

"Mary, my child," said the farmer to his niece, about a fortnight after the above event, "I want you to take a message for me to the lawyer at B ---- . I don't like to trust any one else with it, and no doubt the walk will do you good. There will be no need to hurry; the nights are fine, though there isn't much moon. And I dare say you are not afraid of half-an-hour's walk in the dark?"

Mary smiled at the question, but felt at the same time some surprise. It was not late in the afternoon, and she would have at least six miles to walk in all; besides which she felt it so unusual to be intrusted with an important commission.

"I would let your sister go with you," added her uncle, "but

I know her aunt wants her in the dairy just now. I dare say, you won't mind going alone?"

"O, not at all, uncle," replied Mary cheerfully, as she proceeded to make herself ready for setting out. To tell the truth, she was glad to go for another reason besides obedience to her uncle's wish, she knowing that her road went past her lover's home. Denby knew this well enough, and had had it in mind when he gave Mary the message to take. So the girl set off quite cheerfully on her evening walk, and was soon out of sight of the farm.

As she had expected, she met Philip on the road, and he accompanied her for a short way. When they were obliged to part he promised to be waiting for her on her return, and Mary hurried on with a glad heart, thinking every moment an hour till she was once more walking in the direction of home.

She had had to wait some time before she could see the lawyer, and it was all but dark when she set out to return. Philip, growing impatient, had walked some distance to meet her, and, when at length he joined her, the two proceeded in the most lei-surely manner towards the farm. They had quite forgotten that it was night; the only feeling indeed of the darkness was one of security from observers; and it was only when Mary heard the village clock far off pealing 9 across the silent fields that she started and declared that she must hurry homewards. Philip wished much to be allowed to accompany her still fur-ther, but in vain. Mary dreaded meeting her uncle or some emissary whom he might have dispatched to meet her. The lovers took an affectionate leave of each other, and the girl hurried along the road alone.

As yet there was no moon visible, and the night was growing dark. As she left the road and stepped over a stile into the meadows, Mary, spite of her haste, became sensible of the beautiful calm all around her, tile rich, sweet odor that rose

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from the ground, the gradual appearance here and there of a glistening spot in the shrouded heavens, and her heart overflowed with an unutterable feeling of joy. The sadness which had ensued upon leaving Philip was now gone, and she could think with hope of the future. Almost his last words had been a promise to speak openly to his father, and do his utmost to overcome the obstinate hostility existing between the two farmers; and now the calm, beautiful spirit of love that breathed over the face of the earth seemed to presage success. Alas, our hopes are not always prophecies!

At the bottom of the last meadow to be crossed before reaching the farm ran the river. Mary had been following a footpath, and, before she could reach the bridge, she had to walk a short distance along the river side. Just here the bank was steep and abrupt, and the water was very deep. The footpath ran along between the edge and a thick row of hazels and willows, which, not more than a hundred yards below, merged into a rather large wood. Was it the wind that seemed all at once to rustle the bushes a short way ahead of her? Not only did she hear the rustling, but it was not so dark that she could not see the branches waving slightly. Strange; it made her hurry on a little faster, with just a slight quickening of heartbeats. She was now within a very few yards of the bridge. The bushes were nearer to the bank, leaving only just room for the path, and the shadow they cast was dense. She was just cheering herself with a clear sight of the arch of the bridge, when suddenly she felt a strong arm grasping her, and the same moment she was hurled violently over the edge into the deep, black, silent water. One piercing scream rang from her lips ere she sank.

Hark! Was that the echo only of the scream? Was that the echo of the splash? William Denby did not wait to see. With the speed of a race-horse he had gained the bridge, passed it,

and gained the farm. Then he called loudly and repeatedly to his men.

“Help! help!” he shouted. “There are cries from the river! There is some one in the water! Help, men! There is some one drowning. Oh, if it should be Mary! Help!”

And he started to run towards the river, though in quite a wrong direction, and was followed quickly by the men. Twice they all heard the screams repeated, and it seemed as though there were two voices. Then there was dead silence. The farm-laborers were out of their wits with fright, and found it well-nigh impossible to command their presence of mind. Un-mindful of their own ears, they followed their master whither he chose to lead them, and this was far away from the place whence the cries had sounded. Before many minutes had passed women came hurrying down across the meadow, bear-ing lanterns and impromptu torches. The search spread rap-idly along the river banks. Before long a loud cry arose from a spot below the bridge where a number of people seemed gathered together. All hurried thither, and at once drew back in terror from the sight their lights fell upon. On the meadow side of the river the bank sloped gently down to the edge of the stream, and here on the pebbles lay two bodies, -- those of Brownie and her sister Mary.

They were carried in all haste to the farm and every remedy which rustic ingenuity or experience could suggest was put into practice, whilst messengers were dispatched for the nearest doctor. Before these had returned, Brownie began to show signs of life, and very soon sat up, apparently little the worse. Not so with Mary. The farm people did not give up their efforts to restore her; but the women soon began to look at each other with tears in their eyes, and the men with grave shakings of the head. Before long tile doctor came, and, after slight examination, pronounced the case hopeless. Mary was dead.

Brownie stood looking at her sister’s body in silence, long after the others had withdrawn to weep or discuss the sad event together. She had remained mute and insensible to every question addressed to her; the most eager curiosity had not been able to elicit a word from her. Now the people left her alone, saying to each other that the fright had completed the loss of her wits, and that poor Brownie would henceforth be worse than ever. She had been found stripped of her dress and now stood in her under garments alone, which were dripping with moisture. The readiness with which she had returned to life had diverted all attention for the time from her to her sister. Her extraordinarily long hair, which she always allowed to hang loose, now drooped around her in long, dripping tresses, and gave her indeed much of the appearance of a partially-clothed river nymph. Her face and her slender, bare arms were like marble. She hardly seemed to breathe, but keen flashes of

light shot from her small, green eyes. They were like a cat's in the dark.

It was long before she could be got to speak a word, and when at length she opened her lips it was only to say that she had been wandering, as she often did, by the river side in the dark, in hopes of meeting her sister, when she had seen her coming, and, owing to a slip on the grass fallen off the bank into the water. She had raised a cry and jumped in after her. That was all. Her uncle was among the foremost in questioning her, and, as she replied, she fixed such a steady, gleaming look on his face that those who stood behind him felt him shrink back a few steps, though they knew not why.

Mary was buried, and for a few days Brownie went about in silence. Some thought she had become dumb, for in vain they endeavored to elicit a word from her. She had not wept once since her sister's death, but her cheeks, which such a short time ago were such a rich brown from exposure to the sun, seemed

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all at once to have turned pale, and were perceptibly growing thinner. There was one favorite spot where she spent most of the day and that was behind the thick hedge on the limits of the farm; and no one but herself knew why she went there. One day one of the farm-laborers happened to pass her as she was seated with her face resting on her hands and her elbows on her knees, her long brown hair almost entirely covering her little body. The man felt pity for the poor, lonely girl, and spoke a kind word to her. All at once she started up to her feet, looked for a moment keenly into his face, and then broke out with her old song --

*Oh, cold is the river, and dark and deep,
And stony the bed where the maid doth sleep;
Upward she stares with her wide blue eyes,
But the sun never wakes her, nor bids her arise.*

The man went off shuddering at the girl's strange, wild looks and voice, and told every one the Brownie had recovered her voice. They soon became all aware of it, for from that day Brownie was continually wandering about the farm with that song on her lips. Some chid her, and bade her think of her sister; but the only reply they got was a peal of shrill laughter and a strange look that puzzled them for hours after. Others only shook their heads and muttered grave words to one another; words that they would not have cared to speak out.

But the strangest thing of all was the liking for her uncle she seemed suddenly to have taken. Wherever he went, she was with him. Wherever he sat down, Brownie was sure to be sitting opposite to him, and never took her eyes from his face. Sometimes, when Denby was about to

commence his meal, he would raise his eyes and find them met by Brownie's and so unbearable was the look to him that he often rose up deadly pale, declaring that he felt suddenly sick and could not eat.

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Whenever this happened, Brownie would rise too and sing the verse about the river; then she would take his hand and lead him away, saying that she would care for him. Of all her little scraps of song, that about the river was the only one she now remembered, and not infrequently did the people on the farm wake up in the dead of the night and hear it resounding through the house, and it made them cold with dread.

It was almost a year since Mary's death when Brownie began to disappear each day for several hours, and no one knew what became of her. The circumstance, however, was not thought much of, for there never had been any accounting for her comings and goings. Her uncle, perhaps, noticed it most of all, for to him it was a sensible relief. If Brownie had grown thin and pale, he had grown thinner and paler still; he was but the shadow of the man he had been a year ago. For many months he had been leading the life of a hunted beast, always striving to escape his pursuers, and always being caught when he least expected it. He had grown so nervous that the slightest sudden sound would make him tremble like a leaf; whilst Brownie's look and Brownie's voice seemed almost to paralyze him. Now for nearly a fortnight he had been free from his torturer, but, if possible, he dreaded the reprieve more than the actual torment, for he knew not what lay behind it.

At length the anniversary of Mary's death came round. Denby himself did not seem to remember it, but every one else did, and went about whispering to each other, recalling the memory of the event. Brownie had not been so quiet for a year as she was to-day. No one heard her speak, and her song for the day was silent. "She knows what day it is," the people said one to another, "and she is thinking of her sister." But no one spoke openly to her about it. It happened that on this day Denby had business at B ----, and late in the afternoon he set out to walk there. As he passed over the fields he kept looking

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eagerly and anxiously on all sides for Brownie's figure, but it was nowhere to be seen. He felt easy for once.

It was already dark when the people at Drew's farm were surprised by a visit from Brownie, who came and inquired for Philip. The young man spoke with her, and, obeying her request, allowed himself to be led off by her with but one word of explanation, and that was "Mary." He

shared the common idea that the poor girl was half-witted, but his old love for her sister made him behave kindly to her and willing to humor her fancies. So they took their way down the fields in the direction of the river, walking hand in hand and in silence. The night was very dark, and the only sound was the distant barking of dogs at the farm-houses. They had arrived at the footpath which led along the side of the river to the bridge, by the hazels and willows, when Brownie stopped and pointed in the direction of the wood, which was not far off. Philip saw a clear light burning there, though whence it came he could not distinguish.

“What is that?” he asked. “Let us go and see.”

But Brownie held him back, and, without speaking, drew him in among the thick bushes which bordered the path. Then she whispered to him:

“Stay here till you see Farmer Denby coming along towards the bridge. Watch him, and when he turns to go towards the light, follow him quietly.”

The next moment Philip was alone in his hiding-place. At first he felt half uncertain whether to do as the girl had told him or not; but when he thought of her earnest tones, when he remembered what day it was, and when he reflected that it was Denby whom he was about to watch, all kinds of strange fancies rushed into his mind and he resolved to obey Brownie’s injunctions.

He had not been in hiding long before he heard quick,

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heavy steps approaching. It sounded distinctly in the dead silence. Then all at once he heard a shrill cry from the wood. The footsteps stopped, and, peering from the bushes, Philip saw a tall, dark form not far from him, turned in the direction of the cry. He recognized the figure of Farmer Denby. The next moment the cry was repeated, and the farmer began to move quickly towards the light, which could be seen gleaming distinctly among the trees. Philip followed at a short distance, and as quickly as possible. They drew nearer to the light, and at length Philip perceived that it was a large lantern suspended from the bough of a tree. Denby was now close to it, and was standing motionless, regarding something before him. Philip drew near on tip-toe, till he was close behind the farmer’s back, and saw what it was he was gazing at.

From the bottom of the trunk of a large tree all the bark had been peeled off, and in the wood letters had been deeply cut, and then blackened with common paint. The lantern that hung from the bough made these letters quite distinct, and Philip read them as he stood behind Denby:

A YEAR AGO YOU MURDERED ME:

TO-NIGHT I CLAIM VENGEANCE.

Mary.

Philip's blood froze in his veins with horror, and for a moment he was unable to stir. Then he stepped forward and laid his hand heavily on Denby's shoulder. The man turned with a sudden start and stared wildly with bloodshot eyes into

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Philip's face. Then with a fierce effort he shook off the hands that held his arm and sprang away. Philip pursued, crying loudly for help. Denby, once clear of the wood, darted along the pathway towards the bridge. Just then a faint, gleaming moonlight fell across the path, and disclosed the figure of Brownie stopping the way. Her eyes darted fire, and her bare, white arms were stretched out as if forbidding approach. Denby's eyes fell upon her, and he uttered a cry of horror. Covering his face with his hands, he took a wild plunge, and the waters of the river closed over him. Then a wild voice rang out in song:

*Oh, cold is the river, and dark and deep
And stony the bed where the murd'rer doth sleep.
Upwards he stares with his wide, red eyes.
But the sun never wakes him, nor bids him arise!*

G. R. G.

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THE WARDEN'S DAUGHTER
TWENTY POUNDS

THESE two tales, attributed to Gissing on the basis of tradition and style, appeared in THE CHICAGO EVENING JOURNAL. "The Warden's Daughter" is from the issue of Saturday, April 28, 1877, page 4, columns 1-2. In the first paragraph "warder" is changed to "warden"; in the twenty-fourth, "he" to "she"; in the thirty-eighth, "Amyer" is corrected to "Aymer." "Twenty Pounds" is from the issue of May 19, 1877, page 4, columns 1-2, and is reprinted without intentional

emendation. The tale seems to be akin to 'Joseph Yates' Temptation' in theme, and it is perhaps not wholly fanciful to notice similarities between all these tales, and an acknowledged story, "The Elixir," collected in A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES, 1927.

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The Warden's Daughter

MARION HYDE was a cripple, but for all that she was beautiful. Her father was warden in a prison. Among the prisoners was one at the registering of whose name at his entrance Marion had been present, and something in his youthful, though sullen, face attracted her pitiful glance. He had stolen repeatedly from his benefactor, and finally had admitted into the house in the night time a gang of burglars who had secured considerable booty, and made off with it in safety, save one, after severely pounding the proprietor of the house. This one, who was not able to escape, betrayed the complicity of the young man in the affair. He was tried, convicted and sentenced.

There was no redeeming feature, apparently to the story, but somehow that face haunted the gentle girl's thoughts. Perhaps it was because she had a young brother who was a wild lad, wandering just now in disgrace, no one knew whither, and all the more tenderly loved by Marion because of his sad ways.

One day, as she leaned on the window sill, looking with wistful sadness into the yard at the prisoners, one of them looked up, and, changed as he was in every way, thin in feature, she knew again the black, sullen eyes, that yet were somehow like an angry, obstinate child's.

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Her glance followed him as though fascinated, and as he passed from sight she sighed softly, and went in to look at the prison record for the poor lad's name.

It was Aymer Preston.

The next she knew of him he was in the sick ward.

For a few weeks she saw him there, but the gloomy eyes never softened, only gazed straight before them from their hollow sockets, or hid themselves obstinately behind their wasted lids.

He never spoke, he scarcely ate, and the prison physician told Marion that he was dying of sheer inanition.

"It's my opinion that he's trying to starve himself to death," he said.

Marion drew near the sick bed.

She bent over him, and spoke with gentle firmness.

But she might as well have talked to the blank wall, for all sign he gave of having heard her.

Marion left the ward with a shocked and anxious face.

“Let me know if there is any change, or anything that I can do,” she then said to the doctor.

But at dusk the physician was called away by serious illness in his own family, and near midnight the assistant, going his rounds, found Aymer Preston dead in his bed.

“It’s either make believe or heartbreak,” Dr. Putney said, sharply, when word was brought him, and he ordered that Preston’s body should be kept wrapped in blankets, and not removed till he saw it.

The order was obeyed, but when three days saw no change in the form, Dr. Putney having meanwhile examined it, it was removed to the dissecting room.

Marion Hyde’s window commanded a view of this mysterious and horror-inspiring apartment. As she stood at her

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window that night she thought with a vague thrill of pain of the one cold, still tenant of that terrible room.

She was not a timid, superstitious creature, nor by any means given to nervousness; so, when she saw the window of the dissecting-room slowly lifted, and a gaunt, wild face appear at the opening, instead of screaming or running away, she stood still. She knew that her heart was throbbing wildly, but she knew also that it was no phantom she looked upon. Dr. Putney had been right all the time. Aymer Preston was not dead, and thus he was making one wild effort for liberty. Marion Hyde stood and watched him.

She could not have called out just then if he had been the most desperate and hardened criminal within those walls. Besides, the poor wretch was only mocking himself. He could not escape, even now, unless by a miracle. She saw him stop presently beside a window which opened into an upper hall, and, after an effort, raise it, and slowly drag himself through.

Obeying an impulse which she could not at that moment control, Marion softly opened her door, and passed on without her crutch, for fear of the noise. She reached the hall just as this poor wasted creature, after a brief rest, was urging his half-paralyzed limbs to renewed effort. At the sight of her he gasped and dropped in a swoon, and Marion hurried to his side. She dared not leave him, so she waited, rubbing his cold hands between her tender palms, till he at last opened his eyes, and she made him comprehend that she wanted him to come with her.

“I won’t go back to prison,” he whispered between his set teeth.

“You need not,” she said, simply, and led him to her own chamber.

There was positively no other place that was safe from the strict search that she knew would be instituted as soon as he

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was discovered missing. She procured him some garments which had belonged to her brother, and she got him some food that would be safe for him to eat after his long fast.

He regarded all her movements with the incredulous wonder of a child.

“What has been the matter with me?” he asked, after awhile. “I could not stir any more than though I was dead, but I knew all that was going on about me. Ugh! it was frightful waiting there in that dissecting room. I believe it was only the horror of it helped me to break the frightful spell.”

“I suppose you were in a sort of a trance,” Marion said, thoughtfully.

“What are you going to do with me?” he asked again.

“I don’t know, I am sure,” she said with a sigh. “But you are safe here till I can think.”

“I don’t expect you to believe me, but I am as innocent of the crime for which I was brought here as you are.”

“Guilty or innocent, I pity you, you are so young.”

Concealing him till the hue and cry were over, Marion smuggled him through the gates in a woman’s dress and with a basket of soiled linen. And so the mystery of Aymer Preston’s escape remained.

The years moved on. Marion was 25. Her father was dead. Her idolized brother had perished in a brawl. She was alone in the world; an invalid, living on the merest pittance earned with her needle, but the same sweet-faced, sweet-voiced girl who had won the hearts of the prisoners in the gloomy abode of which her father had been warden.

One day she was sent for, to see about some embroidery. She was received by a young lady, and something in the young girl’s bright face drew Marion’s glance unconsciously. Where had she seen those eyes, so large amid so intensely black?

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“Why do you look at me so?” asked the young girl, with *naive* eagerness.

“You remind me of some one I have known,” Marion answered simply.

“No one ever accused me of looking like any one but Robert, before,” laughed the girl.

“Ah, yes you do. I see the resemblance now quite strong,” and Marion’s face flushed with emotion. “Perhaps you are related to him. His name was Aymer Preston.”

“Oh!” cried the young girl, springing up, “and you are lame, and your name is Marion Hyde. Tell me, isn’t it? I knew it. Oh, Robert, what will you say?”

She vanished from Marion’s astonished eyes, with the words on her lips. She was back, however, in a trice, and with her came a tall, dark-haired, heavily bearded gentleman.

“Marion Hyde? is it possible?” he exclaimed, clasping both the little trembling hands in his and putting them over and over again to his lips, which were quivering with emotion. “Surely you know me?”

“You -- you are Aymer Preston,” stammered Marion.

“I was Aymer Preston. I am Robert Liesson. A relative of my mother’s left me his property on condition of my taking his name. I have searched for you vainly, Marion Hyde. My prosperity has been bitter to me till now I find you. Oh! you shall never touch needle or work again.”

“No, indeed, that you shall not,” chimed in she who had been the means of this happy recognition; and, as she said it, both her arms were around Marion’s neck, and she was sobbing and kissing her alternately. “Robert always said he would never marry anybody but you, and you’ll have him, won’t you, dear?”

“I have proved my innocence of that charge of robbing my guardian,” said Robert, gravely. “But it was long before I

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could do so. I followed up the man whose testimony convicted me, till he lay dying, and he gave me a written confession of false witness. My guardian paid him to injure me. He wanted me out of the way. I will not be so abrupt as to ask you to marry me now, but as this rash sister of mine has said so much I can do no less than testify to its truth. I have always loved your sweet, dear face, Marion. I shall never cease to wish it my wife’s face till that wish is realized.”

And then he left Marion to his sister’s petting and soothing.

“This morning I was alone -- not a friend in the wide world, and now ---- ”

A burst of tears came to her relief.

She is Robert Liesson’s wife now, and her beautiful eyes are as dove-like as ever, with compassion for the unfortunate.

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Twenty Pounds

THERE never was such a man to bet as Staining. He was always so sure he was right. Our mutual friend Marxwell ought to have sailed for Brazil, but I felt confident I had seen him in the street. Staining said it was nonsense, and he'd bet me £20 to a shilling I was wrong. He had hardly finished speaking when Marxwell, who had not sailed, came up. Staining pulled from his pocketbook a £20 note, and handed it to me.

"There you are, old fellow. 'A fool and his money,' etc. Another illustration of that wise adage."

"Not exactly; for you don't suppose I shall take your money?"

"Yes, I do; and shall be extremely annoyed if you make any difficulty."

I protested; but presently he said in irritation: "Then be my almoner, and give the money to charity." And he pressed the note back upon me, and left abruptly.

There are objections to standing in the public highway with a bank-note in your hand, and a puzzled expression on your face. The note was transferred to my pocket, and I went my way pondering, when I was met full tilt by a clergyman whom I very well knew.

"Hulloa!" he cried. "Mr. Smith, both you and I seem to

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have our minds so much occupied to-day that we cannot take care of our bodies."

I apologized. "No grave matter of mine," I said; "but you look sad. Nothing wrong with you or yours?"

"No thanks; but I have just left a depressing scene."

"A young couple, married in hot haste, have come to grief. The wife and child are ill. Relatives and friends have receded into the remote background. And worse than all, the husband" ----

"Has become intemperate or has gone mad."

"Neither one nor the other."

"Something worse?"

"Yes; for to be dishonest is worse than going mad. And it is such a mere trifle that is needed, apparently, to put all straight, that I groan at my inability at the moment to find it."

"What is wanted?"

"Well, it's only £20."

"There's the money which you require. Haste away and do all the good you can with it."

My friend looked astonished. He even hesitated. "It is very good of you," he said; "but really"

“I have the power to give it away, Good-bye.” And I hurried off. Then I hastened back to him.

“Kindly, on no account mention my name.”

“No, as you wish it; but you should know that of the objects of your bounty.” And he told me. Then we parted. I had gone only a dozen yards when there passed me a young man, with a flushed face, and a frightened anxious look in his eyes. He caught up to my friend and spoke to him.

“That is the man,” I said to myself, “whose proceedings have been dubious, and who will, I trust, be rescued by Staining’s £20. Well, if the wheel should turn, and this poor man should ever be in a position to deliver a fellow creature from

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such trouble as he himself is now in, by the surrender of £20, I wonder whether he’ll do it? Smith, you surely know human nature well enough to answer your own question. Not he -- not a bit of it.”

This little incident, with plenty of other things besides, was soon swept from my memory by a sudden call to go abroad, even to a place where Maxwell did not go -- Brazil. Nothing hampered me then; I was a young bachelor, and could start for the antipodes at two days’ notice. When I take my wife and children -- I forget the exact number -- for our Autumnal trip, in these latter years of my life, I require weeks’ preparation. Alas, the change!

Away then to Brazil; away to a new life, new scenes, new companions, new hopes and fears; on to fortune -- and the yellow fever! Here bears in my tale a grand interval of twenty years (my story deals in twenties). I doubt whether I should have come back, had not a young English lady one night sang in my hearing an old home ballad, so well remembered in connection with some loved ones who in this world will sing no more, that the well-known craving for the native land mastered me at once, and within a very short time I was on my voyage to England.

On the way, I had one night a frightful dream. I fancied a terrible enemy had me on my back, and was clutching my throat. Tighter grew his grasp, and fainter my breath. My starting eyes scanned every feature of my murderer. Slowly and painfully -- as I was held in this way for some time, as it appeared -- did I call to my mind the face before me. It was Staining, but Staining reckless, desperate. I gasped an entreaty for mercy.

“Give it to me; I want it, I must have it, instantly -- instantly!” was the hoarse reply.

“What -- what can you mean?”

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“What?” he shrieked, in maniacal frenzy. “Wretch, my twenty pounds!”

I had quite forgotten about this bet and the twenty pounds; but the dream set me thinking of

what rumors I had heard occasionally respecting Staining since I had left England, that his money had wasted, that he had fallen considerably in position, and even into poverty. I had written to him several times; but of late years he had not replied.

“Poor fellow,” I now thought, “there may really be something in the dream. If his pride will accept it, he shall have that money back, and very glad I shall be to restore it.”

Back in England. Settled down again in the old country. Main matters disposed of, I began to think of minor ones, and among the latter the discovery of Staining. He was not in his former haunts, and I failed so long to find him that I was beginning to despair, when one night I met him on the street.

The brilliant artificial light of the ball-room may increase the luster of a woman’s bright eyes and her sparkling jewels; but if you want to see a poor, broken down man, decayed and dismal, in his worst aspect, survey him standing disconsolately under a street lamp, a drizzling rain descending upon him, and he, with folded arms, presenting a picture of mute despair. So did I behold Staining. I put my hand upon his shoulder. He sprang from me as though I were a wild beast.

“I did not want to run away,” he said, hoarsely; “they know that I’ll face it -- I’ll face it,” he added tremulously. “Go on, I’ll walk quietly enough-Why-what-eh-surely can it be -- can” –

“Yes, it is Smith, your old companion. Pray be composed. Staining, my friend, what is all this? Come away, and confide in me. You know you can trust me. If you are in trouble, and money can help you shall not want.” And I took his arm, and we went together.

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And then I heard poor Staining’s confession, and it amounted to this! When he had wasted his money, he obtained a situation in a merchant’s office. The pay, poor enough, was sufficient to keep him: but even now nothing could restrain him from gambling on a small scale on horse-racing. As a consequence he was soon penniless, and worse-dishonest. He had paid a betting debt out of a £20 note which the day before I met him had been intrusted to him. Discovery had ensued, almost instantaneous, and though the luckless man had explained that it was only through the failure of another member of the virtuous fraternity that he could not at once replace the money, he had been discharged, and had reason to suppose he would be prosecuted.

“Many, many thanks,” replied the poor fellow to the offer I directly made him. “You can see the firm in the morning; but though they have allowed a day to pass, I doubt whether they will take the money. I believe they are bent on my ruin.”

I could not believe it; so early next day I was at the office of Messrs. Baydon, Blendon & Co., and having been admitted into the room of the senior partner, I stated my errand and proffered my £20.

Mr. Baydon was a sleek old gentleman. There was, so to speak, wealth and ease all over him. He bent his head complacently, and replied:

“I can appreciate your kindness to this poor man, and I myself would pass the matter over at once; but my partner, Mr. Blendon, takes a different view, and I cannot interfere.” And he was firm upon the point. Could I see Mr. Blendon? Yes, if I could call again in two hours.

In the cab I kept muttering to myself: “Blendon, and Robert Blendon, too? I am sure of it. Still, if it be so, it is very strange. I think I should know that face again, however time may have altered it. We shall see who will be master.”

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Back to Messrs. Baydon, Blendon & Co.'s offices, and then into the presence of Mr. Blendon.

All my anxiety for my poor friend faded away. I was master of the situation. Briefly I stated my desire to pay the amount of Staining's defalcation, and my hope that under the extenuating circumstances no publicity would be given to the miserable wrong doing.

Mr. Blendon heard me with some impatience, and before replying he drew a check to “self or bearer” (I could see him do it) for a hundred pounds. Having given this to a clerk to get cashed, he said to me, arranging his papers the while:

“You will excuse my answering somewhat shortly. It cannot be. It is not the money we care about, but we must vindicate the law.”

I declare I was half pleased at the grandiose style of this speech. How beautifully he was walking into my net!

I ventured to suggest that in a case like this there was no imperative call to such a course, and that forbearance might rightly be shown.

“I do not see it -- I cannot see it,” answered Mr. Blendon, crossing his legs with an air of resignation, as much as to say:

“The man is a nuisance, but I must bear with him.” He resumed:

“You do not appear, sir, to observe the immense importance of punishing delinquency of this kind. I would not take your money on any account. Dear me! If I were to let this man off, I would be ashamed of myself. He ought to be in custody now, and will be very shortly. I have just overcome some foolish hesitation of my partner. I am always firm myself” (not always, Mr. Blendon -- not when I last saw you. But I waited a bit. A little further into my net please), “and, therefore, however sorry I may be, I must say no. Dishonesty is a fearful thing

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and it must be punished. If I were myself to commit an act of this kind, and” –

Why did he stop? I bowed quietly, and rising said:

“You are quite right, Mr. Blendon. Dishonesty is a terrible thing, and while not for another moment pressing my request, I know you will forgive my calling to remembrance before I leave, a curious case known to myself. May I tell you? Some twenty years ago a poor couple, not long married, had fallen into poverty. The wife and infant were ill. The doctor had ceased to attend because he was not paid. Comforts there were none. Even necessaries were wanting. The husband was distracted. He would get money; he must get money. When his young wife and infant child were well-nigh starving, what was to be done? Stay, stay, Mr. Blendon, I will complete my story. The money was obtained, sir -- Mr. Blendon, you know how. I need not tell you that. But in what way was it repaid ere mischief came, and how was the husband saved -- saved from ruin and degradation -- saved to become a rich and respected merchant? Whose money saved him? Ah! Mr. Blendon, that you do not know. But I will tell you. The £20 note which rescued the poor husband rested only ten minutes before in the pocket-hook of this very Staining whom you are about to prosecute, strangely enough, for precisely the same sum. Yes, at that time Staining was rich, maybe, as you are now; but with his riches lie was a kind, charitable, Christian man. Mr. Blendon -- I have a right to ask you -- to what character do you lay claim?”

I have often thought since what admirable advantages are a clear head and a clear temper. In the delivery of the foregoing, I had worked myself up to a white heat. It was only at the moment when he first saw my drift that he manifested any strong emotion. Then he rose from his chair, and his face flushed, but he resumed his seat, and by the time I had

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finished, he was sitting as calmly almost as when I entered. There was a slight pause, and then Mr. Blendon said:

“You have acquired, sir, some knowledge (I will not say whether accurate or not) of an incident in my early life which I am not called to discuss. May I ask whether this knowledge is confined, and is intended to be confined, to yourself?”

“I believe it to be confined to myself and my informant, and I have no desire it would be otherwise.”

Mr. Blendon bowed. “I will not conceal that I shall be glad for it to be an understanding between us that this matter does not go further.” I made a gesture of assent. “Well, then, on that footing, I will say that Mr. Staining shall be entirely absolved, and I will even aid him if I can. You must, therefore, excuse me from taking your £20. I am obliged to you for the coming. Good morning.”

I departed, and I must confess I felt the enemy had well covered his retreat, and had not left me a morsel more of triumph than he could help.

However, my object was accomplished, therefore I hastened to meet Staining. He was not at the appointed place, and after waiting some time I went to his lodging. It was a shabby house, in a by street, not easy to find. The landlady told me Mr. Staining had come in an hour ago, and was in his bed-room -- not very well she thought. She and I went up together, and knocked more than once. Then I went in. Poor Staining was lying on the bed-dead. My first misgivings were happily not confirmed. His enfeebled frame had been unable to withstand the recent wear-and-tear and he was now beyond the reach of his follies and his troubles.

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JOSEPH YATES' TEMPTATION

"Joseph Yates' Temptation" is from THE CHICAGO POST, Saturday, June 2, 1877, page 6, columns 1-4. In the eighth paragraph "habits" is corrected from "habits"; in the fifty-seventh, "sad" from "said." The story is attributed on the basis of style and indirect evidence in NEW GRUB STREET to Gissing. Although the possessive form "Yates'" might now be considered irregular it was certainly common in 1877 on both sides of the Atlantic to speak of "Keats' Poems."

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Joseph Yates' Temptation

DEPOSIT money all right? Fifteen minutes to closing." "Twenty-five," said Joseph Yates, looking up at the dusty old clock, that never varied five minutes the year round. "And here it is in the four packages."

Peter Gale ran it over briefly. Yates could not tell why, but these were always times of trial for him. If he should make a mistake some day! And it always seemed as if Gale suspected him of keeping something back.

A hard, sharp, shrewd man was Peter Gale, though there wasn't a firm in the city that stood higher than that of Gale & Co. Mr. Fielding, the company, traveled the greater part of the time, and Gale managed the indoor affairs.

It was all right. Gale gave a brusque nod.

“There’s those invoices must be made out tonight.”

“Yes, sir.”

“There’s no sense in such an endless string of holidays, that stop business and get men into lazy habits.”

Yates glanced at the clock again. Perhaps the master understood the hint, for he went off grumbling, and the man was left with a good half day’s work before him; for on Saturday as well, everything must be ready for morning.

He was a rapid and true accountant. Peter Gale knew his value well. He felt that he was worth a higher salary, but

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business had not been overbrisk for the last year or two, although “old Gale” was making money fast enough.

Something fluttered down to the floor. Why, what is this? Barton Casey’s check for one hundred pounds. Yates struck his hand to his forehead in terror. How had he forgotten it?

Right in the press of business an hour ago, Casey had rushed in on his way to the railway.

“I’m off to Ireland,” he exclaimed; “and though that bill of mine doesn’t fall due until the second of January, I’d rather take it up and have it off my mind. Here, receipt this, Yates. Quick as lightning, man.”

He had laid it aside to explain to Mr. Gale. Then in the hurry of making up the deposit it had slipped out of his mind.

He was tired out mentally and physically. Every nerve had been stretched and strained. The day’s work was hard enough, but to do two in one was doubly severe. So his thoughts were slow and half terrified as he stood a moment thinking what had better be done. To confess his negligence would be to almost ruin Gale’s estimation. And just when he needed to ask a favor, too!

He went on with his figures, trying to think of a plausible way out of the difficulty, but Gale returned and night was coming on. He slipped the check in his pocket; there was no entry made of it in the day’s ledger. He must trust to luck to make it right on Monday.

Gale went round in his stealthy, suspicious fashion. Yates balanced his long lists, made entries, sorted papers. His master chuckled a little under his breath at his slave’s rapidity. It would have taken him a week to get through with that amount of work correctly. He stood with the safe door open waiting for the books.

Joseph Yates had meant to get the check in the safe somehow. A cold perspiration broke out on his forehead, for it now

hung over him like a horror. The door shut with its sharp, mysterious click. Yates reached for his overcoat, fumbled awkwardly, then turned:

“Mr. Gale ---- ”

“What now,” was the gruff rejoinder.

“Mr. Gale ---- ” and Yates cleared his throat -- “I wanted to ask you if you could -- or would -- advance me a trifle from my month’s salary.”

His eyes were downcast now, and the lines round the mouth twitched nervously under the soft, brown moustache. He had nerved himself to ask the favor for the sake of his wife and children. For himself-well, he would have starved sooner.

“I don’t do those things, Yates, and you know it. I pay a man fairly when his work is done, and not a day before, and I never ask any man to pay me until my money is due. I know you want it for some stupid nonsense, but poor men like you had better save their money. This holiday business is bad for poor men like you.”

He clipped off every word just as a chisel cuts bars of steel or iron with a merciless thud.

Yates turned without another word. Outside the street lamps were burning dimly. The storm was just beginning -- fine sleet that blew out of the clouds in spiteful gusts. He pulled his coat collar over his ears, for the bitter wind nipped them, and almost flayed the skin on his cheeks where the curling beard did not keep him warm.

He went stumbling along, thinking. What had he done that misfortune should follow him, while such men as Gale, who wiling the life blood out of their fellow creatures, prospered and hoarded their wealth? Gale without a child in the world and he longing for a crown to buy his little ones some gift. Oh! what cruel straits there were in this life; what narrow, pitiless souls to make them severer still. Was there any truth in his

boyhood’s lessons, in his manhood’s beliefs? He had never turned his face from any poor man; he had been so glad to help one and another to send gifts at this festive season. Was there any heaven that took these things into account? Was there on this earth “good will to men?”

He was not congratulating himself upon his past good deeds. His mood was too faithless arid bitter just now, and he had done his from the delight of giving pleasure rather than settled principles. For ten years he had been a happy and prosperous man, comfortable in circumstances, generous in heart. During that time he had married, and three children had been born to him. Then came misfortunes, losses, adversity. He had paid his debts, given up his home and its pretty, simple

luxuries and retired to a lodging. Suppose instead, he had looked out for himself, cheated right and left and been a rich man today. The world might have sneered a little, but it would not have passed him by contemptuously, neither would his wife and children be enduring privation.

And a shiver passed over him, but it was not altogether cold. Here in his pockets were a hundred pounds, about which there would not be a question asked for days. He could indorse it easily enough. It was more than half a year's salary, and looked like a fortune to him. He could go somewhere and take a fresh start. He was tired being ground down to the earth.

"Evening paper," sang out a shrill little voice at his elbow. "Oh, please, I want a little money so much!"

"So do I, child," he answered, almost roughly, pushing him away.

A hundred pounds. A few years ago it would have appeared such a trifle. A few years ago he would have thrust a shilling into the little beggar's cold fingers. Not a penny for pleasure or charity.

He had been so scrupulously honest, so careful of his good

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name, what had it brought him? Next week there would be quantities of money coming in. Old Gale was slow at figures, and he could manipulate the books a little, arrange it so that several weeks would elapse before the fraud would be discovered, resign next Friday, and be off to a more prosperous life. Why, how easy it was to be a thief! This one hundred pounds in his pocket had paved the way. He would consider it a loan merely, and presently pay it back to old Gale.

Well, here he was. He stamped his feet, and stumbled up the stairs. The family on the lower floor never indulged in a hall light save when they expected company. But Bessie opened her door.

"Oh, Joe! I thought something had happened. Why, how cold and wet you are," and she kissed the frosty face.

"I walked up."

"In this storm? Oh, Joe."

"Yes; I spent my last sixpence for lunch."

He uttered this in a moody, despairing manner.

"But why did you not take more change this morning?"

He made no reply, but taking off his coat, stood before the grate-fire worn and gloomy.

Bessie Yates looked so bright and cheery in her crimson merino gown, with crimped cambric ruffles at throat and wrists, and a few geranium leaves in her fair hair. And the room was so cozy and inviting with the unsalable relics of former prosperity and Bessie's quick eye and fairy fingers. His slippers were warming in the firelight, and his chintz-covered easy chair gave him a welcome.

"You arc very tired."

The soft check was pressed against his, and the loving arms were round his neck. He made no answer to the question of voice, or still tenderer question of eyes.

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"Has it been a very hard day?"

"Rather," in a slow, weary tone.

"Then you have earned your holiday. Come and have a cup of tea, and we will talk it over."

"Earned it! Yes. But a man like Gale thinks you a mere engine. Not a pleasant word to-night, not a cordial wish. If he could have his way there wouldn't ever be a Sunday. It is true and honorable souls that suffer, and whose place can no more be found. Why, we have dropped out of memory and love and friendship, as completely as if we had committed some fearful crime. If I had paid half my debts, kept my house and taken a fresh start, the world would have thought better of me today."

"You are tired and discouraged. Come and have some supper, and then you shall see what I have made for the little ones' holiday present."

"Poor babies!"

"Oh, we have planned to be merry enough," and she laughed gleefully.

Many a time she had beguiled him with her pretty ways, but to-night he could not smile. She broiled him some slices of rare beef, toasted his bread, gave him a saucer of canned fruit, and chatted pleasantly.

When he stayed so late the children always had their supper and were put to bed, but to-night Bessie wished they were up to help her woo Joseph from his despondency and bitterness.

"Bessie," he began abruptly, as he rose from the table, "let me run over your house account book. How do we stand?"

"Don't bother your head with it to-night. I want to show you the children's gifts."

She studied his face for a moment. Something quite new had come to it. A kind o hard, desperate resolve, shadowed by

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a secret gloom. Seldom had she seen him in such a reticent mood.

"It has been a hard month with us," and her smile was unconsciously sad. "There was the coal and the doctor's bill for little Bits" -- the baby's pet name -- "and the barrel of flour -- one gets so much nicer flour by the barrel for the same money."

She said this lingeringly as she brought him her small housekeeping journal, kept in the fashion of a methodical business man. He looked over the entries and disbursements for three months back.

“You have no washerwoman, Bessie.”

“No; I can wash very well myself. It makes less trouble and saves something.”

He groaned aloud. His darling Bessie, of whom he used to be so tender!

“We shall owe nearly six pounds out of the month’s wages.”

“Oh, my darling, we can make it up when summer comes. I am well and strong, and I can’t help hoping for better times.”

“Better times! Oh, Bessie. When one begins to go behindhand ---- !”

“I shall try to be more economical.”

“My poor dear girl, you make a slave of yourself now.”

“There! Put the bothering thing away. Now look at my gifts.”

She took a large parcel from the closet and unfastened it with an air of triumph.

“There are dresses for Nelly and Rose, made out of my blue poplin that you liked so well. No one would dream that it had been washed, and I made the old velvet do duty again. And are not these stylish Normandy caps? Then I’ve crotcheted them mittens and leggings. I like to see them look pretty on Sunday, amid they do so love to go to Sunday school. And here is Bessie’s

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“Which cannot be an old dress turned?”

“No; it is a Scotch plaid circular I had years ago. Isn’t it pretty? And look at these shoes!”

Two pairs of dainty boots, of thick, pearl colored cloth; bound in blue for one, and scarlet for the other.

“You did not make them?”

“Yes, I did; out of scraps left of my cloak, with the tops of those old French boots of yours for soles. Am I not a genius?”

“Oh, Bessie!” and he hid his face.

“And look at my dolls!”

They were almost as good as “boughten ones,” in their gay dresses. She had marked eyes, nose, and mouth, giving them pink cheeks and a pretty substitute for hair.

“Little midgets, they will be wild with delight.”

“Oh, Bessie! I was thinking of them to-night. We were never so poor before. Not even a penny to spend!”

“It is hard! I shall never be converted to the idea that rich people often advance about poverty being the happiest state of life, and poor people being free from care. The sweet sleep of the laborer is so often quoted, but I wonder how many of them lie awake planning how they can make one pound do the work of two! But we have each other and health, and faith in Heaven ---- ”

“Bessie,” he interrupted, “how much does a woman love? How much would she forgive -- endure?”

“To the end. All things, Joseph -- poverty, trial, sacrifice.”

“And shame, disgrace?”

She was clinging to him, trembling in every pulse.

“Oh, not that!” she cried. “Better the bitterest poverty. It is my one great comfort that you never did anything dishonorable. I would rather be poor as we are to-day than to think you had wronged one living soul.”

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“Yes, to be sure!” he responded weakly, and with a forced laugh. “No one can say that.”

He could never tell how easy the villainy looked to him, how certain the prosperity seemed at the end. Oh, Heaven! he could not stay here, studied by her clear eyes, kissed by her pure lips. Why, it would end by making an honest beggar of him.

“You are not going out again, Joe, darling ---- ”

“Bessie, I must -- for a little while. It is business -- something that may better us a bit if I should be successful.”

“Joe ---- ”

“There sweet wife! Heaven knows you are an angel! I won't be gone long.”

Somehow she had not the will to detain him. She crouched over the fire, listened to the storm, and prayed-it was all she could do-for her dear one whose heart and hands had always been kept clean hitherto.

The storm was fierce enough. It chimed in with desperate mood. In a month maybe he would be an outsider, a thief, a fugitive, skulking in darkness and dread, a dishonored man. On in the darkness! He must think it out now -- decide.

“Evening paper! Oh, sir, please buy a paper!”

There was a lamp-post at the corner, and Joseph Yates (aught the poor little waif by his shoulder.

“You're the boy I met down in Pine street,” he exclaimed. “Don't you know you cannot sell papers this time of night! Ruin home out of the storm.”

“Oh, sir! mother -- she's starving! And there's a great window full of things down yonder that look so good -- so good! Why, the very smell of 'em's a feast. I can't steal, but, oh, won't some one give me a few pennies?”

“Here,” he said; “let us try. We will both beg. They are making ready for a great feast. Come along!”

He pulled him almost roughly by the arm over the sleety steps, through the open door, into the light, the warmth, and the spicy fragrance.

“Will you save a poor, perishing soul this night?” he asked, addressing the group. “Is the love of Heaven within you great enough to keep this child and his mother from starvation?”

They gathered around and the story was soon told.

A small sum was speedily gathered -- ten shillings -- and the boy’s joy found vent in tears and thanks.

“For, you see, I’m not used to selling papers, nor matches, and the other boys run me off. I’d do anything -- but steal.”

Joseph Yates looked at the pitiful little mite. Not ragged, nor with the vagrant air of waifs in general. Why, what was there so oddly familiar about the face?

Somewhere it had peered at him with not quite the same look in the eyes, but rousing him to some other sentiment than that of pity.

They walked out together and went to a shop, where the boy displayed the prudence of a market woman.

“We’ve no fire,” he said.

“I’ll carry some wood,” said Yates.

The shop keeper tied a stout string around a great bundle, and Yates shouldered it.

On they trudged, up an alley finally, and to a room on the ground floor, clean, but poor and very scantily furnished.

“Oh, mother, mother! I’ve brought you something to eat, and wood to make a fire, and this gentleman ---- ”

The child was sobbing on the bed, uttering broken sentences, and then laughing hysterically.

Joseph Yates began to build a fire in a mechanical way, thinking over his temptation, and whether Heaven had saved him.

“Oh, how can I ever thank you?” the woman began presently.

“Don’t,” he said huskily. “I have given nothing -- nothing. I am a beggar myself, or perhaps worse.”

“You may be poor, but you have a heart. And poor little Will -- it’s been so hard for him. If he had only one friend!”

Then she raised herself suddenly, and an eager light shone in the sunken eyes.

“There is a man,” she went on, slowly, “Peter Gale by name, in this city -- a rich man. Did you ever hear of him?”

“Hear of him? I am his bookkeeper,” he answered, grimly.

“If I could see him! He might ---- ”

Joseph Yates smiled bitterly.

“Don’t count on him,” he said. “He is as hard as the nether millstone.”

“But if he knew he had a child -- a son? He used to desire it so much.”

The head fell back feebly, and the thin fingers grasped at the coverlet.

Yates looked at her in amazement.

He remembered now that he had heard some story about Gale’s marriage years ago, and that his wife had left him.

He caught the child again and studied the thin face by the lamplight.

Yes, that was it -- the likeness that had puzzled him so.

“His child!” he repeated in a blind, dazed manner. “His son! And you are his wife?”

“Yes.”

“The kettle boils,” said ‘Willie; “I’ll make you sonic beef-tea. Oh, mother, mother! you will get well.”

Peter Gale’s wife and child! What were they doing in beggary?

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He helped the little boy prepare some nourishment for her, and presently he listened to a broken, disjointed story.

How she had been high-spirited, and they had disagreed, until one day she had renounced him and gone off in a fit of passion. And when her child was born, months afterwards, how she had triumphed in the entire possession of him.

She had a small fortune of her own, which had sufficed her until a year ago, when an unforeseen loss had swept it away.

Then she had sold her furniture, jewels, sewed a little, but with her failing health she could not accomplish much.

She had come to London to stay with a friend until she could decide upon her wisest course for she was fearful that her injured husband would take the child and disown her.

Her friend had died suddenly a week after her arrival, and she had gone on in fear and suspense until, as it seemed now, death was near for herself.

“Will he be glad to have his child?” she moaned. “Oh, if I only knew -- if I only knew.”

He gave the poor thing hope, and left her much comforted. Then he went out in the street once more.

Bessie had watched the hours away in strange affright.

Never had she seen Joe in such a mood.

What had happened to him?

The fire wasted to ashes.

She shivered and drew a shawl around her shoulders.

What if Joe's mind had met with some great strain and he had gone off to self-destruction? -- worse than that she could not think of him.

The clocks were striking nine.

There was a step on the stairs, and she opened the door.

Joe came in quietly, kissed her, took off his overcoat and his boots, and sank into his easy chair. He was deathly pale, now, with great shadows under his eyes.

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"Joe!"

"Bessie, darling, have I acted like a brute -- a fiend? I've been tempted by the evil one. I had made up my mind to be a thief, for I thought I saw no other way out of my wilderness. Don't cry out, Bessie; I am an honest man, and will go honestly to my grave. I could never be tempted again after having been snatched out of these depths."

She was crying at his feet.

He raised her, kissed her with solemn tenderness, and told her his story.

He put on his coat next morning and went to Mr. Gale's.

It was a dull, unpretending brick house; but warm and comfortable within.

The master sat over his lonely breakfast, his face grave and sterner than ever.

Had he been thinking over old dreams long since come to nothing?

"What, now?" he said gruffly, as Yates entered the room.

"This," answered Yates, and he laid the check beside his plate. "You see it came yesterday."

"And you ---- "

"It was accidental at first. I mislaid it in my hurry. I did not tell you then, because I wanted to ask a favor, and knew you would be angry at my carelessness. I put it in my pocket, and it became Satan's temptation to me. Do you suppose this paltry hundred would have satisfied me? I knew how easy I could make false entries, and repay myself the sum I am worth to you that your penuriousness keeps me out of. I went out in the storm last night, and fought as a man does for his life, and, with I leaven's help, conquered. I found a poor little stray, not yet utile years old, hawking papers to keep

himself and sick mother from starvation. In his anxiety even lie refused to steal. And this child that saved me, and made it an utter impossibility

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ever to touch one penny of yours or any man's money that I have not honestly earned is -- listen, Peter Gale -- your son, your baby, born less than nine years ago, months after his mother had left your house.

"My child; my son. What trumped-up story is this?"

"Go and see for yourself -- there, 12 James Court. The woman is dying."

Peter Gale's face took an ashen tint. He rose and tottered a few steps, shaking as if with an ague.

"Will you go with me, Yates? I -- there are so many impostors. But I should know Margaret's face. Dying?"

What bitter memories surged up in that hard heart only Heaven knew. Yates took his arm and led him along.

"Here is the place -- this door. You have no further need of me. A man and his wife are best alone when they have a story to tell."

Joseph Yates went home again.

"I shall be discharged, of course," he said to Bessie. "Peter Gale would never forgive such a thing. It's a hard winter, but I can't think Heaven will let us starve."

He went down to the counting-house on Monday and took his place at the desk.

Peter Gale came and laid the check on his book without saying a word. He had changed greatly since Friday night, looked older and broken, and fearful, as if suspicious that every one he met would pass judgment upon him.

"Yates," he said, at night, "stop awhile, will you? That was my wife and my child -- my little boy," he added with a curious tremble in his voice akin to tears. "I can't tell you about the old times when we were both at fault. Margaret's sorry enough now, and Heaven knows, so am I. She can't last long, but I've brought her home, and the boy hangs after me and kisses me, I never knew before
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He paused, and, after clearing his voice and drawing his coat-sleeve across his eyes, continued:

"Yates, I've been a hard master, I know, but you're a good man, and I couldn't spare you. I want you to stay and take charge at five hundred pounds a year--will that do? And I refused you your

own on Friday, but here's a gift to make up, for you brought to me -- oh, Yates, such a gift as one man seldom brings another. She might have starved before morning. I shall never forget -- never, Heaven bless you, Yates ---- ”

A few tears dropped on Yates' ledger.

He opened the folded paper.

It was a check for a hundred pounds!

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THE TRILOGY FROM THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE PROVISIONALLY ASCRIBED TO GISSING

THE DEATH-CLOCK

THE SERPENT-CHARM

DEAD AND ALIVE

I

“The Death-Clock” is from THE CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE, Saturday, April 21, 1877, page 11, columns 4-5. No intentional changes have been made. The sources of the quotations are: Motto, Poe’s RAVEN, 107-108; “Far into the dreamy land,” etc., untraced; “Among the isles,” etc., untraced; “Was like a chime,” etc., untraced; “My Soul was,” etc., Shelley, PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, II, iv, 72-74; “We have had enough,” etc., Tennyson, LOTUS-EATERS, 105-106. It is interesting that Gissing made the hero of “The Pessimist of Plato Road,” a tale collected in A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES, 1927, misquote Poe, and attribute a line (of Wordsworth) to Shelley.

II

‘The Serpent Charm’ is from the TRIBUNE, Saturday, April 28, 1877, page 12, columns 5-6. In the fourth paragraph the second “wordless” is corrected from “worldless.” There is a good deal of Biblical phraseology, besides the direct quotations of which the sources are: “Earth to earth,” the

BURIAL SERVICE; "Clothed and in my right mind," ST. MARK, 5: 15 and ST. LUKE 8: 35; "Slaying and to slay," untraced, perhaps quoted only as the thought of the person addressed.

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III

"Dead and Alive" is from the same paper, Saturday, July 14, 1877, page 11, columns 3-4. A few changes have been made, the original gives "Ashmorland" in the fifteenth paragraph; "In a" in the thirtieth; "cholera" in the forty-first; and "grufliness" in the fifty-seventh. The only quotation, the "Mills of the gods," is a commonplace, referred to by Plutarch, and many others. (See Bartlett's FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS, tenth edition, page 216.)

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III

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The Death-Clock

WRITTEN FOR THE TRIBUNE

*"And my soul from out that shadow
That lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted -- nevermore!"*

I SHALL die to-night as that clock strikes 12," said Dr Vargrave, lifting a white, shapely hand, as he spoke, and pointing to the clock that stood on the marble mantel.

The wintry day was drawing to a close; since early morn the snow had been steadily falling, and

now all outside was shrouded in a mantle of white. The sun was setting behind a bank of dull, gray clouds, and the sombre twilight of a winter's day, like a pall, had fallen upon the city.

I had just finished visiting my patients, and, in response to a note left at my office that afternoon from Dr. Vargrave, had called to see him.

"I shall die to-night as that clock strikes *i2*," repeated the Doctor, as I seated myself before the cheerful fire, that roared and sparkled in the grate.

I was too astonished to speak, -- frequently in my somewhat extended practice I had encountered persons who, from some real or fancied cause, had quite made up their minds to die, but to meet with this declaration from a person like Dr.

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Vargrave was astounding. I at first was under the impression the Doctor was joking, but, knowing how totally foreign such levity was to his character, and glancing at his face, which was perfectly grave, I saw the words were sincere.

"I see I surprise you," said the Doctor, rising from his chair and advancing to the fire. "I see I surprise you, and no wonder, but I feel it is to be so. When the last stroke of the twelve dies away, my soul will have departed: where? -- who knows? Perhaps to flash out as a flame is extinguished, and all is dark, or, perchance, as the poet sings:

*"Far into the dreamy land of song
My soul did float, as a bird storm-tossed, --
Lashed, and beaten, and all but lost,
Reaches a haven safe at last
From the hungry waves and the biting blast;
Reaches a haven, to drift along
With half-closed eyes, nor fear, nor care,
From dangers past, to come, or where."*

The Doctor paused, and, leaning his arm on the mantel, stood gazing down at me.

"Can this be madness?" I thought; but no, the handsome face was calm, and the dark eyes that met mine, though filled with a mournful light, were not those of a madman.

"I am at a loss to understand the meaning of your words, Doctor," said I after some moments of silence. "Were it any but Dr. Vargrave had such a fancy, I should recommend a blister to the back of the head, and the other remedies we use in cases of cerebral disorder."

A cold smile swept across my companion's face, and he changed his position half impatiently.

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“But surely, Doctor,” I resumed, “there is some mystery here; I see you in the prime of life, full of health, and with a name already famous in the world of science; possessing all these, is it a wonder I do not understand your meaning when you calmly say you will die to-night as that clock strikes twelve?”

“You shall soon know all, my friend,” said the Doctor, crossing the room and touching a small silver bell on the table; “you shall soon know all, and I am sure my confidence in you will not be misplaced.”

The door opened, and the Doctor’s servant, a bright-looking creole boy, entered.

“Is supper ready, Queto?”

“Yes, Senor,” replied the lad.

“Come, Doctor, let us to supper,” said my companion, dismissing the boy with a wave of his hand; “strange as it may seem, I have quite an appetite for this last meal of mine.”

In a dazed way I followed this strange man, who, from some cause, had evidently made up his mind to die at the stroke of 12 that night, and who yet seemed as unconcerned and self-possessed as if his lease of life was to extend for many years, in place of a short five hours, -- for as we entered the cozy dining-room I heard the clock in the room we had vacated strike *seven* in clear, silvery tones.

The Doctor’s appetite was certainly good, although I noticed he ate only of the most delicate food, and the decanter of choice wine he scarcely touched. As for myself, it was with difficulty I could swallow a morsel, and I was much relieved when we rose from the table, and again ascended to the other loom.

“You will excuse time for a time,” said the Doctor, as at his invitation I seated myself. “I have some papers which I wish to collect, and place in your hands. When I return you shall

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have a full explanation of this mystery, as you call it; during my absence you can amuse yourself with the books,” and he pointed to a lofty case full of valuable works, which I had before noticed.

Left to myself, I lighted a choice cigar from the box the Doctor placed before me, and, drawing the note I had received that afternoon from my pocket, proceeded to read it. It was as follows:

To Dr. Homer –

My Friend: *Come to me this afternoon at 6, and, if possible, arrange your business that you may spend the night with me. Truly,*

HENRY VARGRAVE

My acquaintance with Dr. Vargrave had commenced some six months previous, and in several delicate operations he had been kind enough to ask my assistance. Rich, handsome, and evidently of a high family, the Doctor had been much sought after by the leaders of society. Entirely devoted, however, to his profession, he was but little known except through his practice.

I read and re-read the note, but could find no reason in it for the strange phrase the Doctor had several times repeated, "I shall die to-night as that clock strikes 12."

Suicide was out of the question; my friend was the possessor of everything a reasonable man could desire, and a man with faculties too steadily balanced to destroy himself. Ponder and think over the matter as I would, I could arrive at only one solution in regard to the mystery: I had read of, and even treated, patients who, from a constant dwelling of the mind upon one subject, had become monomaniacs to it. It was evident the Doctor had in some way become impressed with the idea he was to die that night at 12, and, though perfectly sane

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in all other respects, believed it was to be so. Satisfied this was the reason of the Doctor's strange assertion, "I shall die tonight as that clock strikes 12," I rose from my chair, and advanced to the mantel to look at the clock, whose face now indicated a quarter of 8. The time-keeper was entirely different from anything I had ever seen; it was of pure white marble, bound at the corners with bands of thick, yellow gold, and engraved with strange characters, cut deep into the marble at the sides and front. Two golden serpents lay coiled around its base, and their jeweled eyes flashed a wicked light as I paused before the mantel.

A thought struck me: "Would it not be a good plan to set the clock back a few minutes, and then when the hour of 12 arrived prove to the Doctor by my watch, an excellent timepiece which he had often admired, that his clock was wrong, and, as the hour had passed, he would have to set some other night for dying?"

This looked as if it would cure the Doctor of his strange fancy, and, opening the front of the clock, I placed my finger on the hand and moved it slightly. Great God! shall I ever forget that cry? It sounded in my ears like a thunder-clap; it was a woman's voice, if voice it could be called, and the agony in it could never have been suffered on earth. The shriek died away in a long, sobbing wail that echoed through the room like a despairing cry of a lost soul might sound.

My hand at the first cry dropped from the clock, and, as I staggered back, to my excited eyes

the golden snakes seemed alive, and writhing in fury. I even imagined I could hear their angry hisses, and the lurid fire of their baleful eyes flashed and sparkled in a thousand colored flames!

Terrified, I resumed my seat, and, as I did so, the glass door of the clock closed of itself with a sharp snap.

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I have heard the cry of raving maniacs; I have heard the cry of a broken heart; but never before had I heard, and I pray I may never again, such a scream as the one that echoed through the room as I laid my hand upon the clock.

What could it mean? Was it possible the Doctor had some mad woman locked in his house? But no, it was not probable. I touched the silver bell standing on the table, and, after some delay, the boy Queto entered.

“What was that cry, my boy?” I asked the lad as he stood before me.

“I have heard no sound, Senor,” replied the boy.

“Ah, never mind; I suppose it was some one in the street,” said I, half ashamed of having called the boy.

Queto departed, and I was once more alone.

A strange feeling had come upon me. I took a book from the case, and, as I did so, the clock struck 8. The sound made me shudder.

I lighted another cigar, and opened the volume. Its title was, “The Dreaming Dead,” -- an old romance, weird and mystical, written by some German author long since passed away. Fascinated by the book, the time flew quickly, and the clock chimed as the door opened and the Doctor entered.

“Back at last!” he exclaimed, as I looked up; “did you get tired of waiting?”

“No; the time has passed quickly; by the way, Doctor, did you hear that strange cry that rang through the house?” As I asked this question I observed the Doctor’s face narrowly.

“I have heard no cry,” replied Dr. Vargrave; “what was it like?”

I described the shriek as well as I could, but it was evident the Doctor had heard nothing.

“My friend, I have but a short three hours to live,” said my companion suddenly; “are you ready to hear my story?”

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I nodded assent, and the Doctor, placing a box of papers on the table, said: “After my death I should wish you to take charge of these; among them you will find full directions regarding the disposing of my property. Now light another cigar with me, and you shall hear my story.”

“It is twelve years ago, one bright day in May,” commenced my companion, “that I stood on the deck of a vessel leaving New York, bound for a trip half for business and half pleasure.

“‘Among the isles of Antilles, that southward stretch away In one long emerald chain of beauty gay.’

“I had just left college, and was full of the enjoyment of youth, finding pleasure in everything. I had embarked for the voyage full of delightful anticipations in regard to the country I was about to visit. I had read of the wonderful beauty of some of these islands, with their tropical fruits and flowers, and now I was to visit them. It is needless to tell you of the voyage, which was short, and without event. I arrived at my destination, and almost the first thing I did after stepping on shore was to succumb to a violent attack of yellow fever.

“Hovering between life and death, I lay for many weeks, totally unconscious of what was passing around, and when once again, with reason restored, I opened my eyes, I thought I had died and passed away. I lay in a large room whose walls, composed of bamboo, were hung with tropic vines and flowers of every hue and size. Through the open door a cool breeze from the sea found its way, bringing with it the fragrance of a thousand flowers. A fountain at one end of the room threw a stream of sparkling water high into the air with a musical murmur, and by my side a maiden sat, who, as I stirred and was about to speak, laid a cool hand on my forehead and sang a tender, dreamy song. Her voice –

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*“‘Was like a chime of silver bells
Whose sweet, sad music floats upon the air,
Whose plaintive soothing melody ebbs and swells
In one low song, harmonious, rich and rare.’*

“Weakened by my long sickness, I lay with half-closed eyes wondering --

*“‘My soul was an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, did float
Upon the silver waves of her sweet singing.’*

“I shall not weary you with the details of my recovery; it was complete, and I was soon able to walk out and enjoy the novelty of my position. During my sickness I had been cared for at the

residence of Don Roderick Morales, a high-born Spaniard, who resided on the island, an old friend of my father's, and it was owing to his attentive care I had recovered. Don Roderick was a widower with one child, Virginia."

Here the Doctor's voice trembled, and he became deadly pale as he held out a small miniature for my inspection.

It was a beautiful face, almost oval, with large, dark eyes, a small rounded chin, sweet mouth, and the head imperial in its poise, crowned with radiant bands of black hair.

"That was Virginia," resumed the Doctor, "as I first knew her. She inherited all the grand beauty of her Spanish mother, and at the age of 18 was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. From the time of my recovery life to me was as a long, delicious dream; by Virginia's side the languid tropic days passed swiftly, and it was not long before I heard the sweet declaration from her lips that I was beloved.

"Night after night we wandered beneath the cold moonlight, now through the fragrant orange-gloves laden with their

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delicious golden fruit, now by the sea beach listening to the dreamy murmur of the waves that flashed and sparkled like molten silver on the shore. Her voice, as I have said, was a glorious one, and, accompanied by the guitar, she sung the strange old Spanish ballads with a passionate tenderness.

"Often, however, I noticed a strange melancholy would overcome her, and in the midst of a song she would suddenly pause and with averted face hurry away, not to reappear for hours. I attributed these attacks to a sorrowing remembrance of her mother, who had not been dead long, and, assured that time would prove a cure for them, I never mentioned it. Oh, God! had I but guessed the true cause," said the Doctor, rising from his chair and wiping his forehead on which a cold perspiration had gathered; "had I but known the cause, what suffering could have been averted!" As he uttered these words the clock struck 11 with hollow, sonorous strokes.

The sound struck a chill to my heart; I glanced at my watch; the clock was five minutes slow; I had set it back that much.

My companion crossed and recrossed the room, and then reseated himself and continued:

"I had now been several months on the island, and I eagerly looked forward to the time when Virginia should be mine. Don Roderick's consent to our union had been obtained, and it only remained for me to receive letters from home.

"One afternoon -- ah, how well I remember it! -- Virginia and I were together on the long piazza that ran the length of the house, she swinging idly in a hammock, while I read aloud from

Tennyson's 'Lotus-Eaters':

*'We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free.'*

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“Suddenly, with a strange cry, Virginia sprang to her feet and hurried down the graveled path that led to the garden. I at first did not follow, as these strange moods were not uncommon; but, overcome with an irresistible feeling, I at length arose and followed her footsteps.” The Doctor paused and gasped for breath; large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, and his face worked convulsively. “She had entered the orange-grove on the south side of the house, and hither I followed her. Oh, Heaven!” -- and the Doctor's voice broke into a groan, so terrible in its agony that I started to my feet and advanced to him. He motioned me back, however, and, after drinking a glass of water, resumed. “As I entered the grove I heard Virginia's voice singing a low, strange song, which I had never heard before. Silently I advanced, and when quite near I paused and, leaning forward, observed her motions. Great God! coiled in her lap lay a slimy, hideous snake, whose flat head undulated to and fro, keeping time to the song! Virginia's hand--that white, beautiful hand I had so often pressed to my lips--stroked the horrid creature and patted its great loathsome head as a mother would caress a child. The sight was too much; with a terrible cry, I sprang forward, and, as I did so, the snake, uncoiling itself with a lightning-like motion, buried its poisonous fangs deep in Virginia's right hand, and glided away. The cry had alarmed the household, and they were quickly on the spot; but too late. Virginia, my only love, was dying as I bent over her. The last words she uttered were these:

“‘You will come when I wish it?’

“That,” said the Doctor, “is my story. As I afterward ascertained, Virginia had been under the care of a native nurse, an old woman, who from some cause entertained a terrible hatred against her parents. I suppose by some devilish art she had cast a spell over the girl, and the mysterious influence lasted.

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Certain it is that Virginia, pure, beautiful Virginia, was the victim of a 'snake-charm,' as it is called in those islands. Unable to resist the influence these creatures exerted over her, she came, as it were, to their call. Had I not made my presence known the snake undoubtedly would never have harmed her. This is the end. Crazed with grief, I fled from the island, and wandered for years in foreign lands,

returning at last to commence the practice of medicine in this city. Three years ago, as I sat in this room, the spirit of Virginia appeared before me. It uttered these words: 'Be ready to come at my call!' Again, last week the same thing occurred. In an inexpressibly mournful voice the vision said: 'Be ready to come at the stroke of 12 Monday night.' I am ready," said the Doctor, rising from his chair, "and into your hands I leave my affairs." He paused.

I glanced at the clock; it indicated five minutes of 12.

"Doctor, how did you become the possessor of such a singular clock?" I asked.

"It was Virginia's," replied Dr. Vargrave in a broken voice; "she gave it to me the last day of her life."

"Well, it is wrong, Doctor," said I in a cheerful tone, drawing my watch from my pocket and holding it up to him. "You see it is already 12 by the right time, while your clock indicates four minutes of the hour. You will not die to-night at 12, certainly."

We were both standing close to the mantel, and the Doctor's hand rested near the base of the clock.

"Ah, my friend," replied my companion, with a mournful smile, "you know not what you say; the clock has kept perfect time for years."

As he uttered these words, the first stroke of the 12, like the deep toll of a funeral bell, sounded through the room; as the echo died away, I, George Homer, physician, saw with my own eyes the golden serpents uncoil their glittering length from

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around the cursed clock, and with a simultaneous movement bury their fangs deep in the Doctor's right hand, where, years before, at the same spot, Virginia had been bitten.

My companion reeled and fell heavily to the floor, and at the same moment a shadowy form, that of a beautiful woman, floated into the room and hovered an instant over him. The last stroke of the twelve died away in a silvery echo, and as the sound ceased the clock flew into a thousand fragments. I bent over the body of Dr. Vargrave and called him by name- he was quite dead.

FELIX BROWNE

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The Serpent-Charm

[A Sequel to the "DEATH-CLOCK" in the Tribune of April 21]

WRITTEN FOR THE TRIBUNE

SO you thought me “quite dead,” my dear Doctor, and done forever with the care and fret, the work and worry of this mortal world, -- the great ante-room to the spiritual life? Well, well. There’s many a soul slips out of human view for a space that would come back to its old tenement again if you were not in such haste to utter over it the solemn-sounding ceremonials of the grave; to pronounce, with awful impressiveness, between the hollow echoing of falling clods upon the coffin-lid, the slow, shuddering sentence of doom -- “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!”

How long I lay in the deep trance which you called death, you are better able to tell than I, who had therein no perception of time or space, as humanly comprehended.

Rising out of the dead, stagnant waters of forgetfulness, -- the fabled River of Death in which I seemed to have been utterly submerged, -- I was conscious first of a dull throb of pain, succeeded by a slow, creeping, delicious sense of peace and content, the source of which I did not even have thought to wonder about, much less care to know.

Gradually there grew upon me an impression of living presence to which my sense of sight was sealed. I heard, as in a dream, soft, thrilling, wordless strains of song. I drank, with languid bliss, the sweet inspiration of a subtly-perfumed

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breath; I felt, with stirring life, the fanning of cold electric currents of air, as of hands floating in mesmeric waves over my head. Though consciously in the body, all power of motion seemed suspended, or rather under the control of a will outside my own, which was wholly dormant. Suddenly, without warning or effort, my eyes opened on a vision of womanly grace and beauty bending over me with a smile of fascination that drew my soul like lightning from the cloud which had imprisoned it. Involuntarily I rose up, gazing with the entire absorption of every faculty of my being into the deep lustrous eyes which held me by some subtle charm I had no care to analyze nor wish to resist. Witched by the glow and scintillation of those wondrous orbs, I did not mark at once the uncertain, dream-like transformation of the beautiful woman into a serpent form, nor did I feel any fleshly shrinking when the lovely, shining head, slowly losing its distinctive human contour, flattened to snake-like mold, with soft, vibratory, fascinating movement keeping time to the murmur of the wordless song which had first stolen on my slumbering sense. True, there was with me some vague impression of horror that seemed to have belonged to a former state of existence, but I regarded it only with dull, uncomprehending wonder, yielding myself absolutely to the enchantment of the jewel eyes whose soft, iridescent flames wavered bewilderingly with the undulating grace of the slow, swaying, magnetic motion of the head.

“My love, said I not that you would come when I called.”

Was it serpent or woman that spoke? The form seemed to shift from one to the other before my vision. But the old legend of the snake talking with our first mother in the Garden of Eden stuck like a burr in the tissues of my thought. If that experience were urged upon my belief, might not this strange

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phenomena of human speech on the tongue of my serpent-charmer be accredited as a reality?

“My love! my lord!” murmured seductively my beautiful enchanter, showing me now the regal head and glorious face of Virginia, which was never absent from my dreams.

I touched with my languid hand the radiant crown of hair, traced, with lingering eyes, the exquisite outline of cheek and chin, the tender curve of the lovely lips that pouted again to say, with a thrill of triumph in the well-remembered voice, “You have come! At last you have come!”

Then I began vaguely to wonder about myself.

“Am I dead?” I questioned, curiously regarding the hand I had lifted to stroke my darling’s head.

“Nay! *alive*, -- more absolutely and truly alive than ever before, though not in the earth,” answered the sweet instructress.

“And is this Heaven, then?” I asked again, with doubtful survey of my surroundings, which seemed in no wise to differ from those long familiar.

The beautiful one, slipping back into the serpentine grace of form and subtlety of expression once more, flashed on me a smile wise and pitiful.

“You bring with you the gross ignorance and superstition pertaining to mortal life,” she said with a superior air. “Know you that Heaven is no place, but a spiritual condition, which you have no need to cross the river of death to find, which, indeed, if you attain not in the body, you will be slow in arriving at out of it. Tasted you never the bliss of Heaven, my idol?”

“What was that in the old days ‘among the isles of the Antilles,’ when you sat with me beside the sea, and sang to me songs of passionate tenderness -- was not that Heaven?” I murmured with a faint thrill of the remembered ecstasy.

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The serpent-woman seemed to glow and expand with inexpressible delight. “Then, so, you shall find Heaven again, my love,” she said with exultant joy.

I cannot tell if we moved from our place, but the scene, with extension of thought, appeared to

change. Nothing was fixed and permanent, but as we talked with varying mood of feeling and fancy, the world about us shifted its symbols in harmony with our state. Wondrous, subtle wisdom of speech flowed from the tongue of my consort, who, when she leaned towards me in the glorious likeness of my lost Virginia, scintillated with the jeweled eyes of serpents glittering in scaly gold on neck and wrists, and darting in wicked splendor from the lustrous folds of her hair. Yet this wonderful philosophy of life unfolded to my understanding, though it appealed powerfully to my intellectual faculties, seemed not to satisfy the divine part of me, and I felt myself at moments withdrawn from my fascinating friend, and partially dead to the spell of her enchantment. In one of these abstractions I was conscious first of an influence or a force combating with silent power the attraction that had held and drawn me for so long a time. The tender memories of youth sprang up like spring flowers in my way, a white dove circled softly over my head, and the faint, sweet breath of violets thrilled delicately the air, bringing to my thought the pure maiden face that had shone like a star in the far heaven of my boyhood dreams, and which, falling suddenly into the black cloud of the grave, had left me desolate and lost for years.

At the coming of these symbols the countenance of Virginia darkened with pain and passion, the serpents about her darted their tongues at me in a sort of fiery rage, and with a cry of agony she twined herself around me, and, with head pressed to my bosom, appealed to the love I had vowed to her in the

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intoxication of those moon-lit hours when she sang to me by the sea.

“Ah, look at me with the old worship in your eyes!” she prayed. “Ah, speak to me with the thrilling passion of tenderness that shook your voice in the old days! Touch me with the remembered magnetism of lips that drew my soul into a heaven of bliss I never since have found! Have I called you hither, O my love! my god, only to lose you utterly and forever!”

A spasm of pity and sympathy struggled with the shudder of repulsion which had been slowly creeping over me, and almost I was persuaded to yield to the despairing plea and give my life again into the power of the charmer. But suddenly there was a soft rush of dove-wings, like a white cloud sailing in the air, a stronger breath of violet swept across my cheek, and the star of my youth rose trembling with silver radiance in the east. Simultaneously with those tokens the evil beauty of the woman on my bosom with awful contortions was transformed into the glittering horror of an angry snake, that, writhing in pain and rage, fell helpless to the ground and crept hissing away into some Outer darkness of subtlety and cunning.

No sooner had this terror vanished than there beamed in its place a vision of sweetness and light, -- the fair, pure, maiden love of my boyish years.

“What do you here, my brother?” said the radiant presence, before whom I bowed with a reverence that would not suffer me to touch so much as the tips of the lovely, transparent hands outstretched toward me. “Your work on the earth is not yet done, -- the world from whence you came hath grievous need of you. It hath wounds for you to heal, pains for you to mitigate, burdens for you to lift, wrongs for you to right, evils for you to root out, and waste 1)laces for you to make bud and

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blossom as the rose. Not yet is your labor and reward in this world where are clearly traced the laws of cause and effect. It was a false call which brought you hither, yet none the less it hath served a use. She who fled away at my approach hath long held you in enchantment, and it may be you had need of just this experience to break the fatal spell. For, though you knew it not when you gazed enraptured on her dazzling beauty, this bewildering creature whom you thought you so passionately loved in the lower life had there all the elements of the serpent which you here see developed, and which rendered her peculiarly susceptible to the charm of the deadly snake that you found her caressing one day with the tenderness of sympathy existing between congenial natures. Your attraction to her, founded wholly on the law of opposites, had in it from the beginning the principle of repulsion, and in the union of life you had planned you would have reached long ago the crisis you have just triumphantly passed. But your place is not now, your work is not yet, in the realm of pure spirit. Go back to the duties and purposes that you left unfulfilled in the other life. Go back to your fight with the evils that prey on the souls and the bodies of men. Go back to your labor of love for the regeneration and salvation of such drifting wrecks of humanity as come within the sphere of your helping hand. There is infinite good for you to accomplish in the direction of your work and calling in the world.”

And with these words the vision of light faded, faded, until, mingling with the star that hung in the east, it drew me like a magnet through limitless space, vanishing at last in an atmosphere too dense and heavy to suffer its clear shining. A period of darkness, suffocation, and pain ensued, in which I seemed battling for a lost possession that yielded but slowly to my claim. Then my eyes opened to a dim sepulchral light striking faintly through what appeared a white, semi-transparent cloud

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over my face. Instinctively, I strove to lift my head and brush the film away, but my power was restricted by some thrall bound tightly on my wrists. Gasping for breath, with the perspiration

starting from every pore, I wrenched my hands from their imprisonment, and, snatching the white obstruction from my face, looked about me with vague wonder. At the first my surroundings seemed strange and unreal, but gradually the impression of familiar objects grew upon me, and I recognized the well-known aspects of my room through the funeral order and ghostly conditions imposed by the acceptance of my death. Smiling at this novel experience, I sat up, clad in the fine vestments of the grave, which I discovered to have the inconvenience of a "front view" only, laying upon me the necessity of ringing at once for the substantial workaday garb in which, "clothed and in my right mind," I might go forth again, as you would say, with heartless reflection on my profession, "slaying and to slay."

Of course my sudden alarm and ghostly appearance caused great consternation in the house, and I have vastly enjoyed the terror and wonder inspired by my resurrection, as also the very extraordinary account of my demise given in THE TRIBUNE, to which I beg leave to add this perhaps equally incredible sequel.

Whether the experience herein related be a dream or an actuality I have no means to determine, but it seems to have utterly cured me, at all events, of my infatuation for the fascinating beauty of the isle of the Antilles.

As for the mystery of the clock, my excellent Homer, I am certain it may be explained on mechanical principles, and I summon you without delay to careful investigation, the results of which shall be given to the public.

DR. VARGRAVE

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Dead and Alive

WRITTEN FOR THE TRIBUNE

YES, according to his own account, Shakovsky has had some queer mental experiences, but none more strange and incredible than the actual circumstances attending his love-suit. Did he ever tell you the story? I dare say not, for he is a little sensitive about the affair, as is natural, speaking of it, even with me, with the greatest reserve and caution. However, I think he would have no objection to your being made acquainted with the facts of the case, since you are not one likely to regard him and his lovely wife as objects of vulgar curiosity, from which, with the instinct of refined natures, both would shrink with pain.

Take a cigar, my friend. It will sooth and make you more patient and credulous.

It was near the close of our last course of lectures at ---- College. We were returning from a more than usually interesting clinic, and discussing learnedly the subject under examination, when, stopping suddenly short, Shakovsky clutched my arm with a rigid look of horror.

“Good God! do you see that?” he whispered hoarsely, shaking with excitement.

“See what, man?” I questioned, gazing astonished into Vacancy.

He stared at me, brushed his hand two or three times across

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his sight, and coloring with a consciousness of being the victim of some strange hallucination, he strode without another word to his lodgings, which I, with a chum's privilege, entered with him.

“In Heaven's name, now tell me what you saw?” I demanded, as he flung himself breathless and bewildered into a chair, staring at me again with a dazed, troubled air.

“You will laugh at me, Breck,” he said solemnly, “but I swear I saw, as plainly as I see you this moment, directly in my way, a coffin settling slowly into an open grave, and under its lid, transparent as glass to my sight, the face of Mary Munroe, distorted with wild anguish and terror. And, Breck, I heard her smothered voice. ‘Louis, oh Louis, come!’ it said.”

He sprang to his feet, as though stirred again by the fancied call.

“Nonsense, my boy! No one would laugh more heartily than yourself at such an absurdity were I to relate it,” I answered with a smile.

“I know it,” he responded with a sickly contortion of the lips designed as humorous, straightening himself and walking once or twice about the room. “The most absurd phantasy, Breck! I will go out and tramp off the effects of it.” And he flung himself into the street again.

Reticent as was his nature, and shy as he had been in his communications on the subject, I knew Mary Munroe to be his tenderly-worshiped sweetheart, and had often congratulated him jocosely on his good fortune, for the little lady, in addition to her other and no less powerful charm, was an heiress by the death of her uncle and guardian, who, disowning utterly his only and profligate son, had left to his lovely ward the bulk of his large and patiently-amassed wealth.

I had heard some rumors of the return of the disinherited renegade, who had been for a number of years absent in

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doubtful and unmentioned associations, and there had been a vague report that he was laying siege to the heart of Miss Munroe with such prospect of success as the accomplished roué too frequently finds with guiltily-admiring and weakly-credulous young womanhood, but as Shakovsky betrayed

no symptoms of doubt and uneasiness, I gave no credence to the probably slanderous whisper.

I had been thinking over these things when the poor fellow burst into the room again, wild and white as a ghost, holding in his shaking hand an open paper, which he thrust in my face.

"I telegraphed to Ashmoreland for news from Mary, and here is the return dispatch," he said in a hollow voice, grasping the back of my chair for support.

I read: "Miss Munroe died suddenly yesterday morning of heart-disease. Her remains were interred at 4 o'clock this afternoon in Ashwood Cemetery."

The telegram, signed by the friend to whom he had appealed, seemed thoroughly genuine.

I got up and put both hands in speechless sympathy on my friend's shoulders.

"I am not dreaming, am I, Breck?" he questioned, in doubt of the strange evidence he had brought.

"I believe not, Louis," I answered, looking gravely in his eyes.

"And you think me perfectly sane, and capable of rational purpose?" he pursued, scanning my face with anxious fear.

"Certainly; as nearly so as circumstances will admit," I returned with caution.

"Then," he promptly resumed, "you will make no objection if I ask you to accompany me on the next train to Ashmoreland?"

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"I will see the bottom of Mary's grave before midnight," he answered, with grim determination.

I stared at him. "Why, I am not so sure that you are not mad after all, Shakovsky. We shall be arrested for corpse-stealing. We cannot even procure the implements for carrying out your purpose without attract big suspicion."

"Pish!" he retorted contemptuously. "We can purchase them here. Disguised as laborers no one would mistrust us to be medical students. However, you shall incur no risk for my sake. I will go alone. No power on earth nor in hell can hinder my response to the appeal of Mary's face as I saw it sinking in the prison of the grave."

Crazed, surely crazed, I thought, as he rushed like a whirlwind out of the house again; but every instinct of friendship prompted me to the guidance of an action that I clearly saw could not be suppressed. Accordingly, I ordered our preparations for the rash adventure with such caution as seemed essential to success, and the next hour saw us gliding rapidly over the fifty miles of rail that ran between our city and the pleasant town of Ashmoreland.

It was some time after dark when we arrived at our destination, taking, against Shakovsky's feverish protestation, a roundabout course to reach the cemetery, which, in its embowering shade,

lay but a short distance back of the handsome grounds surrounding the Munroe mansion. Guided by the stately white column with its finger of Faith, marking the last resting-place of the Munroes, we found, as we had expected, under its protecting shadow the mound of a freshly-made grave, upon which, with a dry sob of anguish, poor Shakovsky fell in utter despair. But, fired by the memory of his vision, he quickly sprang to his feet again, and went at his work with a fury of energy that left me little to do but to stand guard over

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a proceeding for which I could only offer the excuse of the caprice of a love-crazed brain.

In an incredibly short space of time the determined fellow stood at the bottom of the grave, trembling with dread of the sight which might next meet his eyes, yet, without a moment's hesitation, wrenching open the coffin that seemed to me but imperfectly closed. I waited breathless as he flashed the ray of his dark lantern into the sepulchral gloom.

"My God, Breck!" he gasped glancing up at me with an expression of despair.

I looked down with fear and horror, expecting to see a face distorted by the agonies of a death too terrible and shocking to think upon.

The satin-lined casket was empty.

Speechless and white with his labor and his amazement, Shakovsky, clutching my proffered hand, scrambled out of the grave and sat down, baffled and exhausted, on the earth beside it.

In this situation we were suddenly startled by cautious steps behind us, and before we could think of flight a strong hand was laid on each of us, and a rough, indignant voice exclaimed, "So, so! we have caught you at it, my bold grave-robbers!"

There was little use in resistance or explanation. Circumstances were against us, and as we were not able to prove that the missing body had not been whisked away by accomplices before we had succeeded in covering up the theft and making our own escape, we had to submit to the course of the law under prosecution of the younger Munroe, who, it was said, was leaving no means untried to discover the fate of the stolen corpse, but without success.

It was an exceedingly disgraceful predicament to find ourselves in, and poor Shakovsky rated himself bitterly for his folly in dragging me into such a scrape, but we resolved to

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endure our penalty with heroism, trusting that the "mills of the gods" would at last grind out justice to all involved in the wretched mystery.

Meantime, Howard Munroe, who, by a provision of his father's will restoring to him his

patrimony in case his cousin Mary died without heirs, had come into possession of his forfeited rights, and had again disappeared from Ashmoreland, leaving the family house in charge of foreign servants, who, speaking not a word of English, maintained a solitary state among the country people about them. There were vague tales, shyly reported, of ghostly sights and sounds about the old mansion, and it was rumored to be in consequence of such disturbance that the strange occupants finally cleared out, taking with them one of their number, said to have been so crazed with superstitious fear as to necessitate the close shrouding of her face from the possible view she might fancy she would get of the dreaded apparition.

Six years went on. Having paid the penalty of our alleged crime, we had finished our medical course and entered upon the practice of our profession, not, however, without suffering much from the stigma attached to our names, but which we had determined stoically to live down if subsequent events failed to establish our innocence.

Shakovsky had developed into a morose, melancholy man, restless, unsatisfied, and troubled with haunting visions of his love in perilous straits, startled and agonized often by the echo of her voice calling his name despairingly, yet resolute in putting down all such irregular impressions, chary even about naming them, remembering with self-chiding into what perplexity his credulous following of illusions had once plunged both himself and friend. I pitied him from my soul, the more that I myself had found heart-rest and fullness of life in happy love, but on that point there was little and continually

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lessening expression of confidence and sympathy between us as the years ran by.

It was during the cholera season of 18 -- , that circumstances transpired which cast the first ray of light on the mystery that had so long enveloped the fate of Mary Munroe.

Pressed into active service in one of the overflowing hospitals of the city, I found in my rounds one day a man of middle age, with death so plainly stamped on his cunning, sinister face that I saw at once my mission to him was simply to lessen his consciousness of suffering.

He must have divined my conclusions, for he said in broken English, fixing his wild eyes on my face:

“You think I die, Doctor?”

“It seems probable, my friend.”

“Mon dieu,” cried the poor wretch, growing more greenishly pale with pain and terror. “Zhen must I confess! *Ze pretre* to shrive my soul -- *helas!* he come not!”

“What sin lies on your conscience, my brother, that I can help you to retrieve?” I questioned, seeing the necessity of giving mental as well as bodily ease.

“Ze girl!” he groaned in agony, seizing my hand with a despairing clutch. “What you call craze -- number feefy-seven -- ”and he drew me down to whisper in my ear the name of a private asylum for the insane. “She cry continual, ‘O Louis! I am not mad, Louis! Louis, save!’ Ze world zink her dead -- cut up -- preserve in *alcool!*”

“Her name, my poor fellow?” I said, striving to keep down my own excitement as I administered to him a sedative.

“Number feefy-seven,” he said cautiously, but admonished by a sharper pang to make a clean breast of his trouble: “Marie Munroe -- she get her cousin’s heritage -- he come home -- he make love to her -- she scorn him -- she insult him. He appeal to me, his ami, his compagnon. We make her sleep like death.

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Ze savant Doctors tell she die of heart maladie. We have grande obseques. We grieve excessive. But her cousin cannot endure that she smother in ze grave. He command me at ze first shade of night to dig her out -- to bring her by retired path to one secret chambre, and keep her in close confine. Ze same evening zere come down from ze city two medicine students to steal ze beautiful subject for dissection. We, going back to make sure zat we have covered up ze tomb, discover ze wretches at zere foul play. We run for ze *Connetable* -- make arrest -- prove ze beautiful body stolen -- spirited away. Zen -- Ciel! I die!”

The wretched fellow doubled up with a fit of cramps, which I thought, indeed, would be the end of him; but, reviving presently, I gave him a strengthening draught, and held him to his story by inquiry of the next proceeding on the part of the Cousin Munroe.

“*Diable!*” groaned the knave. “He proceed to make good his claims to ze paternal *richesse*; he take himself off to Europe again, and leave me and *ma mignonne* in charge of ze girl, with liberal *salarie* so long as we keep her existence secret. But ze dead alive make trouble -- we fear exposition; we spread rumor of haunted house; we get ze subject by *strategeme* away to refuge safe, and with ze old *chalet* dispose of we enjoy life in ze new countree. But now ze stipend grow so leetle; we nothing hear of Monsieur Munroe, and we swear we make expose, when zis pain *diabolique* seize -- *diable!* Doctor -- help! O, mon Dieu! *Ma aine!*”

Fearful paroxysms cut the dying man’s story short again, and he lapsed into incoherent ravings, from which I could gather no further intelligence of a matter that he little dreamed was of such absorbing interest to his listener. Duty to my other patients not permitting me to linger longer at his cot, I moved away, finding, when I came again, another in his

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place, by which token I knew he had passed beyond need of human help.

Of course, I lost no time in communicating to Shakovsky the facts, which, by their connection with previous events, seemed less incredible to us than to you who are listening with a somewhat questioning elevation of your eyebrows. You may judge, from what you know of Shak's grim steadfastness, that, having gained this long-sought clew to the fate of his love, he did not sleep until he had, by personal investigation, verified the statement of the dying witness and delivered from the meshes of an infernal plot the long-suffering lady whom, to see now in her quiet, matronly happiness, you would not imagine to have been for five years the wretched and despairing initiate of a madhouse.

True to his instincts of reserve, and his repugnance to vulgar notoriety, Shakovsky insisted that no exposure of facts should be made outside the very small circle of friends necessarily interested, and, practically, Mary Munroe continues dead to the world, the lovely Mrs. Shakovsky being in no way identified with her, and, finding in this free Western city, to which the Doctor immediately brought her, no associations or reminders of the life that was.

“But that diabolical kinsman of hers, Breck; does he still walk the earth unwhipped of justice?”

We cannot tell. Nothing has been heard of him in years, -- nothing, in fact, since his final gobble of the last remnant of the family estate. Shakovsky has the impression that the scoundrel will appear on the scene again, and Shakovsky's impressions rarely fail of confirmation, though he himself persistently scoffs at anything which, to his mind, has not a firm basis of reason. As for sentiment, he so sharply ridicules it you would swear the fellow had not a bit, and he is the last person in the world you would take for the hero of a romance. Yet,

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with all his roughness and gruffness of exterior, Shak has a soft, tender, believing heart inside.

The midnight bells-God bless me! Have I gossiped here so long? No time for excuses. Good night, Vargrave.

“Stay a moment, Doctor. Should there be further developments in this case will you report them for my benefit?”

DR. VARGRAVE.

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APPENDIX

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Gissing's Contributions to Chicago Newspapers

THIS table is given to illustrate that the stories, if all are Gissing's, show a regular production and contribution during the novelist's stay in Chicago; and the delayed printing in July of two stories, one signed, left with the *Tribune* for use after his departure. (See the remarks of Mr. Starrett.) It should be remembered that in gathering the stories from the files we had no expectation of discovering this orderly arrangement.

C.H. -- CHRISTOPHER HAGERUP

G.E.H. -- GEORGE EVERETT HASTINGS

V.S. -- VINCENT STARRETT

T.O.M. -- THOMAS OLLIVE MABBOTT

TABLE

(Title, Paper, Date, Reason for Attribution, Collected, Finders)

Sins of the Fathers, *Tribune*, Mar. 10, Reprinted at Troy, Covici, C.H.; G.E.H.

R. I. P., *Tribune*, Mar. 31, Style, Covici, C.H.; G.E.H.

Too Dearly Bought, *Tribune*, Apr. 14, Signed, Covici, C.H.; G.E.H.

The Death-Clock, *Tribune*, Apr. 21, External evidence, Here, G.E.H.

The Serpent-Charms, *Tribune*, Apr. 28, External evidence, Here, G.E.H.

The Warden's Daughter, *Journal*, Apr. 28, Tradition, etc., Here, V.S.; T.O.M.

Gretchen, *Tribune*, May 12, Signed, Covici, C.H.; G.E.H.

Twenty Pounds, *Journal*, May 19, Tradition, etc. Here, V.S.; T.O.M.

Joseph Yates' Temptation, *Post*, June 2, Style, etc. Here, T.O.M.

Dead and Alive, *Tribune*, July 14, External evidence, Here, G.E.H.

Brownie, *Tribune*, July 29, Signed, Here, G.E.H.

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Brownie

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