The Long Corridor

WHEN Edwin Dumble, son of old Richard Dumble, the millionaire brewer, fell in love with Henrietta Schouler, he knew that his father would oppose their marriage. He was a sophomore at Harvard, and Henrietta was studying music with Madame Frisonne in Boston. Mrs. Sears, the girl's chaperone and aunt, had warned the youth that the attachment must be broken. "Not that I or Mrs. Schouler object, for you are a nice boy, Edwin; but your father would rather see you dead than allied to the Schoulers by marriage. Why? I can't tell you—go and ask your father."

So Edwin, hurriedly packing a bag, rushed to his parent's big New York office, blurted out the story of his love for the pretty music student, and demanded the reason for the anticipated opposition. There was a quarter of an hour of storming,—an incoherent damnation by the old man of everything connected with the Schoulers, and a sweeping characterization of the family that brought the young man to his feet almost screaming with rage—before an explanation was offered.

Then old Dumble said tersely:

"Old Schouler was my secretary once. Your mother was his sister; he trotted her around to me when he found out that I wanted a wife, and I married her. Before your mother's death Schouler married his second cousin, a woman of no family, an adventuress, who has been trying to get a hold on me ever since. This daughter has been shipped from St. Louis to Boston to study this fol-de-rol French singing, and—mark my words, boy—and to take you in! You've been taken in, too, easily enough."

"But," the old man's voice was raised in anger, "you must not see that 'creature again!"

"Creature!" cried young Dumble, starting up from his chair, "Sir, you must not say that again! Henrietta Schouler is the dearest, best girl on earth, and——" Edwin controlled himself with an effort.

"There is no use wasting words between us," said the father, speaking quietly now. "I can never consent to your marriage with that girl—I cannot consent to have you see her again. Mrs. Sears agrees with me. Now, will you give me your word as a gentleman—as my son—not to try to see her if you go back to Cambridge?"

"No," replied the son. "I love Henrietta better than my own life. I shall marry her, whatever you say or do." Then, for a time, the two stood face to face. The father turned from his gaze and began to pace the thickly carpeted floor of his big office, and presently the son was measuring the opposite limit of the room. And so, for half an hour. At last the old brewer stopped to face his son and say:

"I am quite determined that this marriage shall not take place. You would do well not to try to force it. I am prepared to go to any extent to prevent it. Now, go back to Cambridge with this thought before you always: I shall thwart every attempt you make to see the girl and will make it absolutely impossible for you to marry her. I hope you will recover from this madness."

The old man's tones were so even, so controlled, that the boy suspected a disposition to yield. He began to plead, saying that the girl was worthy, beautiful—everything desirable. But the thunder-cloud began to gather, and the incoherent pleading was stopped by a fierce oath.

"Go now, my son, before we quarrel further," said the old man quietly.

Young Edwin went back to Cambridge, leaving his father to an hour of fierce anger, then a night of active planning. When the rumble of the milk carts in the deserted streets announced the morning, the old man went home and to bed with a smile of confidence.

"It will be unusual, and a little hard to manage, but it won't hurt them!" he muttered before going to sleep.

Mrs. Sears, co-plotter with Mrs. Schouler, was entirely satisfied with the result of Edwin's visit to his father; the youth came back to her with a pitiful pleading to be allowed to see Henrietta. But she had to deny him, she said. Her plan was to force an elopement, and the boy must be goaded to a very frenzy of desire. She privately determined to allow their next attempted meeting, which was due within two days. But when that time arrived she was thunderstruck to find that another plotter had entered the game; that Henrietta had been, in some inexplicable way, spirited away from her house, half an hour before the young man made his back-yard entry to a deserted first-floor parlor.

As the youth opened the Sears' front door on the evening following his burglarious entry, the girl's aunt met him, wild-eyed and distraught.

"Oh! where have you taken Henrietta? where is the child?" Mrs. Sears was in an agony of fear.

"I?" queried the astonished boy, "I have not seen her for months. Oh! what has become of her—why did I not see her last night?" Mrs. Sears promptly fainted, and was given over to the care of her maid. Edwin could get nothing more from her. But he was determined to find Henrietta and marry her at once.

In a delirium of fear for the girl and rage at his own cursed stupidity, he rushed back to his rooms in Cambridge. He never got to them. He disappeared from the college world as completely as though the earth had opened to swallow him.

* * * * * * *

On the top of Cardigan Mountain in New Hampshire, a stern-faced old man directed the labors of twoscore of workmen. This horde had suddenly descended upon the peaceful hill village two days before, and straightway began the erection on the mountain top of a curiously divided, substantial structure, where, it was announced, a certain rich meteorological experimenter was to spend the winter and spring. It was a matter of snow formation and precipitation, it was said, in which Professor Butler was interested.

Two days from the appearance of the workmen the last nail was driven, and a train of wagons, loaded with a winter's supply of food and clothing, was started for the top. And that evening, when the darkness blotted out every feature of the landscape, the old man appeared with a clinging, frightened-looking girl on the mountain-top. On the next evening, the darkness blotting everything from view as before, the old man brought up a younger man, to be, as he said, assistant to the professor. Then, with a corps of close-mouthed helpers, the experimenters shut themselves away from the world and were buried in the snow of the mountain-top.

The mythical Professor Butler's experiment station was constructed in a peculiar way. Two low-roofed, solidly anchored structures, identical in size and shape, were set on the very edge of a precipice that dropped sheer 500 feet. Three walls of each structure were windowless, unbroken save by heavy doors,—the third, fronting the precipice, had abundant light and ventilation. And between the two structures, opening into each, was a long, covered corridor, lighted from the north, but through which, when it was completed, no man could pass.

Old Richard Dumble, who had assumed the role of the professor, took his son to the end of this strange corridor, and, pointing to the door that loomed at the other end, said:

"In the room at the end of this long passage is the foolish young girl you profess to love better than your own life. This door here, as you see, is open, and will be left unlocked. Yonder door is likewise freely passable. But between these doors is this passage, through the floor of which, when either of you tries to pass, you will fall upon the rocks 500 feet below. I have had marked upon this passage floor the point beyond which you may not go without breaking through. On the girl's side I have taken the same precaution.

"I shall keep you both up here until you are tired of this farce you call loving. I can trust my helpers. I have everything ready to keep you a year if necessary. Whenever you are ready to come to me and swear that you have banished all thought of Miss Schouler from your mind, I will have you both released, send you back to Harvard and make a man out of you.

"But if, in reality, you love one another better than life, you have only to rush together through this passage to a romantic death. Rather than to see you mated with that girl, I would come up to this mountain when the snow is gone in the spring and gather your bleached bones off the rocks. You won't do anything so foolish, I know, and so goodby, my boy, until you send for me."

The old man went out hurriedly, choking a little over the last words. A ponderous lock grated as the father's form disappeared through the door, and the boy turned to gaze, fascinated, down that fatal corridor.

Presently, as he watched, Edwin saw the form of Henrietta Schouler at the opposite door, and he started forward impulsively in an ecstacy of welcome. When the girl saw her lover, she, too, strained forward a pace, and then recoiled with a cry of terror. That telltale mark which the old brewer had showed her stretched its impalpable barrier almost under her feet.

On his side, Edwin approached the white line with an unnatural caution. With his toe on its edge, he felt the fragile floor quake and sway. He crept back to the doorway, a blind animal terror clutching him, and the sweat beading on his forehead. He stood for a moment gazing at the face framed, beside his father's, in that other prison door. He stretched his arms towards the girl, and cried out to his father for pity. The old man finished his talk to the girl, and went out, paying no more heed to the boy's cries than to the wind that rattled the window frames.

Then, for the two young people, began the most curious imprisonment that a prosiac twentieth-century chronicle has ever recorded. In an age that fostered intrigue and inquisition, old Dumble would have been a master plotter. Now he was a shrewd, rich old autocrat with a purpose in view which he was determined to accomplish as quickly as possible.

Thus reasoned the old man: "Once in a thousand cases perhaps a man and a woman will love one another better than life. In this practical age, though, the proportion may be cut down to one in ten thousand. What youth mistakes for the divine passion, lasting through and beyond the span of life, is the impatience of young years, the desire of a child for the moon, the changing whim of an eager pair. Fan this quick flame to white heat and it will soon die to cold ashes. Now, if Edward is of the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, he will soon wear out this love in daily sight of his desired one, and come back to me a wise boy, and no law will be broken—the girl will go unharmed. If he is the one in ten thousand, and the girl is the one in five thousand (for that sex is certainly more impulsive), why, then—but, pshaw! he isn't."

The brewer knew humanity passing well and watched his experiment with confidence. Old Schouler was wild at the disappearance of his daughter; the little world in which the Schoulers and Mrs. Sears moved was in a turmoil; but—old Richard Dumble's world had a wider orbit! No suspicion attached to the old man, and the world, or that part of it that fretted over the young people's affairs, had to fall back upon the theory of an elopement.

Deserted by the world, minstered to by grim, close-mouthed servants, supplied with the comforts and amusements of normal young people—Edwin with books and gymnastic apparatus, Henrietta with music, the latest novel, embroidery—the two prisoners passed their days in maddening proximity. The corridor was far too long to permit the tender whisperings that lovers commonly use; indeed, there was always the bellowing wind as a rival in any exchange of vows. But there was the language of signs, and eternal trust that could be expressed in a clutching at vacancy.

Books mocked the young man,—what did they say but love that was always rewarded in the end? Music, such as she knew, spoke to Henrietta of love that blossomed in a free young breast,—and here the blasts that whirled up that precipice face turned her plaintive notes to a thin wailing. The grim faces of the servants, passing in and out, silently, except for the jangling of the big keys, oppressed the spirits of both. A sort of desperate recklessness possessed the lovers,—they paced their rooms, in and out of those corridor doors, up to the line beyond which it were death to pass; and a great despair came upon them.

Winter gave way at last to spring, and even on that bare mountain-top, where the world stretched away from their view a thousand feet below, the new balm came to renew the lovers' passion. Not once had Edwin taken pen to write his defeat; not once had Henrietta failed to gain courage from a fresh sight of the man who loved her. Sometimes, in a lull of the everlasting mountain storm, they had called to one another to be brave and faithful.

The earth was released from the grip of the snow, and young leaves came out to clothe the trees on the beautiful New Hampshire hills. At last the little lakes that dotted a broad, green valley shone up to the prisoners like bright jewels on a warm, full bosom. Life, throbbing, new, eternal, woke the flame of love to white heat. The decrees of man seemed impotent, unreal. Heaven-sent love, the cry of man to maid, and of the spring to young hearts, swept the lovers' reason and fear to the winds. A great cry, like a challenge to God, rang out from the boy's lips.

"My love, do you fear death?" And the answer, keyed to an exultant pitch, rang back:

"Not with you, my sweetheart!"

"Ah! then come." With the words, Edwin sprang forward to meet the oncoming rush of the mad girl. One step over the white dead line, and the floor was creaking like thin ice. Two steps, and it was swaying like a showman's net. With the touch of hand to hand, the frail foundation splintered and fell with a crash in which were mingled the terrified scream of the girl and the exultant cry of the infatuated lover.

* * * * * * *

"Sir, my master bade me give you this paper whenever you appeared here." Dazed, uncomprehending, Edwin Dumble glanced up from a tangle of broken beams to see a close-buttoned, deferential servant at his side, extending to him a square folded paper. His eyes sought wildly for Henrietta. She was lying near him in an incongruous heap, looking about in a panic of wonder.

The youth opened the paper and read:

If you are the one in ten thousand, and risk death for the girl, you deserve her. Go and be married, and come to me at once. I hope you will not be hurt by the splinters.

RICHARD DUMBLE.

"Splinters!" What kind of an afterdeath dream was this. Then young Dumble looked up, to see the gaping hole in the corridor floor hardly six feet above the sawdust-covered ground on which he sat!—John K. Oskiem, in New York Evening Post.

The Pen Paramount.

A Supreme Court justice, a diplomatist and a writer were talking of the extent of the influence wielded by each, and the New York Times justly credits the last laugh to the writer.

"I can govern by injunctions, as the Populists put it," said the Judge.

"I can involve nations in war," said the ambassador.

"And I could, if I would, make the world laugh at both of you," said the writer.

A Seller.

Playwright—I have here a German tragedy.

Manager—Don't want it.

Playwright—I was about to add, translated, adapted, dramatized, condensed, arranged and set to ragtime by myself.

Manager—I'll take it, sir. Pray name your own terms.—Smart Set.

A young man who takes the time at noon to walk home with a pretty girl, is making himself solid with the wrong party; the girl, when it should be his employer.

Annapolis, Md., carpenters want an eight-hour day.

Boston's electrical strike was settled by the board of arbitration.

Sydney, Australia, street car men have inaugurated the eight-hour day.

Chicago team owners may appoint a labor commissioner to hear complaints.

The number of laborers required to cultivate the tea crop in India is 665,000.

The American Federation of Labor would add a building trades section to the organization.

Havana, Cuba, butchers, bakers and coachmen won their demands for nine hours at \$2 per day.

The plumbing supply men, Cleveland, Ohio, have been granted a nine-hour workday without a strike.

New Orleans has in recent years become a well-organized city, having more than 40,000 trade unionists.

Leominster, Mass., piano factory owners will voluntarily establish the nine-hour day, beginning Jan. 1, 1903.

Kingston, Canada, labor men talk of establishing a national headquarters there independent of American control.

Every member of the Cigarmakers' Union at Jacksonville, Fla., contributes 25 cents a week toward advertising their union label.

Indianapolis' English-speaking cabinet workers have organized. Cooks and waiters and barber shops there were also recently organized.

Canadian Pacific Railway bridgemen have been granted a voluntary increase in wages from \$1.45 for a day's work to \$1.65, the foremen from \$2.50 to \$3.

At Canton, Ohio, an organization of the Women's Union Label League has been effected. The object is to have women pledge themselves to use nothing at home that does not bear the stamp of union labor.

The Paris police have issued an order that no boy under 14 employed in either a factory or workship is to be allowed to carry a weight of over twenty-one pounds, while girls are restricted to less than that.

Efforts have been started to reunite the warring Knights of Labor throughout Greater New York. The remnant of the Knights throughout the country are divided in two factions, one of which continues to recognize John W. Hayes as (what has been often termed) Permanent General Secretary-Treasurer, and is under the nominal leadership of Henry A. Hicks, while the other and much less numerous sections follows the leadership of John N. Parsons.

The benefits of organization are shown by the following recent raise in wages throughout the country: An increase of 1 per cent an hour to motormen and conductors, nearly 5,000 in number, on the Union Traction trolley lines in Philadelphia. This is practically a 10 per cent raise. An increase of 10 per cent to cotton mill operatives in southern New England, affecting more than 50,000. An increase of 25 per cent and an eight-hour day for 2,000 structural iron and bridge workers in and about Pittsburg. An increase of from 3 to 10 per cent to 1,000 employes of the Barbour Flax Spinning Company, of Paterson, N. J. An increase of 10 per cent to the 4,000 employes of the John A. Roebling's Sons, Trenton, N. J.

An Old Acquaintance.

At the fourth house I was met by a bristling cur that seemed to know me not as master, but as foe. He reached earnestly for my trousers through a crack in the fence. I fancied I saw rags in his teeth when he first snarled at me. He stubbornly disputed my entrance, and yielded only when the harsh voice of his mistress called him off.

At the door I was met by the mistress of the house, a brawny, double fisted dame with a face like a pot of kraut, who, planting herself squarely in the doorway, sternly demanded my errand. This tactic was a stunner. My instructions had been to enter the parlor and gallantly take my seat beside the lady and show up my book with grace and dignity.

I did nothing. I stood there in confusion, like a scared lunatic, until the woman herself recalled me to my senses by demanding:

"Zee here, young zhap, vat you vand here?"

I fumbled mechanically for my prospectus and began:

"I am introducing a new work, just from the press, which I would like——"

"I no vand any new work, shust vrom de bress; and I don'd care vat you vand. I vand you to get right out of here and dake your pipestem legs vile carry you. Do you hear?"

I heard, and the next three or four houses I walked past very quietly.—From the Confessions of a Book Agent in Leslie's Monthly.

There Was a Limit.

"I am glad they moved away," remarked the good housewife, speaking of a family of borrowing neighbors who had just left the neighborhood. "I was willing to lend them a loaf of bread occasionally or half a dozen eggs or the washboard or the lemon squeezer, but when they got down to sending the little girl over to borrow pennies to give the organ grinder I began to think it was nearly time to draw the line; and, to cap the climax, one day they actually asked me to come over and take care of the baby while they went out to do the shopping!"

THE POOR OLD SULTAN.

The Turkish Ruler Looks and Acts as Though He Were Haunted.

Probably no potentate on earth is so continuously haunted by the fear of death as is the Sultan of Turkey. This is the pen picture given of him by an American correspondent who recently saw him in Constantinople:

"I stood on the palace terrace rising above the little roadway down which on Friday the Sultan ventures forth to say his prayers. I saw the extraordinary precautions taken to protect him—the gathering of all his 5,000 troops, the stoppage of traffic by walls of armed men in every roadway leading up to the palace, then the surroundings of the few hundred yards of roadway which the Sultan must traverse from his palace gate to his mosque by rows of soldiers knee-deep. It was a strange, gorgeous, incongruous spectacle.

SULTAN OF TURKEY.

"Preceded by his women in closed carriages, several of their sons and some 80 great generals and officers of the army marching on foot, came the Sultan himself. He was driven slowly in an open carriage facing forward, with the minister of war facing opposite. And this is Abdul Hamid II, the absolute ruler of 25,000,000 people, the defender of the faith, monarch of the Huky-met-i-senize, the glorious government, variously known elsewhere as the 'sick man of Europe' and the 'great assassin.' Every splendor of general and trooper is forgotten; every eye is fixed on the little, old, round-shouldered man in the carriage. A shout—well-trained and evidently long-practised shout, curiously lacking in fire or spontaneity—goes up from the troops. The old man raises his hand in salute. He wears a red fez; his face is sickly white, like parchment; the nose is that of an aged eagle, long, hooked, high-bridged—the Armenian nose, his subjects will whisper in contempt. His eyes, what one sees of them, for he turns his head neither to the right nor to the left, are deep set and black.

"Those who know him best say that he has a peculiar way of moving his eyes without moving his head, as if he were always seeking to look behind him, to pry out secrets, to surprise hidden motives. His beard is deep blue-black, as are his eyebrows; naturally they would be gray, but he dyes them, for the Sultan must never look old. To his generals he leaves all the pomp and display of gold lace and tinsel; for himself he is clad wholly in black, like a eunuch, without ornamentation of any kind. 'The Raven,' he has been called, and the raven he looks. The Sultan is not yet a really old—and yet if there is one impression above another that he gives it is that of age and great weariness."

BLAINE'S FEAR OF HORSES.

Would Not Have Been in an Accident Like That of Roosevelt.

"Had James G. Blaine been alive and a member of President Roosevelt's party at Pittsfield last week," remarked Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Taylor to-day, "the disaster by which Craig lost his life would not have occurred. I don't think I ever met anyone who was in such mortal fear of being in a runaway as was the brilliant Maine statesman. He would take absolutely no risks with horses, and required the most extreme precautions to be observed before he would submit himself to a carriage ride. I remember many years ago that Mr. Blaine was to visit our city of Milwaukee, and I was in charge of the arrangements for his reception and entertainment. One of the prominent liverymen of the town came to me and offered free of charge the services of a magnificent team of six white horses to draw the carriage of Mr. Blaine. I accepted the offer, and when the statesman arrived at the depot I escorted him to the street where the team and carriage were waiting. I was about to hand Mr. Blaine into the vehicle when he suddenly drew back. 'There is no one at the head of those horses,' he said, 'and I would prefer that you get some man to guard them before we proceed.' I told the driver what he said, and the latter insisted that he had absolute control over his animals; that they were used to bands and other noises, and that there was not the slightest danger. I repeated this to Mr. Blaine, and told him that I thought he could safely take a seat. But he wouldn't do it. 'I shall not put my foot into the carriage,' he said, 'until a man is put at the head of each horse and is made to stay there.' That ended it, and we hurried around and got half a dozen men from the depot and had each hook on to a bridle. Then Mr. Blaine got into the carriage and we proceeded uptown."—Brooklyn Eagle.

CRIPPLES MADE IN RUSSIA.

Beggars Disfigure Children and Exhibit Them for Gain.

That the making of cripples is carried on in Russia as a regular trade, and is a mighty profitable one, has just been proved in a startling way. As the result of a dramatic happening at the annual fair at Podkamia, it has come to light that Russian beggars make a practice of mangling and disfiguring children in order that they may show them in public and pocket the alms drawn from tender-hearted people by the sight of them.

At the Podkamia fair, in the charge of an old beggar woman, there was a little girl of about 6, whose condition shocked everyone. She was entirely blind, she was lame in one leg, one of her arms was broken, and her body was a mass of disgusting sores. Money simply poured in on the old hag who had the girl in charge, one of those who gave being a shabbily dressed woman.

Handing the little girl some money, she said, "Pray my child, for my lost niece, Kitty!"

"I am Kitty," said the little girl.

The hag with her was arrested at once, and it was soon proved that she had stolen the child from her aunt's house at Zarvanic, in Galicia. She took her to the headquarters of a regular gang of which she was a member, and there the child's eyes were put out, one of her legs and one arm were broken, and terrible wounds were made on different parts of her body. Then the little girl was taken from place to place in the country, the sight of her never failing to bring pocketfuls of money to her abductors.

When the people who were at the Podkamia fair heard the story they vowed that they would lynch every beggar on the grounds, and it was all the police could do to keep them from doing so. Investigation proves that over fifty cases similar to the one described above have been detected during the last year.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

Were the Romantic Adventures of an Exile in Australia.

Like a page of sensational fiction read the romantic adventures of Joseph J. Gill, once a resident of Brooklyn, who died recently while homeward bound from a life of remarkable exile in central Australia.

JOSEPH J. GILL.

In 1886 Gill left his wife and three children and set sail for Australia to look after some mining interests there. After some time no letters were received from him, and after years of waiting his relatives in this country believed him dead—a belief that was firmly established when, in 1890, word came from the United States consul at Sydney, Australia, that a man named Gill, together with four companions, had been ambushed and killed by bushmen in the interior. Three years after his reported death his wife became Mrs. Frank Johnson of Brooklyn.

Meanwhile Gill was having his chapter of adventures in Australia. Instead of being killed by the bushmen he had been captured by them and forced into servitude, doing the most menial work and subjected to every indignity. For twelve years he lived in constant hope of deliverance, but so close was the watch upon him and so far had he been removed from civilization that his hopes seemed vain. Finally the opportunity came and Gill succeeded in making his way to the coast.

He yearned for the home and friends from whom he had been absent for six teen years and sought information regarding them through a detective agency. After some delay he was informed that his wife was dead. Accepting the report as true, he remarried in Australia and this second wife and a child survive him. In March of this year Gill made further inquiry for his people and learned from the Brooklyn police that members of his family were still living in that city and it was while he was on his way to them that death came. He died on shipboard and was buried at sea in the straits of Java.

Quite Safe.

The truth is never more convincing than when it "slips out" involuntarily. Geenrally at such times it has a peculiar charm also, as this incident suggests. A tattered and forlorn young girl of 15 summers or so entered the office of a real estate man the other day. Ordinarily he is the politest of individuals, but this day he was so busy that he did not know which way to turn. So, with a swift glance out of the corner of his eye, he said rather sharply:

"Well, what do you want?"

"P-p-p-lease, mister, won't you buy a ticket on our cuckoo clock?" replied the girl, hesitatingly.

"Your cuckoo clock? What could I do with a cuckoo clock even if I should get it?"

"Oh, you won't get it, mister! Please buy a ticket."

Grass Houses in Oklahoma.

Among the most interesting features of Southern Oklahoma are the remains of the grass houses formerly built by the Wichita Indians, who, to a certain extent, keep up their novel mode of architecture to the present day.

Best Wage Earners.

In the average wages paid to employes the industry that stands highest among the large undertakings is that of smelting and refining, says Mahin's Magazine. Here the average for the 24,500 workers is \$652 per worker.

Cattle Sprayed with Kerosene.

The cattle which draw the mahogany logs in the forests of the Isthmus of Panama have to be sprayed with kerosene to destroy the parasites which are their deadly enemies.

The smaller the man, the larger on the no uses.