

The Follower

A Weird Story of One Wrapped In a Black Cloak.

Two men, John and David, walked side by side along a dusty road. They were returning from the great town in the valley to their homes in the hamlet hanging high above them against the mountain.

As they walked they chatted of the sights in the town, of the good wives and little ones to whom they were coming after three days' absence, joking, joyous, happy in remembrance of their town jollity and in the anticipation of their welcome home.

The sun struck down fiercely upon their backs and shimmered on the dust of the road. "Ah, the heat! Let us go more slowly, John."

"No," replied the other; "it will be cooler higher up. Let us make haste and reach the shade of the woods, and beyond there will be a breeze blowing."

Suddenly as they walked David felt that they were not alone and, turning his head, saw a third person following a few paces behind them, an extremely tall man, wrapped in a black cloak. As David turned the man's eyes looked into his with a steady, unflinching gaze.

When the twilight fell, the young man felt able to go on and was anxious to reach his family, so the two men set out along the path through the rocky fields. As they reached the base of "The Rocks" and began the steep ascent the moon rose.

John led the way, stepping cautiously, calling back to the other to avoid the uncertain footholds.

But David, climbing after, thought of nothing but the somber shape that had waited outside and had followed close across the fields after them and which he felt climbed up and up behind him, step for step.

There was no sound except when at intervals a loose stone rolled down, dislodged by their feet. The night was beautiful. The broad face of the cliff shone in the moonlight. Here and there along the edge of the path, where there was danger, rude railings had been placed to protect the traveler.

These were silvery by the moon. At some places a rock jutting out cast below it a dense shadow amid the surrounding whiteness.

As they climbed David tried to force himself to turn and face the man in the black cloak and question him, his name, his mission, why he followed, gaining steadily step by step, but he lacked courage. Once he had met that cold, steady gaze. He could not brave it again.

He watched his comrade climb above him slowly. Slowly he climbed after and, glancing down, saw the edge of the black cloak blown upward against his legs.

He stopped and put his hands over his eyes. "Who are you?" he said in a low, broken voice. "Why do you follow, pressing nearer and nearer?"

And a voice answered at his ear, while the folds of the cloak, blown upward, flapped about him, "You shall know my name when you are at the end of your journey."

"No, now!" whispered David hoarsely. "Now, your name?"

"Farther on!" came the voice. "When you reach the next railing."

And they climbed on again in the moonlight. John had gone round a turn of the path out of sight. David advanced feebly, rising laboriously from step to step, pausing often. He could feel the other pressing up behind him, ever nearer.

When they reached the railing above, David stopped, with his hand upon it. "Now, your name?"

"Do you not know?" The moonlight fell with tender beauty over the broad valley below, upon the white road, upon the forest trees, upon the small brown house at the foot of the cliff. The black cloak floated about his head, before his eyes, coming between them and the fair picture. A hand fell upon his, grasping the railing.

"Your name! Your name!" David's hand closed firmly on the wooden rail, and he leaned heavily against it for support. An arm closed round him.

"I am so near—so near. Do you not know?" There was a sharp sound of breaking wood as the rotten timber parted in two, and David fell outward, his struggling feet scraping along the rock. As he fell the folds of black swept round him, the arm embraced him more closely, and they went down together. And David knew that the one that followed was Death.

Rebuking a Greedy Client. A Philadelphia lawyer, long dead, who had a national reputation, having been honored with high positions of trust both at Washington and Harrisburg, was famous for his tremendous charges. One day a client for whom he had collected \$1,500 called at his office to receive the money, and the lawyer handed him a check for \$100. The client looked at it and remarked that the lawyer must have made a mistake and had given him the check which he meant to keep for his fee. "Let me look at the check," said the attorney, and, glancing over it, he declared that it was all right and no mistake had been made. The client kicked against a fee of \$1,400 for collecting \$1,500.

SOME LEGAL FREAKS

CURIOS TWISTS THAT OBTAIN IN ENGLISH CRIMINAL LAW.

A Person May Be Guilty of Perjury Though He Swears to the Truth—No Such Offense as Trespass—Points About Forgers.

In no branch of the law as it is dispensed in Great Britain are such curious points to be found or a greater number of anomalies to be met with than in the criminal branch thereof. It may be news to some people, for instance, to know that there are a number of things in existence which cannot be stolen, such as a corpse, animals fere nature—i. e., animals wild in a state of nature (with certain exceptions created by statute)—soil of the earth, etc. To attempt to steal nothing would appear on the face of it to be an impossibility, much less a crime, but a man indicted for attempting to pick a lady's pocket which was subsequently found to be empty was found guilty of an "attempt to commit theft," though, in fact, there was nothing in the pocket to steal.

Any one lucky enough to pick up a sovereign lying in the road will be glad to hear that, if at the time of finding it he had no reasonable means of discovering the owner of it, and also if he did not at the same time conceive the idea of appropriating it to himself, he will not be guilty of stealing if he keeps his lucky find, even if the rightful owner discovers and claims it.

Most people walking in the country must have noticed on numerous occasions boards or placards posted up in woods, fields, etc., notifying in large letters that "trespassers will be prosecuted," but few are aware that such notices are utterly useless and no one need feel the least alarm thereat, there being no such offense known in criminal law as such a trespass, and a person could never be prosecuted for such an offense. They are, in fact, in the words of that eminent jurist, Sir Frederick Pollock, in his well known work, "Pollock on Torts," a "wooden falsehood."

It is a common fallacy to imagine that the crime of forgery consists in signing another's name, though in fact committing forgery consists in making and uttering any false instrument in writing with attempt to defraud; thus it may be a forgery to omit a word from a document, and it will be a matter of considerable surprise to many to learn that it is possible for a person to forge his or her own name. A person, however, who fraudulently inserts another's name on a picture, thereby selling it as the work of some other artist, is not guilty of forgery, as a picture is not an "instrument in writing."

The crime of perjury also does not quite "fit in" with the generally accepted idea, which is that if a person, after being sworn on oath to speak the truth, swears falsely, he is guilty of such offense. This is correct with the important qualification that the fact the witness has sworn to must be material to the case. Thus, if a witness on being duly sworn gave a false address on being asked where he lived, this, though untrue, would not amount to perjury, as the place where the witness lived would be quite immaterial.

That a person may be guilty of perjury though speaking the truth may seem a curious anomaly, but such nevertheless is the fact, as the test of perjury is not whether a person is speaking what he believes to be the truth; so, if a witness, for instance, on being asked, "What colored tie was the prisoner wearing when you met him?" replied "red," when in fact he did not really notice, he would be guilty of perjury, even though the prisoner was in reality wearing a red tie when the witness met him.

Numerous other instances of crimes which present similar curious points to the above might be given, and, in passing, persons taking out insurances against burglary might note that this crime can only be committed between the hours of 9 p. m. and 6 a. m.; that breaking into a house by means of an open door or window is not burglary, although entering a house by sliding down the chimney is.

We must not conclude this article without a short reference to a comparatively recent case in which a man not possessing the means to pay entered a restaurant, where he ordered and ate a good dinner. As, however, he was unable to pay for the same he was given in charge and subsequently indicted for "obtaining goods by false pretenses." The case resulted in the prisoner's acquittal on the ground that he had not been guilty of any false pretenses.

This individual therefore had a good meal on the cheap, but he should not advise any enterprising reader to emulate his example, as, although he could not indeed be prosecuted for obtaining goods by false pretenses, it seems that he will still be criminally liable under the bankruptcy act for obtaining credit by fraudulent means.—London Tit-Bits.

Averting a Panic. On one occasion John Philip Sousa by his promptness was the direct means of stopping a panic which might have had the most disastrous results. While his band was playing before 12,000 people in St. Louis the electric lights in the hall went out suddenly. People began to move uneasily in their seats, and some even began to make a rush for the doors. Coolly tapping with his baton, Sousa gave a signal, and immediately his band began playing. "Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?" A tiny ripple of laughter that went round the audience showed that confidence had partially been restored. When the band began to play "Wait Till the Clouds Roll By" the laughter deepened into a roar of merriment that only ended when the lights were turned on again.

Egotism of Genius.

A writer in the London Standard declares the idea that genius is usually modest to be a popular delusion. On the contrary, he alleges egotism to be the very essence of true genius and quotes many amusing examples.

When Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge were walking together and Coleridge remarked that the day was so fine "it might have been ordered for three poets," the gentle Wordsworth promptly exclaimed: "Three poets! Who are the other two?"

Disraeli, then a mere youth, wrote to his sister that he had heard Macaulay, Shell and Grant speak, "but between ourselves I could floor them all." And again he said, "When I want to read a good book, I write one."

Our own Joaquin Miller wrote to Walt Whitman: "You and I are over the head of the rabble. We know we are great, and if other people don't know it it is their own fault."

It was President Grant who, being told that a certain senator, an admitted genius who was very hostile to him, did not believe the Bible, expressed his estimate of the senator's egotism by rejoicing: "Why should he? He didn't write it, you know."—New York World.

Buying a Razor. "I need a new razor," said the man who shaves himself. "Better let me get it for you," suggested the reformed barber, who, now that he is a trolley car conductor, regards himself as a distinguished member of society. "All cutlery stores are filled with razors of the class known as 'dead ones.' When a barber buys a razor, he takes it with the understanding that he is to try it out, and if it doesn't work well he takes it back and gets another one, keeping this one until he gets one that suits him. Buying a razor, you know, is a lottery in which the prizes are few and far between. When the ordinary citizen goes to a cutlery store, he picks out what he thinks is a good razor, pays for it and takes his chances. He picks one out, too, from the bunch of 'dead ones' that barbers have tried and found wanting. That's why I advise you to let me get it for you. Then if you don't like it I can keep exchanging it until you get a good one. They needn't know I've quit the business."—Philadelphia Record.

Some English Ads. A general servant advertised in a Bristol paper for a place the other day, but required "no inquiries, no caps or aprons, every evening out, good wages," and a journalist advertised himself as of "no particular ability" as a recommendation. A clerk recently sought a place "where great strength, personal appearance or ability are not required." "Good butter, sixpence a pound. Nobody can touch it," was ambiguous and may have been wrongly interpreted by the public, and a Gloucestershire paper which inserted the advertisement, "Our one and nine penny dinner at 6:30 p. m. Funerals promptly attended to," apologized next day for mixing up two separate and distinct announcements.

But it is a fact that a church paper appealed lately for "Old man, lame, deaf, epileptic. Will any Christian take him for a gardener?" and that in a leading Scotch journal an advertiser asked for "£65 to pay debts incurred through losses at betting."—London Standard.

The Woolsack. Back during the time of Queen Elizabeth an act of parliament was passed prohibiting the exportation of wool. This product was one of the great sources of the natural wealth of England at that time, and in accordance with the economic notions of the age the authorities attempted to keep it in the country, imagining that if it went abroad, even though something more valuable or desirable were exchanged for it, the country would be the poorer.

In order to hold the importance of this commodity before the minds of the national legislators woolsacks were placed in the house of lords, where the judges sat. Hence the lord chancellor, who presides over the house of lords, "sits on the woolsack." The woolsack, according to a printed description, is a "large square bag of wool without back or arms and covered with red cloth."

Unexpected Erudition. "An absentminded professor of languages dropped into a restaurant one day for a luncheon.

"What will you have, sir?" asked the waiter.

"Fried eggs," replied the professor.

"Over?" said the waiter, meaning, of course, to ask whether he wanted them cooked on both sides or only one.

"Ova?" echoed the professor, surprised at his apparent familiarity with Latin. "Certainly. That is what I ordered—Ova gallinae."

This the waiter interpreted as meaning "extra well done," and that is the way they came to the table.—Youth's Companion.

A Story of Bunsen. Sir Henry Roscoe in a privately printed book of lectures tells a story of Bunsen, remembered from the time when he and the German scientist were traveling together in England. They met a lady who mistook Bunsen for his cousin, the Chevalier Bunsen.

"Have you finished your book, 'God in History,' yet?" she asked him.

"No, madame," he replied. "I regret that my untimely death has prevented my doing so."

Tastes Differ. Dealer—Here, madam, is a horse I can recommend—sound, kind—Old Lady—Oh, I don't want that sort of a horse. He holds his head high. Dealer—Eh? Old Lady—I like a horse that holds his nose close to the ground, so he can see where he's going.—New York Weekly.

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