"SHREWSBURY"

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

That Smith discerned the chagrin which this enforced companionship caused—though not the ground of it—was as plain as that the fact gave him pleasure of no common kind. I had no longer such a command of my features that I could trust myself to look at him; but I was conscious, using some other sense, that he frequently looked at me, and always after these inspections smiled like a man who finds something to his taste. And I hated him.

How long, with these feelings, I could have borne to go with him, or what I should have done in the last resort had he continued the same tactics, remains unproved, for at the same corner, half way down Long lane, where I had first espied him, he paused. "I want to go in here," he said, coolly. "I need only detain you a moment, Mr. Taylor."

"I will wait for you," I muttered, tingling all over with a sudden hope. While he was inside I could run for it.

"Very well," he said. "This way."

I fancied that he had suspected nothing, and that perhaps I had been wrong throughout; and, overjoyed, I went with him to the door of the house from which I had seen him emerge, my intention being to be gone hot-foot the instant his back was turned. The house was three-storied, high, narrow and commonplace, one of a row not long built and but partially inhabited. Apparently he was at home there, for taking a key from his pocket, he opened the door, and stood aside for me to enter.

"I will wait," I muttered.

"Very well. You can wait inside," he answered.

If I had been wise I should have turned there and then, in the open street, and taking to my heels have run for my life, and stayed for nothing. But, partly fool and partly craven, clinging to a hope which was scarcely a belief, that when he went upstairs or into another room I might stealthily unlatch the door and begone, I let myself be persuaded; and I entered. The moment I had done so he whipped out the key and thrusting the door to with his shoulder, locked it on the inside.

Then the man threw off all disguise. He turned with a laugh of triumph to where I stood trembling in the half-dark passage. "Now," he said, "we will have that letter if you please, Mr. Taylor. I have a fancy to see what is in it."

"The letter!" I faltered.

"Yes, the letter!"

"I have no letter," I said.

"Tut-tut, letter or no letter, out with it! Do you think I could not see you touching your breast every half minute, to make sure that you had it safe, and not know what was in the wind! You are a poor plotter, Mr. Taylor, and I doubt if you will ever be of any use to me. But come, out with it! Unless you want me to be rough with you. Out with whatever it is you have there, and no tricks!"

He had a way with him when he spoke in that tone, not loudly, but between his teeth, his eyes at the same time growing toward one another, that was worse than Ferguson's pistol, and I was alone with him in an empty house. Some who would have done what I did may blame me, but in the main the world is sensible, and I shall forfeit no prudent man's esteem when I confess that, after one attempt at evasion which he met by wrenching my coat open and thrusting me against the wall so violently that my head spun again, I gave up the letter.

"I warn you! I warn you!" I cried in a paroxysm of rage and grief. "It is for the duke of Berwick, and if you open it—"

"For the duke of Berwick!" he answered, pausing and gazing at me with his finger on the seal. "Why, you fool, why did you not tell me that before? From whom? From that scum, Ferguson?"

"From the duke of Shrewsbury," I cried, rendered reckless by my rage.

"From the duke of Shrewsbury," I repeated, thinking that he had not understood me.

"My God!" he said, with a deep breath. "And have I caught the fox at last!"

"You are more likely to be caught yourself!" I answered furiously. Nevertheless his words were a puzzle to me; but his tone of slow growing, almost incredulous triumph told something. Taking very little heed of me, and merely signing to me to follow him, he sprang up the stairs, and opening a door led the way into a back room, bare and miserable, but lighted by the last yellow glow of the western sky. It was possible to read here, and without a moment's hesitation he broke the seal of the letter and tearing the packet open, read the contents.

That the perusal gave him immense satisfaction, his face which in the level light cast by the window, seemed to gleam with unholy joy, was witness, no less than his

"DID YOU WRITE IT, YOU BLOCKHEAD?"

movements. Flourishing the letter in uncontrollable excitement he twice strode the floor, muttering unformed sentences. Then he looked at the paper again and his jaw fell. "But it is not his hand!" he cried, staring at it in very plain dismay. And then recovering himself afresh, "no matter," he said, "it is his name, and the veriest fool would have used another hand. Is it yours? Did you write it, blockhead?"

"No," I said.

"No! But now I think of it—thousand devils, how came you by it? By this—eh?" he rapped out. "This letter? What d—d hocus pocus is here? What have you to do with the duke of Shrewsbury, that he makes you his messenger?"

He bent his brows on me, and I knew that I had never been in greater danger in my life. Yet something of wit came to me in this extremity. Comprehending that if I said I came from Kensington I might expect the worst, I lied to him, yet used the truth where it suited me. "The duke came to Ferguson's," I said.

"To Ferguson's?" he answered, staring at me.

"Yes, and bade him get that to the duke, for his lodging was known, and warrants would be out."

Smith clapped his hands together softly. "What!" he cried. "Is he in it as deep as that? O, the cunning! O, the cunning of him! And I to be going to all this trouble, and close on despair, at that! And—Ferguson gave you the letter?"

"They both did."

"That old fox, too! And I was beginning to think him a bygone! Yet he beats us all! He beats us all! Or he would have beaten us if he had not trusted this silly! But I am forgetting. The duke must be warned—if he has not started. When was this given to you, Mr. Trusty Taylor?"

"Two hours ago," I said sullenly.

I was pleased to see that that alarmed him. "You fool!" he said. Why did you not tell me at once what you had got, and whither you were going. If the duke is taken it will lie at your door. And if he is saved it will be to my credit."

"I will come with you," I said, plucking up a spirit, as I saw him about to leave.

"No, you will not," he answered, drily, "I am much obliged to you, but I prefer to gain the credit and tell the tale my own way. You will stay here, Mr. Taylor, and when the duke is away I'll come and release you. In the meantime, I would advise you to keep quiet. Holty-toity, what is this?" he continued, as in my despair I tried to push by him. "Go back you fool, or it will be the worse for you. You are not going out."

And resisting all my appeals and remonstrances he thrust me forcibly from the door; and whipping outside it, locked it on me. In vain I hammered on it with my fist and called after him, and threatened him. He clattered unheeding down the stairs, and I heard the house door slammed and locked. I listened a moment, but all remained quiet, and then, wild with rage, I turned to the window, thinking that that way I might still escape. Alas, it looked only into a walled yard, and was strongly barred to boot.

God knows I thought myself then the most unlucky of men; a man ruined when on the point of a great and seemingly assured success! I flung myself down in my despair, and could have dashed my head against the boards. But presently, in the midst of my bewailing myself, and when the first convulsive fit of rage was abating, a new thought brought me to my feet in a panic. What if Smith before he returned fell in with Ferguson? The meeting was the more probable, inasmuch as, if Ferguson succeeded in freeing himself, he was as likely to hasten to the duke of Berwick to warn him as to do anything else. At any rate I was not inclined to sit, weighing the chances nicely, but hastening frantically to the door I tried it with knee and shoulder. To my joy it yielded somewhat; on which, throwing caution aside, I drew back and flung myself against it with all my weight. The lock gave way, and the door flying open, I came near to falling headlong down the stairs.

Still I had succeeded. But I soon found that I was little nearer freedom than before. The passage was now dark and the house door when I found my way to it resisted all my efforts. This drove me to seek another egress, which it was far from easy to find. At length, and by dint of groping about, I hit on a door which led to a downstairs room; it was unlocked and I entered, feeling before me with my hands. The darkness, the silence of the empty house, and my hurry formed a situation to appal the boldest, but I was desperate, and extending my arms, I trod cautiously across the room to where the window should be, and sought for and found the shutters. I tried the bar, and to my joy felt it swing. I let it down softly and dragged the shutters open, and sweating at every pore saw through the leaded panes the dark, dull lane outside, with a faint light from a neighboring window falling on the wall opposite.

I was seeking for a part of the window that opened, and wondering whether, failing that, I should have the courage to burst the casement and run for it, when a step approaching along the lane set my heart beating. The step came nearer and paused, and peering out, my face nearer the glass, I saw a man had come to a stand before the door. I looked, and then, to say that my knees quivered under me, but faintly expresses the terror I felt! For as the man moved he brought himself within the circle of light I have mentioned, and at the same time he raised his face, doubtless after searching in his pocket for the key; and through the glass my eyes met those of Ferguson!

CHAPTER XXVI.

If, a few minutes before, I had thought myself the most unlucky of men and placed by that which had already happened beyond fear or misfortune, I knew better when I saw that sight from the window, and fell back into the darkness, as if even from the road and through the panes Ferguson's eyes must discover me. Ignorant whether the room in which I stood contained anything to shelter me, or, barewalled must of necessity discover me to the first person who entered with a light, my natural impulse, when the moment of panic passed, was to escape from it.

But it was not easy to do this in haste. By that time, trembling in every limb, I had groped my way into the passage, the key was turning in the lock of the outer door; and I saw myself within an arm's length of capture. This so terrified me that I sprang desperately for the staircase, but stumbled over the lowest step and fell on my knees with a crash that seemed to shake the walls. For a moment the pain was so sharp that I could only lie where I fell; nor when, spurred by the imminence of the danger, I had got to my feet, could I more than crawl up the stairs and crouch down on the landing a little to one side, and out of eyeshot from below.

Willingly now in return for present safety would I have forgiven Fortune all her past buffets! For if Ferguson came up, as I thought him sure to come up, I was lost; since I could neither retreat without noise, nor if I could, knew where to hide. In this extremity, my heart beating so thickly that I could scarcely listen and thought I must choke, I was relieved to hear Ferguson—after spending what seemed to me to be an age, striking flint and steel in the passage—go grumbling into the lower room, whence a glimmer falling on the wall of the passage told me that he had succeeded in procuring a light.

It was no surprise to me as I sweated and cringed in my hiding place to learn that he was in the worst of tempers. I heard him swear—as I supposed—at the open shutter; then, almost before I had thanked Providence for present safety, he was out again in the passage. I had no doubt that he was going to ascend now, and I gave myself up for lost. But instead he stood and called "Mary! Mary! Do ye hear, you hussy. If ye are biding above there it will be the worse for you ye d—d baggage! Come down, d'ye hear me?"

Surely now, I thought, getting no answer, he would come up; and my heart stood. But it seemed he called only to make sure and not because he thought that she was above; for he went back into the lower room, and I heard him moving to and fro, and going about to light a fire, the crackling of which gave an odd note of cheerfulness in the house. I was beginning to weigh the possibility of slipping by the half-open door, on the chance of finding the outer door unfastened, and with this in view had risen to my feet, when a key again grated in the lock, and supposing it to be Smith, I returned to my former position.

Had it been Smith it would have been some comfort to me; for I thought him more prudent if no less dangerous than the plotter, and I fancied that I had more to fear from one than from two. But the step that entered was lighter than a man's; while Ferguson's greeting told the rest and made the situation clear.

"Ha, you are here at last, are you!" he cried with an angry oath. "Did you want me to break every bone in your body, lass, that you stayed out till now, and I to have the fire to light? You should have a pretty good tale to tell or have kept clear of this! D'ye hear me? Speak, you viper, and don't stand there glowering like a wood cat!"

"I am here now," was the answer. My heart leapt, for the voice was Mary's; the tone sullen and weary, I could understand.

"Here now!" he retorted. "And that is as be all, is it? Perhaps, my girl, I will presently show you two minds about that. Where is the baggage?"

"It is not here."

"Not here?" he cried.

"No," she answered.

"And why not, you Jezebel?"

"You need not misname me," she answered coolly. "I was followed, and could not come here; and I could not carry it about with me all day. And I could not send it for there was no one here to take it in. It is at the Spread Eagle in Gracechurch street, to go by tomorrow's wagon to Colchester. That is what I told them, but it can be fetched away tomorrow."

"If I did not think that you were a big liar, girl?" he answered doubtfully; but I knew by his tone that he believed her.

"You may think what you like," she replied.

"And how do you think I am to do for to-night?" he answered queruously.

"You must do as you can," she said. "You have your hollands and I have brought some bread and meat."

"It is a dog's life," he said with a snarl.

"It is the life you choose," she retorted sharply.

"Pestle!" he answered, after a pause of sheer astonishment at her audacity. "What is it to you, you slut?"

"Why, a dog's life, too! and not of my choice!" she cried passionately, her voice breaking. "What am I better, as I live, than an orange girl in the streets? What do I get, and walk the pavement on your errands night and day? And always hiding and sneaking, biding and sneaking! And for what?"

"For your living, you beggarly baggage!" he roared. "Who feeds you and clothes you, you graceless hussy? Who boards you and lodges you, and finds you in meat and malt, you feckless toad? You shameless—"

"Aye, call names!" she answered bitterly—and it was not hard to discern that she was beside herself with the long sick waiting and the disappointment. "It is what you are good for! It is all that your plots end in! Call names and you are happy! But I am tired of bare boards and biding and all for what? For those, that when you have brought them back, you will be as fierce to oust, as you are now to restore! And shameless it is you call me?" she continued with feverish rapidity. "Shameless! Have you not sent me out into the streets a hundred times, and close on midnight, and not a thought or care what would happen to me, so long as your letter went safe? Have you not sent me, where to be taken was to be jailed and whipped, and not a thought of pity, or what a life it was for a girl? Have you not done this and more," she continued, breathless with passion. "And more? And yet you take praise for feeding me? And call me graceless and shameless?"

"HERE, FERGUSON! HERE'S YOUR MAN!"

She paused and gave him room to speak; but though he put on a show of bluster, it was evident her violence alarmed him. "Odd's name and what is all this?" he said. "What ails the girl. What has set you up now, you vixen?"

"You," she cried vehemently. "You and your trade."

"Well," he said, with a snort of sullen reasonableness, "and what is the matter with the trade? What is wrong with the trade, I say? I'll tell you this, my lass. You would live badly without it."

"I would live honestly," she cried. "And as my father lived!"

"You drab!" he cried. "Leave that alone."

And that, and when judging from the tone of his voice I expected him to break out with fresh oaths and curses, there was instead an astonishing silence, which fell for me at an unlucky moment, for forgetting, in my desire to see, as well as hear, the risk I ran, I had crept down the stairs, and now lacked but a pace of seeing into the room. The noise ceasing, I dared neither take that step nor retreat, and it was only when the silence had continued so long that curiosity overcame fear that I ventured the advance, and looking in saw that the girl, her fire and fury gone, was leaning against the wall beside the hearth her face averted, while Ferguson himself, in an attitude of dejection scarcely less marked, stood near her, his head bowed and his bloodshot eyes fixed on the fire.

"Ay, he lived honestly, your father," he muttered at last. "It is true, my lass. I grant it. But he had a fair wind, bad Alan, and a short course, and if he had lived to be 60, God knows! We are what we are made. I mind him well, and the burn we fished and the pickle things we took out, and your mother that played with us in her cutty sark and not a shoe between us or a bodle of money, but the green hills round us, and all we knew of the world, that it lay beyond them. And that was all your father ever knew, my lass. And well for him! Ay, well for him. But woe's me and woe to the evil king!"

His voice was beginning to rise; in a moment he would have reached his usual pitch of denunciation, of which even now some of his many writings afford a pale reflection; but at the word king there came a sharp knocking at the door, and he paused. For me, I turned in a panic, and, heedless what noise I made, I hurried up the stairs. The steps creaked under me, but fortunately the knocking was repeated so quickly and persistently that it covered the sound of my flight, and before I had more than ensconced myself in the old place Ferguson, doubtless in obedience to some signal, was at the door and had opened it.

Immediately half a dozen men poured noisily in, breathing hard and growling in low tones, and passed into the room below. But until the outer door was closed and secured nothing I could catch, though fear sharpened my ears, was said. Then, as Ferguson went in after them, one of the newcomers raised his voice in answer to a question and cried with a rattling oath, "what is up? What is up, old fox? Why all is up! And we'll all swing for it before the month is over if we cannot clear out tonight! You are a clever one, Mr. Ferguson, but you are caught this time, with better men. God! If I had the sneak here that peached on us I would cut his liver out! I would—"

Two or three voices joined in to the same tune and drowned his words, one asking where Prendergast was, another where Porter was, a third indulging in threats so horrid and blasphemies so profane that I turned cold where I crouched. I began to understand what had happened, and my situation; but that nothing might be spared me, Ferguson, in a quavering voice that proved all was new to him, asked again what was the matter.

"The Blues are moved," cried three or four at once. "They were marching out when we left. The guards at Kensington are doubled, and the orders for the king's hunting tomorrow are canceled. They were hurrying to and fro calling the council when we came away, and messengers were beginning to go round the taverns. They have seized the horses at the King of Bohemia's Head."

"But is it certain?" Ferguson asked, with a break in his voice.

"Ay, as certain as that we shall hang if we do not get over," was the brutal answer.

"And the captain?"

"I have been at his lodgings. He has not been heard of since noon. He ordered his horse then, and they say took the road; and h—l to it, if that is so, he is half way to France by this. And safe! Safe, you devils, and we are left here caught like rats!"

"Ay, we'll go farther than France!" one shrieked. "As for me I am off. I shall—"

"No, my God, you don't!" cried another; and flung himself, as it seemed to me, between him and the door. "You don't go and sell the rest of us, and save your own neck. You—"

"Where is Porter?" a third struck in.

"Ay, and Prendergast?"

"They are not here! Nor Sir William! Nor Friend! So what is the good of talking like that!"

"He will make a fat hang, will Sir William!" said one with a hysterical laugh. "It will cure his gout!"

At that, one of the others cried with furious oaths for liquor, and I judged that Ferguson gave them of his hollands. But it was little among so many, and was gone in a moment, and they calling for more. "There is a keg upstairs," said he. "In the back room. But get it for yourselves. You have hung me. To think that I should have played the game with such fools."

They laughed recklessly, a savage note in their voices. "Ay, you should have stuck to your pen, old fox," one cried. "Then it was only the printer hung. But we'll drink your health before you swing. Up, Keyes, and fetch the stuff. It may be bad, but we'll drink to the squeezing of the Rotten Orange once more; if it be the last toast, I drink!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

The terror that had gripped me on their first entrance, and driving all the blood in my body to my heart, had there set it bounding madly—this terror I should vainly try to describe to persons who have never been in such a situation, or within a few feet of death, as I then found myself. That, reckless and driven to the wall, the conspirators would sacrifice me to their vengeance if they discovered me I felt certain; and at any moment they might come up and discover me. Yet behind me were the confining walls of the rooms whence I knew of no exit, and before me, where alone evasion seemed to be possible, the open door of the room below, and the flood of light that issued from the doorway, forbade the attempt. I lay sweating and listening, therefore, while they snarled and cursed in the black mood of men betrayed and hopeless; and yet, because of the chance that after all they might go out as they had come, I could so far keep my terror within bounds.

Not so, when I heard Ferguson bid the man mount and fetch the keg. Had he come without a light I might still have controlled myself and kept quiet; and, holding my breath, though I were suffocated, and silencing my heart though I died, might have lain and let him pass in the darkness. Nay, had I crouched low, he need not have observed me, with a light; for I was a little beside the stairhead, and to enter the room whence I had broken out he need not face me. But when I heard him stumbling upwards a sudden sense of the loneliness of the house in that far corner of the town came on me; and with it an overwhelming perception of my helplessness and of the life and death struggle to which the men below were committed—so that death seemed to be in the air; which together so far overcame me that I did the last thing I should have expected. As the man came up the stairs, the light in his hand, I rose up and stood gasping at him.

He paused and held up the light. "The devil!" he said, staring. And then, "Who the —— are you? Here Ferguson! Here's your man!"

The only answer from below was a roar for liquor.

"What are you doing here?" he went on, puzzled as much by my silence as my presence.

"I am—going," I stammered a desperate hope rising in my breast at sight of the man's perplexity. He might let me pass.

For aught I know he would have done so, and it is possible that I might have gone unseen by the open door below and gained the street. But as he stood staring a second man came into the passage, and looked up and saw me. "Hallo!" he said, "Who is that?"

"Ferguson's man," Keyes answered. "But boil me, if I know what is the matter with him!"

The other called Ferguson, and he came out and saw me, looked, and, with a scream of rage, sprang up the stairs. In the fury of his wrath he threw himself on me so suddenly and with so much violence and intention that I was a child in his hands, and but for the other's exertions, who, not understanding the matter, tore him from me, I must have been choked out of hand. As it was, I was black in the face, dizzy and scarcely conscious when they freed me from him, nor in much better case for the respite. For with all they could do he would not release my shoulder, but, dragging me down, cried breathlessly and continuously to the others to listen—to listen! That he had the traitor, that I was the informer, the spy, the blood seller! And with that, and as he partly forced and partly tugged me down, the men thickened around me, until dragged into the lighted room I found myself hemmed in by a circle of lowering faces and gloomy eyes, a circle that look where I might presented no breach or chance of escape, no face that pitied or understood. He who seemed to be in the highest authority among them—afterwards I knew him for Charnock, the unfrocked fellow of Magdelen, who suffered with King and Keyes—did indeed make Ferguson let me go, thrusting him back and calling on him to tell his tale, and have done with the blasphemy. But though I turned that way in momentary hope of aid, I read no encouragement in a face as stern and relentless as it was fanatical. A lamp hooked high on one wall, and so that it threw its light downward, obscured half the circle and flung a bright glare on the other half, but in light or shade, seen or unseen, and whether drink flushed it, or passion blanched it, every face that met my shrinking gaze seemed to be instinct with coming doom.

In such situations fear which spurs some minds paralyzes others; mainly I tried to think. The glare of the lamp dazzled and confused me. To Ferguson's passionate iterations, "The Lord has delivered him into our hands! There is your informer! I swear it! I can prove it." I could find no answer except a feeble, "I am not! I am not!" which I continued to repeat—while one plucked me this way that he might see me better, and another that way—until Keyes struck me on the mouth, and thrusting me back bade me be silent.

"And you, too, Mr. Ferguson," Charnock said, raising his hand to still the tumult, "have done with your blasphemy. And talk plainly. Say what you know; and have no fear; if what you allege be proved we will do justice on him!"

"Ay, by—!" cried Cassels, the swearer. "A life for a life."

"But first what do you know?" Charnock continued brusquely. "Speak to the point. We must have gone by midnight if we are to save ourselves."

Then and then only I think, Ferguson hitherto blinded by rage, became sensible of the fact that he stood himself in a dubious position; and that to tell all, and particularly to reveal the visit which the secretary had paid to him at his lodgings, would even with the addition of the attempt he had made on the duke's life, place his conduct in a light far from favorable. Not only were the men before him in no mood to draw fine distinctions, or take all for granted, but it was on the credit of his name and as his tool that I had come to be mixed up in the matter and gained my knowledge of it. It took no great acuteness, therefore, to foresee that their suspicions once roused they would punish first and prove afterward, and be as ready to turn on the master as the man.

These, when I came to review the scene afterward, coolly and in safety, were. I had no doubt, the reflections that gave Ferguson pause at the last moment, and occasioned a kind of fit into which he fell at that—his eyes glaring, his jaws moving dumbly, and his hands springing out in uncouth gestures, like those of a man paralyzed—a fit which at the time was set down to pure rage and temper of mind, always bordering on the insane. I suppose that in that moment, and under cover of that display, his crafty brain, apt in such crisis, did its work; for when he found his voice he had his tale pat; and where truth and a lie most ingeniously and sometimes inexplicably mixed would scarcely serve his turn or win him credence, he imposed on them, even on Charnock, by pure scorn and an air of superior knowledge.

"What I know?" said he. "You shall have it! It is enough to blast him ten times. Today it happened that the secretary came to me, to my lodgings."

For a moment the roar of surprise which followed this statement silenced him.

But in a moment he recovered himself. "Ay," he said, looking around him defiantly. "The secretary. What of it? Do you think that you know everything, or everything is told to you? Today, I say, the duke came to my lodgings."

"Why?" cried Charnock, between his teeth. "Why?"

"Why?" Ferguson answered. "Well, if you will have it, to send a message through me to the other duke; as he has done three times before since his grace has been in England."

"To the duke of Berwick?"

"What other duke is there?" the plotter asked scornfully.

"But G—! if the secretary knows that his grace is in England."

"Well?"

"What will he not know?"

"I cannot say what he will not know, Mr. Charnock," the plotter answered with a cunning smile that brought his wig to his eyebrows. "But I can say what he did not know. He knew nothing of your little business. For the rest when he left me, I missed my man here, and coming to inquire learned that he had been seen to join the secretary at the door of the house, speak to him and go away with him. That was enough for me. I changed my lodging, slipped away here, and had been here an hour when you came. As soon as you said that some one had peached today, I knew who it was. Then Keyes cried that he was here, and there he was!"

"But how did he come to be here?" Charnock asked sternly, and with suspicion.

"God knows!" said Ferguson, shrugging his shoulders. "I don't."

"You did nothing to bring him?"

"Go to, for a fool! Perhaps he came to listen, perhaps he was sent. He knew of this place. For the rest, I have told you all I know, and it is enough, or should be. Hang the dog up! There is a beam and a hook! You hound, you shall swing for it!" he shrieked passionately, as he brought his crimsoned, blotched face close to mine and threatened me with his ten swollen fingers. "You thought to outwit me, did you? You, you dog! You crossed me and thought to sell me, did you? You dolt, you zany! You are sold yourself! Sold and shall swing! Ay, and so shall all my enemies perish!"

"An end to that!" said Charnock, pushing him away roughly. "All the same, if this is true, he shall swing!"

"Well, it is true enough," cried a man, thrusting himself forward—while with shaking knees and chattering teeth and tongue that refused to do its work, I strove to form words, to speak, to say or do something—something that might arrest the instant doom that threatened me. "It is true enough!" he continued, coolly. "I was on the watch at the Kensington end this afternoon, and saw the secretary arrive and go to the Dutchman. And he had this bully boy with him. I know him again, and can swear to him."

(To be Continued.)

TOMORROW IS CIRCUS DAY.

All Omaha Ready to Give Ringling Bros'. Big Show a Royal Welcome.

Tomorrow is circus day. The mere announcement is sufficient to set ordinarily unsusceptible nerves a-tingling and to turn young Omaha topsy-turvy. This year there are several additional reasons beyond the inevitable interest always aroused by Ringling Bros.' big circus why show day should be a gala event of more than usual importance. The show comes back to Omaha with the prestige of a remarkably successful continental tour and with its resources greatly augmented by the addition of hundreds of new features never before presented in this city. Moreover, it comes at a time when the great business and farming community is arousing itself from a long period of lethargy and depression and when the dawn of prosperous times creates a desire for wholesome and legitimate amusement. No show that could come to Omaha could possibly fill this requirement so well as Ringling Bros.' circus and there is no doubt that the crowds in Omaha tomorrow will thoroughly demonstrate the change that has come over the financial spirit of Nebraska during the past few weeks.

The big show will reach the city during the day and the tents will be erected on the old exhibition grounds at Twentieth and Paul streets. The picturesque scene of a big circus in Sunday quarters is one which always attracts great crowds of people and the circus city will be the center of attraction today. Ringling Bros.' horse fair is always open to the public on Sunday and lovers of fine stock take advantage of the opportunity to inspect the more than 400 handsome horses owned by the great show.

The first event on Monday will be the parade, which leaves the show grounds between 9 and 10 o'clock, and passes over the usual down town route. Ringling Bros. street display this season is described as a distinct departure from anything of the kind ever before attempted. Among the notable features in the thirty sections into which the parade is divided, are characteristic representations of all the most noted military organizations in the world, all in their national uniform, properly accoutred and mounted on magnificent war horses; a military convoy in the Punjaub, with its ponderous elephats, drawing great, lumbering cannon and bearing East Indian sharpshooters in their oscilliative howdahs, together with guides, native soldiers and all the impedimenta of an Indo-British army on the march; a blood-quickening reproduction of the Derby day meet, with huge tally-hos, slender spiders, pretty T carts, blooded racing stock, London's society leaders, jockeys, touts and other characteristic features of English racing life; a brilliant picture of Roman and Grecian splendor, as pictured in the great spectacles of Rome and Athens, together with the Olympian games and charioteering of the historic days of Augustus; a caravan crossing the desert; a complete children's parade, with pony chariots, tiny tableaux(miniature cages and other novel effects delightful to the childish sense; ten bands of music, over a hundred dens, cages and tableaux cars, and many other unique representations, each presented complete in its individual section, and comprising in their entirety the most bewilderingly beautiful and effective street display ever conceived or successfully organized. Ringling Bros. have always been noted for their glittering street displays, but this season's pageant is said to eclipse anything ever offered by these enterprising managers.

Only two performances will be given in Omaha—the first at 2 o'clock and the final one at 8 p. m. The doors will be open a full hour previously, to afford visitors an opportunity to inspect the menagerie, which is an especially strong feature this year. The white elephant, in particular, attracts a great deal of attention in the zoological display. The circus performance seems to be universally conceded to be the best ever presented in the west. It is a feature show throughout, and from the Lockhart elephants to the last race in the hippodrome the interest is evidently unflagging. The list of riders includes Willie De Mott, Willie Cook, Rose Dockrill, Elena Ryland, Julia Lowande and many other clever horsemen and horsewomen. The aerialists embrace the famous Fisher family, the DaComas, the Picardos, M'lle Irwin, the marvelous Le Fluer and James Irwin. The Foy Family and numerous other acrobats contribute to the gymnastic part of the entertainment. In all departments the show is exceptionally strong, while the excellent management which pervades the show ensures a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

PANTORIUM

HAIL, PROSPERITY!

Richmond Dispatch.

Prosperity is coming, eh? Again we hear the cry;
She's been a good while picking out "the good time by and by."
And, though our reticence has made our confidence quite numb,
We're up and dressed and peeking out to see which way she'll come.

We'll know the dear old lady when we see her, bless her heart!
No sleek decoy can hoodwink us, no matter what her art;
Our salvos wait the goddess that we've known in days of yore,
The Good Smaritan that comes to bless the rich and poor—

Who enters not the palace door to pass the cabin by,
Who never turns her head away when needy ones are nigh,
Who blesses everywhere alike, with magic of her hand,
And tunes to hallelujah every creature in the land.

If that's the guest you herald, then by all means trot her out,
And when we recognize her face the gods will hear a shout
Surpassing any glad acclaim that history can boast,
And those United States will hear a smile from coast to coast.

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The best salve in the world for cuts, bruises, sores, ulcers, salt rheum, fever sores, tetter, chapped hands, chilblains, corns, and all skin eruptions, and positively cures piles, or no pay required. It is guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction or money refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by Kuhn & Co.

Again Boston and Baltimore are virtually

A Frenchman has discovered a method of making silk of a fine quality from the webs of ordinary spiders. His name is M. Cachot and it is probable that he will claim the reward of $10,000 offered by manufacturers of Great Britain to any one who would accomplish the feat.

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