

Squatter



Sovereign.

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO POLITICS, LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, MERCANTILE AFFAIRS AND USEFUL READING.

STRINGFELLOW & KELLEY,

"The Squatter claims the same Sovereignty in the Territories that he possessed in the States."

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Miscellaneous.

THE MURDERER.

A THRILLING STORY.

A little more than fifty years ago, a man by the name of Henry Thompson, called at the house of Mr. J. Smith, a resident in a retired part of England, and requested a night's lodging. This request was granted; and the stranger, having taken some refreshments, retired early to bed, requesting that he might be awakened at an early hour the following morning.

When the servant appointed to call him, entered the room for that purpose, he was found in his bed perfectly dead.

On examining his body no marks of violence appeared, but his countenance looked extremely natural. The story of his death soon spread among the neighbors, and inquiries were made as to who he was and by what means he came to his death.

Nothing certain, however, was known. He had arrived on horseback, and was passing through a neighboring village about an hour before he reached the house where he had come to his end. And then, as to the manner of his death, so little could be discovered, that the jury returned a verdict that he "died by a visitation from God." When this was done, the stranger was buried.

Days and weeks passed on and little further was known. The public mind, however, was not at rest. Suspicious existed that foul means had hastened the stranger's death. Whispers that to effect were expressed, and in the hearts of the neighbors Smith was considered the guilty man.

The former character of Smith had not been good. He had lived a loose and irregular life, involved himself in debt by his extravagance, and at length, being suspected of having obtained money wrongfully, he suddenly fled from the town.

More than ten years, however, had now elapsed since his return, during which he had lived at his present residence, apparently in good circumstances, and with an approved character. His former life, however, was now remembered, and suspicion was fastened upon him.

At the expiration of two months, a gentleman one day stopped in the place for the purpose of making inquiries respecting the stranger who had been found dead in his bed. He supposed himself to be the brother of the man. The horse and clothes of the unfortunate man still remained, and were immediately known as having belonged to his brother. The body, also, was taken up, and though considerably changed, bore a strong resemblance to him.

He now felt authorized to ascertain, if possible, the manner of his death. He proceeded, therefore, to investigate the circumstances as well as he was able. At length he made known to the magistrate of the district the information he had collected, and upon the strength of this, Smith was taken to jail to be tried for the wilful murder of Henry Thompson.

The celebrated Lord Mansfield was then on the bench. He charged the grand jury to be cautious as to finding a bill against the prisoner. The evidence of his guilt, if guilty, might be small. More information might be obtained. Should he be acquitted he could not be molested again whatever testimony should rise up against him. The grand jury, however, did find a bill, but by a majority of only one.

At length the time of trial arrived. Smith was brought into court and placed at the bar. A great crowd thronged the room, eager and anxious to see the prisoner, and to hear the trial. He himself appeared firm and collected. Nothing in his manner or appearance indicated guilt; and when the question was put to him by the clerk, "Are you guilty or not guilty?" he answered with an unflinching tongue, and with a countenance perfectly unchanged, "Not guilty."

He had left London for the purpose of meeting a trader at Hull, of whom he expected to make a large purchase. The trader he did meet; and after the departure of the latter, Mr. Thompson was known to have had in his possession, jewels and gold to a large amount.

With these in his possession, he left Hull on his return to London. It was not known that he stopped until he reached Smith's, and the next morning was discovered dead in his bed. He died, then, in Smith's house, and if it could be shown that he came to his death in an unnatural way, it would increase the suspicion that the prisoner was in some way connected with the murder.

Now, then, continued the counsel, it will be proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the deceased died by poison. What was that poison? It was a recent discovery of some German chemist, said to be produced from distilling the seed of the wild-cherry tree. It was a poison more powerful than any other known, and deprived of life so immediately as to leave no marks of suffering, and no contortion of the features.

But, then, the question, when and by whom was it administered? One circumstance, a small one indeed, and yet upon it might hang a horrid tale, was that the stopper of a small bottle of a very singular description had been found in the prisoner's house. The stopper had been examined, and said by medical men to have belonged to a German vial, containing the kind of poison he had described. But, then, was that poison administered by Smith, or at his instigation? Who were the prisoner's family? It consisted only of himself, a house-keeper and one man-servant.

The man-servant slept in an out-house adjoining the stable, and did so on the night of Thompson's death. The prisoner slept in one end of the house, the house-keeper at the other, and the deceased had been put in a room adjoining the house-keeper's.

It could be proved, that about three hours after midnight, on the night of Thompson's death, a light had been seen moving about the house, and that a figure holding a light was seen to go from the room in which the prisoner slept, to the house-keeper's room; the light now disappeared for a minute when two persons were seen, but whether they went into Thompson's room, the witness could not swear; but shortly after, they were observed to pass quite through the entry to Smith's room, into which they entered, and in about five minutes the light was extinguished.

The witness would further state, that after the room had returned with the light into Smith's room, and before it was extinguished, he had twice perceived some dark object to intervene between the light and the window, almost as large as the surface of the window itself, and which he described by saying it appeared as if a door had been placed before the light. Now, in Smith's room, there was nothing that could account for this appearance, and there was neither cupboard nor press in the room, which but for the bed, was entirely empty; the room in which he dressed held a distance beyond it.

The counsel for the prosecution here concluded what he had to say. During his address, Smith in no wise appeared to be agitated or distressed—and equally unmoved was he while the witness testified in substance what the opening speech of the counsel led the court and jury to expect.

Lord Mansfield now addressed the jury. He said, that in his opinion, the evidence was not sufficient to condemn the prisoner, and if the jury agreed with him in opinion, he would discharge him. Without leaving their seats, the jury agreed that the evidence was not sufficient.

At this moment, when they were about to render a verdict of acquittal, the prisoner rose and addressed the court. He said he had been accused of a foul crime, and the jury had said there was no sufficient evidence against him. Was he to go out of court with suspicious resting upon him, after all? This he was unwilling to do.—He was an innocent man, and if the judge would grant him the opportunity he would prove it. He would call the house-keeper, who would confirm a statement, which he would now make.

try to fact. But he was now ready to relate all the circumstances he knew; she might be called and examined. If her testimony does not confirm my story, let me be condemned.

The request of the prisoner appeared reasonable, and Lord Mansfield, contrary to his usual practice, granted it.

The prisoner went on with his statement. He said he wished to go out of the court, relieved from the suspicions which were resting upon him. As to the poison, by means of which the stranger was said to have died, he knew neither the name of it, nor even the existence of it, until made known by the counsel. He could call God to witness the truth of what he said.

And then, as to Mr. Thompson, he was a perfect stranger to him. How should he know what articles of value he had? He did not know. If he had such articles at Hull, he might have left them on the road, or, which was more probable, have otherwise disposed of them. And if he died by means of the fatal drug, he must have administered it himself.

He begged the jury to remember that his premises had been repeatedly and minutely searched, and not the most trifling article that belonged to the deceased had been discovered in his possession. The stopper of a vial had been found—but of this he could only say, he had no knowledge, and had not seen it before it was produced in court.

One fact had been proved, and only one. That he would explain, and his house-keeper would confirm the statement. A witness had testified that some one had gone to the bed-room of the house-keeper on the night in question. He was ready to admit that it was himself. He had been subject for much of his life to sudden fits of illness; he had been seized with one on that occasion, and had gone to procure her assistance in lighting a fire. She had returned with him to his room for that purpose, he having waited for a minute in the passage, while she put on her clothes.—This would account for the momentary disappearance of the light. After remaining a few minutes in his room, and finding himself better, he had dismissed her, and retired to bed, from which he had not risen when he was informed of the death of the guest.

Such was the prisoner's address, which produced a powerful effect. It was delivered in a firm and impressive manner, and from the simple and artless manner of the man, perhaps not one present doubted his entire innocence.

The house-keeper was now introduced and examined by the counsel of the prisoner. She had not heard any part of the statement of Smith, nor a single word of the trial. Her story confirmed all he had said.

To this succeeded her cross-examination by the counsel for the prosecution. One circumstance had made a deep impression on his mind—that was, that while the prisoner and the house-keeper were in the room of the former, something like a door had obstructed the light of the candle, so that the witness testified to the fact, but could not see it. What was this obstruction? There was no door—nothing in the room which could account for this. But the witness was positive that something like a door did for a moment come between the window and the candle. This needed explanation. The house-keeper was the person that could give it. Desiring to probe this matter in the end to the bottom, but not wishing to excite her alarm, he began by asking her a few unimportant questions, and among others, where the candle stood when she was in Mr. Smith's room.

"In the centre of the room," she replied. "Well, was the closet, or cupboard, or whatever you call it, opened once or twice while it stood there?" "She made no reply."

"Would the door of the closet make any noise in opening?" "None."

"Are you certain?" "I am."

"Have you ever opened it yourself, or only seen Mr. Smith open it?" "I never opened it myself."

"Who did?" "Mr. Smith, always."

At this moment, the house-keeper chanced to cast her eyes towards Mr. Smith, the prisoner. A cold, damp sweat stood upon his brow, and his face had lost all its color; he appeared a living image of death. She no sooner saw him than she shrieked and fainted. The consequence of her answer flashed across her mind. She had been so thoroughly deceived by the manner of the advocate, and the little importance he had seemed to attach to her statements, that she had been led, by one question to another, till she had told him all he wanted to know.

She was obliged to be taken from the court, and a physician who was present was requested to attend her. At this time the solicitor for the prosecution (answering to our State's Attorney,) left the court, but no one knew for what purpose. Presently the physician came into court, and stated that it would be impossible for the house-keeper to resume her seat in the box short of an hour or two.

It was almost twelve in the day. Lord Mansfield, having directed that the jury be accommodated with a room, where they could be kept by themselves, adjourned the court two hours. The prisoner, in the meantime, was remanded to jail.

It was between four and five o'clock, when the judge resumed his seat upon the bench. The prisoner was again placed at the bar, and the house-keeper brought in and led to the box. The court-room was crowded to excess, and an awful silence pervaded the place.

The cross-examining counsel again addressed the house-keeper. "I have had but a few more questions to ask you," said he, "take heed how you answer, for your life hangs upon a thread."

"Do you know this stopper?" "I do."

"To whom does it belong?" "To Mr. Smith."

"When did you last see it?" "On the night of Mr. Thompson's death."

At that moment the solicitor entered the court, bringing with him upon a tray, a watch, two money bags, a jewel case, and a bottle of the same manufacture of the stopper, and having a cork in it. The tray was placed on the table in sight of the prisoner and the witness, and from that moment no doubt remained in the mind of any man present of the guilt of the prisoner.

A few words will bring this melancholy tale to its close. The house where the murder had been committed was between nine and ten miles distant. The solicitor, as soon as the cross-examination of the house-keeper had discovered the existence of the closet, and its situation, had set off on horseback, with two Sheriff's officers, and after pulling down a part of the wall, had detected this important concealment.

The search was well rewarded; the whole of the property belonging to Mr. Thompson was found there, amounting in value to some thousand pounds; and to leave no room for doubt, a bottle was discovered which the medical men instantly pronounced to contain the very identical poison which had caused the death of the unfortunate Thompson. The result was too obvious to need explanation.

It scarcely need be added, that Smith was convicted and executed, and brought to his awful punishment by his own means. Had he said nothing—had he not persisted in calling a witness to prove his innocence, he might have escaped. But God had evidently left him to work out his own ruin, as a just reward of his awful crime.

A Very Tough Story.

The following story is told by that renowned wag, John Phoenix, of the California Pioneer. The reader will see that it records the verdict of a "coroner's inquest," and in other particulars, bears a strong resemblance to some of the tough stories which our opponents have circulated against the republican party in the State.

Dr. Tushmaker was not regularly bred as a physician or surgeon, but he possessed, naturally, a strong mechanical genius, and a fine appetite; and finding his teeth of great service in gratifying the latter propensity, he concluded that he could do

more good in the world, and create more happiness therein, by putting the teeth of the inhabitants in good order, than in any other way; so he became a dentist.

He was the man that first invented the method of placing small cog-wheels in the back teeth, for the more perfect mastication of food; and he claimed to be the original discoverer of that method of fitting cavities with a kind of putty, which, becoming hard directly, causes the teeth to ache so grievously, that it has to be pulled thereby giving the dentist two successive fees for the same job.

Tushmaker was one day seated in his office in the city of Boston, when a stout old fellow, named Byles, presented himself to have a back tooth drawn.

The dentist seated his patient in the chair of torture, and opening his mouth, discovered there an enormous tooth, the right hand side, about as large as he afterwards expressed it as a "Polygot Bible." "I shall have trouble with this tooth," thought Tushmaker; but he clapped on his heaviest forceps, and pulled. It didn't come. Then he tried the trustworth, exerting his utmost strength, but the tooth wouldn't come.

"Go away from here and return in a week," said Tushmaker, "and I will draw that tooth out or know the reason why."

Byles got up, clapped a handkerchief to his jaw and put forth.

The dentist went to work, and in three days he invented an instrument, which, he was confident would pull anything. It was a combination of the lever, pulley, wheel and axle, inclined plane, wedge and screw. The castings were made, and the machine put in the office, over an iron chair, rendered perfectly stationary by iron rods going down into the foundations of the granite building.

In a week, old Byles returned, and was clamped into the iron chair, the forceps connected with the machine attached firmly to the tooth, and Tushmaker, stationing himself in the rear, took hold of a lever four feet long.

He turned it slightly—old Byles gave a groan and lifted his right leg. Another turn, another groan and higher "went old Byles' right leg again."

A Curious Sermon.

[The Brandon (Miss.) Register reports the following curious sermon preached at the town of Waterproofs, not far from Brandon.]

I may say to you, my breathing, that I am not a educated man, an "I am not one of them as believes that education is necessary for a Gospel minister, for I believe the Lord educates his preachers just as he wants 'em to be educated, an' although I say it, yet in the State of Indiana, where I live, there's no man as gits a bigger congregation for what I gits.

Thar may be some here to-day, my breathing, as don't know what persuasion I am ov. Well, I may say to you, my breathing, that I'm a Hard Shell Baptist, but I'd rather have a hard shell as no shell at all. You see me here to-day, my breathing, and although I've been a preacher of the Gospel for twenty years, an' although I'm caping of the flat-bottom that lies at your landing, I am not proud, my breathing.

I'm not gwine to tell you a strackly whar my text may be found; suffice it to say, it's in the 1st of the Bible, and you'll find it somewhere between the first chapter of the book of Generations, and the last chapter of the book of Revelations, and ef you'll go and search the Scriptures, as I have searched the Scriptures, you'll not only find my text there, but a great many other texts as will do you good to read, and my text when you shall find it, to read this:

"And he played on the harp of a thousand strings—spirits of jest men made perfect."

My text, breathing, leads me to speak of spirits. Now that's a great many kind of spirits in the world—in the first place, there's the spirits as some folks call ghosts, and then there's the spirits as some folks call liquors. I've got as good an article of them kind ov spirits on my flat-bottom as ever was fished down the Mississippi River, but that's a great many other kind of spirits, for the text says— "He played on a harp of a thousand strings, spirits of jest men made perfect."

But I'll tell you the kind ov spirits as is ment in the text: it's fire. That's the kind of spirits as is ment in the text, my breathing. Now that's a great many kind of fire in the world. In the first place, there's the common sort, you light cigar or pipe with and then there's the fire and gun fire, fire before your ready, and fire and fail back and many other kind of fire, for the text says: "He played on a harp of a thousand strings, spirits of jest men made perfect."

But I'll tell you the kind of fire as is ment in the text, my breathing—it's hell fire, an' that's the kind of fire as a great many ov you'll come to, ef you don't better nor what you have been doing—for "He played on a harp of a thousand strings, spirits of jest men made perfect."

Now the different sort of fire in the world may be likened unto the different persuasion of Christians in the world. In the first place we have the Piscalpines, an' they are a high sailin' and a high falutin' set, and they may be likened unto the turkey buzzard that flies up into the air, and he goes up and up, and up and up, till he looks no bigger nor your finger nail, and the fast thing you know he comes down and down, and is a fillin' himself on the carcass of a dead hearse by the side of the road, an' "He played on a harp of a thousand strings, spirits of jest men made perfect."

An' then there's the Methodists, and they may be likened unto the squari, runnin' up into a tree, for the Methodists believes in gwine from one degree of grace to another, and finally on to perfection, and the squari goes up and up, and up, and then he jumps from limb to limb, and branch to branch, and the fast thing you know he falls, and down he cums kor-ban-ass, and that's like the Methodists, for they is a fallin' from grace, an' "He played on a harp of a thousand strings—spirits of jest men made perfect."

There is no moral at all to this story, and it is possible the circumstances may have become slightly exaggerated. Of course there can be no doubt of the truth of the main incidents.

What brings your Southern men always sucking cigars," said a young lady to a creole miss. "Yes, but your northern men, in Maine, you know, suck herring," was the quick reply.

The Poet's Column.

A HOME PICTURE.

BY FRANCIS D. GAZE.

Ben Fisher had finished his hard day's work, and sat at his cottage door.

His good wife, Kate, sat by his side, and the moonlight danced on the floor; the moonlight danced on the cottage floor, it beams were as clear and bright.

When he and Kate, two years before, talked love in her meadow light.

Ben Fisher had never a pipe of clay, and never a dram drank he.

She loved at home with his wife to stay, and he chattered merrily;

Right merrily chattered they on the white, and he slept on her breast,

While a cherub roge with a rosy smile, and his father, 's knee found rest.

Ben told her how fast his potatoes grew, and the corn in the lower field,

And the wheat on the hill was now to seed, and promised a glorious yield;

A glorious yield in the harvest time, and his mother, she doing fair,

And Anna was about at school.

Ben slowly passed his toil-worn hand through his locks of grayish brown—

"Well you, Kate, what I think," said he, "I'll be the happiest folks in town."

Melting Accident.

That form, the fairest one I've seen;

His love, just like the days, was warm—

The mercury at 97.

"Oh, William," she cried,

"My love its top degree is getting;

"This gold, its truth a solemn getting;

She bowed her head upon his breast,

And as her form he warmly pressed,

They melted in his arms together.

They melted in his arms together.