

STORY OF THE MILL

Tom Dennis Was a Victim of Rum and Circumstances.

THE EVENING WORLD "POET."

of "A Yankee Justice," "A Frocked Knight," etc.

A strange man was old Ichabod Crane, near old fellow was he; his hair was white and his eyes were black, his mouth looked like an expressionless track piece of old crockery.

A foot of a hill near his tumbledown mill, lived in an old red house;

no one around, at least above ground, seen on the premises anything round

Ichabod and his dog Bowse.



ICHABOD AND HIS DOG BOWSE.

og was a great brindle creature, as fierce

ugly as he could well be; arched the yard by day, and at night

is shut in the house with baying to fright

make the late passer-by flee.

Ichabod did his own cooking and mend-

ing, faithfully tended his mill;

seldom he spoke, and then 'twas a

croak, half-strangled ox that has turned in

the yoke, plainly against his own will.

He went not to church or political meetings,

voted on 'lection day;

ribbed for no paper, nor cut any caper

showed he cared the worth of a paper

if happened around any way.

He stored in the village some three miles

away, went once a week for supplies;

all the small boys ceased their jabber

and noise, stretched him in silence, forgetting their

eyes, big and terrified eyes.

Country, you know, people learn all

about smallest affairs of their neighbors,

intrusively still hung over the mill;

he man in the red house under the hill,

pite of their prying labors.

True to their nature as Yankees, of

course, in the truth was hid then they guessed;

same to be said his left hand was red

the blood of a victim of his long dead,

in somewhere away out West.

Suspicion arose because his left hand

covered year in and year out;

he had lots of gold hid under the

ground, cellar, or somewhere, in value untold,

neighbors had not the least doubt.

Thus an unanny shadow was thrown

and the mill and the old red house;

it in the night did the footstep grow

light, woe belated, 'till well out of sight,

ugh all was as still as a mouse.

Dennis, a shiftless and useless young

chap, in the village returning mellow,

late in the night, with one eye shut

tight, visible fruit of a hot barroom fight

towed by another fellow—

was woe's hours with a heavy jag on,

was talking plain sailing to find;

was truth to say he was "over the

bay," wind and tide running the other way,

was signs flying behind.

When he'd borrowed from some farmer's

roost, if calmly despatched;

out hid from view, though its blood had

soaked through, as taking it straight to his own T

Y Draw, in whom he longed to be mated,

came near the silent, gloomy red

house, he shade of the wood-clad hill,

leopard's song to help him along;

id a queer notion that something was

wrong in him or the house by the mill.

Light light was burning in two of the

rooms, as he looked so to his ken;

he saw figures quick moving about,

then he heard talking that rose to a

shout; he thought he had "rot 'em agin."

sol's sharp crack came echoing back,

then another! and then

jumped o'er the wall with his chicken

and all.

To reach home as quick as he could, his lumber legs bent and over he went, and on the earth's boom his head made a dent. As if 'twas a beetle of wood, the shock was too much for his befuddled brain.

He lay in a stupor for hours, and it was daylight ere the unlicky wight rubbed his head and sat up, a hard-looking sight. And tested his walking powers. At last he got home and staggered to bed; the chicken he'd lost on the road, where it made a meal fine for some hungry canine.

While Tom from looking too long on the wine was trying in sleep to unload, a farmer came down with a big load of rye that morning, and stopped at the mill. To have his grain ground into flour he was bound; but the mill locked and no one around, and the water-wheel standing still. Such a thing had not happened in many a year.

And the farmer thought it was queer; he looked at the house, all was still as a mouse. No sign of the miller or big brindle Bowse; the man felt a shadow of fear. In vain he halloed, but the echoes replied in a mocking sort of a way; then he walked up the path inviting the wrath of the dog, in his hand a hickory lath. He thought it might come into play. He knocked on the door, no answer came back. From his feet he stamped off the mud; then as he turned 'round he saw on the ground what made his face suddenly turn white from brown—

A ghastly pool of fresh blood. He peered through the window, and saw the room looked as if a cyclone had been there; the furniture tipped, the rag carpet ripped. And looking as if it in blood had been dipped— He saw with a horrified stare,

In vain he halloed, then staying no longer to gaze at the scene, he quickly un hitched his old mare, jumped in with a bound, not looking around, and sent the astonished old mare o'er the ground. In a way that made people stare, the indignant old mare showed a clean pair of heels, and settled right down to her work; up hill and down dale, with straight neck and tail. While the farmer hung on to the dashboard quite pale, she thundered with many a jerk.

With a rattling bang and a clatter and jingle, straight into the village he rode, and down the main street, at a pace hard to beat. He went vainly trying to sit on the seat, and stopped at Squire Deacon's abode. The farmer related the terrible news to the quietly pompous old squire, who heard him all through, hoisted in a fresh chew; then sent for the constable, Jonathan New, and slowly began to perspire. The Squire, the farmer and constable started the case to investigate; the news spread round of what had been found. And soon half the town arrived on the ground, and gathered around the big gate. The constable broke down the heavy oak door, and into the house they all went;

There was blood on the floor, the walls and the door; on the walk to the gate they also found more; to the mill their steps then they bent. The crimson trail led them outside the old mill, and ended beside the deep flume, through which the stream roared and rapidly poured; of course here the miller's dead body'd been lowered into a dark watery tomb. A motive they sought for the terrible deed, and found it beyond the least doubt; they saw in their quest the miller's strong chest wide open and riddled of all it possessed. The mousy bags turned inside out. These amateur slouch-hounds went hunting around to find of the villain some trace, and people looked wise as if the disguise of the villain would fall if it came 'neath their eyes. No matter how guileless his face,

While the search for the villain went on Tom Dennis was snoring profoundly in bed. Oblivious quite to the deeds of the night, or the scenes exciting that came with the light, round the mill and the old house red. But Tom's reputation was none of the best, though he never'd been caught in crime; so hunting around the detectives soon found a place by the wall where he lay on the ground the night before for a time. They found out the hour when he left the barroom and started his homeward road; that when he arrived it was half past five, and that he with fright was more dead than alive. And also had on a big load. They started to interview Tom right away, and found him in bed fast asleep;



TOM ARRESTED FOR MURDER.

'Twas a hard undertaking, but after much shaking he befuddled fellow showed signs of awak-

ing. At last he sat up in a bewildered way, abstractedly scratching his head where it had been hurt when it struck in the dirt. And then they all saw that his coat and his shirt were dyed with blood a deep red. To the stern and threatening questions asked Tom muttered half-foolish replies. So they took him along under double guard strong; that blood showed plainly that something was wrong. With Tom in the officers' eyes. He had no idea what all the fuss meant, and quietly went to the jail; and the people were glad the murderer had been caught red-handed—a villain so bad should speedily swing without fail.

The next day Tom Dennis began to find out what a serious scrape he was in; he thought of his fight in the barroom that night, and of the poor chicken he'd crowded so tight. 'Neath his coat so ragged and thin, whose fowl he had stolen he couldn't make out— There was more than one roost on the wall; he took it, he knew, for his own Tiddy Draw, and its innocent blood had furnished a clue. To land him in jail the next day. Then they tried to extort a confession from him regarding the deed, but he sullenly said his clothes were not red. With the blood of the miller, but a chicken's blood, they gave to his story no heed. They asked him whose chicken it was, and what he had done with it when he got home; he thought long and well, but he never could tell. And so he remained in a dark prison cell, supplied with a Bible and oomb.

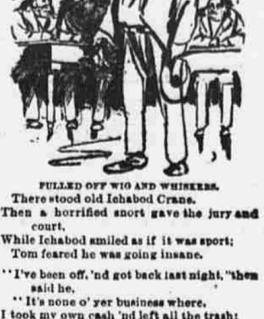
The trial came on and no lawyer had Tom. So the Court picked out one for him: a youth very wise in his own modest eyes, though people generally thought otherwise, and looked on his talents as slim. This wonderful limb of the law went to Tom, where he lay in the dark old jail, and told him his case looked bad on its face, that it showed he was guilty of murder most base. And that he would hang without fail. "But if you'll plead guilty," said he, "and so save a trial's great cost to the State, your neck you may save from the rope and the grave. And get a life sentence; then, if you behave, your pardon may come soon or late." Tom swore he was innocent, that he would die before he would plead to a lie; but the gallows-tree stared in his face, he grew scared. That he would plead guilty at last he declared. He didn't feel ready to die.

The day for the trial at last came along, and Tom was marched in to report; the room was so packed that the floor fairly cracked. And many a head by the baliff was whacked in keeping due order in court. Twelve good men and true in the jury-box sat. And looked at Tom Dennis askance; 'twas easy to see they would quickly agree, and that of the murderer convicted he'd be; Tom saw it himself at a glance. When the proper time came in the order of things the fearful indictment was read; Tom Dennis arose with red eyes and nose and stared at the jury made up of his foes with delect, unbending head. "Are you guilty or not of the charge as here read?" Was the question propounded to him; as he stood there alone like a statue of stone, his white lips gave vent to an agonized groan. As he faced the alternative grim. He gazed at the jury, no mercy he saw; at the Judge, no pity was there; his pleading blue eye sought his lawyer near by. Who winked his advice that he plead to a lie; his heart sank down in despair. An innocent victim of circumstance strange, he saw that for him was no hope; that every man's hand abroad in the land was lifted against him, and that he must stand eye long at the end of a rope.

The only slim chance for escape that he saw was to follow his lawyer's advice; but deep in the grain of Tom Dennis a vein

Of true moral courage unheeded had lain which now to the surface did rise. He threw back his head in a defiant way, and facing the jury near by, "Not guilty!" he cried, and a flash of the pride which graces a hero and none else beside shone forth in his fearless blue eyes. A deep silence fell for a moment on all; Tom's lawyer sank back in his chair and his under lip bit, chagrined at the grit of his client; he felt that his prestige was his certain death-blow then and there. Then just as the trial was ready to move, a man in the audience rose from a seat in the rear, a figure quite queer, and pressing his way up the aisle he drew near where Tom stood facing his foes.

"Before this 'ere trial goes further," said he, "I reckon I've smuthin' to say." When this he declared, the jury all stared, and the Judge frowned down on the man who dared to block the wheels in that way. And then, without noticing how these few words affected the Court, he proceeded: "Tom, here, is all right; I got hum last night. 'Nd Ichabod Crane 'aint defunct, I guess, quite; the proof I kin show ye if needed." He pulled off a wig and some whiskers, and lo!



PULLED OFF WIG AND WHISKERS.

There stood old Ichabod Crane, then a horrified snort gave the jury and court. While Ichabod smiled as if it was sport; Tom feared he was going insane. "I've been off, 'nd got back last night," then said he. "It's none o' yer business where. I took my own cash 'nd left all the trash; 'twas my money, wan't it? 'nd if I was rash it's jest my own business, I'll swear. I couldn't take Bowse, nor leave him behind. So of course he'd got to be killed; I missed the fust shot, he came for me hot, 'nd then we all over the premises fought, 'nd lots of his blood was so spilled. 'I fit with one hand, fer the other is gone, 'nd then he pulled off his old mit; lo a dummy was there; a counterfeit fair; you just should have seen how the people did stare, and whisper 'Lawsez!' and 'Gee whitt!' I tumbled him inter the flume by the mill, 'nd started off on my tramp. 'Nd when I got back last night, it's a fact, I found my door had been splintered and racked. By sum consummit old scamp. I got up this mornin' 'nd started to look both the house and the old mill through, 'nd who should I see a starin' at me. 'Nd lookin' ez crazy as she could well be, but purty black-eyed Tiddy Draw. 'Wall, that is the reason I come here to-day. 'Nd now, havin' had my own say, I want Tom to swear on the Bible right thar, that he'll fight jest ez shy of rum ez a bar, for evermore 'nd a day." He ceased and the room was as silent as death.

A very long breath the Court drew; poor Tom was unmanned, but he laid his great hand on the Bible and swore a big oath that he'd stand by the pledge and his own Tiddy Draw. Then folks made a rush and a hundred warm hands were eagerly stretched out to him. "Three cheers," they all say, "for Tom Dennis, hooray!" The outcast had proven a hero that day, in battle with circumstance grim. Tom's lawyer sneaked off, but Tom did not scold. Then he called for his own Tiddy Draw; they were tied on the spot by the Judge with a knot, that wouldn't unravel or loosen a jot. 'Till death cut the fond tie in two. He found ready hearts to help him to start, and a useful man to become, and he always was glad of his courage that day. That his name was not "Dennis" in more than one way, and that he had got through with rum.

WILLIAM EDWARD PENNER.

PEKIN'S TOY RAILWAY.

A Line Three Miles Long Which Diverts the Chinese Emperor. About two years ago they presented a complete miniature railway to the Emperor through Li Hung Chang, says a Shanghai letter, and the line, which is about three miles long, is laid down within the imperial city. The young Emperor is very much interested in its workings, and spends a great deal of his time in riding to and fro in the beautifully appointed little carriages. He was greatly struck with the toy railway, and his influence upon the recent decrees has been very considerable. The old reactionary party among his advisers were adverse to the miniature line being laid down within the precincts of the sacred city, and it was very near being returned to the donors. But the Government was afraid lest it should give offense to the French, who are greatly feared and respected since they routed and sunk the Chinese fleet at Foochow and inflicted such disastrous defeats upon the Chinese legions in the south. In the end the present was accepted, but the high authorities would not allow any foreigners to have a hand in laying down or working the model railway. The result was when they started the little engine they could not stop it, and great consternation was occasioned to the occupants in the palace by their inability to control the strange contrivance of the foreigners, which dashed along the line till it was pulled up by coming in contact with a mound of earth. Since then, however, a French driver has been procured, and the Emperor is a frequent traveler upon the cars.