

BAXTER SPRINGS NEWS.

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BAXTER SPRINGS, - - KANSAS.

THE OLD CLOCK.

Dingy and brown is the well-worn case,
Where the busy wheels go round,
On the mantle old, in its memorized place,
Ticks the clock with a noisy sound;
How the burnished hands o'er its homely face
Once moved with a leaden creep,
'Twas a sluggish pace, o'er its circled space,
But now 'tis a dismal sweep.
It clicked all day with a steely ring,
It clicked in the midnight hour,
The steady swing of the wall-worn spring
Unclicked its iron power.
The hands still move with a welcome noise,
While softly purrs the cat;
A buzzing fly the dog annoys,
As he growls from the deer-skin mat.
The golden hours that made youth's day
Are dream of boyish fun
Are shorter now, and the shadows play
O'er life's declining sun.
The clock ticks on, in its soulless race,
While the busy wheels go round;
The years are traced on its lettered face
As it clicks with a sober sound.
—N. O. Picayune.

THE VICTIM OF HIS CLOTHES.

By Edward Fielding and Frederick H. Burton.

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CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

At the thought that Drane would be sent, partly on her account, to an island where there might be neither pudding nor tea, Bessie developed symptoms of hysteria which touched Mrs. Bowers' heart.

"Perhaps I could get him committed to Jenkins' Retreat," she said, relenting.

"Where is that?" asked Bessie, catching at a straw.

"It is a private asylum up-town," said Mrs. Bowers, "where they care for mild but hopeless lunatics. I will speak to the judge about it."

"Is it better than that awful island?"

"It is a shade more cheerful," Mrs. Bowers admitted, shutting her lips together firmly.

"Then make the judge send him there," cried Bessie. "Tell him that I will give him ten thousand dollars if he will."

"My dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Bowers, shocked at the girl's ignorance, "there are only a certain number of judges in New York, and you don't want them all."

Drane had observed this conversation, though he could not hear any of it. One can not hear anything in a New York police court. The testimony of tearful innocents given in such places is heard only in Heaven; which is just as well, perhaps, for it may get some attention up there. However, Drane knew that Bessie had been pleading for him; and when Mrs. Bowers approached the judge, the prisoner realized that some amelioration of his condition might be expected.

Mrs. Bowers talked earnestly with the magistrate, and with such good effect that Drane was consigned to Jenkins' Retreat till his friends from Kansas City should arrive. As for the tramp, he went to be fed—to a certain extent.

Mr. Jenkins called his asylum a "retreat," advisedly, because it certainly was not an advance upon any thing hitherto existing in that line of business. Its exterior had all the subdued horror of a fashionable boarding-house where nothing thrives but gaunt respectability. Within it was even worse.

An atmosphere of "references given and required," especially the latter, filled the hall; and through a doorway at the right, could be seen a tomb-like parlor, wherein upon the sarcophagus of a sofa sat the rigid images of two ancient females, evidently patients. They looked out at Drane with a cold severity that made his hair curl.

He had come there in charge of a court officer, and had not been allowed to exchange a word with Bessie, whom Mrs. Bowers had dragged away as soon as the question of commitment had been settled. He felt deserted and friendless, and despite the fact that it was a very warm evening, he shivered as he stood in the hall waiting for Jenkins, of whom the officer had gone in search.

A large number of entertaining and cheerful reflections crowded upon Drane as he stood in the dimly-lighted hall. He wondered, for instance, whether a straight-jacket would be regarded as an essential of absolutely correct evening dress in Mr. Jenkins' retreat. He also had a curiosity to know how often, on an average, the violent lunatics in the establishment overpowered their keepers and slaughtered the less demoted inmates. But, deepest and most important of all, was the question of supper, for the meal which he had appropriated in the bath had ceased to give him satisfactory support, and it might be a long time before he had a chance to steal another.

Jenkins was slow in coming; and Drane got more and more nervous. He had an unusually strong natural horror of lunatics. Not that their presence is particularly agreeable to any body—except a Jenkins at so much a head—but Drane was actually superstitious about it. He had a feeling that the germs of mania were floating in the air around him, and that he might break out with the disease any minute.

He wondered at being left thus alone. A man who had been judiciously decided to be crazy should have a keeper. Then he perceived in the shadow of the door a large, ungainly man who seemed to be on watch. He stood in a kind of niche, and had thus escaped Drane's observation when he entered. This man's eye so glared upon him out of the darkness that Drane's nerves began to dance in a manner that threatened to fit him very quickly for permanent occupancy of the retreat. He felt that he must escape from that man's observation or relieve the oppressive silence by a howl.

He compromised the matter by stepping into the parlor. At this, both the ancient and unfortunate ladies assumed an air of modest reserve which was quite frightful to see. Presently one of them drew out her handkerchief and began to weep softly, but with evident determination to do the subject full justice before she got through.

"Madame," said Drane, gently, "if my presence affects you to tears, I will withdraw."

"Do not do so on my account," she said, "it is not your fault that you have revived a sorrow that has long been buried in my breast."

Drane regretted having been the cause of such a joyless resurrection, and he ventured to murmur words to that effect.

"It does not matter," she said. "My conduct must seem strange to you. I can hardly explain it without telling you the story of my life. There is a romance in it," and she brightened appreciably. "You shall hear the melancholy narrative."

"Far be it from me to intrude upon your confidence," said Drane, endeavoring to get away. But she fixed him with



THE ROMANCE IN HER LIFE.

her eye and he sat back into his seat. Then she drew a chair near to his and between him and the door.

"You resemble him strongly," said she. "The same noble features, the same soulful eyes, the same pallor, indicative of the same sad fate. Are you a genius? Do you write poems of the soul as he did?"

Drane groaned.

"I knew it," she went on. "Listen. We were destined for each other. There was a small matter of property depending upon our union—but never mind. He seemed to avoid me at first, but at length fate threw us together. Returning to his room one morning very early he endeavored to enter the old-fashioned clock at the head of the first flight of stairs under the impression that it was the door of his apartment. It was the absent-mindedness of genius. Ah, well! he and the clock fell down the stairs locked in each other's arms, and when they picked him up one of his limbs was broken. I came to nurse him. For seven, long weeks I was his constant, his only companion. I read to him, I talked to him—and then—and then—"

"He died?"

"No; he became a hopeless lunatic. I have never loved since then; but now your face brings it all back to me. Excuse the outburst of my feelings."

She laid her head on his shoulder, and cried into his collar. Drane could feel his hair begin to turn gray but he shut his teeth together with resolution. The other fellow had stood it seven weeks before he went out of his head, and Drane believed that he could last till Jenkins came.

In fact he did; but it was a close shave. Jenkins was a tall and greedy man, with hollow cheeks and a cheerless smile. At his appearance the woman with a romance in her life vanished in charge of her companion, who proved to be the matron of the house. Jenkins did not care to question the new comer. He was satisfied that all charges would be promptly paid, and he at once escorted Drane to an apartment on the third floor. Here the unfortunate young man secured some toast and tea, which, however, did not wholly sustain him against the horrors of the night.

Jenkins made a casual inspection of Drane's pockets before leaving the room.

"You will excuse this formality," said he, "but the man who occupied this room before you brought in a piece of rope with which he hanged himself over the headboard of the bed before morning. We have had many cases of the kind. Good night."

This was a cheerful subject of reflection to take to bed with one, and it was still more consoling to hear the key turned on the outside of the door.

"I believe that I shall actually go crazy before morning," said Drane as he stretched himself upon the bed. It was insufferably hot. The windows were carefully barred and screened in a way which not only prevented the suicidal egress of Jenkins' boarders but denied ingress to an adequate supply of the free air of Heaven. After making this discovery Drane returned to his bed, where he was soon dreaming that the

dangling heels of his unhappy predecessor were still knocking against the headboard.

From this nightmare he awoke with a shiver of horror. He sat up and listened. There was certainly a strange noise in the heavy air. Sometimes it was like subdued voices; then it was sighing; and again it was a gurgling groan. For some minutes Drane could not summon up the resolution to investigate, but at length he arose, and quaking with horror he endeavored to trace the disquieting sound to its source.

It led him to a door which apparently separated him from the next apartment. What ghastly mystery lay behind it? He hardly dared to think. He listened, and the gurgling sighs made themselves plainly audible. Doubtless some unfortunate was leaving the Retreat by the method Jenkins had described, and had failed to arrange his noose in an entirely satisfactory manner. For what seemed a long time, Drane quaked and hesitated, not daring to penetrate further into the secret. Then with a sudden resolution he seized the knob and threw his force upon it.

The door opened easily. It revealed an empty closet, with a set bowl at the side, into which a thin stream of water was trickling, and running down the escape pipe with the noise which had so horrified him. Alarm gave place to wrath. He vowed all sorts of vengeance upon every body who had even remotely contributed to his present evil plight. Every body but Bessie. He forgave her, and in thinking of her he fell quietly asleep and was not wakened till the light of morning streamed into the room.

Breakfast was served to such of Jenkins' boarders as could be trusted outside their cages, at eight o'clock. After partaking of that frugal meal Drane was permitted to spend a little while in the parlor. It had no other occupant at first except a short, stout man with an abundance of stiff, curly hair who sat at a table writing. Every time he paused in that labor he stuck his pen behind his ear; and when he was ready to resume his task he picked up a fresh one, forgetting what he had done with the other. The consequence was that in a few minutes the bushy hair over his ear was full of pen-holders, and there remained only the one which he was using. Presently that joined the rest, and then the little man, after hunting about the table a few minutes, gave it up and pushed his paper from him.

"The servants here are very careless," said he to Drane. "They always fail to provide me with pens, although they know the importance of my work. And for myself, I am so absent-minded, do you know, that my forgetfulness has been the ruin of my life. It is true."

He leaned toward Drane impressively, and continued: "I am a genius. I once wrote the greatest poem extant. Then I mislaid it. For months I searched for the manuscript, but without finding a trace of it. My cursed forgetfulness! Then I tried to remember what was in it—my forgetfulness again. I couldn't think of a single line. I could remember only that it surpassed Homer, Dante or Shakespeare. The thought that I had thus cast away undying fame by mere carelessness undermined my health, until they brought me to this sanitarium. Confound it, one might as well be honest about it. There's no sanitarium about it. It's a lunatic asylum, and for the sake of veracity let's admit it. Here I sit scribbling away every day, trying vainly to hit upon the single inspiration which for a moment raised

me to an intellectual height no man had ever before attained. Thus far in vain. But who knows—who knows! What's your own special brand of lunacy?"

"I am a sane man," said Drane, half angrily.

The short man shook his head.

"Wait till you've been here a while," said he. "Then you'll dream dreams, and see visions. I was sane enough, too, but the atmosphere of this place—you don't know what it is. In two days you'll have delusions. You'll see things that aren't there—serpents of various hues; zebras with their stripes running from head to tail, and revolving around their bodies like the rings of Saturn. That's why they've put me here. They're jealous of me. They don't want me to remember the great work which I wrote but can not find. It's a plot—"

The short man was getting violent, and presently an attendant came and removed him, to Drane's great relief.

In the course of that day Drane encountered several interesting maniacs of a mild order, but no serious incident occurred until the evening. Then, as he was standing in the hall just after supper, he heard Jenkins talking to the matron, and pointing to him.

"Paresis," said Jenkins. "You want to watch him carefully."

And Drane took that delightful suggestion to his apartment, and meditated upon it. Was it possible that he was really insane? Were the strange events of the past few days which he seemed to remember, in reality only hallucinations?

Who could determine, if left wholly to himself, without a single visible link between him and the past, whether that past had any real existence? In short, Drane didn't know whether he was crazy or not. He watched himself for symptoms. Did his hand tremble? Or his heart beat too fast or too slow? He enjoyed a nice case of hypochondriacism till long past midnight, and when he fell asleep, the zebras described by the forgetful genius were ordinary and reasonable animals compared to those which pranced through his dreams.

But the morrow brought a great event, no less than a call from Bessie. She came unattended, but alas! the matron was present during the entire interview. This not only prevented Drane from enjoying the conversation to the full, but it also made it impossible, or at least unwise, for him to ask her name. So he called her Bessie, and she made no objection.

Only for a moment in the hall were they able to be alone. Then Bessie hastily passed Drane a note, and a number of small, heavy, mysterious articles, wrapped in a handkerchief. He had barely concealed these things in his pocket when the matron approached.

"But your name?" whispered Drane, hastily.

"I am here as Mrs. Lawrence Drane," she replied, with a blush. "Only the wives of patients can visit them on ordinary days."

And she hurried away, leaving Drane in delicious perplexity.

In his room he examined the note and the bundle. The former proved to be an elaborate plan for his escape written out with the detail of a French detective novel. The latter was a great lot of keys of all sorts and sizes. They had been taken from the doors in Mrs. Bowers' house, as the note explained, and were of course designed to open doors in the Retreat.

Drane studied the plan of escape religiously. He noted every place where he should go, and the number of the particular stair where he must breathe in order to avoid detection. In some way Bessie had discovered that the guard at the door was changed at midnight. Drane was to steal softly from his room at 11:30. As near that hour as he could guess he stole, according to directions, having punched the key from his lock and opened his door with one of the bunch Bessie had brought.

He crept down the stair keeping in mind the various shrewd details of the plot; where he must hide to let the guard pass him; how he must do this, and the other thing which the ingenuity of the girl had devised.

And now he stood at the bottom of the lower stair. The guard was asleep with his head against the wall. This, too, was according to programme. Drane could easily have passed him to his place of concealment, but suddenly a new and simpler phase of the problem struck him. He coughed. The guard did not move. Then he went up to the fellow and shook him. The guard awoke.

"Here you!" he cried, sleepily; "go back to your cage."

Drane seized him by the neck; dragged him to the parlor door; pitched him head first into the room; and before the man could recover his balance or his howls could bring assistance, Drane had opened the outside door, and was cavorting down the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRIZE ON HIS HEAD.

No sprinter ever made better time than did Mr. Drane in his first run from the Retreat. A medal at the end of a track is not half the inducement to speed that a pursuer at the beginning is. If Lawrence had been timed by a stop-watch it would probably have appeared that he had broken all records at the end of the first hundred yards; and yet it seemed to him that he was not running half fast enough. The street was absolutely deserted, but he came presently to the corner of an avenue that was brilliantly lighted and lively with many passers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Life Lost Through Red Tape.

Recently in Spain a man was executed for murder twenty-four hours after a reprieve had been actually signed by the Queen and forwarded. The affair has occasioned so much excitement in Spain that the Government has drawn up a bill to give a telegraph message in such cases the force of a formal written order. In this case the authorities charged with the execution were notified by telegraph that the reprieve had been signed and was then on its way, but they insisted that they were powerless to delay the execution in the absence of formal documents.—Frank Leslie's Weekly.

A Telephone Signal Needed.

Those who have spent a half hour or so trying to ring up a man at the other end of a telephone line, and have found out after much effort that there was no one there, would feel better if there was on the market something which would at once, when a box was rung up, give a signal stating that there was no one to receive a message; and how convenient if some attachment could be devised for communicating the time the person would return to receive the message.

A WALL OF FIRE

The Standard Oil Warehouse at Louisville Fired in a Peculiar Manner—Five Acres of Burning Oil—A Number of Fatalities.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., July 1.—Five acres of fire was the awful sight witnessed at the Standard Oil refinery at Fifth and C streets yesterday morning. The immense structure was blazing at every point and the heat was so intense that even 200 yards away persons were overcome. The following is a list of the casualties:

Andrew McDonald, aged 12, badly burned about the face and breast, but will recover.

John McDonald, aged 14, literally roasted alive; can live but a short time.

Dan O'Neil, aged 12, terribly burned and will die.

John Kline, aged 22, frightfully burned all over the body and can not possibly recover.

Severn Skene, aged 41, terribly burned but will probably survive.

J. S. Pettigrew, aged 45, badly, though not fatally, burned about the head and breast.

Three little boys, Danny O'Neill and Andrew and John McDonald, were walking along the railroad track when the explosion occurred. They were slightly to the east of the tank, and the wind blew the blaze directly down upon them. Shrieking with pain, they impulsively jumped backward and into the clear space on the western side of the track. Their clothes were on fire and they ran down the track with the bright blaze streaming after them. As soon as the bystanders recovered from the shock occasioned by their horrible condition they pursued the boys. Covering them with coats they extinguished the flames and laid them under a tree nearby. When an attempt was made to remove O'Neil's clothes, a great piece of flesh peeled off his face and body at a slight touch. He was unconscious and never uttered a cry.

The fire broke out at 8:45 o'clock and was in many respects a remarkable one. The refinery is on the east side of the Louisville & Nashville railroad track, but the tanks are scattered along it on both sides. Last Saturday a tank of crude oil came in on a flat car from Cleveland, and it was to be turned into the refinery vats. Some of the workmen thought the iron tank was too hot for such a thing to be done with safety. After consultation it was postponed in the hope that the weather would be cooler. It did not prove to be, however, and it became necessary to run the oil out of the car tank to another one in the yard. Inspector Severn Skeene took John Pettigrew and another workman, whose name could not be learned, with him and they climbed on the car. They mounted to the manhead and were about to unscrew the cap when they felt that there was a tremendous pressure from the inside against it. At first they decided not to open it, but finally they changed their minds and did so. In an instant there was a dull puff as the vapor escaped, filling the air all around. The gas, as it is known, is heavier than the air and it sank to the ground, spreading out all over the locality and moving with the wind. Almost in a twinkling it reached one of the sheds under which there was a fire. There was a flash as the inflammable vapor ignited, and immediately afterwards there was a tremendous explosion. The tank was blown to pieces and the hundreds of gallons of burning oil were scattered all over the great works.

A wall of fire 300 feet high and nearly 900 feet long moved with lightning rapidity to the buildings. In less time than it takes to relate it the cannery house, filled with thousands of gallons of canned oil, the cooper shop, the carpenter shops, the pump and engine house, the filling and lubricating house, the storage house, the paint and glue houses and 900 feet of platform were all ablaze and burned furiously. The loss is about \$30,000; no insurance.

ELECTRICAL STORM.

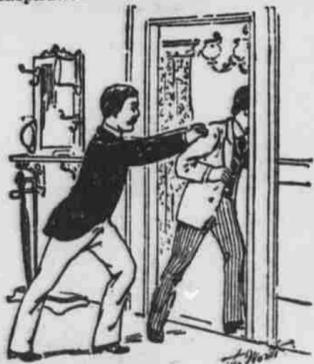
Havoc in Two States By Atmospheric Disturbance.

WHEELING, W. Va., July 1.—One of the most terrific electrical storms ever witnessed here visited the city yesterday afternoon at five o'clock and lasted about an hour. The storm came from the southwest and accompanying it was a tremendous rainfall, flooding the streets and many cellars in the lower part of the city.

The lightning played havoc all through the city, but no lives are reported lost. Lightning ran into the telephone exchange in the fourth story of the People's Bank building and set the tower on fire. The entire fire department was called out. All telephone communications in the city will be stopped for ten days pending repairs. Lightning struck other points in the city, but no serious damage was done.

In Canton, O., the heaviest rain storm in years occurred, flooding the principal streets and stopping all traffic for several hours. Lightning struck several business houses and badly demolished the residence of Herbert Saxton and the steeple in the German Evangelical Church. No fatality is yet reported.

At Columbus, O., the city and vicinity was visited by a fierce electric storm. Lightning struck in fully fifty places in the city, but only two persons are known to have been killed. Chapman Stultz, a laborer, ran for shelter under a shade tree and was killed. William Wise, aged seventeen, was killed while standing in the door of his home on Gift street. A great many roofs and chimneys were damaged.



ESCAPED FROM THE KEEPER.

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