WHERE IS THE FLAG OF ENGLAND?

A REPLY TO RUDYARD KIPLING.

London Truth.

And the winds of the world made answer,
North, south, and east and west;
"Wherever there's wealth to covet,
Or land that can be possess'd;
Wherever are savage races
To cozen, coerce and scare,
We shall find the vaunted ensign,
For the English flag is there!

"Aye, it waves o'er the blazing hovels
Whence African victims fly,
To be shot by explosive bullets,
Or to wretchedly starve and die!
And where the beach-comber harries
The isles of the Southern sea,
At the peak of his hellish vessel,
'Tis the English flag flies free.

"The Maori full oft hath cursed it
With his bitterest dying breath;
And the Arab has hissed his hatred
As he spits at its folds in death.
The hapless Fellah has feared it
On Tel-el-Kebir's parched plain,
And the Zulu's blood has stained it
With a deep, indelible stain.

"It has floated o'er scenes of pillage,
It has flaunted o'er deeds of shame,
It has waved o'er the fell marauder,
As he came with sword and flame.
It has looked upon ruthless slaughter,
And massacres dire and grim;
It has heard the shrieks of the victims
Drown even the Jingo hymn.

"Where is the Flag of England?
Seek the lands where the natives rot;
Where decay and assured extinction
Must soon be the people's lot.
Go! search for the once glad islands,
Where disease and death are rife,
And the greed of a callous commerce
Now battens on human life!

"Where is the Flag of England?
Go! sail where rich galleons come
With shoddy and 'loaded' cottons,
And beer and Bibles and rum.
Go, too, where brute force has triumphed,
And hypocrisy makes its lair;
And your question will find its answer,
For the Flag of England is there!"

THE DEMON HAND.

BY DAN DE QUILLE.

I.

THE ARTIST'S STORY.

About three years ago I was on a sketching tour in the Swiss Alps. At the town of Thun, which is about a mile from the lake of the same name, I made the acquaintance of Silvio Baroli, an Italian about my own age, and likewise an artist engaged in sketching the scenery of the country. Thun being a town of about 5,000 inhabitants, and swarming besides in summer with tourists, because of its being the principal starting place for travelers in the Oberland, my Italian friend proposed that we seek more quiet quarters somewhere near the lake.

In a day or two we found what we were in search of in a lone and quiet chatelet on the southwestern shore of the lake. We had every accommodation and convenience we required in our new home, and from it in a short walk could reach the picturesque region lying about the Stockhorn and Niesen mountains. Also in less than an hour one of the little steamers plying on the lake would carry us to any point we wished to visit.

During our jaunts it occasionally happened that I had finished my task of transferring to canvas the bit of landscape to which I had taken a fancy, while Silvio was still at work upon the view he had selected. At such times I would wait until he had completed his picture, standing behind him and chatting. The first time I did so I saw to my surprise that he was working with his left hand. I remarked that he was the first left-handed artist I had ever seen at work.

Silvio merely said that he found that his left hand better obeyed his will and more accurately put upon the canvas his thought than did his right.

On a subsequent occasion I observed to my astonishment that while his left hand was as delicately formed as the hand of a woman, with tapering and shapely fingers, his right hand was a huge and clumsy paw, with knotty and crooked fingers, armed with nails thick and pointed like those of a beast of prey. Further, I saw that the back of the right hand and wrist were covered with a shaggy growth of red hair. A coarser looking hand I had never seen.

At the moment Silvio's whole soul was in his work, but turning presently he evidently noted the direction of my gaze, and perhaps my look of astonishment, for he

WHY THIS IS THE HAND OF UGO CARCANO.

at once placed the unsightly hand in his bosom. I remembered then that it was his constant habit to so carry his right hand.

Turning my eyes again upon Silvio's white and shapely left hand, as the slender fingers deftly manipulated a brush, I did not wonder he believed that hand most capable of transferring to canvas his artistic inspirations.

In the Old World one encounters deformity of every kind imaginable in the human species—has it thrust into view, indeed, in every town; but this coarse hand upon a young man so trimly built and handsomely molded in every other respect, I thought one of the most singular malformations I had yet seen. I finally arrived at the conclusion that the big, hairy hand must be a strange kind of birthmark. This might account for the hair upon it being red, while Silvio had a fine head of dark brown hair and a mustache of the same color.

Finding Silvio Baroli so sensitive in regard to his deformity I refrained from any remark that would wound him, and, thereafter, when waiting for him to put the finishing touches to a piece of work, always seated myself on his left at some distance. I observed that when out walking or loitering about our inn he always carried his right hand hidden in his bosom or deeply buried in the side pocket of his coat.

Silvio and I strolled together almost daily among the mountains or along the Aar or Simmen rivers and became firm friends, holding as we did much the same notions in regard to art, and particularly landscape work. One day when we had seated ourselves in a shady nook overlooking a beautiful little valley lying in a curve of the Aar, Silvio suddenly turned to me and said:

"I have observed for a long time that you have wondered greatly at the difference in the appearance of my right and left hands, and that apparently you have arrived at the conclusion that my coarse right hand is a natural deformity. I judge this to be your thought because in the goodness of your heart you have refrained from speaking of it; yes, even from curiously looking at it. That hand is, indeed, a sore subject for me. It is the plague and horror of my life.

"Although to speak of that hateful hand, to see it stared at by strangers, or even to gaze upon it myself, always gives me pain, now—that we have come to know each other well and to be good friends—I propose to explain that which has long puzzled you.

"That coarse right hand, with its crooked and knotted fingers, is not really my own, though you see it attached to my body. Although in many things it serves me as a hand, and to that extent is useful, yet there is no good understanding between me and that hand. It was thrust upon me without my knowledge; aye, without my knowledge or consent was thrust upon me. I hate, loathe and mistrust it, and it in some way seems to have become aware of the fact. Ah, it is a cunning, murderous and treacherous hand!

"You look astounded, as well you may, when I tell you this is not my hand; and you probably think me unbalanced mentally when hearing me speak of it as I have done, yet all I have told you is the simple and exact truth. It is not my hand. It is the hand of a brigand—the hand of Ugo Carcano, the bandit and fifty times murderer! It is the hand of a man now in his grave—a man that I killed, and with this very hateful, coarse, brutal hand—his own hand!

"Look at that demon claw, and now look at this, my own natural hand—a hand I was born with. You see at once that between me and such a hand there can be no such thing as sympathy or right understanding—nothing in common. Besides all this, it is a hand at least ten years older than I am—is flesh that was in the world ten years before I was born!"

After this outburst of feeling Silvio was silent for some moments. He then turned to me, and in a calmer tone said: "I have told you that this was the hand of a robber and murderer, and I will now tell you how I came to possess it."

II.

THE STORY OF THE MAN WITH THE DEMON HAND.

"Five years ago I was happy as a young lieutenant in the Italian army. I was attached to a troop of bersaglieri (sharpshooters) and carbineers. The duty for which my troop was detailed was that of hunting down and exterminating the several bands of brigands that infested the country bordering upon the Apennines. In this service we ranged the mountains, from the Col de Tenda, in the Maritime Alps, to the pass of Borgo San Sepalcro, near Arezzo, moving at times through the valley of the Pescara, which flows between the two Abruzzi. In the pursuit of brigands I have seen most of the thirteen passes of the Appenines—Arcano, Cisa, Troja, Potenza, Aquila, and several others. For over two years I was constantly in the mountains.

We had frequent encounters with the brigand bands and succeeded in the extermination of some of them. We generally made short work of all we caught. We shot them down like wild beasts wherever we came upon them in the mountain fastnesses. If we took a prisoner it was only to extort from him information that we required. His life was in our hands; if he ransomed it it was by doing us some very great service.

THE ROBBER FELL—SHOT THROUGH THE BREAST.

"The most dreaded, daring and powerful of the brigand gangs was that headed by Ugo Carcano. He led us many wild chases. He was a chief of wonderful cunning and infinite resources. In the business of brigandage he was matchless. Not only had he a strong party of followers in the field, but he also had a host of confederates among the shepherds of the mountains, among the charcoal burners of the lower ranges of hills and among the peasants of the many small valleys. There were in Ugo Carcano's band outlawed men from all these classes—men who had friends and relatives among the peasants, the charcoal burners and the mountain herdsmen. These accomplices, apparently wholly engaged in honest pursuits, could always be depended upon by Carcano as spies, and, spread abroad as they were through all the land, they served as scouts to send him early information of approaching danger. While the people in the valleys and lower hills were merely secret confederates and confreres, who took no arms in their hands, many of those in the mountains served Carcano as auxiliaries in his engagements with the detachments of troops sent against him. Thus, while apparently engaged in hunting down a robber band, we were really employed in a campaign in a hostile country.

"Carcano having all these aids it not infrequently happened that while we were searching for him on one side of the Apennines he was engaged in plundering raids on the opposite side of the range. We could not turn our guns upon people who were ostensibly shepherds, charcoal burners and small farmers, but we could bring to bear upon them that which was more powerful than bullets, swords or bayonets—all-conquering gold. It was not until we had bought over and made sure of a number of secret spies of our own on both sides of the mountains that we began to make headway against Carcano.

"At last through having reliable information we were able to press forward upon his trail without being misled and thrown out by pseudo Carcanos leading bands of herders, who soon scattered and resumed their several occupations. We pursued the bandit chief into the wildest fastnesses of the mountains and had several skirmishes with his gang, killing and wounding many of them. Finally Carcano had but few followers left, many deserting his standard when his good fortune failed him, and in a last battle with his gang he was captured and brought into our camp a prisoner.

"In the fight I had my right arm shattered below the elbow by a musket ball. The arm was so badly injured that our surgeon at once saw that it could be impossible to save it. This surgeon was a highly educated, gifted and skillful young German named Carl Voltz, who had entered the Italian army and taken service with our troops, ranking as a lieutenant. Carl Voltz had performed many difficult surgical operations for one of his years. He had succeeded in things his elders in the profession had pronounced impossible, and which they looked upon as being unjustifiably daring—as operations that should not have been ventured upon. There being at the time no war in Europe, and being an enthusiast in his profession, Carl had come to Italy and joined our detachment in the Apennines, hoping to find opportunities for the exercise of his skill.

"Carl Voltz was about my own age, and we were soon on terms of the most intimate friendship. Though Carl had not dared to propose opening men's skulls, taking out injured or unsound brain matter and substituting the brain of some animal, as some surgeons now assert may be safely and advantageously done, he had done some wonderful things in the way of splicing and ingrafting bones. He maintained that with due care a finger, hand, or even a whole limb, might be successfully ingrafted. In the case of the transfer of a finger he had succeeded, and his great ambition was to next operate on a whole arm.

"When I was wounded and Carl saw that I must lose my arm, he was deeply grieved, for at that time we were as two brothers. He, however, did not tell me that I must lose my right arm. His brain was already busy with a plan for making a grand experiment, and in furtherance of his design he told me he hoped to save my arm by bringing together, uniting and building upon the several pieces of shattered bone. He said it would be a tedious operation, but he would keep me so well under the influence of anæsthetics that I would suffer no pain. He had under him a skillful assistant, and he said that, working together, they would make every possible effort to give me a good and useful arm.

"This was all I knew in regard to Carl's intentions, or to the condition of my wounded arm for over two months, except that from time to time I was told it was doing well. Carl appeared to be wonderfully elated that he was succeeding so well in my case; but he always so managed as to prevent my seeing my arm.

"When at last the bandages were removed, and I was permitted to see my arm, I was astounded. I knew not what to think of the transformation I had undergone. I saw there what I now hold out before you. I turned to Carl Voltz and expressed my astonishment at the strange appearance of my hand and wrist.

"'What!' cried he, 'you do not like its appearance? Why, it is my masterpiece. It is a triumph of surgical science. It is a great surprise I have for many weeks kept in store for you.'

"Then exultantly he told me how he had managed in order to give me a good sound arm and hand. He said my arm had been amputated, but he had given me a good, serviceable one in its stead. It was the crowning triumph of his life. I had now as my own, he said, 'the strong right hand of Ugo Carcana!' He had made the bandit chief give up his right hand for my benefit.

"Carl then proceeded to tell me that he had promised Carcano his life and liberty on condition that he submitted to have his right arm taken off, and that he would swear upon the cross to reform and lead an honest life. As the fellow was as good as dead—would otherwise be shot without ceremony or delay—he accepted life and liberty on the terms proposed.

"Next Carl gave me a full account of the operation of transplanting the hand and wrist of the bandit to my arm—of every nice bit of work done by himself and assistant. How they had brought us together in a room, the temperature of which was kept at blood heat, when the bones of my arm and those of the bandit's arm had been sawed off at precisely the same angle. Then how the veins and arteries were at once telescoped and side-spliced, and the tendons united with threads of sinew taken from my amputated arm; and how, all this being done and the bones wired in place, the arm was placed in a sort of case and covered with a peculiar kind of antiseptic jelly of his own invention. This jelly he claimed to be far superior to a covering of plaster of paris, it being tough and elastic, and being slit through when congealed, it permitted of being opened for the examination of the limb from time to time. Sections of veins and arteries taken from my dismembered arm were utilized as sleeves in uniting the larger blood vessels of the two arms, and the whole operation was performed so speedily that the bandit's hand and wrist were still of the same temperature as when severed from his arm when joined to mine.

"As I looked at the hand that had thus been ingrafted upon me I felt that I would have much preferred a stump to being provided with a member that was to me so disgusting. However, Carl Voltz was so delighted with the success of his experiment that I as much as possible concealed from him my real feelings.

"Carl, however, read something of my disgust in my face, and let me know that he thought me very ungrateful and foolishly vain. His skill had given me a good and useful hand, and I not only did not appreciate what he had done for me, but was actually ashamed of that which he considered his greatest achievement in his profession.

"To mollify Carl's displeasure I did many things which he suggested, in order to show that I had full use of the hand and every finger of it. He was in ecstasies, and immediately proceeded to write out a complete description of every part of the operation for some Berlin medical journal. He afterward told me his report of the case was discredited in Germany, and begged me to go with him to Berlin and exhibit my spliced arm in proof of the truthfulness of the account he had published.

"I was by this time so ashamed of my hand and so abominated it that I would have preferred blowing out my brains to putting it and myself on exhibition. Carl never forgave my refusal to comply with his request. It appeared to him that through a mere whim of false pride I had deliberately robbed him of fame and fortune. He very plainly told me that I was ungrateful, and I retorted that without my knowledge or consent he had fastened upon me for life a thing that was most hateful—a hand that had shed the life blood of many human beings—a hand that I detested.

"A decided coolness now replaced our old friendship, and Carl soon left Italy, returning to his native country for the purpose of devoting his life to a course of study and experiment he had marked out. Though we parted with some show of our old friendship, I could plainly perceive that Carl thought I lacked heart and was capable of no more than a sort of superficial show of friendship. Even as he was taking his departure, and after our last farewells had been spoken, I detected him looking wistfully at the hand he had given me. Evidently he deeply regretted being obliged to leave that behind.

"Six months after Carl left Italy the detachment to which I belonged was ordered to Savona pass, a considerable distance from the Pass of Aquila, where we had made our headquarters for nearly a year. A very daring gang of brigands had been organized, and all manner of outrages were being committed in the neighborhood of Savona pass. Upon our arrival in the troubled region we soon found traces of the brigands, and followed them deep into the mountains. Through our peasant spies we discovered their stronghold and surrounded and attacked it, taking the robbers completely by surprise.

"In the fight I was brought face to face with the bandit chief as he was trying to rally his panic-stricken followers. At a glance I saw that the chief had but one arm, and almost at the same moment I recognized the savage features of Ugo Carcano. He held a pistol in his left hand, and as I advanced upon him he fired, sending a bullet through my cap. I instantly returned the fire, and the robber fell, shot through the breast. As I ran up to the fallen chief with leveled pistol he raised himself upon one elbow and cried: 'Enough! You have given me my death wound. Silvio Bartoli, you have killed me—have shot me with my own hand—with the hand I gave you! Curse the day on which I consented to give you that hand! With my last breath I curse you. I die, but my hand will live, and my hand—the hand that has slain me—shall be the death of you!' Still muttering something about his soul remaining on earth and living in his still living hand, Ugo Carcano, with a great gush of blood from his mouth, fell back and died.

"I had before hated the hand which Carl Voltz, in his enthusiasm for the science of surgery, had made a part of me. Now I began to feel a dread of it—a horror of having engrafted upon me for life a part of the dead robber and murderer. He seemed to live in that hand and to be ever striving to gain possession of my whole body. I began to fear that his fiendish spirit, having effected a lodgment, would dispossess my soul and take up its abode in my earthly tenement.

"The brigand chief's dying curse seemed to be working, to be taking effect upon me. At night, in my dreams, Ugo Carcano was ever present. Standing at my bedside he held up the stump of his arm and demanded either the restoration of his hand or a dwelling place in my body. These night terrors soon began to tell upon my health, and by advice of a physician I left the army and the country that kept the image of the dead bandit almost constantly before my eyes.

"I had always been a lover of art, and having some skill in landscape painting my thoughts very naturally turned to these mountains. I hastened hither and resumed my long neglected pursuit of painting. I at once discovered that I could do nothing with my right hand. The clumsy, uncouth fingers would not obey my will. With the least relaxation of the vigilant surveillance I was obliged to maintain over them the brushes would drop from my hand. There was no feeling for them in those ill-made fingers. Between that hand and my mind there was no sympathy. I was not sorry to find that this was so. Had it been otherwise would the painting have been really my own? Would it not have been work by the hand of Ugo Carcano? I wanted no community of possession with that hand. To my delight I found upon trial that my left hand readily obeyed every impulse of my mind. Into it seemed to have been translated all the old skill of my lost right hand.

"Since I have been in these mountains engaged in my old loved pursuit of studying and painting the beauties of nature I have regained my health, and to a great extent my former peace of mind. It is now only of nights that my old troubles come to annoy me, and that but occasionally, except at the dark of the moon. Those monthly attacks I cannot escape. Then I must be on my guard against my demon hand.

"You look surprised when I say I must be on my guard against the hand, and may think that constant brooding upon my misfortune has unsettled my mind; but, my friend, that hand really is dangerous—nothing can be more cunning and treacherous. I long ago discovered it to be unsafe for me to leave a pistol, poniard, or weapon of any kind on a table or chair within reach of my bed. If I do so I experience in my sleep an awful feeling of impending danger—a nightmare of the most agonizing description. The brigand chief stands over me exulting like a demon. Ha, ha, at last I have you! he seems to shout. Yes, now you shall die—die by my hand—the hand you robbed me of! With these and similar threats Ugo Carcano stands at my bedside as he appeared in life when in battle, except that his eyes are as coals of fire and his features are lighted up with lambent flames. I am frozen with terror and unable to move or in any way rid myself of the threatening and fearful figure. I feel that I am in great danger and struggle unceasingly to arise and betake myself to flight. When at last I awaken I find that the hand—the still living flesh and blood of the dead brigand—has reached forth and obtained possession of pistol or poniard and is holding the weapon at my breast or forehead.

"No matter how dangerous the inn or other place in which I am lodging may appear, I no longer dare leave a weapon near my bed. Indeed, I have found that it is not safe to have a weapon anywhere in my sleeping room. I can only venture to have weapons about me in my waking moments and when I am out traveling the mountain roads; even then I often feel a horrid and startling thrill in that brigand hand when it clutches a pistol. At times those knotty and crooked fingers seem in murderous mood to stiffen upon the weapon, and it is with difficulty that I can make them obey my will and relax their hold.

"Now, my friend, from what I have told you of my sensations, waking and sleeping, you will readily perceive that this hand of a dead man fastened upon me makes life a burden. It permits me no moment of perfect rest and ease, nor will it ever do so while I carry it. Soon I shall rid myself of it. I shall sever the bond which now unites me to one in the grave. When I leave these mountains I shall go directly to Paris. There, selecting some skillful surgeon, I shall engage him to rid me of this hand of a murderer—the demon gift which Carl Voltz was at such pains to bestow upon me. Not a single shred or fiber of the hated flesh of Ugo Carcano will I permit to remain with me. Then, when I am myself alone in every drop of blood and granule of flesh—then I shall have peace of mind and not before. This I feel and know. I must rid myself of my parasitical demon. Ah, my friend, I dread these dark periods in each month! Those I cannot escape. Then it is that the apparition of the brigand appears at my bedside, and then it is that his lost and vengeful spirit well nigh drives my soul from its own proper tenement. A dark spell is coming soon; I shall endure that—one more—then fly at once to Paris and a new life!"

III.

THE HORRIBLE FATE OF SILVIO BAROLI, AS TOLD BY THE ARTIST.

In a day or two after this strange story was confided to me by Silvio Baroli, I left Lake Thun for the headwaters of the Aar in the Bernese Oberland. I tried in vain to induce Silvio to accompany me. I was anxious to take him with me, for I saw the shadow of his coming "dark period" in the gloom of his face. He would not stir from the chatelet. Then I understood that he had resolved to there make his stand and meet the assault of the ghostly owner of his demon of a hand. Alone in the old chatelet he would fight this last battle.

I ascended along the course of the Aar to near where it rises in the fountains and snows of the Grimsel and Shreckhorn (peak of terror). The Shreckhorn stands between the Finstaarhorn and the Wetterhorn, and being confronted by so many grand peaks and so many stretches of scenery, both beautiful and grand, I was for a time almost overwhelmed. However, I settled down near the Grimsel, at the south end of Hasli valley, where I remained sketching for over a fortnight.

At the end of the time mentioned I descended to the town of Thun, and going down to the lake, at once took a boat for the chatelet at which I had left Silvio. I was anxious to see him immediately, as I had decided to accompany him to Paris, thinking I could go to no better place with my collection of sketches.

Arriving at the chatelet I inquired for my friend.

"You will never again see Silvio Baroli," said the proprietor. "Why, have you not heard of his sudden and strange death?"

"His death!" cried I, greatly shocked. "My God, Silvio dead! My only fear was that he might have left for Paris."

"Ah! but instead he has gone to that great, golden city from whose joys no one ever returns."

"Tell me, how did it happen? Where did he die?" cried I. Yet, even as I asked, I felt sure that in his dreaded "dark period" he had fallen a victim to his haunting demon—the dead owner of that living hand!

"Where did he die? Mon Dieu, here in his room. It was a terrible thing. Since you have not heard it," said the landlord, "I will tell you the story of the shocking death of your friend: Five days—no, let me consider—four days after your departure your friend, Baroli, failed to arise at his usual early hour. Thinking he might still be sleeping, as for a day or two he had looked worn and weary, we waited an hour and then knocked at his door. Obtaining no response to our calls and repeated knockings, we became alarmed and forced open the door of his chamber.

"A strange and horrible sight met our eyes. On the bed lay Baroli, his right hand grasping his throat. He was dead and cold. His discolored face, distorted features and widely staring eyes were frightful to look upon.

"A constable who was called in said: 'He has strangled himself. To have done so he must have possessed a will almost superhuman.'

"The officer took hold of Baroli's hand to remove it. He made the effort, and then, turning to us, said with a shudder: 'My God, the hand still holds to the throat with the grip of a vise!'

"It was even so. The arm and fingers had stiffened in the death grasp. Even after it had been forced away the hand still returned to the throat, until in laying out the body it was bound down to the breast.

"And, sir, a wonderful thing! That right hand was not at all like the left one. The left hand was that of a gentleman, but the right was the coarse, hairy hand of a peasant—a hand, the fingers of which were knotted and twisted from toil. There was a long scar running diagonally round the arm. The officer said it looked as though the hand had in some way been spliced upon the arm—a thing impossible. It was only a singular kind of deformity, sir."

As the landlord thus speculated I sadly mused upon the fate of my friend. "Poor Silvio," thought I, "the dying curse of the bandit has taken effect. That demon hand grasped his throat as he slept and the gnarled and sinewy fingers did not even relax their hold when life was extinct. The hand of the bandit had executed the threat its dying owner had made."

Counting back I found it was in the dark of the moon—poor Silvio's time of dread—that the vengeful and ever watchful hand had risen up, throttled my friend in his sleep and destroyed him.

"They tell a silly tale of a ghost," said the host, breaking in upon my reflections; "of a ghost seen when your friend lay a corpse the night before the funeral."

"Who tells such a story?" I asked.

"The watchers—those who watched by the body."

"And what is their story?"

"Oh, a very silly one, indeed. They sat in a room adjoining that in which the body lay. About midnight two of these watchers went into the room where lay the dead. They went to see if the candles by the corpse were still burning and all safe. As they stepped into the room they were astonished at seeing a tall, wild-looking stranger standing beside the coffin. They say he was a one-armed man and had a red handkerchief bound round his head. They were about to demand of the intruder why he was there alone with the dead, when he took a step or two toward them and vanished. The two men had not been greatly disturbed at seeing the stranger standing beside the coffin, but when he disappeared while in the act of coming toward them in the brightly lighted room they were terrified beyond measure. With faces white as chalk they dashed back into the room where their fellow-watchers were sitting and as soon as they could speak told what they had seen.

"All presently mustered courage to go into the room where the body lay. To their horror they found the great hairy right hand loose and again at the throat of the corpse. One of their number had the courage to lay hold of the hand and try to pull it away. At the instant he did so there rang through the room a wild, fiendish, 'Ha, ha, ha!'

"All rushed forth and, shutting themselves up in the adjoining room, did not again venture into the chamber of the dead."

"And was the hand found loose in the morning?"

"Yes, it is undeniable that the hand was found loose and at the throat of the dead man, but then, for all that, the watchers were a silly, cowardly set. When they told their story to the priest he laughed at them."

WITCHES IN VIRGINIA

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magnetism which in the days of her youth and beauty brought to her feet lovers, husband, friends and admirers is now exerted in putting evil spells upon people; in cursing them with all manner of blasphemies, and every person who knows her fears and shuns her.

It is said she quarrels as fiercely with the ghosts of her mother and sister upon their frequent visits, as she ever quarreled with them in the flesh.

A little boy told me that when he built fires for Mrs. Roland a few years ago she told him to "Set a chair quick for Lucy," upon one occasion.

When he did so he heard distinctly the rustle of a silk dress, and Mrs. Roland, directing her eyes to the apparently vacant chair, set up such a querulous scolding of Lucy's ghost as to frighten him nearly to death.

"Stay in purgatory," she said, "or else you'll have all those silk dresses so creased and glazed that they won't do for Houseman's rag bag! You only come back to hear yourself rustle in silk, you proud hussy; and Satan can have no revenge, because you burnt yourself up here!"

"A great many times," said the child, "would she thus receive her ghostly visitors. Sometimes they would come to look over the family jewels, and then there'd be a great fuss, because certain of Mrs. R's relatives robbed her, and she acquainted Lucy with the fact. Once Lucy slapped the witch's jaws, the sound of which the boy heard distinctly; and the red print of a hand showed plainly on the pallid old cheek."

Lucy was actually burned alive in that ugly old square house. She was burned in her kitchen fire place, and only one shoe inside of which was a foot, proved that flesh, blood and bone had perished there in the pile of blackened ashes on the hearth. The kitchen is now the abode of lights and shades; and since the witch has been unable to hire a cook or command one by witch-power, she has left it wholly to these uncanny occupants; and there the village folks are willing it shall remain.

Patsey Worly was a witch who got drunk. She wore enormous hoops and danced on the streets of this old town for "treats." When Patsey appeared and with her curtsy began her dance, which was an exaggerated one-figured Sir Roger de Coverly, you had better stop in your walks and see it through and afterwards treat her at Bittle's ginger shop or better still at the bar—that is, if you did not want to be "bewitched."

Polly Pockets was a local witch twenty years ago. No one knows what became of her. In a certain neighborhood, however, once lived a crow, which was captured the very day Polly Pockets appeared in the road on her annual tramp, which she made through several counties, filling her capacious pockets with articles begged as she tramped. The youth who caught the crow was horrified to find that she talked! In a squeaky, parrot-like voice, to be sure, and some of the words were foreign, it seemed. But talk it certainly could. This wonderful bird was at once slaughtered, and thereafter never again was Polly Pockets to be seen, though she had been a familiar figure of the wayside since forty years agone, returning as regularly as the crimson grass vetch in the fence corners every spring.

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