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# The Bradford Reporter

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large for some time, as it was discovered he had taken lodgings by the month at the village tavern. For the rest, he was a young gentleman of about twenty-five, tall, well-dressed, courteous, but grave in his demeanor, and with an aristocratic pallor, which his dark eyes and hair rendered still more striking. Three days after his arrival, when the fraternity of gossips were almost in a state of frenzy from his unmanly and insulting silence in regard to himself and his errand, he suddenly terminated all speculation by hiring a small office, in front of which soon appeared a sign bearing the inscription "James Shirley, Attorney at Law."

In three weeks the gossips had discovered all about him, and their disappointment was great. The "unknown stranger" appearing so suddenly and mysteriously was simply a young gentleman from Lower Virginia who had, after the common fashion, left home to commence life upon a new arena. S. had been selected as that arena, and there he was, a simple attorney at law, not a royal exile or prince in disguise.

He soon made friends, though his manners were criticised as much too grave for those of a youth. At times, this gravity gave way to gloom; but an unfailing courtesy conciliated everybody, and in six months Shirley was what was called a "rising man." He had appeared with great success in several actions in the courts, and had made an impression in society. Letters of introduction had opened to him the best circles of S. and the neighborhood; and wherever he appeared, he was received with smiles and welcome alike by old gentlemen and young ladies.

At twenty-five, the feelings soon concentrate. In the skies of youth, one star comes very quickly to outshine all others. Shirley fell in love with a young lady of about nineteen, bearing the pretty name of Pauline Weston, a daughter of Colonel Weston, to whom the young man had brought a letter of introduction.

A month afterward, it was known that he was engaged to this young girl. "She was gay, witty, and the soul of every merry-making. A brighter pair of blue eyes had never shone in that region; redder lips had never uttered the jest or the laugh. Why did Shirley select her? It seemed impossible to explain the fact, save upon the theory of opposites." Engaged they were, however, and Colonel Weston, who had become very much attached to the young man, placed no sort of obstacle in the way. The gossips speedily informed each other that the wedding day was fixed, and this time the fraternity had come into possession of the exact truth.

Fifteen days before the evening fixed for the ceremony, Pauline Weston was setting at a window looking out upon the main street of the town, when she saw Shirley coming toward the house. She awaited him with something nearly resembling gloom. Since her engagement Pauline had discovered in her lover some traits of character which made her uneasy. For a man of fresh and vigorous intellect, he was strangely superstitious, and at times gave way to fits of gloom and melancholy from which nothing could arouse him. At such moments his pale face became paler; his eyes had in them a singular light, as though the gaze of their owner were turned inward; and when any one spoke to him he would start with a frightened air, and answer entirely at random to any question. More than once he had related with ominous gravity the wildest and most extravagant stories of weird occurrences in his own family; the appearance of spirits to members of the household; the fulfillment of terrible dreams, and the strangest verifications of mysterious warnings. That human beings received these warnings of futurity was he believed as firmly as he believed in his own existence; and one of his habitual phrases was, "Three warnings never deceive."

One of his gloomy moods had attacked him on the preceding evening, and Pauline had vainly attempted to laugh him out of it. He had remained obstinately sombre, and had left the house about eleven o'clock, the picture of despair.

As he now approached, Pauline saw that his mood had not altered. As he entered, Shirley's face was as dark as night. A frightful pallor covered his features; but to all the young lady's questions, he only replied that he had had "bad dreams."

Assuming a bright smile and a gay tone, she endeavored to laugh her lover out of his mood. The attempt was entirely unsuccessful. In vain did Pauline assume her most coquettish provocation, twisting as she did so one of her golden curls over her white and taper fingers, the wide sleeves falling back and displaying an arm round, rose-white and charming. Shirley remained gloomy and almost speechless.

"Upon my word," said the young lady at last, with something like a pout, "any one who saw you at this moment would scarcely believe that you were engaged to be married—and to my very humble self!"

This emotion would have a disagreeable effect upon the young lady, he passed his trembling hand over his forehead bathed in cold sweat, and said more calmly: "I do not understand your allusion to 'headless horses!'"

"Have you never heard the legend?" said the young lady, with a troubled glance. "I thought every one in S. had heard it."

"I am a stranger—relate it," he said, with gloomy calmness. "It is very absurd, and very simple. They say that whenever any one is going to die in S. a chariot with six horses, all with its heads, drives noiselessly up to the door of the house where the sick person lies, and at the moment when he expires the door of the chariot opens, without noise, closes in the same manner, dusky hands are seen to gather up the reins, and the chariot drives silently away."

The words uttered by the young lady produced a terrible effect upon Shirley. He placed his hand with a quick movement upon his heart, uttered a groan of the deepest agony, and, closing his eyes, sank back almost fainting in his chair.

The young girl ran to bring a glass of water, which she placed to his lips, and in an instant he opened his eyes. "Do not trouble yourself about me," he said, with an expression of almost agony upon his features; "I have these attacks sometimes, but soon get over them. See, Pauline, I am quite calm again."

And by a powerful effort he suppressed his emotion, and resumed his former expression of gloomy calmness. "But you have not told me your dream," said Pauline, with a beating heart, "what could it have been?"

"I had three dreams—each time the same," he responded in a low tone; "but we will not speak further of them at present. This is almost my last visit before going, Pauline; let us speak of our marriage."

In fact Shirley designed setting out on the next morning to visit home and make every necessary arrangement for his marriage. He gave himself fifteen days for this journey. On his return the marriage was to take place.

Of this they now spoke, and it is unnecessary to listen to the conversation. At the end of three hours, Shirley rose, enclosed the young girl in a long, lingering embrace, and left the house.

On the doorstep he met Colonel Weston, portly, rubicund and laughing, as he struck his gold-headed cane at every step which he took upon the pavement. "Well, James!" was his hearty exclamation, "you are not going just as dinner is ready? A bad rule—very bad! But what makes you so pale?"

"Am I pale?" muttered Shirley. "Yes—as pale as if you had seen the chariot with the headless horses!" laughed the Colonel.

"The second?" came in a hoarse murmur from his lips. "What—what—James? What did you say, my boy?"

"Nothing, sir, I hope you are well, and that I will find you as well on my return." "Ah, yes! you go to-morrow; you must positively come in and dine. You can't? You have business? Hang business, say I! or I would have said, a fortnight before my marriage! But you will spend the evening with us? Yes? Well, come early."

And the old Colonel stamped into the house. "The second?" muttered Shirley again, with a strange expression in his eyes, as he went back to his office.

He spent the evening at Colonel Weston's, and when the rest of the family retired, he was left alone with the young lady, who continued to converse with him until midnight. What occurred during this interview is not known, but it was afterward observed that Pauline carefully avoided any allusion to it. No one saw her after the interview, on that night; but on the next morning all the roses in her cheeks had faded.

The state of Shirley's mind after the conversation was better known. A sort of busyness of the town who spent his time in collecting and disseminating news—that is, gossip—of every imaginable description, happened to be returning home after midnight. Seeing a light in Shirley's office, behind which was his bed-chamber, the busybody conceived a desire to ascertain what kept the young lawyer up so late. No rules of ceremony restrain such people. The busybody coolly entered, and as coolly asked where Shirley—with whom he had but a slight acquaintance—was going.

The reply of the young man, according to the report of his visitor subsequently, was rather rough. "What happened may be related in a few words. Three days later after Shirley's departure, the young lady had gone to a party in a very thin dress and slippers; on her return she had been attacked by pneumonia, and this attack had proved fatal. She would not permit any one to write to her betrothed, fearing to alarm him unnecessarily—hence the cessation of the letters."

In her last moments she had muttered faintly something about a dream—warning of the young man's—a chariot with headless horses which appeared to him three times in sleep, even before he had heard the legend; and after this she sank rapidly.

Pauline had expired at precisely half-past eleven on the night of the 10th of November. The chariot with the headless horses had waited but two minutes.

Three months afterward, as I have said, Shirley had gone to join her.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE.  
PROGRESS OF THE MANUFACTURE—CALLING THE WIRE IN THE HOLD OF THE GREAT EASTERN—INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS—PICKING-UP APPARATUS.  
[From the London Daily News, April 30.]

The slender Birmingham wire, which we recently traced from its arrival at the gutta percha works in the City-road, through the various processes of manufacture, until it left Morden-wharf, Greenwich, a complete submarine cable, is now being coiled at the rate of two miles an hour in the vast tanks of the Great Eastern. The Amethyst hulk, which we saw receiving its precious freight the other day, is now moored alongside the great ship off Sheerness, while the Iris is being landed in her turn at Greenwich, and will supply the Amethyst's place directly the latter is empty. Thus, manufacture and storage go on concurrently, and at the moment one part of the great wire is receiving its elementary coating of Chatterton's compound, or perhaps being spun at Birmingham, other portions are being laid down in the great ship ready for the final and momentous paying out. Standing on the deck of the Great Eastern, a few yards from its stern, you see the cable slowly pass up the ship's side, and over a series of wheels and pulleys, all ingeniously constructed and carefully watched, and follow it under its covered way until it disappears into the large wooden hut erected for its reception. This hut is the size of a moderate barn, and is the deck-covering of the aft tank. Entering by its doorway, you look into a yawning, dimly-lighted circular gulf, the bottom of which seems to be composed of light oak symmetrically turned. The uniformity of the slightly corrugated circles within circles—the mathematical exactitude with which each appears to fit into, and be part of, its neighbor—the seeming solidity and unity of the great whole—all speak of the lathe; and it is only when the eye has become, as it were, acclimatized to the pale glimmer of the swinging lamps below, that the silent white figures squat at regular intervals, and moving noiselessly around, are seen to be cable-men, and the apparent wood carving to be the cable. The external distinction between last year's electric rope and this is now seen to be very marked; the absence of the tarry coating, and the clean, substantial look of the manilla stand, giving an impression of mingled strength and ductility, which is auspicious in itself. It may be repeated that this year's galvanization of the outer protecting wires affords all the security against corrosion given by the final coat of tar formerly applied, while in the event of an unlucky bit of wire defying precaution and finding its way into the tank, the chances of its sticking in the rope are sensibly diminished, through the latter being repellently yielding instead of glutinously adhesive. Very gradually and regularly are the circles increased. No word is spoken as the rope slowly passes the officer on guard at what we may call the top story of the tank, and is received by two of the white figures below. These march slowly round, handling the gracefully descending coil as tenderly as if it were alive, and under the close and constant inspection of the officer on guard below pass it to other white figures, who, with equal tenderness, fit it into and steady it in its appointed place. Thus ring after ring is formed, each layer beginning with the large outer circle of the tank itself, and ending with the centre frame work of wood, which is its bull's-eye, and serves to "shore-up" and keep all steady. Every man entering the tank is searched before going in, puts on the nailless gutta percha shoes provided by the Company, and goes through his work of cable-stowing under the constant and watchful supervision of tried and experienced officers.

Besides these precautions, tests both of insulation and continuity are being ceaselessly put by the electricians. Nor are these confined to this year's venture. The old cable on board is for this purpose connected with the new, and messages were transmitted on Saturday through a total distance of 1,506 nautical miles. There were then 485 of these miles in the after tank, 856 in the main tank, and 265 in the fore tank; and to make the test more searching and complete, communication has lately been established between all these and the shore. An end from each tank is brought into the testing-chamber on deck, is there joined together, so as to make for electrical purposes one cable, while another end is passed over the ship's side, laid in the mud and oozy bottom of the unsavory Sheerness waters, in which the Great Eastern rides, and landed on the stony slippery bank hedging on the shore. The portion thus running from ship to land has been recently added for the sole purpose of proving Mr. WILLOUGHBY SMITH'S improvements in process of testing; and to do this it has not even been thought necessary to use the completed cable. This particular successful leaves the ship without any other protection than its gutta-percha covering, and runs to land, and into the coherer's cottage, where a room has been borrowed, a mere string of slender piping, like a stick of chocolate. Yet, unfair as it seems to work this bit of wire, without the jute, galvanized iron, and manilla strands, which are its proper protectors, the experiments tried have been eminently satisfactory. On Saturday, messages were sent from ship to shore, and from shore to ship, with never-failing regularity; and, more interesting still, upon artificial faults being created, the life-like indicator betrayed them instantly and unerringly. This was tried several times, and in different ways; for, through the aid of the different weights passing up and down being joined in the testing chamber, it is easy to create a fault, now at a distance of a few hundred miles, now at a distance of as many yards from the operator. In all cases the exquisitely delicate apparatus made instant and decided protest, and the result of the experiments proved that, as in the forthcoming expedition insularity and continuity will be tested concurrently and popantly, instead of at intervals, as heretofore, messages may and probably will pass to and from Valentia and the Great Eastern during the whole voyage, so that those on shore will be as fully informed of the condition of the cable as those on board. It is estimated that in the event of a fault arising in the new cable, it will be discovered instantly, and be localized, and the process of paying out reversed to that end of the cable nearest the fault, in a matter of picking up, within a very few minutes of its occurrence. It would be difficult to

speculate too highly of the advance in the science of cable-laying these facts imply; and it is impossible to inquire into the plans of this year's expedition without being impressed with the care taken, not merely to guard against disaster but to prevent disaster affecting result. The whole machinery for both paying out and picking up has been repeatedly tested; the latter is entirely refitted with two high pressure boilers, and will now be of from five to seven and a half times the strength of the breaking weight. Whereas, too, the extreme breaking strain in paying out is ten tons, the large wheels employed will bear seven times and the smaller ones nine times that strain. The mishaps of last year were, it is useful to remember, attributed to the possibility of picking up a cable from the bottom of the Atlantic never having been contemplated. Neither ropes nor gear were provided for such a contingency, and those engaged in the service gave way when put to a strain they were never made to bear. Now, proficiency in picking up at great depths is recognized as a necessity in submarine telegraphy, and every provision is made to make such picking up easy and safe on board the Great Eastern. Last year it could only be done from the fore part of the ship; this year matters will be so arranged that the cable may be brought in as well as paid out at the stern; and the saving of time and complications is obvious. The whole of this machinery—ropes, wheels and gear—has been manufactured, as before, by the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, under the immediate superintendence of Mr. GLASS, its Managing-Director, and of Mr. CANNING, its Engineer-in-Chief, and the responsible head of the cable layers, mechanists and engineers employed in the expedition.

Passing from the Atlantic cable to the grand vessel which is to carry it, it is gratifying to know that her keel and hull have been thoroughly and carefully cleaned, and that the divers' reports show them to be in good sailing order. Considerable time and ingenuity have been expended on the construction of huge brushes and scrapers to effect this, for the immense mass of shell, fish, weeds and dirt which had accumulated and hardened at the bottom of the great ship made her cleansing no easy matter. A strong implement something like an agricultural harrow, has been constructed, and by aid of this and other brushes constantly applied, so much impedimenta has been removed that an addition of two knots an hour to her speed is counted on. This, it is hoped, will give a power of nine knots, when fully laden; higher than is needed for cable laying, and calculated to insure the fullest speed necessary, even against a head wind and an adverse sea. The directors of the Telegraph Construction Company have chartered the Medway, a ship of 1,813 tons, to accompany the Great Eastern on her voyage out. The Medway will carry some hundreds of miles of the cable of last year, and in the event of the expedition being successful, will redischARGE this into the new empty tanks of the Great Eastern, at Newfoundland. The Medway will then start to locate the spot where the broken end lies, to fix buoys, or it may be to commence picking up. Capt. Anderson, to avoid taking the Great Eastern to the north, will go direct to Becheren from Sheerness, and will then supply himself with coal for the voyage. The length of time to be occupied in an expedition during which the double process of laying down one cable and picking up another is to be gone through, is necessarily estimated at a much higher rate than the one of last year, and some seventy days are spoken of as the period the Great Eastern will be away. Assuming her to leave Sheerness on the 29th of June to 30th July next, three days will take her to Beheraven, where she will stay nine days to take in coal. Allowing five days for waiting for favorable weather for splicing with the shore end, and fifteen days for the passage to Trinity Bay, we may look for messages from America about the beginning of August next. The Great Eastern will again supply herself with coal at Trinity Bay, and at once follow the Medway to the grappling ground; this will take three days, and eight more are given for grappling, and five for returning to Trinity Bay and laying the remainder of the old cable. This done, the return of the Great Eastern to England will take twelve days more, and bring her home about the second week in September. In each case a margin must be given to the foregoing figures, but they are based on present calculations, and may be taken as authentic. It will be seen that they assume success throughout, and it may be added that on an elaborate series of problems having been drawn up by authority, as to what would be the effect of different calamities or casualties, should they arise, the responsible leaders of the coming enterprise have answered every supposition satisfactorily in writing. The issue time alone can solve; but whatever may be its results, the more the preparations for the Atlantic expedition of 1866 are known, the more they will be regarded as marvels of forethought, precaution, and logical deductions patiently, laboriously, and courageously worked out.

How BODIES ARE EMBALMED.—By embalming, people generally are apt to imagine that the modern process consists of saturating, filling and surrounding the dead body with spices, gums and other indestructible and preservative substances, as is understood to have been the process practiced by the ancients. Such, however, is not the case. The modern process is about as follows: The blood is drawn off through the jugular vein. An incision is then made up on the inside of the thigh, through which a chemical liquid is injected by a mechanical means. This liquid permeates all the veins and arteries, taking the place before occupied by the blood, and in a short time renders the entire body as hard as stone, and as rigid as statue. A portion of the scalp is removed and the brain scooped out. The chest is opened and the heart, lungs and viscera are abstracted. When the process is completed, the body is reduced to a mere empty shell, having only the outward semblance of the departed individual. How long a body thus prepared will remain unchanged we cannot say. The process has only been employed for a few years—since the war commenced, we believe—so that time sufficient has not elapsed to test the indestructibility of bodies thus prepared.

OLDEST CITY IN THE WORLD.—Damascus is the oldest city in the world: Tyre and Sidon have crumbled on the shore, Balbec is a ruin; Palmyra is buried in the sands of the desert; Nineveh and Babylon have disappeared from the Tigris and Euphrates. Damascus remains what it was before the days of Abraham—a centre of trade and travel—an island of verdure in a desert—a presidential capital—with material and sacred associations extending through more than thirty centuries. It was "near Damascus" that Saul of Tarsus saw the "light above the brightness of the sun." The street, which is called Strait, in which it was said, "He prayed," still runs through the city. The caravan comes and goes as it did a thousand years ago; there is sheik, the ass, and the water-wheel—the merchant of the Euphrates and of the Mediterranean still occupy these "with the multitude of their waters." The city which Mohammed surveyed from a neighboring high, and was afraid to touch, "because it is a sacred city," is now a paradise, and for his part he was resolved not to have it in this world," is to this day what Julian called the "eye of the East," as it was in the days of Isiah, "the head of Syria." From Damascus came the damson, and the delicious apricot of Portugal called damasco; damask, or beautiful fabric of cotton and silk, with vines and flowers raised upon a smooth ivory ground; the damask 1089, which was introduced into England in the time of Henry VII; the Damascus blade, so famous for the work over for its keen edge and wonderful elasticity, the secret of whose manufacture was lost when Tamerlane carried off the artists into Persia; and that beautiful art of inlaying wood and steel with silver and gold, a kind of mosaic engraving and sculptural method—called damask engraving, with which boxes, and barrels, and swords, and guns are ornamented. It is still a city of flowers and bright waters: the stream from Lebanon, the "rivers of Damascus," the "rivers of gold," still murmur and sparkle in the wilderness of "Syrian gardens."

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.—It matters not if you cannot tell just when you become a Christian. If we sow a handful of wheat in our garden, we could not tell though we watched it every so narrowly, the exact moment when it germinated. But when we see the waving grain in the autumn, we know it did germinate, and that it is all we care for. The young disciple should not expect too much light at once. It will grow brighter with every Christian duty he performs. The Christian life is a sort of mountain path; and the higher one climbs the clearer the atmosphere, and the sooner he will see the morning sun. To the adventurous traveler who has ascended to the summit of Mount Blanc, the sun rises earlier and sets later, and the nights are shorter than to a peasant who lives down in the valley at its base. So it is in the Christian life. Clearness of vision, and firmness of foot, and beauty of prospect come only to those who have struggled up the heights to the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Conversion may be the work of a moment, but a saint is not made in an hour. Christian character is not an act, but a process; not a sudden creation, but a development. It grows and bears fruit like a tree, and like a tree it requires patient care and unwearied cultivation.

A few in a Congregational meeting house in thus advertised for sale in the Amherst (Mass.) Express: "A pew in the meeting house of the first parish in Amherst is for sale. The man that owns the pew owns the right of a space as long and wide as the pew is from the bottom of the meeting-house to the roof, and he can go as much higher as he can get. If a man will buy my pew and sit in it on Sundays, and repent and be a good man, he will go to heaven, and my pew is as good a place to start from as any pew in the meeting-house."

THREE WORDS IN ONE.  
There are three lessons I would write—  
Three words with a burning pen—  
In tracings of eternal light  
Upon the hearts of men.  
Have Hope. Though clouds enveil now,  
And gladness hides her face in scorn,  
Put then the shadow from thy brow;  
No night but hath its morn.  
Have Faith. Where'er thy bark is driven—  
The claim'st thy port, the tempter's mirth—  
Know this: God rules the host of heavens,  
The inhabitants of earth.  
Have Love: and not alone for one,  
But man, as man, thy brother call,  
And scatter, like the circling sun,  
Thy charities on all.  
Thus grave these lessons on thy soul—  
Hope, Faith and Love, and thou shalt find  
Strength when life's surges cease to roll,  
Light where thou else wert blind.

FUN, FACTS AND FACETIÆ.  
THE ENTIRE ASSETS OF A RECENT BANKRUPT were nine children. The creditors acted magnanimously, and let him keep them.  
WHAT BUSINESS OUGHT TOM THUMB TO GO INTO? *(Chestnut Grove, Pa.)*  
THE CHEAPEST WAY WITH THE LAWYERS.—Keep one's own counsel.  
THE FOLLOWING IS AN IRISHMAN'S DESCRIPTION of making a canon: "Take a long hole, and pour brass or iron all round it."  
A SCOTCHMAN ASKED AN IRISHMAN, "Why were half-farthings coined in England?" Pat's answer was, "To give Scotchman an opportunity of subscribing to charitable institutions."  
WHY IS A MAD BULL AN OFFICER OF A CONVICT DISPENSARY?—Because he administers a horn to every one he meets.  
AN IRASCIBLE GENTLEMAN RECENTLY FOUGHT a duel with his intimate friend because he jealously asserted that he was born without a shirt to his back!  
THE FOLLOWING PURPORTS TO BE A MODEL medical puff:  
"DEAR DOCTOR.—I shall be one hundred and seventy-five years old next October. For over eighty-four years I have been an invalid, unable to step except when moved with a lever. But a year ago I heard of the Granular Syrup. I bought a bottle, smelt the cork, and found myself a man. I can now run twelve miles and a half an hour, and throw three somersaults without stopping."  
THE FELLOW WHO SAT DOWN ON A PIN, GOT UP ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT.  
A DECEASED CHIEF JUSTICE ONCE ADDRESSED a jury in the following odd speech: "Gentlemen of the jury, in the case the counsel on both sides are unfeeling; the witnesses incredible; and the plaintiffs and defendants both such characters that to me it is indifferent which way you give your verdict."

## Selected Poetry.

THE FREE.  
BY ELIZA COOK.  
The wild streams leap with headlong sweep  
In their careless course o'er the mountain steep;  
And rush and strong they foam along,  
Kissing the rocks with their carol song.  
Why bears a glance like the beam on a lance,  
While I watch the waters dash and dance;  
While with glees, for I love to see  
The path of any thing that's free.  
The skylark springs with dew on his wings,  
And up in the arch of heaven he sings  
Till—Till—oh, so sweet far  
From the noise that comes through the golden bar.  
From the clank of the hounds at play,  
From the rattle of his homeward way—  
All these shall be the music for me,  
For I love the voice of the free.  
The deer starts by his antlers high,  
Proudly tossing his head to the sky;  
The herb runs the plain unbroken by the rein,  
With streaming nostrils and flying mane;  
The dromedars are stired by the eagle's hand,  
The flap of its swooping pinions is heard.  
All these shall be the music for me,  
For my soul was formed to love the free.  
The mariner brave, in his bark on the wave,  
May laugh at the walls round a kindly slave;  
And the one whose lot is the desert spot,  
Is no dread of an envious foe in his cot.  
The thrall and state at the palace gate,  
Are what my spirit has learned to hate;  
The hills shall be a home for me,  
For I'll leave a throne for the hut of the free.

## Miscellaneous.

### A STORY OF THE OPEQUAN.

THE CHARIOT WITH THE HEADLESS HORSES.  
On the right bank of the Opequan—that  
picturesque little stream which, rising  
in Manchester, in the valley of Virginia,  
is between rush-clad banks and  
white-armed sycamores to the Potomac—  
there stands to-day, as it stood fifty  
years ago, an old country house. This  
house has a wide hall, full of deer antlers,  
statues of race horses, fishing rods, fowl-  
ing pieces and game bags. In the large  
portraits of the mansion, portraits of  
knights and cavaliers, in lace and ruffles,  
sit down from the walls. Without, tall  
trees, which their mighty arms against the  
sky, and a sigh around the gables. In front  
the broad porch extends a sort of chase,  
lined over with other oaks so huge and  
old that they are dying at the top. Be-  
hind the hill flows the Opequan with a  
continuous murmur, a "river of time"  
marking the Potomac, its eternity.  
In the thirty years which have rolled over  
the head of the present writer since his  
childhood—each of which has destroyed  
the hope, brought to him some grief, or  
brought away upon its dusky wings some  
illusion—many hours have been  
spent by him in the good old mansion, and  
his hours were among the happiest of his  
existence. The faces, the eyes, the lips—  
the eyes! smiling lips! where are they,  
to-day? They shone and laughed once, to-  
day they are dim and cold.  
Among the diversions of the place  
at that time were "ghost stories." Whence  
they came of profound interest taken by so  
many persons in tales of diablerie? Does  
Spring from some inherent weakness of  
human mind, some craving for a theory  
more exciting than the real? I know not,  
but I know that many hold to the belief  
that there are more things in heaven,  
and earth than are dreamed of in the  
philosophy of mortals. Above all is this the  
belief of the young, it was the conviction  
at least, of him who writes this page.  
In long gone years when he read with  
fervor of the nerves, the wondrous nar-  
ratives of "wing," "The Mysterious Picture,"  
"The Devil and Tom Walker," and all the  
wonderful repertory of that prince of story-  
tellers.  
What was better than reading ghost  
stories, however, was hearing them. In  
the old house on the Opequan he received  
a portion of his education. By the Win-  
dow, or in the Summer nights, he lis-  
tened with more or less credulity, as his  
years were few or many, to those singular  
narratives which escape from the lips of  
many real persons, and through since that  
time in the midst of a circle of awed  
listeners; and, though since that time  
he has to oblivion which awaits all human  
things, those narratives, falling upon the  
sensible mind of youth, struck so deep  
that they remain roteo in his memory.  
One of these tales of diablerie is here  
repeated. It is not the product of the im-  
agination, a fable feigned for the enter-  
tainment of the reader, but the offspring of  
reality. It was told me in the old house  
and mentioned, the lonely mansion, with  
its haunted chambers, its dusty corridors,  
its oaks without, those boughs, as I  
remember, brushed against the windows or  
swooped around the gables with a weird  
and mysterious effect, which made the at-  
tendant start at times and hold their breath.  
The story was called THE CHARIOT WITH  
THE HEADLESS HORSES, and was as follows:  
In the present century, there came  
to the small village on the Potomac,  
Virginia, a young gentleman named Shir-  
ley. It is not necessary to say that the  
appearance of a youthful stranger in any  
of the known world is an occur-  
rence of breathless interest to the fraternity  
of gossips, who have their representatives  
everywhere; and young Shirley at once  
was surrounded upon himself a hundred eyes  
and tongues. All that anybody knew of  
him was that he came from Lower Virginia,  
and seemed to design remaining at the vil-