

# CLAN FRANCISCO SOCIETY HERMIT'S

Once a Society Man, but Now a Recluse, Leaves Companionship of Fellow-Men and Devotes Life to the Expiation of His Father's Guilt.

SAN FRANCISCO has a fashionable hermit. That is, she has a hermit upon whom, by the favor of the gods, has been bestowed all those blessings the possession of which gives one the right to active membership in the aristocratic and exclusive club which we call society.

That right he has exercised in the past, and his wife and children—a family of whom any man ought to be proud—are exercising it still. Between himself and them, however, as between himself and the rest of his fellow creatures, a wall has been built by his own hands; a wall that, during his lifetime, with his consent, shall never be leveled nor dismantled.

He has brains, education, good lineage, good health and wealth. He has had, besides these, friends, a happy home, a loving wife, and beautiful children—enough to make this earth a paradise for almost any man. And yet, he lives, as he will doubtless die, alone in a House of Shadows, which has for years been his haven of refuge from the world.

It was a fine house once, this house in which a man has chosen to bury himself alive—it would be a fine house still were it not that it had so utterly passed under the dominion of neglect and decay. A large roomy mansion, square-fronted, with long windows set deep in its massive walls and looking out upon the street under frowning eyebrows of heavy masonry, it stands a little back from the pavement with a bit of lawn interspersed deprecatingly between it and the world outside.

It is not a sociable looking place. There is no hint of even latent hospitality in the aspect of the rusty iron gate and the knobless front door that has never been known to be opened during the past five years. The lawn is a tangle of dried grass, sticks, pieces of newspaper and all manner of blow-about refuse of city streets. The door is covered with successive coatings of dust that the sticky fog has plastered over the oaken panels; and the windows—gazing blankly like the eyes of some poor uncaared-for dead creature—are shuttered on the outside by thick blinds formed of the same fog and dust, which shut away from the careless gaze of the ordinary passer-by the phantoms which hold revel within the desolate and forsaken-looking interior.

If you are curious enough to risk the possibility of a broken neck, the probability of surprise and unpleasant interrogation by some stray policeman, and the certainty of the disapproval of the entire neighborhood, you can manage to see for yourself that the house is elegantly furnished throughout; but you will also see that the furnishings are of the fashion of past days, and that neglect, utter and systematic, has been its portion for many years.

Rich laces and velvet, costly carved woods and beautiful bric-a-brac, mirrors and gilding, books and bric-a-brac, all are draped with cobwebs and buried in dust that no hand has disturbed for over half a decade, and which no hand

will ever touch. The house is a fine specimen of the architecture of the past, and its interior is a museum of the art of the past. The furniture is of the best, and the decorations are of the most exquisite. The house is a fine specimen of the architecture of the past, and its interior is a museum of the art of the past. The furniture is of the best, and the decorations are of the most exquisite. The house is a fine specimen of the architecture of the past, and its interior is a museum of the art of the past. The furniture is of the best, and the decorations are of the most exquisite.



THE QUEER OLD HOUSE ON GREEN STREET.

## DR. KEANE'S STATEMENT

Explaining Why He Has Become a Hermit.

It suits me to live as I do. My private troubles would interest no one, but they were, and are, enough to keep me as I am. My manner of life is quiet; I trouble no one, and it is a rare thing that any one troubles me.

The politics of our city I deplore. The aim seems to keep taxes high and rents low. Perhaps the new charter may help to a better state of things; it is our only hope.

The manner in which women are forcing themselves to the front in all professions and occupations is a serious menace to the welfare of the world. Women should attend to domestic affairs and not force themselves into fields for which they were never intended. The woman who studies medicine as it should be studied to make a good physician unsexes herself in the process. The trend of the present day seems to be toward the unsexing—not the uplifting—of those who could make the world far better if they remained in their natural places.

This is a transition period. I probably shall not live to see the outcome of what now is chaos. Meanwhile I live as I like best, and am content.

I shall disturb until the present occupant is no more.

In the early '60's this house at 619 Green street was one of the handsomest and best appointed in San Francisco. It was built by a man named Keane—one of the many who made a fortune in the 'early days'—and here with his wife and little son he lived happily until his wife's death left him a smereely unconsolable widower.

After this he devoted himself to his son, George Keane, our hermit of today—who grew to manhood amid the gloom of the saddened house into which no real sunshine ever came after the wife and mother was carried out of the doorway to her long rest among the distant hills.

Nervous, morbidly sensitive, but affectionate and unquestioningly dutiful, this son carried out his father's wishes and became a member of the medical profession. What he suffered during the season of preliminary study no one

save a person similarly constituted can ever realize. Certain it is, however, that the horrors of the dissecting room—the entire "hardening" process which

he went through in suffering but heroic silence because of his love for, and loyalty to, his father—left behind mental wounds which never healed.

By sheer "grit" he dragged himself through the necessary tortures and became in due time a physician of good practice and standing. Later he mar-

ried, and the sad old house learned to smile now and then, and to be, if not gay, at least contented looking again. Old Mr. Keane—rather of a recluse even when a pretty daughter-in-law and merry grandchildren tried to make the world happier for him—died suddenly one day, and his death brought the young doctor face to face with a totally unexpected complication. A woman, of whose very existence he was unaware, appeared at the funeral in the deepest of mourning, and later put in a claim to half the large property left by the elder Keane, claiming to have been for years supported by him, and to be by contract his legal wife.



"A WHITE SHADOW TALKING WITH THE BLACK SHADOWS THAT DOGGED ITS FOOTSTEPS."

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The battle which followed in the courts was long and severe, and although it resulted in a complete victory for the son, the notoriety which it gave the family, and the manner in which his private affairs became public property, made the triumph a dear one for him.

He felt disgraced and humiliated by the whole affair, in which he was, of course, altogether blameless, and his natural shyness deepened into absolute misanthropy. By degrees he withdrew not only from the companionship of his fellow men but even from that of his own family, and found his pleasure, during his few leisure hours, in solitary communion with himself and his memories in the retirement of his own special apartments.

Later, on a pretext so slight as to be trivial, he gave up the practice of his profession, and then his wife, fearing what she scarcely dared, for the children's sake, to acknowledge even to herself, persuaded him to close the town house, which had always seemed to harbor within it brooding shadows of unhappiness and unrest, and come with her and the children to their country place in San Rafael.

Willing to please her who had brought into his life all of brightness that he had ever known, the doctor for a brief time tried to content himself among the roses and sunshine of the pretty little town across the bay. One day, however, the yearning for the old place grew too strong to be resisted. He had grown to hate the encircling hills that seemed to make his beautiful country home a prison; the sunlight and the brilliant colors of the flowers which bloomed all about him made his eyes ache with their insistent brightness; the glad voices of his children, their music and laughter and gay good comradeship disturbed and fretted him beyond endurance; his wife's assiduous and lovingly watchful care filled him with resentful distrust, and he longed for the solitude, the gloom, the quiet and the personal freedom which he knew would be his in the "House of Shadows."

And so he came away from all that troubled him and sought the quiet refuge of the mansion which he so loved.

The heavy oaken doors swung back on their creaking hinges and the dark and silent house seemed to welcome him as if he were a truant son returned to his own. The doors closed behind him, and, so closing, shut him away forever from all that other men hold dear.

From that day he has lived there alone with the shadows. Going and coming only when necessity drove him to have commerce with the world outside, and then through the back way only, his presence among them was for some time unknown to the good people of the vicinity, and after a while it was whispered about that there was something weird and uncanny about the place. There were noises to be heard there at unusual hours, and dim lights flitted from room to room sometimes the whole night through.

Now and again, on moonlight nights, passers-by caught glimpses of a white-robed figure gazing mournfully through the curtains, or pacing up and down with wild wavings of upraised arms—a white shadow talking with the black shadows that ever dogged its footsteps.

Again the strains of music floated out on the air between the hours of midnight and gray dawn; and one man, more venturesome than his brethren, climbing to the drawing room windows and peering in as best he could, saw a dim white something cloudily visible in the gloom enshrouded distance, and straightway grew sick with fear and went his way proclaiming awesomely—

The moths nest and hatch in the upholstery, furniture and fit about like insect ghosts in the stagnant atmosphere of the unaired rooms. Spiders spin their web from corner to corner, from mantel to bookcase, from balustrade to doorpost, and dust—"the bloom of time"—settles down from day to day on web and curtain, carpet and furniture, window and wall, thicker and heavier, and rests there undisturbed.

Some day or night the end will come. The spirit that has so chafed at the restrictions of mortality and circumstance will be set free. The human life, which for so many long years has been the one disturbing element in the silent solitude of the dreary house, will be snuffed out like the candle which has lighted so many purposeless pilgrimages of a restless feet, and dust—"the white shadow" will no longer assert its claim against, and supremacy over, its dark companions, but will join with them on equal footing, and the "House of Shadows" will, perhaps never realize that any change has come, but will shelter and brood over them all then as now.

He is "a good man" they say, but a "little queer" and so he lives alone and unmolested in that desert of unpeopled rooms. His feet wear threadbare paths on the rich carpets; his fingers, grown remiss and stiff, touch lovingly the yellow keys of the once fine piano and draw from them sorrowful music of other days.

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## A FOOL'S LUCK IS ALWAYS THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

FOLLOWS the true story of how Smith got in with the Gaythornes and the Mullers, and all of those golden folks up the State.

It was in Paris, in the quarter called Latin, where, by the way, I never met anybody who knew any Latin. It was only three days after my arrival among us that he went to Longchamps, all by himself, to see the races. He tried to persuade one of us after another to go with him, but everybody had a good reason for staying away, generally a financial one, and it ended in Smith's going by himself. This he did in a costume that no doubt seemed eminently appropriate to the occasion.

It is important to note here that Smith went to the Longchamps races dressed in a light overcoat, a gray Derby hat, trousers of shepherd's plaid, the check thereof drawn to a rather large scale, and that he carried big field glasses slung about him, as if a good view of the running was a vital necessity of his business.

The make of his boots on that occasion is also very important. They were bal-morals, with stout porpoise leather laces. That same evening Smith appeared at our studio, dressed in this same costume, though not so fresh, of course, as when he had set forth earlier in the day.

"How much did you win?" Pollard asked him, entirely without salutation or preface of any kind.

"Well, I didn't seem to pay any attention to what I said. I thought perhaps I'd been mistaken—the man wasn't talking to me at all. He disappeared in the crowd. And the next morning there was a sort of a rally, and everybody began shouting, 'Pompadour!' The horses were coming down the quarter stretch, lickety-clip. I wasn't paying any attention to the crowd; I was looking at my arm and said, 'Somebody's jolting my arm.' I looked to see who it was, and he shoved this thing into my hand before I knew what he was doing. "And you took it, like a lamb?" I asked.

## REMODELLED ENEMY'S CANNON BALLS TO RETURN FIRE.

THROUGH the portals of a new-made grave on Lone Mountain has entered into a unique niche in history one of those martial figures that, living in one century, appear to have been controlled by the daring spirit of a former age. The simple headstone informs the infrequent visitor to the city of the dead that beneath reposes the clay of Colonel Alfred Swingle.

The story of Colonel Swingle's life discounts the most thrilling romances of a Mayne Reid or an Almidar.

In any one chapter of his varied life there is material sufficient to furnish forth the most realistic melodrama. In his short campaign in Nicaragua in 1857 with Walker the manner of the man is probably better to be determined than in any other period of his life. It stamped him as not only an intrepid and active leader, but as a man fertile in resources, any or all of which he brought into play as the circumstances might require. At the siege of Rivas these qualities were notably exemplified. Walker and his men were penned up in the town surrounded by innumerable foes pressing on every side. They lacked provisions and were almost out of munitions of war.

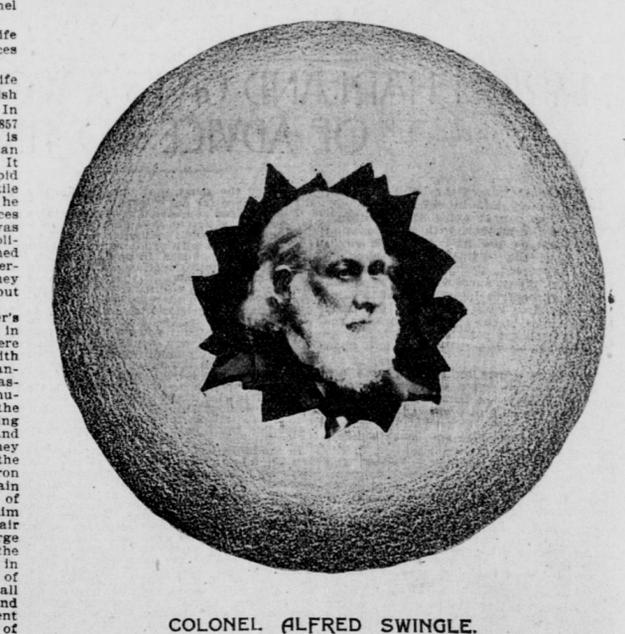
Swingle was the great filibuster's chief of artillery, and, as such, was in direct charge of the guns. These were six-pounders, which he managed with a damaging effect until his supply of cannon balls gave out. Equal to the occasion, he began immediately the manufacture of substitutes, by making in the sand holes of the proper size, filling them with small scraps of iron and pouring in melted lead. When they cooled he had serviceable shot until the supply of lead and small bits of iron gave out. Then he had to turn to again and use his off-hand knowledge of physics. He had enough to enable him to build a crude furnace with a hot air blast which enabled him to melt large pieces of metal, with which he cast the first iron cannon balls ever made in Central America. When he ran out of iron he transformed into round shot all the old church bells he could find, and used them as a convincing argument against the enemy. Even this sort of

religious argument gave out when no more church bells were available, and the facile artilleryman was driven to his last resort, to send out parties to scour the purlieus of the besieged town for the shot with which the enemy had pelted him and to send them, red hot, back to him.

Such were the odds against which Swingle contended at Rivas, and such was his spirit, that he held out against them until rescue came through the intervention of Commander Davis and the men of the United States sloop of war St. Mary's. The ingenuity used to such good effect at that memorable siege was developed later in more peaceful walks, and the latter half of this adventurous life was spent in perfecting mechanical devices.

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