CALDWELL TRIBUNE.

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CALDWELL, : : IDAHO.

IN 1861 England imported 150,000,000 pounds of wool, and 615,000,000 pounds two years ago.

THE state officers of Texas have refused to accept the new capitol building which was erected by Chicago contractors.

ZACHARIAH HASH is the oldest inhabitant of Chandlerville, Ill. It is an astonishing fact that Hash hasn't a hair on his head.

VICTORIEN SARDOU praises Daly's company, but does not take much stock in Shakespeare. Poor Shakespeare! These are sad days for him.

PAUL KOTCHALSKY is a Russian musical prodigy. He is only four years old and he displayed a wonderful genius for music in his second year.

LESTER W. MABREY, of Fair Haven, Conn., died Monday at the age of eighty. He had been a sexton for twenty years and had made 2,000 graves.

DURING the month of August 14,000 umbrellas were left in the railway carriages of the United Kingdom, and 67,000 different articles of all sorts were lost.

THE Marquis of Salisbury has presented his second son with the family living of Hatfield, worth $10,000 a year. The young man was not able to make a living for himself.

MRS. CARLISLE is undergoing her first housekeeping experience in Washington and likes it. She is very hospitable and dislikes to see a vacant place at her dinner table.

WE receive 17,000,000 cocoanuts per year from Central America. In rainy weather the trees shed two cocoanuts in three days and one every two days on fair days. They averages bout 180 nuts per year.

ALBERTA GALLATIN, great-granddaughter of Albert Gallatin, the statesman, is to become a theatrical star. She intends to elevate the stage by wearing the Directoire dress made for her great-grandmother in France.

SHEEP husbandry continues to diminish east of the Mississippi River, while increasing in the southwest and on the great plains. There have been gains this year in Wyoming and Texas, but decreases in Colorado, Michigan and Ohio.

MR. GLADSTONE says that he can hold out no hope that he will be able to take part in any political work after the settlement of the Irish question. His one aim in life is to secure home rule for Ireland. That done, he believes his public work will be ended.

WILLIAM SCULLY, alias "Lord Scully, the alien Illinois landlord, will offer his farms for sale, and dispose of all of his property in that state. By enforcement of lien land law, Scully's system of "rack renting" has been broken up, his tenants refusing to pay rent.

THE peppermint crop of Michigan, which, in St. Joseph and neighboring counties, in 1886 amounted to 75,000 pounds, fell to 60,000 pounds in 1887, and the crop is estimated at only 40,000 pounds this year, owing to drought. An advance in the price of peppermint oil is looked for.

CAPTURING grasshoppers is now a favorite occupation in some parts of Minnesota. The popular method of capture is to cover the inner arc of a wheeled wire tooth rake with cotton cloth and drive where the grasshoppers are thickest. In a short time a few bushels of the pests are collected on the cloth.

WALT WHITMAN, the good gray poet, is still confined to his room and cannot walk, but expects to recover his usual health, which is not very good, before long. He considers his recent attack of paralysis the first that he has had since the war. His cheerful spirits and prove[illegible] luck and poesy sometimes go together.

It is said that as much as ten per cent. of the rice crop is consumed by the rice birds. Besides the actual loss in rice, the expense of saving the balance of the crop is considerable, as tons of powder and shot are consumed, and a considerable amount paid in wages to the "minders," who are hired to scare the birds from the fields.

THE widows of four presidents of the United States—Mmes. Polk, Tyler, Grant and Garfield—are receiving government pensions of $5,000 a year. The widows of the three Major Generals—Mmes. Blair, Hancock and Logan—are receiving pensions of $2,000 a year. The widow of General Sheridan will come between the two, with a pension of $3,500.

THE United States is the great consuming country of raisins in the world, and reliable authorities estimate the consumption at about 2,000,000 boxes of twenty-two pounds each, which, at an average of $2 per box, shows an expenditure of $4,000,000 per annum for one article in dried fruit. The amount referred to represents, say 1,000,000 boxes of Valencia, 750,000 boxes of California, 200,000 boxes of Malaga and 100,000 boxes of Smyrna. The crop of the world for the present season is estimated in round numbers at 6,500,000 boxes.

THE story of how Gen. Andrew Jackson got the name of Old Hickory is again going the rounds, and will be new to some. During the Creek war he had a bad cold, and his soldiers made for him a shelter of hickory bark. The next morning a tipsy soldier not knowing who was under the bark, kicked it over. As the general speechless with rage, struggled out of the ruins, the soldier yelled, "Hello, Old Hickory! Come out of your bark and take a drink!" When the soldiers saw Jackson shaking the bark from his uniform, they gave three cheers for "Old Hickory" and the name stuck.

THE MORGAN WILL.

I had been admitted to the bar, but as I had very little practice and found myself with plenty of time on my hands, I had got into the habit of dropping in to chat with a newsdealer who kept a stand not far from my office. Old Bowls, as everybody called him, dealt also in waste paper and rags, which he sold to the papermakers.

One evening he was sorting a lot of rubbish, when my practiced eye lighted on what appeared to be a legal document, bound with blue tape. I took it up, and saw that it was marked "Last Will and Testament."

I opened it and commenced to read:

In the name of God: Amen. Know all men by these presents, that I, James Morgan, being of sound mind and disposing memory, do make and publish this my last will and testament.

"What's that you say?" demanded Bowls, as he dropped a handful of paper and looked up at me.

I repeated what I had read.

"All right," he said. "Now read on, Squire."

"I give and bequeath to my adopted daughter, Elizabeth Morgan, otherwise known as 'Elizabeth Summers,' all my personal and real property, after the payment of my funeral expenses and my just debts."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Bowles, "that must be the will of old Morgan, who died four years ago—it was said, intestate. He left not less than $100,000, that all went to remote heirs, though everybody expected it would have been left to this very, Elizabeth Summers, his adopted daughter."

"What has become of the adopted daughter?" I asked.

"I do not know, but I think I can find out."

"How much of this property is real estate? and where is it situated?"

"Well, there is the Oakdale plantation which lies about five miles out from here, and is worth at least $50,000. Then there are several houses in town also, besides $25,000 in Government securities."

"Who is the relative that got the property?"

"Simon Skaggs. He lives out at the Oakdale farm. I think he is a second cousin to Mr. Morgan.'

"What kind of man is he?"

"A mean old skinflint, or he would never have taken the last cent from that poor girl."

"Well," said I, "I propose to take this will home with me to-night and examine it carefully. If I find it all right we'll hunt up the girl and recover the property for her."

To this he assented, and, depositing the document in my pocket, I bade the old man good-night and returned to my office, where I slept.

The next afternoon I went to Bowl's store. He was alone, waiting for me.

"I have found where the girl is," he said, as soon as I told him that the will was undoubtedly genuine. "She lives about fifty miles off, in a little place called Friendsville, quite up among the mountains, on a wild hill-farm where things go on in the most primitive manner. A distant relative—an aunt three times removed, very poor, but, it seems, not without a heart—heard of her destitution, and sent for her. An old lady who used to know the girl and had her at her house awhile after old Morgan's death, happen to come here, and I asked her if she knew where Elizabeth Summers was."

"I will go down and see her to-morrow, I said promptly,"

"And bring her back with you," answered Bowls, as briskly. My daughter and I will give her a home. Gad!" he cried, rubbing his hands enthusiastically, "we'll be too much for old Skaggs, after all.

It was late the next afternoon when I arrived at my destination, having made the journey partly by rail and partly by stage. The coach put me down at a lonely crossroads, from which I had about two miles to walk.

"Oh, yes—the Widow Benham," said the driver, pointing with his whip, "lives up yonder, just around the point of the mountain. "You'll see the house in ten minntes or so."

It was a warm, sultry day in August, with not a breath of air stirring. I soon caught sight of the house—a plain, unpretending structure like so many in that region. When it was about 200 yards distant the sound of falling water attracted me, apparently coming from some precipitous rocks on the left. As I was thirsty I went toward it. As I turned a corner of a cliff a handsome girl, about 20 years of age, emerged from a sort of a cave, bearing on her shoulder a large water jar. The lightness with which she stepped from stone to stone across the brook, the poise, as of some sylvan goddess, with which she bore aloft the jar, made me utter unconsciously an exclamation of surprise. Though she was dressed in the coarsest homespun and wore neither shoes nor stockings, I forgot altogether the homeliness of her apparel in the grace of her movements, the exquisite contour of her figure, and the beauty of her expressive face, which was now mantling with blushes. A small dog, apparently a self-constituted protector, barked at me furiously as I advanced, hat in hand; for intuitively I knew this must be my client.

My client it was. I lost no time in explaining the object of my visit. She was very much surprised, but, after a moment's hesitation, she said with dignity:

"Come up to the house, please, I will consult my aunt. Down, Tip—down sir."

The dog ceased barking at this command and trotted quietly ahead. I offered to take the jar, but she declined with the composure of a queen.

When she had introduced me to Mrs. Benham and said, "This gentleman, aunt, has something very strange to tell you, and I will leave you with him for a moment," she disappeared, returning some quarter of an hour later, dressed in a becoming blue muslin and with the daintiest of slippers on her pretty feet. I had meantime produced the will and given details of the manner in which it was found.

Not to dwell too long on this prelude to my story, I will say briefly that my client and I started the next morning for Kent, and were met at the depot by Bowls and his daughter, who relieved me of my charge, while I went to my boarding house for supper and thence to my room.

The next day I filed the document in the office of the County Clerk and gave notice to Skaggs that on the following Monday I should move that it be admitted to probate.

But here a new difficulty presented itself. In our anxiety to find the claimant we had utterly overlooked the attesting witnesses.

I immediately went to Bowls and stated the difficulty.

"Ah!" said he, "why have we not thought of this before?"

"Do you know these witnesses?" said I.

"Yes, I know them; Tom Jones lived as a tenant on the old man's farm at the time of his death. He now lives about ten miles out on the Lancaster road. And, as certain as I'm a sinner, squire, this other witness is dead. William Jackson? Yes—I remember him. He moved to Texas, and died a year ago."

"Then it's all up. We can't get along without both witnesses. Are you sure that Jackson is dead?"

"I am certain sure. He has a brother living in this town, who received a letter from the family in Texas at the time of his death. There is no doubt about it."

"Then we may as well drop the matter at once. The law of this State requires the evidence of two witnesses, and makes no provision for the death of one."

"It does look rather ugly, if that's the case," said Bowls. "But let's make a fight for it—something may turn up in our favor."

My fears proved correct, however. We made a gallant struggle; but it was in vain. My speech, I was told afterward, was applauded privately by the Judge, though in his official capacity he felt compelled to decide against me. I remember that I spoke from a full heart of the injustice of refusing to receive a will which everybody knew to be that of Morgan, merely because one of the witnesses had died.

My fair client still remained at my friend Bowls's. "My eldest daughter has come to love her as a sister," he said. "Bessie, as you must have seen, is unusually intelligent. She had received quite a good education, too, before old Mr. Morgan died. The cheerful manner in which she bore her subsequent poverty is, as Mrs. Benham says, a proof of an unusually noble character. Now we have invented an excuse that we want a nursery governess, for she is too proud to stay as a mere pensioner, and her aunt has consented to the arrangement, saying that it is a sin to bury Bessie among the hills."

One day in the following summer I was in the clerk's office searching some old records, when I came upon a page that almost took my breath away. After reading it carefully I closed the book and returned to my office.

The next day Simon Skaggs was served with a summons to answer a suit of ejectment, in the name of Elizabeth Morgan, for all the real property held by him, which he claimed as heir-at-law of the late James Morgan; and great was the excitement in the village when it was known that this suit was begun. "What could it mean?" asked everybody.

I told no one. Even to Bessie I only represented that I thought I saw a chance to recover but I was careful not to appear too sanguine.

In two months the Circuit Court came on. Again the court was crowded. The excitement was even greater than it had been before. I had prepared no brief. Not even a memorandum or a book did I carry to court.

"Morgan vs. Skaggs," called the clerk, and shortly afterward I said:

"Call Mr. Bowls."

The Sheriff called him. He came into the court room, took the witness stand, and was sworn.

The most intense silence now reigned. My fair client was seated by my side, pale and quiet. The defendant was seated near his counsel calm, confident, and defiant.

"Examine the witness," said the Judge.

"Mr. Bowls," I began, "are you acquainted with the plaintiff?"

"I am."

"Do you know where she lived, from the time she was 3 years old, up to the time she was 16?"

"I do."

"Where?"

"With the late James Morgan."

"Are you certain that this plaintiff is the same person?"

"I am."

"That's all I wish to ask," said I to the the Court.

"Cross-examine, gentlemen," said the Judge.

"We don't wish to ask anything," said the opposing counsel—two of the ablest lawyers in the country.

"Let the witness stand aside," said the Court. "Call your next."

"May it please your honor, we have no other witnesses that we wish sworn at present," said I rising to my feet and looking around the room.

A murmur of disappointment ran through the crowd.

"Then you rest your case here?" said the Judge with a smile.

"No, your Honor; we have some record evidence that we wish to introduce;" and as I spoke I drew it from my pocket. "It is an authenticated copy from the records of the county for the year 18—. It proves that this young lady was duly and legally adopted as the daughter of the deceased, and as such is entitled, under our law, to this property, as his nearest and only heir at law. Shall I read it to the jury?"

"Read it," said the Judge.

But Skaggs's lawyers sprung to their feet with a storm of objections. For a full hour they argued with all the force of their ability, bringing to bear their vast knowledge and experience. But they were finally overruled by the Court who directed me to proceed.

The record was conclusive. After reading it I announced I would close the case for the plaintiff. The defendent was so completely taken by storm that he did not introduce a single witness. The charge of the Court was lucid and comprehensive. In thirty minutes the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff.

The result was received with loud acclamations by the excited audience. Skaggs took the case to the Supreme Court, but only for the purpose of gaining time. The judgement below was affirmed.

Three months later the real estate was turned over to my fair client. The securities were given up at the same time without a suit. With a part of the interest which had been accumulating for so many years the old mansion at Oakdale was refitted and furnished.

Six months later there was a quiet wedding at my old friend Bowls's, in which I took a prominent part.

I am getting on toward middle age. I love my profession better than ever, though my time is now necessarily divided, and a proportion of it devoted to the farm at Oakdale.

The old farm house is vocal with childish music, and a sunny-haired, soft-voiced little woman makes it the brightest spot on all the earth to me.

WAS IT FATE?

Arthur Armitage and myself are friends of many years' standing; so long, in fact, as to make rather middle-aged men of us both were it not that our intimacy dates from childhood. We were both born and brought up on neighboring manors in one of the midland shires of England, went to school together, and subsequently to the university, where our friendship naturally continued, owing partly to early associations and partly to a similarity of tastes in certain directions. I was, perhaps, more inclined to be studious, knowing that, being a younger son my future depended largely on my own exertions, while Arthur, on the other hand, was heir to a very comfortable estate, which by the law of entail descended to him on the decease of his uncle, whose family consisted of an only daughter. Helen Armitage was not the sort of girl to attract particular attention, or for men to go into rapsodies over. Slight and petite of figure, neutral in complexion and hair, shy and retiring in the company of strangers, her one charm consisted in a rare sweetness of disposition and grace of manner, which made her a universal favorite, and so overshadowed her deficiencies in other respects, as to make one oblivious to their existence after being a short while in her company. Brought up, as it were, in the shadow of Haydon Hall—our places were adjoining, as I have said—I had ample opportunity to estimate the character of Arthur's gentle cousin, and to regard her with sentiments of affection, though these were purely Platonic in character. In fact, I can conceive Helen Armitage as inspiring sentiments of any other character.

My friend Arthur and myself, sometimes individually, very frequently in company, used to pay flying visits of a week, or so at a time to the country houses of friends during vacation. One house to which Arthur was particularly fond of going was that of the Boothby's, Boothby Court being within easy riding or driving distance of Haydon Hall. These was, however, a more potent reason than mere accessibility or pleasant surroundings would generate. Ethel Boothby was not alone the richest, but also the handsomest heiress in the neighborhood, and Arthur was of that susceptible age, which subordinates the former quality to the latter, the more so as he had no need whatever to, as it is vulgarly called, marry money. That his feelings were reciprocated can not be wondered at, considering that Arthur was only 20, built like a Hercules and of a peculiarly frank and agreeable disposition.

One forenoon—it was in the Summer term—as I was sitting in my rooms, smoking and cogitating, my friend Arthur came in abruptly, as was his wont, and proceeded to make himself at home.

"I say, old fellow," he suddenly blurted out, after lighting a cigar and smoking a minute or two in silence, "do you believe in astrology?"

"Why, what on earth has put that in your head?" I asked, astonished at such a question coming as it did from such a source.

"Simply this: I correspond, as you know, with Ethel pretty regularly, but within the last two or three weeks I haven't had a line from her. Now Captain Horrocks, of the Twelfth, whom you met at my rooms last night, has just been paying a visit to Boothby Court, and he tells me there is a fellow there—an army man, I think—who is confoundedly sweet upon Ethel, and he says she seems to be spooning him pretty lively, too. Now, it's impossible for me to go down even for a day just now and see how matters stand—I'll lose my term if I do. And yet I am awfully anxious to know. Do you think a fellow could find out anything by consulting an astrologer? I hear there's a fellow here now who's a regular dab at the business they say."

The twinkle in his eye and the humorous expression playing around his mouth as he spoke showed me that Armitage recognized the absurity of his own remarks, for he was as sensible, matter-of-fact a fellow as you could find anywhere; yet the very fact of his making such a proposition also went to show that he was more troubled than he cared to acknowledge about the reports he had heard.

"Bah!" I said; "you don't mean to tell me that you believe in any such rubbish. Don't make a fool of yourself. Depend upon it, what you've heard is considerably stretched. These stories always are."

"Well," he returned, "I think so myself, and as for astrology, of course you know me too well to suppose I have any confidence in it. But suppose we go and see the fellow at any rate?" he continued, as if caught by a sudden inspiration. "Did you ever consult one? Have you got anything particular to do? I confess I'm curious to see how the thing's worked—how they cast a horoscope, isn't it? Suppose we go, just for fun, and have ours cast?"

Young men at a university will do almost anything, provided the thing to be done possesses features of novelty or interest, and as Arthur Armitage and myself, at the age of 20, were no exceptions to the rule, it was agreed that we should visit the astrologer in question without delay.

"How did you find out about him?" I asked, as we turned into High Street, where Armitage said he lodged

"From Benson, of Corpus—you know Benson—he should know if anybody knows; always dabbling in such things. Benson says he's a regular swell. Come up here to consult old works in the Bodleian. He's not one of your professionals—oh, no! A thorough gentleman I hear—man of independent means—no such a thing as a fee—in fact requires introduction to call—I got mine from Benson—Benson believes in it—that's partly what influenced me this morning," and so Armitage rambled on as we sauntered down the street, till we reached a house a few doors beyond the Angel, where we understood the personage we were in quest of was staying.

We sent up our cards, along with Armitage's letter of introduction, by the servant who answered our inquiry as to whether Mr. Asgard was at home. A few minutes later we received an answer in the affirmative, with an invitation to come in, as the gentleman would be pleased to see us. A venerable, but pleasant looking gentleman, with a patriarchal white beard, rose from a table as we entered, and courteously asked us to be seated.

"You are friends of Mr. Benson," he began, "and I am always glad to welcome acquaintances of my young friend, who evinces such laudable enthusiasm with regard to our divine science. The day is not far distant, my young friends, when the chair of astrology in this ancient university will command as much respect and be held in as high esteem as any of those filled by your most learned and talented professors. The exalted science of which I am the humble, though earnest, exponent has too long suffered from the disrepute into which it has fallen through the infamous and fraudulent practices of ignorant and designing men, but I am confident it will not be long before it regains the proud position it once held, as queen of the practical sciences, in that it confers greater and more lasting benefits upon human life than it is possible for any of the other sciences, useful though they be, to bestow. But I forget," he proceeded, checking himself and in a lighter tone, "you did not come here to hear me lecture—you have enough of that in your regular course—you came, I doubt not, to ask me something, too seek information upon some important point connected with your affairs. Is it not so?"

Without waiting for a reply, he evidently took the matter for granted, Mr. Asgard rose from the table and walked to some book shelves, took thence a volume, and returned to his seat.

"This," he said, as he opened the volume, "is a collection of ephemerides for a series of years. An astronomical ephemeris contains, as you are aware, the right ascensions and declinations of each of the heavenly bodies—sun, moon, and planets—at mean noon on every day of the year for which such ephemeris is computed. The science of astrology depends upon the same data, and demands the same accuracy in employing these data, as the science of astronomy. I will now proceed to cast your respective nativities. To do so with accuracy I should know not only the year and day of the month, but also the hour and minute of your birth. Few in after life possess this knowledge. I must, therefore, content myself with day and year, and afterwards correct the horoscope by certain infallible signs in your own appearance, which serve to show me that you could have been born only at a certain hour of that day and year and at no other."

Mr. Asgard, having ascertained that both Armitage and myself were born in '51, he in March, I in August, busied himself for several minutes in a series of computations, referring from time to time to the book which lay open before him, and sometimes glancing up and eyeing us critically for a moment or two. At length he desisted from his task, and bending over a large sheet of paper, upon which appeared two circular figures filled with astronomical symbols and numerals, he remained for some time buried in thought. Suddenly he roused himself with a start:

"One of these horoscopes," he at length said slowly, addressing himself to Armitage, "yours—is a most singular and startling figure. Yours," he continued, turning to me, "presents no features outside the contingencies of human life ordinarily to be expected for persons in your station, except where it is inseparably associated, as it is during the occurrence of the startling events of which I shall shortly speak, with that of your friend.

"Your horoscope tells me," went on Mr. Asgard, again addressing Armitage, "that you come of an old and wealthy family to the inheritance of whose name and wealth you will succeed. You love a lady, tall, dark, beautiful, wealthy and of about your own age, who reciprocates your affection in equal measure. After taking your degree, as you will do next year, you will travel. You will be gone a year. Then the great calamity of your life will befall you. You will kill your nearest and dearest relative. Well may you start! You will kill her whom you now love most dearly upon earth. Both will meet their end directly through your agency. You, too," he added, turning to me, "are associated in some mysterious manner—my art fails to disclose precicely how—with these startling, these ghastly events. Stay! The influence is upon me. Sit one of you on either side of me. Clasp my hands in yours. I may be able to tell you more."

Startled, as we might well be, at the strange language used by our entertainer, and not without a certain feeling of awe on my part, at least, we proceeded to move our chairs at Mr. Asgard's request, Armitage seating himself upon the right, and clasping the old gentleman's right hand, while I did likewise on the left. This was the work of a moment, and when after taking my position I cast a glance at Mr. Asgard's face I noticed that his eyes had a singularly rapt expression, and that they were fixed steadily upon what I can best describe as a large transparent ball of crystal, of about the size and shape of an ostrich egg, resting upon a slab of some polished black substance that looked like jet, and occupying a position upon the table directly in front of Mr. Asgard's seat, and distant perhaps two feet from him. Presently the old gentleman's lips began to move inaudibly, as if trying in vain to speak, his eyes continuing to stare steadfastly at the crystal, like one in a trance. At last he found the faculty of speech:

"The clouds upon the crystal," he said, "are clearing away, and figures begin to shape themselves within it. I see pictured before me the terrace of a stately mansion. It is moonlight. Two figures are pacing slowly along the terrace in close converse. One is the gentleman upon my right, the other is a lady, young, and of rare beauty. Her hair is black, bound about the forehead with a golden circlet, and falling in profusion over her shoulders."

"It is Ethel!" I could hear Arthur say in tones just audible.

"They stop walking. The young man bends over her. He takes her hand. Now he slips a ring upon her finger, and stoops down to kiss her. Now the scene melts away. Again the crystal becomes cloudy. Blackness again. It is gone.

Still the venerable and bearded figure seated between us did not move, and the rapt eyes continued to gaze steadily at the crystal. For perhaps a minute there was silence, while I waited with eager interest to see what would transpire next, and I could see that my friend was in the same condition of mind. Then Mr. Asgard's lips began to move again. He evidently saw something in the crystal, though to my eyes it looked as bright and transparent as ever.

"Clouds, yes," said Mr. Asgard; "but are they the clouds that always usher in and out the picture, or are they—? Clouds, fogs, mist—I fail to see anything more. Ah! I see now the figure of the gentleman upon my right. He holds a knife in his hand and is looking down. There is trouble on his mind. Now two other figures appear upon the scene. One is the beautiful young lady with the raven hair, but now she wears a traveling dress. Beside her appears a portly old gentleman with frank expression, clear gray eyes, a florid complexion, and neatly trimmed white beard and whiskers. He carries a gold-rimmed glasses, his coat is open and he wears a white waistcoat."

"My uncle!" I heard Armitage remark, with a gasp; "that is the description among a thousand."

"The figures are moving toward each other," continued Mr. Asgard; "they meet, and now the knife of the young man is buried in the old man's breast. The young lady falls heavily forward. Fog, clouds—the scene is gone."

I looked at Armitage. His face was a study. The utter bewilderment which overspread it, was curious to contemplate, and at any other time would have afforded much food for merriment, but the gravity and venerable appearance of our interlocutor, together with the really startling character of the revelations, if such they were, which he was making, would have precluded anything of the kind, even if common courtesy had not.

Again there was a period of silence, followed by a reawaking, so to speak as before.

"The cloud this time has lifted like magic," said Mr. Asgard, "the interior of a church is displayed before me. There is bright sunshine, bright dresses and happy faces. A bridal party is standing at the chancel, a bishop in full canonicals is performing the ceremony. The bridegroom is the young man at my right, and the bride is a lady whom it would be flattery to call beautiful in either face or form. But her expression is wondrously kind, sweet and pleasant, and she has marvelously beautiful, hazel eyes. Her left shoulder is slightly lower than the right."

"Helen!" I could hear Armitage remarking, under his breath.

"It has vanished," simply remarked Mr. Asgard. Then he started as one awakening from sleep and looked at us, first at one, then at the other, as he disengaged his hands.

"Ah!" he finally said smiling; "I see. I have been making revelations connected with your horoscopes, through the medium of the crystal. It is sometimes thus when the interest is tense, the influence kindly and there is enough of odic force to generate the visions. In such cases I am simply a passive medium of revelation and communication for the benefit of others. The virtues of the crystal have been handed down to us from the wisest sages of the earliest—you would call them the Pre-Adamic—times; a pregnant title, by the way, of which your most learned professors fail to grasp the true and all-important meaning—all-important, that is to say, if neglected historic truth takes any precedence in their eyes over time-honored fiction. The crystal, on the table there, was a gift from one who knew its value—one to whom I owe much of the lore, I can say, without undue vaunting, I now possess. It is homogeneous and flawless—essential qualifications for purity and accuracy of vision. But, strange as it may seem, of the visions which I saw I now possess no recollection. They were, of course, supplementary to, and explanatory of the horoscope which I have just cast. I trust they may prove of benefit."

"One word, Mr. Asgard," said Armitage, gravely; "I have witnessed things of so extraordinary nature this afternoon, and which relate to persons in whom I possess a peculiar interest, that you must excuse me for putting some plain, blunt questions to you regarding them. Do you really mean to tell me—" here Armitage put on a most inquisitorial look "that I am to place reliance in what has passed; in the information drawn from your horoscope, and the visions you say that you have seen in that lump of crystal? Or are you merely making game of us, on the supposition that we are either too dense, or too careless, to sift your premises or dispute your conclusions?"

I was astonished at the stand taken by Arthur, so contrary was it to the easy, good-natured way in which he usually took things, and must confess that I waited with some curiosity for the reply of Mr. Asgard—not that I myself entertained the least doubt of the purity and sincerity of that gentleman's motives, as his whole bearing pointed to the contrary, but, before I had time to complete my self-constituted argument, Mr. Asgard spoke. Gravely turning to Armitage, and without the least sign of resentment at the remarks so curtly put, he said:

"My dear young friend, I have seen too much of men and manners to take offense at the plainness and sincerity of youth. You must pardon me for not going at this moment into fuller explanations—these would be fruitless in view of your present acquaintance with the matter in hand. I have done my best to serve you; my art is at your command"—here Mr. Asgard bowed toward us in a courtly and dignified manner—"but pray do not impute to me motives which would be perfectly purposeless, even if I cared to trouble myself with them."

This rebuke told upon Arthur. I could see that he felt ashamed of the paltry insinuations he had just made, and the real anxiety which had caused him to make these tentative remarks made itself thoroughly apparent in his next words.

"Pardon me," he said quickly; "I am surprised—dumfounded—at the minuteness and appositeness of your knowledge. One would think you came from Northampton, and knew all the families in the neighborhood." (Here Mr. Asgard gravely signified dissent.) "Your descriptions of my uncle, of Miss Boothby, and of my cousin, must either argue intimate acquaintance, or——"

"Or intimate knowledge of the science of forecasting human events, you would say," interrupted Mr. Asgard, good-humoredly; "that is exactly what my life and energies have been directed toward—I think not with unfruitful results.

"But," answered Armitage impulsively, "what am I to think of all this? You have as good as told me that I am destined to murder my uncle, and the lady whom—whom—I mean to marry when I do marry; and then that I am eventually to marry my cousin, whom I love and admire as a sist[illegible] but nothing more. What am I to think of all this? Does it seem reasonable? How, I ask you as a plain man, could a girl love and marry the murderer of her father? Why, the wildest flight of fiction, where license is most allowable, would draw the line at that."

"My dear sir," responded Mr. Asgard, quietly, "I am not responsible for the workings of destiny. I am simply their humble exponent, for the good, I trust, of those who chance to consult me. No one can be more wise than destiny. You can rest assured that events will transpire just as I have said unless—"

"Unless what?" cut in Arthur, eagerly.

"Unless," said Mr. Asgard, slowly, "the current of events changed by those who are part and parcel of those events, for they alone can move in the matter. You and you alone, have the unalterable and inalienable power to shape the course of your own life. If——"

"If what?" again put in Arthur, eagerly, as Mr. Asgard paused as if seeking for an expression.

"If," returned our venerable friend, slowly, "we are absolutely sure of the conditions of those events, and take deliberate measures to insure the possibility of their happening.

"And then?" returned Mr. Asgard, musingly, "and then—ay, and then what? At our peril. I have seen much and foretold much, but I have yet to record a single instance of the successful defeat of fate, even in cases where there was the most express and premeditated purpose of doing so."

"Then you say," continued Armitage, with the evident intent of pushing our friend into a corner, "that it is practically impossible for me to escape doing what my horoscope has laid down for me that I must, in short, be guilty of those unnatural acts which you have stated."

Mr. Asgard paused and bowed his head upon his hand before he answered. When he did so he spoke very deliberately and earnestly.

"Yes," said he, "I believe that, practically, there is no escape from the conclusions drawn from the configurations of the stars and the visions in the crystal. Still, theoretically there is, and there is no reason why you, of all men, should not use your best endeavors to defeat such a terrible and peculiar destiny as we have just foreseen."

"But how?" asked Armitage, sharply and impulsively, for I could see that, somehow, he was getting every moment more and more deeply imbued with the plausibility of Mr. Asgard's argument.

"There is but one practical course that I can see," returned Mr. Asgard, "and that is to eliminate your own personality from the chart."

And how is that to be done?" inquired Arthur.

"By making sure," answered Mr. Asgard, "that you cannot, by any possibility, participate in the events foretold, for the simple reason that you do not fulfill the conditions of time and place."

"Ah!" acquiesed Arthur; "then will you please enlighten me"—and I could see the skeptical twinkle in his eye as he said so—"regarding those very necessary essentials of time and place. Where and when, for instance, am I to kill my uncle, and—and Miss Ethel Boothby, for your descriptions are certainly unanswerable, and how can I escape the parricidal doom which, it appears, is cut out for me by the planets," and Arthur indulged in the faint mockery of a laugh, a thing which I remember I was sorry for, as he said this: "Give me the time and place, and I will put my resolution against destiny that what you have foretold never occurs."

Mr. Asgard said nothing, but again took the paper upon which the horoscopes were drawn in his hands and scrutinized them closely.

"The place," he said presently, drawing a deep and sympathetic inspiration, "can not be precisely worked out from the data I have got. But the time can. The planets in the sixth and seventh houses of the horoscope point unmistakably to the fatality I have said. Mars and Saturn on the cusp of the seventh, in platic quadrature, to the sun in the fourth—for, unlike Lilly and the astrologers of our modern era, I use both natural and mundane aspects—sines, co-sines and tangents—signifies, of course, the violent death of the nearest relative to the significator. But when? Ah, when? That, fortunately, we can limit by producing the secondary aspect, and by drawing rapt parallels toward the meridian. This fatality must occur"—and in these words Mr. Asgard became more solemn and impressive than ever—"must occur directly on the point of the sun's ingress into cancer."

"And when is that?" asked Arthur, half incredulously, but wholly earnestly.

"At twenty-two minutes past 3 on the morning of the 22d of June, next year, when Mars and Saturn will be in quadrature to the sun, the one in aries, the other in libra," returned Mr. Asgard, referring to his figures.

"And if this causuality you speak of does not occur I am safe?" inquired Arthur, anxiously.

"Precisely speaking, yes," returned Mr. Asgard, slowly; "although, remember that I labored under disadvantages when casting your horoscope and as degrees and minutes are of the first and only value in estimating time, it is possible, in the present instance that the incidents I have foretold may occur either sooner or later by an hour or two than the actual culmination of the aspect."

"In other words you draw out," said Arthur rising from his seat and buttoning up his coat to go; "you are not sure of anything. There is always a loop-hole to crawl out of, and—excuse me, but I must go."

To say that I was surprised at this very strange movement on the part of my friend Armitage, so utterly different from the tone and manner that I had known for years, is very weakly to express the sentiments than possessed me at the time. Mr. Asgard bowed us out, like a courteous man of the world, and together we strolled silent and moody back to college. Arthur was not himself again for more than a week after, for I could frequently see him grinding his teeth and muttering to himself in a manner wholly unlike him, and though I tried over and over again to pull him out of the moral slough into which he had evidently sunk, I made no headway, and eventually was fain to leave things to themselves.

So the term wore on till commemoration when, of course, we went down into the country. I do not think either Arthur or myself gave the visit to the astrologer more than a passing thought afterward—I certainly did not.

One thing, however, recalled it very forcibly to my mind before I had been a week at Boothby Court, which was the first on the list of places to which we, as eligible undergraduates, had been invited and were morally compelled to go. That was the episode on the terrace, and the whole thing struck me like a flash so vividly did it recall the vision Mr. Asgard had seen in the crystal.

This, however, was fogotten as soon as seen so prone is youth to repudiate what it does not like. Arthur Armitage and myself passed "greats" next May at the end of the long term, and together we again took the London and northwestern for home, as we had done many times before.

I believe that our little university incident with the astrologer was forgotten a month after it occurred. At all events it was never referred to and passed, in the busy whirl of existence that we were swept into like a vortex, into the past.

In the following Spring Arthur concluded to make the regulation tour of the world, a year being allotted him for doing so. I would have gone with him myself if the state of my finances had permitted. As it was, I had the pleasure of seeing him off—a pleasure, by the way, which sometimes does not work both ways. For eight or nine months we heard little or nothing of the wanderer; a telegram from Brindisi, another from Alexandria, a slip of paper from Aleppo, Beyrout, Damascus and Teheran; a big draft from a mercantile house in Bombay, another from Singapore, and a third from Hong Kong, served to keep his uncle reminded that he was in the land of the living yet. The last letter I recollect being received was one from our own city of San Francisco, stating that he might be expected home in June.

Early in May, feeling somewhat indisposed—I had been reading for a fellowship—I concluded that a little fresh air would do me good, and thought that a blow on the Atlantic would be the healthiest and most expeditious way of taking it. Accordingly, the middle of the month found me in a suite of rooms on the shady side of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, with Arthur Armitage occupying one of the lounges, I the other. In June we began to get tired of the hum-drum routine of New York existence and yearned for a glimpse of the green fields and stump-willows of old England. State-rooms in the Bothnia were engaged and our luggage transferred thither for passage to Liverpool. We steamed down the harbor, I think it was, the 20th of June, and the same night were rocked in the cradle of the deep, looking upon nothing of any consequence but stars and seas. Two days out found us in pretty much the same condition. On the third day out, while we were on the banks, lounging over the taffrail for an after-dinner chat, Arthur, lazily paring his nails with a penknife, suddenly made the bantering remark:

"I say, old fellow, recollect that old astrologer at Oxford who told me I was to murder my uncle and Ethel on or about the sun's ingress into Cancer? This is the 22d of June, and either they or I must hurry up if the thing has got to be done on time."

It was not three seconds after he spoke when the short snap of the bells "reverse steam" sounded from the bridge right above us. Swiftly out of the fog—although it was pretty fair weather for the banks, still there was the usual fog—came bearing down on us the huge hulk of an ocean steamer. Second: mean miles when ships an eighth of a mile long meet each other, both running at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and all the power in the world will fail to deflect the long hulks out of their course, if only sighted a couple of miles away from each other, in the forty-five seconds before they must inevitably clash.

It is now nearly twenty years ago, but there are many people, both in America and England, who feel sick-hearted when the collision of the Bothnia and the Assyria, upon the Newfoundlands Bank, is brought to their recollection. Arthur and I, as I have said, were leaning over the taffrail, Arthur paring his nails with his penknife, when the collision occurred. There was no warning but the short snap of the bell upon the bridge and then—I knew no more. I have since learned that I was knocked senseless by the concussion. But the extraordinary fact remains, that on the deck of the Assyria, when the steamers struck, stood Mr. Armitage and Ethel Boothby, who had meant to give Arthur a surprise by meeting him in New York and sailing home with him, as our last letters had stated that we were in no hurry. The swiftness and violence of the shock threw old Mr. Armitage against Arthur's penknife, the steamers coming together side by side, and the loose bodies on deck following the usual laws of gravity. At the same time sailors were thrown out of the rigging, and the rivets on two of the boilers of the Bothnia were sprung. Miss Ethel Boothby was thrown violently forward, I have heard, and her head striking the deck, nearly at Arthur's feet, death was almost instantaneous. There is little more to be said, except to consider the marvelous manner in which Mr. Asgard's predictions after all came true, in a way which nobody could have dreamed of and nobody foresees. Helen Armitage—Arthur's quiet and kindly cousin—was of the party, but escaped uninjured, and she nursed him so well—for Arthur, like myself and scores of others, was laid up for weeks after the disaster—that he fell in love with her and married her after all. I would say more, but I am afraid that if I do so I will get a wigging when I call on them at the Palace Hotel next. But still, even twenty years after, Arthur and myself look back with me