

A SUFFERING SOUL

Strange Fancies of an Aged German.

SLEEPS NEAR HIS COFFIN.

Pistols and Knives for Dreaded Assassins.

TERROR OF AN OPIUM COMBINE.

For Years He Has Lived a Haunted and a Hunted Life in a Folsom-Street Abode.

A man who goes pleasant and smiling through the world, yet harbors manifold sorrows; who is careless, indifferent, apparently neglectful of his personal safety at times, yet who lives in the terror of a violent death, fortifies his domicile with murderous looking weapons, sleeps at night in a barricaded bedstead, stands lonesome midnight watches, momentarily expecting to see the gleam of the assassin's knife or hear the report of the murderer's revolver.



Henry Wheeler.

Such is Henry Wheeler. Such is his nature. Of his surroundings, his queer life and fancied rights and wrongs there is much to find out and much to be written.

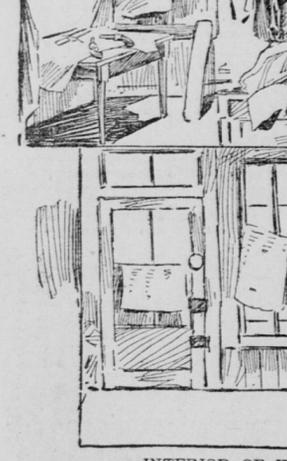
Henry Wheeler resides at 916 Folsom street in this city. He has lived there for six years. They have been years of dread and horror to him and during their passage he had solemnly prepared for death. His finished mahogany coffin stands grim and sentinel-like beside his parlor door, and no doubt there is a skeleton in his family closet.

But Mr. Wheeler of 12 o'clock mid day is not Mr. Wheeler of the hour of midnight. When the uncanny shadow of his coffin casts an elongated shaft of black across his threshold during the hours when the good people of the city sleep soundest, then Henry Wheeler loses the blithe expression of the eye, the firm but pleasant set of the mouth, and scowls beneath his gray eyelashes, grows pale and thinks.

Next door to his fortified premises is a vacant house, wherein gather the members of the smugglers' ring that he claims to have discovered.

Here he says where the assassins hold secret conferences, plan for bringing in trunkful of opium and incidentally lie in wait for an opportunity to put Henry Wheeler out of the way, for he is a thorn in the side of the Government defrauders, you know.

Wheeler unhesitatingly accuses a num-



INTERIOR OF WHEELER'S ABODE.

ber of prominent persons of belonging to the ring. He even goes so far as to name certain persons in the neighborhood as the parties who have at intervals during the past six years tried to murder him by stabbing, poisoning, a blow from a hatchet and other methods of depriving one of life.

Wheeler tells all these stories in as much good argumentative English as the average man is able to summon to his tongue's end. He invited THE CALL'S representatives to come to his quarters at midnight, that they might hear for themselves and be convinced. He showed a bullet hole in the wall where a ball intended to be sent crashing into his body had spent its energy in the plastering.

In his back yard he pointed out the spot where a certain man—mentioning him by name—had leaned over the fence and aimed a deadly blow at the old man's uncovered head with an ax.

He averred that while standing near this same fence one night he heard the smugglers declare that it would be necessary to "get the old man out of the way by fair means or foul."

Wheeler never sleeps twice in the same spot. One night he will rest on a big sea-chest in his front room, another night on the floor of his kitchen, and at times he will repose upon his bed, which is surrounded by a fence of cordwood that

could not be penetrated by an ordinary pistol bullet.

His pistols are always handy, and a big sheath-knife is kept within reach. The coffin mentioned was ordered two years ago and is kept to remind the public, in case of the owner's sudden and violent demise, that he was prepared for the worst and was ready to meet death.

Wheeler of midday is, to all appearances, a perfectly rational man of even temperament and cheerful disposition. He views his big black coffin with nonchalance and talks good common-sense about the opium ring. He knows something about the traffic in opium. Of this there can be no doubt, for he speaks with intelligence about Reed, Whalley, Malcolm and others of past and present power in that crooked line of business.

Though a pauper to all outward visible signs, on any save state occasions, Wheeler is a man of some wealth. He has money in bank and property in different parts of the country.

A midnight visit to Wheeler's was tried and failed, but yesterday the old man consented to an interview.

The first noticeable object in his abode is a huge coffin standing upon end in one corner of the room.

It was purchased nearly three years ago by him and taken to his miserable apartments.

Inside it is trimmed in elegant fashion. The white satin linings are of the richest manufacture, in harmony with the exquisite finish of the case.

Lying neatly folded upon the quilted pillow is the shroud, another habilitment of death.

Nothing is lacking, even the silver ornaments, handles and plate that are to adorn the outside. They lie, neatly wrapped in tissue paper, at the end of the casket.

The only other furniture in the first room, or the one from which the door opens out upon the street, is a small kitchen-table, a sea-chest, a leather trunk, two tumble-down four-barrels and a heavy stick of cordwood, used to barricade the street door.

The walls are dark and soiled, showing in several places where bullets have pierced the plaster.

The glass door leading to the inner or dining room is heavily draped with old clothes and papers, shutting out what little sunshine that might by chance seek to penetrate the interior.

On a small wooden table are the implements of war, consisting of two big 45-caliber revolvers, a huge dirk knife and two large pocket-knives, with the blades open at both ends. These weapons are always in the same position.

At night the table is drawn close to the side of the bed, so that in case of an alarm all can be brought into quick action.

Between the bed and the wall, separating Wheeler's apartments from the vacant storeroom next door is a pile of cordwood standing on end. These sticks, he says, will serve as a shield to stop a bullet fired through the thin wall partition.

All the doors and windows leading to the back, where his dry-house is located, are securely fastened by means of heavy logs rolled up against them.

Hoarded up and hidden away he has considerable money. Besides this he has a snug bank account.

Why he keeps a portion of his wealth in his rooms is to prevent his being compelled to travel back and forth to the bank, thus exposing himself to his imagined assassins.

Wheeler is a German, and most of the wealth he now possesses was accumulated in California.

He was born in Baden seventy-three years ago. In 1845 he emigrated to America, landing in New York, where he opened a small tailor-shop. He remained there four years and came to California in 1849.

From a time shortly after his arrival until 1863 he kept a saloon at the corner of Washington and Sansome streets. In that year he sold out his saloon business and went to Seneca, where he opened up a grocery-store and invested in mining property.

Until 1881 he lived in Calaveras County, when he sold out his interests and removed to San Francisco, opening up a dye-shop on Folsom street, almost opposite where he now lives.

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When Adelaide Brandon, an English actress, appeared at the Wigwam Meyer became infatuated with her. He neglected his wife to pay attention to the actress. Meyer's children were born to his wife, but his action without reproach at first and did not show that she was offended at his attention to Miss Brandon.

Finally, however, there came a separation, which was not legally constituted by a court of law. Meyer lived with Miss Brandon as his wife and signed a contract marriage with her in San Jose.

Adelaide Brandon was an English woman. She had been married in England. Whether her English husband was dead or whether she had separated from him does not appear to be known. Her name was Edith South. She had two children in England, a boy named Robin, now about 17 years of age, and a daughter named Edith.

Just what the guardians of these children propose to do has not been learned, but when Edith South or Adelaide Brandon became the bigamous wife of Charles Meyer she had some property in the way of jewelry, worth perhaps several hundred dollars, found its way to the pawnshop. It is now, or the most of it, in Hyman's pawnshop on Fourth street.

Frank Meyer and his sister, Mrs. Tischebain, say that their father and the second wife pawned the jewelry after the death of Adelaide Brandon, and that the widow, who now claims the Meyer estate under the will, has sent her to the pawnbroker that he may sell the jewelry as she will not redeem it.

Adelaide Brandon, whom Charles Meyer recognized through the form of a written contract, as his wife, although he had a wife living in this city from whom he was not judicially separated, died last September. Even in death she was recognized as his wife, for upon her tombstone in his plot at Cypress Lawn cemetery Meyer had chiseled the words "Adelaide Brandon Meyer."

After the death of the contract actress Meyer became reconciled to his other wife, largely, it is claimed, through the efforts of his daughter, Mrs. Tischebain.

Meyer left a will in which everything was given to Mrs. Mary Meyer, the widow now surviving him, and herein arises all the trouble.

TOO MANY WIVES.

Chapter in the Life of Charles Meyer.

THE ESTATE UNDER DISPUTE

One Wife Was Wedded Before the Altar.

ANOTHER MARRIED BY CONTRACT

There Had Been No Divorce, and Both Lived in This City, Though One Is Now Dead.

Serious complications have arisen interfering with the settlement of the estate of the late Charles Meyer, proprietor of the Wigwam Theater, and suit will shortly be brought to adjust matters.

The fact that he had two wives living at the same time is not generally known. One of these two wives died shortly before the death of Mr. Meyer. After Meyer's death, in accordance with the wish of his widow, to whom he willed his estate, the name Meyer was removed from the tombstone of the woman with whom he once lived as his wife. The minor children of this woman, who are in England,

lay claim to a portion of the estate of Charles Meyer on the ground that their mother let Meyer have money with which to carry on his business, and that the estate is community property.

Then there is another claim on the part of the children of a first wife, who died many years ago, and who appear to be disinherited by the will.

Meyer married three times. The first wife died years ago, before he came to this coast. She bore him two children, Frank A. Meyer, for many years and until recently the leader of the orchestra at the Wigwam, and Mrs. Bertha Tischebain of this city. In St. Louis Meyer married his second wife, Mrs. Mary Koehly, a widow with two sons, Albert and Louis. These sons as they grew older adopted their stepfather's name. By his second wife Meyer had one child, a son named Edward, now about 15 years of age and a drummer in the Wigwam orchestra.

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Widow Meyer has come into possession of them.

Whatever may be the issue of the suits brought by the heirs of the dead woman, who was buried as the wife of Charles Meyer, against the woman whom his will recognizes as his widow and sole heir and who was his legal wife, there promises to be a lively contest on the part of the children of the first wife, who died many years ago in the East.

Last Monday the Widow Meyer attempted to homestead the property. This was resisted by Frank Meyer, who claims that it was in violation of an agreement which she had made with him. Frank Meyer, the son by the wife who died years ago in the East, is a musician who has been connected with the Wigwam orchestra for nine years, and for the last five as leader of the orchestra.

"My father was buried on the 26th of September. When I returned after the funeral to the Wigwam," said Frank Meyer, "I was told by Albert Meyer, my stepbrother, the son of my father's widow, but not his son, that I need not stay around the Wigwam any more, as they were going to manage that, now that the old man was gone."

"Before my father's death my stepmother had said that if the property was willed to her she would do the right thing, that if the property was willed to me she was sure that I would do what was right. The will left the property to the widow, but it had always been understood that I was to manage the theater. My father did not want his stepson, Albert, at the theater. Only three days before his death he had taken the keys away from him, and he had told me just before his death to take the keys and take charge of everything."

"After Albert had his trouble at Morocco's and was forced out of the Musicians' Union my father allowed him \$20 a week to look after the theater for me. My father left property valued at \$40,000, or perhaps more. This property is incumbered, and after all the debts are paid there would probably be left but little outside the Wigwam. Frank Meyer, in his land investments my father got heavily in debt. He needed money to carry on his business. At one time I let him have \$500. Of this amount he paid back \$300, and his widow paid me the other \$200. My father had money at other times. Every cent I have is in the Wigwam Theater. All I want is my own."

"At one time he arranged a compromise. The widow was to have one-half of the estate, her son and my half-brother, Edward, to have one-fifth of the remainder, her sons, Albert and Louis, to have one-fifth, and my sister, Mrs. Tischebain, and myself also to have a fifth each. That would give the widow and her family \$80 out of every \$100, my sister and I together getting the other \$20."

"My father did not want Albert to manage the Wigwam. They know that very well. As to myself, the only accusation which they can bring against me is on account of my jewelry case, they say nothing against my financial integrity."

"The statement which they sent out about Miss Nelson is absolutely untrue. She is a respectable woman, and she went to the Folsom, and the charges that they make about an attempt of mine to keep her at the Wigwam are false."

"My father's will, the one under which they seek to probate and settle," continued Mr. Meyer, "was made in July. I understand that a will was made subsequently. I have not been able to find it. I was told that Jacob Rauer drew up a will for my father, and he died before his death. I asked him about it, but could get little satisfaction. He admitted that he had drafted a will, but stated that he had done so voluntarily, and then I asked him where the will was. Mr. Rauer said he supposed my father had destroyed it."

Both Mrs. Tischebain and Frank Meyer claim that the fact of the marriage of Adelaide Brandon to their father, Frank Meyer, declared that after his father's death the widow Meyer objected to the inscription of "Adelaide Brandon Meyer" in the family plot in Cypress Lawn cemetery, and to please her he went out to the cemetery and removed the word "Meyer" from the tombstone, as well as the testimonial beneath it, in the part of Charles Meyer.

"All I desire is my own," said Mrs. Tischebain. "I look out what money I had in a building and loan association and pawned all my jewelry help my father in his business. I loaned him more than \$700. I ought to have that. My stepmother promised me \$500 from my father's estate, but she never gave it to me. I am a poor woman. I suppose he thought it would be easy to deceive me. The paper contained a declaration that in consideration of the receipt of \$10 I waived all claims against my father's estate, and did not sign the paper."

Mrs. Tischebain states that when her father became infatuated with Miss Brandon she advised her stepmother of the fact, and told her that it would be wise to discontinue his attention to the woman. She says her mother continued to drive in company with her husband and Miss Brandon, and told her that she did not object to his attentions to the actress. Shortly afterward the separation took place and the contract marriage with the actress followed. After Miss Brandon's death Mrs. Tischebain says she expected a reconciliation between her stepmother and her father. This took place about two months before her father's death.

Albert Meyer, who represents his mother at the Wigwam, had little to say. A compromise had been effected, he said, and his mother thought that Frank Meyer and Mrs. Tischebain were perfectly satisfied with the arrangement until she learned that Frank Meyer had contested her application for a homestead.

The Isaac Reed Labeled.

Yesterday the firm of W. W. Montague & Co. of this city labeled the ship Isaac Reed, now lying at Folsom-street wharf, for \$8140, for damages sustained by the breaking of certain goods consigned to the firm which were to be carried by the vessel named from New York to San Francisco. On the voyage out the Reed encountered rough weather, and a portion of her cargo shifted, with the result that Montague & Co.'s goods were badly damaged. The claim under which is based on the ground that the goods were not properly stowed in the hold, and the suit will be of considerable interest to the owners and masters of the account.

Whether weather is to be taken into consideration in the carrying of a cargo "around the horn" is what the captains want to know.

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STOKES LEADING.

To-Day Decides the Fate of Greenway.

NO INVITATION SO FAR.

Where Edward Gets His Pull in Society.

HIS AWFUL ATTEMPTS TO QUIT.

But Every Time He Announces His Retirement Society Beggars for Just One More.

"Festina Lente" may be translated "A little too previous," said a club man gravely yesterday, referring to the skating club of that name organized by James Brett Stokes. "By that, I mean that the originator has gone the wrong way about making it a success if he exclude Greenway, don't you know. For instance, the racket upon which it will split is that of expense. Five large dollars is what the subscription is, and, to tell you the truth, what with club dues, living dues and bad business the swell set is not throwing money away just now. Still, that would not make the difference if Greenway was in the Festina Lente. Being out, lots of his friends will stay out, and then the hiring of that rink cannot be done. I tell you, Greenway is as indispensable in San Francisco society as a dog is to a tail."

"In this case which is the dog?" asked the newspaper man, as his informant stopped to light another cigarette at a nickel apiece.

"My dear sir, it does not so much matter which is the dog as which does the wagging."

"Your best answer would be the thousand and one debutantes and the nine hundred and ninety-nine society men who owe their entire to society to Ed Greenway," and the club man blew a ring of smoke into the air which alighted on a gas jet and hung there.

It is unnecessary to say that this behavior in the indispensability of Ed Greenway in matters social was not James Brett Stokes. Mr. Stokes is saying nothing, but he has a whole backyard full of the wood he has been sawing. His friends deny that an invitation has been sent to Greenway, despite rumors to the contrary, and they say that to-day's meeting of the Festina Lente will not see Greenway there as a member. So the matter stands.

In society there is a distinctly active desire to get rid of Greenway. Still, so far there has come along no one who is capable of filling his large-sized shoes. It is a common belief that no one can make a dollar go farther than Greenway can in social affairs. He is a good executive man, also, and relieves the lazy and bias of the worst of organizing and carrying out a "function." It is this semi-flunkey faculty which has given him his great influence among those who are proverbially dull in organization. Outside of this there is nothing in particular that would indicate Mr. Greenway's fitness for the place of leader; and as far as good looks and appearances go it is "as a watch case to a common 'larum bell'" when compared to the elegant James Brett Stokes. Then, the latter is fresh from the East and has worshiped at the shrine of Ward McAllister, while Greenway has got into a rut staying in a town which Lillian Russell and Blanche Walsh declare to be "Jay." Then, again, James Brett Stokes is a club man, and Greenway is not. In Bohemia Stokes may often be found, while as sure as 2 o'clock comes round in the afternoon he can be located unflinchingly at the University Club. So that, taken all in all, Greenway is not in, to use a vulgar expression, with Stokes.

All these things added to the faculty of organization which Stokes has proved himself to possess by the coup of the Festina Lente, the man seems to be here who shall occupy Greenway's place in the van of society.

Mr. Greenway himself is telling friends that he does not care to be in society. That it no longer has any joys for him. He confesses freely that he has been bankrupt for some time, but says he cannot get out of society; that society drags him into her functions whether he will or no. In fact, Mr. Greenway draws a most pathetic picture of society weeping at his feet whenever he announces his "positively last appearance." On such occasions society whimpers, "Oh, do please, Mr. Greenway, this once. We won't ask you again if you will but attend to this function." Then Mr. Greenway consents and another year is gone before he knows it.

"Positively," said a friend of his yesterday, "Mr. Greenway would give anything to get out of society. He would, indeed. He's sick and tired of it. If he had put the energy and push into some business that he has into society he would be well off to-day. But it's his fate. He cannot help it. Nobody can do it here as well as he can, and he is indispensable. Society can't do without Ed Greenway. And as to stories about his making commissions on everything that is furnished at social entertainments—well, that is told by his enemies."

THE FIRST ARREST.

Concessionaires Who Have Not Paid Their Licenses.

At a meeting of the Concessionaires' Club, held in the '35 camp yesterday evening, the question of the payment of licenses was again brought forward.

It was stated that some immediate action was necessary, as Fred Lees had declared his intention of inaugurating a vigorous war for the payment of all outstanding licenses, and had already arrested Concessionary Stone of the "Stuffed Cow," who owed \$21 for his license.

Those of the concessionaires who, like Stone, had not paid their licenses knew that their time for arrest would probably come to-day, and even those who had paid were in favor of preventing further arrests. Accordingly a committee of three, including Messrs. Rothwell and Saroni, were appointed to consult with