

party; but I pleaded headache, and got up to my room. To tell the truth, I was anxious to be there before Myra, for I wanted to think quietly as to what I should do. It was a horrible secret for a woman to be burdened with, and I could not decide what to do with it. I sat on my bed there thinking and still perplexed, gradually unfastening my ornaments and ball-dress, when Myra's step approached quietly, and in another instant she entered.

"Then you are not in bed after all, Ethel," she said throwing herself carelessly on the sofa, and beginning to tear-off her bracelets in her usual impatient fashion. "What have you been doing?"

"Thinking," I said gravely.

"Thinking! and of what? What Captain Taylor was saying with such emphasis as he took leave?"

"No, Myra, of something more—more!" And then my courage failed me, and I could say no more; but hurriedly beginning to undress, I threw myself into bed and drew the curtains, to hide the view of that beautiful figure in white satin which still sat by the toilet-table.

Whether I went to sleep I know not; if I did my dreams must have been vivid as reality, for I was haunted by the strange secret I had discovered; and at length, sitting up in bed, I drew back the curtains. The moonlight was streaming into the room, and I could distinctly see the form of Myra lying with open eyes, her face turned toward the open window.

Some impulse seized me, whether good or bad I know not, but I sprang up, and crossed the room in my bare feet, knelt down by my school-fellow's bed.

"Hush, Myra," I said, laying my hand upon her arm; "don't speak, don't move. I want tell you a secret."

"A secret?" she said in a frightened voice.

"Yes; listen. Down under the lilies in your garden, Myra, lie all Mrs. Furnival's sovereigns."

It seemed as if I were speaking in my sleep; but before me Myra's figure rose slowly, and with a horror that was awfully life-like. I shall never forget her face; for a moment it worked till it was all distorted; then it calmed down.

"How did you find it out?" she said in a whisper.

"By chance," I answered.

"When?"

"This evening."

"And who have you told? Does Mrs. Furnival know?"

"Not yet."

"And you will tell her?"

"Myra, I must."

She sank back on her pillow and moaned; and I buried my face in the coverlid and began to cry quickly, for that moan was so horrible to hear.

"Why did you do it?" at length I said, clasping hold of the soft white fingers and holding them to my cheek.

"O Myra, Myra! why did you do it?"

"I do not know," she answered quickly; and then she turned away her face, and would not speak for all my questions and sobs.

She lay perfectly still, with the moonlight playing on her face, now and then she gasped quickly, and her hands were clenched, but otherwise she seemed to bear the accusation more quietly far than I could make it. At length, however, she roused herself, and pushed back her auburn hair, pressed her hands tightly to her temples.

"You will tell them all tomorrow, I suppose, Ethel, and I shall be sent to prison?"

"I don't think Mrs. Furnival will send you to prison."

Again we were silent; and then she said, "Ethel, it is very hard to be burdened with the sins of one's parents: this is a hard world, is it not?"

I had not found it so as yet; and answered faintly, "I do not know."

Then she laid her hand on my head in a quaint old-fashioned manner, and said—"I am quite sane to-night, Ethel mind that. When I took that—that gold, I was not perhaps; but to-night I am. I keep my secret too—no one knows?" And then she lay back, covered herself up with the sheet, and turned away; and though I knelt by her for nearly an hour, she would say nothing more.

I sobbed a good deal quietly, and then I grew weary, for I was very young, and crept back to my own bed and there fell asleep. It was a long sleep too; for when I woke, the sun was shining in my eyes and it was four o'clock.

I raised myself from the pillow with a dim uneasy consciousness of something wretched having happened, and looked towards Myra's bed. Was I still dream-

ing, or was the bed really empty? In an instant I was up and feeling with my hands to satisfy my eyes. Myra was gone!

I turned to the window; it was open!

I do not know how it was, but in a moment I seemed to understand what had happened, and to take in all the horrors of the reality. To put on my boots and dressing-gown was the work of a moment, and then climbing out of the window, I let myself fall on to the soft mould beneath. I knew I should see the print of small feet there. Then bare-headed and shivering in the cold morning air, I ran down the garden.

No idea of going to Mrs. Furnival, or alarming any one, entered my head. I went immediately to Myra's garden, and when I was there I turned from the flower-border to the bank, at the foot of which runs the river.

I shall never forget the scene of golden light white mist, and shiny water, that I there looked on. I seemed to note every detail, though I was looking for one object. But no; I could not see it. Thank heaven, it was—I was turning away thinking that, when my eyes happened to fall on the flags below me. There was something white at the verge—something like a human hand caught in the green weeds that grew so thickly just there.

I did not exclaim, I did not utter a sound; but I slid down the bank, and, heedless of danger, entered the water.

Up to my knees, then up to the waist clinging desperately to the rushes; and then under the water, held down by the entangling weeds, I found what I sought.

Though with all my strength, I battled to bring her to land, I knew that she was dead—drowned. I knew that she succeeded, and then my misery burst silence and, winding my arms round the poor dead form, I uttered wild cries.

There was an inquest, a funeral, and then Myra Richardson disappeared from amongst us. The girl's strange death was talked of as a nine-day's wonder: "temporary insanity" had been the verdict returned, and, for a time, all the odd ways of the poor child were talked of and commented on, and she was forgotten. That she was concerned in the mysterious robbery was never known; and no one but Mrs. Furnival ever heard the story of the stolen sovereigns from my lips.

It was not till months afterwards that I heard some details of Myra's history. It appears that she was the daughter of a wealthy Australian merchant, who had married a female convict, whose history was scarcely clearer than her daughter's. Though well-born and educated, Mrs. Richardson had been convicted of some theft and, in spite of the evidence that insanity was in the family, and had before exhibited itself under this form, was transported for seven years. At the end of the time, still retaining magnificent beauty, she had won the affections of a trader and married him. The secret of her mother's disgrace had been kept from Myra for some time; but, by some chance, she came to know it, and whether insanity was really already in the blood, or her vivacious nature was too strongly impressed with the story, was not known—but from that time the wild-elfishness of character took possession of her, and her father terribly troubled, hoped to mend matters by change of scene and climate, resolved on sending her to England.

The wild Australian had probably made up her mind that her mother's evil fate should never be hers. Still, after all we can but surmise; for as her last words which sounded in mortal ears declared—no one knew her secret. It was hers and hers alone; and till she rises from her quiet forgotten grave, and tells out the sad story to One who will not judge her harshly, it will remain forever a mystery.

#### A Stupid Witness.

THOSE who are in the habit of attending police and other courts must have observed the difficulty under which the lawyers and judges labor sometimes in getting witnesses to testify in legal form. The following, which recently took place at a Cincinnati court, is an amusing and perfect example: A man had been caught in the act of theft, and pleaded the extenuation that he was drunk:—Court (to the policeman who was witness.)

"What did the man say when you arrested him?"

Witness. "He said he was drunk."

Court. "I want his precise words, just as he uttered them; he didn't use the pronoun *he*, did he? He didn't say '*he* was drunk.'"

Witness. "Oh, yes, he did—he said he was drunk; he acknowledged the corn."

Court—getting impatient at the witness' stupidity.—"You don't understand

me at all; I want the words as he uttered them; didn't he say, '*I* was drunk?'"

Witness—deprecatingly.—"Oh, no, your Honor. He didn't say *you* was drunk; I wouldn't allow any man to charge that upon you in my presence."

Prosecutor. "Pshaw, you don't comprehend at all. His honor means, did not the prisoner say to you, '*I* was drunk?'"

Witness—reflectively.—"Well, he might have said *you* was drunk, but I didn't hear him."

Attorney for the prisoner. "What the court desires is to have you state the prisoner's own words, preserving the precise form of pronouns that he made use of in reply. Was it the first person, I, the 2d person, thou, or the third person, he, she or it? Now, then, sir,—with severity,—upon your oath, didn't my client say, '*I* was drunk?'"

Witness—getting mad.—"No, he did not say *you* was drunk either, but if he had, I reckon he wouldn't have lied any. Do you s'pose the poor fellow charged the whole court with being drunk?"

#### A Curious Case of Defense.

IN days gone by, when the objectionable military laws were in force in old sober Massachusetts, the customary draft was made in a country town a few miles from Boston, and a notice to appear, "armed and equipped according to law," was left at the boarding house of a wag, who had but little martial music in his soul. Determined that he would neither train nor pay a fine, and entertaining with a very indifferent opinion of the utility of the system, he took no notice of the summons.

Having been duly "warned," however, as he expected, at the expiration of a few weeks the sergeant waited upon him with a bill of nine shillings for non attendance at the muster.

"You're fined, sir—nine shillings—for non attendance at the muster."

"What is it?" said the wag, pretending to misunderstand the collector.

"A fine for not training," bawled out the other.

"I shan't pay it, fellow."

"It will be three dollars the next time I call," said the sergeant.

But the wag couldn't hear a word he said, and in the course of another month he received a precatory summons to appear forthwith at a court martial in the district, instituted for the purpose of trying delinquents and collecting such as could be scared out of the non performance of duty.

At the appointed time he waited upon said court, which was held in an old country house, where he found three or four persons seated, attired in flashy regimentals, and whose awful "yaller" epaulettes were enough to command the attention and profound respect of the beholders.

Though somewhat disconcerted at this exhibition of spurs and buttons, he put a bold face on the matter, and responding to the directions of the junior member of the august court, he advanced to the table and the chief functionary commenced the examination.

"Your name, sir?"

The offender placed his hand quickly to his ear, without uttering a word or moving a muscle of his face.

"What is your name?" repeated the questioner in a louder tone.

"A little louder," said the wag.

"Name," shouted the Judge.

"Taunton, Bristol County."

"What business do you follow?"

"Main street," said the delinquent.

"Your business?" yelled the officer.

"Right hand side as you go up."

"How long have you been there?"

"About two miles and a half."

"How old are you, fellow?" nervously continued the judge.

"Boss carpenter."

"What in the devil is the matter with your ears?"

"Dr. Scarpel's oil, sometimes."

"What, sir?"

"Sometimes Corem's ointment."

"Why don't you answer me?"

"Nearly five years."

"He's deaf as an adder," remarked the judge, turning to his subordinate; "clear the lubber out."

"You can go!" yelled the judge. "Is it possible that a man can be so deaf as all that?"

"I can't say," continued the delinquent, pretending not to understand,— "but I should think—"

"Go, go!" screamed the judge,— "there is nothing to pay. The Lord pity the Colonel who has a regiment like you to command. Show him the door, Major."

Our friend was never again summoned to train during his residence in Taunton.

#### The Fat Man.

"BRIDGET," said a lady in the city to a green Irish girl one morning, as she was reconnoitering in the kitchen, "what a quantity of soap grease you have got here. We can get plenty of soap for it, and we must exchange it for some. Watch for the fat man and when he comes along tell him I want to speak to him."

"Yes mum," said Bridget.

All the morning, Bridget between each whisk of her dish cloth, kept a bright look out of the kitchen window and no moving creature escaped her watchful gaze. At last her industry seemed about rewarded, for down the street came a large, portly gentleman, flourishing a cane and looking in a very good humor. "Sure there's the fat man now," thought Bridget—and when he was in front of the house, out she flew and informed him that her mistress wished to speak to him.

"Speak to me my good girl?" replied the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir, she wants to spake to you and says would you be kind enough to walk in, sir."

This request so direct was not to be refused, so in a state of some wonderment up the step went the gentleman, and up the stairs went Bridget, and knocking at her mistress' door, put her head in and exclaimed:

"Fat gentleman's in the parlor mum."

So saying she instantly withdrew to the lower regions.

"In the parlor!" thought the lady. "what can it mean? Bridget must have blundered," but down to the parlor she went, and up rose her fat friend, with his blindest smile and a most graceful bow.

"Your servant informed me madam, that you would like to speak to me—at your service madam."

The mortified mistress saw the state of the case immediately, and a smile wreathed itself about her lips in spite of herself, as she said:

"Will you pardon the terrible blunder of a raw Irish girl, my dear sir? I told her to call in the fat man to take away the soap grease, when she saw him, and she has made a mistake, you see."

The jolly fat gentleman leaned back in his chair, and laughed such a hearty ha! ha! ha! as never came from any of your lean gentry.

"It is decidedly the best joke of the season. Ha! ha! ha! so she took me for the soap-grease man, did she? It will keep me laughing for a month—such a joke!"

And all up the street around the corner was heard the ha! ha! ha! of the old gentleman as he brought down his cane every now and then, and exclaimed: "such a joke!"

#### Bridget's Mistake.

An Irish girl employed in a family in the city, was sent out, a few evenings since, with a physician's prescription, with directions, to go to Barbour's drug store. With true felicity of Hibernianism she proceeded to a barber's shop, and with great assurance handed the prescription to a sleek disciple of the shears, ungentle to the ears, with the cool request—

"Please, sir put up this for me."

The gentleman of the shears looked at the paper, scrawled with to him meaningless signs of the mysterious Zodiac. It was all Greek to him.—He hesitated.

"Please, sir, put that up for me, for mistress is sick."

"Why, I don't know what it means" replied the barber.

"But give me what's on the paper," replied Bridget, somewhat excited,

The barber expostulated: "Don't yer see that we cut hair here?"

"But what's in them bottles?" she returned.

"That? Why, that is hair ile said the barber."

"Oh, I see," said Bridget, "I've got into the wrong shop; but I thought that 'twas an apothecary's shop I was sent to an' faith an' sure I thought this smelt like one."

The barber finally pointed out an apothecary's shop, and Bridget returned with the prescription not for the hair but for typhoid fever.

Every column of a newspaper contains from five to twenty thousand distinct pieces of metal, according to size of paper and type. The displacement of a single one makes an error. Is it any wonder that errors occur?

#### SUNDAY READING.

##### The Blessed Bible.

IN SCOTLAND, during the times of bloody persecution, when the soldiers were marching about the country, driving people from their homes, burning their houses, and putting many goodly people to death, a pious father told his family that there were soldiers near, and they must hasten to the next village, where there was a strong old church the fugitives could use as a fort. So he told Jennie to take the big Bible for her load, and that she must be very careful not to let it get wet, or lose it by the way; "For we could not live," said he, "without the good book." So she wrapped a gown around the Bible and started with her father and mother each of whom carried a child.

They had to cross a brook, but they did not dare to go by the bridge, lest they should be captured by the enemy. There was a place where they thought they could cross on some stepping stones but on reaching the place it had become quite dark. So Jennie's father waded across and carried the others one by one, until she was left quite alone. Jennie was much afraid to be left there by herself, so she started to cross after her father, stepping carefully from stone to stone. But presently her foot slipped and down she went to the bottom. At the same time up went her arms, holding the precious burden above her head. The water came up to her waist, but, bracing herself firmly against the rapid current she walked bravely on across the stream, and had nearly reached the shore, with her dear old book lifted as high as she could raise it, when she met her father returning to bring her.

"Father," she cried, "you told me to take care of the dear old Bible, and I have done so."

Just as she said this they heard several pistol shots and the sound of approaching horsemen. They soon hid themselves in a little cleft of the rocks, and were not discovered.

Jennie married in after years, and now has great-great-grandchildren living. The old Bible became hers' after her father's death, and in it were written the names of her seven children. It is still, in very good condition, in the possession of her descendants.

Jennie never forgot that dreadful night when she carried the old Bible through the deep water, and when she was dying she seemed to be dreaming of it and said—

"I am in the deep river—in the deep river, but I will hold up the dear old Bible! There take the book!" and she ceased to breathe.

##### The Miller and the Camel.

The Arabs repeat a fable of a miller, who was one day awakened by having the nose of a camel thrust into the window of a room where he was sleeping. "It is very cold out here," said the camel, "I only want to get my nose in. After awhile the camel asked that he might get his neck in, and then he gained permission to have his forefeet in the room, and so, little by little, crowded in his whole body. The miller found his rude companion was now becoming exceedingly troublesome, for the room was not large enough for both. When he complained to the camel, he received for answer, 'If you do not like it you may leave; as for myself I shall stay where I am.'

So it is with sin. It comes and knocks at the heart, and pleads for only a little indulgence, and so goes on, increasing the demand until it becomes master in the soul. What then shall the young do but guard against sin, beware of its very appearance, and above all, pray for the Holy Spirit, that by His grace they may be enabled to keep their heart with all diligence, and to guard against the entrance of anything that may defile or ruin the soul.

##### Is God Dead.

A very small girl whose mother is dead and whose father had married again, but had not assumed family worship, soon after accosted him:

"Father, is God dead?"

"No, my child," said he, "what makes you ask that question?"

"Why, you used to pray to him night and morning when my mother was alive, and did not know but what God was dead too."

This whole life is but one great school; from the cradle to the grave we are all scholars. The voices of those we love, and the wisdom of past ages, and our own experience are our teachers. Afflictions give us discipline.