MURDER WILL OUT

by William Gilmore Simms

THE DIARY OF ANNE RODWAY

by Wilkie Collins

Note: I considered including these two tales in the ghostly clients section of *Ghostly Clients & Demonic Culprits: The Roots of Occult Detective Fiction,* published by Brom Bones Books. However, both fell short in one or the other of the two defining elements of the occult detective cross-genre. While the ghost in "Murder Will Out" is at least real enough to spark the action needed to apprehend the murderer, James Grayling, the agent of justice, lacks in terms of exhibiting typical detective skills. (Contrast Grayling to Dirk Ericson in "The Haunted Homestead," a similar story that *does* appear in *Ghostly Clients & Demonic Culprits*.) On the other hand, Anne and Robert in "The Diary of Anne Rodway" do some fairly impressive detecting, but there are only traces of the supernatural—primarily, a prophetic dream. The history of fiction about dreams leading to the capture of a criminal encompasses Geoffrey Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale" (c. 1400) and Catherine Crowe's *Susan Hopley; or Circumstantial Evidence* (1841)—and eventually shaped some fully formed occult detective stories, especially Sax Rohmer's tales about Moris Klaw, whose cases are collected in *The Dream Detective* (1925). Still, Anne Rodway's dream acts more as encouragement to pursue the case than as a vital key to solving it. Despite such short comings, both works presented here are important enough and interesting enough for me to have made this free supplement to that anthology. You can find more information about *Ghostly Clients & Demonic Culprits* at the end of this document or on the page for that title at BromBonesBooks.com.

— Tim Prasil

MURDER WILL OUT

William Gilmore Simms

I.

The world has become monstrous matter-of-fact in latter days. We can no longer get a ghost story, either for love or money. The materialists have it all their own way, and even the little urchin, eight years old, instead of deferring with decent reverence to the opinions of his grandmamma, now stands up stoutly for his own. He believes in every "ology" but pneumatology. *Faust* and the "Old Woman of Berkeley" move his derision only, and he would laugh incredulously, if he dared, at the Witch of Endor.[1] The whole armoury of modern reasoning is on his side, and however he may admit, at seasons, that belief can scarcely be counted a matter of will, he yet puts his veto on all sorts of credulity.

That cold-blooded demon called Science has taken the place of all the other demons. He has certainly cast out innumerable devils, however he may still spare the principal. Whether we are the better for his intervention is another question. There is reason to apprehend that, in disturbing our human faith in shadows, we have lost some of those wholesome moral restraints which might have kept many of us virtuous, where the laws could not.

The effect, however, is much the more seriously evil in all that concerns the romantic. Our storytellers are so resolute to deal in the real, the actual only, that they venture on no subjects the details of which are not equally vulgar and susceptible of proof. With this end in view, indeed, they too commonly choose their subjects from convicted felons in order that they may avail themselves of the

[1] Pneumatology is a branch of Christian theology focused on the Holy Ghost, but the term can refer to more general ghostly topics. See, for example, Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling's *Theory of Pneumatology* (London: Longman, et al., 1834). *Faust* probably refers to the 1808/1832 poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, though this was preceded by Christopher Marlow's play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (c. 1604). "Old Woman of Berkeley" is a 1799 poem by Robert Southey. Like Goethe's, Southey's poem involves the supernatural, specifically dealings with the Devil. The Witch of Endor is a necromancer described in Samuel 1 of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

evidence which led to their conviction. To prove more conclusively their devotion and adherence to nature and the truth, they depict the former not only in her condition of nakedness, but long before she has found out the springs of running water. It is to be feared that some of the coarseness of modern taste arises from the too great lack of that veneration which belonged to, and elevated to, dignity, even the errors of preceding ages. A love of the marvelous belongs, it appears to me, to all those who love and cultivate either of the fine arts. I very much doubt whether the poet, the painter, the sculptor, or the romancer ever yet lived who had not some strong bias—a leaning, at least—to a belief in the wonders of the invisible world. Certainly, the higher orders of poets and painters, those who create and invent, must have a strong taint of the superstitious in their compositions. But this is digressive and leads us from our purpose.

It is so long since we have been suffered to see or hear of a ghost that a visitation at this time may have the effect of novelty, and I propose to narrate a story which I heard more than once in my boyhood from the lips of an aged relative who succeeded, at the time, in making me believe every word of it—perhaps, for the simple reason that she convinced me she believed every word of it herself. My grandmother was an old lady who had been a resident of the seat of most frequent war in Carolina during the Revolution. She had fortunately survived the numberless atrocities which she was yet compelled to witness. A keen observer with a strong memory, she had in store a thousand legends of that stirring period, which served to beguile me from sleep many and many a long winter night. The story which I propose to tell was one of these, and when I say that she not only devoutly believed it herself, but that it was believed by sundry of her contemporaries who were privy themselves to such of the circumstances as could be known to third parties, the gravity with which I repeat the legend will not be considered very astonishing.

The Revolutionary War had but a little while been concluded. The British had left the country, but peace did not imply repose. The community was still in that state of ferment which was natural enough to passions, not yet at rest, which had been brought into exercise and action during the protracted seven years' struggle through which the nation had just passed. The state was overrun by idlers, adventurers, profligates, and criminals. Disbanded soldiers, half-starved and reckless, occupied the highways. Outlaws, emerging from their hiding places, skulked about the settlements with an equal sentiment of hate and fear in their hearts. Patriots were clamoring for justice upon the Tories and, sometimes, anticipating its course by judgments of their own. Meanwhile, the Tories, those against whom

the proofs were too strong for denial or evasion, buckled on their armor once more for a renewal of the struggle. Such being the condition of the country, it may easily be supposed that life and property lacked many of their necessary securities. Men generally traveled with weapons, which were displayed on the smallest provocation, and few who could provide themselves with an escort ventured to travel any distance without one.

As my grandmother said, there was about this time and while such was the condition of the country a family of the name of Grayling, that lived somewhere upon the skirts of "Ninety-Six" district.[2] Old Grayling, the head of the family, was dead. He was killed in Buford's massacre. His wife was a fine lady, not so old, who had an only son, named James, and a little girl, only five years old, named Lucy. James was but fourteen when his father was killed, and that event made a man of him. He went out with his rifle in company with Joel Sparkman, who was his mother's brother, and joined himself to Pickens's Brigade. Here he made as good a soldier as the best. He had no sort of fear. He was always the first to go forward, and his rifle was always good for his enemy's button at a long hundred yards. He was in several fights both with the British and Tories, and just before the war was ended, he had a famous brush with the Cherokees, when Pickens took their country from them.[3]

But though he had no fear and never knew when to stop killing while the fight was going on, he was the most bashful of boys that I ever knew—so kind-hearted that it was almost difficult to believe all we heard of his fierce doings when he was in battle. But they were nevertheless quite true for all his bashfulness.

Well, when the war was over, Joel Sparkman, who lived with his sister, Grayling, persuaded her that it would be better to move down into the low country. I don't know what reason he had for it or what they proposed to do there. They had very little property, but Sparkman was a knowing man who could turn his hand to a hundred things. As he was a bachelor and loved his sister and her children just as if they had been his own, it was natural that she should go with him wherever he wished. James, too, who was restless by nature, and the taste he had of the wars had made more so—he was full of it—and so one sunny Monday morning in April, their wagon started for the city.

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[2] A colonial judicial district in the western area of South Carolina.

[3] The references to Buford's massacre, also known as the Battle of Waxhaws, (1780) and Brigadier General Andrew Pickens (1739-1817) reveal that Simms was knowledgeable of authentic South Carolina history.

The wagon was only a small one with two horses, scarcely larger than those that are employed to carry chickens and fruit to the city from the Wassamaws and thereabouts. It was driven by a negro fellow named Clytus and carried Mrs. Grayling and Lucy. James and his uncle loved the saddle too well to shut themselves up in such a vehicle, and both of them were mounted on fine horses, which they had won from the enemy. The saddle that James rode on—and he was very proud of it—was one that he had taken at the battle of Cowpens from one of Tarleton's own dragoons, after he had tumbled the owner.

The roads at that season were excessively bad, for the rains of March had been frequent and heavy. The track was very much cut up, and the red clay gullies of the hills of "Ninety-Six" were so washed that it required all shoulders, twenty times a day, to get the wagon wheels out of the bog. This made them travel very slowly—perhaps not more than fifteen miles a day, and another cause for slow travelling was the necessity of great caution and a constant lookout for enemies both up and down the road. James and his uncle took it by turns to ride ahead, precisely as they did when scouting in war, but one of them always kept along with the wagon.

They had gone on in this way for two days and saw nothing to trouble or alarm them. There were few persons on the highroad, and these seemed to the full as shy of them as they probably were of strangers. But just as they were about to camp the evening of the second day, while they were splitting lightwood and getting out the kettles and the frying pan, a person rode up and joined them without much ceremony.

He was a short, thickset man, somewhere between forty and fifty. The man had on very coarse and common garments, though he rode a fine black horse of remarkable strength and vigor. He was very civil of speech, though he had but little to say, and that little showed him to be a person without much education and no refinement. He begged permission to make one of the encampment, and his manner was very respectful and even humble—but there was something dark and sullen in his face. His eyes, which were of a light gray color, were very restless, and his nose turned up sharply and was very red. His forehead was excessively broad, and his eyebrows thick and shaggy—white hairs being freely mingled with the dark, both in them and upon his head.

Mrs. Grayling did not like this man's looks and whispered her dislike to her son.

But James, who felt himself equal to any man, said promptly, "What of that, mother! We can't turn the stranger off and say 'no.' If he means any mischief, there's two of us, you know."

The man had no weapons—none, at least, which were then visible. He deported himself in so humble a manner that the prejudice which the party had formed against him when he first appeared—if it was not dissipated while he remained—at least failed to gain any increase. He was very quiet, did not venture an unnecessary word, and seldom permitted his eyes to rest upon those of any of the party, the females not excepted. This, perhaps, was the only circumstance that, in the mind of Mrs. Grayling, tended to confirm the hostile impression which his coming had originally occasioned.

In a little while, the temporary encampment was put in a state equally social and warlike. The wagon was wheeled a little way into the woods and off the road, the horses fastened behind it in such a manner that any attempt to steal them would be difficult of success, even were the watch neglectful, which was yet to be maintained upon them. Extra guns, concealed in the straw at the bottom of the wagon, were kept well loaded. In the foreground and between the wagon and the highway, a fire was soon blazing with a wild but cheerful gleam. The worthy dame, Mrs. Grayling, assisted by the little girl, Lucy, lost no time in setting on the frying pan and cutting into slices the haunch of bacon, which they had provided at leaving home. James Grayling patrolled the woods, meanwhile, for a mile or two round the encampment, while his uncle, Joel Sparkman, foot to foot with the stranger, seemed—if the absence of all care constitutes the supreme of human felicity—to realize the most perfect conception of mortal happiness.

But Joel was very far from being the careless person that he seemed. Like an old soldier, he simply hung out false colors and concealed his real timidity by an extra show of confidence and courage. He did not relish the stranger from the first, any more than his sister, and having subjected him to a searching examination—such as was considered, in those days of peril and suspicion, by no means inconsistent with becoming courtesy—he came rapidly to the conclusion that he was no better than he should be.

"You are a Scotchman, stranger," said Joel, suddenly drawing up his feet and bending forward to the other with an eye like that of a hawk stooping over a covey of partridges.

It was a wonder that he had not made the discovery before. The broad dialect of the stranger was not to be subdued, but Joel made slow stages and short progress in his mental journeyings.

The answer was given with evident hesitation, but it was affirmative.

"Well, now, it's mighty strange that you should ha' fou't with us and not agin us," responded Joel Sparkman. "There was a precious few of the Scotch, and none that I knows on—saving yourself, prehaps—that didn't go dead *agin* us and *for* the Tories through thick and thin. That 'Cross Creek settlement' was a mighty ugly thorn in the sides of us Whigs. It turned out a raal bad stock of varmints. I hope—I reckon, stranger—you ain't from that part."

"No," said the other, "oh no! I'm from over the other quarter. I'm from the Duncan settlement above."

"I've hearn tell of that other settlement, but I never know'd as any of the men fou't with us. What gineral did you fight under? What Carolina gineral?"

"I was at Gum Swamp when General Gates was defeated," was the still hesitating reply of the other.[4]

"Well, I thank God, *I* warn't there, though I reckon things wouldn't ha' turned out quite so bad, if there had been a leetle sprinkling of Sumter's or Pickens's or Marion's men among them two-legged critters that run that day. They did tell that some of the regiments went off without ever once emptying their rifles. Now, stranger, I hope you warn't among them fellows."

"I was not," said the other with something more of promptness.

"I don't blame a chap for dodging a bullet if he can or being too quick for a bagnet because, I'm thinking, a live man is always a better man than a dead one—or he can become so. But to run without taking a single crack at the inimy is downright cowardice. There's no two ways about it, stranger."

This opinion, delivered with considerable emphasis, met with the ready assent of the Scotchman, but Joel Sparkman was not to be diverted, even by his own eloquence, from the object of his inquiry.

"But you ain't said," he continued, "who was your Carolina gineral. Gates was from Virginny, and he stayed a mighty short time when he come. You didn't run far at Camden, I reckon, and you joined the army ag'in, and come in with Greene? Was that the how?"

To this the stranger assented, though with evident disinclination.

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[4] On August 16, 1780, in the Battle of Camden, the militia led by Major General Horatio Gates (1727-1806) was overwhelmingly defeated by British forces.

"Then, might be, we sometimes went into the same scratch together? I was at Cowpens and Ninety-Six, and seen sarvice at other odds and eends, where there was more fighting than fun. I reckon you must have been at "Ninety-Six"—prehaps at Cowpens, too, if you went with Morgan?"

The unwillingness of the stranger to respond to these questions appeared to increase. He admitted, however, that he had been at "Ninety-Six," though, as Sparkman afterwards remembered, in this case, as in that of the defeat of Gates at Gum Swamp, he had not said on which side he had fought. Joel, as he discovered the reluctance of his guest to answer his questions and perceived his growing doggedness, forbore to annoy him, but mentally resolved to keep a sharper lookout than ever upon his actions. His examination concluded with an inquiry, which in the plain-dealing regions of the south and southwest is not unfrequently put first.

"And what may be your name, stranger?"

"Macnab," was the ready response, "Sandy Macnab."

"Well, Mr. Macnab, I see that my sister's got supper ready for us, so we might as well fall to upon the hoecake and bacon." Sparkman rose while speaking and led the way to the spot near the wagon where Mrs. Grayling had spread the feast. "We're pretty nigh on to the main road here, but I reckon there's no great danger now. Besides, Jim Grayling keeps watch for us, and he's got two as good eyes in his head as any scout in the country—and a rifle that, after you once know how it shoots, 'twould do your heart good to hear its crack, if so be that twa'n't your heart that he drawed sight on. He's a perdigious fine shot and as ready to shoot and fight as if he had a nateral calling that way."

"Shall we wait for him before we eat?" demanded Macnab anxiously.

"By no sort o' reason, stranger," answered Sparkman. "He'll watch for us while we're eating, and after that, I'll change shoes with him. So fall to, and don't mind what's a-coming."

Sparkman had just broken the hoecake, when a distant whistle was heard.

"Ha! That's the lad now!" he exclaimed, rising to his feet. "He's on trail. He's got a sight of an inimy's fire, I reckon. Twon't be onreasonable, friend Macnab, to get our we'pons in readiness!"

And so speaking, Sparkman bid his sister get into the wagon, where little Lucy had already placed herself, while he threw open the pan of his rifle and turned the priming over with his finger. Macnab, meanwhile, had taken from his holsters, which he had before been sitting upon, a pair of horseman's pistols, richly mounted with figures

in silver. These were large and long, and had evidently seen service. Unlike his companion, his proceedings occasioned no comment. What he did seemed a matter of habit, of which he himself was scarcely conscious. Having looked at his priming, he laid the instruments beside him without a word and resumed the bit of hoecake which he had just before received from Sparkman.

Meanwhile, the signal whistle, supposed to come from James Grayling, was repeated. Silence ensued then for a brief space, which Sparkman employed in perambulating the grounds immediately contiguous. At length, just as he had returned to the fire, the sound of a horse's feet was heard, and a sharp quick halloo from Grayling informed his uncle that all was right. The youth made his appearance a moment after, accompanied by a stranger on horseback.

The newcomer was a tall, fine-looking young man with a keen flashing eye and a voice whose lively clear tones, as he was heard approaching, sounded cheerily like those of a trumpet after victory. James Grayling kept along on foot beside the stranger, and his hearty laugh and free, glib, garrulous tones betrayed to his uncle, long ere he drew nigh enough to declare the fact, that he had met unexpectedly with a friend or, at least, an old acquaintance.

"Why, who have you got there, James?" was the demand of Sparkman as he dropped the butt of his rifle upon the ground.

"Why, who do you think, uncle? Who but Major Spencer—our own major?"

"You don't say so!—what!—well!—Li'nel Spencer, for sartin! Lord bless you, major, who'd ha' thought to see you in these parts—and jest mounted, too, for all natur, as if the war was to be fou't over ag'in. Well, I'm raal glad to see you. I am, that's sartin!"

"And I'm very glad to see you, Sparkman," said the other as he alighted from his steed and yielded his hand to the cordial grasp of the other.

"Well, I knows that, major, without you saying it. But you've jest come in the right time. The bacon's frying, and here's the bread. Let's down upon our haunches in right good airnest camp fashion and make the most of what God gives us in the way of blessings. I reckon you don't mean to ride any further tonight, major?"

"No," said the person addressed, "not if you'll let me lay my heels at your fire. But who's in your wagon? My old friend, Mrs. Grayling, I suppose?"

"That's a true word, major," said the lady herself, making her way out of the vehicle with good-humoured agility and coming forward with extended hand.

"Really, Mrs. Grayling, I'm very glad to see you." And the stranger, with the blandness of a gentleman and the hearty warmth of an old neighbor, expressed his satisfaction at once more finding himself in the company of an old acquaintance.

Their greetings once over, Major Spencer readily joined the group about the fire while James Grayling—though with some reluctance—disappeared to resume his toils of the scout while the supper proceeded.

"And who have you here?" demanded Spencer as his eye rested on the dark, hard features of the Scotchman.

Sparkman told him all that he himself had learned of the name and character of the stranger in a brief whisper. In a moment after, he formally introduced the parties in this fashion: "Mr. Macnab, Major Spencer. Mr. Macnab says he's true blue, major, and fou't at Camden, when Gineral Gates run so hard to 'bring the d——d militia's back.' He also fou't at Ninety-Six and Cowpens—so I reckon we had as good as count him one of us."

Major Spencer scrutinized the Scotchman keenly, a scrutiny which the latter seemed very ill to relish. He put a few questions to him on the subject of the war and some of the actions in which he allowed himself to have been concerned. His evident reluctance to unfold himself—a reluctance so unnatural to the brave soldier who has gone through his toils honorably—had the natural effect of discouraging the young officer, whose sense of delicacy had not been materially impaired amid the rude jostlings of military life. But, though he forbore to propose any other questions to Macnab, his eyes continued to survey the features of his sullen countenance with curiosity and a strangely increasing interest.

At the close of supper, James Grayling came in and Sparkman assumed the duties of the scout.

Major Spencer joined the patrol. He explained, "I have seen that Scotchman's face somewhere, Sparkman, and I'm convinced at some interesting moment. But where, when, or how, I cannot call to mind. The sight of it is even associated in my mind with something painful and unpleasant. Where could I have seen him?"

"I don't somehow like his looks myself," said Sparkman, "and I mislists he's been rethermore of a Tory than a Whig. But that's nothing to the purpose now, and he's at our fire, and we've broken hoecake together. So we cannot rake up the old ashes to make a dust with."

"No, surely not," was the reply of Spencer. "Even though we knew him to be a Tory, that cause of former quarrel should occasion

none now. But it should produce watchfulness and caution. I'm glad to see that you have not forgot your old business of scouting in the swamp."

"Kin I forget it, major" demanded Sparkman in tones which, though whispered, were full of emphasis as he laid his ear to the earth to listen.

"James has finished supper, major—that's his whistle to tell me so, and I'll jest step back to make it cl'ar to him how we're to keep up the watch tonight."

"Count me in your arrangements, Sparkman, as I am one of you for the night," said the major.

"By no sort of means," was the reply. "The night must be shared between James and myself. Ef so be you wants to keep company with one or t'other of us, why that's another thing. And, of course, you can do as you please."

"We'll have no quarrel on the subject, Joel," said the officer good-naturedly as they returned to the camp together.

II.

The arrangements of the party were soon made. Spencer renewed his offer at the fire to take his part in the watch, and the Scotchman, Macnab, volunteered his services also. But the offer of the latter was another reason why that of the former should be declined. Sparkman was resolute to have everything his own way. While James Grayling went out upon his lonely rounds, he busied himself in cutting bushes and making a sort of tent for the use of his late commander. Mrs. Grayling and Lucy slept in the wagon. The Scotchman stretched himself with little effort before the fire. Joel Sparkman, wrapping himself up in his cloak, crouched under the wagon body with his back resting partly against one of the wheels. From time to time, he rose and thrust additional brands into the fire, looked up at the night and round upon the little encampment, then sunk back to his perch and stole a few moments, at intervals, of uneasy sleep.

The first two hours of the watch were over, and James Grayling was relieved. The youth, however, felt in no mood for sleep. Taking his seat by the fire, he drew from his pocket a little volume of *Easy Reading Lessons,* and by the fitful flame of the resinous lightwood, he prepared, in this rude manner, to make up for the precious time which his youth had lost of its legitimate employments in the stirring events of the preceding seven years consumed in war. He was surprised at this employment by his late commander, who himself sleepless now emerged from the bushes and joined Grayling at the

fire. The youth had been rather a favorite with Spencer. They had both been reared in the same neighborhood, and the first military achievements of James had taken place under the eye and had met the approbation of his officer. The difference of their ages was just such as to permit of the warm attachment of the youth without diminishing any of the reverence which should be felt by the inferior. Grayling was not more than seventeen, and Spencer was perhaps thirty-four, the very prime of manhood. They sat by the fire and talked of old times and told old stories with the hearty glee and good nature of the young. Their mutual inquiries led to the revelation of their several objects in pursuing the present journey. Those of James Grayling were scarcely, indeed, to be considered his own. They were plans and purposes of his uncle, and it does not concern this narrative that we should know more of their nature than has already been revealed. But, whatever they were, they were as freely unfolded to his hearer as if they had been brothers, and Spencer was quite as frank in his revelations as his companion. He, too, was on his way to Charleston, from whence he was to take passage for England.

"I am rather in a hurry to reach town," he said, "as I learn that the Falmouth packet is preparing to sail for England in a few days, and I must go in her."

"For England, major!" exclaimed the youth with unaffected astonishment.

"Yes, James, for England. But why?— what astonishes you?"

"Why, lord!" exclaimed the simple youth, "if they only knew there, as I do, what a cutting and slashing you did use to make among their red coats, I reckon they'd hang you to the first hickory."

"Oh, no! Scarcely!" said the other with a smile.

"But I reckon you'll change your name, major?" continued the youth.

"No," responded Spencer, "if I did that, I should lose the object of my voyage. You must know, James, that an old relative has left me a good deal of money in England, and I can only get it by proving that I am Lionel Spencer. So you see I must carry my own name, whatever may be the risk."

"Well, major, you know best, but I do think if they could only have a guess of what you did among their soldiers at Hobkirk's and Cowpens and Eutaw and a dozen other places, they'd find some means of hanging you up, peace or no peace. But I don't see what occasion you have to be going clear away to England for money, when you've got a sight of your own already."

"Not so much as you think for," replied the major, giving an involuntary and uneasy glance at the Scotchman, who was seemingly sound asleep on the opposite side of the fire. "There is, you know, but little money in the country at any time, and I must get what I want for my expenses when I reach Charleston. I have just enough to carry me there."

"Well, now, major, that's mighty strange. I always thought that you was about the best off of any man in our parts. But if you're strained so close, I'm thinking, major—if so be you wouldn't think me too presumptuous—you'd better let me lend you a guinea or so that I've got to spare, and you can pay me back when you get the English money."

And the youth fumbled in his bosom for a little cotton wallet, which, with its limited contents, was displayed in another instant to the eyes of the officer.

"No, no, James," said the other, putting back the generous tribute. "I have quite enough to carry me to Charleston, and when there, I can easily get a supply from the merchants. But I thank you, my good fellow, for your offer. You are a good fellow, James, and I will remember you."

It is needless to pursue their conversation farther. The night passed away without any alarms, and at dawn of the next day, the whole party were engaged in making preparations for a start. Mrs. Grayling was soon busy in getting breakfast in readiness. Major Spencer consented to remain with them until it was over.

The Scotchman, after returning thanks very civilly for his accommodation of the night, at once resumed his journey. His course seemed, like their own, to lie below, but he neither declared his route nor betrayed the least desire to know that of Spencer. The latter had no disposition to renew those inquiries from which the stranger seemed to shrink the night before, and he accordingly suffered him to depart with a quiet farewell and the utterance of a good-natured wish, in which all the parties joined, that he might have a pleasant journey.

When he was fairly out of sight, Spencer said to Sparkman, "Had I liked that fellow's looks—nay, had I not positively *disliked* them—I should have gone with him. As it is, I will remain and share your breakfast."

The repast being over, all parties set forward. Spencer, after keeping along with them for a mile, took his leave also. The slow wagon pace at which the family travelled did not suit the high-spirited cavalier, and it was necessary, as he assured them, that he should reach the city in two nights more. They parted with many

regrets as truly felt as they were warmly expressed, and James Grayling never felt the tedium of wagon travelling to be so severe as throughout the whole of that day when he separated from his favorite captain. But he was too stout hearted a lad to make any complaint, and his dissatisfaction only showed itself in his unwonted silence and an over-anxiety, which his steed seemed to feel in common with himself, to go too rapidly ahead.

Thus the day passed, and the wayfarers at its close had made a progress of some twenty miles from sun to sun. The same precautions marked their encampment this night as the last, and they rose in better spirits with the next morning, the dawn of which was very bright and pleasant and encouraging. A similar journey of twenty miles brought them to the place of bivouac as the sun went down, and they prepared as usual for their securities and supper. They found themselves on the edge of a very dense forest of pines and scrubby oaks, a portion of which was swallowed up in a deep bay—or, so called in the dialect of the country, a "swamp bottom"—the growth of which consisted of mingled cypresses and bay trees with tupola, gum, and dense thickets of low stunted shrubbery, cane grass, and dwarf willows, which filled up every interval between the trees and, to the eye, most effectually barred out every human intruder.

This bay was chosen as the background for the camping party. Their wagon was wheeled into an area on a gently rising ground in front, under a pleasant shade of oaks and hickories with a lonely pine rising loftily in occasional spots among them. Here the horses were taken out, and James Grayling prepared to kindle up a fire. Looking for his axe, it was unaccountably missing, and after a fruitless search of half an hour, the party came to the conclusion that it had been left on the spot where they had slept last night. This was a disaster, and while they meditated in what manner to repair it, a negro boy appeared in sight, passing along the road at their feet and driving before him a small herd of cattle. From him, they learned that they were only a mile or two from a farmstead, where an axe might be borrowed. James, leaping on his horse, rode forwards in the hope to obtain one.

He found no difficulty in his quest, and having obtained it from the farmer, who was also a tavern-keeper, he casually asked if Major Spencer had not stayed with him the night before. He was somewhat surprised when told that he had not.

"There was one man stayed with me last night," said the farmer, "but he didn't call himself a major—and didn't much look like one."

"He rode a fine sorrel horse—tall, bright color, with white forefoot, didn't he?" asked James.

"No, that he didn't! He rode a powerful black, coal black, and not a bit of white about him."

"That was the Scotchman! But I wonder the major didn't stop with you. He must have rode on. Isn't there another house near you, below?"

"Not one. There's ne'er a house either above or below for a matter of fifteen miles. I'm the only man in all that distance that's living on this road, and I don't think your friend could have gone below, as I should have seen him pass. I've been all day out there in that field before your eyes, clearing up the brush."

III.

Somewhat wondering that the major should have turned aside from the track, though without attaching to it any importance at that particular moment, James Grayling took up the borrowed axe and hurried back to the encampment. The toil of cutting an extra supply of lightwood to meet the exigencies of the ensuing night sufficiently exercised his mind as well as his body to prevent him from meditating upon the seeming strangeness of the circumstance. But when he sat down to his supper over the fire that he had kindled, his fancies crowded thickly upon him, and he felt a confused doubt and suspicion that *something was to happen*—he knew not what. His conjectures and apprehensions were without form, though not altogether void, and he felt a strange sickness and a sinking at the heart which was very unusual with him. He had, in short, that lowness of spirits—that cloudy apprehensiveness of soul which takes the form of presentiment and makes us look out for danger even when the skies are without a cloud and the breeze is laden, equally and only, with balm and music.[5]

His moodiness found no sympathy among his companions. Joel Sparkman was in the best of humors, and his mother was so cheery and happy that, when the thoughtful boy went off into the woods to

[5] Whether James is experiencing a nagging hunch or a whiff of psychic ability here, *intuition* played an important role in the development of occult detective fiction. Mr. Burton, the detective in Seeley Regester's *The Dead Letter* (1867) explains that he can *sense* when a criminal is present, and he uses his clairvoyant daughter to help solve the case (though she doesn't do very well at it). In the early 1900s, clairvoyant occult detectives flourished with Algernon Blackwood's John Silence, Max Rittenberg's Dr. Xavier Wycherley, J.U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith's Semi Dual, F. Tennyson Jesse's Solange Fontaine, Rose Champion De Crespigny's Norton Vyse, Ella M. Scrymour's Shiela Crerar, and others.

watch, he could hear her at moments breaking out into little catches of a country ditty, which the gloomy events of the late war had not yet obliterated from her memory.

"It's very strange!" soliloquized the youth as he wandered along the edges of the dense bay or swamp bottom, which we have passingly referred to. "It's very strange what troubles me so! I feel almost frightened, and yet I know I'm not to be frightened easily, and I don't see anything in the woods to frighten me. It's strange the major didn't come along this road! Maybe he took another higher up that leads by a different settlement. I wish I had asked the man at the house if there's such another road. I reckon there must be, however, for where could the major have gone?"

The unphilosophical mind of James Grayling did not, in his farther meditations, carry him much beyond this starting point, and with its continual recurrence in soliloquy, he proceeded to traverse the margin of the bay until he came to its junction with, and termination at, the highroad. The youth turned into this and, involuntarily departing from it a moment after, soon found himself on the opposite side of the bay thicket. He wandered on and on, as he himself described it, without any power to restrain himself. He knew not how far he went, but instead of maintaining his watch for two hours only, he was gone more than four.

At length, a sense of weariness, which overpowered him all of a sudden, caused him to seat himself at the foot of a tree and snatch a few moments of rest. He denied that he slept in this time. He insisted to the last moment of his life that sleep never visited his eyelids that night—that he was conscious of fatigue and exhaustion, but not drowsiness—and that his fatigue was so numbing as to be painful and effectually kept him from any sleep.

While he sat thus beneath the tree, with a body weak and nerveless but a mind excited, he knew not how or why, to the most acute degree of expectation and attention, he heard his name called by the well-known voice of his friend, Major Spencer. The voice called him three times: "James Grayling!—James!—James Grayling!" before he could muster strength enough to answer.

It was not courage he wanted—of that he was positive, for he felt sure, as he said, that something had gone wrong, and he was never more ready to fight in his life than at that moment, could he have commanded the physical capacity. But his throat seemed dry to suffocation—his lips effectually sealed up as if with wax, and when he did answer, the sounds seemed as fine and soft as the whisper of some child just born.

"Oh! Major, is it you?"

Such, he thinks, were the very words he made use of in reply, and the answer that he received was instantaneous, though the voice came from some little distance in the bay, and his own voice he himself did not hear. He only knows what he meant to say.

The answer was to this effect: "It *is,* James! It is your own friend, Lionel Spencer, who speaks to you. Do not be alarmed when you see me! I have been shockingly murdered!"

James asserts that he tried to tell him that he would not be frightened, but that his own voice was still a whisper, which he himself could scarcely hear. A moment after he had spoken, he heard something like a sudden breeze that rustled through the bay bushes at his feet, and his eyes were closed without his effort and, indeed, in spite of himself.

When he opened them, he saw Major Spencer, standing at the edge of the bay, about twenty steps from him. Though he stood in the shade of the thicket and there was no light in the heavens save that of the stars, he was yet enabled to distinguish, perfectly and with great ease, every lineament of his friend's face. He looked very pale, and his garments were covered with blood. James said that he strove very much to rise from the place where he sat and approach him—"For, in truth," said the lad, "so far from feeling any fear, I felt nothing but fury in my heart. But I could not move a limb. My feet were fastened to the ground, my hands to my sides, and I could only bend forward and gasp. I felt as if I should have died with vexation that I could not rise, but a power which I could not resist made me motionless and almost speechless. I could only say, 'Murdered!'—and that one word, I believe I must have repeated a dozen times."

"Yes, murdered!—murdered by the Scotchman who slept with us at your fire night before last. James, I look to you to have the murderer brought to justice! James!—do you hear me, James?"

"These," said James, "I think were the very words—or near about the very words—that I heard. I tried to ask the major to tell me how it was and how I could do what he required, but I didn't hear myself speak, though it would appear that he did, for almost immediately after I had tried to speak what I wished to say, he answered me just as if I had said it. He told me that the Scotchman had waylaid, killed, and hidden him in that very bay—that his murderer had gone on to Charleston—and that, if I made haste to town, I would find him in the Falmouth packet, which was then lying in the harbor and ready to sail for England. He farther said that everything depended on my making haste—that I must reach town by tomorrow night, if I wanted to be in season, and go right on board the vessel and charge the criminal with

the deed. 'Do not be afraid,' said he, when he had finished. 'Be afraid of nothing, James, for God will help and strengthen you to the end.'

"When I had heard all, I burst out into a flood of tears—and then I felt strong. I felt that I could talk or fight or do almost anything! I jumped up to my feet and was just about to run down to where the major stood—but with the first step which I made forward, he was *gone*. I stopped and looked all around me. I could see *nothing*. The bay was just as black as midnight. I went down to it and tried to press in where I thought the major had been standing. But I couldn't get far, the brush and bay bushes were so close and thick. I was now bold and strong enough, and I called out loud enough to be heard half a mile. I didn't exactly know what I called for, or what I wanted to learn, or I have forgotten. But I heard nothing more.

"Then I remembered the camp and began to fear that something might have happened to mother and uncle, for I now felt, what I had not thought of before, that I had gone too far round the bay to be of much assistance or, indeed, to be in time for any, had they been suddenly attacked. Besides, I could not think how long I had been gone. It now seemed very late. The stars were shining their brightest, and the thin white clouds of morning were beginning to rise and run towards the west.

"Well, I bethought me of my course, for I was a little bewildered and doubtful where I was. After a little thinking, I took the back track and soon got a glimpse of the campfire, which was nearly burnt down. By this, I reckoned I was gone considerably longer than my two hours. When I got back into the camp, I looked under the wagon and found uncle in a sweet sleep, and though my heart was full almost to bursting with what I had heard and the cruel sight that I had seen, yet I wouldn't waken him. I beat about and mended the fire, and watched and waited until near daylight, when mother called to me out of the wagon and asked who it was.

"This wakened my uncle, and then I up and told all that had happened, for if it had been to save my life, I couldn't have kept it in much longer. Though mother said it was very strange, Uncle Sparkman considered that I had been only dreaming. But he couldn't persuade me of it. When I told him I intended to be off at daylight, just as the major had told me to do, and to ride my best all the way to Charleston, he laughed and said I was a fool. But I felt that I was no fool, and I was solemn certain that I hadn't been dreaming. Though both mother and he tried their hardest to make me put off going, yet I made up my mind to it, and they had to give up.

"After all, wouldn't I have been a pretty sort of a friend to the major if—after what he told me—I could have stayed behind and gone on only at wagon-pace to look after the murderer! I don't think, if I had done so, that I should ever have been able to look a white man in the face again.

"Soon as the peep of day, I was on horseback. Mother was mighty sad and begged me not to go, but Uncle Sparkman was mighty sulky and kept calling me fool upon fool until I was almost angry enough to forget that we were of blood kin. But all his talking did not stop me, and I reckon I was five miles on my way before he had his team in traces for a start. I rode as briskly as I could to get on without hurting my nag. I had a smart ride of more than forty miles before me, and the road was very heavy.

"It was a good two hours from sunset when I got into town, and the first question I asked of the people I met was to show me where the ships were kept. When I got to the wharf, they showed me the Falmouth packet, where she lay in the stream, ready to sail as soon as the wind should favor."

IV.

James Grayling, with the same eager impatience which he has been suffered to describe in his own language, had already hired a boat to go on board the British packet, when he remembered that he had neglected all those means, legal and otherwise, by which alone his purpose might be properly effected. He did not know much about legal process, but he had commonsense enough, the moment that he began to reflect on the subject, to know that some such process was necessary. This conviction produced another difficulty. He knew not in which quarter to turn for counsel and assistance—but here the boatman, who saw his bewilderment and knew by his dialect and dress that he was a back countryman, came to his relief, and from him he got directions where to find the merchants with whom his uncle, Sparkman, had done business in former years.

To them he went and, without circumlocution, told the whole story of his ghostly visitation. Even as a dream, which these gentlemen at once conjectured it to be, the story of James Grayling was equally clear and curious. His intense warmth and the entire absorption which the subject had left on his mind and soul were such that they judged it not improper, at least, to carry out the search of the vessel which he contemplated. It would certainly, they thought, be a curious coincidence—believing James to be a veracious youth—if the Scotchman should be found onboard.

But another test of his narrative was proposed by one of the firm. It so happened that the business agents of Major Spencer, who were well known in Charleston, kept their office but a few rods distant from their own. To them all the parties at once proceeded. Here the story of James was encountered by a circumstance that made somewhat against it. These gentlemen produced a letter from Major Spencer, intimating the utter impossibility of his coming to town for the space of a month and expressing his regret that he should be unable to avail himself of the opportunity of the foreign vessel, of whose arrival in Charleston and proposed time of departure, they had themselves advised him. They read the letter aloud to James, and their brother merchants, with difficulty, suppressed their smiles at the gravity with which the former related and insisted upon the particulars of his vision.

"He has changed his mind," returned the impetuous youth. "He was on his way down, I tell you—a hundred miles on his way—when he camped with us. I know him well, I tell you, and talked with him myself half the night."

"At least," remarked the gentlemen who had gone with James, "it can do no harm to look into the business. We can procure a warrant for searching the vessel after this man, Macnab, and should he be found onboard the packet, it will be a sufficient circumstance to justify the magistrates in detaining him until we can ascertain where Major Spencer really is."

The measure was accordingly adopted, and it was nearly sunset before the warrant was procured and the proper officer in readiness. The impatience of a spirit so eager and so devoted as James Grayling, under these delays, may be imagined, and when in the boat and on his way to the packet where the criminal was to be sought, his blood became so excited that it was with much ado he could be kept in his seat. His quick, eager action continually disturbed the trim of the boat, and one of his mercantile friends, who had accompanied him with that interest in the affair which curiosity alone inspired, was under constant apprehension lest he would plunge overboard in his impatient desire to shorten the space which lay between.

The same impatience enabled the youth, though never on shipboard before, to grasp the rope which had been flung at their approach and to mount her sides with catlike agility. Without waiting to declare himself or his purpose, he ran from one side of the deck to the other, greedily staring, to the surprise of officers, passengers, and seamen, in the faces of all of them and surveying them with an almost offensive scrutiny. He turned away from the search with

disappointment. There was no face like that of the suspected man among them.

By this time, his friend, the merchant, with the sheriff's officer had entered the vessel and were in conference with the captain. Grayling drew nigh in time to hear the latter affirm that there was no man of the name of Macnab, as stated in the warrant, among his passengers or crew.

"He *is*—he *must* be!" exclaimed the impetuous youth. "The major never lied in his life—and couldn't lie after he was dead. Macnab is here—he is a Scotchman—"

The captain interrupted him: "We have, young gentleman, several Scotchmen on board, and one of them is named Macleod—"

"Let me see him—which is he?" demanded the youth.

By this time, the passengers and a goodly portion of the crew were collected about the little party.

The captain turned his eyes upon the group and asked, "Where is Mr. Macleod?"

"He's gone below—he's sick!" replied one of the passengers.

"That's he! That must be the man!" exclaimed the youth. "I'll lay my life that's no other than Macnab. He's only taken a false name."

It was now remembered by one of the passengers and remarked that Macleod had expressed himself as unwell but a few moments before and had gone below even while the boat was rapidly approaching the vessel.

At this statement, the captain led the way into the cabin, closely followed by James Grayling and the rest.

"Mr. Macleod," he said with a voice somewhat elevated as he approached the berth of that person, "you are wanted on deck for a few moments."

"I am really too unwell, Captain," replied a feeble voice from behind the curtain of the berth.

"It will be necessary," was the reply of the captain. "There is a warrant from the authorities of the town to look after a fugitive from justice."

Macleod had already begun a second speech declaring his feebleness, when the fearless youth, Grayling, bounded before the captain and tore away, with a single grasp of his hand, the frail curtain which concealed the suspected man from their sight.

"It is *he!"* was the instant exclamation of the youth. "It is *he*—Macnab, the Scotchman—the man that murdered Major Spencer!"

Macnab—for it *was* he—was deadly pale. He trembled like an aspen. His eyes were dilated with more than mortal apprehension, and his lips were perfectly livid. Still, he found strength to speak and

to deny the accusation. He knew nothing of the youth before him—nothing of Major Spencer—his name was Macleod, and he had never called himself by any other. He denied, but with great incoherence, everything which was urged against him.

"You must get up, Mr. Macleod," said the captain. "The circumstances are very much against you. You must go with the officer!"

"Will you give me up to my enemies?" demanded the culprit. "You are a countryman—a Briton. I have fought for the king, our master, against these rebels, and for this they seek my life. Do not deliver me into their bloody hands!"

"Liar!" exclaimed James Grayling. "Didn't you tell us at our own campfire that you were with us—that you were at Gates's defeat and Ninety-Six?"

"But I didn't tell you," said the Scotchman with a grin, "which side I was on!"

"Ha! Remember that!" said the sheriff's officer. "He denied, just a moment ago, that he knew this young man at all. Now, he confesses that he did see and camp with him."

The Scotchman was aghast at the strong point which, in his inadvertence, he had made against himself. His efforts to excuse himself, stammering and contradictory, were such as served only to involve him more deeply in the meshes of his difficulty. Still he continued his urgent appeals to the captain of the vessel and his fellow passengers as citizens of the same country, subjects to the same monarch, to protect him from those who equally hated and would destroy them all. In order to move their national prejudices in his behalf, he boasted of the immense injury which he had done, as a Tory, to the rebel cause. He again insisted that the murder was only a pretext of the youth before him by which to gain possession of his person and wreak upon him the revenge which his own fierce performances during the war had naturally enough provoked.

One or two of the passengers, indeed, joined with him in entreating the captain to set the accusers adrift and make sail at once, but the stout Englishman who was in command rejected instantly the unworthy counsel. Besides, he was better aware of the dangers which would follow any such rash proceeding. Fort Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island, had been already refitted and prepared for an enemy, and he was lying, at that moment, under the formidable range of grinning

teeth, which would have opened upon him at the first movement from the jaws of Castle Pinckney.[6]

"No, gentlemen," said he, "you mistake your man. God forbid that I should give shelter to a murderer, though he were from my own parish."

"But I am no murderer," said the Scotchman.

"You look cursedly like one, however," was the reply of the captain. "Sheriff, take your prisoner."

The base creature threw himself at the feet of the Englishman and clung, with piteous entreaties, to his knees. The latter shook him off and turned away in disgust.

"Steward," he cried, "bring up this man's luggage."

He was obeyed. The luggage was brought up from the cabin and delivered to the sheriff's officer, by whom it was examined in the presence of all, and an inventory made of its contents. It consisted of a small new trunk, which it afterwards appeared he had bought in Charleston soon after his arrival. This contained a few changes of raiment; twenty-six guineas in money; a gold watch, not in repair; and the two pistols which he had shown while at Joel Sparkman's campfire—but with one difference. The stock of one was broken off short just above the grasp, and the butt was entirely gone. It was not found among his chattels. A careful examination of the articles in his trunk did not result in anything calculated to strengthen the charge of his criminality, but there was not a single person present who did not feel as morally certain of his guilt as if the jury had already declared the fact.

That night, the accused man slept—if he slept at all—in the common jail of the city.

V.

His accuser, the warmhearted and resolute James Grayling, did *not* sleep. The excitement, arising from mingling and contradictory emotions—sorrow for his brave young commander's fate and the natural exultation of a generous spirit at the consciousness of having performed, with signal success, an arduous and painful task—combined to drive all pleasant slumbers from his eyes.

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[6] This introduces some confusion about exactly when this story is set. Fort Moultrie was rehabilitated twice: first, damage from the Revolutionary War was repaired in 1798, and after a hurricane hit the coast of South Carolina in 1804, repairs were completed by 1809. The same hurricane resulted in Fort Pinckney being replaced with a brick structure called Castle Pinckney. Later, though, Simms says a court ruling regarding the murder came was made sometime in the 1780s.

With the dawn, he was again up and stirring with his mind still full of the awful business in which he had been engaged. We do not care to pursue his course in the ordinary walks of the city nor account for his employments during the few days which ensued until, in consequence of a legal examination into the circumstances which anticipated the regular work of the sessions, the extreme excitement of the young accuser had been renewed.

Macnab or Macleod—and it is possible that both names were fictitious—as soon as he recovered from his first terrors, sought the aid of an attorney. He was one of those acute, small, chopping lawyers, found in almost every community, who are willing to serve with equal zeal the sinner and the saint, provided that they can pay with equal liberality. The prisoner was brought before the court under *habeas corpus,* and several grounds submitted by his counsel with the view to obtaining his discharge.

It became necessary to ascertain, among the first duties of the state, whether Major Spencer, the alleged victim, was really dead. Until it could be established that a man should be imprisoned, tried, and punished for a crime, it was first necessary to show that a crime had been committed, and the attorney made himself exceedingly merry with the ghost story of young Grayling. In those days, however, the ancient superstition was not so feeble as she has subsequently become. The venerable judge was one of those good men who had a decent respect for the faith and opinions of his ancestors, and though he certainly would not have consented to the hanging of Macleod under the sort of testimony which had been adduced, he yet saw enough, in all the circumstances, to justify his present detention.

In the meantime, efforts were to be made to ascertain the whereabouts of Major Spencer. Were he even missing—so the counsel for Macleod contended—his death could be by no means assumed in consequence.

To this the judge shook his head doubtfully. "'Fore God!" said he, "I would not have you to be too sure of that." He was an Irishman and proceeded after the fashion of his country. The reader will therefore *bear* with his *bull.* "A man may properly be hung for murdering another, though the murdered man be not dead—ay, before God, even though he be actually unhurt and uninjured while the murderer is swinging by the neck for the bloody deed!"

The judge—who it must be understood was a real existence and who had no small reputation in his day in the South—proceeded to establish the correctness of his opinions by authorities and argument, with all of which, doubtlessly, the bar were exceedingly delighted. But

to provide them in this place would only be to interfere with our own progress.

James Grayling, however, was not satisfied to wait the slow processes which were suggested for coming at the truth. Even the wisdom of the judge was lost upon him, possibly for the simple reason that he did not comprehend it. But the ridicule of the culprit's lawyer stung him to the quick, and more than once, he muttered to himself a determination "to lick the sauce out of that impudent chap's leather." This was not his only resolve. There was one which he proceeded to put into instant execution, and that was to seek the body of his murdered friend in the spot where he fancied it might be found, namely, the dark and dismal bay where the spectre had made his appearance to his eyes.

The suggestion was approved—though he did not need this to prompt his resolution—by his mother and uncle, Sparkman. The latter determined to be his companion, and he was farther accompanied by the sheriff's officer who had arrested the suspected felon. Before daylight, on the morning after the examination before the judge had taken place and when Macleod had been remanded to prison, James Grayling started on his journey.

His fiery zeal received additional force at every added moment of delay, and his eager spurring brought him at an early hour after noon to the neighborhood of the spot through which his search was to be made. When his companions and himself drew nigh, they were all at a loss in which direction first to proceed. The bay was one of those massed forests, whose wall of thorns, vines, and close tenacious shrubs seemed to defy invasion. To the eye of the townsman, it was so forbidding that he pronounced it absolutely impenetrable.

But James was not to be baffled. He led them round it, taking the very course which he had pursued the night when the revelation was made him. He showed them the very tree at whose foot he had sunk when the supernatural torpor—as he himself esteemed it—began to fall upon him. He then pointed out the spot, some twenty steps distant, at which the spectre made his appearance. To this spot they then proceeded in a body and essayed an entrance, but were so discouraged by the difficulties at the outset that all, James not excepted, concluded that neither the murderer nor his victim could possibly have found entrance there.

But, lo! A marvel! Such it seemed at the first blush to all the party. While they stood confounded and indecisive, undetermined in which way to move, a sudden flight of wings was heard, even from the center of the bay at a little distance above the spot where they had striven for entrance. They looked up and beheld about fifty

buzzards—those notorious domestic vultures of the South—ascending from the interior of the bay and perching along upon the branches of the loftier trees by which it was overhung. Even were the character of these birds less known, the particular business in which they had just then been engaged was betrayed by huge gobbets of flesh, which some of them had borne aloft in their flight and still continued to rend with beak and bill as they tottered upon the branches where they stood. A piercing scream issued from the lips of James Grayling as he beheld this sight and strove to scare the offensive birds from their repast.

"The poor major! The poor major!" was the involuntary and agonized exclamation of the youth. "Did I ever think he would have come to this!"

The search, thus guided and encouraged, was pressed with renewed diligence and spirit. At length, an opening was found through which it was evident that a body of considerable size had but recently gone. The branches were broken from the small shrub trees and the undergrowth trodden into the earth. They followed this path, and as is the case commonly with waste tracts of this description, the density of the growth diminished sensibly at every step they took.

They reached a little pond, which though circumscribed in area and full of cypresses, proved to be singularly deep. Indeed, it was an alligator hole, where in all probability a numerous tribe of these reptiles had their dwelling. Here, on the edge of the pond, they discovered the object which had drawn the keen-sighted vultures to their feast: the body of a horse, which James Grayling at once identified as that of Major Spencer. The carcass of the animal was already very much torn and lacerated. The eyes were plucked out and the animal completely disemboweled.

Yet, on examination, it was not difficult to discover the manner of the horse's death. This had been effected by firearms. Two bullets had passed through his skull, just above the eyes, either of which must have been fatal. The murderer had led the horse to the spot and committed the cruel deed where his body was found.

The search was now continued for that of the owner, but for some time it proved ineffectual. At length, the keen eyes of James Grayling detected, amidst a heap of moss and green sedge that rested beside an overthrown tree whose branches jutted into the pond, a whitish but discolored object that did not seem native to the place. Bestriding the fallen tree, he was enabled to reach this object, which with a burst of grief, he announced to the distant party was the hand and arm of his unfortunate friend, the wristband of the shirt being

the conspicuous object which had first caught his eye. Grasping this, he drew the corpse, which had been thrust beneath the branches of the tree, to the surface, and with the assistance of his uncle, it was finally brought to the dry land.

Here it underwent a careful examination. The head was very much disfigured. The skull was fractured in several places by repeated blows of some hard instrument, inflicted chiefly from behind. A closer inspection revealed a bullet hole in the abdomen, the first wound, in all probability, which the unfortunate gentleman received and by which he was perhaps tumbled from his horse. The blows on the head would seem to have been unnecessary, unless the murderer—whose proceedings seemed to have been singularly deliberate—was resolved upon making "assurance doubly sure."[7]

But, as if the watchful Providence had meant that nothing should be left doubtful which might tend to the complete conviction of the criminal, the constable stumbled upon the butt of the broken pistol which had been found in Macleod's trunk. This he picked up on the edge of the pond in which the corpse had been discovered while James Grayling and his uncle, Sparkman, were engaged in drawing it from the water. The place where the fragment was discovered at once denoted the pistol as the instrument by which the final blows were inflicted.

"'Fore God," said the judge to the criminal as these proofs were submitted on the trial, "you may be a very innocent man after all, as by my faith I do think there have been many murderers before you. You ought, nevertheless, to be hung as an example to all other persons who suffer such strong proofs of guilt to follow their innocent misdoings. Gentlemen of the jury, if this person, Macleod or Macnab, didn't murder Major Spencer, either you or I did. You must now decide which of us it is! I say, gentlemen of the jury, either you or I or the prisoner at the bar murdered this man. If you have any doubts which of us it was, it is but justice and mercy that you should give the prisoner the benefit of your doubts and so find your verdict. But, before God, should you find him not guilty, Mr. Attorney there can scarcely do anything wiser than to put us all upon trial for the deed."

The jury, it may be scarcely necessary to add—perhaps under certain becoming fears of an alternative such as his honor had suggested—brought in a verdict of Guilty without leaving the panel.

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[7] The phrase is from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (c.1606). An apparition tells the title character to beware of Macduff, and immediately afterward, another apparition claims that "none of woman born / Shall harm" him. Macbeth then says: "Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee? / But yet I'll make assurance double sure, / And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live" (4.1.81-95).

Macnab, *alias* Macleod, was hung at White Point, Charleston, somewhere about the year 178—.

"And here," said my grandmother devoutly, "you behold a proof of God's watchfulness to see that murder should not be hidden and that the murderer should not escape. You see that he sent the spirit of the murdered man—since by no other mode could the truth have been revealed—to declare the crime and to discover the criminal. But for that ghost, Macnab would have got off to Scotland and probably have been living to this very day on the money that he took from the person of the poor major."

As the old lady finished the ghost story, which by the way, she had been tempted to relate for the fiftieth time in order to combat my father's ridicule of such superstitions, the latter took up the thread of the narrative.

"Now, my son," said he, "as you have heard all that your grandmother has to say on this subject, I will proceed to show you what you have to believe—and what *not*. It is true that Macnab murdered Spencer in the manner related. That James Grayling made the discovery and prosecuted the pursuit, found the body and brought the felon to justice. That Macnab suffered death and confessed the crime, alleging that he was moved to do so as much because of the money that he suspected Spencer to have in his possession as because of the hate which he felt for a man who, on the borders of North Carolina, had been particularly bold and active in cutting up a party of Scotch loyalists to which he belonged. But the appearance of the spectre was nothing more than the work of a quick imagination, added to a shrewd and correct judgment. James Grayling saw no ghost, in fact, but such as was in his own mind, and though the instance was one of a most remarkable character—one of singular combination and well depending circumstances—still, I think it is to be accounted for by natural and very simple laws."

The old lady was indignant. "And how could he see the ghost just on the edge of the same bay where the murder had been committed and where the body of the murdered man even then was lying?"

My father did not directly answer the demand, but proceeded thus: "James Grayling, as we know, mother, was a very ardent, impetuous, sagacious man. He had the sanguine, the racehorse temperament. He was generous, always prompt and ready, and one who never went backward. What he did, he did quickly, boldly, and thoroughly! He never shrank from trouble of any kind—nay, he rejoiced in the constant encounter with difficulty and trial—and his was the temper which commands and enthralls mankind. He felt

deeply and intensely whatever occupied his mind, and when he parted from his friend, he brooded over little else than their past communion and the great distance by which they were to be separated. The dull travelling wagon-gait, at which he himself was compelled to go, was a source of annoyance to him, and he became sullen, all the day, after the departure of his friend.

"When, on the evening of the next day, he came to the house where it was natural to expect that Major Spencer would have slept the night before and he learned the fact that no one stopped there but the Scotchman, Macnab, we see that he was struck with the circumstance. He mutters it over to himself, 'Strange, where the major could have gone!' His mind then naturally reverts to the character of the Scotchman. To the opinions and suspicions which had been already expressed of him by his uncle and felt by himself. They had all previously come to the full conviction that Macnab was and had always been a Tory, in spite of his protestations.

"His mind next and very naturally reverted to the insecurity of the highways. The general dangers of travelling at that period. The frequency of crime, and the number of desperate men who were everywhere to be met with. The very employment in which he was then engaged, in scouting the woods for the protection of the camp, was calculated to bring such reflections to his mind. If these precautions were considered necessary for the safety of persons so poor, so wanting in those possessions which might prompt cupidity to crime, how much more necessary were precautions in the case of a wealthy gentleman like Major Spencer!

"He then remembered the conversation with the major at the campfire, when they fancied that the Scotchman was sleeping. How natural to think, then, that he was all the while awake and, if awake, he must have heard him speak of the wealth of his companion. True, the major, with more prudence than young James, denied that he had any money about him, more than would bear his expenses to the city, but such an assurance was natural enough to the lips of a traveler who knew the dangers of the country. That the man, Macnab, was not a person to be trusted was the equal impression of Joel Sparkman and his nephew from the first. The probabilities were strong that he would rob and perhaps murder, if he might hope to do so with impunity.

"As the youth made the circuit of the bay in the darkness and solemn stillness of the night, its gloomy depths and mournful shadows naturally gave rise to such reflections as would be equally active in the mind of a youth and of one somewhat familiar with the arts and usages of strife. He would see that the spot was just the one

in which a practiced partisan would delight to set an ambush for an unwary foe. There ran the public road, with a little sweep, around two-thirds of the extent of its dense and impenetrable thickets. The ambusher could lie concealed and, at ten steps, command the bosom of its victim. Here, then, you perceive that the mind of James Grayling, stimulated by an active and sagacious judgment, had by gradual and reasonable stages come to these conclusions: that Major Spencer was an object to tempt a robber. That the country was full of them. That Macnab was one of them. That this was the very spot in which a deed of blood could be most easily committed and most easily secured. And one important fact that gave strength and coherence to the whole—that Major Spencer had not reached a well-known point of destination while Macnab had.

"With these thoughts thus closely linked together, the youth forgets the limits of his watch and his circuit. This fact alone proves how active his imagination had become. It leads him forward, brooding more and more on the subject until, in the very exhaustion of his body, he sinks down beneath a tree. He sinks down and falls asleep. With his sleep, what before was plausible conjecture becomes fact, and the creative properties of his imagination gives form and vitality to all his fancies. These forms are bold, broad, and deeply colored in due proportion with the degree of force which they receive from probability. Here, he sees the *image* of his friend.

"But you will remark—and this should almost conclusively satisfy any mind that all that he sees is the work of his imagination—that, though Spencer tells him that he is murdered and by Macnab, he does not tell him *how, in what manner, or with what weapons.* Though he sees him pale and ghostlike, he does not see—nor can he say—*where his wounds are!* He sees his pale features distinctly, and his garments are bloody. Now, had he seen the spectre in the true appearances of death as he was subsequently found, he would not have been able to discern his features, which according to his own account, were battered almost out of all shape of humanity and covered with mud. His clothes would have streamed with mud and water rather than with blood."

"Ah!" exclaimed the old lady, my grandmother. "It's hard to make you believe anything that you don't see. You are like Saint Thomas in the Scriptures! But how do you propose to account for his knowing that the Scotchman was onboard the Falmouth packet? Answer to that!"

"That is not a more difficult matter than any of the rest. You forget that in the dialogue which took place between James and

Major Spencer at the camp, the latter told him that he was about to take passage for Europe in the Falmouth packet, which then lay in Charleston harbor, and was about to sail. Macnab heard all that."

"True enough and likely enough," returned the old lady, "but though you show that it was Major Spencer's intention to go to Europe in the Falmouth packet, that will not show that it was also the intention of the murderer."

"Yet what more probable and how natural for James Grayling to imagine such a thing! In the first place, he knew that Macnab was a Briton. He felt convinced that he was a Tory. The inference was immediate that such a person would scarcely have remained long in a country where such characters labored under so much odium, disfranchisement, and constant danger from popular tumults. The fact that Macnab was compelled to disguise his true sentiments and affect those of the people against whom he fought so vindictively shows what was his sense of the danger which he incurred. Now, it is not unlikely that Macnab was quite as well aware as Major Spencer that the Falmouth packet was in Charleston and about to sail. No doubt he was pursuing the same journey with the same object, and had he not murdered Spencer, they would very likely have been fellow passengers together to Europe. But, whether he knew the fact before or not, he probably heard it stated by Spencer while he seemed to be sleeping. Even supposing that he did not then know, it was enough that he found this to be the fact on reaching the city. It was an afterthought to fly to Europe with his ill-gotten spoils and, whatever may have appeared a politic course to the criminal, would be a probable conjecture in the mind of him by whom he was suspected.

"The whole story is one of strong probabilities which happened to be verified. If proving anything, the story proves only which we know: that James Grayling was a man of remarkably sagacious judgment and quick, daring imagination. This quality of imagination, by the way, when possessed very strongly in connection with shrewd commonsense and well-balanced general faculties, makes that particular kind of intellect which, because of its promptness and powers of creation and combination, we call genius. It is genius only which can make ghosts, and James Grayling was a genius. He never, my son, saw any other ghosts than those of his own making!"

I heard my father with great patience to the end, though he seemed very tedious. He had taken a great deal of pains to destroy one of my greatest sources of pleasure. I need not add that I continued to believe in the ghost and, with my grandmother, to reject the philosophy. It was easier to believe the one than to comprehend

the other. When the discussion was over, I had still one question which, however, neither of the parties were able to resolve.

"But, grandma, did James Grayling ever whip the saucy lawyer as he promised?"

It has always seemed to me that the story—for this is a genuine legend of Carolina—ended with singular abruptness when it left this important question without an answer. It might somewhat impair the moral character of James Grayling, could we fancy that he failed to keep so solemn a promise!

[1842]

THE DIARY OF ANNE RODWAY

Wilkie Collins

I.

March 3rd, 1840. A long letter today from Robert, which surprised and vexed and fluttered me so that I have been sadly behindhand with my work ever since. He writes in worse spirits than last time and absolutely declares that he is poorer even than when he went to America and that he has made up his mind to come home to London. How happy I should be at this news, if he only returned to me a prosperous man! As it is, though I love him dearly, I cannot look forward to the meeting him again, disappointed and broken down and poorer than ever, without a feeling almost of dread for both of us. I was twenty-six last birthday, and he was thirty-three There seems less chance now than ever of our being married. It is all I can do to keep myself by my needle, and his prospects, since he failed in the small stationery business three years ago, are worse, if possible, than mine.

Not that I mind so much for myself. Women—in all ways of life and especially in my dress making way—learn, I think, to be more patient than men. What I dread is Robert's despondency and the hard struggle he will have in this cruel city to get his bread, let alone making money enough to marry me. So little as poor people want to set up in housekeeping and be happy together, it seems hard that they can't get it when they are honest and hearty, and willing to work. The clergy man said in his sermon, last Sunday evening, that all things were ordered for the best and that we are all put into the stations in life that are properest for us. I suppose he was right, being a very clever gentleman who fills the church to crowding, but I think I should have understood him better if I had not been very hungry at the time, in consequence of my own station in life being nothing but Plain Needlewoman.

March 4th. Mary Mallinson came down to my room to take a cup of tea with me. I read her bits of Robert's letter to show her that if she has her troubles, I have mine too. But I could not succeed in cheering her. She says that she is born to misfortune and that, as long back as she can remember, she has never had the least morsel of luck to be

thankful for. I told her to go and look in my glass and to say if she had nothing to be thankful for then, for Mary is a very pretty girl and would look still prettier if she could more cheerful and dress neater. However, my compliment did no good.

She rattled her spoon impatiently in her teacup and said, "If I was only as good a hand at needlework as you are, Anne, I would change faces with the ugliest girl in London."

"Not you!" says I, laughing.

She looked at me for a moment, and shook her head, and was out of the room before I could get up and stop her. She always runs off in that way when she is going to cry, having a kind of pride about letting other people see her in tears.

March 5th. A fright about Mary. I had not seen her all day, as she does not work at the same place where I do; and in the evening she never came down to have tea with me or sent me word to go to her. So just before I went to bed I ran upstairs to say goodnight. She did not answer when I knocked. When I stepped softly into the room, I saw her in bed, asleep with her work not half done, lying about the room in the untidiest way. There was nothing remarkable in that, and I was just going away on tiptoe, when a tiny bottle and wineglass on the chair by her bedside caught my eye. I thought she was ill and had been taking physic, and I looked at the bottle. It was marked in large letters: "Laudanum—Poison." My heart gave a jump as if it was going to fly out of me.

I laid hold of her with both hands and shook her with all my might. She was sleeping heavily, and woke slowly, as it seemed to me—but still she did wake. I tried to pull her out of bed, having heard that people ought to be always walked up and down when they have taken laudanum. But she resisted and pushed me away violently.

"Anne!" says she in a fright. "For gracious sake, what's come to you! Are you out of your senses?"

"O, Mary! Mary!" says I, holding up the bottle before her, "If I hadn't come in when I did—" And I laid hold of her to shake her again.

She looked puzzled at me for a moment—then smiled (the first time I had seen her do so for many a long day)—then put her arms round my neck.

"Don't be frightened about me, Anne," she says. "I am not worth it, and there is no need."

"No need!" says I, out of breath. "No need, when the bottle has got 'Poison' marked on it!"

" Poison, dear, if you take it all," says Mary, looking at me very tenderly; "and a night's rest if you only take a little."

I watched her for a moment; doubtful whether I ought to believe what she said, or to alarm the house. But there was no sleepiness now in her eyes, and nothing drowsy in her voice; and she sat up in bed quite easily without anything to support her.

"You have given me a dreadful fright, Mary," says I, sitting down by her in the chair and beginning, by this time, to feel rather faint after being startled so.

She jumped out of bed to get me a drop of water, and kissed me, and said how sorry she was, and how undeserving of so much interest being taken in her. At the same time, she tried to possess herself of the laudanum bottle which I still kept cuddled up tight in my own hands.

"No," says I. "You have got into a low-spirited, despairing way. I won't trust you with it."

"I am afraid I can't do without it," says Mary in her usual quiet, hopeless voice. "What with work that I can't get through as I ought and troubles that I can't help thinking of, sleep won't come to me unless I take a few drops out of that bottle. Don't keep it away from me, Anne. It's the only thing in the world that makes me forget myself."

"Forget yourself!" says I. "You have no right to talk in that way at your age. There's something horrible in the notion of a girl of eighteen sleeping with a bottle of laudanum by her bedside every night. We all of us have our troubles. Haven't I got mine?"

"You can do twice the work I can, twice as well as me," says Mary. "You are never scolded and rated at for awkwardness with your needle, and I always am. You can pay for your room every week, and I am three weeks in debt for mine."

"A little more practice," says I, "and a little more courage, and you will soon do better. You have got all your life before you—"

"I wish I was at the end of it," says she, breaking in. "I'm alone in the world, and my life's no good to me."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself for saying so," says I. "Haven't you got me for a friend? Didn't I take a fancy to you when first you left your stepmother and came to lodge in this house? And haven't I been sisters with you ever since? Suppose you are alone in the world, am I much better off? I'm an orphan, like you. I've almost as many things in pawn as you, and if your pockets are empty, mine have only got nine-pence in them to last me for all the rest of the week."

"Your father and mother were honest people," says Mary obstinately. "My mother ran away from home and died in a hospital. My father was always drunk and always beating me. My stepmother

is as good as dead, for all she cares about me. My only brother is thousands of miles away in foreign parts and never writes to me. He never helps me with a farthing. My sweetheart—" She stopped, and the red flew into her face.

I knew, if she went on that way, she would only get to the saddest part of her sad story and give both herself and me unnecessary pain. "My sweetheart is too poor to marry me, Mary," I said. "So I'm not so much to be envied, even there. But let's give over disputing which is worst off. Lie down in bed, and let me tuck you up. I'll put a stitch or two into that work of yours while you go to sleep."

Instead of doing what I told her, she burst out crying (being very like a child in some of her ways) and hugged me so tight round the neck that she quite hurt me. I let her go on till she had worn herself out and was obliged to lie down. Even then, her last few words, before she dropped off to sleep, were such as I was half-sorry, half-frightened, to hear.

"I won't plague you long, Anne," she said. "I haven't courage to go out of the world as you seem to fear I shall. But I began my life wretchedly, and wretchedly I am sentenced to end it."

It was of no use lecturing her again, for she closed her eyes. I tucked her up as neatly as I could and put her petticoat over her, for the bedclothes were scanty and her hands felt cold. She looked so pretty and delicate as she fell asleep that it quite made my heart ache to see her after such talk as we had held together.

I just waited long enough to be quite sure that she was in the land of dreams, then emptied the horrible laudanum bottle into the grate, took up her half-done work, and, going out softly, left her for that night.

March 6th. Sent off a long letter to Robert, begging and entreating him not to be so downhearted and not to leave America without making another effort. I told him I could bear any trial except the wretchedness of seeing him come back a helpless, broken-down man, trying uselessly to begin life again, when too old for a change. It was not till after I had posted my own letter and read over parts of Robert's again that the suspicion suddenly floated across me, for the first time, that he might have sailed for England immediately after writing to me. There were expressions in the letter which seemed to indicate that he had some such headlong project in his mind. And yet, surely if it were so, I ought to have noticed them at the first reading. I can only hope I am wrong in my present interpretation of much of what he has written to me—hope it earnestly for both our sakes.

This has been a doleful day for me. I have been uneasy about Robert and uneasy about Mary. My mind is haunted by those last words of hers: "I began my life wretchedly, and wretchedly I am sentenced to end it." Her usual melancholy way of talking never produced the same impression on me that I feel now. Perhaps the discovery of the laudanum bottle is the cause of this. I would give many a hard day's work to know what to do for Mary's good. My heart warmed to her when we first met in the same lodging house two years ago, and, although I am not one of the over-affectionate sort myself, I feel as if I could go to the world's end to serve that girl. Yet, strange to say, if I was asked why I was so fond of her, I don't think I should know how to answer the question.

March 7th. I am almost ashamed to write it down, even in this journal, which no eyes but mine ever look on, yet I must honestly confess to myself that here I am, at nearly one in the morning, sitting up in a state of serious uneasiness because Mary has not yet come home. I walked with her, this morning, to the place where she works and tried to lead her into talking of the relations she has got who are still alive. My motive in doing this was to see if she dropped anything in the course of conversation which might suggest a way of helping her interests with those who are bound to give her all reasonable assistance. But the little I could get her to say to me led to nothing.

Instead of answering my questions about her stepmother and her brother, she persisted at first, in the strangest way, in talking of her father, who was dead and gone, and of one Noah Truscott, who had been the worst of all the bad friends he had and had taught him to drink and game. When I did get her to speak of her brother, she only knew that he had gone out to a place called Assam, where they grew tea. How he was doing, or whether he was there still, she did not seem to know, never having heard a word from him for years and years past. As for her stepmother, Mary, not unnaturally, flew into a passion the moment I spoke of her. She keeps an eating-house at Hammersmith and could have given Mary good employment in it, but she seems always to have hated her and to have made her life so wretched with abuse and ill-usage that she had no refuge left but to go away from home and do her best to make a living for herself. Her husband (Mary's father) appears to have behaved badly to her, and after his death, she took the wicked course of revenging herself on her step-daughter.

I felt, after this, that it was impossible Mary could go back and that it was the hard necessity of her position, as it is of mine, that she should struggle on to make a decent livelihood without assistance from any of her relations. I confessed as much as this to her, but I

added that I would try to get her employment with the persons for whom I work, who pay higher wages and show a little more indulgence to those under them than the people to whom she is now obliged to look for support. I spoke much more confidently than I felt about being able to do this and left her, as I thought, in better spirits than usual.

She promised to be back tonight to tea, at nine o'clock, and now it is nearly one in the morning, and she is not home yet. If it was any other girl I should not feel uneasy, for I should make up my mind that there was extra work to be done in a hurry and that they were keeping her late, and I should go to bed. But Mary is so unfortunate in everything that happens to her and her own melancholy talk about herself keeps hanging on my mind so that I have fears on her account which would not distress me about anyone else. It seems inexcusably silly to think such a thing, much more to write it down, but I have a kind of nervous dread upon me that some accident—

What does that loud knocking at the street door mean? And those voices and heavy footsteps outside? Some lodger who has lost his key, I suppose. And yet, my heart— What a coward I have become all of a sudden!

More knocking and louder voices. I must run to the door and see what it is. O, Mary! Mary! I hope I am not going to have another fright about you, but I feel sadly like it.

March 8th.

March 9th.

March 10th.

March 11th. O, me! All the troubles I have ever had in my life are as nothing to the trouble I am in now. For three days I have not been able to write a single line in this journal, which I have kept so regularly ever since I was a girl. For three days I have not once thought of Robert—I, who am always thinking of him at other times. My poor, dear, unhappy Mary, the worst I feared for you on that night when I sat up alone was far below the dreadful calamity that has really happened. How can I write about it, with my eyes full of tears and my hand all of a tremble? I don't even know why I am sitting down at my desk now unless it is habit that keeps me to my old everyday task in spite of all the grief and fear which seem to unfit me entirely for performing it.

The people of the house were asleep and lazy on that dreadful night, and I was the first to open the door. Never, never, could I describe in writing or even say in plain talk, though it is so much easier, what I felt when I saw two policemen come in, carrying

between them what seemed to me to be a dead girl—and that girl Mary!

I caught hold of her and gave a scream that must have alarmed the whole house, for frightened people came crowding downstairs in their nightdresses. There was a dreadful confusion and noise of loud talking, but I heard nothing and saw nothing, till I had got her into my room and laid on my bed. I stooped down, frantic-like, to kiss her and saw an awful mark of a blow on her left temple and felt, at the same time, a feeble flutter of her breath on my cheek. The discovery that she was not dead seemed to give me back my senses again. I told one of the policemen where the nearest doctor was to be found and sat down by the bedside while he was gone and bathed her poor head with cold water. She never opened her eyes or moved or spoke—but she breathed, and that was enough for me because it was enough for life.

The policeman left in the room was a big, thick-voiced, pompous man with a horrible unfeeling pleasure in hearing himself talk before an assembly of frightened, silent people. He told us how he had found her as if he had been telling a story in a tap room and began with saying, "I don't think the young woman was drunk." Drunk! My Mary, who might have been a born lady for all the spirits she ever touched—drunk! I could have struck the man for uttering the word with her lying, poor suffering angel, so white and still and helpless before him. As it was, I gave him a look. But he was too stupid to understand it and went droning on, saying the same thing over and over again in the same words.

And yet the story of how they found her was, like all the sad stories I have ever heard told in real life, so very, very short. They had just seen her lying along on the kerbstone a few streets off and had taken her to the station-house. There she had been searched, and one of my cards that I give to ladies who promise me employment had been found in her pocket, and so they had brought her to our house. This was all the man really had to tell. There was nobody near her when she was found and no evidence to show how the blow on her temple had been inflicted.

What a time it was before the doctor came, and how dreadful to hear him say, after he had looked at her, that he was afraid all the medical men in the world could be of no use here! He could not get her to swallow anything, and the more he tried to bring her back to her senses, the less chance there seemed of his succeeding. He examined the blow on her temple and said he thought she must have fallen down in a fit of some sort, striking her head against the pavement and so giving her brain what he was afraid was a fatal

shake. I asked what was to be done if she showed any return to sense in the night. He said, "Send for me directly!" and stopped for a little while afterwards, stroking her head gently with his hand and whispering to himself, "Poor girl, so young and so pretty!"

I had felt, some minutes before, as if I could have l struck the policeman, and I felt now as if I could have thrown my arms round the doctor's neck and kissed him. I did put out my hand when he took up his hat, and he shook it in the friendliest way.

"Don't hope, my dear," he said and went out.

The rest of the lodgers followed him, all silent and shocked, except the inhuman wretch who owns the house and lives in idleness on the high rents he wrings from poor people like us.

"She's three weeks in my debt," says he with a frown and an oath. "Where the devil is my money to come from now?"

Brute! Brute! I had a long cry alone with her that seemed to ease my heart a little. She was not the least changed for the better when I had wiped away the tears and could see her clearly again. I took up her right hand, which lay nearest to me. It was tight clenched. I tried to unclasp the fingers and succeeded after a little time. Something dark fell out of the palm of her hand as I straightened it. I picked the thing up, smoothed it out, and saw that it was an end of a man's cravat.

A very old, rotten, dingy strip of black silk with thin lilac lines, all blurred and deadened with dirt, running across and across the stuff in a sort of trellis-work pattern. The small end of the cravat was hemmed in the usual way, but the other end was all jagged, as if the morsel then in my hands had been torn off violently from the rest of the stuff.

A chill ran all over me as I looked at it, for that poor, stained, crumpled end of a cravat seemed to be saying to me, as though it had been in plain words, "If she dies, she has come to her death by foul means, and I am the witness of it."

I had been frightened enough before, lest she should die suddenly and quietly without my knowing it while we were alone together. But I got into a perfect agony now for fear this last worst affliction should take me by surprise. I don't suppose five minutes passed all that woeful night through without my getting up and putting my cheek close to her mouth to feel if the faint breaths still fluttered out of it. They came and went just the same as at first, though the fright I was in often made me fancy they were stilled forever.

Just as the church clocks were striking four, I was startled by seeing the room door open. It was only Dusty Sal (as they call her in the house), the maid-of-all-work. She was wrapped up in the blanket off her bed, her hair was all tumbled over her face, and her eyes were heavy with sleep as she came up to the bedside where I was sitting.

"I've two hours good before I begin to work," says she in her hoarse, drowsy voice, "and I've come to sit up and take my turn at watching her. You lay down and get some sleep on the rug. Here's my blanket for you—I don't mind the cold—it will keep me awake."

"You are very kind—very, very kind and thoughtful, Sally," says I, "but I am too wretched in my mind to want sleep, or rest, or to do anything but wait where I am and try and hope for the best."

"Then I'll wait, too," says Sally. "I must do something. If there's nothing to do but waiting, I'll wait."

And she sat down opposite me at the foot of the bed and drew the blanket close round her with a shiver.

"After working so hard as you do, I'm sure you must want all the little rest you can get," says I.

"Excepting only you—" says Sally, putting her heavy arm very clumsily, but very gently at the same time, round Mary's feet and looking hard at the pale, still face on the pillow. "Excepting you, she's the only soul in this house as never swore at me or give me a hard word that I can remember. When you made puddings on Sundays and give her half, she always give me a bit. The rest of 'em calls me Dusty Sal. Excepting only you again, she always called me Sally, as if she knowed me in a friendly way. I ain't no good here, but I ain't no harm neither. I shall take my turn at the sitting up—that's what I shall do!"

She nestled her head down close at Mary's feet as she spoke those words and said no more. I once or twice thought she had fallen asleep, but whenever I looked at her, her heavy eyes were always wide open. She never changed her position an inch till the church clocks struck six, then she gave one little squeeze to Mary's feet with her arm and shuffled out of the room without a word. A minute or two after, I heard her down below, lighting the kitchen fire just as usual.

A little later, the doctor stepped over before his breakfast time to see if there had been any change in the night. He only shook his head when he looked at her, as if there was no hope. Having nobody else to consult that I could put trust in, I showed him the end of the cravat and told him of the dreadful suspicion that had arisen in my mind when I found it in her hand.

"You must keep it carefully and produce it at the inquest," he said. "I don't know, though, that it is likely to lead to anything. The

bit of stuff may have been lying on the pavement near her, and her hand may have unconsciously clutched it when she fell. Was she subject to fainting fits?"

"Not more so, sir, than other young girls who are hard-worked and anxious and weakly from poor living," I answered.

"I can't say that she may not have got that blow from a fall," the doctor went on, looking at her temple. "I can't say that it presents any positive appearance of having been inflicted by another person. It will be important, however, to ascertain what state of health she was in last night. Have you any idea where she was yesterday evening?"

I told him where she was employed at work and said I imagined she must have been kept there later than usual.

"I shall pass the place this morning," said the doctor, "in going my rounds among my patients, and I'll just step in and make some inquiries."

I thanked him, and we parted. Just as he was closing the door, he looked in again. "Was she your sister?" he asked.

"No, sir, only my dear friend."

He said nothing more, but I heard him sigh as he shut the door softly. Perhaps he once had a sister of his own and lost her? Perhaps she was like Mary in the face?

The doctor was hours gone away. I began to feel unspeakably forlorn and helpless—so much so as even to wish selfishly that Robert might really have sailed from America and might get to London in time to assist and console me. No living creature came into the room but Sally. The first time, she brought me some tea. The second and third times, she only looked in to see if there was any change and glanced her eye towards the bed. I had never known her so silent before. It seemed almost as if this dreadful accident had struck her dumb. I ought to have spoken to her, perhaps, but there was something in her face that daunted me, and, besides, the fever of anxiety I was in began to dry up my lips as if they would never be able to shape any words again. I was still tormented by that frightful apprehension of the past night, that she would die without my knowing it—die without saying one word to clear up the awful mystery of this blow and set the suspicions at rest forever which I still felt whenever my eyes fell on the end of the old cravat.

At last the doctor came back. "I think you may safely clear your mind of any doubts to which that bit of stuff may have given rise," he said. "She was, as you supposed, detained late by her employers, and she fainted in the workroom. They most unwisely and unkindly let her go home alone, without giving her any stimulant, as soon as she

came to her senses again. Nothing is more probable under these circumstances than that she should faint a second time on her way here. A fall on the pavement, without any friendly arm to break it, might have produced even a worse injury than the injury we see. I believe that the only ill usage to which the poor girl was exposed was the neglect she met with in the work room."

"You speak very reasonably, I own, sir," said I, not yet quite convinced. "Still, perhaps she may—"

"My poor girl, I told you not to hope," said the doctor, interrupting me. He went to Mary, lifted up her eyelids, and looked at her eyes while he spoke, then adding, "If you still doubt how she came by that blow, do not encourage the idea that any words of hers will ever enlighten you. She will never speak again."

"Not dead! Dead!"

"She is dead to pain and sorrow—dead to speech and recognition. There is more animation in the life of the feeblest insect that flies than in the life that is left in her. When you look at her now, try to think that she is in Heaven. That is the best comfort I can give you, after telling the hard truth."

I did not believe him. I could not believe him. So long as she breathed at all. So long I was resolved to hope.

Soon after the doctor was gone, Sally came in again and found me listening (if I may call it so) at Mary's lips. She went to where my little hand-glass hangs against the wall, took it down, and gave it to me.

"See if the breath marks it," she said.

Yes, her breath did mark it, but very faintly. Sally cleaned the glass with her apron and gave it back to me. As she did so, she half stretched out her hand to Mary's face, but drew it in again suddenly, as if she was afraid of soiling Mary's delicate skin with her hard, horny fingers. Going out, she stopped at the foot of the bed and scraped away a little patch of mud that was on one of Mary's shoes.

"I always used to clean 'em for her," said Sally, "to save her hands from getting blacked. May I take 'em off now and clean 'em again?"

I nodded my head, for my heart was too heavy to speak. Sally took the shoes off with a slow, awkward tenderness and went out.

An hour or more must have passed, when, putting the glass over her lips again, I saw no mark on it. I held it closer and closer. I dulled it accidentally with my own breath and cleaned it. I held it over her again. O, Mary, Mary, the doctor was right! I ought to have only thought of you in Heaven!

Dead, without a word, without a sign—without even a look to tell the true story of the blow that killed her! I could not call to anybody,

I could not cry, I could not so much as put the glass down and give her a kiss for the last time.

I don't know how long I had sat there with my eyes burning and my hands deadly cold, when Sally came in with the shoes cleaned and carried carefully in her apron for fear of a soil touching them. At the sight of that—

I can write no more. My tears drop so fast on the paper that I can see nothing.

March 12th. She died on the afternoon of the eighth. On the morning of the ninth, I wrote, as in duty bound, to her stepmother, at Hammersmith. There was no answer. I wrote again. My letter was returned to me this morning, unopened. For all that woman cares, Mary might be buried with a pauper's funeral.

But this shall never be, if I pawn everything about me, down to the very gown that is on my back. The bare thought of Mary being buried by the workhouse gave me the spirit to dry my eyes, go to the undertaker's, and tell him how I was placed. I said, if he would get me an estimate of all that would have to be paid, from first to last, for the cheapest decent funeral that could be had, I would undertake to raise the money. He gave me the estimate, written in this way, like a common bill:

A walking funeral complete:	1	13	8
Vestry:	0	4	4
Rector:	0	4	4
Clerk:	0	1	0
Sexton:	0	1	0
Beadle:	0	1	0
Bell:	0	1	0
Six feet of ground:	0	2	0
Total: £	2	8	4

If I had the heart to give any thought to it, I should be inclined to wish that the Church could afford to do without so many small charges for burying poor people, to whose friends even shillings are of consequence. But it is useless to complain—the money must be raised at once. The charitable doctor—a poor man himself or he would not be living in our neighbourhood—has subscribed ten shillings towards the expenses. The coroner, when the inquest was over, added five more. Perhaps others may assist me.

If not, I have fortunately clothes and furniture of my own to pawn. And I must set about parting with them without delay, for the

funeral is to be tomorrow, the thirteenth. The funeral—Mary's funeral! It is well that the straits and difficulties I am in keep my mind on the stretch. If I had leisure to grieve, where should I find the courage to face tomorrow?

Thank God, they did not want me at the inquest. The verdict given—with the doctor, the policeman, and two persons from the place where she worked for witnesses—was Accidental Death. The end of the cravat was produced, and the coroner said that it was certainly enough to suggest suspicion, but the jury, in the absence of any positive evidence, held to the doctor's notion that she had fainted and fallen down, and so got the blow on her temple. They reproved the people where Mary worked for letting her go home alone, without so much as a drop of brandy to support her, after she had fallen into a swoon from exhaustion before their eyes. The coroner added, on his own account, that he thought the reproof was thoroughly deserved.

After that, the cravat end was given back to me by my own desire, the police saying that they could make no investigations with such a slight clue to guide them. They may think so—and the coroner and doctor and jury may think so—but, in spite of all that has passed, I am now more firmly persuaded than ever that there is some dreadful mystery in connection with that blow on my poor lost Mary's temple which has yet to be revealed and which may come to be discovered through this very fragment of a cravat that I found in her hand. I cannot give any good reason for why I think so, but I know that if I had been one of the jury at the inquest, nothing should have induced me to consent to such a verdict as Accidental Death.[1]

II.

1840. March 12th (continued). After I had pawned my things and had begged a small advance of wages at the place where I work to make up what was still wanting to pay for Mary's funeral, I thought I might have had a little quiet time to prepare myself as I best could for tomorrow. But this was not to be. When I got home the landlord met me in the passage. He was in liquor and more brutal and pitiless in his way of looking and speaking than ever I saw him before.

"So you're going to be fool enough to pay for her funeral, are you?" were his first words to me.

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[1] As happens with James in "Murder Will Out," the previous tale, a strong intuition initiates an investigation of murder. See footnote 5 on page 14 for more on how, in the decades to come, writers of occult detective fiction developed this into sleuths possessing well-developed clairvoyance.

I was too weary and heartsick to answer. I only tried to get by him to my own door.

"If you can pay for burying her," he went on, putting himself in front of me, "you can pay her lawful debts. She owes me three weeks' rent. Suppose you raise the money for that next and hand it over to me? I'm not joking, I can promise you. I mean to have my rent, and, if somebody don't pay it, I'll have her body seized and sent to the workhouse!"

Between terror and disgust, I thought I should have dropped to the floor at his feet. But I determined not to let him see how he had horrified me, if I could possibly control myself. So I mustered resolution enough to answer that I did not believe the law gave him any such wicked power over the dead.

"I'll teach you what the law is!" he broke in. "You'll raise money to bury her like a born lady when she's died in my debt, will you? And you think I'll let my rights be trampled upon like that, do you? See if I do! I'll give you till tonight to think about it. If I don't have the three weeks she owes before tomorrow, dead or alive, she shall go to the workhouse!"

This time I managed to push by him and get to my own room and lock the door in his face. As soon as I was alone, I fell into a breathless, suffocating fit of crying that seemed to be shaking me to pieces. But there was no good and no help in tears. I did my best to calm myself after a little while and tried to think who I should run to for help and protection.

The doctor was the first friend I thought of, but I knew he was always out seeing his patients of an afternoon. The beadle was the next person who came into my head. He had the look of being a very dignified, unapproachable kind of man when he came about the inquest, but he talked to me a little then and said I was a good girl and seemed, I really thought, to pity me. So to him I determined to apply in my great danger and distress.

Most fortunately, I found him at home. When I told him of the landlord's infamous threats and of the misery I was suffering in consequence of them, he rose up with a stamp of his foot and sent for his gold-laced cocked hat that he wears on Sundays and his long cane with the ivory top to it.

"I'll give it to him," said the beadle. "Come along with me, my dear. I think I told you that you were a good girl at the inquest—if I didn't, I tell you so now. I'll give it to him! Come along with me."

And he went out, striding on with his cocked hat and his great cane, and I followed him.

"Landlord!" he cried the moment he got into the passage with a thump of his cane on the floor. "Landlord!" he repeated with a look all round him as if he was King of England calling to a beast. "Come out!"

The moment the landlord came out and saw who it was, his eye fixed on the cocked hat, and he turned as pale as ashes.

"How dare you frighten this poor girl?" said the beadle. "How dare you bully her at this sorrowful time with threatening to do what you know you can't do? How dare you be a cowardly, bullying, braggadocio of an unmanly landlord? Don't talk to me: I won't hear you. I'll pull you up, sir. If you say another word to the young woman, I'll pull you up before the authorities of this metropolitan parish. I've had my eye on you, and the authorities have had their eye on you, and the rector has had his eye on you. We don't like the look of your small shop round the corner. We don't like the look of some of the customers who deal at it We don't like disorderly characters, and we don't by any manner of means like you. Go away. Leave the young woman alone. Hold your tongue, or I'll pull you up. If he says another word or interferes with you again, my dear, come and tell me—and, as sure as he's a bullying, unmanly, braggadocio of a landlord, I'll pull him up."

With those words the beadle gave a loud cough to clear his throat and another thump of his cane on the floor and so went striding out again before I could open my lips to thank him. The landlord slunk back into his room without a word. I was at last left alone and unmolested to strengthen myself for the hard trial of my poor love's funeral tomorrow.

March 13th. It is all over. A week ago her head rested on my bosom. It is laid in the churchyard now. The fresh earth lies heavy over her grave. I and my dearest friend, the sister of my love, are parted in this world forever.

I followed her funeral alone through the cruel, hustling streets. Sally, I thought, might have offered to go with me, but she never so much as came into my room. I did not like to think badly of her for this—and I am glad I restrained myself from doing so, for, when we got into the churchyard, I saw Sally, in her ragged gray shawl and her patched black bonnet, among the two or three people who were standing by the open grave. She did not seem to notice me till the last words of the service had been read and the clergyman had gone away, then she came up and spoke to me.

"I couldn't follow along with you," she said, looking at her ragged shawl, "for I haven't a decent suit of clothes to walk in. I wish I could get vent in crying for her like you, but I can't. All the crying's been

drudged and starved out of me long ago. Don't you think about lighting your fire when you get home. I'll do that and get you a drop of tea to comfort you."

She seemed on the point of saying a kind word or two more when, seeing the beadle coming toward me, she drew back, as if she was afraid of him. She then left the churchyard.

"Here's my subscription toward the funeral," said the beadle, giving me back his shilling fee. "Don't say anything about it, for it mightn't be approved of in a business point of view if it came to some people's ears. Has the landlord said anything more to you? No, I thought not. He's too polite a man to give me the trouble of pulling him up. Don't stop crying here, my dear. Take the advice of a man familiar with funerals, and go home."

I tried to take his advice, but it seemed like deserting Mary to go away when all the rest forsook her.

I waited about till the earth was thrown in and the man had left the place, then I returned to the grave. Oh, how bare and cruel it was, without so much as a bit of green turf to soften it! Oh, how much harder it seemed to live than to die, when I stood alone looking at the heavy piled-up lumps of clay and thinking of what was hidden beneath them!

I was driven home by my own despairing thoughts. The sight of Sally lighting the fire in my room eased my heart a little. When she was gone, I took up Robert's letter again to keep my mind employed on the only subject in the world that has any interest for it now.

This fresh reading increased the doubts I had already felt relative to his having remained in America after writing to me. My grief and forlornness have made a strange alteration in my former feelings about his coming back. I seem to have lost all my prudence and self-denial, and to care so little about his poverty and so much about himself, the prospect of his return is really the only comforting thought I have now to support me. I know that this is weak in me and that his coming back can lead to no good result for either of us, but he is the only living being left me to love. I can't explain it, but I want to put my arms round his neck and tell him about Mary.

March 14th. I locked up the end of the cravat in my writing desk. No change in the dreadful suspicions that the bare sight of it rouses in me. I tremble if I so much as touch it.

March 15th, 16th, 17th. Work, work, work. If I don't knock up, I shall be able to pay back the advance in another week, and then, with a little more pinching in my daily expenses, I may succeed in saving

a shilling or two to get some turf to put over Mary's grave and perhaps even a few flowers besides to grow round it.

March 18th. Thinking of Robert all day long. Does this mean that he is really coming back? If it does, reckoning the distance he is at from New York and the time ships take to get to England, I might see him by the end of April or the beginning of May.

March 19th. I don't remember my mind running once on the end of the cravat yesterday, and I am certain I never looked at it. Yet I had the strangest dream concerning it at night. I thought it was lengthened into a long clew, like the silken thread that led to Rosamond's Bower. I thought I took hold of it, and followed it a little way, and then got frightened and tried to go back, but found that I was obliged, in spite of myself, to go on. It led me through a place like the Valley of the Shadow of Death, in an old print I remember in my mother's copy of the Pilgrim's Progress.[2] I seemed to be months and months following it without any respite, till at last it brought me, on a sudden, face to face with an angel whose eyes were like Mary's. He said to me, "Go on, still—the truth is at the end, waiting for you to find it." I burst out crying, for the angel had Mary's voice as well as Mary's eyes, and woke with my heart throbbing and my cheeks all wet. What is the meaning of this? Is it always superstitious, I wonder, to believe that dreams may come true?

*

April 30th. I have found it! God knows to what results it may lead, but as certain as I am sitting here before my journal, I have found the cravat from which the end in Mary's hand was torn. I discovered it last night! The flutter I was in, and the nervousness and uncertainty I felt, prevented me from noting down this most extraordinary and unexpected event at the time when it happened. Let me try if I can preserve the memory of it in writing now.

I was going home rather late from where I work, when I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten to buy myself any candles the evening before and that I should be left in the dark if I did not manage to rectify this mistake in some way. The shop close to me, at which I

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[2] Rosamund Clifford (c. 1150–c. 1176) was a mistress of England's King Henry II. Legend holds that the King commissioned a complex maze in which to hold his illicit romantic affairs. However, his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, managed to find Rosamund there and gave her the option of dying by knife or by poison. The fair Rosamund opted for poison. In some versions of this legend, Eleanor finds her rival by following a thread that had caught on King Henry's shoe as he returned from Rosamund's bower hidden within the maze. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan and published in 1678. Some have argued that it is the first English novel. See the note at the beginning of this supplement for more on the relation of Anne's dream to occult detective fiction.

usually deal, would be shut up, I knew, before I could get to it. So I determined to go into the first place I passed where candles were sold. This turned out to be a small shop with two counters, which did business on one side in the general grocery way, and, on the other, in the rag and bottle and old iron line.

There were several customers on the grocery side when I went in, so I waited on the empty rag side till I could be served. Glancing about me here at the worthless-looking things by which I was surrounded, my eye was caught by a bundle of rags lying on the counter, as if they had just been brought in and left there. From mere idle curiosity, I looked close at the rags and saw among them something like an old cravat. I took it up directly and held it under a gaslight. The pattern was blurred lilac lines running across and across the dingy black ground in a trellis-work form. I looked at the ends: one of them was torn off.

How I managed to hide the breathless surprise into which this discovery threw me I cannot say, but I certainly contrived to steady my voice somehow and to ask for my candles calmly when the man and woman serving in the shop, having disposed of their other customers, inquired of me what I wanted.

As the man took down the candles, my brain was all in a whirl with trying to think how I could get possession of the old cravat without exciting any suspicion. Chance—and a little quickness on my part in taking advantage of it—put the object within my reach in a moment. The man, having counted out the candles, asked the woman for some paper to wrap them in. She produced a piece much too small and flimsy for the purpose, declaring, when he called for something better, that the day's supply of stout paper was all exhausted. He flew into a rage with her for managing so badly. Just as they were beginning to quarrel violently, I stepped back to the rag-counter, took the old cravat carelessly out of the bundle, and said, in as light a tone as I could possibly assume:

"Come, come, don't let my candles be the cause of hard words between you. Tie this ragged old thing round them with a bit of string, and I shall carry them home quite comfortably."

The man seemed disposed to insist on the stout paper being produced, but the woman, as if she was glad of an opportunity of spiting him, snatched the candles away and tied them up in a moment in the torn old cravat. I was afraid he would have struck her before my face, he seemed in such a fury—but, fortunately, another customer came in and obliged him to put his hands to peaceable and proper use.

"Quite a bundle of all sorts on the opposite counter there," I said to the woman, as I paid her for the candles.

"Yes, and all hoarded up for sale by a poor creature with a lazy brute of a husband, who lets his wife do all the work while he spends all the money," answered the woman with a malicious look at the man by her side.

"He can't surely have much money to spend, if his wife has no better work to do than picking up rags," said I.

"It isn't her fault if she hasn't got no better," says the woman rather angrily. "She's ready to turn her hand to anything. Charing, washing, laying-out, keeping empty houses—nothing comes amiss to her. She's my half-sister, and I think I ought to know."

"Did you say she went out charing?" I asked, making believe as if I knew of somebody who might employ her.

"Yes, of course I did," answered the woman, "and if you can put a job into her hands, you'll be doing a good turn to a poor hard-working creature as wants it. She lives down the Mews here to the right—name of Horlick and as honest a woman as ever stood in shoe leather. Now, then, ma'am, what for you?"

Another customer came in just then and occupied her attention. I left the shop, passed the turning that led down to the Mews, looked up at the name of the street, so as to know how to find it again, and then ran home as fast as I could. Perhaps it was the remembrance of my strange dream striking me on a sudden—or perhaps it was the shock of the discovery I had just made—but I began to feel frightened without knowing why and anxious to be under shelter in my own room.

If Robert should come back! Oh, what a relief and help it would be now if Robert should come back!

May 1st. On getting indoors last night, the first thing I did, after striking a light, was to take the ragged cravat off the candles and smooth it out on the table. I then took the end that had been in poor Mary's hand out of my writing desk and smoothed that out, too. It matched the torn side of the cravat exactly. I put them together and satisfied myself that there was not a doubt of it.

Not once did I close my eyes that night. A kind of fever got possession of me, a vehement yearning to go on from this first discovery and find out more, no matter what the risk might be. The cravat now really became, to my mind, the clew that I thought I saw in my dream—the clew that I was resolved to follow. I determined to go to Mrs. Horlick this evening on my return from work.

I found the Mews easily. A crook-backed dwarf of a man was lounging at the corner of it smoking his pipe. Not liking his looks, I

did not inquire of him where Mrs. Horlick lived, but went down the Mews till I met with a woman and asked her. She directed me to the right number. I knocked at the door, and Mrs. Horlick herself—a lean, ill-tempered, miserable-looking woman—answered it. I told her at once that I had come to ask what her terms were for charing. She stared at me for a moment, then answered my question civilly enough.

"You look surprised at a stranger like me finding you out," I said. "I first came to hear of you last night, from a relation of yours, in rather an odd way."

And I told her all that had happened in the chandler's shop, as often as possible mentioning the bundle of rags and my carrying home the candles in the old torn cravat.

"It's the first time I've heard of anything belonging to him turning out any use," said Mrs. Horlick bitterly.

"What! the spoiled old neck-handkerchief belonged to your husband, did it?" said I at a venture.

"Yes. I pitched his rotten rag of a neck 'andkercher into the bundle along with the rest, and I wish I could have pitched him in after it," said Mrs. Horlick. "I'd sell him cheap at any rag shop. There he stands, smoking his pipe at the end of the Mews, out of work for weeks past, the idlest humpbacked pig in all London!"

She pointed to the man whom I had passed on entering the Mews. My cheeks began to burn and my knees to tremble, for I knew that in tracing the cravat to its owner I was advancing a step toward a fresh discovery. I wished Mrs. Horlick good evening and said I would write and mention the day on which I wanted her.

What I had just been told put a thought into my mind that I was afraid to follow out. I have heard people talk of being lightheaded, and I felt as I have heard them say they felt when I retraced my steps up the Mews. My head got giddy, and my eyes seemed able to see nothing but the figure of the little crook-backed man still smoking his pipe in his former place. I could see nothing but that. I could think of nothing but the mark of the blow on my poor lost Mary's temple. I know that I must have been lightheaded, for as I came close to the crook-backed man, I stopped without meaning it. The minute before, there had been no idea in me of speaking to him. I did not know how to speak—or in what way it would be safest to begin—and yet, the moment I came face to face with him, something out of myself seemed to stop me and to make me speak without considering beforehand, without thinking of consequences, without knowing, I

may almost say, what words I was uttering till the instant when they rose to my lips.

"When your old neck-tie was torn, did you know that one end of it went to the rag shop and the other fell into my hands?"

I said these bold words to him suddenly and, as it seemed, without my own will taking any part in them.

He started, stared, changed color. He was too much amazed by my sudden speaking to find an answer for me. When he did open his lips, it was to say rather to himself than me:

"You're not the girl."

"No," I said with a strange choking at my heart, "I'm her friend."

By this time he had recovered from his surprise, and he seemed to be aware that he had let out more than he ought.

"You may be anybody's friend you like," he said brutally, "so long as you don't come jabbering nonsense here. I don't know you, and I don't understand your jokes."

He turned quickly away from me when he had said the last words. He had never once looked fairly at me since I first spoke to him.

Was it his hand that had struck the blow? I had only sixpence in my pocket, but I took it out and followed him. If it had been a five-pound note, I should have done the same in the state I was in then.

"Would a pot of beer help you to understand me?" I said and offered him the sixpence.

"A pot ain't no great things," he answered, taking the sixpence doubtfully.

"It may lead to something better," I said. His eyes began to twinkle, and he came close to me. Oh, how my legs trembled—how my head swam!

"This is all in a friendly way, is it?" he asked in a whisper.

I nodded my head. At that moment I could not have spoken for worlds.

"Friendly, of course," he went on to himself, "or there would have been a policeman in it. She told you, I suppose, that I wasn't the man?"

I nodded my head again. It was all I could do to keep myself standing upright.

"I suppose it's a case of threatening to have him up and make him settle it quietly for a pound or two? How much for me if you lay hold of him?"

"Half."

I began to be afraid that he would suspect something if I was still silent. The wretch's eyes twinkled again, and he came yet closer.

"I drove him to the Red Lion, corner of Dodd Street and Rudgely Street. The house was shut up, but he was let in at the jug and bottle door, like a man who was known to the landlord. That's as much as I can tell you, and I'm certain I'm right. He was the last fare I took up at night. The next morning, master gave me the sack—said I cribbed his corn and his fares. I wish I had."

I gathered from this that the crook-backed man had been a cab driver.

"Why don't you speak?" he asked suspiciously. "Has she been telling you a pack of lies about me? What did she say when she came home?"

"What ought she to have said?"

"She ought to have said my fare was drunk and she came in the way as he was going to get into the cab. That's what she ought to have said to begin with."

"But after?"

"Well, after, my fare, by way of larking with her, puts out his leg for to trip her up, and she stumbles and catches at me for to save herself and tears off one of the limp ends of my rotten old tie. 'What do you mean by that, you brute?' says she to my fare after turning round as soon as she was steady on her legs. Says my fare to her: 'I means to teach you to keep a civil tongue in your head.' And he ups with his fist, and—what's come to you, now? What are you looking at me like that for? How do you think a man of my size was to take her part against a man big enough to have eaten me up? Look as much as you like, in my place you would have done what I done—drew off when he shook his fist at you and swore he'd be the death of you if you didn't start your horse in no time."

I saw the crook-backed man was working himself up into a rage, but I could not, if my life had depended on it, have stood near him or looked at him any longer. I just managed to stammer out that I had been walking a long way and that, not being used to much exercise, I felt faint and giddy with fatigue. He only changed from angry to sulky when I made that excuse. I got a little further away from him and then added that, if he would be at the Mews entrance the next evening, I should have something more to say and something more to give him. He grumbled a few suspicious words in answer about doubting whether he should trust me to come back. Fortunately, at that moment, a policeman passed on the opposite side of the way. He slunk down the Mews immediately, and I was free to make my escape.

How I got home I can't say, except that I think I ran the greater part of the way. Sally opened the door and asked if anything was the matter the moment she saw my face.

I answered, "Nothing—nothing."

She stopped me as I was going into my room and said, "Smooth your hair a bit, and put your collar straight. There's a gentleman in there waiting for you."

My heart gave one great bound: I knew who it was in an instant and rushed into the room like a mad woman.

"Oh, Robert, Robert!"

All my heart went out to him in those two little words.

"Good God, Anne, has anything happened? Are you ill?"

"Mary! my poor, lost, murdered, dear, dear Mary!"

That was all I could say before I fell on his breast.

May 2d. Misfortunes and disappointments have saddened him a little, but toward me he is unaltered. He is as good, as kind, as gently and truly affectionate as ever. I believe no other man in the world could have listened to the story of Mary's death with such tenderness and pity as he. Instead of cutting me short anywhere, he drew me on to tell more than I had intended, and his first generous words when I had done were to assure me that he would see himself to the grass being laid and the flowers planted on Mary's grave. I could almost have gone on my knees and worshiped him when he made me that promise.

Surely this best and kindest and noblest of men cannot always be unfortunate! My cheeks burn when I think that he has come back with only a few pounds in his pocket after all his hard and honest struggles to do well in America. They must be bad people there when such a man as Robert cannot get on among them. He now talks calmly and resignedly of trying for any one of the lowest employments by which a man can earn his bread honestly in this great city—he who knows French, who can write so beautifully! Oh, if the people who have places to give away only knew Robert as well as I do, what a salary he would have, what a post he would be chosen to occupy!

I am writing these lines alone while he has gone to the Mews to treat with the dastardly, heartless wretch with whom I spoke yesterday.

Robert says the creature—I won't call him a man—must be humored and kept deceived about poor Mary's end in order that we may discover and bring to justice the monster whose drunken blow was the death of her. I shall know no ease of mind till her murderer is secured and till I am certain that he will be made to suffer for his crimes. I wanted to go with Robert to the Mews, but he said it was

best that he should carry out the rest of the investigation alone, for my strength and resolution had been too hardly taxed already. He said more words in praise of me for what I have been able to do up to this time, which I am almost ashamed to write down with my own pen. Besides, there is no need—praise from his lips is one of the things that I can trust my memory to preserve to the latest day of my life.

May 3d. Robert was very long last night before he came back to tell me what he had done. He easily recognized the hunchback at the corner of the Mews by my description of him. But he found it a hard matter, even with the help of money, to overcome the cowardly wretch's distrust of him as a stranger and a man. However, when this had been accomplished, the main difficulty was conquered. The hunchback, excited by the promise of more money, went at once to the Red Lion to inquire about the person whom he had driven there in his cab. Robert followed him and waited at the corner of the street. The tidings brought by the cabman were of the most unexpected kind. The murderer—I can write of him by no other name—had fallen ill on the very night when he was driven to the Red Lion, had taken to his bed there and then, and was still confined to it at that very moment. His disease was of a kind that is brought on by excessive drinking and that affects the mind as well as the body. The people at the public house call it the Horrors.

Hearing these things, Robert determined to see if he could not find out something more for himself by going and inquiring at the public house, in the character of one of the friends of the sick man in bed upstairs. He made two important discoveries. First, he found out the name and address of the doctor in attendance. Secondly, he entrapped the barman into mentioning the murderous wretch by his name. This last discovery adds an unspeakably fearful interest to the dreadful misfortune of Mary's death. Noah Truscott, as she told me herself in the last conversation I ever had with her, was the name of the man whose drunken example ruined her father, and Noah Truscott is also the name of the man whose drunken fury killed her. There is something that makes one shudder, something supernatural in this awful fact. Robert agrees with me that the hand of Providence must have guided my steps to that shop from which all the discoveries since made took their rise. He says he believes we are the instruments of effecting a righteous retribution, and, if he spends his last farthing, he will have the investigation brought to its full end in a court of justice.

May 4th. Robert went today to consult a lawyer whom he knew in former times The lawyer was much interested, though not so seriously impressed as he ought to have been by the story of Mary's death and of the events that have followed it. He gave Robert a confidential letter to take to the doctor in attendance on the double-dyed villain at the Red Lion. Robert left the letter and called again and saw the doctor, who said his patient was getting better and would most likely be up again in ten days or a fortnight. This statement Robert communicated to the lawyer, and the lawyer has undertaken to have the public house properly watched and the hunchback (who is the most important witness) sharply looked after for the next fortnight or longer if necessary. Here, then, the progress of this dreadful business stops for a while.

May 5th. Robert has got a little temporary employment in copying for his friend the lawyer. I am working harder than ever at my needle to make up for the time that has been lost lately.

May 6th. Today was Sunday, and Robert proposed that we should go and look at Mary's grave. He, who forgets nothing where a kindness is to be done, has found time to perform the promise he made to me on the night when we first met. The grave is already, by his orders, covered with turf and planted round with shrubs. Some flowers and a low headstone are to be added to make the place look worthier of my poor lost darling who is beneath it. Oh, I hope I shall live long after I am married to Robert! I want so much time to show him all my gratitude!

*

May 20th. A hard trial to my courage today. I have given evidence at the police office and have seen the monster who murdered her.

I could only look at him once. I could just see that he was a giant in size and that he kept his dull, lowering, bestial face turned toward the witness box and his bloodshot, vacant eyes staring on me. For an instant, I tried to confront that look. For an instant, I kept my attention fixed on him—on his blotched face—on the short, grizzled hair above it—on his knotty, murderous right hand, hanging loose over the bar in front of him like the paw of a wild beast over the edge of its den. Then the horror of him—the double horror of confronting him, in the first place, and afterward of seeing that he was an old man—overcame me, and I turned away, faint, sick, and shuddering. I never faced him again, and, at the end of my evidence, Robert considerately took me out.

When we met once more at the end of the examination, Robert told me that the prisoner never spoke and never changed his position.

He was either fortified by the cruel composure of a savage or his faculties had not yet thoroughly recovered from the disease that had so lately shaken them. The magistrate seemed to doubt if he was in his right mind, but the evidence of the medical man relieved this uncertainty, and the prisoner was committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter.

Why not on a charge of murder? Robert explained the law to me when I asked that question. I accepted the explanation, but it did not satisfy me. Mary Mallinson was killed by a blow from the hand of Noah Truscott. That is murder in the sight of God. Why not murder in the sight of the law also?

*

June 18th. Tomorrow is the day appointed for the trial at the Old Bailey.[3]

Before sunset this evening, I went to look at Mary's grave. The turf has grown so green since I saw it last, and the flowers are springing up so prettily. A bird was perched, dressing his feathers, on the low white headstone that bears the inscription of her name and age. I did not go near enough to disturb the little creature. He looked innocent and pretty on the grave, as Mary herself was in her lifetime. When he flew away, I went and sat for a little by the headstone and read the mournful lines on it. Oh, my love! my love! what harm or wrong had you ever done in this world that you should die at eighteen by a blow from a drunkard's hand?

June 19th. The trial. My experience of what happened at it is limited, like my experience of the examination at the police office, to the time occupied in giving my own evidence. They made me say much more than I said before the magistrate. Between examination and cross-examination, I had to go into almost all the particulars about poor Mary and her funeral that I have written in this journal, the jury listening to every word I spoke with the most anxious attention. At the end, the judge said a few words to me approving of my conduct, and then there was a clapping of hands among the people in court. I was so agitated and excited that I trembled all over when they let me go out into the air again.

I looked at the prisoner both when I entered the witness box and when I left it. The lowering brutality of his face was unchanged, but his faculties seemed to be more alive and observant than they were at the police office. A frightful blue change passed over his face, and he

[3] Officially known as the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales, the "Old Bailey" was a courtroom beside Newgate Prison. When this story is set and first appeared in print, public hangings took place in the street outside it.

drew his breath so heavily that the gasps were distinctly audible while I mentioned Mary by name and described the mark or the blow on her temple. When they asked me if I knew anything of the prisoner and I answered that I only knew what Mary herself had told me about his having been her father's ruin, he gave a kind of groan and struck both his hands heavily on the dock. And when I passed beneath him on my way out of court, he leaned over suddenly, whether to speak to me or to strike me I can't say, for he was immediately made to stand upright again by the turnkeys on either side of him. While the evidence proceeded (as Robert described it to me), the signs that he was suffering under superstitious terror became more and more apparent—until, at last, just as the lawyer appointed to defend him was rising to speak, he suddenly cried out in a voice that startled every one, up to the very judge on the bench:

"Stop!"

There was a pause, and all eyes looked at him. The perspiration was pouring over his face like water, and he made strange, uncouth signs with his hands to the judge opposite.

"Stop all this!" he cried again. "I've been the ruin of the father and the death of the child. Hang me before I do more harm! Hang me, for God's sake, out of the way!"

As soon as the shock produced by this extraordinary interruption had subsided, he was removed, and there followed a long discussion about whether he was of sound mind or not. The matter was left to the jury to decide by their verdict. They found him guilty of the charge of manslaughter, without the excuse of insanity. He was brought up again and condemned to transportation for life.[4]

All he did, on hearing the dreadful sentence, was to reiterate his desperate words: "Hang me before I do more harm! Hang me, for God's sake, out of the way!"

June 20th. I made yesterday's entry in sadness of heart, and I have not been better in my spirits today. It is something to have brought the murderer to the punishment that he deserves. But the knowledge that this most righteous act of retribution is accomplished brings no consolation with it. The law does indeed punish Noah Truscott for his crime, but can it raise up Mary Mallinson from her last resting place in the churchyard?

While writing of the law, I ought to record that the heartless wretch who allowed Mary to be struck down in his presence without making an attempt to defend her is not likely to escape with perfect

[4] Penal transportation involved exiling convicts to a distant penal colony to serve their sentence.

impunity. The policeman who looked after him to insure his attendance at the trial discovered that he had committed past offenses, for which the law can make him answer. A summons was executed upon him, and he was taken before the magistrate the moment he left the court after giving his evidence.

I had just written these few lines and was closing my journal when there came a knock at the door. I answered it, thinking that Robert had called on his way home to say goodnight and found myself face to face with a strange gentleman, who immediately asked for Anne Rodway. On hearing that I was the person inquired for, he requested five minutes' conversation with me. I showed him into the little empty room at the back of the house and waited, rather surprised and fluttered, to hear what he had to say.

He was a dark man with a serious manner and a short, stern way of speaking. I was certain that he was a stranger, and yet there seemed something in his face not unfamiliar to me. He began by taking a newspaper from his pocket and asking me if I was the person who had given evidence at the trial of Noah Truscott on a charge of manslaughter. I answered immediately that I was.

"I have been for nearly two years in London seeking Mary Mallinson—and always seeking her in vain," he said. "The first and only news I have had of her I found in the newspaper report of the trial yesterday."

He still spoke calmly, but there was something in the look of his eyes which showed me that he was suffering in spirit. A sudden nervousness overcame me, and I was obliged to sit down.

"You knew Mary Mallinson, sir?" I asked as quietly as I could.

"I am her brother."

I clasped my hands and hid my face in despair. Oh, the bitterness of heart with which I heard him say those simple words!

"You were very kind to her," said the calm, tearless man. "In her name and for her sake, I thank you."

"Oh, sir," I said, "why did you never write to her when you were in foreign parts?"

"I wrote often," he answered, "but each of my letters contained a remittance of money. Did Mary tell you she had a stepmother? If she did, you may guess why none of my letters were allowed to reach her. I now know that this woman robbed my sister. Has she lied in telling me that she was never informed of Mary's place of abode?"

I remembered that Mary had never communicated with her stepmother after the separation and could therefore assure him that the woman had spoken the truth.

He paused for a moment after that and sighed. Then he took out a pocketbook and said:

"I have already arranged for the payment of any legal expenses that may have been incurred by the trial, but I have still to reimburse you for the funeral charges which you so generously defrayed. Excuse my speaking bluntly on this subject. I am accustomed to look on all matters where money is concerned purely as matters of business."

I saw that he was taking several banknotes out of the pocketbook and stopped him.

"I will gratefully receive back the little money I actually paid, sir, because I am not well off, and it would be an ungracious act of pride in me to refuse it from you," I said. "But I see you handling banknotes, any one of which is far beyond the amount you have to repay me. Pray put them back, sir. What I did for your poor lost sister I did from my love and fondness for her. You have thanked me for that, and your thanks are all I can receive."

He had hitherto concealed his feelings, but I saw them now begin to get the better of him. His eyes softened, and he took my hand and squeezed it hard.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I beg your pardon with all my heart."

There was silence between us, for I was crying, and I believe, at heart, he was crying too. At last he dropped my hand and seemed to change back, by an effort, to his former calmness.

"Is there no one belonging to you to whom I can be of service?" he asked. "I see among the witnesses on the trial the name of a young man who appears to have assisted you in the inquiries which led to the prisoner's conviction. Is he a relation?"

"No, sir—at least, not now—but I hope—"

"What?"

"I hope that he may, one day, be the nearest and dearest relation to me that a woman can have." I said those words boldly because I was afraid of his otherwise taking some wrong view of the connection between Robert and me.

"One day?" he repeated. "One day may be a long time hence."

"We are neither of us well off, sir," I said. "One day means the day when we are a little richer than we are now."

"Is the young man educated? Can he produce testimonials to his character? Oblige me by writing his name and address down on the back of that card."

When I had obeyed, in a handwriting which I am afraid did me no credit, he took out another card and gave it to me.

"I shall leave England tomorrow," he said. "There is nothing now to keep me in my own country. If you are ever in any difficulty or distress (which I pray God you may never be), apply to my London agent, whose address you have there."

He stopped and looked at me attentively, then took my hand again.

"Where is she buried?" he said suddenly in a quick whisper, turning his head away.

I told him and added that we had made the grave as beautiful as we could with grass and flowers. I saw his lips whiten and tremble.

"God bless and reward you!" he said, drawing me toward him quickly and kissing my forehead. I was quite overcome and sank down and hid my face on the table. When I looked up again he was gone.

*

June 25th, 1841. I write these lines on my wedding morning, when little more than a year has passed since Robert returned to England.

His salary was increased yesterday to one hundred and fifty pounds a year. If I only knew where Mr. Mallinson was, I would write and tell him of our present happiness. But for the situation which his kindness procured for Robert, we might still have been waiting vainly for the day that has now come.

I am to work at home for the future, and Sally is to help us in our new abode. If Mary could have lived to see this day! I am not ungrateful for my blessings, but oh, how I miss that sweet face on this morning of all others!

I got up today early enough to go alone to the grave and to gather the nosegay that now lies before me from the flowers that grow round it. I shall put it in my bosom when Robert comes to fetch me to the church. Mary would have been my bridesmaid if she had lived, and I can't forget Mary even on my wedding-day. . . .

[1856]

SOURCES

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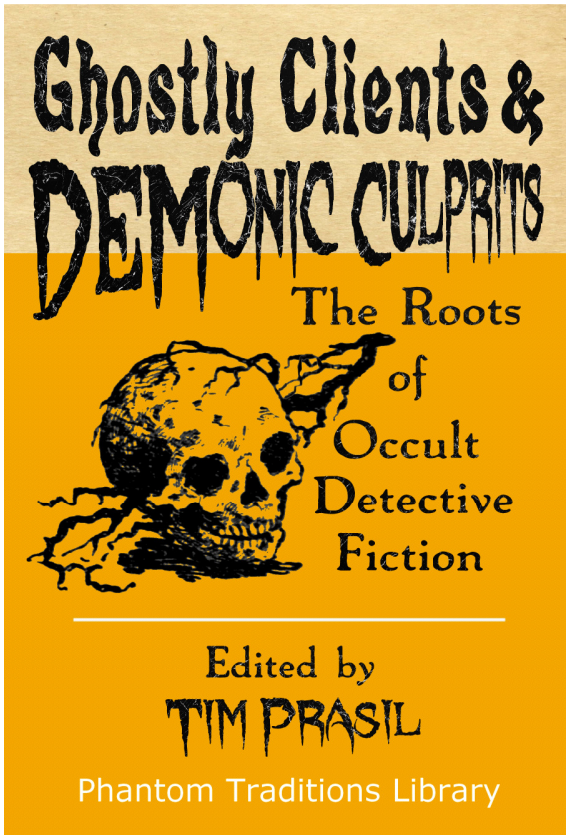

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