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The Marked Arm.

Click! In the dead of the night a sharp sound awakened Mrs. Halifont. The room was dark. Not even a gleam of moon or starlight fell through the curtains of the windows. It was a very strange sound, indeed, but she saw nothing, heard nothing more.

She sat up, leaning on her dimpled left elbow, and put out her right hand and touched her husband's shoulder. He lay upon his pillow, sound asleep, and did not waken at her touch.

"It must have been a dream," said Mrs. Halifont; and her young head—she was only the bride of a year—nestled down again closer to her husband's arm, and slept again.

Click! This time the sound did not arouse Mrs. Halifont. It was her husband who awakened. He did not pause to listen, but grasped the revolver beneath his pillow and jumped out of bed at once. In an alcove in the next room stood a safe which contained valuables. It was not one of the wonderful new safes which defy fire and burglars, but an old one that had been in the family a long while.

Mr. Halifont knew on the instant that some one was opening this safe. A man of courage, a man who never hesitated in the face of danger—one, too, who had a warm regard for his worldly possessions, Mr. Halifont strode at once into the room where he knew house-breakers were at work, and, running in the dark against a powerful man, tackled him at once.

The light of a lantern flashed across the room. There were two more men. Three against one.

The sound of blows, struggling, and the report of a pistol, aroused the young wife once more. Amid her terror she had the good sense to light the gas. It shone upon a spectacle of horror. Her husband, weltering in his blood, wrestling with a gigantic man whose features were concealed by a mask of black crape; a man, the upper part of whose person was clothed only in a knitted woollen shirt of some dark color, with sleeves that left his great arms bare. On the right one, the one which clutched Mr. Halifont's throat, was a red mark or brand, a scar, a birth-mark. It would have been impossible for Mrs. Halifont, even in a calmer moment, to tell what it was; but it indelibly impressed itself upon her mind, as she bravely cast herself into struggle, and fought with all her might to drag the horrible hand from her husband's throat, screaming all the while for aid.

A blow, a kick would have silenced her. The burglar must have known that, but there are very bad men who could not use violence toward a woman to save their own lives. This man could not. His companions had flown with their booty; help might arrive at any moment. With a great effort he wrenched himself from the clutch of his victim, and let go his throat, and sped away. It was not too soon. Assistance arrived, now that it was too late, but Mr. Halifont did not live to tell the story. He was mortally wounded. His young wife watched by his bedside until he breathed his last, then dropped beside it senseless.

For weeks she raved in wild delirium of the murderous hand, of the great muscular arm with a scar upon it, and called upon them all to save her husband's life; but she was young and had a fine constitution. After awhile her health returned, and at last her mind regained its equipoise. She moved from the city and took up her abode in a lonely country place, with a favorite sister for a companion. She had resolved, as all widows who have loved their husbands do at first, to remain a widow forever. And, indeed, though many men would gladly have tempted one so young, beautiful and wealthy to change her mind on the subject, she seemed to care less for any one of them than for the kitten which purred upon her knee, or the little black-and-tan terrier which ran by her side along the garden path. She was nineteen when her husband was murdered; at thirty-two she was still true to his memory.

Is any one forever utterly true to another's memory out of a romance—any one who does not die young? I fear not. In this, the lapsing summer of the woman's life, when she pretended to believe that autumn had

actually come, temptation to inconstancy assailed her. For many years a fine house upon the neighboring estate had been empty, but now there came to take possession of it a gentleman not yet forty. A widower with plenty of money and no children; a handsome man, well-built and stalwart, with magnificent black eyes and hair, and eyes that were like black diamonds. Spanish eyes; indeed, he called himself a Spaniard, and his speech betrayed a foreign accent.

The dark eyes and the blue ones met, a few neighborly words exchanged, a call followed soon. Mrs. Halifont felt a new emotion creeping into her heart. She felt pleased and flattered by this stranger's admiration. Then she knew she was loved, and rejected; and so discovered that she herself loved again.

At first she was angry with herself; then she wept over her inconstancy, but at last she yielded utterly. After all, it was the love that made her untrue. Since she had loved, she could never pride herself on being faithful again, and so she listened to the sweet words that despite herself, made her happy, and promised to marry Colonel Humphries.

When a widow does marry a second time she generally contrives to make a fool of herself. Mrs. Halifont had certainly not done so foolishly as some widows do. She had neither chosen a little boy nor a titled Italian without money enough to keep himself in macaroni. Her future husband was older than herself, and too rich to be suspected of any intention of being a fortune-hunter; but, after all, no one knew him. He came into the neighborhood without letters of introduction to any one, and whether he won his fortune by trade or came to it by inheritance, remained a mystery.

There were those who shrugged their shoulders and declared that Mrs. Halifont would regret not having chosen some one of whom more was known—some retired merchant, some gentleman of fortune, whose father had been known to her friends. Nothing, to be sure, could be said against this Spaniard or Cuban with the English name; but who knew anything in his favor?

However, no one said this to Mrs. Halifont, and if any one had, words never changed a woman's fancy yet. Mrs. Halifont believed in Colonel Humphries, and meant to marry him. Indeed, the trousseau was prepared and the wedding day fixed, all was ready, and Ida Halifont believed herself to be a very happy woman. She once more built castles in the air. Her old sorrow seemed to fade away in the distance. She was a girl again.

At last twenty-four hours lay between her and her wedding day. She was busy in her sewing-room on this last day, finishing some ruffles in lace and ribbon, and singing softly to herself when suddenly the house was filled with cries.

An old man servant, while cutting the grass upon the lawn, had wounded himself seriously. The doctor was sent for at once, but he was not at home, and meanwhile poor Zebedee was bleeding to death.

Suddenly Ida Halifont remembered that Mr. Humphries had said that he understood wounds as well as though he had been bred a surgeon. Without this it would have been natural for her to call on one who was soon to be her protector in a moment of anxiety. She would call him herself, that there might be no delay; and seizing her garden hat, she ran along a little path that led from her ground to that of Mr. Humphries, climbing a low fence to save time which would have been lost in reaching a gate, and so gained the rear of the dwelling, of which to-morrow she would be mistress.

She thought herself terrified and distressed. She felt rather injured in that such an unpleasant thing as the wounding of poor Zebedee should have happened on the eve of her wedding-day. Ten minutes after she thought of herself at that moment utterly at ease—wonderously happy—for as she reached those windows and peeped half timidly through the curtains, a thing happened that made all she had ever suffered appear as nothing.

The room, the window of which she had approached, was one that opened out of a conservatory. She

saw Colonel Humphries busy with some rare plants he had just set out to the warm sunshine that fell through the glass. He had taken off his coat and rolled up his sleeves. Now he left the conservatory, and coming forward proceeded to wash his hands in a basin of water that had been set ready for him. He was close to Ida Halifont. He did not see her, but she could have reached out her hand and touched him.

Why did she not speak, and call him by name? Why did she sink down upon her hands and tremble like an aspen leaf? Alas! the awful reason was this: Upon that arm to which she was about to give the right to clasp her in tenderest embrace she saw a terrible mark—a mark she had seen once before. She knew its shape and size and color. Her eyes had been riveted upon it as the sinewy hand, at the wrist of which it ended, grasped her dying husband's throat. She had learned it off by heart; she could not be deceived. Though years had rolled away, that horrible mark on her arm was not to be forgotten or mistaken for any other.

Suddenly Colonel Humphries felt himself grasped by a hand that, small as it was, had the fierce clutch of a tiger's claw. The fingers closed over that red mark—a white face came close to his.

"You are my husband's murderer," hissed a voice in his ear.

Then the two stood staring at each other.

He made no denial; he only looked down at the red mark upon his arm and cursed it aloud.

"How dared you make love to me?" she gasped. "You—"

"Because I loved you," he said. "Woman, if I had not fallen in love with you that night, I would have killed you also. It was risking my life to spare you, with your screams calling me to hunt me down—"

"Oh, if you had but killed me then!" she moaned.

"Well, I am at your mercy now," he said.

She answered: "You can kill! I wish you would. I pray you do it. You killed my husband. The murderer of my husband must be brought to justice, and I—yesterday, nay, an hour ago—I loved you! O, God, pity me! I have loved this man, this thief, who came in the night to rob my husband and who murdered him."

She remembered saying this. Afterward a strange drowsiness overcame her. She seemed to let go her hold upon the world. She faintly recognized the fact that Colonel Humphries knelt at her feet and kissed her hands. Then there were blank hours, and strange, wild dreams, and she awakened in the twilight and found herself bound fast to a great arm-chair, long cords about her arms tying her hands and confining her feet.

So her servants found her; but she was the only living being in the great house. Colonel Humphries and his two black servants had vanished, no one knew whither.

The empty bottle of chloroform on the floor—the fact that he had left little behind him, and that he had always kept his money in a form that left him free to leave the country at any time, all proved that detection had been prepared for. And he was never traced—or had the means to track those who were set upon his tribe.

Ida Halifont lived through it all. She lives to-day in the quiet house beside the river, but no one has ever seen her smile since that hour. No one will ever see her smile again; and from her deepest slumbers she often starts in terror, fancying that she sees uplifted menacingly above her that cruel, terrible arm, marked with the blood-red stain. There is no hope of happiness for her, for she never can forget that this arm has embraced her.

Review of the Year. At the close of the old year and the opening of the new, it is interesting to look back over the past twelve months and dwell for a moment on its leading events. We condense from the fall record published in the Baltimore Sun Almanac for 1879 the following review.

the occupation of Bosnia by Austria, the ceding of Cyprus to Great Britain, and the latter's declaration of war against Afghanistan and practical victory over that power. A remarkable feature was the coincidence of socialist demonstrations in Germany, Italy, Austria and Spain. Two attempts were made at the life of Emperor William, of Germany, one at that of King Humbert, of Italy, and one at King Alfonso, of Spain, while Emperor Joseph I of Austria, is said to have escaped only by the timely discovery of the conspiracy, The Paris exhibition, which opened on the 1st of May, proved a moderate success, and American exhibitors carried off a handsome share of the awards. The latter half of the year was signalized in Great Britain by the failure of the City of Glasgow and West of England Banks, with liabilities aggregating about \$50,000,000, and the beginning of a period of almost unexampled business and industrial stagnation. Among the many disasters which occurred during the year, the more notable were the loss of the British training ship Eurydice, with 300 lives, the steamboat Princess Alice, with 650 lives, the German iron-clad Grosser Kurfurst, with 300 lives, the steamship Pommerania, with 54 lives, and the steamer Bezanita, with 60 lives. Three serious colliery explosions occurred in Great Britain, the first at Opedal, involving a loss of 35 lives, the second, at Haydock, 200 lives, and the third at Abercorn, with 280 lives. Mention should also be made of the memorable panic at the Coliseum Theatre, Liverpool, when 37 persons were trampled to death.

ROYAL DEAD. Among the distinguished dead of 1878, are Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy; Queen Mercedes and ex-Queen Christina, of Spain; Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse; Archduke Francis Charles Joseph, of Austria; George V, of Hanover; Prince Napoleon Murat, of France; the King of Burmah, Sultan of Morocco and heir-apparent of Japan.

DIPLOMATS, STATESMEN, ETC. Bayard Taylor, minister to Germany; Baron Adelswoend, Swedish minister to France; Don Manuel Freyre, Peruvian minister to the United States; Senator Benj. F. Wade, Congressman T. J. Quinn, of New York; J. E. Leonard, of Louisiana; A. S. Williams, of Michigan, and Beverly Douglass, of Virginia, Lord Russell of England, and Leitrim, of Ireland; Senator Henri, of France, Senor Rivero, of Spain, and Count Scipio, of Italy.

IN THE CHURCH. Pope Pius IX, who has been succeeded by Cardinal Pecchi as Pope Leo XIII; Cardinals Franchi and Cullen; Bishops Rosecrans, of Columbus, Ohio, and Galberry, of Hartford, Conn.; Archbishop Dupanloup, of Paris; Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton; Rev. Alexander Duff, of the Scotch missionary, and Rt. Rev. Bishop Wilmer.

THE BENCH. Chief Justice Pearson, of North Carolina; Asa Biggs, U. S. Circuit Judge at Norfolk, Va.; Alex. S. Johnson, Circuit Judge of the U. S. Court at Utica, N. Y.; Associate Justice W. B. Eagan, of the New Orleans Supreme Court; Judge Sidney Breeze, of the Supreme Court of Illinois, and Judge George F. Shepley, of the U. S. Circuit Court of Maine. Right Hon. Wm. Keoh, Chief Justice of Ireland, died insane at Geneva, after nearly murdering his valet.

ARMY AND NAVY. Gen. Thos. C. Devin, Brig. Gen. Israel Woodruff, Gen. Daniel McCallum, Gen. Robt. C. Buchanan, Lieut. Benner, Rear Admiral Hiram Paulding. Abroad there were Brig. Gen. Julius Hayden, Count Achille d'Hilliers, marshal of France; Gen. de la Mamora, of the Italian army; Gen. Sir Wm. Haley, commander of the English forces in Canada; Gen. Herman, of the Russian forces; Mehemet Ali, the Turkish commander who was assassinated, and Count de Paliko, of France.

OTHER PROFESSIONS. James Hamilton, the marine painter, George Craikshank, the caricaturist, and Wm. Cullen Bryant and Richard Realf, among the poets; Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield

(Mass.) Republican; John A. Graham and Col. Thos. B. Thorpe, British war correspondents, and Col. James Johnson, proprietor of the London Standard; the English novelists, George Henry Lewes, Capt. White Neville and Sir Wm. Stirling Maxwell. In the dramatic profession were Robt. Heller, George Vining Bowers, Henry J. Montague, Chas. Matthews, Wm. G. Fredericks, Miss Mary Wells, (Mrs. Richard Stapels,) Miss Lily Davenport, (Mrs. Frost Thorne,) Arthur Cheney of Boston, Wm. Nible of New York; Frederick Gye of London. Among the roll of scholars may be mentioned Prof. Joseph Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. Peterman, the German geographer. Not included in any of the above classifications are John Morrissey, of New York; Wm. Welsh, of Philadelphia; Gideon Wells, ex-Secretary of the Navy; Wm. Orton, Pres. of Western Union Telegraph Co.; Theodore Roosevelt the New York merchant; Wm. M. Tweed (the 'Boss') Dr. James C. Ayer, and Minnie Warren, the famous dwarf.

HARVESTS OF 1877 AND 1878.

The following table, which we copy from the Sun Almanac for 1879, was compiled from the official returns received at the Agricultural Department at Washington.

Table with columns for Crop, 1877, and 1878. Rows include Wheat, Corn, Potatoes, Barley, Cotton, Buckwheat, Rye, and Oats.

The Governor's Message.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of North Carolina:

In compliance with the constitution and the time-honored custom of my predecessors, I have the honor to greet you as the representative of the people and to confer with you in regard to the state of our commonwealth. To an Executive desirous of serving well his State, the meeting of the General Assembly is always the occasion of rejoicing as it not only brings to his aid the wise counsels of legislators fresh from their constituents, but relieves him of much embarrassing responsibility. I therefore gladly welcome to the capitol, and promise to co-operate most heartily with you in devising means to promote the public good.

It is known to you that owing to causes which I need not here attempt to elucidate, the people of the United States—and in a great measure of the civilized world—have been for some years past, and still are, passing through a period of most remarkable financial trouble, producing everywhere much distress and even disaster. Of course North Carolina has shared these calamities and her prosperity has been retarded as has that of others. But I believe I can truthfully say that she has suffered as little, if not less, by these hard times than her sisters. Looking at the whole State and comparing our condition with others, we have abundant reason to be thankful and take courage for the future. The public health has never been better, whilst the pestilence has played with pitiless fury among the homes and pleasant places of our Southern and Western neighbors—especially of our great daughter Tennessee—the profoundest quiet and most reverential obedience to legal authority have prevailed throughout our borders, whilst rioting, robbing and defiant lawlessness have disturbed the peace of many States, North and West of us, accompanied both by arson and bloodshed. The crops of the last two seasons have been excellent and the means of subsistence have never more abundant and cheap. The industry of our people has been notably increased and diversified, their farms, stock and agricultural implements show considerable improvements; and whilst the cash staples have steadily increased, the amount of breadstuffs purchased abroad has visibly diminished. This is an undoubted evidence of progress, but manufacturing enterprises and the larger class of speculation requiring

more capital have not equally advanced, owing to the financial derangement referred to, in consequence of which there has been distress among our mechanical population and prices of all products, including labor, have ruled low.

Remembering that North Carolina is pre-eminently an agricultural State, your Legislature should be directed toward the improvement of that interest mainly. In this connection I beg to call your attention to the fact that the first and perhaps greatest need of an agricultural people thinly scattered over a wide extent of territory, is that of good highways and easy transportation for persons and products. As a general rule from the lowland belt westward the highways of our State are as bad, if not worse than any to be found in the Atlantic States. The old system of locating them and keeping them in repair, adopted by our fathers more than a hundred years ago, is still in use, though its utter inefficiency for nearly that length of time has been apparent. Of the inconvenience cost and depressing tendency upon all industry which such roads occasion, I need not stop to remind you. I shall only beg your earnest attention to the necessity of change and express my decided opinion that no permanent prosperity need be expected unless this greivous evil is remedied. Certain great leading thoroughfares through the most convenient centres, and all pouring into the nearest railroad lines, might be cheaply and thoroughly constructed by convict labor, the counties thro' which they pass supporting the convicts; and as to the other roads discharging into these, I advise that some other method of their construction and repairing be devised.

I am happy to be able to state that an increased interest is manifested among all classes in popular education. This belief is mainly due to the action of the last Legislature in appropriating money for the establishment of Normal schools. In accordance with the law, the Board of Education established one for the whites at the University and decided to locate one for the blacks at Fayetteville, in a building tendered by the colored people of that place. They were established on somewhat different systems, regard being had to the circumstances of each race. It was considered that the white race had already many educated teachers who simply needed instruction in the art of teaching, whilst the blacks needed teachers instructed in both the elements of teaching and the arts of learning. For the one, therefore, a six week's school was held at Chapel Hill during the summer vacations, and for the other a permanent school was established in Fayetteville. Both have been remarkably successful—at the first session of the white school 225 teachers attended, and at the second one, the past summer, more than 400 teachers were present, representing about sixty counties. An excellent corps of instructors were employed. The University gave the use of its buildings, its libraries, laboratories and apparatus. The railroads very generously gave reduced rates. The Agent of the Peabody fund supplemented the appropriation with a handsome donation, and every dollar that could be spared was used to equalize the benefits of the State's bounty by paying the traveling expenses of the more indigent. Lectures by distinguished citizens of the State on popular themes were delivered almost daily with the best results. The undoubted effect of the whole was to arouse an enthusiastic interest in behalf of popular education among a large portion of our people, and to excite a spirit of honest pride in their noble calling among all the teachers present which will it is hoped do much good. The accompanying report of President Battle is referred to for particulars.

The colored Normal school at Fayetteville was put in charge of Mr. Robert Harris, a native colored man of excellent character and capacity, supervised by a board of local managers selected from the best business citizens of the town, who took a great interest in its welfare. It has been managed with unexpected success. The past session opened with 58 pupils, about 40 of whom have received certificates as teachers, some of high grades; the second year began with 74 pupils and is now in progress. The same donation was made to this school by the Peabody fund as to the white school and the same scheme adopted to equalize its benefits. The report of Mr. Harris, to which you are referred, will be as surprising as I am sure it will be pleasing to all who desire the real welfare of our colored citizens.

I sincerely hope the appropriation for both schools may be renewed and the law made to embrace both sexes. For though females have attended both schools by permission, yet the Board of Education did not feel at liberty to expend any State money in their aid, which was a little ungalant for so chivalrous a people as ours, who are so well aware that as a general rule our female teachers are better than the males. The excellent worded memorial of the teachers themselves, which accompanies the report of Pres. Battle, is especially commended to your favor.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

The establishment by the last Legislature, in pursuance of the Constitution, of a Department of Agriculture was a very important step indeed to the welfare of this State. As was to have been expected the law has in some respects proven defective, and will require some amending at your hands, but in the main it is an admirable one. It is the first step ever made in the direct interest of agriculture and has been hailed by our farming people with great satisfaction. So far this bureau has cost the people nothing, the tax on license to sell fertilizers having yielded sufficient revenue for all its purposes. As soon as possible after the passage of the law in 1877, the organization of the Board of Agriculture was completed by the election of the two intelligent farmers who now occupy seats in it; a Commissioner was elected, Secretary and Treasurer chosen and work began immediately. For the results of the first two years, I refer you to the accompanying report of the Commissioner, Col. L. L. Polk, which sets out everything in detail. I regard the beginning as excellent. The chief difficulty in the way of doing any new thing among a people so conservative as ours is in securing their prompt cooperation. It was found very difficult at first to awaken an active interest in the operations of the bureau, but the impression once produced is lasting and enlarging. Special attention has been given to the analyzing and classification of fertilizers, including mails, to the restocking of our rivers with fish, and the preparation of a handbook of information concerning the State and its resources. Much good has been effected I am sure, and an interest excited that will lead to still more a serious drawback to fish propagation is the numerous dams and obstructions of the streams; and public sentiment is in many places prevented from bearing upon the owners of those obstructions by the sneers of the ignorant and incredulous. This will disappear when results are seen, and the laws passed in aid of this important matter will then be helped in their execution by a wiser popular opinion. The trouble to the preparation of a popular handbook has been the actual impossibility of getting statistics. The duties required of tax lists under the 6th section of the act establishing this Department, have been in seven cases out of ten evaded, or openly and defiantly refused; additional legislation is needed to make this law effectual, and in this connection, I beg permission to remark generally that the vital defects of our laws lies in the machinery provided for their execution. The general tenor of our legislation is excellent, as all who will philosophically examine our statutes for a hundred years passed will confess; but a large portion of them, often of a most beneficent character, lie dormant and inoperative. There is no power given to the Chief Executive or any head of a department, to quicken the diligence or rebuke the criminal neglect of his subordinates; and many of our best laws take the chance of the local favor or disfavor and are alive or dead as that may be. Proof of this is found in the new number of the statutes in relation to subjects concerning which excellent ones are already in existence. It is not a good thing or a healthy sign, perhaps, for a people to multiply greatly their list of criminal offences, but for the curing of this serious defect in the administration of our laws, I can see no better way than the imposition of heavy penalties for the omission or refusal, on the part of any public officer, to perform any duty which he is required to perform. It has not only been found impossible to get the statistics required under the act establishing the Board of Agriculture as before remarked, and also to get proper and timely returns from the County School Boards and Managers, whilst several counties in the last election for Congressmen failed to send full and proper returns of the