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By P. M. HALE.

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A THEOSOPHIC MARRIAGE.

The Start.

She was a theosophic miss
  Who sighed for sweet Nirvana;
She talked of esoteric this
  And that, in mystic manner.
She wore a wide and psychic smile,
  Used diction transcendental,
Two suitors her besieged meanwhile—
  Both softly sentimental.

The one, he was a drummer bland,
  Who wore a lofty collar;
He knew not things were hollow, and
  He chased the nimble dollar.
The other was a soulful youth,
  Who talked of things symbolic;
Enamored quite of inner truth—
  And predisposed to colic.

The one, he talked of common love,
  In tones that made her shudder;
The other soared with her above
  To misty realms of Buddha.
She sent the first upon his way
  With snub unmitigated—
Upon the other smiled, and they
  By Hymen were translated.

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A DEAD MAN'S FACE.

[Harper's Magazine, for December.]

Imaginative beings who invent marvellous tales may take what license they please, but a simple narrator is nothing if not accurate; so, before beginning this, I looked up old correspondences and various memoranda made at the time when the following things occurred. The first paper upon which I put my hand was a letter. I may as well open with a copy of it:

"Dear old Boy:—I have met her at last—my fate—the one woman in the world for me. Nothing is settled as yet; but I would not write this unless hope were a certainty. You must wish me joy, although she is a widow and an American—two qualifications which I know you will find fault with. No matter; when you see her you will recant and be envious. Yours ever, "Claud Morton."

The writer was my brother—I was going to say my only brother, but I had another once, although the less said about him the better. Nearly every family has its black sheep. Ours had been a peculiarly sable one. When he died some years ago, I passed the sponge over his long list of delinquencies, and tried to think of him as kindly as possible. He died a disgraced man, far away from home.

I call this black sheep, Stephen, my brother, not Claud's, the fact being that Claud can scarcely be said to have known him. I stood in age midway between the two. Claud was sixteen years younger than Stephen, so that when the latter was shipped off as irreclaimable, the former was a little golden-haired fellow of seven.

The above letter made me feel both glad and sorry. I was glad that the boy—he was still the boy to me, although his age was seven and twenty—was going to be married; but I was sorry that his choice had not fallen on one of his own countrywomen, and one who could have given him her first love. Still, all this was his own peculiar business. No doubt he had made a suitable choice, and the only thing left for me to do was to write him a cheerful letter of congratulation, and hope that his love affairs would soon be happily settled.

A week went by; then came a long letter from him. He had proposed in orthodox form, and had been duly accepted. His letter lies before me at this moment, and I feel sad as I read again the two pages covered with the lover's usual raptures.

I am not a mercenary man, but I own I felt somewhat disappointed on learning that she was poor. Somehow one associates wealth with an American widow who is sojourning in England. But, so far as I could gather from Claud's letter, Mrs. Despard, or Judith, as he called her, was not well off. He spoke of her as being all alone in London, which fact, he added, would necessarily hasten his marriage. It would take place, he hoped, in a week or two. In conclusion he pressed me to run up to town in order to make the acquaintance of my future sister-in-law.

I was very busy at the time—I may say, in passing, that my business is to cure people's ailments, not to tell stories—nevertheless I managed to pay a flying visit to town, and was duly presented to Claud's betrothed.

Yes, she was handsome—strikingly handsome. Her whole appearance was much out of the common. She was tall, superbly built—on a large scale, perhaps, yet graceful as a panther in every movement. Her face gave evidence of much character, power and determination, and of passion also, I decided. Her rich dark beauty was at that time in full bloom, and although I saw at a glance that she was some years older than my brother, I was not at all inclined to blame Claud for his rapturous expressions. So far as personal charms went, I could find no fault with Judith Despard. For the rest, it was easy to see that she was passionately in love with Claud, and for the sake of this I gladly overlooked all my fanciful objections to his choice, and congratulated him heartily on having won so beautiful a creature.

Yet, strange to say, in the midst of his new found happiness, my brother seemed anything but his usual cheerful self. He, the merriest and most talkative of men, seemed taciturn, moody, and preoccupied. The curious thing was that his changed manner struck me particularly whilst we were in Mrs. Despard's company. He spoke and behaved in the most affectionate and lover-like way, but there was in his general bearing something which puzzled me altogether. It seemed to me that he might perhaps be nervous as to what impression his fair friend might make upon the elder brother whom he so reverenced and respected.

This theory of mine was strengthened by the fact that when, at night, we found ourselves alone, and I was able to freely express my admiration of Mrs. Despard's good looks, he brightened up considerably, and we sat until a very late hour, and talked over the past, the present, and the future.

"When do you mean to be married?" I asked.

"In a fortnight or three weeks. There is nothing to wait for. Judith is living alone in lodgings. She has no friends to consult; so we shall just walk to church some morning and get it over."

"Well, let me walk with you. I should like to see the last of you."

"All right, old fellow. But you'll be the only one—unless Mary likes to honor us." Mary was my wife; but as her time was just then fully occupied by a very young baby, I did not think it at all likely she would be able to make the long journey to town.

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“I shall fix the earliest day I can,” added Claud. “The fact is, I have been feeling rather queer lately. I want a change.”

Thereupon I questioned him as to what ailed him. So far as I could ascertain, all that was the matter was his having worked too hard, and being a little below par, I prescribed a tonic, and quite agreed with him as to the benefit which he would derive from a change of air.

When I reached home my wife scolded me for my stupidity. It seems that it was my duty to have found out all about Mrs. Despard's antecedents, relations, connections, circumstances, habits, and disposition, whereas, all I could say was that she was a beautiful widow with a small income, and that she and Claud were devoted to one another.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Morton, scornfully, “like all other men, the moment you see a pretty face you inquire no further. I quite tremble for Claud.”

When I reflected how little I really knew about Mrs. Despard, I felt abashed and guilty. However, Claud was a full grown man and no fraternal counsel was likely to turn him aside from his desire.

In the course of a few days he wrote me that he was to be married on the 5th of the next month. I made arrangements which would enable me to go to the wedding; but three days before the date named I heard again from him. The wedding was postponed for a fortnight. He gave no reason for the delay; but he said he was anxious to see me, and to-morrow he should run down to my home.

He came as promised. I was aghast when I saw him. He looked worn, haggard, wretched. My first thought was that business matters had gone wrong with him. His looks might well be those of a man on the brink of ruin. After the first greeting I at once took him to my study in order to be put out of suspense. Just as I was about to begin my anxious questions he turned to me.

“Frank, old fellow,” he said imploringly, and with a faint attempt at a smile, “don't laugh at me.”

Laugh! That was the last thing I was likely to do. I pressed his hand in silence.

“You won't believe me, I know,” he continued. “I can't believe it myself. Frank, I am haunted.”

“Haunted!” I was bound to smile, not from any disposition toward merriment, but in order to show the poor boy the absurdity of his idea.

“Yes, haunted. The word sounds ridiculous, but I can use no other. Haunted.”

“What haunts you?”

He came close to me and grasped my arm. His voice sank to a hoarse whisper.

“A horrible, ghastly, grewsome thing. It is killing me. It comes between me and my happiness. I have fought and struggled against this phantom terror. I have reasoned calmly with myself. I have laughed my own folly to scorn. In vain—in vain. It goes, but it comes again.”

“Overwork,” I said, insomnia, too many cigars, late hours; and had you been a drinking man I should add, too much stimulant, too little food, anxiety, perhaps. Have you anything on your mind—any special worry?”

“Of course I have,” he said pettishly. “Did I not tell you it is killing me?”

“What is killing you?”

He rose and paced the room excitedly; then suddenly he stopped short, and once more clutched my arm.

“A face,” he said wildly—“a man's face; a fearful white face that comes to me; a horrible mask, with features drawn as in agony—ghastly, pale, hideous! Death or approaching death, violent death, written in every line. Every feature distorted. Eyes starting from the head. Every cord in the throat standing out, strained as by mortal struggle. Long dark hair lying flat and wet. Thin lips moving and working—lips that are cursing, although I can hear no sound. Why should this come to me—why to me? Who is this dead man whose face wrecks my life? Frank, my brother, if this is disease or madness, cure me; if not, let me die.”

His words, his gestures, sent a cold thrill through me. He was worse, far worse, than I had feared.

“Claud,” I said, “you are talking nonsense. Cure you! of course I mean to cure you. Now sit down, collect yourself, and tell me how this hallucination comes.”

“Comes! How does it come? It gathers in corners of the room; it forms and takes shape; it glares at me out of the wall; it looks up at me from the floor. Ever the same fearful white dying face, threatening, cursing, sometimes mocking. Why does it come?”

I had already told the poor fellow why it came, but it was no use repeating my words. “Tell me when you see it,” I asked; “at night—in darkness?”

He hesitated, and seemed troubled. “No, never at night. In broad daylight only. That to me is the crowning terror, the ghastliness of it. At night I could call it a dream. Frank, believe me. I am no weak fool. For weeks I have borne with this. At last it has conquered me. Send it away, or I shall go mad.”

“I'll send it away, old boy, never fear. Tell me, can you see it now?”

“No; thank God, not now.”

“Have you seen it to-day?”

“No; to-day I have been free from it.”

“Well, you'll be free from it to-morrow, and the next day, and the next. It will be gone forever before you leave me. Now come and see Mary and the babies. I haven't even asked you how Mrs. Despard is.”

A curious look crossed his face. “I think she grows more beautiful every day,” he said. Then he seized my hand. “Oh, Frank,” he exclaimed, “rid me of this horror, and I shall be the happiest man in the world.”

“All right,” I answered, perhaps with more confidence than I felt.

Although I made light of it to my patient, his state greatly alarmed me. I hastened to put him under the strictest and most approved treatment. I enforced the most rigid sumptuary laws, made him live on plain food, and docked his consumption of tobacco unmercifully. In a few days I was delighted to find that my diagnosis of the case was correct. Claud was rapidly recovering tone. In a week's time he seemed quite restored to health.

The days went by. As yet Claud had said nothing about leaving me; yet, unless the date was once more adjourned, he was to be married on the 19th. I did not counsel him to postpone the happy day. He was by now so well that I thought he could not do better than adhere to his arrangement. A month's holiday, spent in the society of the woman he loved, would, I felt certain, complete his cure, and banish forever that grisly intruder begotten of disorganized nerves.

From the monotonous regularity and voluminous nature of their correspondence it was evident, delay and separation notwithstanding, that matters were going on quite smoothly between Claud and Judith Despard. Every day he received and wrote a long letter. Nevertheless, it was not until the 16th of the month that I knew exactly what he meant to do about his marriage.

“Frank,” he said, “you have been wonderfully kind to me. I believe you have saved my life, or at least my reason. Will you do something more for me?”

“Even unto half my kingdom,” I answered.

“Look here: I am ashamed of the feeling, but I absolutely dread returning to town. At any rate, I wish to stay there no longer than is needful. Thursday morning I must, of course, be there, to be married. You think me cured, Frank?” he added abruptly.

“Honestly, yes. If you take care of yourself you will be troubled no more.”

“Yet why do I dread London so? Well, never mind. I will go up by the night mail on Wednesday—then I need only be there for a few hours. Will you do this for me—go up on Wednesday morning, see Judith, and explain how it is that I shall not see her until we meet in the church?”

“Certainly, if you wish it. But you had better write as well.”

“Yes, I shall do that. There are several other little things you must see to for me. The license I have, but you must let the clergyman know. You had better go and see my partners. They may think it strange if I marry and go away without a word.”

Thinking it better that he should have his own way, I promised to do as he wished. Upon my arrival in town on Wednesday afternoon I went straight to Mrs. Despard's. I was not sorry to have this opportunity of seeing her alone. I wished to urge upon her the necessity of being careful that Claud did not again get into that highly wrought nervous state, from which my treatment had so happily extricated him.

She was not looking as well as when last I saw her. At times her manner was restless, and she seemed striving to suppress agitation. She made no adverse comments on her lover's strange whim of reaching town to-morrow only in time for the ceremony. Her inquiries as to his health were most solicitous, and when I told her that I no longer feared anything on his account, her heart-felt sigh of relief told me how deeply she loved him.

Presently she looked me full in the face. Her eyes were half closed, but I could see an anxious, eager look in them. “He saw a face,” she said. “Has it left him?”

“He told you of his queer hallucination, then?”

“No; but once or twice when sitting with me he sprang to his feet and muttered: ‘Oh, that face! that ghastly, horrible face! I can bear it no longer!’ Then he rushed wildly from the room. What face did he see, Dr. Morton?”

To set her mind at rest, I gave her a little scientific discourse, which explained to her how such mental phenomena were brought about. She listened attentively, and seemed satisfied. Then I bade her adieu until to-morrow.

The marriage was to be of the quiet kind. I found that Mrs. Despard had made no arrangement for any friend to accompany her; so, setting all rules of etiquette at defiance, I suggested that, although the bride-groom's brother, I should call for her in the morning and conduct her to the church. To this she readily consented.

Somehow that evening I did not carry away such a pleasing impression of my brother's bride as I did when first I met her. I can give no reason for this, except that I was not forgetful of my wife's accusation, that when first I met Judith Despard I had been carried away by the glamour of her beauty, and thought of nothing else. As I walked to Claud's rooms, which I occupied for the night, I almost regretted that he had been so hasty—certainly I wished that we knew more of his bride. But it was now too late for regrets or wishes.

I called for Mrs. Despard at the appointed hour, and found her quite ready to start. Her dress was plain and simple—I cannot describe it; but I saw that in spite of her excessive pallor she looked very beautiful. In the carriage on our way to the church she was very silent, answering my remarks with monosyllables. I left her in peace, supposing that at such a moment every woman must be more or less agitated.

When the carriage drew up at the church door, the bride laid her hand upon my arm. I could feel that she was trembling. “Claud will be here?” she asked. “Nothing will stop him?”

“Nothing. But I may as well step out and see that he is waiting.”

Yes, Claud was in the church waiting for us. We exchanged greetings. The old sexton summoned the curate; and Judith Despard, my brother, and myself walked up to the altar rails.

Claud looked very well that morning; a little fagged, perhaps, but the long night journey would account for that. He certainly looked proud and happy as he stood on the altar step side by side with the woman who in a few minutes would be his wife.

But before the curate had finished reading the opening address a great change came over him. From where I was standing I could see only his side face, but that was enough to show me that he was suffering from some agitation—something far above the nervousness so often displayed by a bridegroom. A deadly pallor came over his face, small beads of perspiration sprang to his brow, and I noticed that those tell-tales of mental disturbance, the hands, were so tightly clinched that the knuckles grew white. It was evident that he was suffering anguish of some kind, and for a moment I thought of stopping the service. But the rite is but a short one, and from whatever cause Claud's agitation might proceed, it was perhaps better to trust to him to curb it for a few moments than to make a scene. Nevertheless I watched him intently and anxiously.

Then came the charge to declare any impediment. As the curate made the conventional pause, Claud, to my surprise, glanced round in a startled way, as if fearing that his marriage would at the last moment be forbidden. The look on his face was now one of actual terror.

Both bride and bridegroom said their “I wills” in such low tones that I could scarcely hear their voices. Then, in pursuance of my duty, I gave the woman to the priest. He joined the hands of Claud and Judith.

After having played my little part I had not moved back to my former station. I was now close to the bride, and as Claud turned to her, could see his face to advantage. It was positively distorted with suppressed emotion of some kind. His mouth was set, and I could see that his teeth were closed on his under lip. He did not look at his fair bride. His gaze passed over her shoulder. In fact, he seemed almost oblivious to her presence. I was dreadfully frightened.

The clergyman's voice rang out: “I, Claud, take thee, Judith, to my wedded wife." Then, hearing no echo of his words, he paused.

"Repeat after me," he prompted. Again he began, "I, Claud—"

But his voice was drowned in a louder one, which rang through the empty church. With a fierce cry, as of inexpressible rage, Claud had thrown the bride's hand from him, and was pointing and gesticulating toward the wall, upon which his eyes had been riveted.

"Here!—even here!" he almost shrieked. "That cursed, white, wicked, dying face! Whose is it? Why does it come between me and my love? Mad! Mad! I am going mad!"

I heeded not the clegyman's look of dismay, or the bride's cry of distress. I thought of nothing but my unfortunate brother. Here, at the moment which should be the happiest he had yet known, the grewsome hallucination had come back to him. I threw my arm round him and tried to calm him.

"It is fancy, dear boy," I said. "In a moment it will be gone."

"Gone! Why does it come? What have I to do with this dying man? Look, Frank, look! Something tells me if you look you will see it. There! there! Look there!"

His eyes were ever fixed on the same point. He grasped my arm convulsively. I am ashamed to say that I yielded, and looked in the direction of his gaze.

"There is nothing there," I said soothingly.

"Look!" he exclaimed. "It will come to you as to me."

It may have been the hope of convincing Claud of the illusionary nature of the sight which tormented him, it may have been some strange fascination wrought by his words and manner, which made me for some moments gaze with him. God of heaven! I saw gradually forming out of nothing, gathering on the blank wall in front of me, a face, or the semblance of a face, white, ghastly, horrible! Long, dank, wet-looking dark hair, eyes starting from their sockets, lips working—the whole appearance that of the face of a man who is struggling with death: in every detail as Claud had described it. And yet to me that face was more terrible than ever it could have been to Claud.

I gazed in horror. I felt my eyes growing riveted to the sight as his own. I felt my whole frame trembling. I knew that in another moment I should be raving as wildly as he raved. Only his hoarse whisper recalled me to my senses.

"You see?" he asked, or rather asserted.

Horror forced the truth from me. "I see, or fancy I see," I answered.

With a wild laugh Claud broke from me. He rushed down the church and disappeared. As he left me, the face, thank Heaven! faded from the wall, or from my imagination.

I turned to my companions. Judith Despard was lying in a dead swoon on the altar steps; the curate with trembling hands was loosening the throat of her dress. I called for water. The sexton brought it. I bathed the poor woman's temples, and in a few minutes she sighed, opened her eyes, and then shuddered. I took her in my arms and staggered to the church door. The curate removed his surplice and followed me. I placed my almost senseless burden in the carriage.

"For Heaven's sake, see her home," I said to the curate. "I must go and look after my brother. As soon as I have seen him I will come round to Mrs. Despard's. Get her home quickly, The coachman knows where to go."

The brougham drove off. I threw myself into a cab, and drove towards Claud's rooms. I hoped he might have gone straight there.

To my great relief, when I reached his house he was on the door-step. We entered his room together; he sank wearily into a chair, and buried his face in his hands. I was scarcely less agitated than himself, and my face, as I caught its reflection in the mirror, was white as his own. I waited for him to speak.

Presently he raised his head. "Go to her," he said. "Ask her why that face comes between us. You saw it—even you. It can be no fancy of mine. Tell her we can meet no more."

"I will wait until you are calmer before I go."

"Calm! I am myself now. The thing has left me as it always does. Frank, I have hidden from you one peculiarity of my state. That awful face never shows itself to me unless I am in her company. Even at the altar it came between us. Go to her; ask her why it comes."

I left him, but did not quit the house for some time. I went into an adjoining room and tried to collect my thoughts; for, as I said, my mind was more troubled than even Claud's could be.

I am ashamed to re-assert it; I am willing to own that excitement, my brother's impressive manner, superstition which I did not know I possessed—anything that may bear a natural explanation—may have raised that vision. But why should that phantom, gathering and growing from nothing until it attained to form, or at least semblance, have been the face of one I had known? Why should the features distorted in deadly agony have been those of my brother Stephen? For his was the dreadful face which Claud's prompting or my own imagination had raised.

Almost like one in a dream I went to do Claud's bidding. I was thankful, upon reaching Mrs. Despard's, to find that she had gone to her room, and left word that she could see no one to-day. This gave me time to consider the position.

Acting on a sudden impulse, I went to the telegraph office, and sent instructions to my wife to forward to me, by passenger train, a small box in which I kept old letters and papers. Then I went back to Claud, and after some persuasion induced him to leave town at once. I told him I would arrange everything on the morrow. He was better away.

In the morning my box arrived. In it I found what I wanted. After the calming effects of a night's rest I felt ashamed of my weakness as I drew from old letters a photograph of my brother Stephen—one taken about two years before the report of his death reached us. Nevertheless I put the portrait in my pocket, and about noon went to Mrs. Despard's.

I was at once admitted, and in a few minutes she came to me. She looked worn and haggard, as if sleep had not visited her for nights. Dark circles had formed round her fine eyes; lines seemed to have deepened round her firm, passionate mouth. She advanced eagerly toward me and held out her hand. I took it in silence. Indeed, I scarcely knew what to say or how to act.

"Where is Claud?" she asked, in a quick voice, but scarcely above a whisper.

"He has left town for a few days."

She pressed her hand to her heart.

"Does that mean I shall see him no more?"

"I am afraid I must say it does. He thinks it better you should part."

She gave a sharp cry, and walked up and down the room wringing her hands. Her lips moved rapidly, and I knew she was muttering many words, but in so low a key that I could not catch their meaning. Suddenly she stopped, and turned upon me fiercely.

"Is this by your counsel and advice?" she demanded.

"No. It is his own unbiassed decision."

"Why?—tell me why? He loved me—I love him. Why does he leave me?"

The passionate entreaty of her voice is indescribable. What could I say to her? Words stuck in my throat. It seemed the height of absurdity for a sane man to give a sane woman the true reason for Claud's broken faith. I stammered out something about his bad state of health.

"If he is ill, I will nurse him," she cried. "I will wait for years if he will give me hope. Dr. Morton, I love Claud as I never before loved a man."

She clasped her hands and looked imploringly into my face. In a mechanical way I drew the portrait of my dead brother from my breast. She saw the action.

"His likeness!" she cried, joyfully. "He sends it to me! Ah, he loves me!"

I handed her the photograph. "Mrs. Despard," I asked, "do you know—"

I did not finish the question, yet it was fully answered. Never, I believe, save then, did a human face undergo such a sudden, frightful change. The woman's very lips grew ashen, her eyes glared into mine, and I saw them full of dread. She staggered—all but fell.

"Why is it here—who is it?" she gasped out.

I was a prey to the wildest excitement. To what revelation was this tending? what awful thing had I to learn?

"Listen," I said, sternly. "Woman, it is for you to answer the question. It is the face of this man, his dying face, that comes between you and your lover."

"Tell me his name." I read rather than heard the words her dry lips formed.

"The name he was once known by was Stanley."

A quick, sharp shudder ran through her. For a moment I thought she was going to faint.

"He is dead," she said. "Why does he come between my love and me? Others have loved or said they loved me since then. They saw no dead faces. Had I loved them I might have married and been happy. Claud I love. Why does the dead man trouble him?"

"That man," I replied, "was my brother—Claud's brother."

She threw out her arms with a gesture of utter despair. "Your brother—Claud's brother!" she repeated. Then she fixed her eyes on mine as if she would read the secrets of my soul.

"You are lying," she said.

"I am not. He was our eldest brother. He left England years ago. He passed under a false name. He died. When and how did he die?"

She sank, a dead weight, into a chair; but still she looked at me like one under a spell. I seized her wrist.

"Tell me, woman," I cried—"tell me what this man was to you; why his dying face comes to us? The truth—speak the truth."

She seemed to cower beneath my words, but her eyes were still on my face.

"Speak!" I cried, fiercely, and tightening my grasp upon her wrist. At last she found words.

"He was my husband; I killed him," she said, in a strange voice, low yet perfectly distinct.

I recoiled in horror. This woman, the widow and self-confessed murderess of one brother, within an ace of being the wife of the other!

"You murdered him?" I said, turning to the woman.

"I murdered him. He made my life a hell upon earth. He beat me, cursed me, ruined me. He was the foulest hearted fiend that ever lived. I killed him."

No remorse, no regret, in her words. Quite overcome, I leaned against the chimney-piece. Bad as I knew Stephen Morton to have been, I could at that moment only think of him as a gay, light-hearted school-boy, my elder brother, and in those days a perfect hero in my eyes. No wonder my heart was full of vengeance. Yet even in the first flush of my rage I knew that I could do nothing. No human justice could be meted out to this woman. There was nothing to prove the truth of her self-accusation. She would escape scot-free.

"Would that I could avenge his death!" I said, sullenly.

She sprang to her feet. Her dark eyes blazed. "Avenged!" she cried. "Is it not doubly, trebly avenged? Has he not taken all I care for in life from me? Has he not taken my love from my side? Coward in life, coward in death! When I killed him I knew he would try to come back to me. He has tried for years. Ah, I was too strong for him. I could banish the face with which he strove to haunt me. I could forget. I could love. I could have been happy. Yet he has conquered at last. Not me—he could not conquer me—but the one I love. Oh, the coward is avenged!"

In spite of my feeling of abhorrence, I gazed on the speaker in amazement. Her words were not those of one who had committed a black crime, but of one who had suffered wrong. The strange, fanciful idea that the dead man had been trying to haunt her, but had been kept at bay by her strong will, was in my experience unprecedented. As I saw the agony of mind under which she was laboring, the thought came to me that perhaps her words were true, that my brother's death was this day avenged. I resolved to leave her. I could gain no good by prolonging the painful scene.

She was still pacing the room in fierce passion. Suddenly she stopped short, and in thrilling accents began to speak. It seemed as if she had forgotten my presence.

"See," she cried, "the river-bank—the dark rushing stream. Ah, we are all alone, side by side, far away from every one. Fool! if you could read my heart, would you walk so near to the giddy brink? Do you think the memory of the old love will stay my hand when the chance comes? Old love is dead: you beat it, cursed it to death. How fast does the stream run? Can a strong man swim against it? Oh, if I could be sure—sure that one push would end it all and give me freedom! Once I longed for love—your love. Now I long for death—your death. Oh, brave swift tide, are you strong enough to free me forever? Hark! I can hear the roar of the rapids in the distance. There is a deep fall from the river cliff; there are rocks. Fool! you stand at the very edge, and look down. The moment is come. Ah!"

With her last exclamation she used a violent gesture, as if pushing something fiercely from her. She was, I knew, in her excitement, re-acting the tragedy.

"Free! free! free!" she cried, with a delirious, almost rapturous laugh, and clasping her hands. "Hold him, brave stream

Sweep him away! See! he swims; but he dare not swim with you. You are hurrying down to the rapids. He must face you, and wrestle with you for his life. Bear him down; keep him from me. If he masters you, he will land and kill me. Hold him fast, brave stream! Ha! his strength fails. He is swept away; he is under. No, I see him again. He turns his face to me. He knows I did it. With his last breath he is cursing me. His last breath! He is gone, gone forever! I am free!"

The changes in her voice, ranging from dread to tearful joy, her passionate words, her eloquent gestures, all these combined to bring the very scene before my eyes. I stood spell-bound, and even, as she described it, seemed to see the unfortunate man battling for dear life in the rushing stream, growing every moment weaker and weaker. As the woman's last wild exclamation—"Gone forever! I am free!"—rang through the room, I seemed to hear the cry of despair drowned as the waves closed over the wretched man's head. I knew every detail of my brother's fate.

I turned to leave the room. I longed to get away, and if possible to banish the events of the day from my mind. It was not given to me to be Stephen Morton's avenger.

My hand was on the door when the woman sprang to my side. She grasped my arm and drew me back into the room.

"Look!" she whispered. "Do you see it? There! The face—that awful face! It has come at last to me. The dead man has conquered. There! look! His eyes glaring, his mouth mocking. Now it has once come, I shall see it always—always! Look!"

No, I was not doomed again to see or to fancy I saw that face. Its mission, so far as I was concerned, was at an end. But the look of concentrated horror which Judith Despard cast at the wall of the room beggars description. Then with a piteous cry she fell at my feet, and seemed to strive to make me shield her from something she dreaded. I raised her. She broke from my grasp, and again fell upon the floor, this time in paroxysms of madness.

My tale is ended. That night she was removed to a private lunatic asylum, where for three years she was kept at my expense. She died raving mad, and from inquiries I made I know that from the moment when it first appeared to her to the hour of her death the face of the man she had killed was ever with Judith Despard.

MEN'S DRESS REFORM.

Knee Breeches and Padded Calves.

[New York Post's Paris Letter.]

It is announced that the fashionable season will begin somewhat later than usual, and possibly will not be well inaugurated before February, by which time, we are credibly informed, the gay and festive gentlemen who devote their leisure and energies to setting the fashions in the masculine world propose to bring about a startling revolution in costumes, a complete revolution, in fact, as they purpose taking us back to the picturesque and stately costumes of the eighteenth century. A movement of this kind has been noticeable for two years. The dandies of Paris and many of those of London have been observed at watering-places in the summer season and in town in the late autumn, resplendent in gorgeously colored coats and waistcoats, such as would have been laughed at five years ago as ridiculous relics of the fopperies of the past generation. But there is a class of fashionable men in Paris and London who pass their whole time in endeavoring to invent something which will distinguish them from the mass. Just as some years ago they made it the fashion to abolish the crush hats and to carry the awkward and clumsy chimney-pot into the drawing-rooms, simply because they said that every cad had learned to carry an opera-hat, and only a gentleman could steer his way through a crowd with the more cumbrous tile unruffled, so now they wished to array their persons in knee breeches and ruffled lace and gorgeously flowered waist-coats. The papers seriously announce this reform, as it is called, and say that it will be in full blossom by midsummer. The tailors are naturally delighted at the success of a revolution which they have always aided and abetted, since the democratic black had made it possible for men of all classes to dress inexpensively, and at the same time with a certain degree of elegance. With the new costumes will come the epoch of extravagant and of personal fancy in attire. It seems certain that the great majority of young men about town in Paris will have to wear false calves, for nature has not been prodigal to them of brawn and muscle, nor have they by their late hours and their rapid progress through life contributed to the establishment of that health which, in itself, gives a certain grace and comeliness to the plainest.

Reform Garments for Ladies.

[Clara Belle in Cincinnati Enquirer.]

I am in receipt of numerous inquiries relating to reform garments. Collectively responding to several, I may describe a new sort of sanitary clothing as consisting of tight fitting stockingette undergarments, made of pure undyed wool, fastened over the shoulders, and of double thickness over the breast. The jacket is double-breasted, buttoned well up to the throat, contains no lining or padding unless of wool, and is either undyed or treated with uninjurious fast dyes. The same rule applies to the drawers, inside of which is a contrivance which, fastening tight around the leg, prevents up-draughts; for cold, rheumatism and lumbago are caught by the sudden rush of cold air to one particular part of the body, and not by the gradual cooling of the entire system. The feet are clad in pure woollen socks, with divisions for each toe, while the upper part of the boot is made of felt, the lower part also of felt, or of some porous leather, and the inner soles consist of perforated leather and layers of felt. Thus the boot is thoroughly porous, and the feet are consequently kept as clean and as pure as the hands. Part of the theory is that, by doubly protecting the front of the body, where the blood-vessels converge, these are stimulated, and as an even temperature throughout is maintained, the necessity for heavy outer garments is obviated, rain or damp having little or no effect, for in every case gradual and even evaporation is insured.

Experience that is Cheap.

[New York Sun.]

"Experience may be a dear teacher," remarked a clergyman, as the contribution box was returned to him empty, "but the members of this particular flock who have experienced religion have accomplished it at a very trifling cost. The choir will sing the seventy ninth hymn, omitting the first, third, and fourth verses, in order to save unnecessary wear on the organ."

BLAINE.

HIS RESPONSE TO A SERENADE BY HIS NEIGHBORS.

Music Without Charms to Soothe His Savage Breast.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS: The national contest is over, and, by the narrowest of margins, we have lost. I thank you for your call, which, if not one of joyous congratulations, is one, I am sure, of confidence and sanguine hope for the future. I thank you for the public opportunity you give me to express my sense of obligation, not only to you, but to all the Republicans of Maine. They responded to my nomination with genuine enthusiasm and ratified it by a superb vote. I count it as one of the honors and gratifications of my public career that the party in Maine, after struggling hard for the last six years, and twice within that period losing the State, has come back in this campaign to an old-fashioned 20,000 plurality. No other expression of popular confidence and esteem could equal that of the people among whom I have lived for thirty years and to whom I am attached by all the ties that ennoble human nature and give joy and dignity to life. After Maine—indeed along with Maine—my first thought is always of Pennsylvania. How can I fittingly express my thanks for that unparalleled majority of more than 80,000 votes, a popular indorsement which has deeply touched my heart, and which has, if possible, increased my affection for the grand old Commonwealth; an affection which I inherited from my ancestry and which I shall transmit to my children. But I do not limit my thanks to the State of my residence and the State of my birth. I owe much to the true and zealous friends in New England who worked so nobly for the Republican party and its candidates, and to the eminent scholars and divines, who, stepping aside from their ordinary vocations, made my cause their cause, and to loyalty and principle added the special compliment of standing as my personal representatives in the national struggle.

But the achievements for the Republican cause in the East are even surpassed by the splendid victories in the West. In that magnificent cordon of States that stretches from the foot hills of the Alleghanies to the Golden Gate of the Pacific, beginning with Ohio and ending with California, the Republican banner was borne so loftily that but a single State failed to join in the wide acclaim of triumph. Nor should I do justice to my own feelings if I failed to thank the Republicans of the Empire State, who encountered so many discouragements and obstacles, who fought foes from within and foes from without, and who waged so strong a battle that a change of one vote in every 2,000 would have given us the victory in the nation. Indeed, a change of little more than 5,000 votes would have transferred New York, Indiana, New Jersey and Connecticut to the Republican standard, and would have made the North as solid as the South.

My thanks would still be incomplete if I should fail to recognize with special gratitude that great body of workingmen, both native and foreign born, who gave me their earnest support, breaking from old personal and party ties, and finding in the principles which I represented in the canvass the safeguard and protection of their own fireside interests.

The result of the election, my friends, will be regarded in the future, I think, as extraordinary. The Northern States, leaving out the cities of New York and Brooklyn from the count, sustained the Republican cause by a majority of more than 400,000—almost half a million, indeed, of the popular vote. The cities of New York and Brooklyn threw their great strength and influence with the solid South, and were the decisive element which gave to that section the control of the National Government. Speaking now, not at all as a defeated candidate, but simply as a loyal and devoted American, I think the transfer of the political power of the Government to the South is a great national misfortune. It is a misfortune because it introduces an element which cannot insure harmony and prosperity to the people; because it introduces into a republic the rule of a minority. The first instinct of an American is equality—equality of right, equality of privilege, equality of political power; that equality which says to every citizen, "Your vote is quite as good, just as potential as the vote of any other citizen." That cannot be said to-day in the United States. The course of affairs in the South has crushed out the political power of more than six million American citizens, and has transferred it by violence to others. Forty-two Presidential Electors are assigned to the South on account of the colored population, and yet the colored population, with more than 1,100,000 legal votes, have been unable to choose a single Elector. Even in those States where they have a majority of more than a hundred thousand they are deprived of free suffrage and their rights as citizens are scornfully trodden under foot. The 11 States that comprised the rebel Confederacy had by the census of 1880 7,500,000 white population and 5,300,000 colored population. The colored population almost to a man desire to support the Republican party, but by a system of cruel intimidation and by violence and murder, whenever violence and murder are thought necessary, they are absolutely deprived of all political power. If the outrage stopped there it would be bad enough, but it does not stop there, for not only is the negro population disfranchised, but the power which rightfully and constitutionally belongs to them is transferred to the white population, enabling the white population of the South to exert an electoral influence far beyond that exerted by the same number of white people in the North. To illustrate just how it works to the destruction of all fair elections, let me present to you five States in the late Confederacy and five loyal States of the North, possessing in each section the same number of Electoral votes. In the South, the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina have in the aggregate 48 Electoral votes. They have 2,800,000 white people and over 3,000,000 colored people. In the North, the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and California have likewise in the aggregate 48 Electoral votes, and they have a white population of 5,600,000, or just double the five Southern States which I have named. These Northern States have practically no colored population. It is therefore evident that the white men in those Southern States, by usurping and absorbing the rights of the colored men, are exerting just double the political power of the white men in the Northern States. I submit, my friends, that such a condition of affairs is extraordinary, unjust, and derogatory to the manhood of the North. Even those who are vindictively opposed to negro suffrage will not deny that if Presidential Electors are assigned to the South by reason of the negro population, that population ought to be permitted free

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suffrage in the election. To deny that clear proposition is to affirm that a Southern white man in the Gulf States is entitled to double the political power of a Northern white man in the Lake States—it is to affirm that a Confederate soldier shall wield twice the influence in the nation that a Union soldier can, and that a perpetual and constantly increasing superiority shall be conceded to the Southern white man in the government of the Union. If that be quietly conceded in this generation, it will harden into custom until the badge of inferiority will attach to the Northern white man as odiously as ever Norman noble stamped it upon Saxon churls.

This subject is of deep interest to the laboring men of the North. With the Southern Democracy triumphant in their States and in the nation, the negro will be compelled to work for just such wages as the whites may decree; wages which will amount as did the supplies of the slaves, to a bare subsistence, equal in cash, perhaps, to 35 cents per day, if averaged over the entire South. The white laborer in the North will soon feel the distinctive effect of this upon his own wages. The Republicans have clearly seen from the earliest days of reconstruction that wages in the South must be raised to a just recompense of the laborer, or wages in the North ruinously lowered, and the party have steadily worked for the former result. The reverse influence will now be set in motion and that condition of affairs produced which, years ago, Mr. Lincoln warned the free laboring men of the North will prove hostile to their independence and will inevitably lead to a ruinous reduction of wages. A mere difference in the color of the skin will not suffice to maintain an entirely different standard of wages in contiguous and adjacent States, and the voluntary will be compelled to yield to the involuntary. So completely have the colored men of the South been already deprived by the Democratic party of their constitutional and legal rights as citizens of the United States that they regard the advent of that party to national power as the signal of their re-enslavement, and are affrighted because they think all legal protection for them is gone. Few persons in the North realize how completely the chiefs of the rebellion wield the political power which has triumphed in the late election. It is a portentous fact that the Democratic Senators who come from the States of the late Confederacy, all—and I mean all with out a single exception—personally participated in the rebellion against the National Government. It is a still more significant fact that in those States no man who was loyal to the Union, no matter how strong a Democrat he may be to-day, has the slightest chance of political promotion. The one great avenue to honor in that section is the record of zealous service in the war against the Government. It is certainly an astounding fact that the section in which friendship for the Union in the day of its trial and agony is still a political disqualification should be called now to rule over the Union, All this takes place during the lifetime of the generation that fought the war, and elevates into practical command of the American Government the identical men who organized for its destruction and plunged us into the bloodiest contest of modern times.

I have spoken of the South as placed by the late election in possession of the Government, and I mean all that my words imply. The South furnished nearly three-fourths of the Electoral votes that defeated the Republican party, and they will step to the command of the Democrats as unchallenged and as unrestrained as they held the same position for 30 years before the civil war. Gentlemen, there cannot be political inequality among the citizens of a free republic; there cannot be a minority of white men in the South ruling a majority of white men in the North. Patriotism, self-respect, pride, protection for person and safety for country all cry out against it. The very thought of it stirs the blood of men who inherit equality from the Pilgrims who first stood on Plymouth Rock, and from liberty-loving patriots who came to the Delaware with William Penn. It becomes the primal questian of American manhood. It demands a hearing and a settlement, and that settlement will vindicate the equality of American citizens in all personal and civil rights. It will, at least, establish the equality of white men under the National Government, and will give to the Northern man, who fought to preserve the Union, as large a voice in its government as may be exercised by the Southern man, who fought to destroy the Union. The contest just closed utterly dwarfs the fortunes and fate of candidates, whether successful or unsuccessful. Purposely—I may say instinctively—I have discussed the issues and consequences of that contest without reference to my own defeat, without the remotest reference to the gentleman who is elevated to the Presidency. Toward him personally I have no cause for the slightest ill-will, and it is with cordiality I express the wish that his official career may prove gratifying to himself and beneficial to the country, and that his Administration may overcome the embarrassments which the peculiar source of its power imposes upon it from the hour of its birth.

A Story About the Old Debt.

[Chicago Times.]

Recently an old man from a New England State went into the Treasury Department in Washington and said that about 20 years ago he had found some old bonds among the papers of an uncle, a man of national reputation for ability and wealth from 1820 to 1836, whose name he bore and whose estate he inherited many years ago. They seemed to be United States bonds, he said, but he could not find a banker who knew anything of them or their value, and as he was coming here he thought he would bring them along and see if they really had any value. They were indeed curiosities, old and yellow as they were from age, for they were part of "the old debt," and ceased to bear interest in 1836. The amount of the principal was $50,000, and there was ten years' interest due on them. He said he would gladly have taken $5,000 for them, and that he had once offered them to a Massachusetts bank for that, but his offer was contemptuously declined. The old man walked out of the Treasury with a check in his pocket on the New York Sub-Treasury for $70,000.

Quick Work.

[Asheville Citizen.]

A correspondent from Yancey writes us of the most expeditious election work done during the past very active campaign. Mr. L. Whittington was put out as the Democratic candidate for the House on Monday the 3rd, at 4 o'clock. There being no time or facility to print tickets, they were written and rapidly distributed throughout the county, and on Tuesday, at 7 o'clock, p. m., he was elected.