

ALLEN GRAY;

The Mystery of Turley's Point.

Being a Few Romantic Chapters From the Life of a Country Editor.

BY JOHN B. MURPHY, AUTHOR OF "WALTER BURNFIELD," "HITLER LAKEMAN," "HARPER OF BEDFORD," AND OTHER STORIES.

"They seem to fear that I am being watched," said Allen to himself, "and I suppose that the sooner I get away from here the better."

He gave his horse a rein, and the animal cantered away at a brisk pace. It was a quiet night. The hum of insects and chirp of crickets along the wooded road made pleasant music for the lonely traveler. Though he had been considerably rested, his muscles, unaccustomed to the hard strain so recently put upon them, were bruised and sore. Had not his horse been an easy-going animal he could not have enjoyed the journey. Being alone and unaccompanied, the return was much more comfortable than his ride of the night before.

The farmers were returning to their homes after their hard day's toil. The weary horses, now freed from the clanking chains, crunched their hooves on the dusty road. The farmer, sitting on the door-step to cool his heated feet, the night of sweet repose that was before him.

The country was thickly settled, and for the first hour or two of his night ride he heard the low murmur of voices in and about the farm-houses. At one the weary plowman sat on the front porch smoking his evening pipe; at another a pair of lovers were cooling upon the lawn; at a third two or three noisy children were playing in the yard, their shouts and laughter making the weary traveler glad.

But when the hum of voices and scenes of life died away. As night still more closely enveloped the earth in her sable mantle a quiet repose fell over the scene and all became silent. The farmer had cooled his feet and was sleeping sweetly; the plowman had stoked his pipe and retired; the lovers had separated with a parting kiss, and the merry childish voices were hushed in slumber.

Only occasionally was he aroused from his gloomy reveries by a restless dog running out into the road to bark at the passing stranger. Then he plunged into a great forest-covered valley, and the hoot of owls and screams of night birds groined upon his nerves, causing him to shudder.

Having only a forty-mile ride before him, and not wishing to enter the town before daylight, Allen allowed his horse to jog along quietly, and his mind dwelt upon the strange events of the last few weeks, terminating in this most extraordinary journey. How was he to account for his strange absence, and would he be able to keep this visit secret from the tall,

dark stranger? Somehow he felt that that tall, dark man, giving his name as X. Y. Z., was his enemy, and if he had been pursued by one of the pursuers.

All night, over low-lying roads, through dark forests and along silent lanes the young editor continued his journey. When morning dawned he was in sight of the village where he was directed to stay.

He went to a small hotel, where he gave his horse into the care of the landlord, ordering the horse to be groomed and fed, and that breakfast be prepared for himself. He slept most of the forenoon, but at two o'clock rose, and after a hearty dinner called for his horse.

"Which way are you going?" the landlord asked.

"Back home—up the river," he answered.

"Did you come from the river?"

"Yes, sir."

"Been out trading?"

"No, sir. I went to a town below here on some business, and I am now on my way back."

Glad to escape so inquisitive a man as the landlord was liable to prove, Allen paid his bill and mounting his horse galloped away in the direction of Turley's Point.

If he went straight ahead he would reach the Point long before night, which he did not wish to do; so, coming to a thick forest, he rode some distance into it, and there waited until the sun had gone down and the shades of twilight had begun to deepen, when he again resumed his journey.

Allen was almost worn out with his long ride at such unreasonable hours, and his very glad when he appeared on the Point in the vicinity of Turley's Point. It was still early, and not wishing to be seen by any one, he rode around the village, entering the old deserted turpentine some distance above it. Here it was so dark that he could scarce see an object three paces before him, but he managed to find the path, and took the horse to the very spot where he had found him, and tied him to the same tree.

He felt a great burden lifted from his breast. He seemed to be just awaking from a troubled dream. Cramped by his long ride, his stiffened limbs seemed hardly able to carry him to the village.

Danger was over; a few moments more and he would be in his bed resting from his toilsome journey.

Allen reached the turpentine, and had just stepped out of the narrow path into it, when a tall dark form sprang upon him. Before he could make an effort to resist, he was seized by the shoulders and hurled to the earth. A hand clutched his throat and a sharp bright blade glittered in the starlight above him, while a voice almost stifled with hate, hissed in his ear.

"Die, you dog!"

CHAPTER XV.
THE MAN WITH THE HORSE WHIP.

Wholly unprepared for the sudden attack, Allen Gray was struck to black and equally as quick to act. His movements had to be with lightning-like rapidity to seize the wrist of the descending hand which held the murderous dagger, but once he had the arm he clung to it with an iron grasp. Next, with his hand that was free, he seized the hand of the would-be assassin, which was clutching at his throat until he was almost suffocated, and here it loose. The assassin had clenched his teeth on the chest of the man he had hurled to the earth, but not knowing how strong he really was, the young fellow actually sprang from under him, and in a moment was on his knees. He clung with wonderful tenacity to the hand which still held the dagger, for he knew that it was certain death to release his hold.

The struggle was silent and desperate, for both were strong, determined men. While Allen's opponent was taller and heavier than himself, the latter had an advantage in activity and skill in wrestling and boxing. From their knees the struggling men

rose to their feet.

The dagger fell to the ground and neither could get it. The contest became one of endurance. The men were fighting for life. They struggled, turned and twisted, and fought with maddened desperation until Allen finally struck his antagonist on the head. The blow staggered him, and another following up this momentary advantage, Allen struck three or four more blows and felled him to the earth. Enraged and furious at the sudden attempt on his life, the young editor seized the dagger which lay on the ground at his side, and raising the gleaming blade to drive it to the heart of his assailant, he cried:

"Now you'll see which dog shall die!"

A piercing shriek rose on the air, and a slender form clad in spotless white flew toward them and seized the uplifted arm.

"Oh, don't, don't in Heaven's name, don't murder him!" cried the beautiful girl, at whose solicitation he had gone to Frenchtown.

"Bertha—Bertha—you here?" gasped Allen, starting back in surprise, not unmingled with horror, when he reflected that he was about to take the life of a human being.

"Oh, spare him, spare him. In the name of the Virgin let there be no blood shed!" pleaded Bertha, wringing her hands in agony. Allen stood transfixed and dumb with amazement, while the dark-skinned man, to whom her appearance was not such an inexplicable mystery, rose to his feet and in a voice of suppressed thunder said:

"It is very kind of you to save my life after plotting so long to take it. I, Henry, I never—never dreamed it would come to this!" groaned the beautiful girl, still wringing her hands in agony. The master turned upon her much as a cruel father or master might upon a child or servant, and in a tone of muffled thunder said:

"We've had enough of this—go home." In his excitement and rage Allen could distinguish a strong foreign accent in his language, which on ordinary occasions was not perceptible.

"Not while you threaten each other," she answered, sobbing bitterly.

"Why did you follow me? Did I not tell you to stay within your house?"

"I know—I know; but I'll not come you quiet repose fell over the scene and all became silent. The farmer had cooled his feet and was sleeping sweetly; the plowman had stoked his pipe and retired; the lovers had separated with a parting kiss, and the merry childish voices were hushed in slumber.

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Speak to them of love, hear it we speak in the winds of heaven. He looked through the window at a man leaping, dancing and yelling a lullaby to a hundred paces away, wearing his best man on dirt. It was the man with the horse-whip from Billy's Creek.

CHAPTER XVII.
A DESPERATE DETERMINATION.

Allen smiled. The man from Billy's Creek had cultivated his ill-temper until he was enabled to fly into a passion on the slightest notice. Some men do this, apparently, for no other reason than to make themselves miserable.

Growing tired of the silly fellow's antics, the editor turned to his desk and tried to bury himself in his business. But notwithstanding the many exciting and ludicrous events, his mind was not wholly won away from the mystery which seemed to be real-izing by blighting his life, and he thought of the most exciting moments, the cry: "In Heaven's name spare him!" rang on the ear. The sweet, sad face of the mystic girl, whom he could not but love, seemed always before him, pleading with her large blue eyes for relief.

"Who are you? Who are you?" he asked himself again and again as the vision rose before his mind. Ten thousand tormenting thoughts seemed constantly aggravating him with their doubts and fears.

"I will know the worst," he declared to himself. "If I have to beard the lion in his den, I will know all."

The stranger from Billy's Creek was forgotten, so wholly was Allen absorbed with thoughts of the stone house on the hill. The rustling of the robe, weary with cursing and striking the air, and so on one seemed to dispute his title to be "the best man on dirt." He left the village, to carry to his friends a wonderful story of how he had made the editor quiet.

The editor, meantime, sat in oblivion of his existence when he was started by a knock. Looking around, he saw a little surprised woman, Miss Leathy Hopkins standing just within the door.

"Why, Miss Hopkins, are you here?" the wondering editor asked.

"Ah, are you hurt?" she sobbed, hysterically.

"No," he answered, in astonishment.

"Oh, I—that is—sir—I was afraid that you had been hurt," gasped Miss Hopkins, sinking into a chair.

"I assure you that I am unharmed." "But he looked so furious!" "There is little danger in looks." "And I had such a dread of him." "He is gone now, and can do you no injury," said the editor, misinterpreting the old maid.

"Oh, Mr. Gray, I—I would not have had him injure you for the world, and we were talking so pleasantly, too, when he came in."

"So we were," returned Allen. "I believe we were talking about the mystery of Turley's Point, were we not?"

"No, no—oh, you rogue, you know about what we were talking," said Miss Leathy, wiping her eyes and blushing profusely behind her handkerchief.

"If he comprehended Miss Hopkins he did not pretend to be in a cool, even voice said:

"I was going to ask you something about that old house on the hill."

"Don't you know it is a forbidden topic?"

"Yes, generally it is," he answered, with a sigh. "It is not every one that I would talk with on this subject, but as we have occasionally exchanged confidence on other subjects, we might on this."

"Oh, of course," she managed to blush quite profusely now, and coyly pinching at the folds of her dress, gathered them down into narrow plaits.

"I thought you would be willing to tell me all you knew about the matter."

"Oh, yes," she smiled and gave him a glance from the corner of her eyes.

"What is the name of the man who lives in the stone house?" Allen asked, without noticing her look or making an effort to translate it.

"Some say it's Collins, but he has a great, big French name, something like De Collier, which they say is his real name, and that he took the name of Collins in place of it, because it is easier to pronounce."

"How many have they in family at the rock house?"

"That is very difficult to ascertain. Some say there are several, others that there are not many. They have good many servants, but as all talk French, no one can find out anything from them."

"Did you ever realize that there is a great deal of romance about this singularly mysterious old house on the hill?"

"Yes, sir, it was," she answered; "and I believe that it would be an excellent theme for a story."

"It might. What do you know of it?"

"Oh, not much."

"How long have you known that tall, dark-whiskered man?"

"I don't know him at all."

"You mean you have no formal acquaintance?"

"No, sir."

"How long since you first saw him?"

"Three or four years ago."

"Had he been here before that time?"

"I have heard that he had. He has been living at the old stone house on the hill, at about the same time."

"I believe you said that a young lady was once seen within those walls?"

"Yes, sir; that was only a few months ago. I have heard that she was seen again within the last few days. Some one discovered her sitting on a rustic seat beneath an old oak, at a spring on the hillside, between the village and the rock house."

"No one knows. She seems to be an additional mystery. It is generally supposed that she is the daughter of the dark-whiskered master of the stone house."

"She has no resemblance to him whatever," interposed Allen.

"You have seen her then?"

"From the description I have had of her, she has no resemblance to him."

"No; not parents and children are sometimes very dissimilar."

"Do you think she has lived there long?"

"No, sir, she can not have been there more than a few months at most," answered Miss Hopkins. "She was never seen about the place until recently."

"Have you ever heard of any children being seen or heard there?"

"No, sir."

"Do you think there are any?"

"There are none. They would find it impossible to keep a child within those great walls so quiet and silent that it would not be seen or heard by some one," answered the school-teacher.

"Does that dark-whiskered man make frequent trips away?"

"I suppose he does—it is seldom, however, that any one ever sees him go away or come back. For weeks at a time he is not seen, and then we know he is away from the old house on the hill. Then all of a sudden he is discovered walking about the big house, or even coming to the village, but he is very quiet, and he is a miser. Some people think that he is the child of a beautiful and goes away to his rendezvous occasionally. There is an old mother who believes in witchcraft. She says he is a wizard, and that the strange sights seen and strange voices heard there so often are the result of his wild incantations and invocations of the evil spirit. I have heard people say that they have heard screams, shrieks and wild, demonic laughter from within that old house, which assert from the blood in their veins."

Allen, having witnessed some of these strange sights and heard some of these mysterious noises, did not think that she was exaggerating them in the least. But his strong common sense told him that there was nothing supernatural in all he had seen and heard. It could all be very easily accounted for if properly understood. He was not so much interested in the house and the mysterious sights and sounds associated

with it as he was. A terrible noise with a strong forward attraction of the editor's attention. He looked through the window at a man leaping, dancing and yelling a lullaby to a hundred paces away, wearing his best man on dirt. It was the man with the horse-whip from Billy's Creek.

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"It might. What do you know of it?"

"Oh, not much."

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"I don't know him at all."

"You mean you have no formal acquaintance?"

"No, sir."

"How long since you first saw him?"

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"You have seen her then?"

"From the description I have had of her, she has no resemblance to him."

"No; not parents and children are sometimes very dissimilar."

"Do you think she has lived there long?"

"No, sir, she can not have been there more than a few months at most," answered Miss Hopkins. "She was never seen about the place until recently."

"Have you ever heard of any children being seen or heard there?"

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"There are none. They would find it impossible to keep a child within those great walls so quiet and silent that it would not be seen or heard by some one," answered the school-teacher.

"Does that dark-whiskered man make frequent trips away?"

"I suppose he does—it is seldom, however, that any one ever sees him go away or come back. For weeks at a time he is not seen, and then we know he is away from the old house on the hill. Then all of a sudden he is discovered walking about the big house, or even coming to the village, but he is very quiet, and he is a miser. Some people think that he is the child of a beautiful and goes away to his rendezvous occasionally. There is an old mother who believes in witchcraft. She says he is a wizard, and that the strange sights seen and strange voices heard there so often are the result of his wild incantations and invocations of the evil spirit. I have heard people say that they have heard screams, shrieks and wild, demonic laughter from within that old house, which assert from the blood in their veins."

TAMING A CANARY.

How a Bird May Be Taught to Perch Upon His Master's Nose.

The method I have followed in the earlier training of canaries is not original with me. I am indebted therefore to a Catholic priest, whose entire success therein encouraged me to make some efforts on the same lines.

There are two important preliminaries in the process: First, you must have no one else in the vicinity of the bird's cage—or, better still, in the room; and second, a rare degree of patience is requisite. Of these two essentials, moreover, I would place the greater stress on the latter.

The small bunch of fluff and feathers and warbling unceasing, whose dainty tricks shall form the burden of my sketch, I called Cap. He was of a bright, yellow tint, but had a black spot topping his head and extending well down to the eyes. This ebony speck, so neatly placed, suggested his name. When he first came into my possession Cap was a bit fractious—for a bird. Here, then, is the method by which I tamed him.

At a dozen intervals in the day I approached the cage slowly, and, placing one finger near the wires where the perch rested, instantly jerked the finger away. This action, which may seem rather foolish, I repeated over and over, but always in gentle fashion, so as not to frighten the bird, but only to excite his curiosity. Well, it gradually dawned on the tiny brain that I was afraid of having my finger pecked—the very impression my action was meant to convey. The canary's shyness was becoming obliterated through the novel idea that I was actually afraid of him! Cap began quite soon to act on this idea, and with lessening caution each few times. Nor did I fail to give him opportunities. By slow degrees I got closer to the wires and intruded my finger at greater length between them, withdrawing it directly on the bird's approach, and if he chanced to overtake and peck it I simulated much misery if not pain at the mishap.

"Well, it got so at last, simply by following the above rules, that whether Cap was eating or bathing or picking his feathers, he left off the task and flew to the side of the cage the instant my finger appeared, and later on, in fact, if I dared to come within a yard of his territory! His enjoyment of my supposed fear of him was merged at last in genuine temper, and he would evince it by outstretched wings, sharp squeaks, and eyes which had as much of the devil in them as they could hold. At such unamusing times he stood on one leg, grasped the wires with the other claws, and bade me particular defiance.

Cap was now tamed; so the aggravating measures employed in bringing about this condition were gradually dropped, and a coaxing system, which varies, of course, with bird lovers, was adopted to win confidence where I had effectually displaced fear. Once you tame a bird, it is advantageous to give him the liberty of the room for a couple of hours every day. He thus has the chance to improve an acquaintance made behind the bars. But tame him first in the cage; this is my experience.

And now let me recount some of Cap's cute accomplishments. I have time and again had him alight on my shoulder or on the top of my head while I was writing, and he had a trick of fluttering around or below from these points and poising with perfect sang froid on the bridge of my nose! This, indeed, was his favorite coign, albeit a trifle awkward for me.

Sometimes I placed his bathing dish on the palm of my hand, which I held out invitingly, and Cap made not a particle of bones about alighting on the dish rim and, after a few preparations, dousing down in the water and making it fly while he performed his ablutions. Having finished, he would seek the top of my head, shake himself thoroughly, and then make the circuit of the room warbling at the top of his voice. My door often stood open while Cap was out of his cage, and if I left the room his invariable practice was to fly after me and have a "lift" down stairs on my head or shoulder; while often, when he heard my step coming up and I had previously crept out without his seeing me, he would fly down to meet me. Occasionally, through inadvertence, the cage door has been left open at night, and Cap has awakened me in the morning sitting demurely on the bridge of my nose. This may not appear very strongly to the credence of the reader, but it is a fact, as are each of the instances named of my canary's talent for making himself perfectly at home.

—Cor. N. Y. Sun.

—Some persistent novel readers in the British Museum devoured as many as twenty volumes a day, and occupied their seats so persistently that the authorities have been compelled to issue the rule that novels that have been first published within the preceding five years will not be issued to readers unless some special reason can be given by those requiring them.

—A correspondent says that he treats every man as a rascal until he proves himself honest, and that he finds it saves him many a dollar. If the man is honest he will not suffer from being watched as you would watch a rascal, and if he is a rascal you will be greatly ahead by watching him.

—A company with a capital of \$150,000 has been formed to build passenger tunnels under New York City.

—Dancing is said to be declining in popularity in England.

—The wives of Msid, the great African chief, are his ministers of state. He has 500 of them. They run the whole kingdom.

—One of the rules of the Royal Library in Berlin, made with a view to preserving quiet and order, calls for the exclusion of all members of the gentler sex.

—The Emperor of Japan is rich. He is allowed \$2,500,000 a year for his household department and his private fortune is large and increasing.

AN UNMIGATED EVIL.

The Habits of Borrowing and the Money Which It Lends.

The habit of borrowing has become less prevalent in all ages, and of equal probability has always been regarded as reprehensible. There are many times when a little assistance, in case of sudden sickness or such emergency, is a temporary necessity as well as a kindness, but the tendency in borrowing should be discouraged. It destroys that modest form which the economical and prudent housewife esteems almost essential to her worldly prosperity, and it is a habit which can be rectified by any one fortunately addicted to it who has a slightest strength of purpose. The habit of borrowing has been practiced by our most ancient and greatest sages and poets, and is dating back to the almost prehistoric period has said: "If thou hast a need, borrow not, since thou hast none; if thou hast nothing, borrow as thou canst not be sure to repay; while that shrewdness of economy, Polonius, is represented by Shakespeare as urging upon his son Laertes these sentiments:

"Sooner a borrower than a lender be. For loan of money best, and that of heaven, hold things is a pestiferous evil. Thrifty housewives are often compelled to carry an unwholesome load, or by refusal to initiate divisions and dislikes. It is an old story that of the unthrifty housewife, gauged her new neighbors a good deal because they did not have a kettle or flatiron, or even a drinking tea, to lend, but it was evident that a spirit of