



THE HOUR GLASS.

BY ROBERT BARR.

Copyright, 1906, by Robert Barr.

BERTRAM EASTFORD had intended to pass the shop of his old friend, the curiosity dealer, into whose pocket so much of his money had gone for trinkets gathered from all quarters of the globe. He knew it was weakness on his part to select that street when he might have taken another, but he thought it would do no harm to treat himself to one glance at the seductive window of the old curiosity shop where the dealer was in the habit of displaying his latest acquisitions. The window was never quite the same, and it had a continued fascination for Bertram Eastford, but this time he said to himself resolutely he would not enter, having, as he assured himself, the strength of mind to forego this temptation. However, he reckoned without his window, for in it there was an old object newly displayed which caught his attention as effectually as a half driven nail arrests the hem of a cloak. On the central shelf of the window stood an hourglass, its framework of some wood as black as ebony. He stood gazing at it for a moment, then turned to the door and went inside, greeting the ancient shopman, whom he knew so well.

"I want to look at the hourglass you have in the window," he said.

"Ah, yes," replied the curiosity dealer, "the cheap watch has driven the hourglass out of the commercial market, and we rarely pick up a thing like that nowadays."

He took the hourglass from the shelf in the window, reversed it and placed it on a table. The ruddy sand began to pour through into the lower receptacle in a thin, constant stream, as if it were blood that had been dried and powdered. Eastford watched the ever increasing heap at the bottom, rising conically, changing its shape every moment as little avalanches of the sand fell away from its heightening sides.

"There is no need for you to extol its antiquity," said Eastford, with a smile. "I knew the moment I looked at it that such glasses were rare, and you are not going to find me a cheapening customer."

"So far from overpraising it," protested the shopman, "I was about to call your attention to a defect. It is useless as a measure of time."

"It doesn't record the exact hour, then?" asked Eastford.

"Well, I suppose the truth is they were not very particular in the old days, and time was not money as it is now. It measures the hour with great accuracy," the curio dealer went on, "that is, if you watch it, but, strangely enough, after it has run for half an hour or thereabouts, through some defect in the neck of the glass or in the pulverizing of the sand, it stops and will not go again unless the glass is shaken."

The hourglass at that moment verified what the old man said. The tiny stream of sand suddenly ceased, but went on again the moment its owner jarred the frame and continued pouring without interruption. "That is very singular," said Eastford. "How do you account for it?"

"I imagine it is caused by some inequality in the grains of sand. Probably a few atoms larger than the others come together at the neck and so stop the percolation. It always does it, and of course I cannot remedy the matter because the glass is hermetically sealed."

The dealer named his price, and Eastford paid the amount asked.

That night in his room Bertram Eastford wrote busily until a late hour. When his work was concluded, he pushed away his manuscript with a sigh of deep contentment which comes to a man who has not wasted his day. He placed the ancient hourglass on his table, watching the thin stream of sand which his action had set running. The constant, unceasing, steady downfall seemed to hypnotize him. Its descent was as silent as the footsteps of time itself. Suddenly it stopped, as if it had done in the shop, and its abrupt ceasing jarred on his tingling nerves like an unexpected break in the stillness. He could almost imagine an unseen hand clapping the thin cylinder of the glass and throttling it. He shook the bygone time measurer and breathed again more steadily when the sand resumed its motion. Presently he took the glass from the table and examined it with some attention.

"Now, I wonder what that's for?" murmured Eastford to himself. "An attempt at a coat of arms perhaps?"

There was no clew to the meaning of the hieroglyphs, and Eastford, with the glass balanced on his knee, watched the sand still running, the crimson threads spawling the lamplight. He fancied he saw distorted reflections of faces in the convex glass, although his reason told him they were but caricatures of his own. The great bell in the tower near by with slow solemnity tolled 12. He counted its measured strokes one by one, and then was startled by a decisive knock at his door.

"Come in!"

The door opened, and the discussion in his mind ceased to consider the untimeliness of the visit, for here in the visitor himself stood another problem. He was a young man in military costume, his uniform being that of an officer. Eastford remembered seeing

JAPAN IN WINTER.

Colder in Houses of the Rich Than in Open Sunshine.

"I suppose that the American people and the Russians are the only western races that really keep warm in winter. Still those who dwell in other countries admit that they have the same ideal by their inefficient effort to attain to it," writes Anna N. Benjamin in *Alanskie's*.

"The Japanese winter is most trying on account of its continual dampness, but the Japanese are content to remain cold. They make almost no effort to overcome it. The old bushido (chivalrous) idea of the 'samurai' (knights) was that it was effeminate to feel cold, and such is their severe training that they do not really feel it as we do. The wearing of some extra 'kimonos' and the use of a 'hibachi' or brazier, in which are a few tiny sticks of lighted charcoal, are the only concessions to winter weather. With the 'hibachi' they never pretend to heat more than their finger tips, which they hold over the coals. It is used when the house is entirely open.

"The houses, as every one knows, are built of thin, light wood, and the sliding panels which serve for doors and windows have paper panes. They are as apt to be open as closed during the day. When I took my first jūrīkisha ride through the streets of Nagasaki, I forgot my own sufferings in my sympathy for this unhappy nation, which as surely as the cold came endured such misery from it. The coolies wear thin blue cotton clothes and are always piddling through the mud. The storekeepers sit out in their open booths, and the women go bareheaded about the streets. In the houses of the rich the still cold behind the closed panels is often more intense than the cold outside in the sunshine, where the air is stirring. The schools and public buildings are equally frigid.

"It seemed to me that the only warm things in Japan were the babies, who looked like bundles of gray colored erape, their round heads covered by knit caps. They slumber peacefully tucked down their mothers' backs. The attempt to keep warm in winter is not entirely a modern improvement (though I forget my own sufferings in my sympathy for this unhappy nation, which as surely as the cold came endured such misery from it. The coolies wear thin blue cotton clothes and are always piddling through the mud. The storekeepers sit out in their open booths, and the women go bareheaded about the streets. In the houses of the rich the still cold behind the closed panels is often more intense than the cold outside in the sunshine, where the air is stirring. The schools and public buildings are equally frigid.

"Yes," said the officer; "I was more accustomed to a sword than to an etching tool, and the letters are but rudely drawn. One evening after dark Gretlich and I were whispering together in the hall when we heard the heavy tread of the general coming up the stairs. The girl fled precipitately, and I, holding open the door, waited the approach of my chief. He entered and quietly asked me to close the door."

"Lieutenant," he said, "it is my intention to capture the citadel tonight. Get together 25 of your men and have them ready under the shadow of this house, but give no hint of what you intend to do with them. In one hour's time leave this place as quietly as possible and make an attack on the western entrance of the citadel. Your attack is to be but a feint to draw off their forces to that point. Still, if any of your men succeed in gaining entrance to the fort they shall not lack reward and promotion. Have you a watch?"

"Not one that will go, general, but I have an hourglass here."

"Very well; set it running. Collect your men and exactly at the hour lead them to the west front. It is but five minutes' quick march from here. An hour and five minutes from this moment I expect you to begin the attack, and the moment you are before the western gate make as much noise as your 25 men are capable of so as to lead the enemy to believe that the attack is a serious one."

"I set the hourglass running and went at once to call my men, stationing them where I had been ordered to place them. I returned to have a word with Gretlich before I departed on what I knew was a dangerous mission. Glancing at the hourglass, I saw that not more than a quarter of the sand had run down during my absence. I remained in the doorway where I could keep an eye on the hourglass, while the girl stood leaning her arm against the angle of the dark passageway, supporting her fair cheek on her open palm, and standing thus in the darkness she talked to me in whispers. We talked and talked, engaged in that sweet, endless conversation that murmurs in solitude, and the world, being duplicated that moment at who knows how many places. Absorbed as I was in listening, at last there crept into my consciousness the fact that the sand in the upper bulb was not diminishing as fast as it should. This knowledge was fully in my mind for some time before I realized its fearful significance. Suddenly the dim knowledge took an actuality. I sprang from the door-lintel, saying:

"Good heavens! The sand in the hourglass has stopped running!"

"I remained there motionless, all action struck from my rigid limbs, gazing at the hourglass on the table. Gretlich, peering in at the doorway and looking at the hourglass and not at me, having no suspicion of the ruin involved in the stoppage of that miniature sandstorm, said presently:

"Oh, yes; I forgot to tell you it does that now and then, and so you must shake the glass."

"The United States is now patronizing the banana plantations of the West Indies and of Central America to the amount of about \$8,000,000 a year. That is the exporting, not the retail value. The island of Jamaica alone is sending to this country over 4,000,000 bunches a year, which means \$1,500,000 to the producers and shippers of the colony.

THE NEW TENANT.

Now, when he left my life I drew

Close shut the casements of my heart
And locked the door, and in each part
Strange darkness reigned, forlorn and sad
There pierced no happy sunshine through
The barrier of fastened doors;
The dust lay thick upon the floors
Where roanery was strewn and rue.

But on a certain day came one
Who knocked and would not be denied
And through the closed casements wide
And dinged with the wind and sun,
The dinged with grief had spun,
The dust that sat neglected had laid,
The faded hangings, rent and frayed,
Had vanished ere his work was done.

Oh, he hath swept my heart for me
Clean of old sorrowing and doubt,
And he hath set it all about
With peace and happy certainty!
Oh, home he glad for such as he,
And very sweet nor let him find
That ghost one tenant left behind,
That silent and unsummed!

—Theodora Garrison in Harper's Bazar.

NO BREAKING OFF.

Just a Little Disagreement Between the Peppery Lovers.

"See here, Daniel," began the old farmer when he had cornered his son out by the corner, "what's this here circlear tin round 'mong the neighbors 'bout you and Patience breakin' off yer engagement?"

"Nuthin' to it 'tall," with a sullen tone and look.

"Blamed funny. I never see so much smoke where there wasn't so much fire. Did you and her have some words?"

"I said there wasn't no breakin' off, didn't I? What's the use of cross questionin' a feller like he was on the witness stand?"

"Lots of use, my young man. Hain't I told you more times 'n you've got fingers and toes that my mind and ma's mind is set on this here marriage? Don't our farms jine, and isn't she a only child, and hain't you a only chile? Hain't you got no guntion nor common sense?"

"She said not. She said I didn't know enough to peel 'biled pertaters afore eatin' 'em or to keep awake when I was a-courtin' of her."

"She hain't so far wrong, either. And what did you say?"

"I tol' her she didn't have interlock enough to talk so's to keep nobody awake and that if I was a-pickin' and a-choosin' fur beauty she'd be at the foot of the class. That's what I tol' her."

"Well?"

"She ordered me to git out and said of she ever see me on that farm from hencefor'ard she'd set the dogs on me, and I tol' her the dogs would have a confounded easy time of it so far as I was concerned. But there was no breakin' off."

"Then the old man informed the boy that if the engagement wasn't renewed within 24 hours he'd leave every 'durned dollar to a sanatorium fur fools."—Detroit Free Press.

World's Longest Stairway.

The Philadelphia city hall contains the highest continuous stairway in the world, and tourists who have boasted of their muscular ability in climbing the stone steps of the Bunker Hill monument at Charlestown, the Washington monument or the monument to General Brock near Queenstown, Ontario, will tell their friends of their feat of ascending the 598 steps which lead from the seventh floor of the city hall to the landing about the feet of William Penn's statue. It extends from the seventh to the sixteenth floor and contains 598 steps of iron, arranged about a square central shaft, in which runs an electric elevator. To reach the tower stairway the climber may mount 245 granite stairs in the stairways at the northern end of the building, thus making a total climb of 743 steps.

Tower climbing is one of the fads of tourists. Hitherto the Bunker Hill monument, with its four hundred odd stone steps, and the Washington monument, which has a few more, have represented the acme of opportunity for tests of physical endurance in this country.—Philadelphia Press.

Remarkable Power.

A dear old lady was taken one day to a musical service in a Boston church. She had heard much about the fine voice of the soprano and was prepared for a treat.

She sat in rapt enjoyment until the service was over and then turned a radiant face toward her escort, who was a young grandson.

"Dear boy," she said, "you've given me a great treat. Her voice is perfectly beautiful. It made cold chills run all up and down my spine."

"It's too bad, grandmamma," said the boy, "but she didn't sing today, though she was there. The gentleman next me says she's been suffering from a bad cold, and one of the chorists had to sing the solos for her."

"What, dear?" said the old lady, looking momentarily distressed. Then her face cleared, and she patted his arm reassuringly.

"Never you mind," she said. "We can come again some time. But, after all, if she can make me feel that way without singing I don't know that it would be wise for me to hear her. Now, would it?—Youth's Companion.

Too Profuse.

Managing Editor—Quiller writes more than twice as much as any other man on the staff. He really deserves to have salary raised.

Business Manager—On the contrary, he ought to have it reduced. Just think of the money he costs us in a year in the matter of pens, ink and paper!—Boston Transcript.

Many Men in China do not marry.

The actors' club at Budapest has held a demonstration in favor of prohibiting plays being performed in Hungary in a foreign language.

The best collection of Chinese coins to be found outside of China has been given to the Archaeological museum of the University of Pennsylvania by Rev. E. W. Tving, a Honolulu missionary. The collection goes back to a time over 2,500 years ago and includes those odd early Chinese coins which were made in the form of spades, razors, keys, shirts and tools.

Flower Gardens of the Sea.

The sea has its flower gardens, but the blooms are not on plants as they are on the land. It is the animals of the sea that make the gardens, the corals of the tropical waters particularly making a display of floral beauty that fairly rivals the gorgeous coloring and delicate grace presented by land flowers. So closely do they resemble plant blooms that it is hard to believe that they are wholly animal in organization. Dr. Blackford says that among the coral gardens there are fishes of curious forms and flashing colors darting about, just as the birds and butterflies dart about plant gardens on land.—Chicago Chronicle.

The Indian Territory, which increased in population from 180,000 in 1880 to 391,000 in 1900, is an aspirant for the same territorial representation in congress as is now given to its neighbor, Oklahoma, formerly a part of it. The white population of the Indian Territory is largely increasing.

People give more time to recreation than they did years ago, and the world is the better for it. Occasional outings, railroad journeys, visits to interesting points both at home and abroad, have greatly swollen the tide of travel.

Mail Orders...

Having originated the system of sending out catalogues from which to obtain orders by mail some twenty years ago, and having continued to perfect the service ever since, in every respect, we believe we need no introduction to most buyers on this coast, and to whom we refer as to the advantages of the system.

We claim to treat persons we never see like those as though at our counters.

Three-fourths of our trade is out of town orders. We can't afford to neglect or impose on it. Our friends in the interior get the best we have to offer and will continue to. Our groceries goods and prices are 'unmatchable.'

COMPLETE PRICE LISTS FOR THE ASKING.

25 DEPARTMENTS.

When in town call and see us.

SMITH'S CASH STORE,
25 Market St., San Francisco, Cal.

Importers and Dealers in
BLAKE, MOFFITT & TOWNE
PAPERS
STRAW AND BINDERS' BOOK
55-57-59-61, First St.
TEL. MAIN 199. 28 SAN FRANCISCO.

For 23 years with
C. E. Whitney & Co.
CHAS. CAMM
For 3 years with
C. E. Whitney & Co.

NEW COMMISSION HOUSE

MARTIN, CAMM & CO.
121-123 Davis St., San Francisco.

General Commission and Produce.
Specially, Butter, Eggs and Cheese.
Your consignments solicited.

Most Healthful Coffee in the World.

All the world knows that coffee in excessive use is injurious. And yet the coffee lover cannot stand tasteless cereals. There has to this time been no happy medium between the best elements of both. It is richer than straight coffee, and many will not be easily convinced that it is not all coffee. But we guarantee that Café Bland contains less than fifty per cent coffee, which is scientifically blended with nutritious fruits and grains, thus not only displacing over fifty per cent of the caffeine, but neutralizing that which remains and still retaining the rich coffee flavor. To those who suffer with the heart, to dyspeptics and to nervous people Café Bland is especially recommended as a healthful and delicious beverage, so satisfying that only the member of the family making the change in the coffee knows there has been one. More healthful, richer and less expensive than straight coffee. Better in every respect. 25 cents per lb. Your grocer will get it for you. Ask for

Café Bland
Pronounced café-blay—accent on last syllable

Too Classic For Them.
A resident in a small suburban town had a visit from a German friend who knew little English, but played the violin well. One of this resident's neighbors gave a "musical," and of course he and his visitor were invited. The German took his violin, and when his turn came he played one of his best pieces from one of the great masters. When he had finished, there was an awkward silence and no applause. The people were still looking expectantly at the German, who looked disappointed and flustered. The silence grew painful.

"Finally the hostess, quite red in the face, edged over to the side of the German's friend.

"'Can't you get him to?' she whispered.

"'What do you mean?'"

"'Why, now that he's got tuned up, isn't he going to play something?'"—London Tit-Bits.

Wrote Sermons in His Sleep.
Narrating "some remarkable cases of Double Personality," Dr. H. Osmond Mason cites in *The Ladies' Home Journal* the case of a "young ecclesiastical in the seminary with the Archbishop of Bordeaux, France, who was in the habit of getting up at night in a condition of somnambulism, going to his study and composing and writing his sermons in the dark. When he had finished one page, he read it over and properly corrected it. A broad piece of cardboard interposed between his eyes, and his writing made no difference to him. He wrote, read and corrected just the same as if there had been no obstruction. Having completed his work to his satisfaction, he returned to bed, and in the morning he had not the slightest idea of what he had done in the night and had no knowledge of it until he saw the manuscript in his own handwriting."

Crushed Lawyer.
Some time ago a well known San Francisco attorney, who prides himself upon his handling of Chinese witnesses, was defending a railway damage case. Instead of following the usual questions as to name, residence, if the nature of an oath were understood, etc., he began: "What is your name?" "Kee Lung." "You live in San Francisco?" "Yes." "You sabbie God?" "Mr. Attorney, if you mean 'Do I understand the entity of our Creator?' I will simply say that Thursday evening next I shall address the State Ministerial association on the subject of the 'Divinity of Christ' and shall be pleased to have you attend."

Needless to say, a general roar of laughter swept over the courtroom at this clever rally, and it was some minutes, much to the discomfiture of the lawyer for the defense, before order was restored and the examination proceeded upon ordinary lines.—Argonaut.

Telltale Boast.
Nell—She used to boast that she was one of the charter members of the Woman's Suffrage club. She doesn't appear to be as proud of it now.

Belle—Oh, she's just as proud, but you know, the club was organized 15 years ago, and she must have been at least 20 when she joined.—Philadelphia Record.

The Late Hours.
"You never think of staying out late," said the convivial and ill bred person.

"Sometimes I think of it," answered Mr. Meekton distantly.

"But you don't care for that sort of thing."

"Not in the least."

"Perhaps you never had any experience?"

"Oh, yes, I have. It was only last night that I was out at half past 2 a. m. Henrietta sent me out to see if I couldn't keep the back gate from slamming.—Washington Star.

One of the smallest parishes in Wales is the historic parish of Sber, in the Bridgend Union. It has only a population of eight or nine souls. Nash and Stenbridge, two other parishes, only number 14 inhabitants between them.