

THE HAND OF FATE

ANTON STRADESKI sat at the table with his chin resting upon his hand, lost in thought. He was wondering why he had not heard from the society, or he well knew what his disobedience of their commands would cost him—probably his life. Presently a little boy clambered down from his high chair and toddled round the corner of the table towards him.

"Will unkie please tate off my nap-tin?"

Anton turned and mechanically untied the serviette from the child's neck; then, as the little one put up his face for the usual morning kiss, a rush of tenderness came over the man, and he lifted the boy on to his knee, pressing the curly head to his bosom.

"Poor little Bobby," he said, as he stroked his face; "you do love unkie, do you?"

"Ees, I do," answered the child, as his big blue eyes sought those of his friend.

"And what would you do if unkie had to leave you—had to go on a long journey?"

"You're not going to go. I won't let you, or you must tate me, too."

"But suppose some bad men were to take me away and not let you come," said Anton, with something like a sob in his voice.

"Then I would kill them," said the youngster, and he clenched his little fist.

"Dear little chap," murmured the man, "you have all your mother's spirit in you. Well, Bobby, for your sake I must be off to work now; you run along down to Mrs. Weston, and be a good boy, and perhaps I'll bring you home some sweets."

"All right," said the little fellow, as he got down and marched off.

"Dear little boy; it is for your sake I dread what is coming more than for my own. I have no wife nor child, and you have only me to look after you. It was your face that came before me when I was about to kill Marinsky, as they had ordered. Perhaps, I said, he has a boy like Bobby, and for your sake I spared him; and now it is to be my turn."

Rising from the table, he hurriedly looked at himself in the mirror over the mantelpiece, then turned and went out of the house. He walked in the direction of the warehouse where he worked. As he reached the corner of Oxford street a peddler stopped him, and drew his attention to the various small articles displayed for sale upon his tray. Anton shook his head and was about to pass the man, when the latter picked up one of the articles wrapped in tissue paper and handed it to him, saying as he did so: "Monsieur, has not seen anything like this before, and will surely buy it."

Anton opened the paper and found inside a small medallion portrait of a man whose face he remembered well. Turning it over, he saw the fateful sign, written in French, upon the back: "When we meet, thou wilt remember to obey!"

"Ah! it's come at last!" he ejaculated, turning to look for the peddler, who, however, suddenly disappeared. He thought he caught a glimpse of the foreign, bearded face looking at him from the window of a cab that was going up Oxford street, but nowhere else was there any trace of the man who had handed him his death warrant.

His first impulse was to call a cab and hurry after the one containing the messenger, but he said to himself: "Where is the use? Suppose I caught him, it would avail nothing, and would not save me from the avenger."

Crossing the street, he went down Charing Cross road, looking about him in all directions for the original of the portrait, for he knew the ways of the society, and that their warnings were followed by fulfilling them.

When his day's work was done and he hurried homeward, he kept his eyes moving from side to side, occasionally turning round to see if his trackers were near him, for he did not doubt that the man was already in London.

As he reached the corner of Oxford street again, he remembered that he had promised to bring Bobby home some sweets. He accordingly went into a shop in Oxford street, and, having made his purchases, resumed his journey homeward. He was very much surprised at reaching the door of the house where he lodged without having been accosted by any one.

Bobby was overjoyed at seeing him and his burden, and the child kept his thoughts from brooding upon the message he had received in the morning by the laughter he made as he exploded the crackers in the bonbons, and by his making "Unkie" decipher the mottoes he found therein, as well as by dancing round the room with colored caps upon his head, and Anton's stick in his hand, "playing soldier."

After supper and pore romping, Bobby was put to bed in a little room adjoining the one that served Anton as bed and sitting room, and the latter was left alone to his gloomy reflections. He dined not out, for his foe might be lurking for him around the first turning, but sat revolving in his mind some plan of his escape from his pursuer. He even contemplated informing the police of his message, and the danger that threatened him.

He was no coward, but he knew well the daring of the men to whom the society entrusted the accomplishment of their revenge, and that they would stop at nothing to carry out their order, for their own lives depended upon their doing.

He sat at an hour or more, when he was roused by a knock at the door. He at once rushed to it, but was too late, for a man had entered, closing and locking the door behind him.

"I thought I would save the landlady the trouble of announcing me," he began, "so have introduced myself, as you see." Then, without waiting to give the other time to reply, he went on: "I suppose you know me?" at the same time pulling off his heavy beard

and brows, and disclosing the face represented in the portrait.

"Yes, I know you, Horitz," replied Anton, in French, in which language the former had addressed him. "What want you with me?"

"The message I handed you this morning will surely tell a member of the society. You have been condemned for disobeying your orders."

Anton did not reply, but quickly pulled out a drawer of the table at which he sat.

"You need not look there," interposed Moritz. "The revolver was removed from there this morning by those in our employ, as well as all dangerous weapons of this character," showing him a knife which that morning had been secreted in another quarter of the room.

"It is useless for you to resist," he continued, "for two of our confederates are watching the windows from outside in the square, and if you move or attempt to call for help I will slay you without further warning. Before you die, however, the society has instructed me to ask you a few questions."

"Go on," said Anton, doggedly, watching every movement of the other, and determined to fight when the decisive moment arrived. He knew there was no use in calling for help, for that would simply mean putting off the fulfillment of the vengeance, and it was almost certain from the revolver incident that the people in the house were in the society's pay, and would not come to his assistance, however much he needed them.

"The first question I have to ask you," went on Moritz, "is, why did you disobey the society's orders to kill Marinsky?"

"Because I did not think he deserved death, and—"

"Enough," interrupted the other; "you set up your own judgment against the verdict of the council; you know what punishment the rules provide for that?"

"Yes, I do; but I am bound no longer by your devilish rules."

"The same question," continued the other; but before he could get further the door behind Anton was softly opened and a child's figure in a white nightgown with a popgun in his hand stole into the room to Anton's side, inquiring who the stranger was.

"Who's child is that?" said Moritz, hurriedly.

"I do not know," replied Anton, "and Bobby himself does not know. I found him at the bedside of his dying mother, not far from here. She said his father was a German who had been suddenly called back to the fatherland on some secret business. She would not tell me his name. She was English, and had resolved to remain in her own country. It had broken her down, and as she lay dying she made me promise to look after her poor orphan boy, for she feared his father might never return."

"What was her name?" said Moritz.

"Clara Roberts."

"Great heavens! my wife!" exclaimed Moritz. "They let her die, and now they would have me kill you who befriended her, and have watched over my little one. Hang them all! I will not do it. Stradeski, thou knowest I would have killed thee in obedience to their commands, but thy hand, man—how can I do it? Together we will kill bloodhounds of their vengeance."

Then, rushing to the boy's side, he lifted him in his arms, and covered his face with kisses.

"Bobby does not remember me," he said, "for when I was in London before I grew my beard."

Then putting the child down, he turned to Anton. "Now for some plan of escape from the men outside. You must draw near the window, and attempt to struggle when I rush upon you, and then pretend to stab you and push you down upon the floor."

Anton, half suspecting treachery, did as he was directed, but warily, so that when Moritz rushed upon him he actually struggled, but finding that Moritz did not attempt to use the knife he suffered himself to be struck and thrown down. Bobby screamed and rushed to his side, but Anton's smiling face reassured him as he bade him not to make a noise.

Moritz then went to the window made some signal to the men and drew down the blind.

"You are saved," he said to Anton, as he saw the men depart. "I have been a hard man, Stradeski, but have done no murder yet, thank God; though if it had not been for Bobby here I should have been a murderer this night. I quit this infernal society now—forever."

"This well," replied the other, "Life in this English land has driven all their madness out of me."

"We shall have to leave London at once," went on Moritz, "for unless I rejoin them at once they will grow suspicious and come back to look for me, when the game will be up. Is there a back entrance to this house?"

"No," replied Anton, "but we can climb the wall into a mews at the rear, and escape that way."

"Let's that night a boy and two men, carrying a handbag each, might have been seen hurrying into the Euston road to catch the first morning train for Liverpool, and be borne beyond the reach of pursuit.—Penny Pictorial Magazine.

Two-thirds of the Australian continent is a desert, and yet her productivity is enormous. This land contains over 100,000,000 sheep, between 30,000,000 and 35,000,000 head of cattle and horses. It has given to the commerce of the world over £400,000,000 in gold, copper, coal and tin. The two provinces of Ballarat and Bendigo alone have produced £100,000,000 of gold, and as much more have come from the great Tambora and Lambing Flat in New South Wales. It sends to England annually over £40,000,000 worth of metals, grains, wool, beef, tallow, hides and mutton.

TWENTY-ONE NEW CHURCHES IN CHICAGO.

Unprecedented Activity in Constructing Religious Edifices.



HERE is an unprecedented activity in the building of churches in Chicago at the present time, and, in spite of the labor difficulties which extended far into the fall of last year, twenty-one churches have been built since then or are still building. Among the buildings in course of construction, or already finished, are some rather pretentious structures of brick and stone, costing from \$25,000 to \$75,000. One-third of the number are Roman Catholic churches, and the rest are almost evenly divided among the Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Evangelical, and Jewish denominations. Different styles of architecture are represented in the new church buildings, and some of them are remarkable for their architectural beauty. The Gothic and Roman styles predominate. These churches not yet finished will be completed, with one or two exceptions, before fall. The illustrations show the variety in style of architecture.

MADISON'S HOME SOLD.

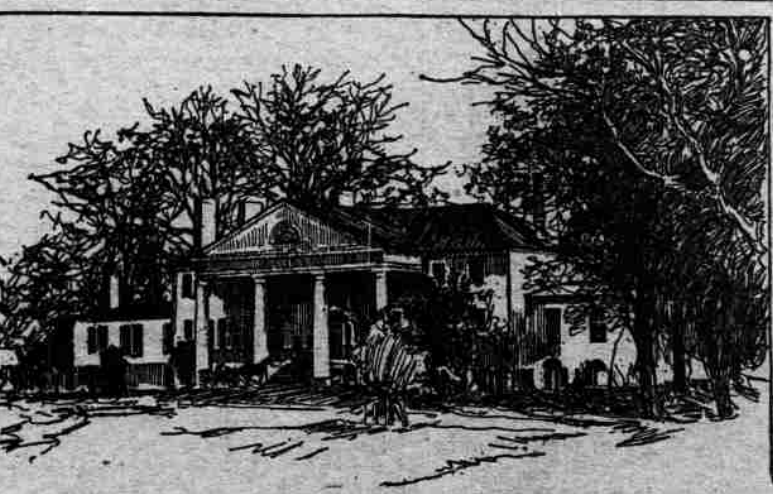
Montpelier, the beautiful home of the late President, in Orange County, Virginia, at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, has recently been sold at auction and the purchaser was Mr. William Dupont, the powder manufacturer of Wilmington, Del. The estate includes 1,300 acres, sixty acres of which is in gardens, 500 acres in forests and about 300 acres under cultivation, although the land is pretty well worn out. The mansion, which is one of the best types of colonial architecture and compares well with Mount Vernon and Monticello, the home of Jefferson, has passed through many vicissitudes, but is still dignified and imposing. The local traditions attribute it to William Thornton, who designed the capitol of the United States, and say that it was built by Madison's grandfather, but the latter is questionable. The same story is told of Monticello, but

SNOW AND WATER SUPPLY.

Some very interesting conclusions have been published by the experts of the United States weather bureau, who have for several years been studying the effect of winter snowfall on the water supply of the succeeding summer. The observations have been confined to the arid regions of the West, more particularly Colorado and Idaho, where the rivers and streams derive their principal water supply from the melting of the snow on the mountains. The generally prevalent belief that a winter of heavy snowfall is succeeded by swollen streams in spring and summer is not necessarily correct. It is not the quantity of snow that falls during the winter so much as the condition of the soil when winter sets in, the quality of the snow and the time when it falls,

THE LITERATURE.

Up on Third avenue lives a gentleman who has a large library, in which he usually stores his visitors on first acquaintance, to show them the large assortment of fly leaves on which is inscribed "To My Dear Friend," by the author. Recently a young society man happened to drop in and was ushered up against the fly leaves a few minutes later. After a while he grew tired of reading these dedications, and while his host's back was turned, he picked up one large volume, and with a fountain pen inscribed on a blank fly leaf the words, "To My Dear Friend," by the author. It was about the only book in the collection which the young man found to be without a dedication. By and by, the young man casually picked up this same book, and quietly remarked: "Ah, Mr. So-and-So, I see you are rarely honored in this parlor. Mighty few people have ever had the signature of this author on a fly leaf."



MONTPELIER, THE HOME OF JAMES MADISON.

Mr. Jefferson's diary shows that every brick in the building was made by his own men and every piece of timber was cut off his own place.

Montpelier is more than 200 years old, so that Dr. Thornton could not have designed it, but it is very likely that it was restored under his direction in 1794, when James Madison, afterwards with great pillars porticoes, and has long windows with quaint transoms and deep sills. The house contains twenty-four rooms and was at one time handsomely furnished, but after Mr. Madison's death was neglected. It was his home for seventy-six years. He was born there and died there, and is buried in a little inclosure a stone's throw from the house, where a modest granite obelisk marks his grave. There is no epitaph but the single word "Madison" and the date of his birth and death. Behind it is another simpler wall. President, brought his bride to live there. The facade is of stately proportions, 152 feet long, winged on either end by more splendid shafts, which bear the words, "In Memory of Dolly Payne," the maiden name of Mrs. Madison, who was one of the most accomplished, influential and beautiful women ever known in public life.

After Madison's death the place was sold to strangers and has passed through several hands. It is strange that some patriotic Virginians did not purchase and preserve it for its historical associations, but Virginians do not do such things. The ruins of Jamestown, the first white settlement in the

United States, belong to a lady in Dayton, Ohio, and Jefferson's former home is the property of a New York lawyer.

convenes every two years, was in session while I was in Phoenix. Now the Arizona Legislature is not held in very high repute by the average citizen, though the friendship and favor of the distinguished solons are, of course, industriously cultivated by the representatives of railroad companies and the professional lobbyist. The sign, "No Dogs Admitted," in very large letters occupies a conspicuous place in front of the capitol building. One day as I passed the building I noticed an old fellow—a typical frontiersman with the drawing accent of the born-and-bred Westerner—closely studying the edict of canine banishment. He scratched his head reflectively and then soberly observed:

"Humph! No dogs admitted, eh? Seems ter me they're gittin' d-d exclusive. Wonder how in h—l they managed ter get a quorum to-day?"

"The old man's way of expressing his opinion of the legislature so tickled me that I immediately searched for a grassy spot to enjoy a good laugh."—Detroit Free Press.

PUZZLED THE OLD FELLOW.

Arizona Frontiersman Did Not See How the Legislature Got a Quorum.

"A fellow runs across some rare old characters down in Arizona," said "Pop" Wiggins, who recently returned from a health-restoring sojourn in Phoenix, the capital. "Aside from its climatic and scenic advantages, there is much to interest and amuse the Easterner, and to my mind it offers the most attractive field in the country to the story writer. There is certainly an unworked mine of material in that region.

"The Territorial Legislature, which

LET US ALL LAUGH.

JOKES FROM THE PENS OF VARIOUS HUMORISTS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that You Will Enjoy.

While watching the circus parade "Rastus became separated in some unaccountable way from his sweetheart, and he asked a policeman to help him find her."

"What does she look like?" queried the officer.

"Well, sah," replied Rastus, "she's a she's a brunette, sah, with a Yeastah hat on her head, an' her name's Jopheey, sah."

A Literary Round Up.

"Is Stubbin the finished writer he claims to be?"

"Yes; he was done for as soon as his book came out."—Chicago Record.

An Easy Method.

Parke—I think, after all, I shall put my son into politics.

Lane—How are you going to manage it?

Parke—Oh, get him into the army.—Harper's Bazar.

Abnormal Destructiveness.

Phrenologist—Your bump of destructiveness is very large. Are you a soldier or a pugilist?

Subject—Neither; I'm a furniture mover.

House-Cleaning Days.

The boy knocked at the front door. The bell was out of order.

Presently somebody was heard trying to climb over the furniture in the front hall and a woman's voice asked: "Who is there?"

"Telegraph messenger," loudly replied the boy. "Got a message for the man of the house."

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Mr. Mann—Can you—er—take pills, my dear?

Mr. Mann—Oh, yes; without a bit of trouble.

Mr. Mann—Thank goodness! I have a bitter one for you; I just sat down on your new Easter hat and squashed it as flat as a pancake.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

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Mother—My dear, how could you refuse him? He may never propose again.

Daughter—But, mamma, he said he would.

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Briggs—Did you find your Frenchy assistance to you while in Paris?

Griggs—Oh, yes. I could swear at the waters by the hour and they never knew it.

A Compliment.

"I understand that one of your ancestors was a horse-thief," said Billings to Ricketts.

"He was. Glad you mentioned it. I regard that as a compliment."

"How's that?"

"It is an acknowledgment that I have improved on my ancestors."

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Briggs—Gleason tells us he has made a lot of money in Wall street.

Griggs—How much has he lost?

The Usual Cause.

Munn—I wonder why Saxby is always railing against society?

Tuther—I think it is because society seems to have put up a railing against him.—Indianapolis Press.

Did Anybody Ever Do That?

Some one asks what is tact. It is that feeling which prompts a woman to dig up the photograph of a friend who is coming to visit, from the bottom bureau drawer, and put it on the parlor mantel.—Aitchison Globe.

"The Window's Pane Is in Its Sash."

Kindliman—What's the matter, my little man? You seem to be in great pain.

"Why, I take pride in it, of course," remarked the host. "I have met every one of these authors personally."

A Musical Family.

A gentleman of decided and highly cultivated musical tastes, wishing to change his residence, advertised for rooms in a "private family fond of music." The next mail brought him the following reply:

"Dear Sir—I think we could accommodate you with rooms, and as for music one of my daughters plays the parlor organ and guitar; another one plays the accordion and banjo; I play a cornet and fiddle; my wife plays the harmonica, and my son the fute. We all sing, and if you are good at tenor singing you would fit right in when we get to singing gospel hymns at evenings, for none of us sing tenor. Or if you play the bass viol we have one right here in the house. If you want music as well as board we could accommodate you, and there would be no extra charge for it."

Labeling a remark as a secret has the same effect as putting the word "Private" on an office door; it gives the effect of importance to something very trivial.

Not a Case of Atavism.

"These people that are always preaching evolution and the survival of the fittest are so inconsistent," remarked the girl in the fur jacket.

"How so?" asked the other girl.

"You know that young professor who was trying to act so gay the other evening? Well, I called him a mischievous monkey, and do you know he got real mad about it!"—Chicago Tribune.

On the Contrary.

"I understand that visionary chap is regarded as being twenty years ahead of his time."

"No," answered the grave-looking citizen. "I am his landlord, and I know better than that. He is about six months behind time."—Washington Star.

Her Comment.

"Fame," said the youth with the earnest intellectual expression, "is so hard to attain! It is so difficult for one to get himself talked about!"

"Humph!" rejoined the woman with cold blue eyes and a firm jaw. "You just ought to live in our neighborhood."—Washington Star.

A Lack of Reciprocity.

"What makes that look so haughty?" "He is proud of his ancestors."

"I see. And I suppose it never occurred to him that his ancestors might be more or less ashamed of him."—Washington Star.

What He Said.

Mrs. Quizz—What did your husband say when the stovepipe fell on him?"

Mrs. Meek—O, I wouldn't repeat it for the world, but it's equivalent to dashes and exclamations in a newspaper.—Ohio State Journal.

A Boy's Nature.

It makes no difference how much a woman stuffs her boy before sending him with his father's dinner, he always looks starved when his father opens the bucket.—Aitchison Globe.

The Better Way.

"Maude says she isn't going to sing for nothing any more."

"H'm! If I had her voice I wouldn't sing for anything."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Best He Could Do.

"Look at my desk; isn't it in sad disorder?"

"Perhaps you are cramped for time?"

"That's so; if I had more time I could make it look worse than it does now."—Chicago Record.

Life's Horrid Grind.

"It's so tiresome!" sighed the girl in the fur jacket. "No sooner do you get back from your winter trip to the South than you have to begin to make up your mind where you are going to spend the summer. Sometimes I think life is hardly worth living!"—Chicago Tribune.

A Dilemma.

Mrs. Von Blumer—I don't know what we shall do about that cook.

Von Blumer—What's the matter now? "She threatens to stay."—Life.

Humdrum Existence.

Mrs. Muggins—She says her life is so monotonous.

Mrs. Buggins—Yes, she never even seems to have any trouble with her cook.—Philadelphia Record.

A Wise Cook.

Judge—You are charged with stealing six turkeys from Colonel Snilax. Have you any witnesses?

Rastus—No, sah; you bet I ain't I doan't steal turkeys befo' witnesses, sah.

Time.

"How do you pass the time?" inquired the city visitor of the friend who had moved to the country.

"I don't pass it," replied the lady who could always find something to do; "it passes me."

How Fascinating.

Said the mistress of a Marseilles shop to a young—and impecunious—journalist: "This is the sixth time you have been here without saying a word about the money you owe me, monsieur! What am I to understand by it?"

"Ah! madame," said the witty journalist, "when one sees you one forgets everything."—Le Voleur.

Peculiar Girl.

"What a phenomenal girl Helen is!"

"Why?"

"She says all men look alike to her."—Chicago Record.

Awin, Indeed.

Buster—I am having awful luck. I am now down to my last dollar.

Deadbroke—Phaw! that's nothing. Wait till you are down to the last dollar of your last friend.—Life.

Misplaced Words.

According to French dictionaries, a lorgnette is an opera glass, and a lorgnon an eyeglass, but the two words have become curiously mixed. In connection with this a highly cultivated Philadelphia woman tells a good story. Not long ago she went down town to buy a lorgnon for a friend.

"Let me look at some gold and silver lorgnons," she said to the clerk in the jewelry shop. "I want to see the prettiest you have."

"You mean lorgnettes," said the salesman superciliously. "That's the word, lornet," pronouncing it very slowly.

"Perhaps I do," said the lady amiably; "at any rate, it's very kind of you to tell me about it. Now, if you will show me some I'll be still further indebted to you."

And he did, but he lost no opportunity, just the same, of rubbing that "lor-net" in while he was displaying his wares.

Solomon said: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." But Solomon was a millionaire and could afford to say it.



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