PIONEER WOMEN OF OLD CLATSOP

By Mrs. Owens-Adair, M. D.

[It is the intention, beginning with this edition of the Sunday Astorian, to publish a series of biographical and autobiographical sketches of noted pioneer women in Oregon, which will be edited and arranged by Mrs. Owens-Adair, M. D. It is believed, when finished, that they will become one of the most valuable additions to the early history of Oregon yet made. Past records and current writings have much to say about the hardy and brave pioneer men of this state, but little mention has been made of the noble and self-sacrificing women who accompanied these men in their dangerous and arduous wanderings to the shores of the Pacific, and who made possible the establishment of happy, prosperous and contented homes here in the wilderness, and in doing so shared not only all the privations and perils which have made their husbands and fathers famous in the heroic annals of Western America, but, of necessity, must have felt and endured peculiar dangers and hardships in addition, utterly unknown to the men. Dr. Adair proposes to see that her sisters receive their due credit in the future written history of Oregon, and to that end, the preparation and publication of these interesting accounts of the lives of Oregon's early women will hereafter continue a permanent feature of the Sunday Astorian, so long as she is able to collate the material and find subjects worthy of mention in this department of Oregon's pioneer annals.]

ACANITH GLOVER HOSFORD.

The late Mrs. Hosford, of Mt. Tabor, wife of Chaney Osburn Hosford was one of 'Old Clatsop's" pioneer women, of whom any county in the state might be justly proud. Mrs. Hosford's maiden name was Acanith Glover. She crossed the plains with her brother, Aquilla Glover, and his wamily in 1846. They were of that ill-fated Donner party, but Mr. Glover left his party and pushed ahead with his family a few days in advance, and reached the valley of Sacramento in safety.

In the days of '49 there were very few American women in California, Miss Glover was one of five unmarried American young ladies at that time in San Francisco.

Rev. C. O. Hosford crossed the plains in 1845. The following year he became a student of the Willamette university and was licensed to preach by that institution in 1847, being 25 years of age at that time. In 1848 he, with nearly all the men of Oregon, went to the California gold mines. He going under license from Elder Roberts and preaching in San Francisco at "West's boarding house." Then he organized the first Methodist class meeting, west of the Rocky mountains, which became the nucleus of the first Methodist church in California. Mr. Hosford was of excellent English blood and when a young man chanced to be in a ship that visited the island of St. Helena at the time the remains of the great Napoleon were removed from the island and saw all the ceremonies of that great and impressive occasion. This was only one of the many most interesting incidents in this good old pioneer's remarkable life. In San Francisco, early in 1849, he married Miss Acanith Glover, the woman who proved to be more priceless to him, than could have been all the gold of the earth, and who remained his faithful helpmate even unto her death. Mrs. Hosford came to Oregon with her husband soon after her marriage. He was a circuit preacher and for a time their home was on Clatsop plains. And here it was that Mrs Hosford's admirable character first began to be known to the people of Clatsop county. She was possessed of a strong individuality and great force and decision of character. She was what is termed "a level headed woman;" being a frugal, active, economical and thorough housekeeper, and withal a most excellent cook. She was an energetic, cheerful, consistent Christian mother and ever faithful, able and watchful wife. Her husband being a preacher had many calls upon his charity and had often to rely upon his clear-headed, industrious and thrifty wife for advice, which prevented their impoverishing themselves and forgetting the essential adage that "Charity begins at home." It was the writers privilege to know Mr. and Mrs. Hosford intimately. I knew them while they were hewing out their home from the Mount Tabor fir forests, as well as later when Mrs. Hosford had made her yard litterly blossom with beautiful shrubs and flowers of almost every variety. She delighted in flowers and with all the care that fell upon a mother with a large family, she was always able to find recreation and pleasure in the culture and care of her much beloved flowers and rare plants. Their beautiful home was made more beautiful, both inside and out, at all seasons of the year by the presence of beautiful flowers. And in her delirium during the last hours of her illness she talked of flowers, "Beautiful white flowers, How beautiful! And they are always used at funerals.' Yes and they were used in profusion at her funeral. Even her casket was filled with the "beautiful white flowers" she loved so well. No one could have been missed more than Mrs. Hosford, not only by her devoted family but by her legion of friends who loved and appreciated her, and will cherrish her memory throughout their lives.

Mrs. Hosford had great executive ability and was scrupulously just. When she was stricken down in her last illness, she knew that death was near. She at once called for her attorney and proceeded to divide her property among her children. Thus finishing up her last work and setting her house in order.

It has been Mr. Hosford's invariable habit to preach at least once each Sabbath, which habit he most industriously and faithfully continues in storm and sunshine, sometimes he goes so far that he is not able to reach home for the regular Sunday afternoon family gathering. This happens less often in these days of steamboats, railroads and electric cars than in the days of canoes, blind trails and cayuse ponies. When Father Hosford promises to preach he is sure to be there.

For 48 years this worthy couple fought the battle of life together, shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart. To them marriage was the greatest gift of a merciful God. Mrs. Hosford died at her Mt. Tabor home, December —, 1896, surrounded by her affectionate and devoted family and friends. Her later life was made happy by her devoted family and friends. Her strong, self-reliant nature enabled her to overcome all the trials and privations of an eventful pioneer life. Her irrepressible cheerfulness brought happiness to her home, and to all those with whom she come in contact, she leaves the world much better for having lived in it.

Mrs. Hosford was the mother of eight children and seven grandchildren. Two sons, Captain Olin and Perne Hosford, of East Portland, and four daughters, Mrs. Harkins, wife of Superintendent Harkins, of the Southern Pacific shops, since their erection at East Portland; Mrs. Field, wife of L. R. Field, superintendent of the Southern Pacific lines in Oregon; Mrs. Peterson, wife of Mr. Peterson a prosperous fruit farmer of Mt. Tabor; Mrs. Cora Grout, wife of Prof. D. A. Grout of the Park street school, Portland, Oregon. All these living children are well settled in life and worthily enjoy the esteem and friendship of large circles of friends.

POLLY HICKS McKEAN.

Polly Hicks McKean was born April 24, 1798, in Delaware county, state of New York. Married Samuel Terry McKean March 9, 1817. After living a few years in New York they moved to Ohio, where they lived till the summer of 1832, when they made another start west, at the time Illinois was first open to settlers. They stopped on the Illinois river and laid out a town, calling it Chillicothe, after the town where they lived in Ohio.

In 1847 they made another move west, in company with their two married sons. They had eight children born to them, five boys and three girls. Two boys died while they lived in Ohio, the rest all lived to be grown and married. They left their old home in Illinois April 13, 1847, with four wagons and a good many cattle and horses to start on the long and tedious journey across the plains to Oregon. They stopped the first winter at the falls of the Willamette, opposite Oregon City, where they arrived in November, having stopped at Vancouver, which was then in the hands of the Hudson Bay Co., for a couple of weeks. In February, 1848, they moved down the Willamette to a place called Liston, where there were a few little houses. In September of the same year, they put what household goods were left them after the Indian Whitman troubles, on board a scow schooner, called the "Calipoola," and came down to Astoria.

Resided in Astoria until 1864, when she, her husband and youngest daughter, then unmarried, moved to San Jose, California.

Her two married sons had preceded them to California and for a number of years she resided with one or the other of them at or near San Jose. After the death of her husband, which occurred near San Jose Feb. 12, 1873, she continued to live with her eldest son for a time and afterwards with her son-in-law, Mr. J. M. Battee of San Jose. She survived her husband four years and died April 15, 1877, while on a visit to her daughter, Mrs. Eliza Hustler, at Astoria, Oregon.

It is difficult to describe or estimate such a life and character as hers. So quiet and unassuming, creating no stir in the world; not differing greatly from thousands of women, especially during the early and middle part of this century. And yet she possessed strong individuality and independence of mind. Never robust in body, with limited education and opportunities, she was looked up to and loved, not alone by the members of her family, but by all with whom she came in contact. She had no patience with cant or hypocrisy in any form, did not believe much in secret societies; her creed consisting principally in doing good when, where and to whom you can. As a parent she was devoted and self sacrificing, perhaps too indulgent, but always endeavoring to instil in her children habits of frugality, temperence and independence. She seemed to realize more fully than most persons, the futility of looking to others for any help in the various difficulties of life, and that to attain success at all one must be self reliant and persevering.

Withall she was very charitable towards other's faults and no child or person in trouble ever went to her in vain for sympathy and such help as she could give.

CAROLINE CHILDS VAN DUSEN.

Mrs. Caroline Childs Van Dusen, was the daughter of Lloyd and Amy Childs. She was born September 3, 1825 in Wayne county, New York. Her father was a farmer. When she was about six years old her parents moved to and settled in Michigan, then a new country. In 1845, at the age of 20, she was married to Mr. Adam Van Dusen, who was of German descent. Mr. Van Dusen's health not being good in Michigan he decided to emigrate to Oregon, and his young wife being of pioneer stock was pleased with the idea. Judge Aaron E. Walt, a cousin of Mrs. Van Dusen, then a prominent young attorney, had made up his mind to go west, so they joined forces and provided themselves with a wagon, five yoke of oxen, one horse and a good milk cow. This wagon differed from most wagons, in that it had a deep bed in which was placed all their provisions for the six month's trip. Across the wagon bed projections were placed, widening it out sufficiently to admit of beds being made crosswise of the wagon. Judge Walt's bed was in the front end, there a curtain formed a partition. On the center cross piece was attached a little round sheet iron stove about the size of a three gallon bucket, with a little teakettle, boiler and frying pan. On this little stove cooking was done with great ease and satisfaction, Mrs. Van Dusen says, she many times sat in her cozy kitchen on wheels, cleaned and cooked a bird while the wagon moved along. On cold nights their little stove made their house very comfortable. They had also a little churn in their kitchen. The milk was placed in the churn each morning, the motion of the wagon churned it, and every evening they had fresh butter. In this way one cow furnished them with sweet and buttermilk and fresh butter daily. Mrs. Van Dusen says she really enjoyed the trip very much indeed. Their old friend and neighbor, the late Judge Columbia Lancaster, had a similar outfit to theirs. These two teams left Michigan March 4, 1847, to join the emigration of that year at St. Joseph's river. On leaving St. Joseph's their company consisted of 18 wagons, with William Meeks employed as guide. Our wagons were called the "steamboat wagons" on account of having the little stove pipes passing up through the top covers. We also had a tin reflector for baking bread. There were many excellent people in the company, two young ladies I remember especially, a Miss Clum and a Miss Rolston. Miss Rolston's step-mother, Mrs. Rolston, gave birth to a boy baby while crossing the Platte river. The baby was named Platte. Unfordable rivers were crossed in the usual pioneer way, by turning a wagon bed into a ferry boat. Strife and dissention occurred in the company, causing it to break up into sections, that would separate and occasionally unite again as we travelled along until we reached Fort Hall. Here a part of our section decided to go to California, the other to Oregon. Judge Lancaster and family were our only travelling companions from Fort Hall to Oregon City. As we progressed our oxen grew thin, grass being scarce, some days we were compelled to travel all day without finding any feed for our cattle, but we pushed along, finally reaching the Cascade mountains. In climbing a very long and steep mountain to the Cascade range, our team was, as usual, doubled up with Judge Lancaster's to take his wagon up first, this left my husband and myself alone at the foot of the mountain, shortly after two Indians came riding up at full speed. They stopped beside our wagon and looked us over, talking to themselves. We were much frightened but pretended to be very brave; Mr. Van Dusen having his pistols and knives in his belt, and plenty of guns strapped on the wagons, which we examined as we walked around talking. At last the Indians turned their horses and rode away at full speed. In about an hour they returned and went through the same performance and left us again. To our great relief we saw no more of them. Shortly after this Judge Walt returned with the teams to take our wagon up the mountain. On the Barlow road in sight of Mt. Hood we had heavy rains, making the road very slippery. Late one evening our wagon upset for the second time that day and as our cattle had found nothing to eat all day, the men had to leave the wagon on its side and go ahead with the stock in search of grass. We got out a few bed clothes, made a big fire and sat up nearly all night. We could hear the brush crackling and wild animals screaming during the night. I suppose our fire kept them from attacking us. The next morning the men brought the cattle back without having found any feed and we pushed on until late in the evening, when we fortunately found grass.

We soon reached Oregon City and put up at the Barlow hotel. Having arranged my toilet and putting on a new calico dress I went in to supper, and everybody declared that I could not have just crossed the plains for my face was not tanned a bit. After a few days we went to the private boarding house of Mrs. Andrew Hood and soon after that found a house which we rented for the winter.

Early in the spring of '48 we prepared to move down the river. About this time our late governor, George L. Curry, was expecting to marry Miss Boon. Mr. Van Dusen sold Mr. Curry his dress suit, and I sold Miss Boon my wedding bonnet, which was a lovely little bonnet of the gypsy style. They were married and took our house for their first home. Mr. Van Dusen had already been down to Astoria and taken a land claim on the Wallacut river, now owned by Mr. H. S. Gile. When we reached Astoria we decided to give up the Wallacut claim and take one on the west side of Young's Bay in Oregon, and we located on the place now known as "Sunnymead" farm, and owned by Col. and Dr. Adair. Their home stands just where our little log cabin stood in 1848 and '49. We lived on this place one year, planting and raising a garden, principally potatoes. The winter of 1849 was extremely long and cold. Adair creek in which we kept our boat, a large one, became frozen up and we did not see the face of a human being for six weeks. Early one Sunday morning our dog barked and Mr. Van Dusen got up quickly to find the old Chief Waluski standing at our door. Chief Waluski was then living on Smith's point or Taylor's point, just across the bay from us. He had come across in a little "duck" canoe to the west side and walked up on the ice. He told us that he had been watching for smoke from our cabin for several days and seeing none thought we might be "memoloose" (dead) so he came to see. We invited him to breakfast with us and showed him every respect. I remember this happened about two weeks before Christmas. The chief said if the ice remained until Christmas he would come and take us to Astoria. He came as promised and took us across the bay in his big canoe. We remained in Astoria two weeks and then our friends brought us safely home in a large boat. This one year was long enough as the land claim, so in the spring of '49 we moved to Astoria. At this time there were but two frame houses in Astoria. Mr. Welch's and Mr. David Ingall's. We moved into one of the Shark houses, that stood near where now stands the Parker House in Astoria. The houses were built by the men from the wrecked vessel Shark.

Mr. Van Dusen had to split out boards for roofing and chinking for this house. We had no furniture except what we made ourselves. Our bedstead was made by boring three holes into the logs of the house into which end and side rails of the bedstead were driven and fastened to one log on the floor. We were very thankful, however, for this humble home, and soon made it cozy and comfortable. About this time Mr. and Mrs. Truman P. Powers arrived in Astoria and we gave them house rent for the use of their cook stove. We divided or partioned off our house by using "tulequtses" (mats), purchased from the Indians. These mats were very nice and pretty, made from dried tules, from three to five feet wide and various lengths. Many Indians were camped on the hills near our house and they seemed to keep up an incessant howling. As their Queen Sally was very sick, they constantly made night hideous with their medicine performances. The queen's slaves were in mortal terror lest she should die and they be buried alive with her, according to tribal power. I became so familiar with the peculiar and varied music made by these Indians that I might have excelled as one of their magicians. Our house stood near a little bay, the front of the house being three or four feet above the ground; frequently a number of Indians would come from Chinook, landing in the bay, then come up to our house and stand around the fire to dry out and get warm and often slept under the house. One night an Indian baby was born under our house.

The following little incident might be of interest: I was always very handy with my needle and had made me a pretty hood, quilting it very nicely. Mrs. R. C. Kindred was visiting me one day and seeing this hood offered me five pounds of butter if I would make her one like it—I made the hood. Butter was then 25 cents per pound. Time passed and we built us a comfortable home in Uppertown (Adair's Astoria), and here in 1852 I was keeping boarders. By this time the California gold mines had made money plentiful and produce of all kinds very high. One day Mr. Kindred called and said, "Well I think it is about time we were paying for that hood, how much is it?" I said five pounds of butter. He replied, "Well butter was only 25 cents a pound then while it is worth $1.50 a pound now." Yes, I said but the price of the hood was five pounds of butter. He laughed and paid the five pounds of butter. Mr. Van Dusen was the first person in Astoria to sell goods from shelves. The Hudson's Bay Company always having sold their goods from boxes.

My first child, Seth, died in infancy, next Florence, born November 6, 1851. Cara, January 20, 1854: Brenham, April 16, 1856: Hustler G., October 3, 1858; Lloyd, August 29, 1860: Mary Amy, May 2, 1863. Mrs. Florence Westdale and Mrs. Mary McIntosh live in Oakland, California, and Mrs. Cara Trenchard, Brenham and Hustler G. Van Dusen with their families reside in Astoria.

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The above story is given as told by Mrs. Van Dusen, and is of great interest as coming from one of the very few actors in the tragic times of our state's pioneer history. In later years, about 1862, Mr. A. Van Dusen moved his family down to their beautiful modern home, built a little east of the original Fort Astor. This delightful home at once became the most prominent house in Astoria, and here this worthy family generously and cordially entertained their hosts of friends, including many prominent visitors to this far western city. Although Mr. Van Dusen's hospitable and genial presence is missed from around the family table, his charming widow still lives in this lovely home, surrounded by children and grandchildren, as well as hosts of friends who appreciate and delight to do her honor for her true and inestimable worth. Her days are much occupied with her children and grandchildren, yet she finds time to devote to church and charity and is a pillar of strength in all good work.

Six hunters, the property of Mr. Foxhall Keene, were sold at auction at Tattersall's on Monday. They brought £1335, the top price being £450 for Bailey Ferma.

Miss Greene, a beautiful American, long prominent in London, is engaged to be married to a member of the ducal family of Hamiltons. She gave a concert on Monday evening at the house of Lady Blandford.

THE CURSE OF THE MOOR'S HEAD

A Tale of the Crusaers.

"Curses are nonsensical at all times, Thorndyke, and to talk of them descending from generation to generation—bah!" And the speaker flipped the ashes from his cigar and curled his lip scornfully.

The younger man changed his position and smiled.

"Of course," he said, "except in this single case. But because it is in my own single family and because I have the written record of it—not relying upon 'old woman tales,' as you express it, I'm afraid I do rather put faith in that wretched curse, much as I would like not to."

"Then I say you are an ass. Any man would be an ass to believe such a lot of pure"—

"Tommy rot," suggested Thorndyke. "That is what you would like to say if you were not so elegant, I know. So, I'll say it for you. Yes, it looks very much like that, I know, but there's no help for it—I do believe in this particular curse, as I said—and no amount of ridicule can change it. I've tried to change my mind but—well, perhaps I haven't such small change with me." And he smiled again at the little pleasantry.

Carwin picked up the sword which lay upon the table, and which had brought up the whole subject, and looked at it curiously. It was a heavy old weapon, with jeweled handle and guard, and, though the blade was rusty and nicked now, one could see that it had been used in more than one deadly conflict and had seen hard service and years of use in the dim past. It had belonged to a very ancient ancestor of Thorndyke and had been handed down to him with the few other family relics that his father had been able to collect the last time he had been abroad. Beside the sword lay a yellow old paper, from which Thorndyke had been reading when Carwin, his best friend, dropped in for the evening.

"Then what I gather from your narrative," said the latter after turning the weapon about in his hands a few moments, "is that this is the very sword that did he deed. Am I right?"

"You are."

"And the story is that away back in the dark ages, before people found that killing every man who crossed you was not the shortest way to heaven, one of your respected forefathers"—nodding to the row of dim old portraits which ran around the cosy room above the bookshelves—"owned this sword and was a knight. When the crusades got to be the fashion, he was seized with a desire to wear a cross upon his shoulder, and also to cross his feet when he was buried, and girding this self-same weapon about him he got himself unto the wars, and whooping it up, as it were, raced off like the rest of humanity to fight with the Saracens and have a good time generally. And as he had a daughter—a young and pretty daughter—whom he could not take along with the rest of his impediments, he left her at home. How do I come on?"

"Finely. Proceed," said Thorndyke, twirling his sword about his head and showing himself no mean fencer as he did so.

"Before leaving this charmingly dull witted individual—pardon me for calling him names, Thorndyke, but he was a chump—called all the servants up and made them a speech, in which he told them of the great things he intended to do while away and instructed them to be good boys and girls and mind their mistress' slightest wish or prepare to hunt for other places when he returned from his little jaunt. Then he turned the keys over to her and left.

"When he got to the wars he did some big fighting and distinguished himself, as you, Thorndyke, have a faculty for doing, and though he did not write home every week, as you do, he picked up a young Moor and shipped him back with letters and household expenses for the castle. The Moor was a slave, of course, but a handsome fellow—quiet, grave and intelligent—and he made a great impression on every one connected with the castle, the mistress included. He got there about Christmas time and settled down as if he had intended coming all his life, but only just found the opportunity. For awhile the other servants liked him, but as soon as they found that he was fast becoming a favorite with the daughter of the house, their mistress, they veered round and took to despising him in good old English fashion, and proceeded to make things as hot for his Moorship as possible. Naturally enough, this had the effect of making the mistress like him all the more—no, I did not say all the Moor—and to show them she was the head of the house, she took the Moor as her constant attendant. He waited upon her everywhere, excepting in her boudoir, and was with her constantly whenever she drove or walked about the grounds of that palatial pile.

"The Moor, being with her so much, very naturally, too, fell in love with her, and as the girls then were no more proof against the wiles of foreigners than they are in this matter of fact century, she succumbed to his dusky charms, and one morning bright and early they slipped across the green lawn and into the little chapel in the edge of the woods, where, by alternately browbeating and cajoling the deaf and blind parson, they were married. Am I not interesting old man?"

"Very," said Thorndyke, laughing at his friend's frank manner. "There is added charm to the tale when 'tis told by you."

"Thank you. Well, they were good and married and all went well—"

"Until a year had passed," put in Thorndyke.

"Until a year had passed. Then a little one was born—a tiny, light skinned Moor, with blue eyes like the mother and other features copied in minature from its proud father. Of course there was a great stir when the youngster came, and the truth leaked out, but it was almost forgotten in the additional excitement caused by the return of my lady's father. An uninformed servant who had learned only half of the truth met him at the draw-bridge and told him of the supposed to be sad news of his daughter's marriage, and the old gentleman, still with the blood of war in his nostrils and heeding nothing else but the fact as he thought it was, that his name had been dragged in the dust by his child, dashed into the castle and pushed his way unceremoniously into her room, where she lay a sweet picture upon her bed, the child in her young arms, the sunlight streaming through the open window over her and the little one.

"Without a word the half-crazed crusader snatched the baby from its mother's arms, and, and swung it about his head he dashed it down to the courtyard below, where it lay dead almost before it had breathed the breath of life. Then, before the terrified, stricken mother could realize what had happened, the Moor appeared in the doorway, his dark face wreathed in a Christianlike smiles, waiting to greet the father. With an imprecation, the crusader sprang at him, and ere the Moor could draw and defend himself, he was run through by the sword that had been the death of so many Saracen's before him, and lay weltering in his own blood at his father-in-law's feet. Then the girl widow understood, and, mad with grief and horror at the terrible deed, she pulled herself to her knees and, stretching her white arms out, her yellow hair glistening like burnished gold in the sunlight, she cursed the wretched man—cursed him as only a woman of that day and age could curse. As the last awful word dropped from her lips, she sank back upon the bed unconscious, and a few hours after she was dead.

"From that hour the knight was a changed man. Serious and grave, with a haunted, frightened look upon his hitherto rugged countenance, he went about his estate, a broken, decrepit old man hardly a shadow of his former self. A few years later he, too, died, but—but I believe that is as far as I can go unaided old man," concluded Carwin abruptly, turning to Thorndyke.

"Why—why—you leave off in the most interesting part, Carwin," said the other, resting from his exercise, which he had kept up in a lazy way while the other talked. "The old knight died, to be sure, but have you forgotten how? Well, he got into trouble with another old fellow over some land, and the other chap fell upon him, unarmed though my forefather was, and slew him. As he fell, he turned his head and gazed on the wound which was in his right side, and which he tore the clothing from, and after one glance he covered his eyes with one hand, shrieking out something about the Moor's head as he did so.

"There in the shadow of his castle he died a few minutes later, and when the servants came running to find him—having heard his death screams—they knew the first curse had fallen, for from the gasping wound in their master's side a clot of blood had risen and taken the form of a head. And to their excited imagination and from the color of the dark fluid it took upon itself the resemblance to the Moor whom the knight had slain as unmercifully as his enemy had just put an end to his life.

"Then they remembered the curse, and looked at each other frightened and awed. The old knight's only son lived to be 30, when one day he wounded himself in the arm. He thought nothing of it until the Moor's head appeared, when he lost his nerve, too, and died the next day. And so for generations it ran, and never once has the eldest son of the eldest son died aught but a violent death, and his death has always been preceded by the appearance of this silent messenger, who has never given a false warning. That is the legend, and I'm sorry to say I sometimes feel as if my death would have to be a violent one to carry out the wretched curse. Being the eldest son of my father, it would end with me were I to die now."

"I trust so, but pray be a little cheerful and talk something else besides dying just to accommodate the charming malediction. You are good for many many years yet, and—be careful, Thorndyke."

The other man was lunging at a heavy old bronze plaque which hung on the wall opposite him as Carwin spoke, and the sword bent and snapped back again at each thrust in a manner unpleasant to the latter's ears, as if forboding some evil. Indeed, hardly had he spoken when there was a sharp crack of breaking steel and the point of the weapon whistled back from the wall. Thorndyke sprang aside, but too late. The rusty tip of the sword, broken only an inch or two from the point, had already reached him and sank deep into his breast just below the heart, and with a suppressed groan of pain he tumbled into his friend's outstretched arms.

Carrying him to the cushioned seat near the fireplace, Carwin tore the coat and shirt from about the wound, and, taking a firm grip upon the bit of steel, which just showed itself above the wound, he withdrew it slowly with his muscular fingers and hurled it into the glowing fire.

As he did so Thorndyke opened his eyes and struggled to a sitting position, though the other strove to keep him upon the pillows.

"Oh, heavens!" screamed the wounded man wildly. "Look, Carwin, look! It is—it is the Moor's head! And I—I"— He stopped, a shiver passed over his now damp body, and he swayed against the wall and from there down to the couch dead.

Carwin, with a curious light in his eyes, glanced about the room as an animal might, and then back at the Moor's head. Then he swept one hand down over his friend's bare breast and tore the cloth from the wound, squeezing it viciously in his hand as he did so.

A moment passed during which there was no sound save the deep and nervous breathing of the man crouching beside the dead body of Thorndyke. Then slowly the head appeared again, and again he swept it off and crushed it with his hand.

A third time the head came, and Carwin, with staring eyes and chalklike face, staggered to his feet. Then, with one mad look at the horrible thing, he rushed to the door, and wrenching it open, screamed for help.