

# An Actor's Stratagem.

My whole career is blighted; I shall never be given a position of trust again." Geoffrey Hurst said despairingly. And Stephen Grant, looking into the troubled face before him, thought that a boy Geoff was, in his five-and-twenty years.

Geoffrey Hurst was junior secretary of the Queen's favorite ambassador at Rome, and a favorite with all about it.

At the public school where they had met together, Geoffrey had been Steadfast's friend, and the beautiful influence of the elder had over the younger as never before.

It was midnight, and in a small house in St. John's Wood the lights were all extinguished, except those in the special sanctum of the master of the establishment.

The other inmates of the house were all wrapped in slumber, while Geoffrey Hammond sat brooding on the table before him a leather letter-case. The question he was debating was whether or not the papers should be destroyed.

It had struck 1 o'clock when he was roused from his reverie by a loud knocking at the front door. He started up, and was about to thrust the letter-case into his pocket, but, changing his mind, placed it again on the table before he hurried downstairs.

Hammond was anxious that the household should not be roused. It would not mend matters to have his wife coming down inquiring what was amiss. So he unlocked the door, and drew back the bolts cautiously; then, leaving the chain still up, opened the door a few inches, demanding who was there.

The unmistakable gleam of a bull's eye came into the dark hall, as a voice answered: "A constable. Are you the owner of the house?"

Hammond replied that he was, and asked what the policeman wanted. "I have reason to believe that an attempt is being made to enter your premises," he said.

"Let me in, and I will look at the fastenings," the constable returned. The chain was undone, and, saying he was glad the women folk were a-bed, as they always took alarm at the sight of a policeman, he told Hammond only to close the door, as he should be off again directly. Then, throwing the light of his lantern before him, kitchen, scullery, pantry, all were visited.

Places into which Hammond had never before made his way. The policeman's keen eye scanned each lock and window, but all were securely fastened. As they emerged once more into the hall, the policeman asked:

"Which is the room at the back of the house, where the lights are burning?" "My private sitting room," Hammond said impatiently. "It is impossible anyone could reach it from the outside. It must be thirty or forty feet from the ground."

"Few things are impossible to a determined mind," the constable answered, as he made his way noiselessly upstairs, Hammond following.

The policeman entered the brightly-lighted room, and gave a quick glance round. Then he turned out the gas, leaving the room in darkness, save for the occasional gleam of his bull's-eye.

He asked Hammond to draw up the blind and open the window. Then the two men peered into the garden beneath.

"As you say, it is impossible for anyone to get in this way," the constable said; "and having ascertained that, I must be off."

He quitted the room, leaving Hammond alone in the dark. He was still fumbling for the matches, when the front door closed with a bang.

Geoffrey Hurst woke from a dreamless sleep to the remembrance of a calamity that had befallen him. He lay on the sofa in his friend's room, and in an armchair, wrapped in a cloak, Stephen sat smoking. It was some seconds before Geoffrey became aware of the other's presence; then he started up, crying out eagerly for news.

For answer, Stephen pointed to the table, and there, in the lamplight, Geoffrey saw the precious letter-case that had caused him so many hours of anguish. For a moment he could not speak; then he caught his friend's hand in his, as he whispered:

"Heaven bless you, Stephen! You have saved me from dishonor!" "See that the letters are intact," said all Stephen said; but there was an unusual brightness in his eyes, which showed that he, too, was deeply moved.

## ARE HUMAN FIENDS.

### CHINESE PRACTICE DEVILISH FORMS OF TORTURE.

Of All Peoples on Earth They Are the Most Cruel and Delight in Long-Drawn Out Punishment—Some of Their Systems.

Of all races on the face of the earth the Chinese are the most cruel, the most devoted to fearful torture of those in their power and the most adept in devising ever new forms of martyrdom for the objects of their hatred. In their almost simple cruelty they are lower than the animals. If they merely delight in torturing, one might say it was a perversion. But they do not merely delight in it. They torture living creatures, from rats to man, as a simple matter of course, and the native victims accept it equally as a matter of course. There is something supremely terrible in the matter-of-fact, stolid way in which they subject a prisoner to demoniac pain with as much readiness as a magistrate would sentence a man to spend ten days in jail.

To begin with, there is the whipping and scouring with bamboo rods. This is so common a method of "preparing" a victim for trial that it is hardly considered punishment, much less torture. Yet the bamboo is laid on hard enough to bring blood at each stroke, and, especially when it is applied to the soles of the feet, the victim often faints from pain and loss of blood combined. One hardly can enter a Chinese court

edge of the collar cuts deeply into the flesh of his neck, and all his muscles are drawn more and more tense, pain begins to conquer him, and in a week before the condemned man dies. The executioner knows just what to cut without killing, and he goes to work as carefully as would a surgeon. Muscles and tendons and flesh are stripped from the body with the razor blade of the sword, until only a dreadful frame

When ling-chee is to be a long operation, and the victim is to die only after long torture, the slicing sometimes is done so slowly that half a day elapses before the condemned man dies. The executioner knows just what to cut without killing, and he goes to work as carefully as would a surgeon. Muscles and tendons and flesh are stripped from the body with the razor blade of the sword, until only a dreadful frame

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## HOW THE CHINESE TORTURE AND KILL.



Victim bound to a cross, while the executioner with a sharp sword slices off parts of his body. The torture sometimes lasts for a day before death ensues.

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## FIRST DIME NOVELS.

### THEY WERE CHEAP, BUT CLEAN AND INTERESTING.

Interview with Dr. Orville J. Victor, the Man Who Originated the Style of Literature that the Boys of the Sixties Used to Devour.

Orville J. Victor, who edited and practically conceived the idea of the popular and cheap novel, the old-time yellow-covered affair, in which Indian stories, cowboy stories, raftsmen's stories and other tales embodying wholesome adventures formed the sole literary meat, is to-day living quietly in a pretty home in Undercliff, N. J.

When he is not spending his time among his flowers, his grounds and extensive country property, which is every other day in the week, Mr. Victor occupies a little office at No. 156 Broadway, New York, where still engages in literary work.

That the old dime novel was a far superior product than the half-dime and dime folio of to-day is evidenced by the list of authors contributing to the series of little books for which Mr. Victor was responsible. Of those authors still living Col. Prentiss Ingraham, Clara Augusta Trask, Edward S. Ellis, William R. Eyster and Charles Morris are possibly the best known to-day. Besides these there were Col. A. J. H. Duganne, the war poet; John Neal, the Maine poet; Judge William Jared Hall, Col. John S. Warner, Mrs. Mary A. Dennison, Mrs. Anna S. Stephens and Mrs. Metta V. Victor.

"They speak of the immense sales of modern books, like 'David Harum' and other productions," said Mr. Victor. "Why, when our series was started, in the early '60's, the sales of the books all ran above 100,000, and many ran as high as 400,000 copies. 'Seth Jones,' for instance, sold immensely, and all of Mr. Ellis' books went like wildfire. It was my aim to give high-class reading, adventurous, but clean, and not an oath or any undesirable situations found their way into the old dime novel.

"They speak of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' We issued a little volume, 'Maum Guinea,' which dealt with the antebellum days down South, and it was read all over the world when the civil war broke out.

"There is no dime novel to-day. At least, not in the old meaning of the term. The time for them may come again some day, but it does not look so now."

Next to Mr. Victor in the production of the old novel is Alexander Orr, who engraved all the noted productions of the artist's pencil in the early days. Mr. Orr lives near Mr. Victor, and the two men often spend hours together talking over the old times when, at No. 52 John street, a little colony of artists and literateurs used to congregate and evolve the popular books and stories of the time.

The full-page illustrations in the weeklies of 1860 bear witness to many a day's continual hard work by Mr. Orr, bent over the wood blocks and carrying out, stroke by stroke, with the little graver's edge, the lines of the artist's pencils. Photo-engraving has usurped the wood engraver's usefulness to-day to a great extent, and Mr. Orr has now the memory of the good old days to live over in his beautiful country homestead near Undercliff.—New York Journal.

When President Kruger was last in England, he received a visit from the Duke of Abercorn, in the course of which his grace informed "Oom Paul" that he himself had been for years a member of the British lower house, and that his father had been lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The President evidently considered that his guest's present rank was a great rise in life, for he exclaimed, hastily: "Oh, that is nothing; my father was only a shepherd!"

Archbishop Temple of Canterbury, is always made impatient of horses, especially clerical horses. One of the clergy of his diocese, who had pestered him a good deal recently, wrote an inordinately long letter describing a picture which he proposed to put up in the chancel of the church, and asking permission to do so. By the time his grace reached the end of the epistle his patience was quite exhausted, and he replied on a post-card: "Dear Blank—Hang the picture! The clergyman is still wondering how he ought to regard the reply."

A private in the Dublin Fusiliers, who collected a number of bullets in his body, and is even more bored by inquisitive visitors to the Mool River Hospital, was visited by a pompous legislator from Cape Town. He wearily described his wounds. Two bullets through his helmet, one in his shoulder, another in his "fut," and two explosive bullets through his left breast. "It's a wonder you weren't killed," said the legislator; "they must have passed perilously near the region of the heart."

"They did, that, indeed," said the Fusilier, "but I was right enough, for sure my heart was in my mouth for safety."

Thomas Sheridan, the Irish clergyman and grandfather of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist, had a great distaste for metaphysical discussions, whereas his son Tom, the actor, had a great liking for them. Tom one day tried to discuss with his father the doctrine of necessity. "Fray, father," said he, "do you ever do anything in a state of perfect indifference—without motive, I mean, of some kind or other?" Sheridan, who saw what was coming, said, "Yes, certainly." "Indeed?" "Yes, indeed." "What, total indifference—total, entire, thorough indifference?" "Yes, total, entire, thorough indifference." "My dear father," said Tom, "tell me what it is that you can do with (mind) total, entire, thorough indifference?" "Why, listen to you, Tom," said Sheridan.

Brother Dickey on Politics. "Politics," said Brother Dickey, "has been de ruitation er me! In de las election I voted for two men—woked night on day, en de Lord sen Sunday; Bofe er'em couldn't git de office; one er'em did. De one dat landed sayt de done spen' so much money in de race dat now he'd hatter economize wid me, en he didn't have nuttin' for me. De one dat git beat ax me how I hez de face ter call on him for money wen he didn't have no place ter lay his head; dat wuz de sen er it. En all I got out er de whole business wuz de misery in my left side, de rattlin' er de brain en de campaign cetch!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Typewriting by Electricity. Electricity is used to operate a newly invented typewriter, in which the keyboard may be separated from the machine and used to operate several machines, the keys closing circuits connected to magnets which operate the type levers.

Ocean's Bottom. Recent studies of the ocean bottom near the coast line of continents have shown that rivers of considerable size sometimes enter the sea beneath the surface.

Is a boy's mother his father when she is a sister? Waiting for something to turn up is one of the greatest obstacles to success.

They are a queer crowd, these coolies, whether on land or sea. Cunning as foxes, and cowardly as wolves, they resemble the parish dogs of their own cities in point of inability to hunt any prey save in packs. I heard of an instance where a gang of coolies, employed as navvies in the cutting of a railway, bashed their overseer with shovels and fled into the bush. Nobody was ever hanged for the crime, because some forty of them were in it—and that would have been rather a large consignment to condemn, even in the far East, where human life is so cheap.

There are a quarter of a million Chinese in Bangkok alone, and they do not appeal to one's cordial emotions—very much the contrary. And should this catch the eye of any intending visitor to the far East, I would urge upon him the unwisdom of venturing to spend a night on a Chinese junk without so much as a revolver to defend himself with. Occasionally a European is discovered by the marine police floating on the water with his throat cut. Is such a case it is highly probable that he has been foolhardy, as I was. But different people are born to different ends, and the Chinese contempt of the European is frequently justified by facts.—Ludgate Magazine.

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IN THE CAGE.

of "justice" without witnessing a flogging. The mildest punishment that is known to the simple and kindly official Chinese soul is the cage or cangue. Its principle is that of all Chinese punishments—slow torture. A Chinaman would take no artistic pleasure in anything that killed quickly or that reach-



TRIAL OF A CHINESE BOXER.

ed its culmination of pain quickly. His victim must suffer a little more, and a little more, and then a little more, each hour. In that way he makes his delight last long and can keep a whole string of wretches to charm him by their slow dying for months. If he killed them at once his fun would be over too soon.

The cangue, then, is formed to keep the agony of the penitent up for months, till madness or death end his sufferings. It is a delightfully simple thing—so simple that there is nothing at all terrifying about it at first sight.



HEAD DOWNWARD.

It merely is a large frame of wood, with a collar in the middle. It weighs about fifty pounds, and is so made that it can be locked around a man's neck. When it is so locked it rests directly on the muscles of the neck and on the bones of the shoulder, and it is so constructed that it cannot be shifted even a tenth of an inch, nor can the weight be relieved with the hands. In addition, the collar has a sharp rim underneath. At first the victim does not suffer much, except from inconvenience. He is turned loose as soon as the cangue is locked on him, and for an hour or two he waddles around in fair comfort. But gradually, as the sharp

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WEARING THE COLLAR.

work remains that still has awful life in it. And at this terrible spectacle the Chinese gaze stolidly, without an expression either of pleasure or loathing. Another ingenious torture that is much used is to suspend the condemned man with his head down in