

A HAUNTED HOUSE

The Weird Story of Mme. La Laurel's Abandoned Home. Reminiscences of Slavery Days in the South.

Each of the great Eastern cities contain old landmarks with historical surroundings, which recalled are of interest to the readers of the Pacific Coast, where our cities are comparatively new and there are few indications of the days of our ancestors. The story of Mme. La Laurel's home which comes to us from New Orleans is one of a thousand such instances in that remarkable city: On one of the principal streets stands a big square house, built in old French style. It is five stories high, and although there are great scars upon the gray stone walls, and the ornate carvings over the peaked tops of the small paned windows are beginning to crumble off, it is a building whose architectural features attract the attention of all the sight-hunting strangers. About forty-five years ago the house belonged to a wealthy old French woman, whom one may call Mme. La Laurel. She owned many slaves, and when she went to live in her Royal street residence she furnished some of the rooms in grand style.

That the madame was a she-devil who tortured her slaves all the town was beginning to know. There was a deep well in her back yard, in which, it is said, she hung the negroes, even to the little babies, suspending them by the arms so that the black, cold, foul-smelling water came up to their lips, and there they hung till almost dead. If they died in the water, especially the babies, who could not naturally endure much of such treatment, the body was weighted, the rope cut, and the poor, freed darkey sunk swiftly out of sight.

In a room on the lower floor of the house Mme. La Laurel had built a sort of dungeon—a brick room inside of a brick room. It has one window, with iron gratings across it, and is as black and awful looking as any dungeon you can imagine. The floors in this echoing old building are full of murderous-looking stains, and to day, if water is thrown upon them they come out blood red. It was up in the garret, though, that the worst torturing was done. Here this bloodthirsty old woman, so they say, upon the least provocation, used to take her negroes, tie them to the walls or nail them by the hands down to the floors, and then amuse herself by cutting off their ears, tearing out their nails and cutting off their tongues. One night there came a hoarse roar blowing down the narrow length of Royal street, and toward midnight a black crowd of human beings—that awful result of an outraged community, a mob—surrounded that stately, grim building. The old French mistress listened in scorn to the storm-like clamor, until the tumult of people apparently came to halt under her own windows, and she heard her own name cried out with threats for her of the torture.

She sprang down the oaken stairway, across the marble hall, past the dungeon, then full of festering wretches, past the well of water—they say the reason 'tis so black to-day is owing to the little negro babies on the bottom—and unlocking the heavily-barred back gates she made her way to the river side. She dodged her pursuers, and crossed the river in a canoe. Finally she escaped to France, where she afterwards died. They say the mob, after freeing the negroes, fairly gutted the house. Of course, the place is haunted. By all the laws of sensationalism it could not but be a place where black ghosts walk. The building was once used as a public high school, but the parents of the girls were superstitious, and would not allow their daughters to cross the threshold of the place, so it was abandoned.

No fewer than three of Twickenham's historic mansions near London are at present in the market. The Strawberry Hill estate is to be offered for sale by auction in a few weeks' time, unless previously disposed of by private treaty. The rumor is revived that the mansion will be secured by a company, and converted into a hotel; and another report is that a distinguished foreigner, closely connected with royalty, is about to take up his residence in the neighborhood, and is anxious to obtain possession of Strawberry Hill.

Black Jerseys are universally worn by ladies in mourning. They are not only a convenient, but a stylish and becoming garment. Some of the newest are cut in battlements around the edge and have a small, turn-over collar.

Mr. Thomson Hankey, a well-known and wealthy London diner-out, has published a little book on diner giving. His main points are: 1. Limit the number of guests to twelve or fourteen. 2. Keep the dining-room cool and well ventilated. 3. Sit down to dinner at 8 1/2, without waiting for guests who may be absent. 4. Return to the drawing-room by 9 1/2 to 9 3/4. 5. Reduce the present number of dishes. If this were done, Mr. Hankey says London diners might be what they ought to be—from the materials to be collected in London society—the most agreeable reunions in the world.

M. Quet maintains that the forces of induction developed in bodies by the sun through its rotation vary, all other things being equal, in inverse ratio to the square of the distance.

The reason why people never have any other disease after having consumption is because they do not lead

LAUGHABILITIES.

Butchers, as a general thing, can "make a little go a great weigh."

Just so long as a woman retains her maiden name, her maiden aim is to change it.

Patience may be golden, but it takes a heap of talk to borrow a silver quarter.

As far as the presentation of the average actor goes, man wants but little Lear below, nor wants that little long.

It is all well enough to love your neighbor, but flirting with his wife is both reprehensible and dangerous.

An exchange asks: "Shall women practice medicine?" They will if they can get any one to practice on, and don't you forget it.

Nothing so strongly tests a man's veracity as to be summoned to the door to be confronted with the question, "Are you the head of the house?"

The man who sang "I would not live always," spent \$152.65 for doctor bills last year. It is still an open question whether he wanted to live or not.

First Small Girl—"I know what I'm going to be when I grow up." Second Ditto—"What are you going to be when you grow up?" First Small Girl—"A widder."

The height of comfort—paying a dollar and a half for a seat in a palace-car, dropping your satchel into a luxuriously cushioned chair and then going forward to the smoking-car to make your journey.

"Mr. Jones," asked Smith of the parson, "don't you think the wicked will have an opportunity given them in the next world?" "Yes, certainly," replied the parson, "an excellent opportunity to get warm."

He is a born genius who, going out in full-dress, succeeds in tying a white cravat around his standing collar without having the bow shift around under his ear or the whole business work up over the collar on his neck.

"Henry" writes asking how he can break his mother of calling him "You Hon-erry!" He says that he has noticed that whenever she calls him that way she always gives him a licking and sends him to bed without his supper.

They tell of a Kansas woman who slept so soundly with a hot flatiron at her feet that she never felt the blisters until some one woke her up. A woman with such a lack of feeling would wear the same bonnet ten years.

An Oil City citizen purchased a piano for his daughter recently, and the other day went around to the agent and wanted to know when the "forte" would be delivered. The piano had arrived all right, but the "forte" hadn't got there yet.

The evil days are upon us when the question where to live agitates many a family man, and the level-headed house owner goes at once to the printing office and advertises his property to rent, thus getting the start of the man who waits until the house-hunter searches him out.

In San Francisco Police Officer Sullivan arrested Joseph Sullivan for robbing John T. Sullivan. When the case had been on trial about an hour there was a wild, harassed look on the judge's face, the lawyers were very much fatigued and the jury asked to be taken out of doors that it might breathe the fresh air.

That celebrated ship, the Great Eastern, cost its unfortunate proprietors \$20,000 for maintenance in the past year, while her total earnings are represented by the miserable sum of \$65, which was received as visitors' fees. The owners say they wouldn't have been much worse off in America running a comic opera troupe.

A dozen or twenty men will come into an over-heated car, and each will say, if he says anything, "Pretty warm in here," and then sit down and bear the heat like a martyr; but presently a woman come in. "Mercy!" she exclaims, and up goes the window in an instant. Women are too fond of ventilation, and if they get into politics like as not they would be ventilating everything they could lay hands on.

In a suit for separation the counsel for the wife pleaded, among other motives, the incompatibility of temper, and began to trace a portrait of the husband: "Brutal, violent, angry—"

The lawyer for the husband, in his turn, painted the wife: "Wicked, violent, peevish." "Excuse me," said the judge, interrupting the advocate, "gentlemen, where do you find the incompatibility of temper?"

"Well, I must say," remarked Mrs. Fogg, "that our John is the slowest boy that I ever saw. It takes him forever to do nothing. He is so awfully lazy that it puts me all out of patience with him." "Oh, don't call him lazy," said Fogg, of whom the boy was a truthful copy; "it isn't laziness, mother. The fact is, the boy hates to be idle, and when he has anything to do he takes as much time about it as possible, through fear that he will be left with nothing to do."

Two sports of Billings, M. T., undertook to run a foot race for \$20 a side. At the start one of them pushed his opponent over a drygoods box and then ran the race by himself. When he reached the end of the course he turned around and saw the victim making off with the stakes. He thereupon drew a six-shooter and compelled the skipper to stop and deliver. After accomplishing this feat the victor returned to the place where he had left his coat and vest and found that some wretch had stolen from the pockets of the aforesaid vest a \$400 roll and a \$125 diamond pin. Altogether it was very honorably conducted affair for a race.

HIS PA BROKE.

The Bad Boy Tries to Sell a Silver Mine and Strikes the Pious Man's Pocket Book.

"Say, can't I sell you some mining stock in a silver mine?" asked the bad boy of the groceryman, as he came into the store and pulled from his breast pocket a document printed on parchment paper and representing several thousand dollars' stock in a silver mine.

"Lookahere," said the groceryman, as he turned, pale and thoughtful of telephoning to the police station for a detective, "you have been stealing your father's mining stock, have you? Great heavens it has come at last! I have known all the time that you would turn out to be a burglar, or a defaulter, or a robber of some kind. Your father has the reputation of having a bonanza in a silver mine, but if you go lugging his silver stock around he will soon be ruined. Now you go right back home and put that stock in your pa's safe, like a good boy."

"Put it in the safe! Oh, no, we keep it in a box stall now, in the barn. I will trade you this thousand dollars in stock for two heads of lettuce, and get pa to sign it over to you if you say so. Pa told me I could have the whole trunk full if I wanted it, and the hired girls are using the silver stock to clean the windows and to kindle the fires, and pa has quit the church and says he won't belong to any concern that harbors bilks. What's a bilk?" said the boy, as he opened a candy jar and took out four sticks of hoarhound candy.

"A bilk," said the groceryman, as he watched the boy, "is a fellow that plays a man for candy or money, or anything, and don't intend to return an equivalent. You are a small sized bilk. But what's the matter with your pa and the church, and what has the silver mine stock got to do with it?"

"Well, you remember that exhorter that was here last fall that used to board around with the church people all the week and talk about Zion, and laying up treasures where the moths wouldn't gnaw them, and they wouldn't get rusty, and where thieves wouldn't pry off the hinges. He was the one that used to go home with us from prayer meetings, when pa was down down, and who wanted to pay off the church debt in solid silver bricks. He's the bilk. I guess if pa got him by the neck he would jerk nine kinds of revealed religions out of him. O, pa is hotter than when the hornets took the lunch off him. When you strike a pious man on his pocketbook it hurts him. That fellow prayed and sang like an angel and boarded around like a tramp. He stopped at our house over a week and he had specimens of rock that were chock full of silver and gold, and he and pa used to sit up nights and look at it. You could pick pieces of silver out of the rock as big as brickshot, and he had some silver bricks that were beautiful. He had been out in Colorado and found a hill full of the silver rock, and he wanted to form a stock company and dig out millions of dollars. He didn't want anybody but pious men, that belonged to the church, in the company, and I think that was one thing that caused pa to unite with the church so suddenly. I know he was wicked as could be a few days before he joined the church, but this revivalist, with his words about the beautiful beyond, where all shall dwell together in peace, and sing praises, and his description of the Colorado mountain where the silver stuck out so you could hang your hat on it, converted pa. That man's scheme was to let all church people who were in good standing, and who had plenty of money, into the company, and when the mine began to return dividends by the ear load, they could give largely to the church, and pay the debts of all the churches, and put down carpets and fresco the ceiling. The man said he had been steered on to that mine by a higher power, and his idea was to work it for the glory of the cause. He said he liked pa, and would make him vice-president of the company. Pa he bit like a bass, and I guess he invested \$5,000 in stock, and ma she wanted to come in, and she put in \$1,000 that she had laid up to buy some diamond ear-rings, and the man gave pa a lot of stock to sell to other members of the church. They are all into it, even the minister. He drew his salary ahead, and all the deacons they come in, and the man went back to Colorado with about \$30,000 of good, pious money. Yesterday pa got a paper from Colorado giving the whole snap away, and the pious man has been spending the money in Denver and whooping it up. Pa suspected something was wrong two weeks ago, when he heard that the pious man had been on a toot in Chicago, and he wrote to a man in Denver who used to get full with pa years ago when they were both on the turf, and pa's friend said the man that sold the stock was a fraud, and that he didn't own no mine, and that he borrowed the samples of ore and silver bricks from a pawn broker in Denver. I guess it will break pa up for a while, though he is well enough fixed with mortgages and things. But it hurts him to be took in. He lays it all to ma. He says if she hadn't let that exhorter for the silver mine go home with her this would not have occurred, and ma says she believes pa was in partnership with the man to beat her out of her thousand dollars, that she was going to buy a pair of pious diamond ear-

rings with. O, it is terror over to the house now. Both the hired girls put in all the money they had, and took stock, and they threaten to sue pa for arson, and they are going to leave to-night, and ma will have to do the work. Don't you never try to get rich quick," said the boy as he peeled a herring and took a couple of crackers.

"Never you mind me," said the groceryman. "They don't catch me on any of their silver mines. But I hope this will have some influence on you, and teach you to respect your pa's feelings, and not play any tricks on him, while he is still feeling so bad over his being swindled."

"O, I don't know about that. I think when a man is in trouble, if he has a good little boy to take his mind from his troubles, and get him mad at something else, it rests him. Last night we had hot maple syrup and biscuit for supper, and pa had a saucer full in front of him, just a steaming. I could see he was thinking too much about his mining stock, and I thought if there was anything I could do to take his mind off it, and place it on something else, I would do a kindness that would be appreciated. I sat on the right hand of pa, and when he wasn't looking I pulled the table cloth so that the saucer of red hot maple syrup dropped off in his lap. Well, you'd a dote to see how quick his thoughts turned from his financial troubles to his physical misfortunes. There was about a pint of hot syrup, and it went all over his lap, and you know how hot melted maple syrup is, and how it sort of clings to anything. Pa jumped up and grabbed hold of his pants legs to pull them away from himself, and he danced around and told ma to turn the hose on him, and then he took a piteer of ice water and poured it down his pants, and he said the condemned old table was getting so rickety that a saucer wouldn't stay on it, and I told pa if he would put some tar on his legs, the same kind he told me to put on my lip to make my moustache grow, the syrup wouldn't burn so, and he cuffed me, and I think he felt better. It is a great thing to get a man's mind off his troubles, but where a man hasn't got any mind, like you, for instance—"

At this point the grocery man picked up a fire poker, and the boy went out in a hurry and hung up a sign in front of the grocery, "Cash paid for fat dogs."—Peck's Sun.

STICK TO YOUR TRADE.

"Stick to your trade," says an exchange, "nine-tenths of all the failures of the last year have come to men who were dabbling in outside affairs." There could not be more truth crudely into a few lines than is contained in the above. As a general thing when you hear of the failure of a man in business you can set it down that he has been dabbling in something he knew nothing about, and has sunk the money needed in his legitimate business. The merchant, even in a country village, who attends strictly to business, may in time lay by a snug little sum, but as soon as he commences to speculate in land, or even trade horses, he is liable at any time to hear something drop on account of taking the money needed in his business for speculative purposes. The farmer who works hard all summer, sows and reaps a good harvest, and puts the proceeds of the sale of his wheat into his pants pocket and goes to speculating in pork, may eventually find a mortgage plastered down over his property that it will take years of frugal industry to remove. You hear of the failure of a merchant engaged in trade and in nine cases out of ten you can trace the cause to the fact that he had a few thousand dollars invested in wheat when the price tumbled and the bottom fell out of his scheme for making a little money by outside speculation. A merchant may be all right and level-headed in his trade, he can weigh out codfish and sugar, or drive a sharp bargain in buying a load of green hides or a barrel of butter, but when he has a few thousand dollars invested in wheat, or pork, or lumber, and the price takes a drop, he loses his head and is laid out colder than a mackerel.—Peck's Sun.

WHEAT IN INDIA.

A gentleman of Calcutta, India, has lately written and published a pamphlet in which is set forth with considerable ability the proposition that India, native and European, can, if given cheaper means of transportation, crowd American wheat out of the Liverpool market. Immediately following the issuance of this pamphlet comes the news to this country that railroad rates from the North of India to Bombay are to be at once reduced 18 1/2 per cent, which if done, means a reduction of at least 5 cents a bushel on Indian wheat in the Indian markets.

It is claimed by the Government of India that wheat there can be raised at considerably less cost than in America, and that, were it not for the cost of transportation, India could and would supply all the wheat that England now buys abroad. Statistics show that India does raise enough wheat to supply the English demand, but being without elevators in which to store it or railways to carry it, millions of bushels perish annually. India has 255,000,000 of people with only 10,000 miles of railroads. So that as yet, with our superior facilities of transportation the day is not by any means at hand when American exporters need fear any dangerous competition on the part of India in English wheat markets.

Whatever exception occurs, it is a great truth that man's body must be sound if he is to be sound in mind and in heart.

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