

A BRITISH VERDICT.

Tom Selby laid down the last batch of English papers which had reached us at Hamberhufn with a sudden cry of surprise. "Charlie," he cried, turning round at me, "just look over these reports and tell me what you make of this Greyhamp-ton mystery."

We were two young doctors who, anxious to earn a name for ourselves in science, had come to Norway on purpose to study that strange disease the goback, said to be induced among Norwegian fishermen during the anachronous season by excessive consumption of raw salt fish. It is a rapid disease, acting from the outset with extraordinary violence. No satisfactory cure, no mode of treatment even, has yet been devised for it.

I took up the papers and read. This was a curious case. Yet at first my interest was but languidly aroused. The incidents seemed all of a stereotyped pattern. It was "Casey No. 7" of the drama pasted, according to Lombroso's luminous classification. You remember the circumstances: Old Mr. Pargiter was a rich but cranky merchant at Greyhamp-ton engaged in the Norway trade. His wife, 30 years his junior, fell desperately in love with a curate named Gilbright, and while those two were conducting a clandestine correspondence Mr. Pargiter died, with grave suspicions of poisoning.

It was alleged by the crown that Gilbright had given him arsenic, and indeed evidence was brought forward to show that Gilbright had bought the poison in considerable quantities at a local chemist's, though his counsel contended he used it only for preserving birds' skins, as he was an enthusiastic and learned ornithologist. However, it was clear that both Gilbright and Mrs. Pargiter were anxiously waiting till the rich old husband safely out of the way, where they proposed to marry and live happily and virtuously ever after.

You will observe at once that in the story so far there was nothing more than Lombroso's familiar Case No. 7: "Wife has a lover and a rich husband. Lover poisons husband. Wife remains in ignorance of the circumstances." But as I read on, and on I came to the part to which Tom had so urgently called my attention. It was the medical evidence as to the dead man's symptoms, together with the analysis of the contents of his stomach.

Then my interest deepened. Tom watched me narrowly. "Well, what do you make of it?" he inquired at last eagerly.

I looked up from the paper. "Why, the goback," I answered, without a moment's hesitation.

"So I think," he assented. "And as for arsenic—judging! How could a man like Forbes-Ellery put down such symptoms as those to an irritant?"

I read to the end of the medical evidence. "Oh, it's as clear as mud!" I cried. "Here are the small black spots, and the temperature below normal, and the rigidity of the hands, and the final sense of total happiness."

"Besides which," Tom put in, "the patient had been over at Lofoden just ten days previously."

"What did the jury do?" I cried.

"Found the parson guilty of course," Tom answered.

I jumped up in horror. "When is the man to be hanged?" I exclaimed.

"Not decided when the papers left," Tom replied. "But, then, that was more than a week ago."

I made up my mind at once. "Tom," I cried, "we must save this poor fellow's life. The case is clear. There was no murder at all. We know every symptom. The man died of goback."

"What can we do?" Tom inquired.

"Take the first chance of a coaster down to Bergen," I answered, "and telegraph at once to the home secretary."

Oh, the long, dreary delays of that endless sail in a small fishing smack down the sound to Bergen! How we tacked and luffed! Would we ever reach our port, and if we did, would it be in time to save the innocent victim?

The moment we landed I telegraphed in all haste: "We have been studying an obscure disease in Norway and can lay before you evidence which will clearly show no murder at all took place at Greyhamp-ton, thus exculpating Gilbright. We implore you to delay execution till we can produce our proofs. The disease was at Lofoden when Pargiter called there. We signed it with our names and medical credentials."

A few hours later a reply came back: "Home secretary regrets execution of Convict Gilbright took place at Newgate yesterday morning. Cholmondeley Jevons, private secretary."

I was beside myself with indignation. I took the first steamer and laid the case at once before the home office.

Mr. Cholmondeley Jevons received me. His chief was too busy. He listened politely but incredulously to my narrative. I showed him beyond a doubt that Pargiter had died of the Norwegian disease acquired at Lofoden, but never till our time investigated with care by any medical man, either Norse or English. He gazed at me through his eyeglass, smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "Most regretful, if true," he remarked at last, with official callousness.

"If only I could have been present at the trial," I exclaimed, "I might have saved that man's life. I might have convinced the jury!"

The private secretary smiled again, an inscrutable smile. "My dear sir," he said, "you misunderstand the British juryman, and you forget Mrs. Maybrick. Twelve good men and true found Gilbright guilty of murder, not because it was proved he had poisoned the man, but because it was proved he had intrigued with the lady."

Grant Allen in Sketch.

Duty First.

The late General Francis A. Walker went into the army a year after he graduated from Amherst college. A pleasant story which he used to tell illustrates the temper of the time and shows of what stuff mothers were then made:

He obtained a leave of absence to go home to Massachusetts and arrived there without having notified his mother that he was coming. When he approached the house, it was evening. He peered through a window and saw his mother sitting alone, knitting.

Then he stepped softly into the room and, standing before her, said suddenly: "Mother!"

Mrs. Walker started and looked up at her son, but did not rise.

"Francis," she said severely, "have you left the army?"

"No, mother, only on leave. I'm going back next week."

"Then," General Walker used to say, "she jumped from her chair and came and kissed me. I have always wondered what she would have done if I had left the army."—Youth's Companion.

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