

girded it about my waist—always with a straw rope, the sole band within my reach; but as it went on, the power departed from the dream; I stood waiting for foes who would not come; or they drew near in fury, and when I would have drawn my weapon, old blood and rust held it fast in its sheath, and I tugged at it in helpless agony; and fear invaded my heart, and I turned and fled, pursued by my foes until I left the dream itself behind, whence the terror still pursued me.

There were many things more on those walls. A pair of spurs, of make modern enough, hung between two pewter dish-covers. Hanging book-shelves came next; for although most of my uncle's books were in his bed-room, some of the commoner were here on the wall, next to an old fowling-piece, of which both lock and barrel were devoured with rust. Then came a great pair of shears, though how they should have been there I cannot yet think, for there was no garden to the house, no hedges or trees to clip. I need not linger over these things. Their proper place is in the picture with which I would save words and help understanding if I could.

Of course there was a great chimney in the place; chiefly to be mentioned from the singular fact that just round its corner was a little door opening on a rude winding stair of stone. This appeared to be constructed within the chimney; but on the outside of the wall was a half-round projection, revealing that the stair was not indebted to it for the whole of its accommodation. Whither the stair led I shall have to disclose in my next chapter. From the opposite end of the kitchen, an ordinary wooden staircase, with clumsy balustrade, led up to the two bed-rooms occupied by my uncle and my aunt; to a large lumber-room, whose desertion and almost emptiness was a source of uneasiness in certain moods; and to a spare bed-room, which was better furnished than any of ours, and indeed to my mind a very grand and spacious apartment. This last was never occupied during my childhood; consequently it smelt musty notwithstanding my aunt's exemplary housekeeping. Its bedstead must have been hundreds of years old. Above these rooms again were those to which the dormer windows belonged, and in one of them I slept. It opened into that occupied by Nannie, our only maid. It had a deep closet in which I kept my few treasures, and into which I used to retire when out of temper or troubled, conditions not occurring frequently, for nobody quarrelled with me, and I had nobody with whom I might have quarrelled.

When I climbed upon a chair, I could seat myself on the broad sill of the dormer window. This was the watch-tower whence I viewed the world. Thence I could see trees in the distance—too far off for me to tell whether they were churning wind or not. On that side those trees alone were between me and the sky.

One day when my aunt took me with her into the lumber-room, I found there, in a corner, a piece of strange mechanism. It had a kind of pendulum; but I cannot describe it because I had lost sight of it long before I was capable of discovering its use, and my recollection of it is therefore very vague—far too vague to admit of even a conjecture now as to what it could have been intended for. But I remember well enough my fancy concerning it, though when or how that fancy awoke I cannot tell either. It seems to me as old as the finding of the instrument. The fancy was that if I could keep that pendulum wagging long enough, it would set all those trees going too; and if I still kept it swinging, we should have such a storm of wind as no living man had ever felt or heard of. That I more than half believed it will be evident from the fact that, although I frequently carried the pendulum, as I shall call it, to the window sill, and set it in motion by way of experiment, I had not, up to the time of a certain incident which I shall very soon have to relate, had the courage to keep up the oscillation beyond ten or a dozen strokes; partly from fear of the trees, partly from a dim dread of exercising power whose source and extent were not within my knowledge. I kept the pendulum in the closet I have mentioned, and never spoke to any one of it.

CHAPTER II.

MY UNCLE AND AUNT.

We were a curious household. I remembered neither father nor mother; and the woman I had been taught to call *auntie* was no such near relation. My uncle was my father's brother, and my aunt was his cousin, by the mother's side. She was a tall, gaunt woman, with a sharp nose and eager eyes, yet sparing of speech. Indeed, there was very little speech to be heard in the house. My aunt, however, looked as if she could have spoken. I think it was the spirit of the place that kept her silent, for there were those eager eyes. She might have been expected also to show a bad temper, but I never saw a sign of such. To me she was always kind, chiefly, I allow, in a negative way, leaving me to do very much as I please. I doubt if she felt any great tenderness for me, although I had been dependent upon her care from infancy. In after years I came to the conclusion that she

was in love with my uncle; and perhaps the sense that he was indifferent to her save after a brotherly fashion, combined with the fear of betraying herself and the consciousness of her unattractive appearance, to produce the contradiction between her looks and her behaviour.

Every morning, after our early breakfast, my uncle walked away to the farm, where he remained until dinner-time. Often, when busy at my own invented games in the grass, I have caught sight of my aunt, standing motionless with her hand over her eyes, watching for the first glimpse of my uncle, ascending from the hollow where the farm-buildings lay; and occasionally, when something had led her thither as well, I would watch them returning together over the grass, when she would keep glancing up in his face at almost regular intervals, although it was evident they were not talking, but he never turned his face or lifted his eyes from the ground a few yards in front of him.

He was a tall man of nearly fifty, with gray hair, and quiet meditative blue eyes. He always looked as if he were thinking. He had been intended for the church, but the means for the prosecution of his studies failing, he had turned his knowledge of rustic affairs to account, and taken a subordinate position on a nobleman's estate, where he rose to be bailiff. When my father was seized with his last illness, he returned to take the management of the farm. It had been in the family for many generations. Indeed that portion of it upon which the house stood was our own property. When my mother followed my father, my uncle asked his cousin to keep house for him. Perhaps she had expected a further request, but more had not come of it.

When he came in, my uncle always went straight to his room; and having washed his hands and feet, took a book and sat down in the window. If I were sent to tell him that the meal was ready, I was sure to find him reading. He would look up, smile, and look down at his book again; nor, until I had formally delivered my message, would he take further notice of me. Then he would rise, lay his book carefully aside, take my hand, and lead me down stairs.

To my childish eyes there was something very grand about my uncle. His face was large-featured and handsome; he was tall, and stooped meditatively. I think my respect for him was founded a good deal upon the reverential way in which my aunt regarded him. And there was great wisdom, I came to know, behind that countenance, a golden speech behind that silence.

My reader must not imagine that the prevailing silence of the house oppressed me. I had been brought up in it, and never felt it. My own thoughts, if thoughts those conditions of mind could be called, which were chiefly passive results of external influences—whatever they were—thoughts or feelings, sensations, or dim, slow movements of mind—they filled the great pauses of speech; and besides, I could read the faces of both my uncle and aunt like the pages of a well-known book. Every shade of alteration in them I was familiar with, for their changes were not many.

Although my uncle's habit was silence, however, he would now and then take a fit of talking to me. I remember many such talks; the better, perhaps, that they were divided by long intervals. I had perfect confidence in his wisdom, and submission to his will. I did not much mind my aunt. Perhaps her deference to my uncle made me feel as if she and I were more on a level. She must have been really kind, for she never resented any petulance or carelessness. Possibly she sacrificed her own feeling to the love my uncle bore me; but I think it was rather that because he cared for me, she cared for me too.

Twice during every meal she would rise from the table with some dish in her hand, open the door behind the chimney, and ascend the winding stair.

[To be continued.]

The *Medical Press and Circular* relates the following extraordinary mistake: "A working man, afflicted with small-pox, was removed to one of the metropolitan district hospitals; his wife applied from day to day for information respecting his state, and was told 'No.'—(by which he was designated) was worse, and in time was dead: in due course a letter arrived requesting her to arrange for the removal and interment of the body. A coffin was provided, the body placed therein and screwed down to prevent infection, mourning procured for the woman and child, and the funeral duly solemnized. A week after, the disconsolate widow was astonished by her husband opening the door and walking into the room in which she was at work. An error in the number had occasioned the mistake. The man and his wife are now endeavoring to obtain from the hospital authorities the amount expended upon the funeral and mourning."

WALKING.—A mathematical young man calculates that during a period of five years he has walked thirteen thousand two hundred and fifty-three miles in visiting his sweetheart. How far must he travel, we wonder, to walk into her affections?

(REGISTERED in accordance with the Copyright Act of 1869.)

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

TALES

OF THE

LINKS OF LOVE.

BY ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE.

LILLYMERE.

CHAPTER XXVI.—Continued.

The prisoner was conveyed by indirect road towards Conway, to avoid unnecessary exposure the constables said.

"I'm not afraid of exposure," the captive remarked; "but I'm afraid a little—just a little—that you two strangers have a design other than alleged. Why has no local magistrate endorsed that pretended warrant?"

"It was unnecessary. The warrant is good."

"Why don't you go through Rama where I might see the Mayor, Mr. Ramasine, who is a county magistrate? Or by the Mills where I might see Squire Steelyard, also a magistrate of the county? What authority has Junkyn of Swush to endorse such a warrant? He'd sign anything to have his insignificant name go abroad, or into newspapers as a Justice of Peace, I know that much of him."

"It is endorsed by another with authority everywhere. Junkyn backed the warrant in case you were intercepted escaping by Niagara frontier."

"Who set you on me?"

"It is no part of our duty to make explanations of that kind."

"You will explain and submit to penalties, too, before this matter finally closes. Though I already suspect it was a man employed by us for a time on private inquiry business, and who proving worthless was dismissed."

"We answer no impertinent remarks. When you, Mr. Inkle, can satisfactorily account for the human remains and clothes in your possession, and produce Anna Liffey alive, it will be time for our explanations."

"You go to Conway this round-about way for an object other than that just stated. Money? Do you expect money?"

"You said you had no money."

"None with me, more than for gates and hostlers; but of course you know I've money at command."

"How many thousands would Mr. Inkle pay to let his son get away, not to the States, they'd extradite a murderer under the treaty; nor to Europe, for they'd hang you there as readily as here; but to Cuba, or Panama, Sandwich Islands, Patagonia, or such like; how many thousands in pounds sterling, and in gold?"

"Not one penny sterling, or Canadian. My father knows his son innocent in this matter; and the son defies you."

"Good. We were not asking money; somebody may, however. You had confederates planted at Rama and the Mills to effect a rescue?"

"How should I? Neither myself nor any human being knew of this outrage being designed."

"You knew of the crime, Inkle. Knew of sharp eyes watching your movements. Did not you leave home this morning to avoid arrest, and to get to the States by fast riding to a railway station twenty miles from home?"

"A falsehood. Every word a falsehood."

While this conversation proceeded in the light waggon, where Inkle sat locked by a handcuff to Ragstrath, Welterback, the companion constable, driving at a leisurely pace, Deacon Pearly hastened to Rama to inform his friend, Mayor Ramasine, of what had occurred. The Mayor called together a few select neighbours to consult. Said he:

"I refused to back their warrant; and so did Squire Steelyard. I'm not satisfied our late schoolmistress is dead. She disappeared suddenly without explanation, I admit. She may have been under constraint; for had she gone voluntarily I think she'd have confided the intention to me. I suggest constraint, it being not impossible that wicked speculators from a distance tried to force from her information as to the localities of auriferous strata. But why should any creature other than a madman kill her? Lest of all young Inkle. As a land speculator his interest was to be served by her continuance in life."

"Don't know that, Mr. Mayor," said Irk, his neighbour. "Nobody seems satisfied with the claims they purchased at long prices from old Inkle. No claim turns out as expected. Happily the land-owning population all over this district remain unmoved. Only one or two residents have shown excitement. But farther away that is not so. The Rama gold diggings are filling cities east and west of us with speculative fever. Joint stock companies arise in hundreds. They are selling scrip at enormous premiums. Agents of the companies come flocking here as we see to secure claims. Labouring men from distant places crowd hither to dig. Loafing vagrants and college-bred do-nothings come here to gather gold, but find that stubborn rocks are first to be

quarried, tunnels driven through spurs of the hills, or pits sunk in the bottoms, the workers to the knees in water and clay; and even then signs of gold all but invisible, except in the Redwald Diggings. Worst of all swindlers drop particles of gold in the excavated mud, get it assayed and publish the results; 'gold found! gold found!' on that claim, or this, or other, to re-sell land at fabulous premiums. Which deception the Inkles have shared in. Which they may have desired Anna Liffey to assist in. Which she may have refused. Then! what if she were murdered to silence her? The thing is quite as probable as any other crime."

"There's to be a Coroner's inquest to-day," the Mayor remarked, "on the bones found in the Inkle cellar. It may be well that some of us go, who knew Miss Liffey best, and see if they are really her clothes which report alleges to have been found with the remains. I shall set off at once."

So went many more, mostly in their family carriages with fast trotting spans of horses. The flourishing farmers of the four townships touching at Ramasine Corners, twelve miles square the township, gentlemen freeholders the farmers; Eccley potwallers, Lancashire weavers most of the flourishing squires,—they, I say, drove fast trotting teams of best horses. They hurried to the inquest at Conway.

"If that young lady, whose penetration into secrets of science were most daring, as I'm told," said Wooliser, the newly-arrived fashionable draper; "if she has really fallen a victim to the commotion she has raised in the country it will be a kind of romance; almost a romance."

"Rather say a judgment," interposed Grinley Dawk. "See how all honest, sober work is disturbed in pursuit of the root of evil."

"Nonsense!" cried young Lariker, now partner with Ramasine; "foundries and machine shops at Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Dundas, Brantford, are engaged getting out engines, crushing mills, steam pumping apparatus for the Rama gold fields. Saw-mills are pressed getting lumber for use at the diggings. Every man is in demand at high wages who can handle tools. Railways are crowded carrying people, goods, material. Money is circulating as never before. When, where, out of California, out of Australia, was such life inspired in a country in so short a time as along the Ramasine Hills? And by one woman of genius! If dead, you should bewail her death and build monuments. If alive, find her and lay honours on the peerless head, treasures of offerings at her feet."

"She is causing the land to follow idolatry," reiterated Dawk.

The Coroner, after consultation with town and county magistrates, declined holding the intended inquest. Young Inkle gave what they deemed a satisfactory account of how the skeleton and clothes came into his possession. But as Rickaby could not be found, and mystery attached to the bones, it was decided to confide them to the Chief of Police. Which trust Mr. Grynd accepted, remaining silent with his plain clothes man Alleroo about the opera gaiter boots, scarf, veil, and half-burned crinoline, taken by them from Tom Inkle's rooms on night of the fire. 'Agnes Schoolar,' the name within the gaiters as they had since made out by aid of the microscope.

"Who was Agnes Schoolar?" That had become the secret concern of Grynd and Alleroo. "Were these the bones of the lady who owned the opera boots, veil, and scarf?"

They would wait and watch events. Yet said they, the skeleton might be not Agnes Schoolar's, but Anna Liffey's! Though Inkle were guiltless of Anna's death, the Rickaby story was not satisfactory. So the Chief instructed Alleroo to continue keeping 'a quiet eye' on young Inkle.

Ragstrath and Welterback returned to their frontier duties dissatisfied with the Conway magistrates and Coroner. They talked of appealing to the Hon. the Attorney-General.

Mrs. Inkle feeling deeply hurt at the indignity done the family by imputations on her son, false as she instinctively believed them, deemed her public appearance in the superb chariot more incumbent than ever. The negroes attended on horseback as outriders, handsomely equipped, wearing red caps and gold tassels.

Young Tom for similar reasons showed himself abroad more than ever; the two negroes in livery riding a long distance behind to keep him in sight, if he were on horseback and his mother not out with the carriage.

The banker scowled; was sour in temper and so stern that "his Tilda" betook herself to sleep in another chamber. The son had not, at end of a week, presumed to face his father. Not that the old man suspected guilt. Far from that were his thoughts.

"But the disgrace, Tilda! It is enough to kill me and kill the bank. Let them not come! the way, wife or son, as disgrace Thomas Inkle, or hurt the bank. As for the niggers never let one of them come in my office with message about anything whatsoever. I hate the sight of them! What do wi' them? Sell them down South, and dong thee!"

It was exactly a week from the day of the arrest, that the young gentleman being out on