

TO-MORROW.

A dreamer sat idly thinking
Of a beautiful yesterday,
Long past, that in farther sinking
Cast ever a richer ray,
Like the last deep crimson linking
Of the sunlight into the gray.

But e'en as he sought to borrow
A warmth from its fervid glow,
The chill of life's toll and sorrow
Returned like the ocean's flow,
And he prayed for but one to-morrow
That might not be blighted so.

Then paused in his mute devotion,
A heavenly sound to list,
That came, as over the ocean
Murmur voices through a mist,—
It was only the soul's emotion
That throbbed in his heart, I wist.

He deemed it a heaven-born token,
And watched for the coming morn;
But the fitters of grief, unbroken
And bitterer to be borne,
Still bound him; "my prayer unspoken,"
He whispered, "is turned to scorn."

Again was that dreamer sitting,
Breathed o'er by the balmy air,
That smoothens the knottiest knitting
Of brows that are lined with care,
His thought to no subject fitting,
Till it touched unanswered prayer.

And with merely an earnest gazing
Out into the western sky,
Full of clouds, like a prairie blazing,
He uttered a prayer or sigh;
And knew of his soul's upraising
In faith for a sure reply.

It came, and his soul was gifted
To echo the words aright,
While a hand he saw not shifted
The veil from his longing sight;
Yet bearing his grief unlifted,
As a burthen by strength made light.

And this was the heavenly teaching
That came to that heart in doubt,
To answer its soul's beseeching,
And circle it round about
Like the arm of an angel reaching
Through clouds, from a world without.

Ah dreamer! what need to borrow
From youth and its joys one ray?
Take courage, this night of sorrow
Most surely shall fade away
In the light of that promised morrow,
The dawn of Eternal Day.

Montreal.

BARRY DANE.

THE GHOST OF A CHANCE.

The whole affair sounds like the wildest romance. Granted. It is not for me to go into the question of its probability. I simply record certain facts which have come under my notice.

Here is a young fellow, like scores of others, with just enough property to live on and to deprive him of the spur to exertion. A barrister, quite briefless, dabbling in art, literature and music, and doing nothing with either. Amongst other tastes he has one for quaint jewelry—not for his own adornment, but he collects it, and possesses many curious specimens, ancient and modern. I knew him very well, and he has often shown me these treasures. One day I call on him, after a long vacation, and find him throwing off slip after slip of manuscript.

"Excuse me five minutes," he says, "and I shall have finished. I have made a wonderful addition to my collection, and in the oddest manner. I am writing a story about it, and—there—that's the end of the first part." He has been scribbling away while speaking, and now lays down his pen. "You shall read for yourself," he goes on, gathering up his manuscript, "how it came about, and you will understand why I am rather excited at recalling this, the narrowest escape and the strangest adventure I ever had in my life." Then, lighting a cigar, and giving me another, he settles me in an easy chair by the fire, and begins pacing the room, while I read as follows:

I left King's Cross by the night mail on the 16th of last August. I was out of health, tired, and wanted to sleep; so, settling my traps on the seat to my satisfaction, I suddenly remembered that I had nothing to read, and I called the guard to the window that he might get me a book. Returning in a minute, he put into my hands Bulwer's "Strange Story;" and as I gave him the money, he said, "Now, we're off in one minute, sir; I hope you'll like my choice." Leisurely turning over the leaves by the light of the carriage lamp, I very soon found that the work my friend had selected was utterly distasteful to me, and I regretted having wasted my money upon it. It was a story, as most people know, treating of spiritual influences, a subject on which I was thoroughly sceptical. I soon got tired of it; but it served its purpose, and sent me to sleep, and sound asleep I remained till the train stopped at Peterborough.

Only partly awake, I remember letting down the window, and that several persons in the crowd on the platform tried to get into the carriage; one fellow, just as we were starting, thrust his head so far in that I thought he was going to make a harlequin's leap for it. Drowsily congratulating myself on having had the door locked, I was dropping off to sleep again when I suddenly discovered I was not alone. Who was that seated in the opposite corner of the carriage? A young lady, assuredly. The dim light from the lamp enabled me to discern that she was in evening dress, with the hood of her opera cloak over her head. She appeared to be busy fastening her ear-ring into her left ear.

"How odd," I thought, "that I should not have seen her get in!" Here were my legs still

stretched across the seat with my rug over them; and surely I must have known if she had passed me; and the door had certainly never been opened. Very angry and puzzled, I determined to remonstrate with the guard at the next station. What an odd costume, too, for travelling, I thought; I couldn't make it out. The young lady was very quiet and still, and, as she appeared not to notice me, I hardly liked to begin any conversation, so I sat watching her till sleep again overtook me.

All at once the slackening of speed and the shrill, horrible, hollow danger-whistle of the engine again disturbed my comfortable nap, and, lazily looking out, I found to my surprise we were not stopping at any station, and that outside nothing could be seen. A darkness that might be felt was all that met the eye when turned to the open window, whilst the fresh damp air announced that we were in the midst of country, and the sighing of the night breeze told of woods not far off. Neither station, lights, nor dwellings were to be discerned in the upper gloom. A furtive glance across the carriage showed the young lady still quietly sitting there fidgeting with her ear-ring, and not the least alarmed at this interruption to our journey. I called to the guard as he ran by the moment we stopped, and, putting my head out of the window, inquired what was the matter.

"Nothing, sir," he said cheerily; "no danger; only the line's blocked, and we are waiting till they signal us to go on. I expect it's a goods train's being shunted. It'll be all right, sir, in a few minutes." I then said, in a low tone, "What possessed you to place this young lady in my carriage, when I so especially enjoined you to keep it empty?" "I never let anybody in," protested the man, with surprise. "A young lady, do you say?" Springing on the step as I drew my head back, he looked into the carriage, and exclaimed, "Why, there's no lady there, sir!"

I turned, and imagine my confusion—she was gone! "This passes my understanding," said I, "for though I'll swear she was there before I spoke to you, there is certainly nobody there now; she must have gone out." I crossed to the further door, and tried it; it was locked sure enough. I let down the glass and looked out, but in the darkness, of course, could see nothing. "Why, you've been dreaming, sir," said the guard, as I, looking somewhat small, resumed my seat.

"Don't tell me," cried I, indignantly, and disgusted at the absurdity of the position. "I'm perfectly convinced that she was in the carriage! Why, here is positive proof," I went on, as I perceived, and immediately picked up a gold ear-ring from the floor between her seat and mine. Amazement, mingled with doubt and distrust, was plainly depicted on the guard's handsome countenance, as, regarding me with a puzzled, half comical expression, he said, after a minute, "Well, sir, if you really believe you saw her, I should advise your changing your carriage."

"Why so?" I demanded, in surprise. "Because it's well to be on the safe side, sir, for I've heard something of this kind before. Young ladies are dangerous customers in trains sometimes, sir," he added, with the twinkle coming into his eye again. As I drew myself up somewhat indignantly he continued: "They say an accident is almost certain to occur when an apparition has been seen."

So, opening the door, he began to collect my bags and traps, while I, perplexed, and not without some feeling of alarm, alighted, and followed him hastily along the side of the line. "You might have seen some ladies and gentlemen, all dressed for a party, get into the compartment in front of yours at Peterborough," resumed the man, as he steered me by the light of his lantern over the rough ground; "and fine and merry they were; they were going to a ball at Grantham. I fancy you must have been dreaming, sir, for certainly none of them got into your carriage, though one did try; and as to apparitions, well—" He did not finish the sentence, for just then we found an empty compartment at the rear of the train; and the engine's whistle at the same moment announcing the line clear, with but few more words I was very soon again locked in and left to myself.

My first act when the train was once more in motion was to examine carefully the ear-ring so unaccountably found. The shape struck me as curious. It was a wheel suspended from a bird's claw which turned when touched. Surely, as I told the guard, this trinket was a proof that I had not been deceived or dreaming; at least, this was not the apparition of an ear-ring, at any rate. What could it mean? The more I thought of it, the more I was perplexed; and finally put it away in my portemonnaie; and, with a mind wearied with puzzling over the strange occurrence, I at length fell asleep once more—but not long. Suddenly I was rudely awakened by a terrific crash and a shock which threw me violently forward, while the carriage lurched over and nearly capsized.

I knew at once an accident had happened—the accident half prophesied by the guard. As soon as I could collect my scattered senses and found myself unhurt, I clambered out of the carriage and ran down the line to the front of the train, to ascertain the extent of the catastrophe. It was difficult to make one's way in the darkness and confusion; but what were my feelings of horror and amazement, joined to intense thankfulness, when I discovered, after some light had been obtained from a hastily kindled bonfire, that the carriage I had pre-

viously occupied was lying a complete wreck! I knew it by its colour and the number, which I had remarked, still visible on the battered panel. Then I learned that several passengers in the other compartments of it had suffered fearfully, and I was so overcome that I felt quite dizzy.

Here was a wonderful and miraculous escape indeed. All the events of the last half hour rushed through my troubled brain. On that smashed and splintered seat I had sat; and but for the presence of my mysterious companion, there I should be lying—crushed, maimed, perhaps dead! Horrible! The bead broke out on my brow as I thought of it. When my nerves had recovered a little, I sought out the guard, who, pale and grave, was endeavouring to reassure the frightened passengers assembled on the bank. He was comforting them with the intelligence that a special train would arrive shortly from Grantham, and take them from the scene of the disaster.

"My good fellow," said I, "you must explain to me what you meant respecting that young lady—the apparition, I mean, as you chose to call it. You said an accident—" "Lor bless you, sir," he interrupted sadly, "'twas only my chaff. I never heard anything about a young lady; but I thought as you seemed a bit scared it would make your mind easier like, and that's why I shifted you. I can't give any reason why such a fancy came into my head; but it's well it did, sir, for it just saved your life, saved it by 'the ghost of a chance,' as one may say; and there was a faint return of the old humorous twinkle in the man's eye as he thus aptly made a play upon the words. "It was the carriage you were in that suffered most." "Well, there's many a true word spoken in jest," returned I. "Are there many hurt?"

"About seven, I fear sir, and four or more killed. We don't know the cause at present, sir; 'twasn't a collision, and don't appear to have anything to do with the stopping of the train awhile ago. These things do turn up one more than a bit, sir," added the man as he was called away. The lamps of the special train were now sighted and we, the unscathed, were speedily in our places, and arrived at our destination without further hurt or hindrance; but what perplexed ideas whirled in rapid succession through my mind as we were hurried along.

Here was I, saved from a dreadful and untimely death by—what? Not a dream, certainly; but whether it was, by a most marvellous interposition, or, perhaps, as the guard said, "by the ghost of a chance." How could I call it a dream or entertain the notion of ghostly influence, when the ear-ring picked up by my own hand was now safe in my pocket? Was it safe? I looked. Yes, safe enough, the wheel suspended from the bird's claw. A wheel of fortune it had indeed proved to me.

"And do you mean to tell me this is a fact?" I asked ironically, as I finished my friend's manuscript. "Every word of it, as I am a living man," he answered. "See, here is the ear-ring," he and he handed me the trinket. "Well," I continued, after examining it, "What are you going to do? How are you going to finish the story?" "Oh, I don't know. Can you give me a notion?" He knows I have an eye for dramatic situations. "Not I, indeed; you will have to invent, I suspect." And we talked a good deal more, of course, about the strange affair before I left him; and equally of course, at the end of two years the story was not finished. My friend is only a dabbler, and seldom brings any of his efforts in art or literature to a fruitful issue. I little thought that it would devolve on me to take up the thread of this one and finish it for him.

Before parting, however, I asked, "Did you see the girl's face?" "Not very clearly. The light was dim, I could not distinguish her features precisely, nor the colour of her eyes, nor any details exactly, you understand; yet there was a look"—he went on after a pause—"which reminded me of somebody, or I thought it did, I could not tell whom, that I had seen before. It was a mere impression, quite unformed, vague to a degree. I had forgotten, even, that anything of the kind crossed my mind until you asked the question." "Would you know her again?"

"Humph!"—he hesitated—"I hardly know. I think I should if she were similarly dressed and posed." Then he said good-bye; and for two years I do not think we have mentioned the subject above twice; once, when I inquired if he had finished the story; and once later on, when, if I did not clear it up, I at least threw a weird light upon the mystery; the light by which I am enabled to make a sort of second part to the first which I found him writing.

My friend's rooms again; looking much as usual, save that he is at his easel instead of at his desk. Again, as usual, keen for the time being upon what he is doing, he does not rise when I enter, and I stand talking to him for awhile behind his chair. We have not seen each other lately, and he rallies me good-humouredly about dropping the acquaintance of careless bachelors like himself since my marriage—for that momentous event has happened within the last six months. He was abroad at the time, and does not know my wife yet. Soon we passed from this interesting topic, and I said something about the water-color drawing he was working at, as I still stood watching its progress over his shoulder. It was a small study, done the previous evening at a life-school, as he told me from what, artists call the draped model—a rustic figure of a girl seated on a stile.

"But stay," he cried, "you should see it under a white mount. I have one here cut out to the size. Wait, let me get it." He rose and went to the other end of the room. An idea struck me; and taking from my pocket a certain cabinet-sized photograph I had brought to show him, I stood it on the easel in front of his picture, which it exactly covered. Returning with the mount, and talking volubly about what he was going to do in painting, he automatically put the hollow centre of the white cardboard just over the photograph, but without for a moment noticing the change I had made. Suddenly he saw it, and with an exclamation of wonder, started back.

"How came that here?" he went on, pale and agitated as he looked inquiringly from the picture to me. "Did you put it there? Do you know the lady?" "You recognise it?" "Yes, certainly. I haven't seen her for some years now, but I should know that likeness anywhere." He bit his lip and paused, and then added, "I didn't know you knew her." "I don't," I answered, "and I never knew that such a person had ever lived till yesterday." "Then how do you come by her portrait, and why do you bring it to me?" "To ascertain if it really was the same person." "Same person as who?—what? I don't understand!"

"Why, whether, by any strange coincidence, this lady—my wife's old friend and schoolfellow—might happen to be the lady you once—well, shall I say once knew under very peculiar circumstances?" He looked at me somewhat angrily as he said: "See here, old fellow, there are matters sometimes in a man's life that he doesn't care about having raked up again. I tell you honestly that this is one of them, and I don't quite like this kind of joke." No joke, on my word," I continued; "and if I am touching on anything unpleasant, please forgive me, for I have a purpose. Not that I imagined you were so sensitive on the subject, especially as you contemplated turning it to literary account."

"I?—literary account? What do you mean?" he asked indignantly. "I should as lief think of turning cannibal as of turning anything connected with that young lady to account, as you call it." I was a little puzzled now; so I said: "Well, but who do you say the young lady is?" "Her name—if you mean that—was Miss Naughton, Rose Naughton when I knew her; but I confess I don't see that because she happens to be a friend of your wife's you are warranted in referring thus abruptly to my acquaintance with her." "My dear fellow," I cried. "I had no idea of this, believe me. I hadn't a notion that you knew her name, and we are evidently a little at cross purposes; but bear with me a little longer. Admitting that this is a portrait of the Miss Rose Naughton whom you seem to have known, though I never could have guessed that, just look at it again carefully, and see if it does not remind you of some one else—some one whom you once saw, I repeat, under very peculiar circumstances."

He bends forward to examine the photograph, and presently says, "No." Then I say, "Will this help your memory?" and while he is still looking at the portrait, I put down on the ledge of the easel, just under his eyes, an ear-ring. "Good God!" he cries, "what are you up to? What have you taken this out of the cabinet for?" "I have not been near the cabinet, if you mean the place where you keep your jewels." "Then what on earth—" He hesitates, and, taking up the ear-ring, walks with it across the room to his treasure store. I cannot help, with my dramatic instincts, watching him eagerly; and it is as good as a play to see his surprise and wonder, when, opening the cabinet, he takes forth the ear-ring he picked up in the railway carriage, and finds he has the fellow to it in his other hand.

Yes; there they are, clearly the pair—two bird's claws, each holding a revolving wheel. "Now look at the portrait again," I say, when he had stood for a minute regarding me with blank amazement. "I don't say that you will, because it is mere speculation; but do you not see in the portrait of Miss Naughton something to remind you of the young lady, your mysterious travelling companion?" He is examining the photograph again. "Well, it is very absurd, but really, now you put it to me, there might be something in it, and—" He ponders. "Was it she, then—Rose—after all, that I in a measure was reminded of that night? On my honour I seem to think it must have been." Then turning to me, he asks: "But what is the meaning of all this? Why do you want to know whether I can see any resemblance in this photograph to that girl, and where, above all, did you get this other ear-ring from? Explain yourself, for God's sake!"

"Because, as I say," I replied, "it seems to me just possible that, if there be such a thing as ghostly influence, or spiritualism, or clairvoyance, or whatever one may choose to call such mysteries—because, I say, if such things exist, you may have received the warning to leave your seat as you did through the mysterious influence of Miss Naughton herself, for she was in that railway train that same night, and those ear-rings belonged to her." Again the wonder in his face would have been amusing had it not been mingled with an expression of pain. "Incredible, preposterous!" he said at length. "You say that Miss Naughton is a friend of your wife's?"

"Yes; and I will explain how I came upon the fact forthwith. Yesterday as my wife was dressing she asked me to fetch her a brooch from the drawer in her dressing-case. On opening it the first thing which caught my eye