

name—memory is a treacherous jade; but if you feel any curiosity on the subject, I have no doubt that by forwarding the above particulars to the College of Heralds, you may satisfy it. There were few of the boys who had not cause to remember the device in question, though I doubt if many could have described it in heraldic language, for the study was the scene of the doctor's private birchings, public "executions" being reserved for greater offences. The large window to the left belongs to the schoolroom, and through a corresponding one at the opposite end I catch a glimpse of the playground, and of the tall fir-trees peopled by a flourishing colony of rocks, the climbing of which was interdicted under severe penalties. Well do I remember them! They recall a moonlight summer's night, and a young boy rising from his bed, noiselessly slipping on his trousers and socks, and as noiselessly creeping down the oak staircase, and emerging, through a window I believe, into the play ground. I see him now crossing the lawn and commencing his perilous ascent up the very highest of the forbidden trees. Now he is hidden in the deep shade; now he comes out again into the moonlight, and each time higher and higher his white figure shows against the dark foliage, till he seems to be poised on the very summit, and then grasping something in his right hand, he slowly and cautiously descends.

I don't know to this day if I did right, but masters are human, after all, and liable to err. I kept the boy's secret; he never knew that any eye but those of his dormitory companions saw him. He won his wager and the applause of his fellows, but he paid the penalty. Some small footprints beneath the sacred trees, a very soiled pair of socks, and a night-shirt decidedly more "green" than such habiliments are wont to be, told a tale of cause and effect only too plain. The boy was birched, and laid up with a violent cold as well.

Poor Tom Burke! I don't know whether he showed most bravery in his midnight expedition or in the fortitude with which he bore its consequences. We augured a bright future for him in his chosen calling, but Providence ordained otherwise. Tom was one of the earliest victims of the Indian mutiny. Peace to his memory!

The low wing connecting the schoolroom with the chapel has, too, its reminiscences. The upper story is a low pitched room, called the "washing gallery," from being the scene of the boys' ablutions. There is a trap-door in the centre, leading into the rafters, and easily reached by the judicious piling of two or three boxes. We had in my time an idle, eccentric boy, whom I will call Arthur Williams. He always seemed to live in an ideal world of his own, from the regions of which it was impossible to dislodge him, and he was consequently very frequently in trouble. He then concocted a scheme with a boon companion, in whose face mischief reigned supreme, to pay a stolen visit one half-holiday to the "washing gallery," and explore the rafters. They put their plan in operation, lighted a candle, and started on their journey. All went well for a time, till the vicinago of numerous cobwebs warned them of the danger of a lighted candle. The "glim" was "doused," and the next step Arthur took his foot went through the ceiling. Not a whit dismayed by this casualty, or else rendered reckless by it, they visited the clock-tower, set the clock wrong, and altered the weights. These misdemeanors proved so engrossing, that the summons of the four o'clock muster-bell was disregarded, and the whole proceedings were discovered. Wanton destruction of property was a very heinous crime in the doctor's estimation, and Arthur's companion was a *mauvais sujet*, so we were scarcely surprised that the expulsion of both was the consequence. They were not publicly expelled, but their respective parents were requested to remove them. Arthur turned out very well, as I always predicted he would, and is now one of our most popular literary men.

But in these reminiscences I am forgetting the especial subject of this paper. If I found the school little changed, I found plenty of change elsewhere. Now, the Great Western Railway carried me swiftly and comfortably to within a mile or two of N—, and two hours after I left the Paddington station found me ensconced in the coffee-room of the White Hart. Then, it used to be a long journey by coach, and altogether about as disagreeable a journey as I have had occasion to make.

It was in February, 184—, that, having obtained the appoint-

ment through the interest of a friend, I started on my way to N— for the first time. I occupied myself a great deal, as may be imagined, in speculating on my future kind of life, and once or twice I fell asleep. At length the coach drew up in the old market-place, and I alighted.

I was accosted by a boy, a pale-faced boy, with a peculiar expression of countenance that seemed to haunt me with its singularity, "Was I for N— Grammar School?"

I was.

Then the doctor had commissioned him to show me the way. And he went with me accordingly.

My companion was taciturn beyond anything that my experience of boys had hitherto encountered. I asked some questions as to the school. He would answer monosyllabically, and then relapse into silence, apparently regarding his shoe-string with the most intense interest. His reticence did not appear to me to be the result either of shyness or churlishness. Had he not been so young a boy, I should have said his spirit was crushed out of him by the possession of a deadly secret. Altogether his manner puzzled me.

My speculations, however, were cut short by our arrival at the school, and in the occupation of making the doctor's acquaintance and arranging my room. I had little time to think of my recent companion. At supper I noticed him among the other boys, but as soon as he caught my eye, he turned his head away abruptly. A mysterious boy.

After supper and prayers, the doctor called me aside.

"Mr. Merton," he said, "the dormitory attached to your room is under your supervision. Be so good as keep a sharp look-out on it. There is something wrong," he added, in a lower voice, "about that dormitory, and I should be only too glad if your vigilance could discover it. It is a most mysterious circumstance. The ventilation appears to me to be most efficient; in fact, I am assured it is by competent authorities, and yet if I put the most healthy boy there, in three or four days he becomes pale and haggard. It's a very extraordinary thing, and most annoying. Saunderson," he added, pointing to the mysterious boy, who was looking into the fire with the strange, abstracted look I had noticed before, "is the prefect of your dormitory, and will initiate you into any of our customs. Good-night."

In a quarter of an hour all the boys were safely in bed, and the lights out. I should have mentioned that my bed-room commanded a view of the dormitory by means of a window which I could open or shut at pleasure. The doctor's parting words had connected themselves in my mind with the mysterious boy. I felt disinclined for sleep, so shading my lamp, I stationed myself at the window, and took up a book. I heard the clock strike eleven—twelve—one. By a restless impulse which I could not account for, I felt constrained to go round the dormitory, at the risk of disturbing its occupants. All was quiet. The twenty-five boys were all slumbering peacefully on, and as I looked at each one in turn, I bore witness to the truth of the doctor's assertion as to the pallor and haggardness of the inmates of our dormitory. They might have been scholars of Dotheboy's Hall.

Nearest my window slept Saunderson. The odd expression that had attracted my notice seemed to have given place in sleep to an expression of peaceful innocence more befitting his years, and as he lay with one arm thrown over the quilt, I thought him even nice-looking.

I had not been in my room five minutes before I was attracted by a sound from the dormitory, and looking through the window, I saw Saunderson rise from his bed and approach that of his nearest neighbour. He leant over him, and—oh, heaven!—the sight seemed to paralyse me!

(To be Concluded.)

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