

companion in the front pew, but thought that he must have been an "impudent scoundrel to stare in that manner at a lady."

On the two following Sunday evenings the mysterious unknown appeared again, but sat alone, for Mr. Dyer left him a wide berth and himself sat six pews behind. It is on record that the sermons of Mr. Alexander, which had never been rated at their just value, rose in favor, and the quiet little church presented on each successive Sunday evening an animated appearance most gratifying to my friend. Miss Lyle, however, having never identified her interests with those of the congregation, continued to observe the stranger with an interest strictly personal and not altogether unselfish, and therefore did not view her pastor's increasing popularity with a sympathetic feeling of pleasure. On the contrary she owns that the spectacle of bovies of young ladies, whose usual places of worship were in a different part of the town, sailing up the aisles of this particular church Sunday after Sunday, goaded her to madness, having as she declares a perfect knowledge of their notices, which enabled her to treat with derision all charitable constructions put upon their tactics by pastor or deacon. These feelings prompted a line of conduct which Miss Lyle earnestly affirms was quite repugnant to her tastes, and which we might pass over without censure in consideration of the severe punishment which attended the fulfillment of a plan formed whilst she was thus unfortunately in an unhappy frame of spirit.

I may here make a digression to comment upon the apparent singularity of sentiments which have met me whilst pursuing my researches, and which I understand are common in the world although new and striking to me—a recluse. I allude to the remarks, prevalent at the time of which I write, expressive of the general conviction that the tendency of the evident commotion amongst the young ladies would be to raise an inordinate vanity in the breast of the stranger. I am not a man of the world, I am a man of science. I look calmly at the facts, and am, I confess, surprised at the conclusion. I have been roused to interest in the question, a philosophical interest induced by what seems to me an irrelevance of thought, and my observations have convinced me of the truth of the statement that the young of my own sex are afflicted with that overweening self-esteem which is always a blot on a fine character. But this appears to me to be not so much the inevitable result of the attitude of the young ladies as the fruit of their own misconception of premises. With what astonishment, bordering even on scorn, would we not view the merchant, who, having in his establishment a vacant post, should plume himself and openly boast of the number of applicants who daily presented themselves before him, ignoring the fact that the salaried situation and not his fascinations, was the attraction which gathered to him these important young men. I am not prepared to approve of this mode of action on the part of the young ladies as it appears to me, to say the least, illogical, inasmuch as it is so likely to fail of its object, but I would be glad to see them freed from the heavy charge of having wilfully and selfishly deformed the male soul.

After this long digression I make haste to lay before my readers the tale of Miss Lyle's delinquency.

Forcing, as she fancied, that one

of the intruders would sooner or later entangle the stray lamb whom she regarded as her legitimate prey, she resolved by a bold coup d'etat to accomplish the feat of an introduction, or rather, I fear, to dispense with one. For this purpose she left her pew instantly on the close of the benediction, and by mingled rapidity of motion and persistence of purpose succeeded in passing the cold vacant-looking figure which emerged from a seat close beside her. Miss Lyle dropped her handkerchief and slackened her pace.

When half way to the door she slightly turned her head, to meet the cold eye of the stranger fixed upon her with a stony stare. The young lady shivered involuntarily. A cold tremor seized her frame. She paused. He passed on with steady pace and again left the church in advance of the crowd to vanish in the darkness.

Miss Lyle walked home with shaken nerves, and reflections which might have checked her reckless career, had it not been for the taunt of a careless friend during the walk, a taunt which stimulated afresh her energies and sent her to church on the following Sunday evening with pale cheeks, but lips compressed with the determination to win the notice of this singular man, regardless of consequences. So, again adroitly timing her movements to admit of reaching the vestibule side by side with the stranger, Miss Lyle carefully avoided raising her eyes to encounter a gaze like the former, but executed a manoeuvre which must inevitably result in his treading upon the train of her dress. To her surprise no such contretemps followed; and as she paused at the outer door she cautiously glanced to see the reason of the failure of a scheme so neatly arranged. As she did so the figure bent, and the straight thin lips articulated the words "Are you desirous of accompanying me?"

Miss Lyle's indignation and intense astonishment at this amazing effrontery held her speechless gazing into the adamantine face. The next instant a sense of her position and its singularity to those behind, caused her to pass quietly out, merely making reply by the irrelevant remark, "Good evening." As she gained the street the stranger was by her side. Miss Lyle with beating heart but outward calmness looked at him. His attitude was what is often called star-gazing. His arms were closely folded upon his heart. The night was cloudy; and Miss Lyle, puzzled by the even gliding motion of her companion could not distinguish the peculiar step which suggested the smooth grace of the fawn.

Feeling silence oppressive, and brimming over with curiosity, she addressed her companion, but with hesitancy—

"How dark the night is."

No reply.

After a pause of a few moments she again essayed, but in tremulous tones, "Don't you think it is dark?"

Not by word or sign did the silent form reply. Miss Lyle, heartily wishing herself any where else, turned her head to see if any one had yet overtaken her rapid steps.

In doing so her foot slipped forward and to save herself from a fall, she hastily put out her hand towards her companion, and in doing so touched his arm. In an instant all apathy vanished. Throwing his arms above his head with horror expressed in every line, he uttered in hissing tones, the word "Arant!"

Miss Lyle was not a reader of poetry and did not fully know what was implied in this command, but the aversion

to render her the slightest assistance was too distinctly visible, and the brutality of the action filled her eyes with tears of anger and distress.

"I don't know what you mean," she said, timorously, "I wish you would go away."

"You have sought me," returned her companion, with arms still extended and upward gaze, "You have desired my companionship."

Miss Lyle tried to stammer a denial but no heed was taken.

"Do you indeed wish to aid me in my melancholy search?"

"I didn't know," sobbed Miss Lyle, "that you were looking for anything, and I never thought of helping you, you are very rude, I am afraid of you, I never saw anyone the least like you."

Miss Lyle's last remark produced an extraordinary change on her companion. In what seemed a frenzy of despair he groaned, "Not one like me!" Then again waving his arms he gave vent to what she describes as a *howl*, a term which Mr. Dyer who came up at the moment declares to be the most fitting description of the harsh noise with which Miss Lyle's escort appeared to be about to take leave of her.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Dyer did not make better use of the opportunity in his power, but George's was not a rashly venturesome nature. I will not be too ready to call him timid. I am willing to believe that in certain circumstances approved of by proper authorities, and affording room for the following of a legitimate precedent, my young friend might possibly display a British courage. In the present instance George hurled at the shrieking phantom several opprobrious epithets in a timid and faltering voice.

The figure approached him and laid its hand upon his arm. I have already alluded to the fact of Mr. Dyer's veracity, I beg to remind the reader that I have affirmed him to be incapable of uttering a falsehood. Let this give weight to his statement, taken down by me word for word as he uttered it, that "through the sleeve of a fur overcoat and the thickness of cloth beneath the touch seemed like red hot iron."

Hear also my solemn assertion that after several minutes of close examination of his arm five weeks after the occurrence, I detected a redness in the skin which I think might be accounted for by a reference to the adventures of that eventful night.

Having done this the apparition vanished round a corner as Miss Lyle fell fainting to the ground.

Leaving Miss Lyle's narrative now, I beg your attention while I recount what took place a few minutes later. A boy was walking lightly along an adjoining street at this very time, merrily whistling as he went; a boy well known in the neighborhood, and whose character stood well the searching investigation which I instituted before pronouncing his communication to be worthy of credence. Such peccadilloes as came to light betrayed more an impulsive and unreasoning habit than a tendency to romantic flights of imagination. A boy with a little soul and as much muscle as most of his species. My subsequent knowledge of this boy's lack of reflective powers forbids me to say that the scream, which startled Miss Lyle and Mr. Dyer, interrupted his thoughts. I will say rather that the discordant sound disturbed the even tenor of his whistling. He at once abandoned the strain, and darting forward almost came into collision with a quickly gliding figure going in the opposite direction.

"Hillo, Mister," said the boy, "Do you know what that noise was?"

"Mortal, that sigh was mine."

"Sigh!" responded this remarkable boy, "You'd better call that a sigh, I'd like to see me getting off for a yell by telling them 'twas a sigh. Was you hurt?"

"Mortal, my pain is lasting, my wound is incurable."

"Are you wounded? Was you a soldier? What battle was it at? By jimminy! if it isn't the chap what's been going to church up there!"

"Mortal, call me not a chap. I am not flesh. I am—"

Here the creature interrupted itself to wave its long arms and give vent to another shout.

"Say you," remonstrated the boy, "You'd better shut up. You'll be took up the first thing and have me in the scrape too."

A silence ensued, which was broken by the boy quietly hinting to his companion to resume the thread of his discourse.

"You was saying you wasn't flesh."

Meeting no response the boy indulged in a quiet laugh which he explained by a reference to the ancient witticism appertaining to fish, flesh, and good red herring.

"Muck me not," began the strange creature in solemn tones.

"I ain't a mocking you," retorted the boy. "A feller that goes round nights telling the people he ain't flesh, and yelling and getting mad if a feller laughs at something else. Say," he he added, looking upwards into the pale face, "If you ain't flesh what are you?"

"Mortal," responded the phantom, "You shall not leave this spot until you know what I am and what you may be. Know then that when a man dies, before his soul can enter the spirit world it must be proved by a mystical process to be of admissible bulk. The lower instincts, whose object and tendency are merely the preservation of our earthly existence are in that after state of no avail, when leaving the house of flesh which here imprisons you. You will also be separated from those qualities whose mission was to minister to the wants of the body. Well will it be for you if when that perishable robe and its mortal appurtenances are cast from you, enough be left to constitute an admissible soul. It was my lot to be born with but little beyond the shrewdness and selfishness which men too often admire, but which are of the perishing instincts whose end is of this world. I loved praise, and to gain the more I mixed among those who from ignorance or thoughtlessness saw not my lack. I acted my life drama before an audience yet less than myself and feasted upon the praise which rewarded each petty trick or successful and selfish scheme. The slender talents which I might have cultivated and enlarged, yearly became more starved and cramped until on my decease my weak reason stiff from long disuse made no sign of existence, and a mourning memory followed by the phantom of a palsied conscience, advanced to the mysterious test. I was found wanting. I have returned to earth in hopes to meet a nuage soul whose undecaying fragments will unite with mine, that together we may amount to a bulk which shall merit the name of soul." With these words the apparition fled and has not, to my knowledge, been heard of since.

I feel that my readers will support me in my assertion that this occurrence merits the terms astounding, appalling,