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A TRAGEDY.
A soft-breasted bird from the sea
Fell in love with the Righthouse flame;
And it wheeled round the tower to its latest wing,
And floated and cried like a lover's thing,
It brooded all day and it fluttered all night,
But could win no look from the steadfast light.
For the flame had its heart afar—
Afar with the ships at sea;
It was thinking of children and waiting wives
And darkness and danger to sailors' lives;
But the bird had its tender bosom pressed
On the glass, where at last it dashed its breast.
The light only flickered, the brighter to glow;
But the bird lay dead on the rocks below.
—John Boyle O'Reilly.

PAYING A DEBT.

The following story bears at least the
merit of truth, having been told by my
great-grandmother, who was, at the time
she related it, over 80 years of age.

Long ago, in the reign of the good King
George IV, there lived in the city of Lon-
don a lady, who was noted alike for her
beauty and her reckless extravagance. She
was still unmarried, though perilously near
30. Lovers in plenty had bowed at her
shrine, but Lady Bertram had set a very
high value on her charms, and having been
born to a title herself, no lover of less ex-
alted rank than a duke, and a duke, too,
with an unimpeachable rent roll, would
have satisfied her soaring ambition. Con-
sequently she was still single, and with
every prospect of ending her days in maiden
meditation.

Now, Lady Bertram possessed but
£10,000 in the world, and as she had ex-
pensive tastes, and lived at the rate of
£5,000 a year, she soon got into debt. At
the time this story opens she owed no less
than £50,000, and they had a disagreeable
and ungallant fashion to those blighted
days of imprisoning even the fairest and
the brightest ornaments of society, who
either could not or would not pay their
just debts. So, in spite of her lovely face
and her brilliant wit, Lady Bertram was
accommodated with apartments in that
most unpleasant institution, the Fleet
prison, and there she seemed likely to re-
main.

But if her beauty was powerless to effect
her release, her brilliant wit did not desert
her in her hour of need.

In those days every lady had her hair
dressed by a barber, and the barber who
was attached to the Fleet for the accom-
modation of the lady guests was a gen-
tleman of Irish extraction, celebrated not
only for his skill in hair dressing, but as
the handsomest barber in the whole city of
London. And, like the rest of his coun-
trymen, this man, Terence O'Reilly by
name, was an ardent admirer of the fair
sex.

One morning, when Terence was dress-
ing her beautiful hair, Lady Bertram took it
into her head to converse with the hand-
some barber and to flash upon him the
glory of her very brightest smiles.

"Are you married, Terence?" she asked
sweetly.

"Divil a marry! your honor's ladyship,"
said the barber.
"Well, but wouldn't you like to be mar-
ried?" continued the lady, with a dazzling
smile.

"Would a cow eat potatoes, your lady-
ship?"

"Is there any one you would like to
marry particularly?"

"Well, madam," said the barber bash-
fully, "maybe you never heard of Kathleen
Phelan, down byant Doneraile? Her
father's cousin to O'Donahue, who's own
steward to Mr. Murphy, the under-agent
to my Lord Kingstown, and—"

"Never mind," said the lady impatiently.
"I don't want to know who she is. But
would she have you if you asked her?"

"Sure, I only wish I'd be after thyring
that same."

"Well, why don't you?"

"Sure, I'm too poor; your honor's glory,"
said the barber, with a deep sigh.

"Would you like to be rich?"

"Does a dog bark, your honor?"

"If I make you rich, will you do as I tell
you?"

"The saints betune us, and all evil! I
your honor, don't be after tantalizing a poor
boy."

"I'm not going to," said Lady Bertram,
"so listen. How would you like to marry
me?"

"Ah, this, my lady, it's the king of
Rooshia himself would be proud to do that
same, have alone a poor devil like Terence
O'Reilly."

"Well, O'Reilly, if you'll marry me to-
morrow, I'll give you a thousand pounds."

"Millia murder!" shrieked Terence.
"If's enchanted by the good people I am,
sure."

"But there are conditions," said Lady
Bertram. "After the marriage, you must
never see me again, or claim me for your
wife."

"Faith an' I don't," said Terence, who
had been making desperate eyes at her
lovely ladyship.

"But remember Kathleen Phelan: with
the money I give you, you can go and marry
her."

"That's true," said Terence. "But
what about the bigamy?"

"I'll never appear against you," said her
ladyship. "Only, remember you must take
an oath never to call me your wife after to-
morrow, and, above all, never to tell the
story."

"Divil a word I'll ever say, your honor."

"Well then, there's ten pounds. Go and
buy a license, and leave the rest to me."

The next day, Terence was true to his
appointment, and found two gentlemen al-
ready with her ladyship.

"Have you got the license?" said she.

"Here it is my lady," said the barber.
She handed it to one of the gentlemen, who
examined it carefully. Then calling in her
two servants she turned to the gentleman
who was reading.

"Perform the ceremony," she said.

And sure enough, in ten minutes, Terence
O'Reilly was the husband of the lovely
Lady Bertram.

"That will do," she said to her new
made husband, as he gave her a hearty kiss.

"That will do. Now sir, give me my
marriage certificate."

The old gentleman did so, and bowing
respectfully to the five pound note she
handed him, he retired with his clerk, for
he was the parson.

"Go and send the warden to me," said
my lady to one of her servants, and pres-
ently the warden appeared.

"Will you be so kind," said Lady Ber-
tram, in a voice that for sweetness might
have called Eurycle back from the realms
of darkness, "as to send and get me a
hackney coach? I wish to leave this place
immediately."

"Your ladyship forgets," replied the
warden, "that you must pay £50,000 before
I can let you go."

"I am a married woman. You can de-
tain my husband, but not me." And she
she smiled sweetly at Terence, who began
to feel vaguely uneasy.

"Pardon me my lady, but it is well
known you are single."

"I tell you, I am married."

"Then where is your husband?"

"There, sir," she answered, pointing to
the astonished barber. "There he stands.
Here is my marriage certificate which you
can peruse at your leisure. My servants
here were witnesses to the ceremony. Now
detain me one instant at your peril."

The warden was dumb-founded, and no
wonder. Poor O'Reilly would have spoken,
but neither party would let him. The law-
yer round the corner was consulted, and
the result was evident. In half an hour
Lady Bertram was free, and Terence
O'Reilly, her lawful husband, a prisoner for
debt, to the awful amount of £50,000.

For some time Terence thought he was
in a dream, and the creditors of the beau-
tiful lady thought they were in a nightmare.
The following day they held a meeting, and
finding how cleverly they had been tricked,
they swore they would detain poor Terence
for the whole term of his natural life. But
second thoughts are best, and as they well
knew, he had nothing, and would not feel
much disinclination to go through the in-
solvent court, they made the best of a bad
bargain, and let him out.

Now, about a week after this, as poor
Terence O'Reilly was sitting over his little
fire, thinking of his late wonderful experi-
ences, the postman brought him a letter,
the first he had ever received in his life,
and which he promptly took over to his
friend Murphy, the grocer, because Murphy
was a scholar, you see, which Terence was
not. And this was the letter:

"Go to Doneraile and marry Kathleen
Phelan. The instant the knot is tied, I
fulfill my promise of making you comfort-
able for life. But as you value your life
and liberty, never breathe a syllable of
what has passed. Remember you are in
my power if you tell the story. The money
will be paid you directly you enclose me
your marriage certificate. I send you £50
for present expenses."

And perhaps Terence didn't get drunk
that same night, and start for Doneraile
the next day with a sore head, but a light
heart. He married Kathleen, and got the
£1,000, took a cottage in the county of
Limerick, and forgot his first wife entirely.
He never told the story, even to Kathleen.

How my respected great-grandmother ever
got hold of it, or how Lady Bertram over-
managed to silence the warden and the
parson and his clerk, not to speak of her
own two servants, were points on which
my deeply revered relative never seemed
able to satisfy my curiosity.

GEOFFREY CUTBERT STRANGE.

What the editorial "We" Means.

What the editorial "we" means depends
on who uses it. When the editor of a
great metropolitan journal writes it, it is a
very comprehensive term, signifying "I and
the rest of the boys," including the base
ball reporter, the printers, the elevator boy,
and the carriers, not to speak of the pres-
man, the advertising solicitor, and the cigar-
store Indian next door. But when the
editor of the Raccoon Hollow Weekly Ex-
positor says, "We and our wife are enter-
taining our wife's mother for a few days,"
it becomes manifestly a more limited term,
for it can hardly be supposed that the wife
and mother are the wife and mother-in-law
of the entire printing establishment. The
broadest use of the term, however, is
exemplified when the editor of the Bull
Cap Vindicator writes: "We are suffer-
ing with hog cholera in our midst." Obvi-
ously this is an impersonal "we." Wash-
ington Post.

There is no more fruitful source of dis-
sension than vitiated blood. It involves every
organ and function of the body, and if not
immediately corrected by the use of Ayer's
Sarsaparilla, sooner or later leads to fatal
results. Be warned in time.—Advt.

Wearisome Aids, Too.

"What are you doing?" asked a chap of
a man who was loading the barrel of a hand
organ.

"Putting on airs," was the comprehen-
sive reply.—N. Y. Sun.

THE FELON'S RETURN.

"Will you ask whether Mr. Graham will
see a stranger?"

The clerk who spoke to nodded, arose,
and went into an inner office. The stranger
remained, leaning against the walnut railings
of the desk, his hand trifling with the little
door that shut outsiders from the sanctum
within. He was a tall, fair man, with
close-cropped hair and beard. His shoul-
ders were broad, his features handsome,
but there was an odd air about him that
puzzled the clerk, and would have
perplexed anyone. It was something that
could not be defined, but it pervaded the
whole man; a suppressed look, as of one
forced in some way to hide his feelings;
a manner of standing and holding his hat
which had something apologetic in it.

"Mr. Graham will see you, sir," said the
clerk, returning and opening the little
railed door. "In there; the office to the
right."

The stranger passed into the room indi-
cated, and closed the door behind him.
Then standing with his back to it, he
fumbled with his hat in the same odd man-
ner in which he had handled it in the outer
office, and instead of speaking, looked at
the gentleman behind the desk with eyes
that had a measureless appeal in them.

The other man, who sat in his chair,
not holding out his hand, as he had done
on some moments; each looked at the other
that was all. But it was the elder one, at
the desk, who broke the spell at last.

"So," he said, "it is you, James?"

"Yes, it is I," said the other. "Haven't
you heard me, William?"

"I have got many words that you
might not like to hear," said William
Graham. "I really can't say I'm glad to
see you, delighted, honored, and all that,
you know."

"I don't expect anyone to be glad," said
the other, who I've disgraced the
family, but I've been punished for it. Ten
years, William—think of that—ten years
of prison life, and prison fare, and prison
friends! I'd have given my soul to undo
what I did, even before it was found out;
and I never meant to keep the money."

"I know the story," said the merchant.
"You were in a position of confidence;
you betrayed it. It's the old affair. I've
had it happen in my own office. I can't
feel any sentimental pity for a fellow like
you. What brings you here, James?"

Shifting his hat from hand to hand, look-
ing from under his eyebrows in an abject
fashion, the other contemplated, when one
saw in what a gentlemanly manner he had
been cast, James Graham answered, "I
was 25 when I went to prison. I'm 35 now.
The outside world has been a blank to me
all these years. I want work. I want you
to give it to me—any honest work, Wil-
liam. I'm a good book-keeper, but I'll be
porter, an errand boy, anything."

"Oh, no; not anything," said the
elder. "You've reckoned without your
host, James. You are no brother of mine.
I cast you off when you became a felon.
For the sake of the poor woman who called
you 'son,' I'll give you some money, enough
to live on for a week or two. I will never
give you another penny, I expect. I
will have you turned out if you come
here again."

The prison taint was so strong upon the
other man that his pride was not aroused
yet; he fumbled with his hat, ground him-
self against the door, looked abjectly from
under his eyelids, and asked, "How is
sister Jessie?"

"Well," said the merchant, "asked
his brother."

"Can you tell me where she lives?"

"No," said the merchant. "Jessie is
married, and has tried to forget the terrible
grief you gave her. You are the last per-
son a respectable brother-in-law would care
to see."

"I'll ask you one more question," said
James, in a faltering voice. "Ada Mus-
grave—what has become of her? Is she
living? Is she married?"

"I have no information for you," said
the merchant, harshly. "If you're ten
pounds. If you are careful you will get
employment before it is gone. Remember,
you'll not have another penny from my
hands. Take it and go, and don't come
back again."

He threw the money down upon the table.
But there was a spark of naughtiness in his
brother's breast; even yet, he could not
take a gift so proffered.

Suddenly the abject look upon his face
changed to one of wrath and hate.

Tall as he was, he seemed to grow a
head taller as he drew his shoulders back
and, glaring at his brother, threw the
sovereigns that lay before him into his
face.

"Hang you, keep your money!" he said.
"I don't want it. I don't want anything
from you or anyone. I came for help, it
is true; for help to be an honest man. I've
been the outcasts of the world so
long that I've lost all kinship with you
decent folk; but I thought a brother might
hold out a hand to draw me back. You
refused it. Money! Why, look at these
hands, these shoulders—look at me! I can
earn money somehow. And by Heaven!
if this is all your respectability and chris-
tianity amounts to, I don't care if I see no
more of it. There are plenty to welcome
me, and you have driven me to them. Re-
member that, son of my mother! You!"

He thrust his hat upon his head, and
dashed out of the room, striding through
the outer office with no heed of anyone
there, and clanging the door behind him as
he departed.

One dark night, a few weeks later, James
Graham, in full fellowship with a gang of
burglars, was receiving instructions from a
companion how to enter and conceal him-
self in a house that had been marked for
robbery. The lesson was given in front
of the doomed house itself, and after his
companion had left him, Graham muttered,
"Yes, I belong to the fraternity now. I
am here to rob this house. I have the
mask and the pistol in my pocket. I have
my little dark lantern, too. I'm a burglar,
and burglars were the only men who wel-
comed me back out of prison. My brother
turned his back on me. My brother! I
wonder what my poor mother would
say if she could see me now? If she
knew—"

He stopped himself with a start—
seemed, with a motion of his hand, to cast
away the thoughts that were upon him—
and in a moment more had mounted to the
window indicated by his comrade; and,
finding that it opened easily, had clambered
in. His shoes were noiseless. He made
no sound as he moved; and guiding him-

self by the lantern's light looked for a
moment of concealment. He soon presented
himself. A long wardrobe with a door at
either end. In this, behind a very curtain
of suspended garments, he hid himself.

He heard, after a while, a baby cry, and
in a minute more a step ran across the
entry, and a ray of light glanced through
the keyhole at one end of the wardrobe.

"Ada," cried the baby's voice, "come here.
Baby is wide awake, and I can't leave
him."

Then another rustle, another step, and
there were two women very near him—so
that he could almost hear them breathe.

"I'm so glad you came today, Ada,"
said the other, "when I'm all alone."
Charles was called away so unexpectedly
this morning! I declare the thought of
that accident makes me ill, and I am
nervous all alone in the house at night,
dear. Besides being always glad to see
you, I'm so thankful to have you to-
night."

"And I am never nervous, Jessie," said
the other. "I am as good as a man about
the house, mamma says. I've hunted in-
vulnerable burglars with a poker many a
night. Mamma is always imagining bur-
glars. I'm so glad you're here."

"Don't speak of them," said the matron,
who was evidently quieting the child, who
only a mother can. "This house would be
more of a temptation to them tonight than
it has ever been before since we lived here."
There are £2,000 in that safe, Ada.
Charles hadn't time to deposit it in the
bank. They telegraphed that Mr. Bird
might be dying."

As she made this confession, the man,
concealed so near her, listened with his very
heart in his ears; but it was not to the
statement so well calculated to rejoice a
burglar's heart. That was forgotten.
He heard only the voices and the names
these two women called each other by.
Ada! That had been the name of the girl
he loved! Jessie! That was his sister's
name. After all, what was it to him?
Like his brother, the latter had cast him
out, and no doubt Ada only remem-
bered him with horror. Still, how like the
voices were. Could it be? He stole for-
ward, and knelt down with his eye to the
keyhole, but he could only see part of a
woman's figure swaying to and fro as she
rocked her infant on her bosom.

"Dear little fellow!" said the voice of
the other woman. "How sweet babies
are!"

She came forward now and knelt down,
and he saw her profile. It was Ada Mus-
grave—older, for he had left her a girl
of seventeen, and found her a woman of
twenty-seven, but handsomer than ever.

"You've children so that I wonder you
don't marry," said the matron; and now
James Graham knew that it was his sister
who spoke. "I know William wants you
to marry him. He always has loved you.
And, Ada, he can give you all that makes
life happy."

James Graham's cheeks flushed in the
darkness. He had the more than he
ever now. He hated his kindred—his
cruel brother and sister of his most of all.

"He cannot give me the one thing neces-
sary for wedded happiness—love for him,"
said Ada. "No, Jessie; I have never said
this to you before, but I must say it now.
I loved poor James too well ever to love
any other man while I knew he lived."

"Ah, Ada," cried Jessie, stooping over
her, "it is a comfort to me to know you
still love my poor brother. I thought I
was the only living being who still loved
him."

And then James Graham, listening on
the other side of the door, heard these two
women weeping together, and for him
the world was a different place.

"Yes, Ada," said his sister; "and
though poor James is sadly disgraced, still
when he returns I shall be glad to see him,
and this shall be his home if he will, and
my husband will help him to win back the
place among good men that he lost so long
ago. William is cruel to his kindred, but
woman are softer. When he is free again,
I trust he will come straight to us. I fear
William would hurt him by some reproach-
ful speech. He will be free very soon,
Ada. But baby has fallen asleep again.
Shall we go downstairs?"

The man who had stolen into the house
to rob it—the man of whom they spoke
could bear no more; his heart was softened
as it had been since he was a little
child. It was as if the angels had spoken to
him.

Then he remembered why he was there;
and, kneeling and raising the door that lay
between him and those dear women who
had saved him from desperation, he crept
away, and finding his way to the window
which he had entered, he departed as he
had come, vowing to lead an honest life,
and some time—perhaps he was never
seen again. At least the memory of their
hearts and words would always keep him
true to his life pure, lonely as
might be his lot.

With these thoughts in his mind he stood
on the ground, and remembered with
James Graham heard it and wondered
what had happened, and why he could not
turn himself, and who spoke.

Then came the remembrance of a quar-
rel, a conflict, and the report of a pistol.
He knew all now. His fellow-burglars
had shot him and left him for dead. But
where was he now?

"Ada, dear," said the voice again, "I
think he is opening his eyes."

Then they did open, and James Graham
saw two women bending over him.

"James," said one, "do you know sister
Jessie?"

The other only burst into tears.

"Yes, I know you both," said he faintly.
"How did I come here? I am so full of
wonder. How did you know me?"

"We found you wounded—dead, we
thought—at our gate," said Jessie. "It
was Ada knew you first. We don't know
how it happened. When you are better
you must tell us. Only we have you back,
and you shall never go away again; never."

He knew he never would. He knew it

did not matter whether he told them how
he had come to them now. He knew that
in a little while he should neither see their
faces nor know their voices, but he was
very happy. A foretaste of heaven was
given him.

"They have been terrible years," he
said, "terrible years! All that while I
never heard from you, but I have you now.
Come closer. I can't see you very well.
There's a mist before my eyes. I want
Jessie to kiss me."

The sister flung her arms about his neck
and kissed him over and over again. Then
he turned to Ada Musgrave.

"If I were going to live I should not ask
it," he said; "but you used to kiss me
long ago, Ada. Will you kiss me now,
my dear, just once more?"

She took him in her arms.