

The Cashier's Story.

BY ALFRED B. TOZER.

We had been discussing spiritualism before the open fire in Charley's room, and had drifted from arguments on the condition of the dead to the relation of incidents of a mysterious character influencing the lives of the living.

"I don't like to figure as a creature of the mysticisms," Charley continued, "because it seems to commit me to a belief in all sorts of outlandish and unnatural things—to include me in an atmosphere altogether unearthly; but my only relief seems to lie in an utter repudiation of an occurrence too real and too productive of practical results to be repudiated, so you see I am in a good deal of a mess over it."

Now Charley is one of the most matter-of-fact men. At the down town bank where he holds the position as cashier, such an admission on his part would have produced a sensation. In the familiar circle where he sat that night it only provoked curiosity. This curiosity he at once proceeded to satisfy by beginning with an abrupt question:—

"Do you remember the night of the 15th of March? At the time you all took a great interest in at least one of the occurrences of that night. I refer to the attempted bank robbery."

"Well, when I left the bank that evening," said Charley, "I was accompanied by Dick Munson, the paying teller—a pale, nervous little fellow, with a memory for faces and signatures almost phenomenal, and an instinctive ability to detect fraud. We stopped on the bank steps for a moment to speak to a customer, and then passed on up the street together. His rooms are about half a mile further out than mine, and when we were kept at the bank later than usual, as on that occasion, we frequently dined together at a neat little restaurant not far from my chambers. We did so that night, occupying a good hour of sleep, and I resolved to make up for lost time as soon as possible by turning over for another nap."

"If I had not, as a preliminary step to the rest so formed, raised myself in bed and made a great noise beating up and rearranging my pillows, perhaps the most trying portion of that night's experience would have been spared me. Be that as it may, the fact remains that before I had arranged my pillows to my liking my attention was diverted from my task by three rather startling objects."

"The first was a dark lantern pouring its red rays full in my face. The second was an unusual long and unattractively bright self-cooking revolver located within six inches of my nose. The third was a particularly villainous face, with thick black eyebrows running together above the nose, forming no arch to speak of, and producing the general effect of a straight, unbroken line crossing the lower forehead."

"Was I frightened?" Yes, but I scarcely think my fright took the usual form. I knew in an instant, as well as I know now, that it was not my life, nor the trifling amount of money he might find in my room, that the intruder wanted. I recognized his presence there as part of a well-laid plan to rob the bank. The intruder's first words confirmed my suspicions.

"Get up and dress yourself," he said, in a whisper. "We want you at the bank. If you value your life, be quick about it, and make no noise."

"The man's arguments were unanswerable, and I obeyed. 'You are going with me to the bank,' he said, holding his weapon close to my head as I dressed, 'and open the vault. The first movement you make to escape or call assistance will be your last. My mates are below. If I miss my aim, they will not. If we meet an officer at the bank, or on the way there, and you are questioned, you are to say that you want important papers left on your desk, and pass on. You will not be harmed. We want money, and not human life. Do you understand?'"

"In a short time I was at the outer door of my sitting-room, dressed for the street. Never for an instant, in all my journeys about the room to secure my clothing, had the threatening weapon been removed from the close proximity in my waking moments. Still, I had not abandoned all hope. Surely, between my rooms and the bank, some opportunity for escape would present itself. I had no intention of unlocking the vault. At the last moment I should have risked a few shots from the robbers' revolvers."

"My escort unlocked the sitting room door and passed with his hand on the knob. At that instant a sound of footsteps were heard on the stairs, the key was quietly turned in the lock, and I felt for the first time the cold rim of a revolver on my temple. The steps passed my door, and the weapon was lowered. You all know what followed. Before the weapon could be raised again, the door fell in with a crash, and the robber, who stood directly in front of it, was clabbered to the floor and handcuffed by a squad of policemen led by the paying teller."

"Dick did not return to his chambers that night. We spent the time until daylight over a basket of wine and some prime cigars in my sitting-room. At first he absolutely refused to explain his sudden appearance with the officers, for Dick is a hardbodied sort of fellow; he sees everything that cannot be demonstrated by set rules and figures; but over the second battle he fairly unboomed himself, telling his story before I had even given a word of my own mysterious experiences."

"I slept soundly until nearly one o'clock," he said, with the air of a man who expects to be laughed at, "and then I awoke to find a strange trance-like dream. In that dream I saw, as plainly as I ever saw it, in my life, the interior of your bath-room, and seated at the foot of the tub, where the opening door would have concealed him from

any one looking in, I saw the man who had last seen opposite the window where we dined. I recognized it at once. The stouping figure and the level line of eyebrows he then attempted to hide beneath the rim of his slouch hat."

"There was no light in the bath-room, or anywhere about your apartment, but I had no difficulty in tracing every line of your face, nor seeing you sound asleep in your bed. My mind at once became filled with the idea that you were in danger. In my sleep I called out to you to lock the bath-room door, and warned you that I could not get the stouping figure we had seen on the edge of the walk out of my mind! I could not make you hear. In my alarm I even gave the private signal we use at the bank. I actually awoke to find myself sounding it on the head of my bed, and repeating over and over again the words I have told you speaking."

"I laughed at myself for a superstitious idiot, and went to sleep again, only to renew the experience described—to see the stouping figure in the bath-room and to repeat my cry of warning and the private signal. I awoke again, to find myself standing by open window (I must have opened it in my sleep, for I closed it on retiring), sounding the private signal on the wall, and repeating the warning words. How long I should have remained there I cannot say. My blow on the sash must have loosened the catch, for the window fell with a crash. In an instant I heard the city hall clock strike one."

"I was not thoroughly awake, but I could not drive from my mind the impressions created by my singular dream. Perhaps I should have gone to bed again only for the fact that the figure my dream had shown me in your apartment was the same I had warned you against on parting with you for the night. I resolved to dress myself and seek you in your rooms."

"I was ashamed to come to your door at that time of night, with no excuse to offer for my presence save such a one as any old woman would have laughed at, so I crept up stairs like a spy and listened. I saw the flash of the dark lantern at the threshold. I heard enough to satisfy me that something was wrong. So I went for the police."

"Don't bring me into ridiculous notoriety by repeating what I have told you. Draw your own conclusions, only be silent in public."

Napoleon as a Horseman. Napoleon was a most cruel horseman, and changed his mount frequently during his military career. At Waterloo, however, he rode only the famous Marengo. Another celebrated war horse of the great Corsican was "Austerlitz." Napoleon always insisted that his horses should be white or gray. Twelve were killed under him. He was once carried quill within the enemy's lines, where he narrowly escaped capture, by a mad charger. Napoleon's misadventure is said to have been caused by a terrible fall to the ground, which he was unable to get up from. He was once carried quill within the enemy's lines, where he narrowly escaped capture, by a mad charger. Napoleon's misadventure is said to have been caused by a terrible fall to the ground, which he was unable to get up from.

French Mode of Conducting Auctions. The French mode of conducting auctions is rather curious. In sales of importance the affair is placed in the hands of a notary, who for the time being becomes an auctioneer. The auctioneer is provided with a number of small tapers, and a candle of burning about five minutes. As soon as a bid is made one of these tapers is placed in full view of all interested parties as a lighted. If before it expires, another bid is offered, it is immediately extinguished, and a fresh taper placed in its stead, and so on until one flickers and dies out of itself, when the last bid becomes irrevocable. This simple plan prevents all contention among rival bidders and affords a reasonable time for reflection before making a higher offer than the one proceeding. By this means, too, the auctioneer is prevented from exercising undue influence upon the bidders or hastily accepting the bid of a favorite.

Origin of the Chinese Cue. It seems that it was not the custom of the ancient Chinese to shave the head and wear a cue. That was a custom brought in by the Tartar invaders, nearly 300 years ago, and they forced it upon the conquered provinces. The result was that many Chinese were driven into Corea, and the inhabitants of that province when they yielded to the suzerainty of the Tartars stipulated that they should be permitted to preserve their ancient dress. So the Coreans do not shave the head, but wear their hair as their ancestors wore it 4000 years ago, a manner which is seen in China only on the stage.

Shakespeare's Sonnets. It is claimed that the "Dark Lady" to whom twenty-eight of Shakespeare's sonnets were dedicated, was the notorious Miss Mary Fitton, maid of honor to Queen Elizabeth.

ROMANCE OF A NEBRASKA CITY

The Rapid Growth of the State Capital and the Real Estate Boom that Followed.

You hear fairy stories of the mushroom cities of the west—Leadville, becoming a popular center in two years and then growing smaller almost as fast as it grew larger. But Leadville had no state university, no magnificent post-office building and court house, no architectural phenomena, such as a beautiful white stone insane asylum of a size and elegance that any state of any nation might well be proud, and a penitentiary equally imposing. Many men went to Leadville, but surely you could not have found there the scholars of a state as you might have found in Lincoln. Leadville didn't get five railroads all in a lump. Railroads may fall and leave in the hands of receivers, but railroads are substantial things, and however badly they pay, there they are, fast and solid; and usually they have to be run, though there was a possibility in the hard times of the 70's when the railroads lying around in Lincoln were not all run.

Lincoln was from the first a city to be proud of. Born, as I have said, full-blown as a city, from the wisdom of state, with the great headquarters of cityhood thrice augmented, as I have described, it maintained itself steadily and continuously through all the hard times of the 70's; for it was then that the buildings were reared up and that settled air of eastern culture was attained. And all as true, just as I have stated, for I am no longer an inhabitant of Lincoln, and I was not born there, and it is you since my nostrils breathed its brisk air. But I saw, or heard from my own father, all that I have described.

The rest of this romance of a city may be devoted to dry statistics, such as the number of paupers, insane and criminals, the number of students at the university, male or female, and so forth, but to the price of city lots, for all the bloom and all the fragrance of this fair young city was in the price of her city lots.

City lots in good locations started in at about \$200, were bought for \$400 and over in the early 70's, and sold for \$100 after the crash of '74. Only those who were obliged to sell sold, and those who were not obliged to sell held their property at the old figures. But prices went down more or less rich to and of itself, but it had little surplus money to put on to the prices of lots. The slow, steady decline forced out the poor little by little, and the prosperous of necessity bought, hoping for a happy day.

At last the happy day came. It had been a prosperous year and the wheat and corn and oats were excellent. The country in general was prosperous. Everything was propitious. How it should nobody know, but it got into the air—that happy day. Long and patient waiters recognized it at once. They would not be taken in by who had waited for fully fifteen years for the happy day to come. They recognized it when it was only a breath in the air. They encouraged it at once by every possible means within their reach. They fanned the little spark of boom till it began to blaze. They wrote to their eastern friends about it. Their jealous rivals, the new comers to the city, did not like to be left out, and wished they did, saw the spark and offered to buy. The old ones sold, and then bought back and sold again. Everybody heard how prices were going from \$200 to \$1,000 and \$1,000 to \$1,500. Young boys went down to the real estate office and bought suburban lots for \$300 in the morning, and sold them the next morning for \$500. Two or three dollars for a mere boy who knew nothing, and that in a single night! Money grew like Jonah's gourd. People heard about it and rushed to want the great city of Lincoln. They came and they did. The great railroad center of the West. The great railroad center of the West. The great railroad center of the West. The great railroad center of the West.

There was Father Brighton. He had come from Illinois with a few hundreds in his pocket. In Chicago he had just missed making his fortune, and now he was old. With his few hundreds he bought a quarter section of unbroken land on the edge of the city limits, erected a battened barn, in which he housed his family, and a lean-to shed, in which he housed his

AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY ABOUT THE GANGES

A planter in India, writing to a newspaper published in Calcutta called the Englishman, makes the statement that the Ganges will soon lose its sacred character. He says—

"Further, a critical period in the Hindu era is at hand. It may not be known to many, but within a very few years the Ganges is to cease to be the holy river. Another is to take its place. The Narahada, I believe, is to be in future what the Ganges has been for thousands of years. With Hinduism on the wane, it is natural that the leaders of the religion should desire to make some point to fix the credulity of the uneducated masses. For it must be a terrible strain on a religion which has ever desired blind faith in its traditions to have one of its greatest landmarks transported as it were in a moment, 3,000 miles away. Now, Jonakhpur presents every advantage which the Hindu Pandits could desire. First, it is already holy and a shrine closely interwoven with the Hindu mythology; secondly, it is within the precincts of a Hindu Raj. The British Empire will there have no power to belittle the influence of the Brahmins."

This is all, and it is most disappointing. It seems incredible that a man should know such a thing and not say more about it. The Ganges, "Mother Ganga," has been worshipped as no other river has ever been within historical times.

The most sacred city of the Hindus, Benares, gathers most of its holiness from the Ganges. To bathe in the river is to wash away all sin.

How is it possible that all this should be swept away, and why did the writer of the paragraph say so little about it?

Auctioned Off the Old Maids. An auction of unmarried women used to take place annually at Babylon. "In every district," says the historian, "there assembled on a certain day in every year all the women of marriageable age. The most beautiful was first set up and the man who bid the largest sum of money gained possession of her. The second in personal appearance followed and the bidders gratified themselves with handsome wives according to the depth of their purses. But alas! it seems that in Babylon some women for whom no money was likely to be offered, yet these also were disposed of, so provident were the Babylonians. "When all the beautiful virgins were sold," continues the historian, "the chief ordered the most deformed to stand up; and after he had openly demanded who would marry her with a small sum, she was at length adjudged to the man who would be satisfied, with the least; in this manner the money arising from the sale of the handsome served as a portion to those who were otherwise disagreeable looking or who had other imperfections." This custom prevailed about 500 B. C.

Man's Stupidity. "I wonder what that girl is working her face around to one side all the time for?" asked the fussy old man on the North Indianapolis car. "Do you reckon she's got the mad-dog?" "No, she's got the mad-dog," replied the man who had been married fifteen years and don't know any more about girls than that," replied his wife in disgust. "Don't you see she's got her young man with her? She's twisting her cheek that way to make her dimple show."

Notifying the Deity. Several of the Chinese temples have a bell at the entrance, so that each devotee as he passes may announce his arrival to the deity.

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