

THAT DREADFUL NIGHT.

By MARY CHADWICK.

I must begin by confessing that I am a very nervous woman—as the Scripture has it a woman full of fears—for unless this is clearly understood my story will convey but little to the reader, especially the lady, superior male reader, ever ready with his half-pitying, half-contemptuous comments on the weakness of my sex. I am brave enough at any rate to acknowledge my lack of courage, and will freely state that I am afraid of mice, entertain a deep-rooted aversion to spiders, tremble at the scratching of a rat, grow sick and nervous in the dark, and hopelessly collapse at the merest mention of ghost or burglar. So that I don't think it's quite fair of Dick to chaff me so about this defect of mine, especially when he has a much more serious one, a self-will which wants to carry all before it, and which, as every woman will admit, is simply the most aggravating quality when one's own will happens to be set in the very opposite direction.

In this case the trouble was about a house that Dick (did I forget to mention that Dick is my husband) wanted me to see—a house, that he thought of buying, several miles away from the city and at some distance from any other dwelling. And this because he had heard that it was a well-finished house and was cheap and likely to turn out a bargain at some future time, when probably I should have succumbed to the horrors it had engendered and left the way open for Mrs. Richard Reynolds number two.

He said (Dick said of course) that the children needed fresh air, and looked party, but this necessity he had been enduring calmly enough until the advent of an officious and fussy lawyer, Mr. Miles, who set my dear husband's imagination aflame one unlucky night when I in the simple goodness of my heart had asked him, Mr. Miles, to dinner.

Now it seems to me that I have been talking rather flippantly thus far, but if so it is with a view to shaking off the attack of the horrors generally entailed upon me by the recollection of that night I am going to describe—as a would-be brave boy whistles his loudest passing the church-yard of a dark night. I have often been complimented on my telling of a ghost story, and have witnessed with pardonable pride the blanched cheek and moistened eye of some dear and valued friend whom I had selected as a good subject for experiment. But though my experiences were quite creepy enough upon the night aforesaid ghosts had no part in them, and faint hope have I indeed of shaking the steady nerves of readers well inured to weird tales of terror.

It was just this way. My slightly obstinate husband, my two little children supposed to be in need of country air, and my nervous self, had been for some time living expensively and somewhat constructively in a city flat far away (Dick was right enough there) from trees and pure air and all the dear delights of Nature. We were always planning, optimistically, summer trips which never materialized, and doing our little best meanwhile to make up for lack of better things by sundry ridiculously extravagant and exceedingly wearisome all day expeditions in boats and cars. These expeditions began cheerfully in early mornings and ended in utter collapse of mind and body towards sunset, at which peaceful hour we victims to paternal feeling might often have been seen wearily dragging or carrying our tired offspring homewards, out of temper and decidedly out of pocket.

It may be easily imagined then with what interest Dick and I had listened to Miles' interesting account of this beautiful country residence, just a few miles from town, surrounded by a good bit of land—including a flower and vegetable garden as well as a couple of fine fields—an ideal playground for our little people.

Dick looked radiant, but my enthusiasm began to cool after I had listened to Mr. Miles, who could not tell a lie. Lawyer as he was, the damning fact that this paragon house was what he called, ahem! "some-what remote," namely a good mile or either hand from its nearest neighbor, but—and at this I saw in Dick's eye that he had leaped to decision—the certainty of the street railroad being continued to the very door was assured, inside a year, he was not afraid to say.

"And I may tell you in all friend-ship," Mr. Miles went on, peering at the table with an aggravating hand,

"that this is an opportunity you will not have the chance of refusing every day, my dear Richard. But!" the hands flew up in deprecation, "if Madame does not like the idea there is no more to be said, the lady should have the casting vote."

To which sentiment Dick listened in opposing silence, and only waited till Mr. Miles had gone smilingly away to reopen the subject, and convince me against my will as is his way.

"Why does this Mr. Jessup he speaks of sell the house if it is in every way desirable?" I asked in answer to Dick's expressed conviction that this house was the one and only house for us, and that he regarded our hearing of it as providential.

"As if I had not asked Miles that the very first thing," scornfully. "Jessup built this house and thoroughly well too, lived in it comfortably and happily for years and only leaves it to reside with his daughter-in-law and little grandchild, as well as to be under the care of a specialist for some complaint he has."

"Now you have been long talking of the desirability of the country," my husband went on. "I certainly had not used the word desirability. I detest long, high-sounding words, but I let that pass, and listened."

"And here is a splendid chance of our getting, and for a mere song, such a house as we could never aspire to in the city, in the common course of events, such a house as you could be proud of, and just because you fancy it may be what you call lonely, you prefer this, this cage—there is no other name for it."

I kept listening, and Dick continued with the mistaken idea that he was convincing me.

"Lonely! well I suppose it might be for a solitary woman, or even a couple of women, but with the children, such a perfect, capable nurse as Sarah, and above all with Cousin Elinor, who, you will remember, only waits for us to go to the country to join forces with us—not to speak of the extra protection of a coachman, for we shall very easily manage keeping some sort of a trap out there, why I think that plea falls to the ground at once."

I drew pictures, with Dick's pencil, all over a sheet of paper, which came to think of it—had been carefully placed on the table with a view of putting down facts concerning the new house, a way of Dick's at times very aggravating because I never find any difficulty in remembering anything I want to remember.

Dick glanced at my pencil impatiently, sighed gently, and went on tentatively.

"So I hope you'll go out and see it, Marion, and the sooner the better. It won't commit you to anything, you know. Elinor would go with you I am sure, and then if you both like it, or see your way to live out there, I shall try to get a day and look it over myself. I don't want to waste time if you've made up your mind beforehand, you know."

Now I don't mind adopting a suggestion of my husband's now and then; in fact, strictly speaking I think one ought to, but still I do like thinking for myself, and there was something in dear Dick's manner of speaking so smacking of a settled determination that, instantly, uprose my own particular little demon of contradiction, and—I don't mind avowing it—I did what I considered the most annoying thing under the circumstances, said nothing, thus leaving my lord and master entirely at a loss.

But, honestly, it wasn't a contradiction. Far from it. All the dismal experiences of friends stranded in superior suburban residences which they had one and all entered into so hopefully and lingered on in so despairingly came crowding into my mind, and "Mind a turned" me against Dick's latest bid. It was only after a firm resolve to talk it over with Elinor, the day following, that I could get myself to sleep.

Dick said absolutely no more about the matter, and if I had judged by his silence I might have considered the question closed. But knowing his little ways I could see he had set his heart upon this suburban residence, and already saw himself in imagination smoking his evening cigar in majestic seclusion on the ornate veranda overlooking his spacious grounds, instead of the ridiculously narrow and somewhat rickety balcony which we at present had a right to call our own, with its

rather circumscribed view of adjacent domestic interiors and highly confidential articles of clothing hung out upon kindred balconies about.

I am almost sure that before I went off to sleep that same evening I decided to go to see the house—that is to go of my own free will and when I chose—and I preferred going without Dick's knowledge and surprising him with my account of it some evening at dinner.

Before I had seen Elinor next day Dick got letters which obliged him to go on the day following to a place where his firm had a branch, and he told me at luncheon that he would start in the morning, remain all night, and be home for late breakfast on the day after, as was his custom on such occasions.

Nothing could have been better. I at once decided on inspecting the new house during Dick's absence, and sitting down at once wrote to Elinor asking her if she would drive out with me on the following afternoon to look at a charming house in the country, which Dick thought of buying. She answered at once regretting that she would be unable to go out with me as she had a luncheon engagement, but suggesting that I should drive out with Sarah and the children and that she would follow with all speed and come back with us.

So far so good. I accepted her suggestions as to the children, who were all ready and looking forward to their expedition, when, as fate would have it, who should suddenly appear but a long-invited country cousin bringing her children to spend the day while she tore madly about the city with an endless shopping list in her hand.

I had almost made up my mind to send off a line to Elinor and give up what seemed my well-timed project when nurse stepping into the breach begged of me to leave all the children to her, promising them a thoroughly good time all around, while I drove out and met Miss Elinor as agreed upon.

Reflecting that Elinor had not only gone to luncheon by this time, but might even have accomplished her intention of slipping away early, I determined on setting out alone, in spite of a latent uneasiness added to my usual extreme distaste for solitary expeditions. My only crumb of comfort was the hope that as I had started a little later than the hour named, Elinor might even have reached the house before me and would be waiting at the door to receive me.

Alas! how little I dreamt as I got into my cab and drove off countrywards that I was on my way to passing the most terrible night of my hitherto peaceful life.

My way lay for some time along familiar streets, and rather to my surprise I found myself actually enjoying the peace and quiet of a little solitude. Dearest of children's voices ran occasionally upon the overstrung nerves of a tired mother, and I felt that I could give myself up to the luxury of rest. The remembrance of their satisfied happy faces about the nursery play table left me nothing to worry about on the score of what might have been their disappointment.

Presently the endless brick and mortar began to show gaps here and there, and patches of intervening sky glimpses of distant pools and bits of woodland added to a distinct freshening of the air proclaimed the beginning of the country, or that imitation of the real thing suggested by the suburbs.

(To be Continued.)

A GUARANTEE TO MOTHERS.

There is only one medicine intended for use among infants and young children that gives mothers a guarantee that it is free from opiates and poisonous soothing stuffs. That medicine is Baby's Own Tablets. Milton L. Hersey, M. Sc., public analyst for the Province of Quebec, and demonstrator in chemistry for McGill University, says:—"I hereby certify that I have made a careful analysis of Baby's Own Tablets which I personally purchased in a drug store in Montreal, and said analysis has failed to detect the presence of any opiate or narcotic in them." These Tablets cure all minor ailments of little ones, such as teething troubles, simple fevers, colds, constipation, diarrhoea, colic and worms. They make little ones sleep naturally because they remove the cause of sleeplessness. They are a boon to all mothers and no home where there are young children should be without a box of Baby's Own Tablets. Sold by all medicine dealers, or by mail at 25 cents a box from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

MUKDEN.

The Most Sacred City in the Chinese Empire.

(The New York Times.)

If one looks at the map of the present zone of war operations in Manchuria one can hardly fail to be struck by certain remarkable circumstances. The Russian railway, which enters so many important cities of Manchuria, makes a wide detour when it approaches Mukden, the most important city of all. The Chinese railway from Shan-hai-Kwan, instead of being continued to Mukden, has its terminus at Sing-min-Tung, a small and comparatively unimportant place thirty miles to the west of the capital.

Why, it is natural to ask, should the Russian surveys who laid out the Central Chinese Railway and the British surveys who planned the Imperial Chinese Railway, have deliberately avoided the capital of this great territory, the wealthiest city in Manchuria, the most important market in the region, and the centre of an ever-growing trade?

They avoided it because they had to. The British capitalists who provided the money for the Chinese line wanted to continue it to Mukden, but China would not hear of it. Russia also found the Peking Government unexpectedly obstinate on this point. Ten years ago, when China had been beaten by Japan, and Russia had stepped in to save her from having to pay the price of her defeat, China was willing to give Russia about everything that was asked, but she insisted on making one reservation. Russia could have Port Arthur, she could build her railway through Manchuria, she could send troops to guard it, but she must promise not to go too near Mukden.

The veneration of the Chinese for this city can perhaps hardly be realized by Occidental peoples. The feeling of the English for Westminster Abbey, of the Italians for Rome, may serve to give a faint idea of it. But in the Far East the veneration for the past, as expressed in the worship of ancestors, is actually an important part of religious belief, and for this reason Mukden is the most sacred city in the whole great Chinese Empire.

Mukden is the ancient capital of the present dynasty of China. It was there that in the year 1625 Nurhachi, the famous founder of that dynasty, established himself. It was there that the ancestors of the Manchurian Emperors were buried.

Mukden stands in the middle of a great alluvial plain, about 320 feet above the level of the sea. All the soil around it is rich and highly cultivated. It is reputed to have a population of 260,000, chiefly Chinese. The houses, both those of the Chinese mandarins and merchants and those of new Russian construction, are built on a magnificent scale.

There is a "Forbidden City" in Mukden, like the one in Peking, but while the Boxer outbreak of 1900 was followed by the entry of the allies into the hitherto mysterious palaces within the inner walls of Peking so far as is known no European or American has ever penetrated into the Forbidden City of Mukden. It is believed to contain wonderful treasures of ancient art and buildings which surpass in beauty and elaborateness even those of Peking.

Judging from the portions of the city which foreigners are allowed to see, the place must be a very treasure house of the art of the old Chinese. Even the streets are full of carvings of a delicacy unattainable in modern work, while the tombs of the Emperors combine a purity of design with an elaboration of detail which show how far the art of China has deteriorated from the old standards.

The city is surrounded by a great brick wall, with picturesque high towers at the eight gates and the angles. Outside are the suburbs, enclosed by a mud wall, while in the middle of the city are the ancient palaces of the Manchurian Emperors inside a third wall. The streets of Mukden are broad and straight. Like Peking, the city possesses a drum tower and a huge bell. The administration buildings and the Hall of Examinations are within the precincts of the Forbidden City.

The early history of the warlike monarchs whose chief city was Mukden, and who in the seventeenth century became the rulers of the whole Chinese Empire, is veiled in legend. Three heaven-born maidens, so the story runs, were bathing one day in a lake near the Shan-ai-lin Mountains, when a passing magpie dropped a ripe red fruit into the lap of one of them. The maiden ate the

fruit, and in due course a child was born to her, whom she named Aisin Gioro, or the Golden. When Aisin Gioro was a lad he was elected chief over three contending clans. His reign was not of long duration, for his subjects rose against him and murdered him, together with all his sons except the youngest, Fancha, who was miraculously saved from his pursuers. It was Aisin Gioro who named his people Manchus, which means "pure." His descendants, through the rescued Fancha, fell into obscurity until the middle of the sixteenth century, when one of them, Nurhachi, born in 1559, the seventh in descent from Aisin Gioro, welded the Manchu tribes into one great kingdom. The Emperor Nurhachi, toward the close of his long and illustrious reign, transferred his capital to Mukden, and his tomb there is the most venerated of all the royal tombs of the city.

In 1617 Nurhachi drew up a list of "seven hates" against the Chinese, and declared war on them. The Chinese were defeated with great slaughter, and seventy cities were captured. The war was followed by an alliance between the Manchus and the Chinese, who were then ruled over by the Ming Dynasty. The later Emperors of this dynasty were weak and cowardly, and China was continually invaded by the Tartars. In the end the Manchus were begged to save the country. They consented with great alacrity to send an army, and the result of it all was that in 1644 the grandson of Nurhachi ascended the Dragon Throne without serious opposition on the part of the Chinese. He was Sun-Chi, the first of the Manchurian Dynasty, which has retained the throne of China ever since.

Mukden is identified with all that is glorious in the records of the Manchurian Emperors and the Manchus people, who have become so intermingled with the Chinese that the veneration for the city is shared by all the inhabitants of Northern China. Under these circumstances the Peking Government's anxiety as to the fate of Mukden can be understood.

It was hoped that the Russians and Japanese would do what they could to respect the sacred tombs and the other relics of the past in the Manchurian capital. Both belligerents know the temper of the Chinese; both are aware that to desecrate the Mukden tombs would result in a wave of passionate indignation in China, and both are naturally anxious to keep on good terms with the Chinese.

In the eyes of the natives the possessor of Mukden is the possessor of Manchuria. The whole administrative machinery of the region centres in Mukden as completely as that of Korea does in Seoul, and the moral and political effect of the withdrawal by the Russians will be incalculable.

It must be remembered that China not only obtained Russia's promise before the railway was built that it should not go near Mukden, but when the present war began and the question of the neutrality of China came up, the Peking Government made a special stipulation that Mukden should not be excluded, as was the rest of Manchuria, from the neutrality arrangement.

THE RURAL SHERLOCK.

The wise old farmer and his good wife were discussing the case of their eldest son, says the New York Press. The eldest son had been absenting himself from the family circle on Wednesday and Sunday evenings with suspicious regularity now these many weeks. Not only that, but on these evenings he donned the very finest of his clothes. Father remembered that in the courting etiquette of his youth Wednesday evening calls were considered by the girl's parents to mean business; also, that staying to Sunday night supper was equivalent to publishing the banns.

Mother looked troubled. She confessed she would like to know who the girl was.

"I do hope she knows something about housekeeping, and isn't a girl who is always gadding about," she said wistfully, with an anxious look on her usually placid brow.

"Why don't you ask him?" said father, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ask him! How would you have liked to be asked where you were going when you—" Mother blushed, and father looked contrite.



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she had come to the end of her accustomed route. Then she halted and turned to look round into the buggy inquiringly.

The pucker disappeared from mother's brow, and she beamed upon the roan mare as if it had been all her doing; for this was the one girl out of the whole township whom she would have chosen herself if she had been consulted.

THE ENCORE FIEND.

(Musical Opinion, London.)

The nuisance attending the existence of the encore or applauding fiend is so great and so permanent that I could welcome with effusion the advent of a sort of special Star Chamber tribunal endowed with despotic powers to crush the wretches responsible by any means which might seem desirable, not excluding the pillory. Indeed, I should greatly favor the revival of this time honored institution, because one might attend the proceedings and there find relief. With the exception, perhaps, of the advanced Wagner operas, it is almost impossible to hear good music with unalloyed pleasure. If no unseemly interruption takes place, you are haunted with nervous apprehension that it may do so at any moment; opera, oratorio, orchestral concert, recital—it is all one. Instances could be piled up by the thousands. At the Crystal Palace, Mr. Ben Davies sang the opening bars of "The Sorrows of Death" in dumb show; at a "Rigoletto" performance at Covent Garden, applause began for a distant note of Caruso just as the Jester was approaching the sack containing his murdered daughter. What about the pillory in this case? I have twice heard the applause begin in the middle of the last movement of Tchaikowsky's Fifth Symphony; applause began twice during Schumann's "Carnival" at the second Otto Voss recital; and, if a concerto is played with piano accompaniment, the latter is accounted of no consequence at all when the solo player is silent. At one of Von Vecsey's recitals (the fourth, I think) Herr Schmidt Badekow, after beginning an orchestral passage, stopped deliberately, waited until the noise had ceased, and then began again from the end of the solo part. So far from any hint being conveyed by this line of action, it might as well have been tried on an audience of owls.

STONEWALL JACKSON'S BATTLES.

Stonewall Jackson's negro body servant knew before anybody else when a battle was imminent. "The general tells you, I suppose," said one of the soldiers.

"Lawd, no, sir! De gin'ral nudder tell me nothin'! I observates de 'tention of de gin'ral dis way: Co'se he prays, jest like we all, mornin' an' night; but when he gits up two, three times in a night to pray den I rubs my eyes and gits up too, an' packs de haversack—ca'se I done fine out dere's gwine to be old boy to pay right away."—From Mrs. Roger A. Pryor's Reminiscences.

HIS REASON.

The other day a young man gave a reason for not dancing, the spirit of which might be made to apply to a good many failures in life.

"I should like to dance," he said, "and I should dance, only the music puts me out and the girl gets in my way."

What is a virtuous man? Some one who possesses a perfect whole of religious, social and domestic virtues, perfumed with delicacy.—The Abbe Roux.