

The Killing of a Humourist.

BY BARRY PAIN.

I was once sitting in the office of the *London Review* engaged in the usual routine of editorial work, when one of the clerks entered with a telegram for me. It was no unusual occurrence, for telegrams are more common than letters in the office of the *London Review*. Yet, as I opened this particular telegram, I had a distinct feeling of nervousness. Indeed, my mind had been haunted all the morning by presentiments of some catastrophe impending, either for myself or my friends. The telegram ran as follows :—

“Our poor Harry is becoming a humourist. Do please come at once.—George Blackburny.”

The Blackburny's are among my oldest and dearest friends. I have always regretted that they lived in Carlisle, while my work compelled me to live in London. They were devoted to their son Harry, and when I first knew him he was, indeed, a boy of whom any parents might be proud. His gentleness and earnestness had endeared him to everybody ; he was at this time studying, with hopes and prospects singularly bright, for the career in life which he had selected. He was to have been a missionary.

Shocked and pained though I was by the news which the telegram contained, I yet felt a melancholy