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HENRY BLAIR

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Sensations in Court.

Thrilling Scenes in Great Murder Trials.

One of the most remarkable sensations during a murder trial within recent years occurred at the conclusion of the case against the British taxi-cab murderer. On being found guilty, Mason calmly declared that he was "quite satisfied."

The nearest parallel to this dramatic incident occurred some years ago at the Old Bailey.

Two burglars, one of them named Campbell, who had a scar on his face, were indicted for murder. It was alleged they broke into a house, and when the occupier came downstairs there was a struggle, in which he was fatally stabbed. Everything turned on identification, and the principal witness to the crime—the dead man's wife—was positive that Campbell struck the fatal blow. She repeated over and over again, "He had a scar on his face," whereupon everybody turned towards the prisoner, and there was the scar.

Campbell was found guilty, and in reply to the usual question he made a thrilling statement.

"My lord," he said, calmly, "I must acknowledge I have been justly found guilty. I never intended to kill him. The blow was made for his shoulder, for at that moment he was holding my mate. He must have moved, and received the blow in the eye. I am sorry for it, and I hope that God will forgive me."

At the trial of Drinkwater, the poisoner, there was a strange scene. Asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, the prisoner did not answer orally, but made certain signs known only to Mason. For a moment Mr. Justice Bigham, who did not belong to the craft, looked slightly puzzled. Then the tension was broken by the even voice of the judge, who passed sentence of death without comment.

Beddou was a more dramatic figure. He clasped his wife, who was overcome with emotion on hearing the verdict, in a passionate embrace, and rose to a tragic height when asked the usual question.

"Before the Great Architect of the Universe," he said, raising his hand and pointing aloft with a Masonic sign, "I declare I am not guilty."

Mr. Justice Bigham, himself a Freemason, was considerably affected. In passing sentence of death his voice faltered, and he ended with a sob.

Thrilling also was a scene at Stafford. While the jury in a trial for murder were considering their verdict, the electric lights failed and the court was plunged into darkness. Presently an attendant brought in a few lighted candles, and when the jury returned, the foreman uttered the dread word, "Guilty," the judge, in the flickering light of the candles, assumed the black cap and pronounced sentence of death.

Carmarthen was the scene of an equally singular drama. A man named Rees was tried for murder. During the three days he was in the dock he did not speak a word, and he remained silent even when asked the usual question before being sentenced to death. On reaching the cells, he shook hands with the warders and said them good-bye, stating that he would be glad to get back home. Then the truth came out—he could only speak Welsh and he thought he had been acquitted!

There was consternation in court when the position was explained to the judge. What was to be done? In the end the prisoner was brought back and the whole ceremony was gone through again, somebody interpreting the judge's words into Welsh. An unlocked for incident at Chelmsford was more poignant. While a young woman, known to be in delicate health, was being tried for murder she became very ill. Ultimately she was removed from the dock and taken back to prison. The proceeding was then adjourned.

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ings were consequently invalidated. When she was again arraigned on the capital charge she was a mother, and everybody in court was moved with pity for her. In the end the jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of "Not Guilty."

In a similar drama despair trod on the heels of triumph. Catherine Wilson, indicted at the Old Bailey for poisoning a friend, was so ably defended by Montagu Williams that the jury acquitted her.

"I knew I'd win!" she exclaimed in ecstasy. Throwing back her head she left the dock, only to be re-arrested on seven separate charges of wilful murder immediately she set foot on the floor of the court, which some months later was the scene of her condemnation to death.

Nothing so grimly dramatic was ever presented on the stage as an incident at the Old Bailey. At the close of a session the judge (Mr. Justice Graham) caused those who had been convicted of capital offences to be brought into the dock and then sentenced, as he thought, each of them to death. But there were sixteen prisoners, and his lordship read out the names of only fifteen.

After they had gone below, and as everybody was wondering what would happen, the faller explained the situation, whereupon Mr. Justice Graham ordered the culprit whose name he had omitted to be brought back.

"John Robins," he said, in an excitedly animated tone, "I find I accidentally omitted your name in my list of prisoners doomed to execution. It was quite accidental, I assure you, and I ask your pardon for my mistake. I am very sorry, and I can only add that you will be hanged with the rest."

One drama of the French courts is probably unique. A remarkably eloquent advocate, Chair d'Est Ange, had to prosecute a man named Benoit, who was charged with killing a companion and suspected of having murdered his mother. The famous orator drew a vivid picture of the conduct of the murderer on the night of his mother's death—of how he refused to look at her body, how unspeakable terror prevented him from entering the room where his dead mother lay.

So great was the effect of the words and the gestures of the advocate that the man in the dock sank down gasping. "Ah! My mother! Oh! Yes, it is I!"

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Just Folks.

By EDGAR A. GUEST.

JUST A BOY.

He is just a boy with his eyes aglow, Just a boy, and you love him so, And his merry laugh and his roguish way And those restless feet which turn to play Are youth's rich treasures swiftly spent, You had them once, ere your boyhood went, You raced and romped in the selfsame way, But cry, "Keep still!" for you're tired to-day.

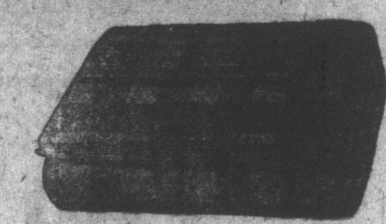
Time was you jeered at an easy chair And an hour of quiet was hard to bear; Then life was filled with a thousand things And your arms and legs were strong as springs, And the old folks said as they looked at you: "He races and romps the whole day through, And he's never tired and he can't sit still. He ought to rest, but he never will."

He is just a boy, and a boy must jump, And a boy must run till his sides thump, Must swing his arms and kick his heels, And give full vent to the joy he feels; Must rush in the house and bolt his meals And long for things which run on wheels, And whenever you find him sitting still, It's not that he's tired—it's because he's ill.

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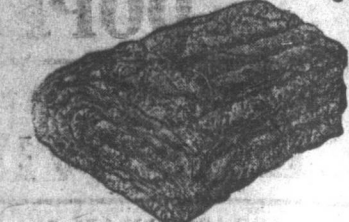
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