THE TORONTO WORLD: SATURDAY MORNI

A REIGN OF TERROR.

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a Mr. Luscombe had taken the vacant room next Mr. Jackson's.

"Oh, how very odd," exclaimed Miss Hatch. "Luscombe is quite an aristocratic hame. Is he nice?"

"He has paid me a week in advance, at any rate," replied Mrs. Yate, looking severely at poor old Mr. Parrot, who was, I fear, considerably in her debt.

Dinner concluded she had led her troop from her room, while we others remained to make as was the custom of the establishment. A few minutes later we were joined by Mr. Luscombe, a wiry little man with sharp features, fair hair, black beard and keen, gray eyes, which seemed to include us all at one glance. The difference in color between his hair and beard gave him rather a pecular appearance, and but for the latter he might have passed for a soldier. He introduced himself to the room generally, took a chair at the table, brought out a cigar-case, and made himself quite at home, talking freely of everything except himself, and especially of the recent murder, though he seemed to know less about it than we did.

"The fellow will never be caught," said Tom Renny." for the police are only a set

"The fellow will never be caught," said Tom Renny, "for the police are only a set of noodles." "That's your opinion, is it?" observed
Mr. Luscombe with a smile.
"It is."

"It is."
"Then, my dear sir, I don't agree with you. You young fellow are too impatient. You must give the police time."
"While he runs away! Perhaps dodges "While he runs away! Perhaps dodges into another house to murder some one else! My advice to everybody is to look after themselves and I intend to set the example by buying a revolver."

"And shooting one of your friends!" added Mr. Luscombe, apparently absorbed in watching the smoke float up to the ceiling.

"Not at all," cried Tom, piqued at our laughter. "I am not such a fool as—as—some people."

some people."

"It's not a question of folly, my good sir," said Mr. Luscombe, good-homoredly.

"When the house is in darkness, it's not easy to distinguish between a friend and a foe and a startled man with a revolver in he hand is apt to blaze away at the one in the hope of hitting the other. If you'll take my advice, and excuse a stranger for giving it, you'll leave revolvers alone." you'll leave revolvers alone.

"As to that I shall please myself," said Tom, walking towards the door. "Good night, Jack," he called out to me, "I'm going I followed him into the hall in order to en

postulate with him, for he had latterly developed an alarming fondness for billiards, most expensive taste for a junior clerk in most expensive taste for a junior clerk in a broker's office. Belonging to a good but poor family, he told me he had to make his own way in the world, and this I felt was a sorry beginning. Though our acquaintane dated only from his arrival at Mrs. Yate a few months before, I had taken a great liking to the tail, powerful handsome ways. liking to the tail, powerful, handsome young fellow, whose many excellent qualities were undeniable, and whose faults were chiefly undeniable, and whose faults were chiefly those of youth. Always exceedingly head strong, he laughed at the remonstrance which I now addressed to him, and playfully calling me an old grandmother, he left the

which I now addressed to alm, kind synthesial realing me an old grandmother, he left this house.

When we went up-stairs to join the laddes to the drawing-room, we found Miss Hater performing lustily on the piano; Miss Dume sisting in a supercilious attitude on the ottoms, and the remaining half-dozen talking round the fire. At our estrance the scenchanged, Mr. Luscombe immediately becoming the central object of the picture. Not withstanding their thorough knowledge of the street of pumping, they got less information dut of him than out of new comers generally. Way tempted him with pictures of places to the art of pumping, they got less information dut of him than out of new comers generally. Way tempted him with pictures of places the marked at certain passages, which were of the mature of leading questions; but with provoking skill he slipped through all these fences without leaving a shred of evidence behind. One thing along was clear; he could talk better of current events than of the historical past.

There was a good deal of excitement when we separated for the night. Mrs. Yate, was leading to the provoking skill he slipped through all these fences without leaving a shred of evidence behind. One thing along was clear; he could talk better of current events than of the historical past.

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"Well," replied Mrs. Yate, beaming over folded hands, "he is short and slight; his face is handsome, smooth shaven, and wrinkled a little; his hair is light, turning gray; eyebrows arched like my friend General—"s; he stoops rather, and has a bad cough, poor man; his manners are affable though nervous. I think that's all I noticed about him."

"Dear me, how interesting!" said Miss Hatch with enthusiasm. "And his baggage "Though small in quantity is good in quality. Not that that matters much "added Mrs. Yate complacently, "for he has baid me a month in advance."

"And his cough?" anxiously inquired old Mr. Parrot.

"Oh, yeu needn't be afraid. You won't hear it." She turned towards me to say: "Mr Jackson has taken the big room at the end of your passage, so—why goodness gracious, there's another cab stopping! Not another boarder surely."

As we sate listening there came such a sharp knock at the door that several ladies actually screamed, no doubt because their nerves had been overstung by the accounts of the murder. Mrs. Yate was again summoned from the table and upon her return told us a Mr. Luscombe had taken the vacant room next Mr. Jackson's.

"Oh, how very odd," exclaimed Miss Hatch. "Luscombe is quite an aristocratic

The conversation was confined entirely to whispers.

"Good morning," I said, looking round in perplexity. "You all seem to be suffering from the effects of your fright last night, on has anything else happened?"

By way of answer Tom thrust into my hand a newspaper, and pointed to a paragraph on the last page. It was an advertisement emanating from the police, and offering \$1,000 reward for such information as would lead to the capture of the muderementioned at the beginning of this narrative And now for the sensational part of the affair; the description given by the police corresponded exactly with Mrs. Yate description of Mr. Jackson! It was a astonishing and merciful thing, commented Miss Hatch, that we had not found out throats cut this morning.

Miss Hatch, that we had not found ou throats cut this morning.

There had been rather a warm dispute as to what should be done. Mrs. Yate, back in was for the instant delivery of the malefactor, the sham invalid, into the hands of justice. But Mr. Luscombe declared that such action based upon the mere shadow of tuspicion, would be cruel and unjust. An with him the men generally concurred.

"What about the clue the police were supposed to have?" I inquired.

"Oh, of course, it has come to nothing, replied Tom. "They arrested the wrong man yesterday and let him go again. Disyou ever hear of such duffers? Mr. Lus combe, who defended them yesterday," added he, spitefully, "will perhaps defend them again."

"Mistakes occur in the best regulated in the such control of the such duffers."

again."

"Mistakes occur in the best regulated amilies," s-id that gentleman, smiling, as he helped himself to the last egg, upon which Miss Hatch had evidently set her heart. "Do you never err, sir!"

"What a rude man?" said Miss Hatch in a loud whisper, and stared angrily at the mpty dish.

The servant entered with a tray for the burpose of carrying up Mr. Jackson's breakliest.

"Don't let her go, Mrs. Yate," cried Miss

"Don't lether go, Mrs. Yate," cried miss ounne, frantically waving a skinny hand a he girl. "If she enters that room she will aver come out alive. His blood will be pon your head."

"You see how I shall be situated," said Mrs. Yate, looking frigidly at Mr. Lusombe, a swan no longer, "if I attempt to tollow your advice."

"If you'll allow me, madam," said he, rising, "I'll take up the poor old gentleman's breakfast myself."

"What and be murdered!" shrieked

man, I hope your temper will have cooled a bit."

A clash of tongues followed his departure but very little was said to the point. Presently, in spite of the usual remonstrances from me, Tom left the house to play billiards, and I went upstairs to fetch a book from my own room. The passage was lighted with gas, though only very dimly, and the carpet was thick enough to render my foot inaudible. Hoping to find something connected with the events of the previous night, I determined to explore.

Arriving at the door of Mr. Luscombe s room, I noticed it was ajar, and, not thinking of what I was doing, looked in. What I saw was startling enough; nothing more or less than Mr. Luscombe's beard resting on the bed. He himself was writing at the table beyond. I retired as speedily as was

less than Mr. Luscombe's beard resting on
the bed. He himself was writing at the table beyond. I retired as speedily as was
consistent with prudence. This, then, ac
counted for the difference in color between
the hair and beard, but who was the wearer? Strange if, while suspicion was direct
ed toward Mr. Jackson, the real murderel
should actually be among us in the person of
Mr. Luscombe! This theory offered a rational explanation of his anxiety net to have
the pelice called in, and also of his carrying
a revolver, the very weapon with which the
unfortunate old lady was supposed to have
been murdered. Moreover, due allowance
being made for disguise the advertised description might very well apply to Mr. Luscombe.

While these thoughts were passing through
my mind, I was standing at the window of
my room, the curtain being up and the genot yet lighted. Looking out aimlessly i
happened to notice on the opposite side of
the street, a man who was watching the
house. Whether by accident or design, hi
back was turned towards a lamp-post, so
that his features were obscured. Suddenly
he started and moved to a little distance
when he was joined by Mr. Luscombe;
greatly to my surprise, for I had not hear
him pass my door. He was wearing the
black beard again, and carried a par sel and
a letter, both of which he gave the stranger
After a short conversation they parted, Mr.
Luscombe returning to the house. The plor

After a short conversation they parted, Mr. Luscombe returning to the house. The plot was certainly thickening.

Not knowing what to do, I did nothing When the time arrived for going to our owrooms the excitement of the previous nightway repeated, Miss Dunne and her search and the search of the provider of the provid parties displaying wonderful heroism. M Hatch took leave of us in a most affecti Hatch took leave of us in a most affecting manner; with tears in her eyes she solemn assured us she was going to have her three cut without fail. Hence I saw by evading one responsibility I had only incurred an other; and consequently decided not to go to bed, so as to be ready in case any emergency should arise.

As on the previous night, Mr. Jackson cough ceased as soon as the house became

uiet and after that net a sound was heard, and turned my gas out, but on the table stood a small lamp with a shade which con ined the light to the space immediately around it. In an armchair by the side the table I sat reading. What seemed to be almost interminable time elapsed without almost interminable time elapsed without the same of the length thinks in the same of in almost interminable time elapsed without incident of any sort. At length, thinkin that Tom might have returned without mentions in the transport of the meaning that the meaning the meaning the meaning sounds. Somebody ran rapidly along the passage; one heavy fall was closely followed by another; then came a scuffle a sharp crack of a pistol, a cry of pain, an lastly a confusion of shouts and screams. The suddenness of the whole thing glued meto my chair, but as seen as I could collect my energies I rushed into the passage.

No words of mine could describe the panic Miss Dunne had thrown her angular body half-way out of the window, and was impaired the meaning the mea

balf way out of the window, and was in ploring the police to save her, and the reswere shricking inside their rooms. Ac plering the police to save her, and the reswere shrieking inside their rooms. According to her own account, however, Miss Hatch did not utter a sound; burying he head in the bed-clothes she clamly awaited her fate. I had an indistinct vision of a yellow night-cap and poker as I ran past, and further along Mrs. Yate was frantically shouting through the keyhole that she was armed with a rifle and bayonet, and that it would be instant death to attempt to enter. But the interest centred in a confused h gp on the ground and a tall figure standing over



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HEAD

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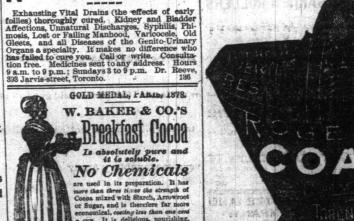
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