

Wails From the Dungeon.

"Let me out! Let me out!" comes the cry of a soul in torment over the Annan waters. For nigh on to two centuries has that beseeching prayer come sighing with the winds and the hail and the sleet.

The cry is the echo of a poor unfortunate, done to death, left to starve in a cold, dismal dungeon, alone with his God and his conscience, the bright sunshine shut out forever.

Forgotten by the world above him, he makes agonizing efforts to tear down the walls that hold him captive.

Starvation is gnawing at his vitals, he sinks his teeth in his tender flesh and his blood-dripping lips let forth a final scream, "Let me out! Let me out!"

Far down the valley came the sound of clapping horses, presently could be heard the shouts of drivers, urging cattle ahead of them, then the rattle of steel and the clinking of spurs and the laughter of men whose work is accomplished.

Around the bend came a goodly host of men at a hand gallop, retreating from a successful border raid, and home after Christmas.

No ordinary raid had this been, however, for Sir Peter, the red-headed, the dread of the south, had led it in person, and where Sir Peter went retainers must follow.

They had swept across the border in the dead of night and surprised an old enemy, John Naseby of Riven, and caught his guards napping.

It had been a bloody skirmish, and many men on both sides had fallen.

Naseby had fled to the sea with a few of his remaining followers, guarding zealously his only daughter, but many had been taken prisoners and Latham of Lee among the number.

No wonder Sir Peter laughed long and loud as he galloped along side by side with his old enemy, Sir Michael of Riven, for was he not on his good green turf again, had not the land been a rich one and had he not in his clutches his arch enemy and successful rival, Hugh Latham of Lee?

As I indeed it had been worth the fight, twenty odd good men at arms as prisoners, to be hanged or broken up in his own hand of hardened marauders, fifty head of cattle and as many horses and Naseby's pride.

Round the bend of the Annan they sped up to the castle gates, the drawbridge is let down, they clatter across the moat, they are home and safe.

Into the vast hall march the conquerors and in after them surge the retainers and men at arms.

It has been a time of hard riding, and fighting, now for the cup and feasting and well-earned rest.

Health after health is drunk, the rafters ring with joyous shouts, smoking dishes appear and load down the tables, sheep are roasted whole, all to celebrate the most successful raid in years, and the jolly Christmas time as well.

The common prisoners, bound hand and foot, are bedded for the night in the vast "salle" above the banquet hall, but poor Latham of Lee rests his weary bones as best he can, some straw for his pallet, bread and wine for his stomach, in the dungeons beneath the keep.

Sir Peter and his good friend Sir Michael talked long into the night, sitting, legs stretched out, before the big log fire, and Naseby's name and Latham's name were most on the tongues of both.

Should it be death or ransom? Quoth Sir Peter, "Could I but have got the wench I would have hanged young Hugh to the highest limb ere it was too late tomorrow."

"Hang him anyhow," growled the Baronet, and they went to bed.

But betimes next morning there came a messenger from Edinburgh, whose bearing would admit of no delay. The Council called.

In an hour the pair, with fifty men behind them, were riding like devils toward the capital.

Prisoners and raids had no place in their thoughts now, and the jollity of the Yuletide was well forgotten.

That night strange sounds were heard, and the next and the next, faint cries which grew gradually fainter and fainter, then died out forever.

One old servant, David Rogers, who had served the son and the father before him, alone bethought himself of the young laird, lying in the dungeon below and trembling when he remembered that the keys hung at Sir Peter's belt.

No man could be spared from guarding the prisoners to ride to Edinburgh, and there was no way of getting through three feet of solid masonry and, dreadful thought, perhaps Sir Peter knew he had the keys.

But exactly Sir Peter had forgotten all about Hugh Lee till he got to the capital, for one morning a horseman was seen to draw up at the palace, his horse near dead and he himself a little better off.

He had ridden day and night, sparing neither body nor horseflesh, to bring the keys of the dungeon. The keys were delivered, they rushed down the heavy locks and drew the ponderous bolts.

At last, in the light of the torches they saw the wretched young man lying, his face ashy, a bloody foam at his

mouth, his right sleeve rolled up and the flesh of his arm eaten away.

It is said that when Sir Peter heard of this terrible tragedy his red hair stood on end and his face took on a frozen look. He gave up hunting and hawking, raiding and drinking, shut himself up in the east wing and would see no one or have no one near him but old David, his old retainer.

To his sons he entrusted the guarding and management of the vast estates, while he sat alone with his thoughts and his crimes.

Even the approach of the holidays brought no cheer to the old man, but rather dread, and Christmas came with never a word of the old-time jollity.

That night curdling yells were heard in the east wing, and cries of a lost soul. Men were quickly to the door where the redoubtless sons leading the van and old David trembling and tottering behind them.

The door was burst in and by the light of the dying logs could be seen on the bed, the gaunt body of Sir Peter, twisted into an almost unrecognizable shape, and a bloody hole in his throat and the marks of teeth that belonged to no animal.

Time went on, the east wing was closed and the sons traveled abroad, but in the long winter nights moans and cries were repeatedly heard.

A serving man swore by the roof that rowing over the Annan on one Christmas night from a neighboring farm he had seen a tall figure running along the bank wringing its hands and crying, "Let me out! Let me out!"

Spedlin castle thus came to be haunted, and as the years rolled by was deserted and allowed to crumble and decay, leaving only one massive wing, the strongest of all, under which lay the dungeons.

And in the course of events a new and modern structure was seen to go up on the other side of the river and furniture came from London town and presently a young Sir William brought his blushing bride to the "Hall."

With the coming of the holidays, rumor had it, the same moans and sighs were heard, and the pathetic cry of "Let me out! Let me out!"

Then the matter coming up the long drive saw that same tall figure moving among the beeches, crying and uttering mournful sounds. He had lashed up his horse and arrived in the kitchen whither his flour, and had breathlessly related his story. It had taken many long draughts of the butler's best before he could prevail upon to make the home journey, and how he did get home he never knew.

Again, a servant maid stealing out to meet her lover saw in the moonlight the form of a young man, his face pale, bloody foam on his mouth, standing on one of the long grass mounds.

Screaming, her apron thrown over her head, she ran back to the pantry, there to fall in a deep swoon, which lasted so long it seemed like death.

Sir William, hearing of these two encounters and being himself of a nervous temperament, took counsel of his friends. Some suggested one thing some another, but one sage bade him hie to Edinburgh, there to buy and bring back the blessed book.

Acting on this advice presently was to be seen a large handsome Bible inclosed in a beautifully carved oaken case lying on a massive table in the center of the large reception-room.

It is a matter of record that the soul of the murdered Latham of Lee rested in peace for many years after that and it was not till 1820 that anything of a serious nature occurred in connection with the tragedy of so many years before.

The hall was once more in the decorator's hands and more new furniture came from London and amidst great rejoicing and flying of flags and playing of bands another young Sir William brought his bride home.

A handsome couple never faced their tenantry and for many months their time was devoted to the restoring of farms, tiding over tenants and a devotion to the property and the people thereof generally.

And all might have been well for all time had not the young laird, when he took out the great book from its oaken case, there to write the name and date of his first-born, discovered that the binding was sadly in need of repair.

The idea once in his head nothing would do but the book must be taken on the coming holiday shopping trip to Edinburgh to be rebound.

His wife's entreaties were of no avail. "The whole thing was superstitious nonsense, anyway," he argued. "He only revered the book because it was Holy Writ and paid no attention to the fears of the neighborhood; nevertheless, as her ladyship desired it, the book should be taken in its case and brought back in its case and then perhaps she would be satisfied."

"But, Sir William," she pleaded, "it is not that so much, it is not of ourselves I am thinking, but of the poor good superstitious souls that must remain here under our roof while the Bible is away. If they learn of it they will all leave and will never be induced to return."

But the laird was obdurate and the next day, in their large comfortable traveling carriage drawn by four horses and followed by two trusty servants on horseback, they set forth

with their precious burden for Edinburgh.

They reached the capital in safety and Sir William, good naturedly laughed at the fears his spouse had entertained.

The binding completed and shopping finished they started for home.

And now came a chapter of accidents. They had not travelled thirty miles before one of the hind wheels came off and they were forced to delay for repairs. The jar had been a considerable one and her ladyship's nerves were greatly upset thereby; moreover, they found to their disgust that they must spend Christmas day on the road.

The husband consoled her in every way possible and that night they rested at the Douglas Arms, where accommodations had already been prepared for them.

They dined in their own apartments—a rather sorry Christmas dinner—and her ladyship retired early to bed.

Sir William went downstairs to chat with the landlord and drink a negus or two, as was his custom.

The common room was empty and the landlord informed him there were but two other guests in the house, a doctor of middle age, on his way to England, and a belated young squire of the neighborhood, on his way to his father's house for the holidays; his horse had dropped a shoe and he had preferred to wait till morning before undertaking the ten miles still before him.

At 11 o'clock the landlord closed up, barred and locked the back and front doors, and bidding Sir William a pleasant repose retired to his own quarters.

Sir William had just got into his first sound sleep when something woke him with a start. He sat up in bed, and this time the undeniable report of a pistol shot came to his ears.

He jumped out of bed, hastily put on his dress-gown, bade her ladyship stay quietly where she was, and went out into the hallway.

His candle threw shadows on the wall as he groped his way along the passage.

At the top of the stairs he discovered the innkeeper, with a candle in one hand and an old blunderbuss in the other.

"What has happened?" asked Sir William.

"God knows, sir, but the sound came from the young squire's room."

The laird went quickly back for his small arms and they went together to the bedchamber, whence the sound of shots had come.

The door was locked. One push from Sir William's powerful shoulders and they were in the room. The window was open and they shaded their candles with their hands from the night air.

The innkeeper shut the window. Then they looked around them.

The table was overturned, chairs were upset and the disorder of the room showed there had been a desperate struggle.

In one corner nearest the bed lay a white object. It was the young squire shot through the lungs.

Sir William tenderly lifted him up till he rested on his knee.

"Run for the doctor and bring some brandy," said the laird.

The innkeeper shuffled out of the room. The boy, who was but nineteen, opened his eyes, looked up at Sir William's pale face, smiled and said "No good."

He was dead before the doctor, rubbing his eyes, half awake, got to his side.

The country was scoured for miles. The murderer, however, was never discovered. How he had gained an entry to the inn remained always a mystery. His egress had been, of course, by the open window, whence he had dropped some ten feet to the ground.

Sir William, himself a magistrate, took full charge of the affair and accompanied the remains to the house of the sorrowing parents, to whom he related the circumstances as far as he was able.

Then the laird and his wife continued their journey with sad faces and bowed heads.

Her ladyship whispered once in the ear of her spouse, "Sir William, if we ever get home with the book, in safety, go down on your knees, and thank the Almighty."

And Sir William, nodding his head, promised he would.

On arriving at the hall it was with a sigh of relief that they discovered that from the stately butler to the boy below stairs, there were only smiles and greetings and welcome home.

That night her ladyship sighed and said, "Thank God, everything is all right here."

"Spedlin was busy elsewhere," replied Sir William, as he blew out the light.

For sixty years the Bible lay in its oaken case undisturbed and there was peace and quiet in the land.

There came a time, however, when another laird sat in the home of his fathers and found it too small for himself and his family.

At first he was for building a new house, but eventually decided that the foundations should stay, but that there should be an extension of wings and another story put on.

So the family departed to the manor house and the Bible in its case went with them.

The repairs commenced and the first big brown stone was loosened at the east corner.

David Rogers, the oldest mason on the estate, superintended the operations.

How it happened, no one can or will tell, but the big stone loosened before anyone realized it, tottered, then fell, crushing poor old Rogers into a mass of nothing.

Accident followed accident and the men refused to work. English masons were sent for and the work went slowly on.

No sooner was the extra story up than the house began to sink and the wings and other improvements were given up.

Today the Bible is back in its place but the family resides abroad and the hall is rented on a ten years' lease to strangers, who care nothing for the Spedlin ghost or the ill luck it has brought the family—San Francisco Call.

WHITE WIFE OF NEGRO

Gets Ten Years for Murder in San Francisco.

San Francisco, Dec. 24.—"It is the judgment of this court, Catherine Coarum, that you be confined in the State Prison at San Quentin for the term of ten years."

Thus spoke Judge Dunne yesterday in the slayer of Charles Daniels. The woman uttered not a word but her eyes spoke volumes. Before she stood up to receive her sentence she had said her say. She listened to the words of the court like a stone.

Mrs. Coarum, killed a watchman named Charles Daniels at her home, 1133 1/2 Clay street, on April 9, last. She shot him three times and the crime was discovered by a policeman to whom the neighbors of the woman reported that, at the home of Mrs. Coarum sobs of hysterical sobbing could be heard. The officer entered the house and found Mrs. Coarum, who is the white wife of a colored cook on a vessel, moaning and bewailing her crime. In the cellar the policeman found Daniels' body, propped up against a dirt bulk head.

Mrs. Coarum was arrested and charged with murder. She pleaded self-defense and the jury convicted her of manslaughter.

When she appeared for sentence yesterday she was very much excited and asked the court for permission to say a few words.

Judge Dunne gave her permission to talk, and she said:

"I had to do what I did to that man. I was driven to it and had to defend myself and my home. I never troubled that man at all and would not have hurt him if he had let me alone. He had been running around my home, Judge, month after month, and that night he got me down on the stairs and held me down and threatened to cut my throat with the razor. What could I do? What would any woman have done in a place like that? I had to do what I did. If I had not done it, my husband would have come home and found me murdered."

"Strong men arm themselves and go out and look for their victims and shoot them down dead—shoot them in cold blood—and the law lets them off, but I, a poor, helpless woman, compelled to act in defense of my home and my life, am convicted. Where is the justice of that? It isn't right, Judge. That man would have killed me if I had not done what I did."

Mrs. Coarum, after finishing her speech, sank back into her chair and gazed straight at the Judge.

See Ho Mon, a Chinaman convicted of manslaughter, was sentenced by Judge Dunne to serve nine years in State Prison.

The Celestial and the woman were taken from the courtroom together. Mrs. Coarum shot a last glance at the Judge and said:

"Humph! This is a pretty country—a white woman gets ten years for manslaughter and a Chinaman gets nine."

On Commercial Basis.

New York, Jan. 1.—Cuthbert Hall, manager of Marconi's company, asserts that the inventor of wireless telegraphy, will be back in England in two or three weeks, says a dispatch to the Tribune from London. He will then start in earnest on the work of putting England and America in wireless communication, on a practical commercial basis.

The American station will be at Cape Cod and the English station, will be in Cornwall as at present and Mr. Hall is optimistic enough to believe that within six months wireless telegraphy service between England and America will be in operation.

English Capital.

New York, Jan. 1.—Wm. Jessop & Sons of Sheffield have placed contracts for the erection of three new steel works at Washington, Pa., says a dispatch to the Tribune from London. No bars will be made and attention at first will be devoted to the manufacture of sheet steel. A large portion of the ore used will be imported from Sweden. The material for all the buildings and engines is to be supplied by American firms.

Russian girls have a peculiar way of learning their matrimonial prospects. A number of girls take off their rings and conceal them in a shallow basket of corn, partake of the corn, and the owner of the first ring uncovered will be the first to enter matrimony.

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