THE FALSE FUNERAL.

I NEVER liked my uncle's business, though he took me when my father died, and brought me up as his own son. The good man had no children. His wife was long dead; he had an honest old woman for a housekeeper, and a flourishing business, in the undertaking line to leave to somebody; but he did not leave it to me, and I'll tell you the reason.

When I had been about five years with him and had grown worth my salt, as he used to sny, a death occurred in our neighbourhood, which caused greater lamentation than any we heard of since my apprenticeship began. The deceased gentleman was a Mr. Elsworthy. The family had been counted gentry in their day. I should have said my uncle lived in York, and all the world knows what Yorkshire families are. Well, the Elsworthys were of good family, and very proud of it, though they had lost every acre of an old estate which had belonged to them time out of mind. I am not sure whether it was their grandfather's dice and cock-fighting, or their father's going surety for a friend, who did something wrong in a government office, that brought them to this poor pass; but there was no house in all York where candles went further, and tealeaves were better used up. There was a mother, two sisters, and a consin who lived with them. The mother was a stately old lady, never seen out of a black brocade. The sisters were not over young or handsome, but they dressed as time as they could. The consin was counted one of the prettiest women in Yorkshire, but she walked with a crutch, having met with an accident in her childhood Master Charles was the only son, and the youngest of the family; he was a tall, handsome, dashing, young man, uncommonly polite, and a great favourite with the ladies. It was said there were some red eyes in the town when the story got wind that he was going to be married to the Honourable Miss Westbay, Her father was younger brother to the Earl of Harrowgate, and had seven girls beside her, without a penny for one of them; but Miss Westbay was a beauty, and the wonder was that she had not got married long ago, being nearly seven years out, duncing, singing, and playing tip-top pieces at all the parties. Halfa-dozen matches had been talked of for her, but somewhow they broke down one after another. Her father was rather impatient to see her off; so were her sisters, poor things, and no wonder, for grow up as they might, not one of them would the old man suffer to come out till the eldest was disposed, and at last there seemed semething like a certainty of that business. Young Mr. Elsworthy and she struck up a courtship. He was fast inated-isn't that the word?—at an assize ball, paid marked attentions at the bishop's party, and was believed to have popped the question at a pic-nic, after Lord Harrowgate, the largest shareholder in the North-Eastern Bank, got him promoted from a clerkship to be manager. It's true he was some years younger than Miss. Westbay, and people said there had been something between him and his pretty cousin; but a lord's niece with beauty, accomptishments, and a serviceable connection, does not come in every young man's way; so the weddingday was fixed for the first of January; and aff the milliners were busy with the bride's bonnots and dresses.

It was just a month to come, and everybody was talking of the match, when Mr. Elsworthy fell sick. At first they said it was a cold then it turned to a brain fever; at last the doctor gave no hopes, and within the same week Mr. Elsworthy died. The whole neighbourhood was east into mourning. A promising young man, in a manner the only dependence of his family, newly promoted to a station of trust and influence, and on the eve of marriage, everybody lamented his untimely death, and sympathized with his bereaved relations and his intended bride. I think my uncle lamented most of all. None of his customers, to my knowledge, ever got so much of his sorrow. When he was sent for in the way of business, it struck me that he stayed partinothing but the grief of the afflicted familyhow the mother went into fits, and the sisters tore their hair-how the cousin talked of wearing mourning all her days-and how it was feared that Miss Westbny, who insisted on seeing him, would never recover her senses. The county papers gave expression to the publie grief. There were a great many verses written about it. Nobody passed the house of mourning without a sigh, or a suitable remark. My uncle superintended the making of the coffin, as I had never seen him do to any other; and when the workmen were gone home, he spent hours at night finishing it by himself

The funeral was to set out for the family vault in the Minster church at Beverley, about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was made a strictly private affair, though hundreds of the townsmen would have testified their respect for the dead by accompanying it all the way. The members of the family in two mourning-coaches, and the undertaker's men, were alone allowed to follow poor Elsworthy to his last resting-place, and the coffin was not | hearts they shewed; but when we got out on to be brought till the latest hour. My uncle the Beverley road, the cousin gave us a sign, had got it finished to his mind, but evidently and away we went at a rattling pace: a funeral 14

did not wish me to look at his work. He had a long talk with Steele and Stoneman, two of his most confidential assistants, in the workshop after-hours, and they went away looking remarkably close. All was in train, and the funeral to take place next day, when, coming down his own stairs-they were rather steep and narrow, for we lived in one of the old houses of York-my uncle slipped, fell, and broke his leg. I thought he would have gone mad when the doctor told him he must not attempt to move, or mind any business for weeks to come, and I tried to pacify him by offering to conduct the funeral with the help of Steele and Stoneman. Nothing would please the old man; I never saw him so far out of temper before. He swore at his bad luck, threw the pillows at his housekeeper, ordered me to bring him up the key of the workshop, and kept it fast clutched in his hand. I sat up with him that night. In a couple of hours, he grew calm and sensible, but could not sleep, though the house was all quiet, and the housekeeper snoring in the corner. Then he began to groan, as if there was something worse than a broken leg on his mind, and 'Tom,' said he, 'haven't I been dways kind to you?'

'No doubt of it, uncle,' said I.

Well, Tom, I want you to do me a great service-a particular service, Tom, and I'll never forget it to you. You know Mr. Elsworthy's funeral comes off to-morrow at three, and they're very high people.

Never four, uncle; I'll take care of it as

well as if you were there yourself.

'I know you would, Tom-I know you would. I could trust you with the hearsing of in earl's coffin; and for managing martes, I don't know your equal. But there's something more to be done. Come over beside me, Tom; that old woman don't hear well at the best and she's sleeping now, and no mistake. Willyou promise me - and his voice sunk to a whisper-that, whatever you hear or see. you'll make no remark to any living, and be as cautious as you can about the body? There's no foul-play, said he, for I began to look frightened; but maybe this leg's a judgment for taking on such a business. Howsomever, I'm to have three hundred pounds for it; and you'll get the half, Tom, the full half, if you'll ! conduct it properly, and give me your solemn promise. I know you'll never break that?

"Uncle," said I, "I'll promise, and keep it too; but you must tell me what it is,

* Well, Tom '-and he drew a long breathit's a living man you're going to put in that coffin in the workshop! I have made it high and full of air-holes; he'll lie quite comfortable. Nobody knows about it but Steele and Stoneman, and yourself; they'll go with you. Mind you trust no one cise. Don't look so stupid, man; can't you understand, Mr. Elsworthy didn't die at all, and never had brain fever; but he wants to get off with marrying Miss Westbay, or something of that sort. They're taking a queer way about it, I must say; but these genteel people have ways of their own. It was the consin that prepared my mind for it in the back-parlour; that woman's up to anything. I stood out against having a hand in it, till I heard that the sexten of Beverley Church was a poor relation of theirs. The key of the coffin is to be given to him; it will be locked, and not screwed down, you see; and when all's over at the vault-it will be dark night by that time, for we don't move till three, and these. December days are short-he'll come and help Mr. Elsworthy out. and smuggle him off to Hull with his son the carrier. There's ships enough there to take him anywhere under a feigned name?

Could be get off the marriage no easier? said I, for the thought of taking a living man in a hearse, and hearing the service read over him, made my blood run cold. You see I was young then.

'There's something more than the marriage in it, though they didn't tell me. Odd things will happen in my business, and this is one of the queerest. But you'll manage it, Tom, and get my blessing, besides your half of the three hundred pounds; and don't be afraid of anycularly long. The good man could talk of thing coming wrong to him, for I never saw any man look so like a corpse.

I promi ed my uncle to do the business and keep the secret. A hundred and fifty pounds was no joke to a young man beginning the world in the undertaking-line; and the old man was so pleased with what he called my sense and understanding, that before falling asleep, close upon daybreak, he talked of taking me into partnership, and the jobs we might expect from the Harrowgate family; for the downger-countess was near four-score, and two of the young ladies were threatened with decline. Next day, early in the afternoon, Steele, Stoneham, and I were at work. The fumily seemed duly mournful; I suppose, on account of the servants. Mr. Elsworthy looked wonderfully well in his shroud; and if one had not looked closely into the coffin, they never would have seen the air-holes. Well, we set out, mourning-coaches, hearse, and all through the yellow fog of a December day, There was nothing but sad faces to be seen at all the windows as we passed; I heard them admiring Steele and Stoneman for the feeling

never got over the ground at such a rate before. Yet it was getting dark when we reached the old Minster, and the curate grumbled at having to do duty so late. He got through the service nearly as quick as we got over the miles. The coffin was lowered into the family vault; it was more than half-filled with Mr. Elsworthy's forefathers, but there was a good wide grate in the wall, and no want of air. It was all right. The clerk and the elergyman started off to their homes; the mourning-coaches went to the Crown Inn, where the ladies were to wait till the sexton came to let them know he was safe out-the cousin would not go home without that news-and I slipped him the key at the church-door, as he discoursed to us all about the mysterious dispensations of Provi-

My heart was light going home, so were Steele's and Stoneman's. None of us liked the job, but we were all to be paid for it; and I must say the old man came down handsomely with the needful, not to speak of Burton aie; and I was to be made his partner without delay. We got the money, and had the jollincation; but it wasn't right over, and I was just getting into bed, when there was a ring at our door-bell, and the housekeeper came to say that Dr. Parks wanted to see me or my uncle. What could be want, and how had be come back so soon? Parks was the Elsworthys' family doctor, and the only stranger at the funeral; he went in the second mourningcouch, and I left him talking to the sexton. My clothes were thrown on, and I was down stairs in a minute, looking as sober as I could; but the doctor's look would have sobered any man. 'Thomas,' said he, 'this has turned out a bad business; and I cannot account for it; but Mr. Elsworthy has died in carnest. When the sexton and I opened the coffin, we found him cold and stiff. I think he died from fright. for such a face of terror I never saw. It wasn't your uncle's fault; there is no doubt he had air on ugh, but it can't be helped; and the less said about it, the better for all parties. I am going to Dr. Adam's, to take him down with me to Beverley. The sexton keeps poor Elsworthy, to see if anything can be done; and Adams is the only man we can trust; but I know it's of no use.

The doctor's apprehension was well founded -Mr. Elsworthy could not be recovered; and after trying everything to no purpose, they laid him down again in the coffin with airholes. The ladies came back, and we kept the secret; but in less than six months after, a rumour went abroad of heavy forgeries on the North-Eastern Bank. On investigation. they proved to be over fifty thousand, and nobody was implicated but the deceased manager. His family knew nothing about it; being all ladies, they were entirely ignorant of banking affairs; but they left York next season, took a bandsome house at Scarborough, and were known to get money regularly from London. They never employed any doctor but Parks; and his medical management did not appear to prosper, for they were never well, and

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To all to whom these presents shall come or whom the same may in any wise concern.—GRIETING:

A PROCLAMATION.

TO prosper, for they were never well, and always nervous; not one of them could sleep alone or without light in the room; and an attendant from a private asylum had to be got for the consin. I don't think the matter ever left my nucle's mind; he never would undertake an odd job after it; and all the partnerships in England would not have me continue in the lustinesss, and run the risk of another false funeral.

THEATRE ROYAL

SATURDAY NIGHT, 7th MAY,
PARRWILL APPEARANCE OF

MISS KATE REIGNOLDS

THE ANGEL OF MIDNIGHT;
THE A

nts. Of all which our loving subjects and all others whom these presents may convern are hereby required to take notice and to govern themselves ac-

cordingly.

In testimony whereof we have caused these our letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of Canada to be hereunto affixed: Witness, Our Trusty and Well Beloved. The Right Honorrable Sir John Youxa, Barcoret, ore of our Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cress of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Cress of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor-General of Canada. At Our Government House, in Our City of Ottawa, the FOURTH day of FEBRUARY, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and in the thirty-third year of Our Reign.

By command

By command.
J. C. AIKINS,
Secretary of State.