

step, and observed that a man's head, arms, and body were in the small window at the end, as though in the act of wriggling himself through the opening.

In the man's right hand was a pistol, and his left had hold of a shelf which ran along the side of the closet. The man raised the pistol and fired.

Mrs. Mowbray in an instant seized the huge carving-knife which lay on the shelf, and advanced towards the ruffian. He was struggling to withdraw himself from the window. His hands were on the sill, and his head somewhat raised, leaving his neck exposed.

Being unable to work himself out of the aperture, he raised the pistol as though to hurl it at Mrs. Mowbray. The courageous old lady made one step forward, and dashed the keen blade across the man's throat, laying it open from ear to ear. She then calmly retired, closed the door, blew out the lamp, and taking up her candle returned to the parlor, first having satisfied herself that not a drop of blood had stained her dress or hands.

Half an hour after midnight her children returned home. They found their mother seated by the fire, serenely reading her Bible. They greeted her affectionately, and prepared to retire for the night. Mrs. Mowbray said:

"Boys, remain behind a little. I wish to speak to you. You, my daughter, can retire."

When she was alone with her children, she said, with dignity and calmness:

"My children, I have killed a man. You will find his body fast in the small window of the closet of my bed room."

Her sons stared at her in amazement. They at first imagined that she must be laboring under some mental disorder, but when she related to them, plainly and rationally, and in her own straight-forward, terse fashion, the story as just told, they saw that she was telling them a simple fact.

"Go," said she, "make what arrangements you please. I will wait here, and you can tell me what course is best to pursue in this matter."

The sons took the light and went to their mother's room. They opened the door, and there, sure enough, was the body of a man hanging half through the window. The floor was a pool of a blood. With difficulty the eldest son got near enough to the body without stepping into the gore to raise the head, which was drooping on the chest. He grasped the hair and lifted the head so that the light might fall upon the face. As he did so a cry of horror escaped them all.

"Great God! it is our brother George."

"What do you say?" asked Mrs. Mowbray, in a voice horribly calm, from the doorway, whither she had followed unperceived. "George! What do you mean?"

The oldest son dropped the head, to prevent, if possible, his mother from recognizing it, and all of them endeavored to explain their exclamation, and get their mother away from the spot. It was in vain.

"Boys," she said, in her old, well-known tone of authority, "stand aside, and let me see the face of the villain I have slain."

With that she put her sons aside as though they were mere lads, and walked through the slippery gore that lay upon the floor up to the body. She took the candle from the unresisting grasp of her first born, and, with a hand that trembled not, lifted the head of the dead man so