### The Room Without a Door,

[By W. C. Norris in the Springfield Repub-

I really think that the time has now come when I may relate, without danger or in-discretion, the one adventure which has refallen me in a life which, I am thankful as been otherwise remarkably de-

befallen me in a life which, I am thankful to say, has been otherwise remarkably devoid of startling experiences. It happened many years ago. All the persons chiefly cencerned in it are dead, and I daresay that by employing fictitious names I shall fulfill the requirements of prudence.

Workingham, where I have exercised my calling as a medical man throughout my professional career, is a manufacturing town which has, I believe, returned Liberal or Badical members of Parliament ever since 1832; so that everybody was surprised when Sir Horace Sibthorp, one of the principal territorial magnates of the county, came forward to solicit our suffrages. He came forward, it is true, as a Radical, and even as what in those days was esteemed a very extreme Radical; but that, of course, only increased the general surprise. What his motives were for thus departing from the traditions of his order I did not inquire—indeed I have never taken much personal interest in party politics—but he was triumphantly returned, and his skill in oratory—possibly also the incongruity of his position—soon earned for him a popularity far greater than had been enjoyed by any of our previous representatives.

It was on account of what I had been

Joyed by any of our previous representatives.

It was on account of what I had been told about his eloquence that I attended a great meeting which he addressed shortly after his election; and I must say that a finer apeaker I never listened to. He talked what seemed to me at that time to be rather wild and dangerous nonsense, although many of the schemes which he advocated have since become law; but the fascination of his voice and gesture, and his air of thorough, enthusiastic conviction were such that one could not help being carried away by him, and I soon found myself applauding as loudly as anybody. He was a tall, spare man with singularly bright brown eyes. His age was probably nearer 60 than 50; but he had a youthful carriage and, but for his gray hair, he might have 60 than 50; but he had a youthful carriage and, but for his gray hair, he might have passed for being on the better side of middle life. His speech, as I have said, interested me; but as he went on I began to take another and a more professional interest in the speaker. Those curiously brilliant eyes of his, the pallor of his complexion and a blutsk tinge about the lips, which grew more apparent as he approached his peroration, were symptoms of an unmistakable kind, and it was very evident to me that Sir Horace's political career would be a brief one. He sank back into his chair at last, completely exhausted, amid a tremendous outburst of cheering, and I observed that he left the platform immediately afterward, leaning upon the immediately afterward, leaning upon the arm of one of his friends, while somebody else rose to address the meeting.

Not being particularly anxious to hear this gentleman's views, I slipped away, and was leaving the hall when a messenger ran

was leaving the hall when a messenger ran after me and caught me by the arm.

"Dr. Drew, you're wanted," said he breathlesity; "Sir Horace Sibthorp has been taken ill."

been taken ill."

I went at once into the little room behind the platform, where, as I had expected, I found Sir Horace lying in a dead awoon, with two or three frightened-looking gentlemen standing hopelessly around him. It was some little time before I was able to restore him to consciousness; but when his senses returned they did so with astonishing rapidity, and our grave faces seemed to amuse him.

I accepted his invitation all the more willingly because his words seemed to show that there was some genuine alarm underlying that assumed jauntiness of manner; but unhapply the careful examination which I made after accompanying him to his hotel did not justify me in saying anything reassuring to him. To put things plainly, his condition was such that he night die at any moment and that are might die at any moment, and that, even under the most favorable circumstances, he was very unlikely to live more than another year or two. Naturally, I did not tell him that; but I warned him that he could not afford to trifle with his health,

could not afford to trifle with his health, and that it was absolutely necessary for him to avoid excitement.

"My dear sir," he returned, smilingly, "you might as well order me to avoid meat and drink. You give me to understand that unless I retire from public life I shall kill myself, and I daresay you are right; but there is another fact to be taken into consideration, namely, that for reasons with which I need not trouble you, private life would kill me. I firmly believe that my best chance is to go on with this sort of thing. It is ridiculous enough," he added, with a shrug of his shoulders, "yet, somehow or other, it exhibitations are in the sort works as the shrug of his shoulders, "yet, somehow or other, it exhibitations are in the sort works as that Six Heane."

meat and drink. You give me to understand that unless I retire from public if shall kill myself, and I dareasy you are rights but there is another fact to be taken into consideration, namely, that for you, private life would kill me. I from inspection and humiliating her ladyship—which I feel sure must be good to take in the consideration, namely, that for you, private life would kill me. I from inspection and humiliating her ladyship—which I feel sure in the same time to make the property of the same time in the same time is to go on with this sort of thing. It is raidculus enough, "he added, with a shrug of his shoulders, "yet, somehow or other, it exhilarates me."

"I don't wonder at that, Sir Horace," said I, "you can I see anything ridiculous in the same time a very goar speech in cold blood, that I utterly diagree with it."

"Deas' me "! he exclaimed, with an ammed to worth at I think over your speech in cold blood, that I utterly diagree with it."

"Deas' me "! he exclaimed, with an ammed twinkle in his eye; "so you took me seriously, did yoo? You really bolives the suddenly started, staggered forward and seriously, did yoo? You really bolives that provided the suddenly started, staggered forward and left heavily to the ground. I was not shall be suddenly started, staggered forward and ammed twinkle in his eye; "so you took me seriously, did yoo? You really bolives the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he same time a very enjoyable illusion. In reality, as I need searcely tell am all left he small but the stage of the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he same time a very enjoyable illusion. In reality, as I need searcely tell am all left he small but the stage of the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he scale and the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he scale and the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he scale and the suddenly started, staggered forward and left he scale and left

certain to come; all the oratory in the world went check or intry its advance, will have been forgotten long before the last set has begun.

The condot relate more of the protracted conversation which nates of the conversation which interested me very much at he time, though less prings on account at the time, though less prings on the little content which interested me very much at the time, though less prings on the little content which is threw upon the character of my interior. He can be a seen and the content of the man being his content which is threw upon the character of my interior. He can be a seen and the content of the most perfect frankness throughout, and when a length I rose to take my leave, the most perfect frankness throughout, and when a length I rose to take my leave, and of the lower animals when brought into contact with the dead of their species; and when a length I rose to take my leave, and the large grant many corpose to be affected by that repugnance and of the lower animals when brought into contact with the dead of their species; and the large thin the content of the most perfect frankness throughout, and when a letter of the six in the content of the co

with Sir Horace.

I saw no more of him for some months after this. Toward the end of the summer, when Parliament had risen, he came down to address his constituents once more, and I had promised myself the pleasure of listening to him again, but was prevented from doing so by professional engagements. I was walking homeward, late on the evening which I had seen advertised as appointed for his meeting, when a poke in the back from a walking stick made me turn round, and there was Sir Horace himself.

"You're the very man I want, doctor!" he called out cheerily. "Are you too busy to drive home with me and make an ex-amination of this troublesome heart of matter, but I've had some uncomfortable symptoms to-day."

I said I was quite at his orders, and

presently I was seated beside him in his brougham, which took us out of the town at a high rate of speed. On the way he told me that he had been consulting some of my London conferes, who had done their best to frightem him.

"As if getting into a funk was likely to prolong one's life! However, I should just like to hear what you think of me. There are one or two matters which I ought perhaps to see to in case of accidents."

The coachman did not turn in at the gates of Sandridge Park, as I had expected

perhaps to see to in case of accidents."

The coachman did not turn in at the gates of Sandridge Park, as I had expected him to do, but, wheeling abruptly to the right, conducted us all along a lane running parallel with the palings and pulled up beside a small iron gate.

'I daresay you didn't know that I have a tiny abode here which belongs to me exclusively," said Sir Horace, as he jumped out, 'Well, I can take you into it; but I'll lay you 10 to I in anything you like that nobody else can."

He dismissed the carriage and led the way into what, so far as I could see in the

seemed to amuse him.

"Don't look so solemn, all of you," said he, laughing; "didn't you ever see a man faint before? It's a little way I have; it doesn't mean anything serious, I assure you."

I could have assured him that in all probability it meant something very serious indeed, and I almost felt that I ought to enlighten him, although, of course, I was not his medical attendant, and my opinion had not been asked. No donbt my face reflected the thoughts which were passing through my mind, for presently Sir Horace said, in the same jesting tone:

"I know you're dying to listen to my heart, Dr. Drew. Well, I'm not going home to-night; so if you'll come round and smoke a clgar with me at 'he Red Lion, where I intend to sleep, you shall be gratified. Moreover, you shall have the additional pleasure of prescribing for me.

I accepted his invitation all the more willingly because his words seemed to show that there was some genuine alarm under-

vious that we had not entered that way.

"Well," I answered, "I suppose we got in by opening one of those panels."

"Quite so, my dear sir; but which of them? And if you were to hit upon the right one, do you think you would hit upon the dodge of making it yield? Simple though the trick is, I doubt whether you would discover it, because nobody has done so yet. And I have every reason to believe," added Sir Horace, with a twinkle in his eye, "that some people have tried their best."

I presumed that he alluded to his wife, I

their best."

I presumed that he alluded to his wife, and indeed he presently avowed, with his accustomed candor, that such was the case. "Lady Sibthorp," said he, "is a woman superior to nearly all the defects which disgrace erring mortals like myesif; still to prove to her and others that she is not absoluted. prove to her and others that she is not absolutely angelic, heaven has afflicted her wich one small failing in the shape of an insatiable curiosity. So, you see, this impenetrable den of mine serves the double purpose of protecting some of my papers from inspection and humiliating her ladyship—which I feel sure must be good for her soul. I have a little bedroom beyond that curtain; I sometimes sleep here. However, I don't often do that, because it is inconvenient having ne place to put my man.

of serene interrogation.

I explained my presence and broke the news of her bereavement to her as gently as I could. If I had had more time to collect myself I might have been rather less abrupt; but I am bound to say that her nerve showed no sign of being shaken, though she frowned and looked distressed.

"This is most unfortunate," was her rather odd comment upon my narrative. And then looking me straight in the face, she added calmly, but a trifle sternly, "Sir Horace must not die just yet."

"But, my dear madam, he is dead," I remonstrated.

"It is possible," she continued, without deigning to notice my interruption, "that he may die to-morrow, for his brother, Admiral Sibthorp, is said to be sinking fast, still people often linger on longer than is expected. It is tiresome to have to enter into explanations; but I suppose the position of affairs must be made intelligible to you. Admiral Sibthorp, as perhaps you may be aware, is heir to the baronetcy and the entailed estates. As he has half-a-dozen daughters and no son, the mext in succession is Dick Sibthorp, the only child of Sir

may be aware, is heir to the baronetcy and the entailed estates. As he has half-a-dozen daughters and no son, the next in succession is Dick Bibthorp, the only child of Sir Horace's younger brother, who died many years ago. Dick is married to my sister, and I am very fond of them both; that, I suppose, is one reason why Sir Herace has chosen to bequeath his personal property, which is very large, to the admiral, instead of to them. Dick is only to inherit in the event of his surviving his uncle. I may tell you," she added with a scornful smile, "that I am acquainted with the contents of my late husband's will, and that I long ago found my way into this Bluebeard's closet of his, of which he was so childishly proud. Since he chose to defy me, I thought and still think, that, having outmaneuvered him, I was fully entitled to take every advantage of my success. Well, now you understand how things are. The admiral must, of course, have made a will leaving all that he has to dispose to his family. If, therefore, he survives Sir Horace, his haughters will divide a great sum of money between them, while poor Dick will come into a property which he will not be well

daughters will divide a great sum of money between them, while poor Dick will come into a property which he will not be well enough off to keep up."

"I quite understand all that, Lady Sib-

thorp," I replied. "What I do not under-stand is why you should imagine that I am likely to assist you in perpetrating a

ing out to her that, even were I as great a secondrel as she obligingly assumed me to be, there would be insuperable objections in the way of my doing what she wished. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case it might be requisite to hold an inquest upon her husband's body; in any event, the necessary arrangements for the interment must not be delayed; finally, Sir Horace's non-appearance in London and my own absence from home during a whole night would of course give rise to inquiry.

"No inquiry will be made about Sir Horace," she answered; "he has always been eccentric and uncertain in his movements, and Thompson, his valet, is quite accustomed to losing sight of him. As for you, you have the advantage of being a

you, you have the advantage of being a bachelor as well as a medicai man; younced only tell your housekeeper that you were called away to attend an anxious case. The caused away to attend an anxious case. The inquest difficulty is one of your own creating; it rests with you to sign the death certificate, and give the directions to the undertaker."

"Well, Lady Sibthorp," said I, "I won't

my tening the truth about our recent interview, Lady Sibtherp?" I inquired, grimly.

"You can tell it if you like," she answered, "but I really think you had better hold your tongue. In self-defense I must give you the lie, and I think I am more likely to be believed than you are. Besides, what will you gain by telling your preposterous story? You won't injure me, for I shall leave Sondridge very shortly, and you won't do yourself much good by incurring the wrath and ill-will of Dick Sibthorp, who will now be your great man in these parts. Dick firmly believes me to be the best and kindest of women-as indeed I am for those I care for. He will certainly conclude that you were either intoxicated or the victim of some hallucination, and you may depend upon it that nine people out of ten will agree with him."

Well, there was something in that; and I am a quiet, peaceable man, constitutionally

Well, there was something in that; and I am a quiet, peaceable man, constitutionally adverse to being mixed up in scandals. Duty no longer compelled me to expose Lady Sibthorp, and expediency seemed to counsel silence. So, in giving my account of the circumstances attendant upon Sir Horace's death, I merely stated that, after having vainly sought the secret entrance through a night and half-a-day, I had at last found that some agency for which I was unable to account had caused it to fall ajar.

ajar.

I never saw Lady Sibthorp again. She died a few years later in Italy, and I do not know whether there was or was not any truth in the report that she had lent large sums to Sir Richard which he refunded on

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stand is why you should imagine that I am flikely to assist you in perpetrating a fraud.".

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the song of the nightingale.

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