

## THOUGHTFUL, MOTHER.

My darling and joy,  
My bright little boy,  
This morning begun  
His frolic and fun,  
By feigning to drink  
From a bottle of ink,  
And bespattered his clothes  
From his head to his toes.  
Shall I whip him? No, halt!  
It was none of his fault.  
I must keep ink and such  
Quite out of his reach.  
I know he's so careful,  
I'll in future be careful,  
My love, you're tired out  
And beginning to pout,  
And look void of joy  
At your Noah's Ark toy.  
Undress and to bed,  
Is all that is said.  
Lamp lit, and up-stairs  
The couple repairs.  
Now, darling, don't frown,  
And before you lie down,  
Kneel with mamma to pray,  
She will teach you to say—  
This night when I  
Lie down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord  
My soul to keep.  
Kiss me! That's right.  
Bless me! Good night!  
Good night!

## THOUGHTLESS MOTHER.

You're the plague of my life!  
Oh, you trouble some imp!  
With mischief so rife,  
See you spilling the ink  
All over your clothes,  
From your head to your toes,  
Smothered from head to foot,  
Black as a negro or soot!  
Oh, what shall I do?  
I will give it to you.  
I slap you in vain.  
Will you do it again?  
And where is your hat?  
Oh, you trouble some brat!  
Just look at his head!  
I wish you were dead!  
Come, now, Mary Brags,  
Just pull off his rag,  
And get ready the tub;  
Give the wretch a good scrub;  
Put him quick into bed,  
Without wakening Ned.  
No good-night or prayer is said,  
The young imp shouts to waken Ned.

Chatham, Ont. A. MACFIE.

## THE OPEN VERDICT.

It was a very pleasant feeling that of liberty from all business care of whatsoever kind, if for only a few weeks, when one's avocations for the remainder of the year confine one to a busy brain-devouring city like this mighty London of ours, and therefore it was with no slight degree of anticipated enjoyment that some year or two ago I accepted an oft-repeated invitation to visit an old school-chum, Dr. Henry Gladden, at the village of Claystone, in one of our northern counties.

I arrived, however, at an unfortunate period, and found that what I had pictured to myself as being a happy, jolly country-house, was at that time a house of mourning; Gladden's uncle and predecessor, old Mr. Williams, had died only a few hours before my arrival. I would willingly have gone on my way; but this my friend with his wife would not hear of, and everything was done to render my visit as cheerful as circumstances would permit. I attended the funeral; and as we turned to leave the churchyard, was struck by an expression of Gladden's, which appeared to be uttered without any knowledge of it on his part. It was: "The grave has closed over the last." I felt greatly tempted to ask for an explanation, but for obvious reasons checked my curiosity.

A few mornings afterwards, while accompanying my friend on his round of visits, we came before an old, large red-brick house that stood close beside the road, being separated from it merely by a hedge and small lawn.

"Why, what's this?" exclaimed Gladden, as we saw a number of workmen engaged in erecting scaffolding, digging up the lawn and otherwise demolishing the place. "What are all these men about?—Hi! (calling one of the people) What is it you are doing here?"

"Pulling down 't'house for railway," was the laconic response.

"Then the final link is being broken," mused my companion as we drove on.

My curiosity was again aroused, and this time I resolved to satisfy it, so I came to the point at once by thus addressing my friend, "Hal, you are not generally given to ambiguous or unsatisfactory sentences, and therefore—if I am not presuming too much—would you mind telling me to what you alluded in your last remark, and the equally strange one uttered at your uncle's funeral?"

"Well, Dick," he replied, "it is a strange story, and one perhaps, that does not reflect much credit upon my poor uncle; but as the actors in this little drama have passed away, and even the very scene of action will, in a few days, be plowed up, I may and will set your mind at rest on the subject. You remember that after I had walked the hospitals in town, I came down here partly to study under my late uncle. But I found a greater attraction than any I had anticipated, in the person of my cousin Lucy, with whom I soon fell over head and ears in love. Her father was not averse to it, and things were shortly in a good train for our marriage. I was to be taken into partnership by my uncle when that event took place; and the day before the deeds were signed, the old gentleman called me into his room, and narrated

the following story, which I will tell you in his own words.

"Harry," said my uncle, "as you are to be my son-in-law and partner, I think it but right you should become acquainted with an adventure which befell me in my younger days, and for my share in which—justifiable as it then appeared to me—I have never ceased to reproach myself. At the time I am speaking of, I was studying medicine at Manchester, but while on a visit to a distant relative, a Dr. Seyton, who occupied this very house—"you see, Dick, this is quite a family practice," parenthetically Gladden—"I was one night awakened by a shake of the shoulder, and looking up, saw, by the light of the moon, which streamed in at my window, Dr. Seyton standing by my bedside. 'Come, get up,' said he. 'I have been sent for; and as Poor (his assistant) was out last night, I'll get you to accompany me now.' While he descended to the surgery and stables, I speedily donned my habiliments; and by the time I reached the front gate, the doctor was seated in his gig waiting for me. It was a most magnificent moonlight night.

"Along the clear white road, as fast as the horse could draw us, on we went; past cottage, farm and mansion, past pond and park and stream; beneath long avenues of trees that bordered the roadside and drooped over us, now veiling all in shadow, now showing some stray moonbeam that danced upon the quivering boughs to the soft cadence of the night-breeze. Sharp and crisp rose the echo of our horse's tread; and as we came within sight of our destination, we heard the gallop of another horse; and, as we sped past a turning, saw a horseman riding up—as we imagined, the messenger who had been dispatched for the doctor, and who has said he must return by way of Merlton. We stopped before Mazeborough House, the residence of the Hon. Frederic Wellester, presumptive heir to the title and estates of the Earl of Caultdale. There was great commotion in the house; for its owner, who had been ailing for some time past, had that night been taken seriously ill; and while the doctor ascended to the sick chamber and our horse and trap were put up, I lit a cigar and stood under the veranda, looking out upon the night and musing. Presently, one of the domestics emerged from the house and passed out into the road, walking briskly on; and just as my cigar was out, I heard Dr. Seyton's voice inquiring for me.

"Take this," said he, handing me a paper, "and ride home as fast as you can." Get Poor to make it up; and come back with all speed; it is life or death. Here is one of Mr. Wellester's horses for you." I then perceived a groom standing with one ready saddled at the gate, on which I mounted and galloped off.

"For upwards of a mile the road lay open and clear enough; but beyond that it was darkly shaded by copses and plantations, through which the moon's rays found little space to shine. I had barely penetrated a dozen yards into this dark and lonely spot before I received a summons to 'stand and deliver.' My horse, being very fresh, quite entered into his rider's feelings, and had not the least intention of checking his speed, but continued his journey; while behind came he who bade me 'stand,' threatening to put a bullet in me if I did not draw rein. This only made me urge my animal to greater speed; but my pursuer did his best to keep his word, for he fired, and the bullet just grazed my left arm; and at the same instant a hand was laid upon my horse's bridle so suddenly as to throw him on his haunches and cause me a speedy and ignominious dismount. But be that as it may, it served me a good turn, as I was enabled, not being at all hurt, to slip away in the darkness and conceal myself in the plantation.

"Where is he?" inquired the horseman, riding up.

"Stunned, I s'pose, close by," was the reply. "The fiend take him for a plaguy horse-dealer," rejoined the first speaker, as I fancy they searched for me. At last, the same voice said: "Here, Stevens; I can't see him. Take this note to Walters and Garforth, and bring me back an answer sharp. Take my horse; that other brute might get you recognized."

"Beside," said the other, "the animal has trotted off;" which was true and much to my regret.

"I will wait for you at the corner of Deadman's-lane," said the first speaker, as his companion mounted and rode on; and he continued his search for me, little thinking I was creeping away from him through the plantation, out of which at length I emerged, and, crossing some fields, regained the road, and had the unspeakable gratification of seeing the horse I had ridden fastened to a gate. This, I suppose, had been done by Stevens when he overtook him. I was soon once more in the saddle, and away we went as fast as horse could go. About three miles from here the road to Garforth branches off to the right; and as I came down the hill towards the turning, I perceived Stevens riding along it. Quick as thought, I threw myself flat on the horse's back, thinking it just possible he might hear the galloping; turn round and try his hand as a marksman; fortunately he did not; and I arrived at my destination without further adventure. To call up the assistant, have the description made up, and attend to the horse, were things speedily done; and, ere long, I was again in the saddle.

"Now I looked before, beside and behind me; but all was peaceful. I neared the plantation where I had been stopped; but no one barred my progress; so on I rode, not quite reassured though, for I had not forgotten my pursuer was

to wait at the corner of Deadman's-lane and I did not know where that was. And now the open road, shining in the clear moonlight, lay before me. I could distinguish Mazeborough House; and nearer, the lane up which, when coming with Dr. Seyton, we had seen a horseman riding. Then it struck me that as that horseman was not the messenger who had been dispatched for the doctor, that functionary having arrived before us, it might have been the one who had stopped me, and that that was Deadman's-lane. There was no help for it; I must pass the spot; so, feeling for the pistol I had taken the precaution to bring with me this time, I pressed the horse's sides and urged him on. I was not four or five yards from the lane when a man started into the roadway and stood directly in front of me; his figure was slight and his face concealed by a mask; but when he spoke, I recognized the voice that bade me 'stand and deliver.'

"Not quite so fast, young sir," said he, as he perceived my intention to draw on one side. "We don't part company so easily this time. I must have the medicine."

"What medicine?" I asked.

"Oh! none of that stuff for me. I want that physic you have been sent for; and that bottle I must and will have. So take your choice; that bottle and life; or," producing a pistol, "this barrel and death!"

"It was a serious moment; but my plan was at once decided on; so putting my hand in my breast as if for the bottle, I reined close up beside him and as he eagerly stretched forth his hand for the expected prize, I drew my pistol and fired. I saw him stagger, and in a few moments after, as it seemed, I was at the gate of Mazeborough House.

"Once inside and safe I had no sooner delivered the medicine to the servant, to be taken upstairs to Dr. Seyton, than the state of tension to which my nerves (not of the strongest) had been strung, gave way, and but for some stimulation from the steward I should have fainted away. However, I soon recovered sufficiently to narrate my adventure to him; but he only laughed at my attributing a literal meaning to the robber's demand for the bottle, and suggested it might be slang for plunder; so I held my peace on that head, feeling the force of the lines:

A man convinced against his will  
Is of the same opinion still.

The conversation with the steward soon changed to the family, and I learned from him that the Hon. Frederic Wellester had a half brother Ernest, a very wild, dissipated person, who had been the favorite of the Earl until his character was found out. This Ernest used to live at Caultdale Place, one of the Earl's seats, some fifteen or sixteen miles off; but owing to heavy gambling debts, he was compelled to break up his establishment, and only retained one servant, whom, after a time, he also discharged. This servant, Mr. Frederic had engaged, "and," continued the steward, "a very decent servant Stevens was."

"Stevens!" I ejaculated very loudly I dare say, for a man looked into the apartment and inquired: "Did you call, sir?" I was struck dumb; a thousand ideas rushed through my brain. "No; it was nothing," replied the steward; and the man disappeared, but not before I had recognised in him one of the men concerned in my late adventure. Just at this moment there was a great disturbance in the house; and, going out to enquire the cause, I found Dr. Seyton standing on the staircase interrogating Stevens, the other domestics being grouped around.

"How is this?" exclaimed the Doctor. "How came you to bring me this? It contains a slow poison."

"The gentleman brought it, sir, and of course I gave it to you."

"But, surely, Poor could never have made this up. Look at it, Frank; what do you say?" and Dr. Seyton held out the bottle; but before I could reach it Stevens had taken it, and at the same moment his foot slipped, and the vial was dashed to pieces on the ground. The doctor looked annoyed at what appeared to him to be an accident; but to me there was design in it; so as he reascended the stairs, I called to Stevens, who followed me and the steward into the latter's apartment; when, shutting the door and placing my back against it, I thus addressed him: "How did you become possessed of that bottle you let fall just this minute?" (for I could see it was not the one I brought), "and for what motive did you stop my horse a few hours since, and who was your companion?" These queries poured out rapidly, not giving time for any distinct reply; but when I paused for a moment he answered with a look of the utmost astonishment, "Sir, I really do not understand you. The bottle you brought I gave the doctor; and as to stopping your horse and about a companion, I am quite at a loss to know what you allude to."

"But I need not enumerate the answers by which he fenced off my inquiries; suffice it to say that he denied all knowledge whatever of my adventure, and stoutly affirmed he had not left the house since the previous day. What annoyed me still more was the conduct of the steward, who appeared to regard my statements as proceeding either from a weak intellect or a too free use of the means supplied for my recovery."

"There was nothing to be gleaned from Stevens, so of course he went his way, and I remained with the steward. Soon after daylight Dr. Seyton rejoined us; the invalid was sleeping, and

all immediate danger was over, so orders were given for our horses to be put to. In a few seconds news was brought in of some of the farm laborers having discovered the lifeless body of a man lying in the road; the remains had been removed to one of the outhouses, whither we proceeded. It was a dreadful spectacle; the features were quite undistinguishable, and presented the appearance of having some firearm discharged close to them. The steward and Dr. Seyton minutely examined the body, and after holding a whispered conversation together, the doctor advised me not to mention any of the circumstances connected with my late adventure, but to wait until the inquest; then, as medical aid was perfectly useless, we took our departure and drove home.

"Two days afterwards a letter was received desiring our presence at Mazeborough House; and, immediately on our arrival, I was ushered into Mr. Wellester's private room. Our interview was a lengthened one; we then descended to where the inquest was being held. The best report of the proceedings was given in a local paper published a day or two afterwards, which, if I remember rightly, ran thus: "As some farm laborers in the employ of the Hon. Frederic Wellester of Mazeborough were proceeding to their work early on Tuesday morning, they discovered the dead body of a man on the highway. The remains were at once removed to one of the farm-buildings, where they remained till Thursday last, when an inquest was held upon them. No satisfactory evidence was produced tending to throw any light on either who the unfortunate person was, or by what means he met his death, although it is conjectured, owing to the frightful spectacle the face and head presented, that some pistol or gun must have been discharged close to him; but whether by himself or by some one unknown, no clue could be obtained. A pistol, ready loaded and capped, was found in one of the deceased's pockets, but no papers or other means of identification. A strange fact in connection with this case is the disappearance on the same morning the body was found of one of the domestics, named Stevens, formerly in the service of the Hon. Ernest Wellester (half-brother to the proprietor of Mazeborough House), a gentleman who for some years has resided on the continent. This occurrence has only tended to throw greater obscurity upon this mysterious affair. In consequence of the utter want of all evidence, the jury returned an open verdict—'Found Dead.'"

"Such," continued Gladden, "was my uncle's story. You have followed him to the grave, and seen the preparations for razing to the ground Mazeborough House; the Caultdale title has become extinct; the Hon. Frederic Wellester, who succeeded to it, died a few months' afterwards without issue; and, although diligent search was made for the next of kin (his half-brother Ernest), no tidings could possibly be obtained of him."

"But," said I, "surely your uncle——"

"Lived at a time when wealth and interest could influence everything and almost everybody."

"I see," I rejoined; "it is what is called 'hushed up.' But I suppose the body that was found was that of half-brother Ernest?"

"Precisely."

## MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

MR. IRVING has been offered 10,000*l.* to play in New York for 100 nights, but has thought fit to decline the offer, at least for the present.

MISS ADELAIDE NELSON, in January, will begin an engagement in the United States of 100 nights. At the conclusion of her dramatic tour there she will go to Australia, where she will take her farewell of the stage.

MR. DION BOUCAULT'S new drama, which is to be produced at Wallack's Theatre, New York, in December, will be called "Qui Vive." The heroine will be an Irish girl, Norah Kavanagh, and the scenes will be laid in England and India.

JOHN GILBERT, New York's favourite comedian, will complete the fiftieth year of his public service shortly. Many prominent citizens of New York and Boston have expressed a desire to celebrate this event by some sort of public testimonial to this veteran of the stage.

APTOMAS' musical lecture, the oral portion of which, consisting of critical and biographical remarks upon ancient minstrelsy, the origin of semitones, the invention of the piano, classical, operatic and other compositions, are varied by performances upon the harp, made a very favourable impression upon a New York audience.

MME. CHRISTINE NILSSON recently began her English concert tour with Mr. Pyatt, aided by Mr. Midge, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Sims Reeves. The English journals report that the great Swedish singer has been brilliantly successful, and at Liverpool, where she had not been heard for some years, she received an enthusiastic welcome.

THREE theatrical managers in New York have reason to be happy in financial success—Mr. Star'n, of Niblo's, whose Deluge is an overwhelming attraction; Mr. Henderson, of the Standard, whose engagement of Emmet in Fritz has proved a mine of wealth; and Mr. Hill, of the Lyceum, whose faith in the merit of Denman Thompson's Joshua Whitcomb is now meeting with its just reward.

## NOTICE TO LADIES.

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the ladies of the city and country that they will find at his Retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample, on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only. J. H. LEBLANC. Works: 547 Craig St.