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W. B. MORRIS.
4, 1871.

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The St. Andrews Standard.

PUBLISHED BY A. W. SMITH.]

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No 31

SAINT ANDREWS NEW BRUNSWICK, JULY 31, 1872

Vol 39

BANK OF
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Interesting Tale.

A NIGHT EDITOR'S STORY.

My story is a ghost story, and one of the genuine article, I conclude, from putting together my preconceived ideas of ghosts, and the particular experience I have to relate on this occasion. It was an experience so strange, so terrible, and so fraught with poignant grief, that for a long time after the occurrence I shrank from all mention of it; but time, the great alleviator, enables me now to sit down and give a calm account of the events to which I refer.

I was night editor on the Hawbuck "Morning Sentinel." My associate in the local department was Ward Stufin, a young fellow of keen perceptions, really wit, and active ability. He had clear eyes, a concentrative brow, a rather pale complexion, a long, flaring, jet-black moustache, and an open, wide-awake look that was a perfect index to his character. Nothing escaped his observation. He was indefatigably industrious, and picked out all the news, delving out items from the most apparently barren ground. He was the best local we ever had, and our department, soon after his advent, outstripped all contemporaries in the variety and scope of our city news.

Ward had one fault, however. The social bow possessed powerful attractions for him, and it was too often evident that he had imbibed more freely than a sound judgment would indicate. To be sure, he was seldom unfitted for business—not more than once in three or four months—but he was pursuing a course which, if persisted in, must, I endeavored to persuade him, result in his downfall. I talked to him often about it, but although he listened pleasantly, my words seemed to be uselessly expended. He was the same free and easy, light-hearted and convivial fellow, and hard-working and valuable assistant.

He would frequently choose a topic of popular interest, and write thereon a series of descriptive articles in a free, gossiping vein, just calculated to catch the public attention. This was in addition to his regular work as city editor. The amount of labor he accomplished, and the ease with which he performed it, frequently filled me with astonishment.

Well do I remember when he chose for his theme "Dregs and Scum." He penetrated the vilest haunts of the lowest classes, and described their habits in a wonderfully vivid manner. Their vices, their misfortunes, the bright spots in their lives, together with scraps of adventure and incident—exciting, amusing, and pathetic—were all treated with rare spirit and grace by his ready pen.

Of course in this pursuit he visited the resorts of thieves, villains, and desperadoes, and plunged into scenes against his safe exit from which there were many chances.

"We will see what can be fished up from the slime," he would say, with a mocking laugh, and start off on one of his midnight excursions. Or again he would announce that he had an appointment to visit some distinguished friends, the true purport of which remark we all well understood.

Ward and I, when at work, occupied a room by ourselves, while the managing editor, and Bailey, his assistant, had another apartment, just across the hall.

One night, about half-past eleven, Ward said to me:

Well, Peck, I guess I'll go out and see what I can see. I've sent in a couple of columns, and Dobbin will be on the lookout to report if anything turns up. I'll be back by half-past one or two.

Dobbin was a middle-aged, seedy individual, of ability, but no particular occupation, who loafed around the office most of the time, in readiness to assist, for a small remuneration, in any department that happened to be crowded. He frequently lent his aid to Ward in reporting police cases, accidents, rows, and the like.

Hold on, Ward, I said, looking him in the face, hadn't you better wait until to-morrow night?

Why? Oh! I know, you think I'm not exactly well balanced. But I'm all right. I'm in just the mood for it to-night, too.

Yes, you always are, for that matter. Where do you propose to go to-night?

Down to Muggins' Forks.

The very worst place in the city! The concentration of vice and desperate lawlessness. You're not in earnest, Ward? You are not going there to-night, are you?

That's just where I'm going. You know their great mogul, Barney Buck, is awaiting his trial for that highway robbery scrape, and I want to hear their comments. Jove! won't it be a rich treat?

I heard they were going to have a talk about it.

Yes, Muggins' Forks is to hold an indignation meeting. Ha! ha!

Well, Ward, I wouldn't go, that's all.

Well, Peck, I don't want you to go, but I'm going.

You may take this, if you want it; and I unlocked a drawer, and drew out a six-shooter.

No! he exclaimed, laughing in scorn. You had better take it.

But he persisted in declining.

Very well; have your own way. But, be cool, and keep a sharp look-out. And, promise me one thing, Ward: that you will not drink anything more to-night—at least till you get back.

He had been slowly moving toward the door, and now rushed out suddenly, exclaiming, with a laugh:

All right; I guess not.

After he was gone, I moved uneasily in my chair for some moments, and at last, with an effort, bent myself to the work before me. Presently Bailey came in on an errand.

Where's Stufin? he said.

Oh! he exclaimed with a scowl. Begone! long! Till half-past one, I said.

Well, I hope he'll get back. And with the last word the door swung shut, as Bailey retired.

I echoed an amen to his wish. We all liked Ward, and felt an interest in him. He was so young, so bright, and capable of so much.

My head was not clear that night. I could not think straight, nor bring my energy to bear on the task before me. So I took my meerschaum down from the shelf, scraped it out carefully, went to a private drawer, and filled the pipe with genuine Turkish tobacco that I kept on hand for rare occasions like the present one. For it was not often that my brain baffled me, and when it did, a pipeful of this tobacco would invariably set things going swimmingly. I suspect it contained a liberal admixture of those fascinating, trenchant drugs, for which the East is famous, for its effect was always, indescribably exhilarating. It gave me new energy, new life, and a quick, far-sighted penetration that could grapple with any problem within the scope of my learning or information.

Perhaps I took a more liberal allowance than usual that time. I do not know that I did; but I never felt so keen or so fascinated by any work as on that particular night. I worked on steadily and unflinchingly, conscious of no effort, and completely absorbed in the task before me.

I do not know how long I had thus sat when a very strange incident occurred. It was the beginning of the strangest experience of my life—an experience whose parallel I hope never to pass through again.

My tasks were completed, with the exception of one or two trifles, and I leaned back in my chair and yawned. Happening to look around—I know not what impelled me to look around at that particular moment—I beheld the door open noiselessly, and Ward Stufin enter. It was about two o'clock, or after.

What is the matter, Ward? I cried, for there was a bright red wound on his forehead, and every vestige of color seemed to have faded from his face.

He paid no attention to my inquiry, but proceeded to his desk and sat down. He walked with his usual quick step, and immediately on seating himself took pencil and paper and began to write:

"Ward! I say."

Still he did not reply. His pencil travelled over the paper rapidly.

"Ward!" I spoke loudly and sharply.

But he paid no attention to my voice. I concluded he was so absorbed as not to hear me, though that would not be like him. I felt curious to know how he had received the wound on his forehead, which, however, I concluded from his cool behavior could be nothing serious.

I took a newspaper, rolled it up into a bunch, and threw it at his head, thinking to startle him.

He seemed to go through him, and he kept on writing apparently undisturbed.

I gazed at him, spell-bound.

Finally he threw down his pencil and arose.

"See here, old boy!" I exclaimed, springing up and starting toward him.

But, without even so much as looking at me, he walked quickly to the door, opened it, seemed to glide out, and closed it noiselessly after him.

I followed him hastily. Going into the outer hall I expected to overtake him, but he was not in sight. I ran across an office boy.

Did you see Mr. Stufin, just now? I asked.

No, sir.

You did not?

No, sir. There hasn't been nobody here.

How long have you been here?

A few minutes. I was waiting for Sim.

Ward certainly just came out here from my room.

Guess not—leastwise I didn't see him.

I was bewildered. I returned to my room, was just about to sit down to my table, when I bethought myself to examine what Ward had written.

I went to his desk, and, to my intense astonishment and horror, read the following:

MURDER.—Mr. Ward Stufin, local editor of this paper, came to his death at the hand of assassins shortly before 2 o'clock this morning. He had been attending—as a spectator—an indignation meeting at Muggins' Forks, and while leaving, was set upon by three ruffians, and severely beaten. One of the trio accomplished their murderous design by striking a fearful blow on his forehead with a small bar of iron. They left his body in a cellar way in Pinche's alley.

At first I was so transfixed as to be able only to hold the paper in my hand and stare at it. I read it twice over, scanning each word and letter in a horrible fascination. It was Ward's handwriting—there was no mistake about that; and Ward had written it, for I had seen him.

Strange to say, no suspicion of a practical joke entered my head for an instant. A calm reflection would doubtless have suggested that explanation of the affair. But I did not reflect calmly. I pounded upon a conclusion without delay, and that was that Ward had been murdered, and that I had seen his ghost! Strange proceeding, would it not be, for a man to appear after being killed, and write his own obituary? However, the strangeness of the preposterousness of the idea did not enter my mind then. I simply accepted it at once, with all its horror and wildness.

As I said, I held the paper in my hand, and read it carefully. I was in a sort of stupor for a few seconds, and then came suddenly the desire to act. The place mentioned as the receptacle of Ward's body must be searched immediately.

I laid the paper down and went to the door. As I opened it, emitting quite a commotion among the papers, I sprang back to the table. Ward's manuscript had blown off with the rest, and I stooped down to look for it. Just then I heard Bailey's step in the outer hall, and I called out:

Bailey! Bailey! Come in here, for God's sake!

What's up, Peck?

He entered hastily, and spoke with surprise and anxiety. I can't distinctly recollect much less account for my manner on that night.

It's just as I feared, I said, still searching for the missing paper.

What is it?

Ward.

What of him?

He is killed.

Ward killed? How? When? Who brought the news?

I suddenly paused in my search, and started at him blankly, as he asked the last question.

Why don't you answer me? His voice was full of business and distress.

Who told you? Where is he?

In a cellar way on Pinche's alley.

Who brought the news? Will you answer that?

He brought it himself—or rather his ghost did, I answered doggedly.

See here, Peck, said Bailey sharply, don't have any fooling on such a subject. Are you joking, or are you not?

Joking! No, no! I wish I was! But, come on! I seized him by the shoulder and endeavored to drag him toward the door. We must find his body.

Bailey thought I was out of my head, and I do not blame him. He disengaged himself from my grasp, and wheeled about, facing me.

Now tell me what you mean? He said, sternly, with a voice and manner that brought me back to coherency.

In as calm a manner as possible, I related to him the events of the few minutes just passed.

When I had concluded, he eyed me narrowly, and his face bore an incredulous look.

You don't believe me, I said. But be kind enough to help me for a moment, and we will soon find the paper. The wind blew it on the floor.

We searched for some time, but in vain. I felt rather chagrined, and was doubly anxious to find it. But it was not to be found. We searched every stray scrap.

It must have fallen into the fireplace, I said. See—there are its charred remains, now.

Yes, I see, said Bailey, looking at me, pityingly. But never mind to-night, Peck. You had better go home and get rested.

This infuriated me.

You are trifling! I ejaculated. You don't believe me. But I am neither drunk nor crazy. I have spoken the truth, and you or some one else must go with me immediately to Muggins' Forks.

Bailey poohed, and endavored to persuade me out of this idea, whereas I left him without ceremony.

I made my way into the street and walked swiftly to police headquarters.

I was well acquainted there, and without being obliged to enter into minute explanations, was furnished with an escort of two officers.

Been a fuss at the Forks, did you say? remarked one of them, after we had got well on our way.

Yes—in fact there has been a murder—

Whew! that's coming in pretty strong.

No. I might not have been believed if I had. It is rather a singular affair, take it all through. But if we search the cellar ways on Pinche's alley, it's my opinion that we'll find the dead body of Ward Stufin.

Both men uttered startled exclamations at this, and demanded to know my reasons for thus speaking.

I then detailed to them the particulars that they have already been related, at which they uttered sundry expressions of surprise and incredulity.

But we hurried on faster than ever, and in due course of time reached that quarter of the city known as Muggins' Forks. It was in a state of comparative quietude, being dark and silent, lights glimmering only here and there out of low groceries.

Soon we turned on Pinche's alley, a narrow, dirty, dark lane, from various quarters of which arose stenches almost unbearable. We walked slowly and cautiously along, guided by the light of one of the policemen's lanterns, which cast about a ghastly glimmer, seeming to make visible the foulness of the air and the corruption which left not untainted one inch of space. With hesitating steps and dread anticipation we pursued our horrible search. Down into damp places and nests of filth we peered, with drawing from each as soon as we had scanned it thoroughly.

We found it.

It lay partially doubled up, but the head and face were visible. I looked first at the forehead, and there was a bright red wound, corresponding precisely with the one I had seen on—what?

We carefully gathered it up and straightened it out, and composed the limbs in a less painful posture. There were two hands that worked with loving through trembling touch.

It was taken to the hospital in order to ascertain beyond peradventure whether or not life was extinct. The physician said he must have been dead an hour.

I thought, when I returned to the office, that Bailey looked upon me with an expression akin to awe. But I was in a mood far from triumphant. I had loved Ward dearly, and was bowed down with grief at his untimely and terrible death.

I set forth all sickening details of the excitement that followed, of this talk about my part in the tragedy, of the fruitless search for the murderers.

Afterward Bailey made me give him a more explicit account of the strange manner in which I received information of the tragic event.

And, as I minutely described each circumstance, he alternately opened his eyes wide, scowled, laughed, and looked wise. What else could he do.

I do not attempt to give any explanation of what I have related. The facts—or my memory of them—have been laid before the reader. But, as I think them over, questions obtrude themselves upon each other.

Was I dreaming? If so, is the method in a dreamer's? And can a stimulated brain receive an impression from a dream so vivid and indelible as to be indistinguishable from the memory of an actual fact? If so, what is memory but a delusion, and to what extent can we trust our recollections? But why pursue the subject?

TRUST THE TEACHER.
BY THOMAS K. BECKER.

"I believe in free inquiry. I am not going to believe tidings just because you say so. Every man must investigate for himself," so I see and hear it said again and again with regard to items of religious faith.

A minister, preacher, or pastor is a man who equires and ascertains truth in the department of religion. It would seem not unreasonable to ask in behalf of such, that they receive for their teachings the same attention and respect that is given to men who investigate other departments of truth, and declare their discoveries to their fellow men. I am not able to see why it should be disre-

ditable, or humiliating, to receive as true the sayings of a minister, any more than the sayings of a doctor or a lawyer, a chemist or a schoolmaster. No doubt the days have been in which religious teachers were arrogant and dictatorial. Their arrogance needed chastening, and has received it. But it is certainly both unwise and unfair to recoil from the one extreme of blind and slavish superstition, to the other extreme of proud and superficial independence.

Men accept, unquestionably, thousands of truths which they have never proved and cannot prove now. Not one man in a hundred has ever proved that seven times nine are sixty-three—proved it by writing seven 9s in a column and adding them. The teacher told a child again and again in a school, a hundred and thirty-two facts called the multiplication table. The child swallowed those facts, and has believed them ever since, without any pretence of investigation or reasoning. This is not creditable to any man. For he has gained, unconsciously the highest of all proof that these statements of his teacher were true, in that he has acted on them for a score of years, and they have never brought him into controversy or trouble. This kind of proof is experimental proof. It is not investigative.

In this land of common schools it is difficult to find any one who doubts the roundness of the earth, and that it rotates on its axis, and revolves around the sun. Yet more than a hundred highly educated Lutheran ministers in Germany, within the last 3 years, expressed their amazement and horror at such unscriptural faith. We in turn laugh at their old-fashioned bigotry and stupidity. Yet I may be allowed to doubt, that one reader in a thousand in this land, can really prize that the earth is round that it rotates on its axis, and revolves round the sun. We all committed these things to memory, and recited in the schools of our childhood; some of the evidences, namely: the gradual appearing of a ship at sea; the actual circumnavigation of the globe by voyagers; the shape of the shadow of the earth when cast upon the moon in an eclipse, and other like proofs. But very few have ever been to sea and noticed a ship "hull down" ten miles off. Few of us in looking at an eclipse, are positive that the shadow is cast by the earth. Millions of people saw eclipses before any one dreamed that the earth was standing in its own light. And few or none of us have ever deliberately undertaken to sail around the globe. In short, we have not investigated this assertion. We have not tested its evidence. Yet we believe it.

Our farmers, with beautiful docility, take home with them each year from one to five almanacs, and believe the implicitly as regards the hour of sunrise and sunset, the phases of the moon, and, notwithstanding the times of the tide. Nevertheless there are not twenty farmers in the land that can prove that the almanac is accurate, but they all apply the higher test of experiment. And since the almanacs usually turned out to be accurate in everything except the predictions of the weather, and the advertisements of patent medicines the farmer trusts them more implicitly than they do the Bible.

And it is not a little amusing to notice how cheerfully these same citizens will listen to a travelling lecturer impeaching the Bible, when they would not listen to any man that sneered at the almanac. As a matter of fact, the average farmer or citizen can neither prove nor disprove the truth of one or the other. Yet millions of men live by the almanac, patent medicines and all, and ever dream that they are forfeiting all claim to intelligent manhood, free thought, progress, and love of truth. In short, they are living experimentally.

We read histories. Happy is the man who preserves his peace of mind by reading but one. And when in our schools and colleges, juvenile students have read the appointed history, or compend of history, they come out appraising that they know. How do they know? Have they investigated? Are there ten men in the United States who have had access to the original authorities in English history? I think not. If a man be a Roman Catholic, he believes one set of assertions, and if he be a Protestant, he believes another set of assertions, as to certain alleged events. And it is by no one thought to be unmanly to hold firmly certain opinions as to Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, Mary of Scotland, Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Thomas More, and other noted men.

It would seem, however, as if we ought to apply the same test to religious teachings that we do to the teachings of the almanac and of the schoolmaster. Granted that they are taught by a monk or a priest or a teacher of good reputation, the wise presumption is that they are true; that it is foolish to dispute them promptly and even flippantly because they seem improbable or unreasonable after five minutes' acquaintance.

If the receiving and believing, and acting, by a given scheme of religious truth, produce certain good results in the receiver or professor, the scheme itself is proved true by its good effect. This, in the long run, is the only safe

[Continued on fourth page.]