

## "DE MORTUIS!"

## AN APPEAL FOR A CRIMEAN CEMETERY.

"Bury me with the men," were the last words of one of the purest officers ever known among British soldiers!—*Daily Paper.*

## I.

Side by side to the battle we strode  
Facing our death like men!  
Waving his sword the old Colonel rode  
Straight to the tiger's den.  
Whispered words in a bated breath  
Troubled the ranks that morn;  
Where shall we lie? if the "Sergeant Death"  
Summons a Hope forlorn?  
We saw the plume of the Colonel wave.  
And heard him muttering then,  
"Put me to rest in a soldier's grave,  
Bury me there with the men!"

## II.

"I have a mother whose heart will break,  
Dear Home," the Ensign said.  
He checked his sob for the Regiment's sake,  
But I saw his lips had bled!  
"Among the grasses I'd like to lie.  
I've played there half my life!  
Bear me to her—on her breast to die,  
Take me to children—wife!"  
But still we followed the Colonel's crest,  
Who still kept muttering then,  
"A soldier's grave is the place for rest,  
Bury me deep with the men!"

## III.

"Colonel, speak! is it cross or stone  
Will mark where the Regiment bled?  
Bitter it were to be left alone,  
Forgotten with England's dead;  
Sad it were to be hidden away  
Where never a tear will fall.  
How many here, at the close of day,  
Will answer the bugle's call?  
We cheered the voice of our Colonel brave,  
Who answered pluckily then,  
"Old England's trust is the soldier's grave,  
Bury me here with the men!"

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

[For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.]

## WHO STOLE THE DIAMONDS?

BY MRS. LEPROHON.

(Concluded from our last.)

Ah, what was that? In the solemn stillness of the night every sound was strangely audible, especially in my then nervous excited state, and a creaking of the stairs, a cautious footfall approaching the door again brought out the dew of terror on my forehead. Yes the step drew nearer, my hearing had not played me false; I saw the door knob on which my terrified gaze was strainingly fixed, slowly turn, the door was pushed back overturning, it seemed without effort, the impromptu barricade I had erected against it, and the wretched butler again presented himself. On seeing me awake, the man started, perhaps he had expected to find me asleep; or, it may have been that the poker which I had unconsciously grasped on the first approach of the footsteps and still held threateningly poised in my hand, alarmed him. After a moment he stammered forth with considerable hesitation that "Martha had sent him to ask if I wanted anything and to stir up the fire at the same time." Ah, he wanted to get possession of my weapon did he? I, whose very hand was shaking with terror was not defenceless enough yet for him.

"I want nothing! Be off!" I sternly ejaculated, whilst the culprit considerably discomfited slowly withdrew.

"The coward!" I mentally exclaimed. "He would rather rob and murder me in my sleep. Ah, he came for that. Poor Martha sent him indeed! Perhaps she is already lying dead down stairs."

After this last event the drawing-room became intolerable to me, and I again revolved in my mind what place could afford me a safe shelter. The thought of my father's office here occurred to me. It was easily reached being on the same flat with the room in which I then was, and had only one door, so that I could securely lock myself in. I felt convinced the butler had not overheard my father mention his intention of locking my diamonds in the safe, and would consequently confine himself to plundering the sideboard. I hastened at once to the office fortunately reaching it unobserved. Neither gas nor taper were lit but a smouldering grate fire diffused enough light and heat through the room to make it comfortable. A low couch stood at the far side of the hearth in deep shadow, and effectually protected from any possible draft by a light screen placed in front of it. Noiselessly locking the door lest mine enemy should be lurking anywhere in the vicinity, I stole over to the couch and threw myself on it with something like relief, covering my chilled form with a soft tiger skin that lay on a chair near me.

Exhaustion arising from pain, fear, and want of rest finally threw me into a sleep soon disturbed by a dream natural enough after the late terrors I had undergone. It seemed to me that I had sought refuge from the man who had already caused me so much waking terror, down in the wine cellar, bearing with me all the while the diamonds which he was determined to obtain at any price. I had fled from him, from story to story, closely pursued, and unable to get out of his path till I had reached this last spot—the lowest and loneliest in the house. Hastily I had barred and bolted the heavy oaken door, and then sunk down fainting and breathless on the damp earth floor. The bolts and bars were of immense strength and knowing this, my ter-

ror began to diminish. My heart to beat less rapidly. My fortress seemed impregnable at least for a few hours, and when my friends should return they would never rest especially loyal loving Harry, till I would be found. All would come well at last, so I endeavoured to forget the thick darkness, the chill dampness of the ground, the eerie loneliness of my dreary hiding place. Suddenly a faint grating sound struck on my ear, chilling my very marrow with fear. Monotonous, continual, passionless, it went on, whilst I slowly studied, then finally divined its awful meaning. My pursuer was slowly and surely sawing an opening through the door, around the principal bolt, and in a few moments more I should be entirely, hopelessly at his mercy. The agony of the moment awoke me and as I mechanically wiped the large drops of perspiration from my forehead a new thrill of horror ran through my already quivering frame. I was fully awake now, in full possession of all my faculties, and yet, merciful Heaven! that strange unaccountable noise went on, nearer louder—more terribly distinct than it had sounded in my dream. What did it—what could it mean? With lightning like rapidity the whole truth flashed upon me. The sound proceeded from the window where some miscreant—probably the treacherous butler—was cutting out the pane, preparatory to putting in his hand, raising the window bolt and springing into the room. Was there any escape possible? The door was at the far end of the apartment, unlocking it would always take a certain amount of time, crossing to it before the lace curtained window would instantly reveal my presence and bring on me a foe driven desperate by fear of detection. During the second I was hesitating a crash of glass told that the outer works were taken—another moment and the enemy was within the citadel. Scarcely daring to breathe, I lay there motionless as if carved in stone, fearing that the loud tumultuous beating of my heart would reveal my presence. I understood it all. The burglar had taken the ladder that usually rested at the end at the stable and placed it against the window. Of course he was a member of our household else our fierce watch dog would long ere this have given wrathful notice of his approach.

As I have mentioned the room received light only from the coal fire smoldering dimly in the grate, and that light was not sufficiently strong to pierce the huge shadow that hung over the sofa I occupied. Could I remain perfectly still without giving any tokens of my presence I might hope to escape, but stifled cough, or slightest motion would ensure my doom. From my position I could dimly see a tall dark figure, the face covered with some black tissue, bending over my father's safe which stood near the window. This domestic robber was not obliged to force the lock, or to use gunpowder as had been laughingly suggested that evening, but merely drawing a key from his vest pocket he quietly opened the safe, first depositing a short iron bar on the chair beside him. Recalling the fears that had haunted me during the early part of the evening I could not help thinking how light and childish they were compared with those of the present moment—a pale shadow of the agony of terror that oppressed me now. Expeditiously the mid-night marauder pursued his work, sweeping jewels and gold, into a small leather bag he had brought with him, whilst I watched him without a feeling of regret—hoping only that he would quickly finish his task and then depart. Just as he thrust in the diamonds, my costly gift of the morning, the covering over his face annoying him, he pushed it impatiently aside, and I saw, not the butler, not some stern featured midnight robber, but merciful Providence! my lover.

Yes it was indeed him though the hard dark expression on his face was one such as I had never seen there yet, and which warned me that this man who had so often whispered love and devotion in my ear, would have struck me down with that fearful bar, had he discovered my presence, with as little compunction as he would have kicked a spaniel out of his path.

Among the articles he took from safe was an ivory miniature of myself which my poor father had had painted a year previous, the frame of which was gold, studded with jewels.

"Can I not have even this without the sickly faced original?" he muttered, vainly endeavouring to tear the likeness from the frame. "Ah if it were Carrie Willis now with her bright eyes and rose leaf cheeks the case would be different! How the little vixen blazed up when I ventured on a soft word to her in the green-house to night. Well I must take the other girl as I have to do this miniature—for the sake of the setting."

I knew him now thoroughly and no chance of future self-deception remained. Ah! what a mighty effort it cost me to suppress the moan of anguish that rose to my white lips. In what a flood of bitterness my soul was steeped! I whom the morning sun had smiled on a bright happy woman, finding life a chalice of bliss, had just seen that golden cup dashed from my grasp and myself flung down as it were into a gulf of utter despair. I had so loved this man—had been as proud of his beauty, and grace, his mental gifts as most women are of their own! I who had prized the wealth to which I was heir only that I might bestow it on him; who scarcely added a ribbon to my toilet, a flower to my hair without an ulterior thought as to whether it would please him; who would have worked—toiled—begged for him, must have suffered strangely to find my love thus ridiculed, thrown back on myself.

My situation was one of the deepest peril and after the first shock of surprise I fully realized its terrors. Only a light low screen stood between me and him, and any involuntary movement on my part—the sudden blazing up of the smouldering fire—a chance close glance in my direction would reveal my presence and entail on me swift destruction. Life at the moment had for me nothing worth living for, but, I recoiled from the thought of a violent death dealt by a murderer's hand. Indistinctly yet softly the midnight chimes of the church bells stole on my ear through the broken casement, telling the old angel-taught legend: "Glory be to God on high and peace on earth to men"; and my heart went up in voiceless fervent prayer to Him who alone could grant me help. My supplications seemed directly answered when a moment later Mr. Severton closed the iron chest now rifled of its valuables, and got out on the ladder, drawing the window to behind him. I waited a moment lest he should be lingering outside, and when re-assured by the utter silence prevailing, rose—closed the door behind me and sought my own room.

I will not dwell on the paroxysm of anguish through which I passed, an anguish so intolerable that had it not been for the gentle voice of religion reminding me of duties, parents, friends that had such powerful claims on my life, madness must have overtaken me. Finally I rose, divested myself of the gay evening dress which I had put on with such bright hopes and happy feelings, and sought my couch so as to avoid exciting the curiosity of my friends on their return. Later, when they all arrived, my mother stole softly into my room, and seeing me lying motionless, with closed eyes, imprinted a kiss on my cheek and withdrew, leaving me sure of peace till morning. How I dreaded joining the family at breakfast—the discovery of the robbery—the meeting with my lover. Still, when the usual hour came round, I resolved to brave the dreaded ordeal at once, knowing that it must come sooner or later. I found the family assembled in the sitting room, but instead of the jesting repartees and gay animated talk that generally reigned in their midst, an unusual silence and constraint prevailed. On my entrance every eye was sympathizingly bent on me till my heart questioned with a bound of fear: "How much did they really know?"

"I fear, poor Alice, you have passed a wretched night, to judge by your pale worn face," softly observed my mother.

I merely bowed in reply.

"Your neuralgia must have rendered you insensible to all other things and it was a direct mercy from Heaven that it did so," interposed Aunt Willis with a mysterious shake of her head.

"You suffered greatly, poor Alice, whispered cousin Carrie laying her soft cheek lovingly against mine. Your poor hands are hot as fire." Remembering my unjust suspicions of her loyalty I gently returned her caress with a feeling of inward remorse. A short silence followed interrupted by Aunt Willis who loftily exclaimed:

"You may remember, my dear child, my having hinted yesterday evening at the necessity of carefully putting away those valuable jewels of yours lest they should be stolen. Well, I grieve to say that my prediction as all predictions of mine generally are has been fulfilled."

Notwithstanding her expressions of regret a gleam of triumph shone in the speaker's cold gray eyes which must have been noted by my mother, for the latter retorted with an asperity most unusual to her; "All your prophecies have not come true for you picked out the new butler as the probable thief, and Mr. Sommers who is innocent."

"Of course, Mr. Sommers will say so were it only for the sake of contradicting me. Men are always jealous of the superior acuteness of women. Still, the identity of the robber is but a secondary consideration—the loss itself is the first, so my dear niece, accept my sincerest sympathies on the loss not only of your magnificent diamonds, but of many other valuable heir-looms destined to be yours later."

Again I merely bowed in reply then faintly asked: "Where was my father?"

"Gone to give notice of the robbery at the police office. Severton went with him."

A tremor ran through me at the name, but, Aunt Willis, the speaker, without perceiving my emotion continued: "You may be proud of your lover, Alice. So prompt, so energetic, so self-possessed, and then so full of tender anxiety for you, so anxious as to how you had passed the night, and whether the nocturnal robber had in any manner disturbed or alarmed you. And how devoted to yourself! Last night he danced very little and that only with elderly ladies, spending great part of his time moping in the conservatory, where indeed I caught him once, apparently just waking up from a nap."

Yes Mr. Severton was undoubtedly clever. Whilst supposed to be moping in the conservatory at Mrs. Carr's, he had in reality got out of it by the back window which I remembered well, hastened to our house with the key which he had previously secured,—my poor father's hiding places were all known to him—and accomplished his purpose.

Then he had returned to the house of festivity, and re-entered by the same way in which he had come forth without his absence having been observed.

After a pause Aunt Willis resumed: It was merciful indeed you knew nothing of what was going on. Certainly you had enough to endure from neuralgia without having terror added to

your sufferings. The butler, when cross examined this morning, told us that when he last went up to look at the drawing room fire, just before you left that apartment, he found you looking so wild and strange from pain, that he scarcely knew your face. Ah, here come the gentlemen!

Calm, sympathetic, gentle, Harry Severton entered, approach the sofa on the arm of which my aching head was pillowed, and taking my reluctant hand whispered: "My darling, I have been miserably anxious about you!"

How I longed to bring this intolerable acting to an end—to turn on him and plainly say I knew the entire truth, but the time for this had not yet arrived, so pettishly withdrawing my hand—I begged to be left alone.

"Pray what success have you had Mr. Severton?" questioned my mother.

"Very little as yet madam, but, we have good hopes for later."

Unable to bear more I here made my escape to my room. An hour after my father entered and seating himself beside the bed on which I lay in speechless tearless misery, said; gently, taking my hot hand in his:

"Alice, my child, is it physical suffering, or regret for the loss of your diamonds that is afflicting you thus? If the latter, I promise that should your own not be found, I will replace them—do anything rather than see you look as you are looking to day."

"Then father I will tell you the favor I would crane from your kindness. The very thought of this robbery is unbearable to me, and I would entreat of you to let the matter rest instead of dragging it and us before the public?"

"A singular request, my child, a very singular request;" and the speaker earnestly scrutinized my agitated countenance. "However, in your present, strangely excited, nervous state, I suppose it must be granted, at least to some extent. I doubt not later you may be able to impart some information that may put me on the path of discovery. I will not talk any longer with you now. It seems to agitate you too much."

He then took leave and I quickly rose, bolted the door and sat down to my writing desk.

My epistle was to Mr. Severton and briefly told him that I had been in the office the night previous and had recognized the robber. I addressed him no reproach whatever, but informed him I would keep silence on the one sole condition that he should leave Canada within a week, never to return to it; adding that to enable him to do so, as well as to make his way in the new country to which he might bend his steps, I would not ask for the restitution of the jewels, taking on myself to give them to him. I warned him to seek no farther interview as nothing would induce me to grant one; concluding by plainly assuring him that his safety lay in immediate flight, as if any servant of the house or other innocent person were taken upon suspicion, I would deem myself bound in conscience to come forward and reveal the true culprit, however averse I might be to such a measure.

This letter I put in my breast to be sent or given on the first favorable opportunity, and then lay down again. Shortly after the family physician entered with my mother. He felt my pulse—laid his hand on my burning forehead and prescribed a couple days of absolute quiet, a recommendation for which I felt most devoutly thankful. He had not left me a half hour when a restless desire to know if anything new had transpired with regard to the robbery led me to leave my room. In the passage I found myself face to face with Harry Severton.

"Dear Alice," he said eagerly advancing towards me, though with a certain anxiety in his look, prompted perhaps by the expression of my own face, "I have been walking up and down here an age in the hope of seeing you."

I looked him fully, fairly in the face as we stood confronting each other, then without a word handed him the letter and left him. Three days later he sailed for Australia, leaving on his room table a letter for my father in which he told him he abandoned Canada in consequence of my rejection of his suit, and referring him for all farther information to myself. This missive exposed me to a perfect fire of interrogations on all sides, accompanied more or less liberally with reproaches; for his departure was attributed to a lover's quarrel attended with iron obduracy on my part. I maintained a stolid silence, broken only in favor of my father: when he questioned me earnestly on the subject. I replied by winding my arms round his neck and imploring him with a burst of tears to seek no farther explanations. He looked searchingly sorrowfully in my face and slowly rejoined: "Whatever be the mystery thus concealed from me, I feel assured my Alice has nothing to reproach herself with."

Influenced by my tearful entreaties and perhaps by some secret misgivings which he concealed from me, he quietly dropped all farther attempts at discovering either jewels or robber; and our household soon fell back into its usual groove of quiet cheerfulness. Nothing on the surface showed that the rose tints and sunshine had gone out of my life.

Time sped on. Cousin Carrie married, but, I did not, though offers were not wanting; and Carrie's children play around my knee, and even as I write, climb on my lap and lovingly press their soft cheeks to mine.

Years afterwards, a traveller, an old friend of ours, arrived from Australia, and spoke to us of Harry Severton. The latter had entered into business immediately on his arrival in that