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THE WOMAN IN GREY.

The barren plateau, on which the allied armies were encamped before Sebastopol, was naturally suggestive of many superstitious fancies among the troops. The outlying sentinels, with their eyes at the uppermost degree of attention, to detect some crouching spy, eventually saw imaginary forms around him, and the darkness became peopled with the denizens of another world. Many stories of ghostly manifestations were current, very few of them possessing any other foundation than the imaginary fancy of the credulous soldier; but there are one or two authentic stories of ghosts, one of which I will tell here, as I heard it from the lips of an officer of an Irish Regiment, who was conversant with all the details.

A soldier on being relieved from guard one winter's night, swore stoutly that he had been haunted during the whole period of duty, by a woman in gray, who made signals to him, which he, good Catholic as he was, declined to follow. He was laughed at; but when the sentry on duty the next night told the same story the most incredulous began to believe. When a week had passed away and each night the same occurrence happened the regiment was so infected with alarm that the captain of the day had to interfere. For this purpose he summoned to his councils one Patrick Leary, a Color Sergeant, who was popularly supposed to fear neither man nor devil. The captain let the non-commissioned a revolver, bidding him fire if he found it absolutely necessary, but to do his best to capture the woman alive. Mr. Pat took his heavy dragoon of run and went on sentry-go much to the relief of the men warned for that night's duty.

It was a dark misty night when Pat commenced his duty, and it was enough to make any one feel uncomfortable. The gale, however, so long as the effect of the rumble, whistled the 'Night on which Larry was stretched,' *sotto voce*, stamped his feet to restore the chilled circulation. Some how or another though, he began to grow very lonely, and almost wished the ghost would come, only to bear him company.

His wishes were soon fulfilled, for hearing a slight sound, and raising his rifle to his shoulder, he saw a dusky form gibbering at him in the distance. Pat began scraping and bowing in reply, and the woman apparently encouraged by this drew nearer. Pat laid his firelock on the ground as if to encourage the other but placed his hand carefully on his revolver. There was nothing like being prepared, but if it were a woman—the thought fairly turned the honest sergeant's mind. Ere long the figure approached so near that Pat was enabled to challenge—

"Who goes there?"

"A friend," replied the stranger, in a musical, though foreign voice.

"Advance friend, and give the counter-sign," said the sergeant mechanically.

Just as the figure approached, the moon broke out from behind a cloud, and enabled him to see the woman's features.

The most astonishing thing was the immense great head the figure wore. Pat as a traveler was accustomed to strange sights, but this surpassed all. In a second though the truth flashed upon him, and he made ready for action.

"Come here my darling, Pat said, artfully but the woman did not seem inclined to obey. The moonlight had evidently destroyed the stranger's calculations. She fell back a step or two, and then turned to fly. But it was too late; Pat was after her with a tiger's bound, and, imbedded by her petticoats, she stumbled and nearly fell. In a second however, she recovered, and turned on the sergeant with a most uncomfortable yaghtan.

"Tear and 'ouns," the sergeant shouted, the woman's devil.

"Stand still, but these are too sharp. A howl, a laugh burst from the stranger's lips, as he tried to get between Pat and his musket. But the sergeant was on his guard; pretending to fly, he managed to beat down in the grasp of the woman, and caught at her capote. The next moment the yaghtan had passed through the fleshy part of her arm, but he did not relax his hold.

He grappled with the stranger, but meeting with an unexpected resistance, he drew his revolver. The stranger clutched at it with frantic energy, and a terrible struggle ensued, which terminated by the pistol suddenly exploding; and the stranger fell to the ground with a groan, while Pat weakened by the loss of blood, followed his example. The quarter-guard, aroused by the shout soon hurried up to the spot, and both were borne into the camp.

The stranger was placed in a hut, and a surgeon fetched, and it was evident that the ghost in grey was a fine-looking old man. He was, however, declared to be a dangerous state, for the ball had passed through his lungs. His condition was kindly explained to him, and he told his story readily enough.

His name was Constantine, and he was by birth a Pole. Having been engaged in the revolution in 1831, he was saved from the death that fell to the lot of his comrades to endure a worse fate. He and his family were transferred to Russia, and he was forced to perform the most degrading duties in the secret police.

For twenty-three years he had endured the humiliation for the sake of his wife and child, but the little reckoned what was in store for him. When the war with allies became imminent, he was ordered with his family to Sebastopol, for he was a perfect French and German scholar; and when the campaign compelled to risk his life nightly by going out to spy the progress the enemy made. Death stared him in the face either way; if he refused, the sentence passed upon him at Warsaw still remained in force, while if obeyed, he was in hourly risk of detection. Why not desert you ask? but the Russian police were Machiavellis. His daughter Eudoxia a lovely girl of three and twenty was taken into the Governor's house, ostensibly to protect her from the horrors of the siege; but Constantine was sorely distressed to understand that her life depended on his fidelity. The poor father was sorely distressed; his hatred of the Russians was counterbalanced by his love for his daughter, the only treasure he possessed in the world, for his wife had succumbed under the privations and exposure of a winter's journey across the steppes.

Need I say that the father triumphed over the man? Constantine was a nightly visitor to our lines, and by the cleverness with which he played the character of a French or English linesman, long escaped detection.

At length, a dreadful ordeal was offered him; he was told that if he could only induce an English soldier to desert, from whom some valuable information could be obtained, his sentence would be reversed, and he would be free to go where he pleased with his daughter. Maidenly by the thought of freedom Constantine attired himself in feminine garb, hoping thus to attract some sentinel from his post. He would then wound him, though not dangerously, and drag him into the Russian lines. In fact he must catch a Briton alive; but unfortunately, in Sergeant Leary, he caught a Tartar.

Such was the story he told, and which aroused considerable interest among the hearers. It reached the ears of Lord Raglan himself, who visited the prisoner, and bade him be of good cheer; no harm should befall him. But Constantine shook his head sadly; of what value was life to him now when he was separated from his Eudoxia?—I need not say that every kindness was shown the poor fellow, and the doctors vied with each other in their attention to him. But there was little chance of saving him; the wretched conical ball was apparently imbedded in his backbone and there was no prospect of moving it.

Pardon, reader, such a common place story but the end is not yet.

Two days later, Sergeant Leary, who had bound up his flesh wound, and laughed at it, was at work in the front parallel. He was sitting in the trench, smoking a very dirty short pipe and growling inwardly, when the wound gave him a twitch. It was a lovely night, and double caution had to be exercised, for the Russians were all alive, and seemed shooting for a wager at the trenches.

Pat philosophically took off his shako, and placed it on top of the earth-work. In five minutes he took it down again and there were three Minnie balls clean through it.

"Whirrah!" said Pat as he comically surveyed the damage; there's a patent ventilator."

"Lucky, for you, Sergeant Leary," a young ensign remarked that your head wasn't in it."

"Arrah, your honor, and do you suppose that those dirty bullets would go through my head? It's all very easy with a regulation shako, for we know what that is made of; but an Irishman's head is formed of strong materials."

A suppressed laugh ran along the trenches but Pat was not at all put out.

Boys, he remarked with solemn pathos, since the unlucky day that I landed in this filthy country, not a night has passed that I haven't got at least a pint of bad spirits in me; and you can say he has seen me the same for it. It wants a party dunsent, head to stand the rakew get up here, for it would take the roof off a house; so I think my head is safe against a ball sent by the Russian powder. Biff! what's their game now I wonder."

The men jumped up involuntarily for the firing from the Russian guns had grown tremendous. Forgetting all caution, they sprang on the breast work, naturally supposing that the enemy meditated a sortie. They were in perfect safety, however; all the bullets were

at present directed at a single figure, which was crossing the open space at frantic speed. Our men cheered heartily, as the stranger passed on, utterly reckless of the shower of lead, and some two or three fellows, Leary at their head, rushed out to rescue him. Great was the Sergeant's surprise, though when he recognized in the stranger, the Woman in Grey. But there was no time for enquiry. The Russians had opened all their batteries, as if disgusted at not bringing down their victim, and for an hour the very earth shook with the vibration. Suddenly the fire died away, as we did not condescend to reply to it; the moon retired behind a cloud in disgust, and there was silence for the rest of the night.

In the meanwhile, Sergeant Leary had convinced himself that this Mr. Jones was not that Mr. Jones; the stranger, instead of wielding a yataghan, employed a far more dangerous weapon in a pair of the most lovely eyes ever seen. Then, in a most seductive voice, (Leary swore afterwards that he understood every word but don't believe him), she asked after her father's welfare. She spoke in French, and, at any rate, the officer of the watch comprehended her, and sent a party with her at once to head-quarters. Lord Raglan no sooner heard of the horsemanship she had displayed in order to join her father, than he gave direction that she should be treated with all possible kindness; and have free access to the prisoner. Her presence was better than all the doctor's stuff to Constantine; he rapidly recovered, but Eudoxia's duties were not over then. By some stupid mistake, Leary managed to run his renowned head against a Minnie ball, which sadly injured his personal appearance and for some reason or another Eudoxia insisted on nursing him. It may be that his repeated visits to his father had touched her heart, but what do I know?

All I can say is that the nurse, Sergeant Leary's youngest girl the other day, when I went in for an ounce of tobacco at a shop not a hundred miles from Leicester Square, and was requested to wait and see Father Constantine, who has very comfortable engagements as interpreter at one of our police courts.

With him I smoked a refreshing pipe, and he confirmed all the details of the story I lay before the reader.

British Columbia.

The white population of British Columbia amounts to about 5,000 men, with scarcely any women or children. The Emigration Report states that the people in the towns are well conducted; divine service is regularly performed by resident clergymen, and there is an almost entire absence of crime. The export of gold is estimated at about 14,000,000 a month, exclusive of that in the hands of the miners. An export duty is in contemplation. The gold searching is principally carried on by 'sluicing,' which is effected by means of ditches, constructed with great skill, and sometimes of great length, one of them being five miles long, through a very difficult country. A 'free miner' has to take out annually a 20s. license from the Gold Commissioner of the district; a claim must be registered at a charge of 4s. a year. The free miners in a district may procure the establishment of an elective Mining Board, to make bye-laws concerning mining matters. The Gold Commissioner is a magistrate with power to try all mining disputes, but subject to an appeal in cases of importance. The Governor reports that the land on the banks of the Fraser river which rises in successive terraces, evidently the former bed of the river, is highly auriferous, and seventy-one ounces of gold have been taken out of a claim, by three men in twenty-four hours; gold has been discovered as far as the Fraser river has been prospected, which is 600 miles from its mouth; and on the Quesnel river, a tributary, 40l. a day is said to have been made 'to the hand.' Roads are being opened by the sappers and miners, and the expense of transport has been reduced from 37 cents per lb. to ten. The great drawback is the absence of an agricultural class; but every encouragement is given to settlers, and they are allowed to occupy unsurveyed land (100 acres), with a future right of purchase at an upset price of 10s. an acre (reserving the precious minerals). Aliens who have been bona fide residents for three years may be naturalized.—Times.

Lifeboat Services.

It appears that during the terrific gales of the few months that have passed of the present year, the lifeboats in connexion with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution have been instrumental in rescuing 115 of our fellow creatures from a watery grave. Nearly all the services of the life boats took place during stormy weather and heavy seas, and frequently in the dark hour of the night, yet not a single accident happened either to the crews or the boats.

SCOTCH SONG.

November came so chill and cruel,
And frost and snow on the hill,
And Boreas w' his blasts so loud,
Was threaten'g our chicks to kill;
When my gudewife who loves no strife,
Gut up and plainly did declare:
Go to the druggist, John, and buy
The Pectoral o' Dochter Ayer.

Now this is so, as weel ye know,
To cross the heaves will nae day,
So ad I said as I was bid,
And bought the Pectoral that day.
Our health increased, our coughing ceased,
No frowns the gudewife's brow did wear;
So every time we brew the malt
We drink the health o' Dochter Ayer.

Lang be his life an' free from strife,
May bairnies' bairnes climb his knee,
And ne'er may they to their last day
For gowd or silver wanting be;
May he ne'er lack a trusty friend,
May he be fed the clutch o' care,
O' blessings may our Father send
To him the eldest brother's share.

The Lesson of Man's Troubles.

If whenever a man has trouble, he will put a moral consideration under it, his trouble will be almost done. Troubles that have a moral consideration under them, are like sick babes cradled in the arms of their mothers. They are sick; but oh, how sweet a place they have to be sick in! Whereas, troubles that have not a moral consideration under them are like sick babes all alone on a bare floor, crying to themselves. Men may make themselves as miserable as they choose over their trouble, by refusing to look at it in the light of divine providence, they may render it comparatively easy to bear, by the reflection that God sends it upon them for their good.

Griefs and troubles wrongly used are more destructive to us morally and eternally, than almost any other thing. The apostle says, 'The sorrow of the world worketh death.' On the other hand, troubles nobly borne advance us.

They are not the most happy who have the least trouble; they are the most happy who know best how to convert trouble into prosperity.

One thing more. I think that the whole language of our households is heathen; on the subject of death. I think that the language of the pulpit on this subject is heathen. I think that the language of Christian men about dying is calculated to make one think that there is no God but fate, and that death is a great calamity, instead of being the most blessed consummation of human life.

So on the subject of troubles in this life, there is a heathen philosophy and spirit. I think we bring up our children on a heathen principle in regard to troubles. We teach them that the better way to deal with troubles is to dodge them; whereas, the Christian way is to put on the whole armor of God, and be able to stand in the day of evil, and having done all, to stand.

We do not teach our children that to suffer is nobler than any other experience of life. We do not teach our children that they are not to aim to avoid suffering so much as to maintain their manhood. Character and nobility of nature are the things which we ought to inspire our children with an ambition to obtain; and we ought to teach them that in obtaining these things they should count sufferings as matters of indifference. We ought to inspire them with this feeling:—Truth, justice, purity, piety—these are the things which I mean to live; and, if, in prosecuting my journey through this world, I am beset with storms on every hand, I am willing to bear them. We ought not to bring up our children in such a way that they will put their trust in material things; but in such a way that they will make it the great object of their life to gain a rich inheritance in the life which is to come.

We should say to them,—Endure hardness, as good soldiers! So we should bring them from the heathen ground of seeking the pleasures of this life, upon the Christian ground of taking up the cross and following Christ.—Brecker.

Charitable and Religious Institutions of London.

The metropolitan charities comprise—12 general medical hospitals; 50 medical charities for special purposes; 35 general dispensaries; 12 Societies and Institutions for the preservation of life and public morals; 18 societies for reclaiming the fallen, and staying the progress of crime; 18 societies for the relief of general destitution and distress; 32 societies in connection with the Committee of the Reformatory and Refuge Unions; 12 societies for relief of specific distress; 11 societies for aiding the resources of the industrious (exclusive of loan funds and savings banks); 11 societies for the deaf and dumb and the blind; 103 colleges, hospitals and institutions or almshouses for the aged; 16 charitable pension societies; 74 charitable and provident societies, chiefly for specified classes; 31 asylums for orphans and other necessitous children; 10 educational foundations; 4 charitable modern foundations; 40 school societies, religious books, church aiding, and christian visiting societies; 35 bible and missionary societies. Total 526. (This includes parent societies only, and is quite exclusive of the numerous auxiliaries, &c.) These charities annually disburse in aid of their respective objects the extraordinary sum of £1,764,733; of which upwards of £1,000,000 is raised annually by voluntary contributions; the remainder from funded property, sale of publications, &c.

Curious Calculation.

If London were surrounded by a wall, having a north gate, a south gate, an east gate, and a west gate, and each of the four gates were of sufficient width to allow a column of persons to pass out freely four abreast and a peremptory necessity required the immediate vacation of the city, it could not be accomplished under twenty-four hours; by the expiration of which time the head of each of the four columns would have advanced no less a distance than seventy-five miles from the respective gates, all the people being close file, four deep.—Advertiser.

A NEW RIFLE WEAPON.—A Springfield correspondent of the Hartford Times thus describes a new weapon just completed at the armory in that city:—"A heavy gun, called the 'wall rifle,' has just been finished at the Springfield armory. It was proposed by that department, approved by the Secretary of War, and built at the armory under the superintendence of the master armorer, Erskine S. Allen, then acting-superintendent. It is a breech-loading piece of the following dimensions:—Length of barrel, 4 feet; stock, 19 inches; diameter of barrel at breech, 2½ inches; at muzzle, 1 15-16ths inch. It carries a Minie ball weighing ½ pound, 19-100ths of an inch in diameter. It is loaded with 38½ grains of powder. The barrel is of cast steel, with five grooves or ridges of ratchet form. The lock frame is different from that of other breech-loading pieces. It is hung on a pivot, and, when closed, presents a smooth surface, all the machinery being inside. The gun is suspended on a pivot rod as a rest and to prevent the recoil from hurting the shoulder. The wt. of the gun is 85 lbs. It is intended wholly for wall service, in picking off officers, and for other such purposes. It is now being experimented with by the Board of Ordnance at Washington."

[We cut the above description of a new swivel gun from an exchange. It is manifest that the dimensions of the bore are not correctly given, as a shot weighing half a pound and less than the fifth of an inch in diameter would be altogether too long.—Eds. Sci. American.]

A BUSINESS QUAKER.—The Quakers are in the main, as every one knows, a thrifty, kindhearted, and undoubtedly honest people; but with some of them, as among the 'world's honest people,' love of filthy lucre will predominate. In one of their farming communities lived friend Benjamin and his son. It was their custom to buy up cattle to fatten for sale. One day Benjamin, Jr., had selected a choice portion of stock from a passing drove, and was about to buy, when Benjamin Sr., came along.

"Father, I am about to buy these cattle. What dost thee think of them?"

"What dost he ask?"

"So much?"

"I guess thee'll get them for less."

"Offer him \$800 and wait till morning if he don't trade."

Filial Ben assented—made an offer in vain—went home with the old gentleman—slept—and next morning, after caring for the stock, mounted his horse to try again to buy the cattle. But on his way he met Benjamin, senior, returning homeward with the whole herd in question. Benjamin, senior, was wealthy as well as smart; he had taken an early start and bought the lot.

"Thee will let me have my portion, will thee not?" asked filial Ben.

"No, sonny, of course not; I've bought the whole; wait 'em all."

"What! isn't that a hard task to play the son? and I trusted to thee?"

"Ah, Benny, said pater familias, reprovingly, thee must be sharp and wide awake; trust nobody, Benjamin; watch thy father."

Quite likely for young Benjamin the admonition was needless thence forward.

Philadelphia Press.

Literary 'a-me is more easily caught than a fox. If you do nothing, you are forgotten; and if you write and fail, your former success is thrown in your teeth."