

Sam Baxter on being interrogated, reluctantly corroborated the half-witted lad's statement, but declared that they were only due to the natural irritation felt by the young master on being struck, and that he did not for a moment believe that they had the meaning ascribed to them. The members of the inquest, however, took another view of the matter, and a verdict of wilful murder was returned against Leonard Bradeley, who was shortly after arrested upon a warrant issued by one of the neighbouring magistrates. When brought up for examination he simply protested his innocence, and declared that the words he had made use of had reference to his enlisting, and so removing himself from his father's tyranny, and to prove this, he called the Troop-Sergeant-major, with whom he had discussed the subject. As for shooting his father intentionally it was impossible for him to have done so, as from the thickness of the underwood and the branches of the trees, it was impossible to see out of the covert. When Baxter called on him to take care, it was too late, for his finger had already pressed the trigger, but the caution was sufficient to disturb his arm and cause him to miss the hare.

The magistrate, who sympathized deeply with the young man, remanded him for a week in the hopes that some evidence might be brought forward which might obviate the necessity of his sending his case for trial. Great sympathy was manifested for the unfortunate prisoner throughout the county, but the only one who took a decisive step was the Rev. Mr. Chamberlayne. Both that gentleman and his daughter Ella were thoroughly convinced of the prisoner's innocence, and the clergyman dispatched a letter to a gentleman who held a high position in the Home Department, and who had been a chum of his at Oxford. The result was that in the course of a couple of days a slim, quiet little man, with an intelligent cut of features, came to the rectory and had a busy conversation with the Rev. Mr. Chamberlayne. The two visited together the scene of the tragedy, and the detective, for such the rector's visitor was, minutely inspected the ditch and the hedge surrounding the plantation. When he had completed his work he addressed the rector in the following words: "You said, sir, that the medical officer deposed that the victim had been shot in the back with a charge of No. 3 shot. Is not that rather a larger size than is usually used for pheasant shooting?"

"It is," replied Rev. Mr. Chamberlayne, "but what has that to do with clearing Leonard?"

"I'd rather you would leave it to me if you have no objection, sir," returned the detective. "When can I see Samuel Baxter, that was the keeper's name if I remember rightly?"

"Yes," replied Rev. Mr. Chamberlayne, "if you want to talk to him privately, as I presume you do, you had better see him at the rectory; I can send for him."

"If you please, sir," returned the man, "and after that I shall leave the place, Orpminster I mean, and, perhaps, if after to-day you see me you won't take any notice of me, though I don't think you will know me," added the detective with a faint chuckle.

The next day, about three in the afternoon, a weary and shirt-sleeved knife-grinder, wheeling his professional barrow before him, appeared in the straggling street of Bradeley village, and after refreshing himself at the local ale house, the Moon and Seven Stars, declared that he was too dog-tired to do a handsturn of work that day, and so would give himself a holiday until the morrow. After this declaration he sat himself down in a bench outside the public house, and lighting his pipe, soon collected a crowd of gaping villagers around him, by the wonderful riddles he asked, his fluency in relating the gossip of London town, and the quickness with which he parried and related the jokes of the professed village jester. "I'm going to be a gentleman for the future," remarked he, after one of his most brilliant sallies, "and want a boy to wheel my barrow for me. I don't want too sharp a lad, for he might learn the secrets of the trade too soon, besides so many fair ladies take a fancy to me in my travels, that I don't want anyone too fly, you know, but just a simple chap like myself."

"Then take half-witted Ned Tupper," remarked the village Dagonet, who was indignant at the success of the stranger, "and there'll be two fools in the business."

"Haw, haw, haw, George had ye there, tinker," cried the rustics.

"In the first place, gentlemen, I am not a tinker, but a

professional sharpener of cutlery, and, in the second place, I should not take George's estimate of intellect, for being a fool himself, he naturally takes every one else for one," answered the knife-grinder, "but let me see this same Ned Tupper."

In a few moments the ragged figure of the lad was pushed into the ring of spectators and placed within a couple of feet of the knife-grinder. "And so, boy," said the latter magniloquently, "you want to travel and improve your mind, do you; quite right, but have you quite made up your mind!"

"Yes," answered the lad, drawing back his lips and showing his white dog-like teeth, "old master what killed mother and purvided for me is shot dead, and young master is agoing to be hanged for it, so there ain't no place for I at the Grange, d'ye see."

"Quite so, quite so," returned the professional sharpener of cutlery, as he had grandiosely styled himself, "and I think from your general appearance you would suit me. You ain't such a tremendous fool as our friend George here, but you'll do well enough, and he's a bit too stiff in the joints, and too ugly by a long chalk, to do credit to my establishment. Just turn round and let me have a look at your togs, which seem a bit out of repairs."

Ned Tupper did as he was ordered, and a faint smile of triumph stole over the knife-grinder's features, as he cast one searching glance at the dilapidated costume.

"Ah, well," remarked he, with a sigh, "they are just good enough for decency, and we must not fret too much. Come to me in an hour, boy, and we'll settle matters, and now my worthy friends, good-evening. I'm just going up to my room for a little, to manufacture a fresh stock of jokes, for I have wasted all mine upon George, there." And with this parting shot the knife-grinder returned into the ale-house, leaving the villagers to congratulate Ned Tupper upon his luck in securing so talented a master.

Two days after these events, the Rev. Mr. Chamberlayne received a thick letter, and on opening it saw that its contents consisted of two or three sheets of paper neatly written. Page number one was headed:

"Report of Mark Alton, delective, in his enquiry into the death of Lawrence Bradeley, Esquire, of Bradeley Grange, Fenshire.

"Having been ordered to go down to Fenshire and enquire into this case, I put myself in communication with the Rev. Pearce Chamberlayne, Rector of Orpminster, and from him derived much valuable information. With the reverend gentleman I visited the scene of the accident or murder, whatever it might turn out to be, and made a thorough investigation of it. In the ditch I found a number of empty cartridge cases, evidently thrown aside as the deceased had reloaded, but in addition, in a bramble, was a dirty piece of corduroy, with a common brass breeches button attached to it. I enquired of Mr. Chamberlayne what dress Mr. Bradeley wore on the day of his death, and was informed that he had on a brown velveteen suit and leathern gaiters. I put by the scrap of corduroy, and on my return to the vicarage had a long talk with Samuel Baxter, the keeper. After a few unimportant questions I asked him what shot the squire used, and he answered:

"The squire would always use No. 3, tho' I used to tell him it was a sin and a shame, for it knocked the birds about so."

"Then," remarked I, carelessly, "I suppose the young man used the same number."

"No, he didn't," returned the keeper, sharply. "He used No. 5, as a decent, respectable man should, and he did so on that day, for he came to the plantation with his cartridge bag empty. You know he had been having a bit of a breeze with the old squire and that had put him out. This didn't matter, however, for I had plenty and gave him a stock of my own, which were all No. 5, for I loaded them myself."

"Thank you, keeper," says I, "I won't trouble you any more," and off he goes. So it seems the old squire was the only one who used No. 3 shot, and the doctor says it was with that number that he was finished off; therefore, someone must have shot him with his own gun. Now, who was that?

"Well, the next day I came down in the knife-grinder's lay, and hung about Bradeley, playing the giddy goose with the villagers. Amongst other things I pretended I wanted a boy, not that I did, but I hadn't quite made up my mind

how to work the case, when to my surprise they pushed a lad into the ring, dressed in tattered clothes of the same material and colour as the bit of corduroy I had picked up in the ditch. I persuaded him after a time to turn round to see if his clothes would suit, and there was a bit gone with the brace button. I felt convinced the bit I had in my pocket would fit the place nicely. I told him to come and see me in an hour, which he did, and as it was dark I walked him out of the village where I met a friend of mine who had been waiting about for me a precious long time. I then began to pitch a yarn to the lad, saying that when I first caught sight of him I had read determination in his face and that I wanted a lad full of pluck.

"Are you that?" I asked.

"He scanned up into my face with a look as cunning as that of a fox, but made no reply. Then I handed him a bottle I had with me, but though he took a good sup, yet it didn't seem to unloose his tongue."

"Come," said I, a bit roughly, "there is no use in beating about the bush. I know you did for the old squire, and that's why I came for you, let's know all about it."

This flabagasted him, and he told me the whole story, how, as soon as he was old enough to understand, he had made up his mind to revenge his mother's death, if he could do so without getting into harm himself. How he knew where the old squire would take his post on the day of the murder, and going ahead hid himself in the ditch on the chance, and when the old man put down his gun and walked after the bird, he crept out, seized the gun, shot him dead, reloaded the gun, and hid himself again in a place which he knew was secure, a big hole in the ditch, out of which a badger had been dug some time before. He says just as he fired, a gun was discharged in the covert, and a lot of shot rattled about him. My friend took down the confession in shorthand, and the lad made no bones of putting his name to it, which I attested. I don't think they will hang him."

"This quite clears the young squire, and if you show it to your solicitor he will know what to do."

MARK ALTON.

The detective was quite right. Ned Tupper was not hung, but ordered to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure, while Leonard Bradeley was ordered to be discharged forthwith. In spite of the sympathy shown him by the county gentry, he never lived in the Grange, which was pulled down and the land sold in small plots. The dead man's penurious habits had resulted in the accumulation of a large sum of money in the bank, and on this and the amount derived from the sale of the property, Leonard and his wife (*nee* Ella Chamberlayne) lived very happily in London.

[THE END.]

HISTORIC CANADA, VIII.

Old Martello Tower, St. John, N.B.

(For Engraving See Page 70)

While the war of 1812-15 between Great Britain and the United States was waged on the ocean and in the western Canadas with great vigour, and maintained throughout a bitter character, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were comparatively free from its horrors and bloodshed. While a broad sheet of water separated the former province from the enemy, New Brunswick and Maine had no such barrier between them; but the residents of both countries mutually agreed on tacit peace, and military forays from either side were unknown. This state of things, while preserving life and property, left no unpleasant memories to rankle in the hearts of the settlers along the frontier, whose intercourse at all times had been frequent and of a pleasant nature. In the vicinity of St. John, however, various defensive works were erected, among them the object of our engraving. This tower was built in 1813, on the heights on the west side of St. John harbour, and was garrisoned by a detachment of soldiers for many years thereafter. It is about forty feet high and originally mounted three guns. It is an interesting relic of the war, and one of the many points of interest to be seen in the vicinity of the Loyalist city.