

## THE FOILED REVENGE.

A proud, stern man was Geoffrey Peyton, and rich withal, in wealth and honors.

He had won distinction at the bar and on the bench.

How deeply his proud heart had suffered, those familiar only with his cold and haughty bearing would have been surprised to know.

Not very early in life he married one whom he had long loved with an ardent devotion, often characteristic of men like him, and of which weaker natures are incapable.

In his early struggles with poverty, he had kept his love a secret.

He would have suffered his heart to break sooner than have had it whispered he was seeking advancement through an alliance with rich old Ronald Mason's daughter.

But when he could hold up his head with the highest in the land, he no longer hesitated to speak the words he had been so many years waiting to utter, and which Alice Mason had been as many waiting to hear.

A few years of unalloyed felicity followed their marriage.

Though proud and stern as ever to the outside world, not the same man was Geoffrey Peyton at home, his wife by his side and his bright-eyed boy prattling on his knee.

There he forgot his pride, save that he felt in those he loved, forgot fame and ambition and greatness, and remembered only that he was happy.

Then came a blow which fell none the lighter on the proud man's head, because he gave no sign of yielding.

Death crossed his threshold and took from him first his wife and then his child.

The last of these bereavements was peculiarly distressing.

The child had gone for a walk with his nurse by the river side, and in a moment of inattention on the part of the nurse, had strayed out of sight.

Soon after, his hat was found floating on the water.

Alarm was given; search was made; the river was dragged; but in vain.

The child was nowhere to be found.

The body, in all likelihood, had been borne out by the tide.

Geoffrey Peyton bore his loss in silence.

What his grief was no one knew, for no one was permitted to look upon it, and sympathy he would have resented as an impertinence.

Years sped, and Geoffrey Peyton had become an old man.

At his death, his large fortune would descend by law to a distant relative, a young man whose avarice kept him free from all costly vices, and who, most vices being costly, enjoyed, in consequence, an excellent reputation.

But Mr. Peyton had opinions of his own as to the disposition of his property.

Like many men of his caste, he had an aversion to the division of estates; and while not inclined to disinherit his kinman, of whom he knew nothing but his reputation, which we have already said, was good, there was one other whose claims he felt it would be unjust to overlook.

He had brought up in his house, and in some sort adopted, Gertrude Gray, the orphan daughter of an old friend to whom he had been beholden in his days of struggle, and who had died, leaving his only child destitute.

Mr. Peyton's plan, duly set forth in his will, was to settle his property, in equal portions, on Gertrude and his kinsman, provided they married each other in a given period.

If either declined the match, the share of the one declining was to go to the other; and if both declined, the whole was given in trust for certain charities.

Three years after the occurrences of which we are now to speak, George Hayne had sought and obtained employment of Mr. Peyton as his secretary.

The young man proved faithful and diligent, manifesting, moreover, qualities of intellect, which induced his employer to encourage the devotion of his leisure time to a course of legal study.

George made so good use of his opportunities, that by the end of two years he was prepared for admission to the bar.

He had learned other things besides law in the meantime.

He had learned, for instance, how pretty Gertrude Gray was, and how devotedly he loved her; though he was too straightforward to tell her so without first asking permission of Mr. Peyton, with whom, at last, he sought an interview for that purpose.

Modestly, but unreservedly, the young man explained the state of his feelings, and was about to express the hope that he might be allowed to speak to Gertrude herself on the subject, when Mr. Peyton cut it short.

"Is this the return you make for my confidence," he exclaimed—"you, whom I have trusted and taken so much interest in?"

"I am unconscious, sir, of having abused your trust, or ill-requited your kindness," replied the youth, with a touch of the other's pride in his manner; "nor can I perceive aught that is reprehensible in the honest attachment I have this day declared for Gertrude Gray."

"Would you do her a real service?"

"I would die for her!" said George earnestly.

"You can do her a greater favor at less cost," returned the other dryly.

"Name it."

"Never see her—never speak to her. I am not one lightly to make or break a promise; and I solemnly promise that, should you repeat your foolish avowal to Gertrude, and should she be weak enough to listen to it, instead of bringing you the fortune with which it has been my promise to endow her, she shall come to you a beggar-like yourself."

"You do me rank injustice," answered George, whose cheek flushed, "by the intimation which has just escaped you. I have never thought of Miss Gray with an eye to any prospects she may have in connection with your fortune. I have loved her for her own sake."

"Then for her sake desist from a scheme which, if successful, must reduce her to beggary. If you possess a tithe of the unselfishness you profess, you will heed this warning and go your way. I have other plans for Gertrude."

A moment's reflection convinced George that, harsh as Mr. Peyton's word were, in one respect they were just.

It would be selfishness to persist in seeking happiness at the cost of her whom he pretended to love.

"I shall leave this place to-morrow," he said, and turned away.

The morning papers announced the loss of a great steamer, bound for San Francisco.

Nearly all on board had perished; and among the names of the lost was that of George Hayne.

Gertrude Gray swooned when she read it, and Mr. Peyton felt not quite easy in his conscience.

That evening, as he sat moodily in his study, he was interrupted by a visitor, a woman, whose form, once tall, was bent with age, and whose wrinkled face and wild eye had something sinister in them.

"Pray be seated, and explain the reason of your visit, madam," said Mr. Peyton, pointing to a chair.

Taking the proffered seat, she remained for a time silent, gazing intently on the face before her.

Time had graven deep lines upon it, and sorrow deeper still.

As she perused them, a smile of satisfaction, more like a shadow than a smile, flitted over her countenance.

"You had a son once," she said.

The lines grew deeper on the face she was studying, and a pained expression came over it.

"I, too, had a son," she continued, "an only one, as yours was. In a sudden affair, he had the misfortune, in a moment of passion, to slay his antagonist, who was quite as blamable as himself. The jury decided it murder, but recommended him to mercy. Others joined in a petition for clemency. My boy's life was in your hands. I begged it of you on my knees. The law had intrusted you with the dispensation of mercy, but you had no mercy. You turned aside from my prayers, and my son was left to die a felon's death."

Geoffrey Peyton remembered now the face that had often haunted him since the day it had been turned pleadingly upon him, and vividly recalled the look of anguish it had worn when he spoke the relentless words that crushed hope out of a mother's heart.

"That day," she resumed, "I took an oath to make you feel, if possible, all I then felt. I stole away your child."

"My child!—is he alive?"

"Listen. I stole away your child, and left you to mourn him as dead. I took him to a distance and reared him as my own. I bore no malice towards him. I only hated you. I brought him up tenderly, educated him as my moderate means would allow, and felt thankful that in inflicting punishment on the father, I had been enabled to do it with so little injury to the child."

"Is he alive?" cried the old man, piteously.

"Speak woman!—have you no mercy?"

"You had none when I sought to appeal to it," she answered. "That your son is not alive, and that your conscience may accuse you of his death, is the reason I am here. The young man you drove away because he presumed to love one for whom your pride had prepared other plans, was your own son! Before he went, he confided to me the cause of his going; and on reading the announcement of his fate, I resolved that you should feel again the agony of a parent's bereavement, heightened now by the sting of remorse."

"Your story is false," he cried, springing up—"a devilish invention, gotten up to torture me! But I will put you to the proof. My son bore a mark upon his person, put there clandestinely by an old nurse in India, when we travelled in that country, who attached some superstition to it. If the child you say you reared was my son, you must have seen and can describe that mark."

"A serpent's head, and some strange characters, in Indian ink, on the left arm below the elbow," was the answer.

Geoffrey Peyton staggered, and fell into the chair from which he had risen.

He seemed as one stunned by a terrible blow. The woman stood over him for a moment, peering down into his anguish-stricken face with a look of triumph, and then walked quietly away.

"Good news! good news!" cried Gertrude, bursting into the room. "The evening paper corrects the report of this morning. George Hayne is among the saved."

But her words were heeded not.

The old man lay in his chair unconscious. He was placed upon his bed; and on return-

ing to himself, and being informed of George's safety—

"Send for him," he whispered, eagerly—"let there be no delay."

Then he called for his will, and when it was brought, kept it in his hand.

"Has he come yet?" was the question he repeated, as often as he had strength.

When at last the young man came, and was conducted to his late employer's bedside, the latter, with eager, trembling hands, turned back the sleeve of George's coat so as to expose the left arm.

"My Ernest!—my son!" he exclaimed.

And raising himself with sudden strength, he clasped the young man to his breast.

"Bear witness, all," he said; "this is my son. These marks," pointing to certain devices tattooed on George's arm, "prove it, as does the testimony of the woman who stole him away and reared him as her own, and whom I saw and conversed with last night. It now only remains to cancel this;" taking his will and tearing it in fragments.

Geoffrey Peyton would fain have lived for his son's sake, but it was not to be.

The recent shock proved too much for his strength, and, not many days after, he sank to rest in Ernest's arms.

Ernest Peyton and Gertrude Gray, in due time, were happily married.

What became of the distant relative we don't know, and don't suppose anybody cares.

## MARRIAGE RINGS.

The wedding ring has been in use from a very early date, and Clement of Alexandria explains it as "still intended for a 'sigil'"—a seal which stamps the bond or covenant entered into between man and wife. In addition to this it is a symbol:

And as this round is nowhere found  
To flaw or else to sever,  
So let our love as endless prove,  
And pure as gold for ever.

Or, as an old writer says: "The ring is a pretty mystic type, and suggests a great deal of lively fancy. Thus, being round, it is obviously a symbol of perfection and of eternity, having neither beginning nor end that we can see, and is of course a proper emblem of love, that usually begins without notice and ought always to be without end." Not only in itself is it symbolical; so is the place where it is worn. The right hand indicates authority and power, it is therefore put on the left, to signify that the woman is in subjection to her husband. It encircles the fourth finger, to denote that not only does she obey, but love, since it was an idea that through it was thus made to pass the strongest and warmest current of the heart's blood. Another reason, it is true, can be given why this, as every *ex-officio* ring, should be worn on the fourth finger. It is the first "vacant finger." The thumb and two first are reserved as symbols of the Trinity. This explanation receives confirmation from the ancient marriage ritual, for according to it the bridegroom placed the ring on the top of the left hand thumb with the words "In the name of the Father," removing it to the forefinger, saying, "and of the Son," then to the middle finger as he said "and of the Holy Ghost;" and at last, as he pronounced the word "Amen," leaving it on the fourth finger. Still another reason might be given why this finger was chosen. The ring fingers are thus described by an old authority: "For a soldier or doctor, the thumb; a sailor, the finger next; a fool, the middle finger; a married or diligent person, the fourth or ring finger; a lover, the last or little finger." So the position of the marriage ring may, as some think, symbolise the duty of the wife to give all diligence to the fulfilment of her household work. Among Catholics there is a form of consecrating marriage rings, and the superstitious have ascribed to them many virtues, such as that if a sty in the eye be rubbed with one of them it will disappear. There is an old proverb, "As your wedding ring wears, your cares will wear away." May all good wives find this to be their happy experience!

## HOW TO SEE ONE'S OWN BRAIN.

Dr. Fraser Halle communicates a remarkable discovery, showing how it may be possible to see one's own brain, to the *English Mechanic and World of Science*. Some 40 years since, Purkinde observed that by passing a candle to and fro several times by the side of the eye the air in front became a kind of screen on which was reflected what was then supposed to be a magnified image of part of the retina. Sir C. (then Mr.) Wheatstone believed it to be, Professor Mayo reports ("Physiology," p. 276), the shadow of the vascular network. Mayo thought it was an image of the blood-vessels of the retina. Sir Benjamin Brodie, to whom Dr. Halle wrote on the subject, could not identify it with any part of the retina, and said that it was to him utterly incomprehensible. By means of more careful drawings, especially those in Carpenter's "Manual" and Gray's "Student's Anatomy," Dr. Fraser Halle resumed the exploration a week or two since, and has succeeded in identifying the ocellispectrum with the representations of the interior lobe of the cerebrum. The spectrum consists, he has long observed, of red convolutions with dark interspaces, among which a whitish admixture is

sometimes visible. These, he now says, constitute exactly the image of convolutions of the anterior lobe of the cerebrum, with the sulci between them, as given by Gray in his and Dr. Carpenter's drawing of the base of the brain. To observe this discovery one should move the candle to and fro about four inches below the eye, and about three and a quarter inches from the face. When the movement ceases the undulations also cease, and the image disappears. A reddish mist appears first, and the image is soon developed and defined. Night is the best time for it; but it can be seen in a dark place faintly in the daytime. Dr. Fraser Halle noticed this ocellispectrum and its mystery some years since in a lecture on "The Emotions," which he delivered at the South-Western Literary Institute, Nine-elms; and suspected then that it might represent part of the living human brain.

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