

Leaves from a Life in London — No. III

By William E. Burton

The Secret Cell

I'll no more—the heart is torn
By views of woe we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these things forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style.
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,
While struggling for the full-drawn sigh. —Crabbe.

ABOUT eight years ago, I was the humble means of unraveling a curious piece of villainy that occurred in one of the suburbs of London; it is well worth recording, in exemplification of that portion of "Life" which is constantly passing in the holes and corners of the Great Metropolis. My tale, although romantic enough to be a fiction, is excessively commonplace in some of the details—it is a jumble of real life; a conspiracy, an abduction, a nunnery, and a lunatic asylum, are mixed up with constables, hackney-coaches, and an old washerwoman. I regret also that my heroine is not only without a lover, but is absolutely free from the influence of the passion, and is not persecuted on account of her transcendent beauty.

Mrs. Lobenstein was the widow of a German coachman, who had accompanied a noble family from the continent of Europe; and, anticipating a lengthened stay, he had prevailed upon his wife to bring over their only child, a daughter, and settle down in the rooms apportioned to his use, over the stable, in one of the fashionable mews at the west end of London. But Mr. Lobenstein had scarcely embraced his family, ere he was driven off, post haste, to the other world, leaving his destitute relict, with a very young daughter, to buffet her way along the rugged path of life.

With a little assistance from the nobleman in whose employ her husband had for some time been settled, Mrs. Lobenstein was enabled to earn a respectable livelihood, and filled the honorable situation of laundress to many families of gentility, besides divers stray bachelors, dandies, and men about town. The little girl grew to be an assistance, instead of a drag, to her mother; and the widow found that her path was not entirely desolate, nor "choked with the brambles of despair."

In the sixth year of her bereavement, Mrs. Lobenstein, who presided over the destinies of my linen, called at my rooms, in company with a lady of equal width, breadth, and depth. Mrs. L. was of the genuine Hanseatic build—of the real Bremen beam—when in her presence, you felt the overwhelming nature of her pretensions to be considered a woman of some weight in the world, and standing in society. On the occasion of the visit in question, her friend was equally adipose, and it would have puzzled a conjurer to have turned the party into a tallowy trio. Mrs. L. begged leave to recommend her friend as her successor in the lavatorial line—for her own part, she was independent of work, thank heaven! and meant to retire from the worry of trade.

I congratulated her on the successful termination of her flourish with the washtubs.

“Oh, *I* have not made the money bless you! I might have scrubbed my fingers to the bones before I could have done more than earn my daily bread, and get, maybe, a black silk gown or so for Sundays. No, no! My Mary has done more with her quiet, meeting-day face in one year, than either the late Mr. Lobenstein or myself could compass in our lives.”

Mary Lobenstein, an artless, merry, blue-eyed girl of seventeen had attracted the attention of a bedridden lady whose linen she was in the habit of carrying home; and in compliance with the importunities of the old lady, she agreed to reside in her house as the invalid's sole and especial attendant. The old lady, luckily, was almost friendless; an hypocritical hyena of a niece, who expected, and had been promised, the reversion of her fortune, would occasionally give an inquiry relative to the state of her aunt's health; but so miserably did she conceal her joy at the approach of the old lady's dissolution, that the party in question perceived her selfish and mercenary nature, and disgusted at her evident security of purpose, called in an attorney, and executed an entirely new will. There was no other relative to select—Mary Lobenstein had been kind and attentive; and, more from revenge than good nature, the old lady bequeathed the whole of her property to the lucky little girl, accepting a trifling annuity to the old maid, her niece, who also held the chance of possession in case of Mary's death.

When this will was read by the man of law, who brought it forth in due season after the old lady's demise, Mary's wonder and delight almost equaled the rage and despair of the hyena of a niece, whom we shall beg leave to designate by the name of Elizabeth Bishop. She raved and swore the deadliest revenge against the innocent Mary, who one minute trembled at the denunciations of the thin and yellow spinster, and in the next chuckled and danced at the suddenness of her unexpected good fortune.

Mr. Wilson, the lawyer, desired the disinherited to leave the premises to the legal owner, and staid by Miss Mary Lobenstein and her fat mama till they were in full and undisturbed possession. The “good luck,” as Mrs. L. called it, had fallen so suddenly upon them, that a very heavy wash was left unfinished, to attend to the important business; and the complaints of the naked and destitute customers alone aroused the lucky laundress to a sense of her situation. The right and privilege of the routine of customers were sold to another fat lady, and Mrs. Lobenstein called upon me, among the rest of her friends, to solicit the continuance of my washing for her stout successor.

A year passed away. I was lying in bed one wintry morning, and shivering with dread at the idea of poking my uncased legs into the cold air of the room, when my landlady disturbed my cogitations by knocking loudly at the room door, and requesting my instant appearance in the parlor, where “a fat lady in tears” wished my presence. The existence of the obese Mrs. Lobenstein had almost slipped my memory; and I was somewhat startled at seeing that lady, dressed in a gaudy colored silk gown, and velvet hat and feathers, in violent hysterics upon my crimson silk ottoman, that groaned beneath its burden. The attentions of my landlady and her domestic soon restored my *ci-devant* laundress to a state of comparative composure, when the distressed lady informed me that her daughter, her only child, had been missing for several days, and that, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of herself, her lawyer, and her friends, she had been unable to obtain the smallest intelligence respecting her beloved Mary. She had been to the police offices, had advertised in the newspapers, had personally inquired of all her friends or acquaintance, yet every exertion had resulted in disappointment.

“Every body pities me, but no one suggests a means of finding my darling, and I am almost distracted. She left me one evening—it was quite early—to carry a small present to the chandlers’ shop woman, who was so kind to us when I was left a destitute widow. My dear girl had but three streets to go, and ran out without a cloak or shawl; she made her gift to the poor woman, and instantly set out to return home. She never reached home—and, woe is me, I fear she never will. The magistrates at the police office said that she had eloped with some sweetheart; my Mary loved no one but her mother—and my heart tells me that my child could not willingly abandon her widowed parent for any new affection that might have entered her young breast. She had no followers—we were never for one hour apart, and I knew every thought of her innocent mind. One gentleman—he said he was a parson—called on me this morning, to administer consolation; yet he hinted that my poor girl had probably committed self-destruction—that the light of grace had suddenly burst upon her soul, and the sudden knowledge of her sinful state had been too much for her to bear, and, in desperation, she had hurried from the world. Alas! if my poor Mary is indeed no more, it was not by her own act that she appeared in haste before her Maker—God loved the little girl that he had made so good; the light of heavenly happiness glistened in her bright and pretty eyes; and she was too fond of this world’s beauties, and the delights of life showered by the Almighty upon His children, to think of repaying Him by gloom and suicide! No, no! Upon her bended knees, morning and night, she prayed to her Father in Heaven, that His will might be done; her religion, like her life, was simple, but pure. She was not of the creed professed by him who thought to cheer a parent’s broken heart by speaking of a daughter’s shameful death.”

The plain, but earnest eloquence of the poor lady excited my warmest sympathy. She had called on me for advice; but I resolved to give her my personal assistance, and exert all my faculties in the clearance of this mystery. She denied the probability of any one being concerned in kidnapping, or conveying away her daughter—for, as she simply expressed herself, “she was too insignificant to have created an enemy of such importance.”

I had a friend in the police department—a man who suffered not his intimacy with the villainy of the world to dull the humanities of nature. At the period of my tale, he was but little known, and the claims of a large family pressed hard upon him; yet his enemies have been unable to affix a stain upon his busy life. He has since attained a height of reputation that must ensure a sufficient

income; he is established as the head of the private police of London—a body of men possessing rare and wonderful attainments. To this man I went; and, in a few words, excited his sympathy for the heart-stricken mother, and obtained a promise of his valuable assistance.

“The mother is rich,” said I, “and if successful in your search, I can warrant you a larger reward than the sum total of your last year’s earnings.”

“A powerful inducement, I confess,” replied L—, “but my professional pride is roused; it is a case deserving attention from its apparent inexplicability—to say nothing of the mother’s misery, and that is something to a father and a son.”

I mentioned every particular connected with the affair, and as he declined visiting Mrs. Lobenstein’s house, invited her to a conference with the officer at my lodgings, where he was made acquainted with many a curious item that seemed to have no connection with the subject we were in consultation upon. But this minute curiosity pleased the mother, and she went on her way rejoicing, for she was satisfied in her own mind that the officer would discover the fate of her child. Strange to say, although L— declared that he possessed not the slightest clue, this feeling on the part of the mother daily became stronger; a presentiment of the officer’s success became the leading feature of her life; and she waited for many days with a placid face and a contented mind. The prophetic fancies of her maternal heart were confirmed; and L— eventually restored the pretty Mary to her mother’s arms.

About ten days after the consultation, he called on me, and reported progress—requiring my presence at the police office for the purpose of making the affidavit necessary for the procurement of a search warrant.

“I have been hard at work,” said he, “and if I have not found out where the young lady is concealed, I have at least made a singular discovery. My own inquiries in the mother’s neighbourhood were not attended with any success; I therefore sent my wife, a shrewd woman, and well adapted for the business. She went without a shawl or bonnet, as if she had but stepped out from an adjacent house, into the baker’s, the grocer’s, the chandler’s, and the beer shop; and while making her trifling purchases, she asked in a careless gossiping way, if any intelligence of Miss Lobenstein had been obtained? everybody was willing to talk of such a remarkable circumstance; and my wife listened patiently to many different versions of the story but without obtaining any useful intelligence. One day, the last attempt that I had determined she should make, she observed that a huckster woman, who was standing in a baker’s shop when the question was discussed, betrayed a violence of speech against the bereaved parent, and seemed to rejoice in her misfortunes. The womanly feeling of the rest of the gossips put down her inhuman chucklings, but my wife, with considerable tact, I must say, joined the huckster in her vituperation, rightly judging that there must be some peculiar reason for disliking a lady who seems generally esteemed, and who was then suffering under an affliction the most distressing to a female heart. The huckster invited my wife to walk down the street with her.

“I say—are you one of Joe’s gang?” whispered the huckster.

“Yes,” said my wife.

“I thought so, when I seed you grinning at the fat old Dutchey’s trouble. Did Joe come down with the rhino pretty well to you about this business?”

“Not to me,’ said my wife, at a venture.

“Nor to me, neither, the shabby varmint. Where was your post?”

“This question rather bothered my wife, but she answered,

“I swore not to tell.’

“Oh, stuff! They’ve got the girl, and it’s all over now, in course; though Sal Brown who giv’d Joe the information about the girl, says that five pounds won’t stop her mouth, when there’s a hundred offered for the information—so we thought of splitting upon Joe, and touching the rhino. If you knows any more nor we do, and can make your share of the work, you may join our party, and come in for your whacks.’

“Well, I know a good deal, if I liked to tell it— what do you know?”

“Why, I knows that four of us were employed to watch when Miss Lobenstein went out in the evening without her mother, and to let Joe know directly; and I know that we did watch for six months and more; and when Sal Brown *did* let him know, that the girl was missing that same night, and ha’n’t been heard on since.’

“But do you know where she is?” said my wife in a whisper.

“Well, I can’t say that I do. My stall is at the corner near the mother’s house; and Sal Brown was walking past, up and down the street, a following her profession. She’s of opinion that the girl has been sent over the herring pond to some place abroad; but my idea is that she ha’n’t far off, for Joe hasn’t been away many hours together, I know.’

“My wife declared that she was acquainted with every particular, and would join them in forcing Joe to be more liberal in his disbursements, or give him up to justice, and claim the reward. She regretted that she was compelled to go to Hornsey to her mother for the next few days, but agreed to call at the huckster’s stall immediately on her return.

“There was one point more that my wife wished to obtain. ‘I saw the girl alone one night when it was quite dark, but Joe was not to be found when I went after him. Where did Sal Brown meet with him, when she told of the girl?’

“Why, at the Blue Lion beer shop, to be sure,’ said the other.

“I was waiting in the neighborhood, well disguised. I received my wife’s valuable information, and in a few minutes was sitting in the taproom of the Blue Lion, an humble public house of inferior pretensions. I was dressed in a shooting jacket, breeches, and gaiters, with a shot belt and powder horn slung round me. A huge pair of red whiskers circled my face, and a dark red shock

of hair peeped from the sides of my broad-rimmed hat. I waited in the dull room, stinking of beer and tobacco, till the house closed for the night, but heard nothing of my Joe, although I listened attentively to the conversation of the incomers, a strange, uncouth set, entirely composed of the lower order of laborers, and seemingly unacquainted with each other.

“The whole of the next day, I lounged about the sanded tap room, and smoked my pipe, and drank my beer in silent gloominess. The landlord asked me a few questions, but when his curiosity was satisfied, he left me to myself. I pretended to be a runaway gamekeeper, hiding from my master’s anger for selling his game without permission. The story satisfied the host, but I saw nothing of any stranger, nor did I hear any of the old faces called by the name I wished to hear. One of the visitors was an ill-looking thick-set fellow, and kept up a continual whispering with the landlord—I made sure that he was my man, when, to my great regret I heard him hailed by the name of George.

“I was standing inside the bar, chattering with the landlord, and settling for my pipes and my beer, when a good-looking, fresh-colored, smiling-faced young fellow, danced into the bar, and was immediately saluted by the host, ‘Hollo, JOE, where have you been these two days?’

“‘Heavy business on hand, my buck—occupies all my time, but pays well. So give us a mug of your best, and d— the expense.’

“I had no doubt but this was my man. I entered into conversation with him, in my assumed manner, and my knowledge of the Somersetshire dialect materially assisted my disguise. Joe was evidently a sharp-witted fellow, who knew exactly what he was about. All my endeavors to draw him into talking of his own avocations completely failed; he would laugh, drink, and chatter, but not a word relative to the business that occupied his time could I induce him to utter.

“‘Who’s going to the hop in St. John street?’ said the lively Joe. ‘I mean to have eighteen pennyworth of shake-a-leg there tonight, and have it directly too, for I must be back at my place at daybreak.’

“This was enough for me. I walked with Joe to the vicinity of the dancing rooms, when, pleading a prior engagement, I quitted him, and returned home. My disguise was soon completely altered; my red wig and whiskers, drab hat and shooting dress were exchanged for a suit of black, with a small French cloak of dark cloth, and plain black hat. Thus attired, I watched the entrance of the humble ballroom, fearing that my man might leave it at an early period, for I knew not how far he had to journey to his place in the country, where he was compelled to be by the break of day.

“I walked the pavement of St. John street for six long hours, and was obliged to make myself known to the watchman to prevent his interference, for he doubted the honesty of my intentions. Just before the dawn of day, my friend Joe, who seemed determined to have enough dancing for his money, appeared in the street with a lady on each arm. I had to keep him in sight till he had escorted the damsels to their domiciles; when, buttoning up his coat, and pressing his hat down over his brows, he walked forward with a determined pace. I followed him at a convenient distance. I felt that he was in my power—that I was on the point of tracing the mystery of the girl’s disappearance, and ascertaining the place of her detention.

“Joe walked rapidly towards Shoreditch Church. I was within a hundred feet of him, when the early Cambridge coach dashed down the Kingsland Road. Joe seized the guard’s hold at the side of the back boot, placed his feet upon the hind spring, and in one moment was on the top of the coach, and trundling away from me at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

“I was beaten. It was impossible for me to overtake the coach. I thought of hiring a hack, but the rapid progress of the stage defied all idea of overtaking it. I returned dispirited to my home.

“My courage rose with the conception of fresh schemes. In the course of the day, I called on a friend, a stage coachman, and telling him some of the particulars of my object, asked him to introduce me to the driver of the Cambridge coach. I met him on his return to town the next day, and, by the help of my friend, overcame his repugnance to talk with strangers respecting the affairs of his passengers. I learnt, at last, that Joe never travelled more than half a dozen miles, but Elliott, the coachman, was unable to say who he was, or where he went to. My plan was soon arranged, and Elliott was bribed to assist me.

“The next morning by daybreak, I was sitting on the top of the Cambridge coach, well wrapped up in a large white top coat, with a shawl tied over my mouth. I got on the coach at the inn yard, and as we neared the church, looked out anxiously for my friend Joe; but he was not to be seen, nor could I discern any thing of him for six or seven miles along the road. The first stage was performed, and while the horses were being changed, Elliott, the coachman, pointed out a strange ill-looking man, in a close light waistcoat with white sleeves, white breeches, yarn stockings, and high-low shoes. ‘That fellow,’ said Elliott, ‘is always in company with the man you have been inquiring about. I have seen them frequently together come from over that style; he is now waiting for Joe, I’ll bet a pound.’

I alighted, and bargained with the landlord of the small roadside inn for the use of the front bedroom, up stairs. I took my post, and as the stage departed, began my watch. Joe did not appear till late in the afternoon—his friend eagerly seized him by the arm, and began to relate something with great anxiety of look and energy of action. They moved off over the style. I glided out of the house, and followed them. A footpath wound through an extensive meadow, and the men were rapidly nearing the farthest end. I hastened my pace, and gained the centre of the field, ere they were aware of my approach. I observed a telegraphic signal pass between them, and they instantly stopped their expedition, and turning back upon their path, sauntered slowly towards me. I kept on; we met—their eyes were searchingly bent upon me, but I maintained an easy gait and undisturbed countenance, and continued my walk for some minutes after they were past. As I climbed the farthest style, I observed them watching me from the other end of the field. I saw no more of Joe or his friend for the rest of that day and the whole of the next.

“I was much annoyed at my disappointment, and resolved not to be again outwitted. Every possible inquiry that could be made without exciting the curiosity of the neighbourhood, was instituted, but I was unable to obtain the smallest information, either of the abducted lady or of Joe’s individuality. His friend was known as a vagabond of the first class—a discharged ostler, with a character that marked him ready for the perpetration of every crime.

“I was hunting in the dark. I had nothing but surmises to go upon, excepting the declaration of the huckster, that a man named Joe was the means of Miss [Lobenstein’s] absence, but I was not sure that I was in pursuit of that identical Joe. The mystery attending the object of my suspicion gave an appearance of probability to my supposition, but it seemed as if I was not to proceed beyond the limits of uncertainty. I resolved, after waiting till the evening of the next day, to return to the taproom of the Blue Lion, and the impenetrability of my gamekeeper’s disguise.

“Tying my rough coat up in my shawl, I clapped the bundle under my arm, and walked quietly along the road. As I passed through some posts on the sidewalk, a post-chaise was coming through the adjoining toll gate. A scuffle, accompanied with high oaths, in the interior of the chaise, attracted my attention; a hand was dashed through the carriage window, and cries for help were loudly vociferated. I ran towards the chaise; and ordered the postillion to stop; a coarse voice desired him to drive on; the command was repeated with violent imprecations, and the horses, severely lashed, bounded rapidly away. I was sufficiently near to catch hold of the back of the springs as the vehicle moved; the motion was violent, but I kept my grasp. The back board of the chaise, where the footman should stand, had been covered with a double row of iron spikes, to prevent the intrusion of idle boys; but, determined not to lose sight of the ruffians who were thus violating the peace of the realm, I pressed my bundle hard upon the spikes, and jumping nimbly up, found myself in a firm and pleasant seat.

“The carriage rolled speedily along. I determined, at the very first halting place, to summon assistance, and desire an explanation of the outcries and demands for help. If, as there seemed but little doubt, some act of lawless violence was being perpetrated. I resolved to arrest the principals upon the spot. While cogitating on the probabilities of the result, I received a tremendous cut across the face, from the thong of a heavy leather whip, jerked with considerable violence from the window of the post-chaise. A second well-directed blow drove me from my seat, and I fell into the road, severely lacerated, and almost blind.

“I rolled upon the dusty ground, and writhed in excessive agony. A thick wale crossed each cheek, and one of my eyes had been terrifically hit. It was yet early night, and the public nature of the road soon afforded me assistance. A young man passed me, driving a gig towards London; I hailed him, and requested his services. A slight detail of the cause in which I had received my injuries, induced him to turn round and receive me in the vacant seat. The promise of half a guinea tempted him to drive rapidly after the chaise, and in a few minutes we heard the sound of wheels. The young man cheered his horse to greater progress, but we were unable to pass the vehicle in advance, and it was not till we both drew up to the door of the roadside inn, where I had previously stopped, that we discovered that we had been in pursuit of a mail-coach instead of a post-chaise.

“The waiter declared that ‘nothin’ of a four-veel natur, ’cept a vaggin and a *nearse*’ had passed within the previous half hour. Placing my gig friend over some brandy and water, I sought the recesses of the kitchen, that I might procure some cooling liquid to bathe my face with. While busily employed at the yard pump, the sound of voices from an adjoining stable arrested my attention. The dim light of a lantern fell upon the figure of the ostler whom I had seen in company with mysterious Joe. I advanced lightly, in hopes of hearing the conversation. When I reached the door, I was startled by the sudden approach of some one from the other side of the

yard, and compelled to hide behind the door. A stable helper popped his head into the building, and said—

“See here, Billee, vot I found sticking on the spikes of the chay you’ve left in the lane.’

“My luckless bundle was produced, and speedily untied. Directly Billy, for so was the suspicious ostler named, saw my rough, white, great coat, he exclaimed, with considerable energy—

“I’m blessed if ve haint been looked arter. I seed this ere toggery a valking arter Joe and me in the meadow yonder. Ve thought it suspectable, so ve mizzled back. And I’m jiggered if the owner vornt sitting behind our conveyance, ven Joe hit him a vollop or two vith your vip to knock him off. Tommy, my tulip, I’ll go back vi’ you tonight, and vait a vhile till the vind changes.’

“It was evident then, that Joe was connected with the abduction of the day—another convincing proof that he was the active agent in Miss Lobenstein’s affair. With respect to my friend the ostler, I determined to try the effects of a little coercion, but concluded that it would be better to let him reach some distance from his usual haunts, to prevent alarming his comate Joe.

“In about an hour the post-chaise was driven to the door; and the ostler, much the worse for his potations, was placed within the body of the vehicle. I was soon after them, in company with the young man in the gig, and we kept the chaise in sight till it had entered the still and deserted streets of the city. It was nearly midnight; the drunken ostler desired the scarcely sober postillion to put him out at the door of a tavern. I walked up to the astonished couple, and, arresting them on a charge of felony, slipped a pair of small but powerful spring handcuffs over the ostler’s wrists. I conducted him, helpless and amazed, to an adjacent watch-house; and mentioning my name and office, desired his safe custody till I could demand his body. The postillion, who was guarded by my gig friend, became much alarmed; and volunteered any information that I might desire. He confessed that he had been employed that afternoon, by one Joseph Mills, to carry a lunatic priest to the Franciscan Monastery, at Enfield Chase, from whence it was asserted that he had made his escape. The existence of a religious establishment in that neighborhood was entirely unknown to me, and I questioned the postillion respecting the number of its inmates, and the name of the superior, but he professed to know nothing beyond the locality of the building, and declared that he had never been inside the yard gate. He admitted that Joseph Mills had employed him several times upon the same business; and that, rather more than a fortnight ago, Billy, the ostler, had desired him to bring up a post-chaise from his master’s yard at a minute’s notice, and that a young lady was lifted, in a senseless state, into the chaise, and driven down to the building at Enfield as rapidly as the horses could be made to go.

“I took down his directions respecting the house, and at daybreak this morning I reconnoitered the front and back of the building. If I am any judge, that house is not devoted to monastic purposes alone; but you will see it tomorrow, I trust; for I wish you to accompany me as early in the morning as we can start, after procuring the warrants for a general search into the secrets of this most mysterious monastery.”

[To be continued.]

It was nearly noon the next day before we were enabled to complete our necessary arrangements. L—, Mr. Wilson, the attorney, Mr. R—, a police magistrate of some distinction, and the reader's humble servant, stepped into a private carriage, while a police officer, well armed, sat with the driver. The magistrate had been interested in the details necessary for the procurement of the warrant, and had invited himself to the development of the mystery. An hour's ride brought us to the entrance of a green lane that wound its mazy length between hedges of prickly holly and withered hawthorn trees. After traversing this lane for nearly two miles, we turned again to the left, by L—'s direction, and entered a narrow pass between a high brick wall and a huge bank, surmounted by a row of high and gloomy trees. The wall formed the boundary of the monastery grounds, and, at a certain place, where an ascent in the narrow road favored the purpose, we were desired by L— to mount the roof of the coach, and, by looking over the wall, to inspect the back front of the building. Massive bars of iron were fastened across every window of the house; in some places, the frames and glass were entirely removed, and the gratings were fixed in the naked brick work; or the apertures were fitted with thick boarding, excepting a small place at the top for the admission of the smallest possible quantity of light and air. The windows of a range of outhouses, which extended down one side of the extensive yard, were also securely barred; and a small square stone building stood in the middle of the garden, which immediately adjoined the yard. Two sides of this singular construction were visible from our coach top, yet neither door nor window were to be discerned.

One of our party pointed out a pale and wild-looking face glaring at us from one of the grated windows of the house. "Let us away," said L—, "we are observed; and a farther gratification of our curiosity may prevent a successful issue to my scheme."

"This looks more like a prison than a monastery or convent," said the magistrate.

"I fear that we shall find it worse than either," replied L—.

In a few minutes the carriage stopped at the gate of the building, the front of which exhibited but few points for the attachment of suspicion. The windows were shaded by blinds and curtains, but free from gratings or bars. The palings that enclosed a small fore court, were of massive oak, and being mounted on a dwarf wall, effectually prevented the intrusion of uninvited guests. The gates were securely closed, but the handle of a small bell invited attention, and a lusty pull by the driver gave notice of our presence.

L—, who had quitted the vehicle by the off door, requested the magistrate to keep out of sight, and with his brother officer, retired behind the coach. Our course of proceeding had been well arranged; when the door of the house was opened, I put my head from the carriage window, and requested to see the superior of the convent. The attendant, a short, ill-looking fellow in a fustian coat and gaiters, desired to know my business with him. "It is of great secrecy and importance," I replied; "I cannot leave the carriage, because I have somebody here that requires my strictest attention. Give your master this card, and he will know exactly who I am, and what I require."

Our scheme succeeded. The fellow left his post, and, unfastening the paling gate, advanced to the edge of the footpath, and put his hand in at the window of the carriage for my card. L— and the officer glided from their concealment, and secured possession of the outer gate and the door of the house, before the fellow had time to give the alarm. The driver, who had pretended to busy himself with the horses, immediately opened the carriage door; and in a few seconds, the whole of our party were mustered in the entrance hall. The man who had answered the bell, when he recovered his surprise, rushed to the door, and attempted to force his way to the interior of the house. The police officer stopped him, and an angry altercation ensued—he placed his finger in his mouth, and gave a loud and lengthy whistle. L—, who was busily engaged in searching for the fastenings of an iron screen, that crossed the width of the hall, observed the noise, and turning round to his mate, said quietly, “If he’s troublesome, Tommy, *give him a pair of gloves.*” In two minutes, the fellow was sitting helpless on the ground, securely handcuffed.

“Confound him,” said L—, “he must have come out through this grating; there is no other entrance to the hall, and yet I cannot discover the doorway; and I am afraid that his signal has made it worse, for I heard the click of spring work directly after he gave his whistle.”

“This grating is a common appendage to a convent or religious house,” said Mr. Wilson. “Perhaps we are giving ourselves unnecessary trouble—let us ring the bell again, and we may obtain admission without the use of force.”

The officer and the magistrate exchanged a smile. The latter went to the man who had opened the door, and said, in a low tone of voice, “We *must* get into the house, my man; show us how we can pass this grating, and I will give you five guineas. If you refuse, I shall commit you to jail, whether your connection with this establishment deserves it or no. I am a magistrate, and these, my officers, are acting under my direction.”

The man spoke not; but, raising his manacled hands to his mouth, gave another whistle of peculiar shrillness and modulation.

The hall in which we were detained, was of great height and extent. Beyond the iron screen, a heavy partition of wood work cut off the lower end, and a door of heavy oak opened from the room thus formed into the body of the hall. An open, but grated window, was immediately above the door, and extended almost from one end of the partition to the other. L—, observing this, climbed up the iron screen with the agility of the cat, and had scarcely attained the top, ere we observed him level a pistol towards some object in the enclosure, and exclaim, with a loud voice, “Move one step, and I’ll drive a couple of bullets through your skull.”

“What do you require?” exclaimed a tremulous voice from within.

“Send your friend there, Joe Mills, to open the door of the grating. If *you* move hand or foot, I’ll pull trigger, and your blood be upon your own head.”

L— afterwards informed me, that upon climbing the screen, he discerned a gentleman in black in close consultation with a group of men. They were standing at the farther end of the enclosure

against a window, the light of which enabled him to pick out the superior, and to discern the physiognomy of his old acquaintance Joe.

“Come, come, Joe, make haste,” said L—, “my fingers are cramped, and I may fire in mistake.”

The threat was effectual in its operation. The man was afraid to move, and the door of the enclosure was opened by his direction. Joe walked trippingly across the hall, and, touching a spring in one of the iron rails, removed the fastenings from a portion of the screen, and admitted our party.

“How do you do, Mr. Mills?” said L—; “how are our friends at the Blue Lion? You must excuse me if I put you to a little inconvenience, but you are so volatile that we can’t make sure of finding you when we want you, unless we take the requisite precaution. Tommy, tackle him to his friend, and by way of greater security, fasten them to the grating— but don’t waste the gloves, for we have several more to fit.”

“Gentlemen,” said the man in black, advancing to the door of the enclosure, “what is the reason of this violence? Why is the sanctity of this holy establishment thus defiled? Who are you, and what seek you here?”

“I am a magistrate, sir, and these men are officers of justice armed with proper authority to search this house for the person of Mary Lobenstein, and we charge you with her unlawful detention. Give her to our care, and you may save yourself much trouble.”

“I know nothing of the person you mean, nor are we subject to the supervision of your laws. This house is devoted to religious purposes—it is the abode of penitents who have abjured the world and all its vanities. We are under the protection of the Legate of His Holiness the Pope, and the laws of England do not forbid our existence. Foreigners only dwell within these walls, and I cannot allow the interference of any party unauthorised by the head of the church.”

“I shall not stop,” said the magistrate, “to expose the errors of your statement; I am furnished with sufficient power to demand a right of search in any house in the kingdom. Independent of ascertaining the safety of the individual with whose abduction you are charged, it is my duty to inquire into the nature of an establishment assuming the right to capture the subjects of the king of this realm, and detain them in a place having all the appointments of a common prison, yet disowning the surveillance of the English laws. Mr. L—, you will proceed in your search, and if any one attempts to oppose you, he must take the consequences.”

The countenance of the man in black betrayed the uneasiness he felt; the attendants, six in number, who, with our friend Mills, had formed the council whose deliberations were disturbed by the sight of L—’s pistol, were ranged beneath the window that looked into the yard, and waited the commands of the chief. This man, whose name we afterwards ascertained was Farrell, exchanged a look of cunning with his minions, and, with apparent resignation, replied,

“Well, sir, it is useless for me to contend with the authority you possess; Mr. Nares, throw open the yard door, and, do you and your men attend the gentlemen round the circuit of the cells.”

The person addressed, unbolted the fastenings of a huge door that opened into the yard, and bowed to our party as if waiting their precedence. Mr. Wilson being nearest the door, went first, and Nares, with a bend of his head, motioned two of his party to follow. As they passed him, he gave them a knowing wink, and said, "Take the gentlemen to the stone house first." The magistrate was about to pass into the yard, when L— seized him by the collar of his coat, and violently pulling him back into the room, closed the door, and jerked the principal bolt into its socket.

"Excuse my rudeness, sir, but you will soon perceive that it was necessary. Your plan, Mr. Nares, is a very good plan, but will scarcely answer your purpose. We do not intend placing ourselves at the mercy of your men in any of your stone houses, or cells with barred windows. You have the keys of the establishment at your girdle—go round with us yourself, and let those five or six fellows remain here instead of dancing at our heels. Come, come, sir, we are not to be trifled with; no hesitation, or I shall possess myself of your keys, and leave you securely affixed to your friend Mills."

Nares grinned defiance, but made no reply; Farrell, whose pale face exhibited his dismay, took courage from the dogged bearing of his official, and stuttered out, "Mr. Nares, I desire that you will not give up your keys." The hint was sufficient. Nares and his fellows, who were all furnished with bludgeons, raised their weapons in an attitude of attack, and a general fight was inevitable. The closing of the yard door had cut off one of our friends, but it also excluded two of the enemy. Still the odds were fearfully against us, not only in point of numbers, which rated five to four, but our antagonists were all of them armed, while the magistrate and I were totally unprovided with the means of defence.

Hostilities commenced by one of the men striking me a violent blow upon the fleshy part of the left shoulder, that sent me staggering to the other side of the room. Two of the ruffians simultaneously faced the police officer, as if to attack him; he received the blow of the nearest, upon his mace or staff of office, and before the fellow had time to lift his guard, returned him a smashing rap upon the fingers of his right hand, compelling him to drop his cudgel, and run howling into the corner of the room. The officer then turned his attention to the fellow who had assaulted me, and who was flourishing his stick with the intent of repeating the blow—but receiving a severe crack across his shins from the officer's mace, he was unable to keep his legs, and dropped upon the floor. I immediately wrested the bludgeon from his grasp, and left him *hors de combat*. The officer, while assisting me, received a knockdown blow from the fellow who had hesitated joining in the first attack, but, catlike, had been watching his opportunity for a pounce. I gave him in return a violent thump upon his head, and drove his hat over his eyes—then, rushing in upon him, I pinioned his arms, and held him till the officer rose and assisted me to secure him. While placing the handcuffs upon him, I was favored with a succession of kicks from the gentleman with the crippled hand.

L—, having drawn a pistol from his pocket, advanced to Nares and desired him to deliver up the keys; the ruffian answered him by striking a heavy blow on L—'s ear that immediately produced blood. The officer, exhibiting the utmost self-possession under these irritating circumstances, did not fire the pistol at his adversary, but dashed the weapon into his face, and inflicted a painful wound. Nares was a man of bulldog courage. He seized the pistol, and struggled fearfully for its

possession. His gigantic frame and strength overpowered his antagonist; the pistol was discharged in the scuffle, luckily without wounding any one—and the ruffian, holding the conquered L— upon the ground, was twisting his cravat for the purpose of choking him, when, having satisfactorily arranged our men, we arrived to the rescue, and prevented the scoundrel from executing his villainous intention. But Nares, although defeated by numbers, evinced a determination to die game—it was with the utmost difficulty that we were enabled to secure his arms, and while slipping the handcuffs over his wrists, he continued to leave the marks of his teeth upon the fingers of the policeman.

While this furious *melée* was going on, the magistrate had been unceremoniously collared by the master of the house, and thrust forth into that part of the hall which adjoined the iron screen. But his worship did not reverence this ungentlemanly proceeding, and turned valiantly upon his assailer. Both of them were unprovided with weapons, and a furious bout of fisty-cuffs ensued, wherein his worship was considerably worsted. Mills and the porter, who had been fastened by the policeman to the railing of the screen, encouraged Farrell by their cheers. The magistrate was severely punished, and roared for help; Farrell, dreading collision with the conquerors of his party, left his man, and started off, through the open door of the grating; he ran down the lane with a speed that defied pursuit. The driver and the magistrate both endeavored to overtake him, but they soon lost sight of the nimble rogue, and returned discomfited to the house.

During the scuffle, the two men, who, with Mr. Wilson, were shut out by the promptitude of L—, clamored loudly at the door for readmission. The attorney, as he afterwards confessed, was much alarmed at the position in which he found himself—cut off from all communication with his friends, and left at the mercy of two ill-looking scoundrels, in a strange place, and surrounded by a range of grated prisons, while a number of cadaverous, maniac looking faces glared at him from between the bars.

Upon mustering our party, we were all more or less wounded. The magistrate was outrageous in his denunciations of vengeance upon all the parties concerned; his discolored eye and torn apparel, besides the bruises about his person, had inflamed his temper, and he declared that it was his firm determination to offer a large reward for the apprehension of the chief ruffian, Farrell. L— was much hurt, and for some time appeared unable to stand alone—his ear bled profusely, and relieved his head, which had been seriously affected by Nares's attempt at strangulation. The other officer had received a severe thumping, and his bitten hand gave him much pain. My left arm was almost useless, and many bloody marks exhibited the effects of the fellow's kicks upon my shins. Nevertheless, we had fought a good fight, and had achieved a perilous victory.

The magistrate threw up the window sash, and addressed the men in the yard from between the iron gratings. "Harkee, you sirs, we have thrashed your fellows, and have them here in custody. If you attempt resistance, we shall serve you exactly in the same manner. But if either of you feel inclined to assist us in the discharge of our duty, and will freely answer every question, and render all the help in his power, you shall not only be forgiven for any part you may have taken in scenes of past violence, short of murder, but shall be well rewarded into the bargain."

One of the men, and I must say that he was the most ill-looking of the whole lot, immediately stepped forward, and offered to turn “king’s evidence,” if the magistrate would swear to keep his promise. The other fellow growled his contempt of “the sneak what would snitch,” and darted rapidly down the yard. As we never saw him again, it is supposed that he got into the garden, and found some means of escaping over the walls.

The yard door was opened, and the lawyer and the informer were admitted. The latter personage told us that his wife was the matron of the establishment, and, with her sister, would be found up stairs. The keys were taken from Nares, and we began our search. Mr. Wilson desired the man to conduct us to Mary Lobenstein’s room, but he positively denied the knowledge of any such person. His wife, a coarse, pock-marked, snub-nosed woman, with a loud, masculine voice, also declared that no female answering to that name, had ever been within the house. L— remarked that no credit was to be attached to their assertions, and ordered them to lead the way to the search.

It would occupy too much space to describe minutely the nature of the persons and events that we encountered in our rounds. Suffice it to say, we soon discovered that the suspicions of the police officer and the magistrate barely reached the truth. Farrell’s establishment had no connection with any religious house, nor could we discover either monk, friar, nun, or novice in any of the cells. But the name was a good cloak for the villainous usages practised in the house, as it disarmed suspicion, and prevented the interference of the police. The house, in reality, was a private madhouse, but subject to the foulest abuses; wives who were tired of their husbands, and vice versa—reprobate sons, wishing to *dispose* of fathers— or villains who wanted to remove their rivals, either in love or wealth, could secure safe lodgings for the obnoxious personages in Farrell’s Farm, as it was termed by the knowing few. Farrell could always obtain a certificate of the lunacy of the person to be removed; Nares had been bred to the pestle and the mortar; and as the act then stood, an apothecary’s signature was sufficient authority for immuring a suspected person. Incurables, of the worst description, were received by Farrell, and boarded at the lowest rate. He generally contracted for a sum down, guaranteeing that their friends should never again be troubled by them—and, as the informer said, “He gave them little enough to eat, and if they did not die, it wasn’t his fault.”

The house was also appropriated to other purposes of secrecy and crime. Ladies in a delicate situation were accommodated with private rooms for their accouchement, and the children effectually provided for. Fugitives from justice were sure of concealment, if they could obtain admission to the farm. In short, Farrell’s doors, although closed to the world and the eye of the law, were open to all who could afford to pay, or be paid for—from the titled seducer and his victim, whose ruin was effected in the elegant suite of rooms fronting the lane—to the outcast bedlamite, the refuse of the poorhouse, and the asylum, who was condemned to a slow, but certain death in the secret cells of this horrible abode.

It would fill a volume to recount the history of the sufferers whom we released from their almost hopeless imprisonment—a volume of crime, of suffering, and of sorrow.

After a painful and fruitless search through all the various rooms, cells, and hiding places of that singular house, we were compelled to acknowledge that the assertions of the under keeper and

his wife were but too correct. Mary Lobenstein was not among the number of the *detenues* at the Farm, nor could we discover the slightest trace of her. Still L— clung to the hope that, in the confusion necessarily attending our first search, we had passed over some secret cell or dungeon in which the poor girl was immured. The square stone building in the centre of the garden afforded some ground for this surmise—we were unable to open the small iron-banded door that was fixed in the side of this apparently solid structure. The under keeper declared that the key was always in the possession of Farrell, his principal; and that no one ever entered the place but Nares and his master. He was not aware that any person was ever confined in it; a spring of water bubbled up within the building, and he believed that Farrell used it as a wine cellar only. He had seen wine carried in and out of the place. Indeed, the whole appearance of the building corroborated the man's statement—there was no window, air hole, or aperture of any description, excepting the small door before mentioned; and the contracted size of the place itself prevented the possibility of its containing a hiding hole for a human being, if a well or spring occupied the area, as the keeper affirmed.

Resigning this last hope of finding the poor girl, we gave our assistance to the magistrate in removing the prisoners, and placing the unfortunates whom we had released in temporary but appropriate abodes. In this service, the under keeper and his wife proved valuable auxiliaries, in pointing out the incurable mad folks, and those who, in his opinion, had been unjustly detained. The prisoners were placed in our carriage, and conveyed to London, under the superintendance of L— himself, who promised to return during the evening with additional assistance. The policeman was despatched to Enfield for several carriages and postchaises. Some of the most desperate and confirmed maniacs were sent to the lunatic asylum, with the magistrate's order for their admittance, and two or three of the sick and sorrowing were removed to the Middlesex hospital.

I assisted the lawyer and the magistrate in taking the depositions of several of the sufferers who appeared sane enough to warrant the truth of their stories. As night approached, I prepared for a departure, and Mr. Wilson resolved to accompany me; we received the addresses of several persons from various inmates of the Farm, who requested us to let their families know of the place of their detention. As we drove down the lane, we met L—, and a posse of police officers, who were to accompany the magistrate in his night sojourn at the house, and assist him in the removal of the rest of the inmates in the morning.

During the evening, I called, with a heavy heart, upon Mrs. Lobenstein, and communicated the melancholy result of our scheme. I related minutely the particulars of our transaction—she listened quietly to my story, and occasionally interrupted me, when describing the zeal of the officer L—, by invoking the blessings of heaven upon his head. When she learnt the unsuccessful issue of our search, she remained silent for a minute only—when, with a confident tone, and a cheerful voice, she said—“My daughter Mary is in that stone house. The workings of the fingers of Providence are too evident in the wonderful train of circumstances that led to the discovery of Farrell and his infamous mansion. My child is there, but you have not been able to penetrate the secret of her cell. I will go with you in the morning, if you can spare another day to assist a bereaved mother.”

I declared my readiness to accompany her, but endeavored to impress upon her mind the inutility of farther search. She relied securely upon the faith of her divine impression, as she termed it, and declared that God would never suffer so good a man as L— to be disappointed in his wonderful exertions; the keenness of a mother's eye, the instinct of a mother's love would help him in the completion of his sacred trust. It was impossible to argue with her; and I agreed to be with her at an early hour.

I slept but little during the night, for my bruised shins and battered shoulder pained me considerably, and the strange excitement of the day's events materially assisted to heighten both my corporeal and mental fever. When I arose in the morning, I felt so badly, that nothing but the earnest and confident tone of the poor childless widow induced me to undertake the annoyance of the trip—I could not bear to disappoint her. I found the carriage ready at the door—a couple of mechanics, with sledge hammers, crow bars, and huge bunches of skeleton keys, occupied the front seat, and having placed myself beside Mrs. Lobenstein upon the other seat, the horses trotted briskly along the street. During our ride she informed me that a lawyer had called upon her from Elizabeth Bishop, the disappointed spinster, who, it will be recollected, had lost her expected fortune by the intervention of the gentle Mary Lobenstein. The man stated that Miss Bishop had heard of the disappearance of the inheritor of her aunt's estate, and had desired him to give notice that if proof was not forthcoming of Miss Lobenstein's existence, she should take possession of the property, agreeably to the provision existing in the will. "I am sure," said the mother, "that woman is at the bottom of this affair—she has concerted the abduction of my daughter to obtain possession of the estate—but I trust in God that she will be disappointed in her foul design. A fearful whisper comes across my heart that those who would rob a mother of a child for gold, would not object to rob that child of her existence; but my trust is in the Most High, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and will not consent to the spoliation of the widow and the fatherless."

The probability of the poor girl's murder had been suggested by L—— at the termination of our unsuccessful search, and had occupied a serious portion of my thoughts during the wakeful moments of the past night. Expecting nothing from the mother's repetition of the search, I determined to consult L— upon the feasibility of offering rewards to the villains Mills and Nares for a revelation of the truth, and if we failed in eliciting any intelligence, to institute a rigorous examination of the garden and the yard, and discover, if possible, the remains of the murdered girl.

The magistrate received Mrs. Lobenstein with tenderness and respect, and sanctioned her desire to penetrate into the mystery of the square stone house. L— had nothing new to disclose, excepting that, in one of the rooms several articles of female apparel had been discovered, and he suggested that Mrs. L. should inspect them, as, perhaps, something that belonged to her daughter might be among them. The mother remarked that her daughter left home without a bonnet or a shawl, and it was scarcely likely that her body-clothes would be in the room: she, therefore, thought it useless to waste time in going up stairs, but requested the locksmith to accompany her to the stone house in the garden. It was impossible to help sympathising with Mrs. Lobenstein in her anxiety; the magistrate deferred his return to London, where his presence was absolutely necessary to preside at the examination of Messrs. Nares, Mills, and Co., and the warm-hearted L— wiped the moisture from his eyes as he followed the mother across the yard, and heard her

encourage the workmen to commence the necessary proceedings for the release of her darling child. The lock of the stone house was picked—the door was thrown wide open—and the maternal voice was heard in loud citation, but the dull echo of the stone room was the only reply—there was no living creature within the place.

We found the interior of the building to correspond with the description given by the underkeeper. The walls were hollowed into bins, which were filled with wine bottles, packed in sawdust; a circular well, bricked up a little above the level of the floor, filled the centre of the room; the water rose to within a foot of the ground—an old pulley and bucket, rotten from desuetude, clogged up one side of the doorway, and two or three wine barrels filled up the remaining vacancy of space. It was impossible that a human being could be concealed in any part of the building.

Mrs. Lobenstein sighed, and her countenance told of her dismay; but the flame of hope had warmed her heart into a heat that was not to be immediately cooled. “Gentlemen,” said she, “accompany me once more round the cells and secret places—let me be satisfied with my own eyes that a thorough search has been made, and it will remove my doubts that you have overlooked some obscure nook wherein the wretches have concealed my little girl.” The range of chambers was again traversed, but without success, and the widow was compelled to admit that every possible place had been looked into, and that a farther sojourn in the house was entirely useless. The old lady sat down upon the last stair of the second flight, and with a grievous expression of countenance, looked into our several faces as we stood around her, as if she was searching for that consolation it was not in our power to bestow. Tears rolled down her cheeks, and mighty sobs told of the anguish of her heart. I was endeavoring to rouse her to exertion, as the only means of breaking the force of her grief, when my attention was drawn to the loud yelping of a dog, a small cocker spaniel, that had accompanied us in the carriage from Mrs. Lobenstein’s house, and in prowling round the building, had been accidentally shut up in one of the rooms. “Poor Dash!” said the widow, “I must not lose you; my dear Mary was fond of you, and I ought to be careful of her favorite.” I took the hint, and walking down the gallery, opened the door of the room from whence the barking proceeded. It was the apartment that contained the articles of wearing apparel, which Mrs. L. had visited in her round, without discovering any token of her daughter. But the animal’s superior instinct enabled him to detect the presence of a pair of shoes that had graced the feet of the little Mary when she quitted her mother’s house, on the day of her abduction. Immediately the door was opened, the faithful creature gathered up the shoes in his mouth, and ran to his mistress, and dropped them at her feet, inviting her attention by a loud and sagacious bark. The old lady knew the shoes in a moment—“Yes, they are my girl’s—I bought them myself for my darling—she has been here—has been murdered—and the body of my child is now mouldering in the grave.” A violent fit of hysterics ensued, and I consigned her to the care of the wife and sister of the underkeeper, who had not been allowed to leave the house.

I deemed the finding of the shoes to be of sufficient importance to recall the magistrate, who was in the carriage at the door, and about to start for London. He immediately alighted, and inquired into the particulars of the affair. Directly it was proved that Mary Lobenstein had been in the house, L— rushed up stairs, and dragged the keeper into the presence of the magistrate, who sternly asked the man why he had deceived him in declaring that the girl had never been there.

The fellow was evidently alarmed, and protested vehemently that he knew no female of the name of Lobenstein—and the only clue he could give to the mystery of the shoes was, that a young girl answering our description of Mary, had been brought into the house at night time about a fortnight ago, but she was represented as an insane prostitute, of the name of Hill, who had been annoying some married gentlemen by riotous conduct at their houses—and it was said at first that she was to remain at the Farm for life—but that she had suddenly been removed by Nares, but where, he could not say. L— shook his head ominously when he heard this statement, and it was evident to us all that the mother's suspicions were right, and that a deed of blood had been recently perpetrated. The best means of ascertaining the place of burial was consulted on, and we adjourned to the garden to search for any appearance of freshly disturbed ground, or other evidence that might lead to a discovery of her remains. When we had crossed the yard, and were about entering the garden gate, L— suggested the propriety of fetching the little dog, whose excellent nose had afforded the only clue we had been able to obtain. I went back for the animal, but he refused to leave his mistress, and it was not without some danger of a bite, that I succeeded in catching him by the neck, and carrying him out of the room. I put him on his feet when we were past the garden gate, and endeavored to excite him to sprightliness by running along the walk, and whistling to him to follow, but he sneaked after me with a drooping tail and a bowed head, as if he felt his share of the general grief.

We walked round the garden without discovering any signs that warranted farther search. We had traversed every path in the garden, excepting a narrow, transverse one, that led from the gate to a range of green and hothouses that lined the farthest wall. We were on the point of leaving the place, satisfied that it was not in our power to remove the veil of mystery that shrouded the girl's disappearance, when the dog, who had strayed into the entrance of the narrow path, gave extraordinary signs of liveliness and emotion— his tail wagged furiously—his ears were thrown forward—and a short but earnest yaffle broke into a continuous bark as he turned rapidly from one side of the path to another, and finally ran down toward the green house with his nose bent to the ground.

“He scents her,” said L—; “there is still a chance.”

Our party, consisting of the magistrate, L—, and two other officers, the underkeeper, the locksmiths, and myself, followed the dog down the narrow path into the centre of a piece of ground containing three or four cucumber beds, covered with sliding glass frames. The spaniel, after searching round the bed, jumped upon the centre frame, and howled piteously. It was evident that he had lost the scent. L— pointed out to our notice that the sliding lid was fastened to the frame by a large padlock—this extraordinary security increased our suspicions—he seized a crowbar from one of the smiths, and the lock was soon removed. The top of the frame was pulled up, and the dog jumped into the tan that filled the bed, and commenced scratching with all his might. L— thrust the bar into the yielding soil, and at the depth of a foot, the iron struck a solid substance. This intimation electrified us—we waited not for tools—our hands were dug into the bed, and the tan and black mould were dragged from the frame with an eagerness that soon emptied it, and exhibited the boarding of a large trap door, divided into two parts, but securely locked together. While the smiths essayed their skill upon the lock, the magistrate stood by with lifted hands and head uncovered—a tear was in the good man's eye—and he breathed short from the excess of his anxiety. Every one was visibly excited, and the loud and cheerful

bark of the dog was hailed as an omen of success. L—'s impatience could not brook delay. He seized the sledge hammer of the smiths, and with a blow that might have knocked in the side of a house, demolished the lock and bolt, and the doors jumped apart in the recoil from the blow. They were raised—a black and yawning vault was below—and a small flight of wooden steps, green and mouldy, from the effects of the earth's dampness, led to the gloomy depths of the cavern.

The little dog dashed bravely down the stairway, and L—, requesting us to stand from between him and the light, picked his way down the narrow, slimy steps. One of the smiths followed, and the rest of us hung our heads anxiously over the edge of the vault's mouth, watching our friends as they receded in the distant gloom. A pause ensued; the dog was heard barking, and an indistinct muttering between L— and the smith ascended to the surface of the earth. I shouted to them, and was frightened at the reverberation of my voice. Our anxiety became painful in the extreme—the magistrate called to L—, but obtained no answer; and we were on the point of descending in a body, when the officer appeared at the foot of the stairs. "We have found her," said he—we gave a simultaneous shout. "But she is dead," was the appalling finish of his speech, as he emerged from the mouth of the vault.

The smith, with the lifeless body of Mary Lobenstein swung over his shoulder, was assisted up the stairs. The [corpse] of the little girl was placed on one of the garden settees, and, with heavy hearts and gloomy faces, we carried the melancholy burden into the house. The mother had not recovered from the shock which the anticipation of her daughter's death had given to her feelings; she was lying senseless upon the bed where she had been placed by the keeper's wife. We laid the body of her daughter in an adjoining room, and directed the woman to perform the last sad duties to the senseless clay while we awaited the parent's restoration. The magistrate returned to London; the smiths were packing up their tools preparatory to departure, and I was musing in melancholy mood over the events of the day, when the forbidding face of the keeper's wife peeped in at the half-opened door, and we were beckoned from the room.

"Please your honor, I never seed a dead body look like that there corpse of the little girl up stairs. I've seed a many corpses in my time, but there's something unnatural about that there one, not like a dead body ought to be."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, though her feet and hands are cold, her jaw ain't dropped, and her eyes ain't open—and there's a limberness in her limbs that I don't like. I really believe she's only swounded."

L— and I hurried up stairs, and the smiths, with their baskets of tools dangling at their backs, followed us into the room. I anxiously searched for any pulsation at the heart and the wrists of poor Mary, whose appearance certainly corroborated the woman's surmise, but the total absence of all visible signs of life denied us the encouragement of the flattering hope. One of the smiths took from his basket a tool of bright, fine-tempered steel; he held it for a few seconds against Mary's half-closed mouth, and upon withdrawing it, said, with a loud and energetic voice, "She is alive! her breath has damped the surface of the steel!"

The man was right. Proper remedies were applied to the daughter and to her parent, and L— had the gratification of placing the lost Mary within her mother's arms.

Miss Lobenstein's explanation afforded but little additional information. When she was brought to the Farm by the villain Mills and his friend Billy the ostler, she was informed that it was to be the residence of her future life. She was subjected to the treatment of a maniac, her questions remained unanswered, and her supplications for permission to send to her mother were answered with a sneer. About three nights ago, she was ordered from her room, her shoes were taken off that she might noiselessly traverse the passages, and she was removed to the secret cell in the garden; some biscuits and a jug of water were placed beside her, and she had remained in undisturbed solitude till the instinct of her favorite dog led to her discovery, shortly after she had fainted from exhaustion and terror. There is little doubt but that the ruffians were alarmed at the watchings and appearances of the indefatigable L—, and withdrew their victim to the securest hiding place. I had the curiosity, in company with some of the officers, to descend into the Secret Cell; it had originally been dug out for the foundation of an intended house; the walls and partitions were solidly built, but the bankruptcy of the projector prevented any farther progress. When Farrell and his gang took possession of the place, it was deemed easier to cover the rafters of the cellar with boards and earth, than to fill it up—in time, the existence of the hole became forgotten, save by those most interested in its concealment. Farrell contrived the mode of entrance through the glass frame of the forcing bed, and when the adjacent greenhouses were constructed, an artificial flue or vent was introduced to the depths of the cell, and supplied it with a sufficiency of air.

Mrs. Lobenstein refused to prosecute the spinster Bishop, the malignancy of whose temper preyed upon her own heart, and speedily consigned her unlamented to the grave. The true particulars of this strange affair were never given to the public, although I believe that its occurrence mainly contributed to effect an alteration in the English laws respecting private mad houses and other receptacles for lunatics.

The magistracy of the county knew that they were to blame in permitting the existence of such a den as Farrell's Farm, and exerted themselves to quash proceedings against the fellows Mills and Nares, and their co-adjutors. A few months imprisonment was the only punishment awarded them, and that was in return for the assault upon the head of the police; but in Billy, the ostler, was recognized an old offender— various unpunished offences rose against him, and he was condemned to “seven pinnerth” aboard the hulks at Chatham. The greatest rogue escaped the arm of justice for a time; but L— has since assured me he has every reason to believe that Farrell was, under a feigned name, executed in Somersetshire for horse stealing.

The Farm was converted into a Poor House for some of the adjacent parishes; L— received his reward, and when I left England, our heroine Mary was the blooming mother of a numerous family.

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