

The Detective

A Tale Of The Old Walton House

by H. Macaulay

THE remarkable skill and penetration shown by our modern detectives in “shadowing” suspected persons until sufficient proof has been obtained to warrant their arrest is illustrated by the daily history of crime. By the term “shadowing” is meant that vigilant watch kept upon the culprit by some one who follows him like his own shadow, and to do this successfully indicates no small degree of skill on the part of the “detective.” This last expression recalls to memory some strange facts which came to my knowledge in the early part of my life, and I can never meet the term in print or hear it in conversation without a painful reminiscence. This I now offer to the world, inasmuch as its lessons may be not altogether useless.

The old Walton House is one of the few historic buildings in this city, not historic in the highest sense of the term, but simply as commemorating commercial and social greatness of a past age. The Waltons, for several generations, were the merchant princes of this city, but their glory began to wane before the Revolution, and since then no one of the name has restored its greatness. William Walton, in whom the family culminated, built a mansion in the fashionable suburbs of the city, in which was exhibited the highest reach of colonial architecture. The locality, which is now known as Franklin Square, was then the most fashionable spot in New York. Mr. Walton’s mansion was surrounded by spacious grounds which sloped down to the East River, and afforded a fine view of the fields of Broekellyn, as the place opposite was called by the Dutch settlers. These grounds are now cut off from the river by Water, Front, and South streets, and huge warehouses now stand on the spot where the Waltons (like the renowned Izaak) were wont to amuse themselves with piscatorial sport.¹ The Walton House still stands, but it is so grievously changed that its author would hardly know it. It is hedged in with buildings, it is defaced with alterations, and is cut up into small rooms after the fashion of a tenement house. These changes have been gradual, and at the time to which I have reference it retained much of its former grandeur. The Walton family had become, as it was supposed, extinct, and the property had passed into other hands, when suddenly a member of this ancient house reappeared in the person of a British sea-captain. This event of course made a sensation in the society of New York, which, sixty years ago, was limited to Wall Street and the lower part of Broadway, and hence was easily stirred. Captain Guilford Walton had nothing, however, to recommend him beyond the prestige of his name and former rank—not in the royal navy, but in the merchant service. He had sailed many years, but, though sea-captains generally make money, he brought with him no reputation of wealth. He was well built in form, and might have been called good-looking, had it not been for an expression peculiarly sinister which his countenance bore when in repose, but which, however, passed away as soon as he began to speak. He was an intelligent and agreeable companion, and could fascinate with his strange sea tales; but at times he became

¹William Walton built the mansion referred to in 1752. He died, childless, in 1768, leaving his estate to his grand-nephew, William Walton. The latter joined the British during the Revolution, and his estates were in part confiscated. His children went to England, and one of them entered the British navy, in which he rose to the post of Rear-Admiral. *Vide* HISTORY OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

silent, and even moody. Such a man could at once command access to the best society of New York, and Captain Walton was accordingly received among the Hamiltons, the Crugers, the Gracies, and other aristocratic families whose mansions fronted the Battery, or were to be found near by in Broadway or Greenwich Street. His own residence was far distant on the east side of town, and, in fact, was the mansion to which reference has been made. It was no longer in a fashionable neighborhood, but was occupied by a well-to-do family, who were glad to let a suit of furnished apartments to a gentleman whose name was identified with the house. Here he exhibited an orderly life, and thus differed much from other sea-faring men, who, when ashore, indulge in gaming, drinking, and other degrading habits. It was noticed that he gradually cultivated a recluse habit, or rather yielded to an inclination of this sort, for he seldom mixed with gay society, and when he did so he readily showed that it was from a desire for its excitement rather than for any gratification of thought or sentiment. As he was un-married, it was supposed that such a prudent, steady bachelor (of forty-five or thereabout) would live and die a celibate, and, perhaps, immortalize his memory by some great deed of posthumous charity.

These ideas, however, were soon upset by his introduction to a young lady who lived in the upper suburbs of the city, and was of a respectable though not aristocratic family. Her father had been a Tory during the Revolution, and had lost a large fortune. He now occupied a few acres near what is now called Spring Street, and this, with a small house, was all that was left of his once splendid estate. I do not know how Captain Walton formed the acquaintance of Anna Barrington, but as soon as made it seemed to act upon his nature with great power. Anna, though neither rich nor beautiful, had the charm of innocence, and this could not but win the admiration of one who had gone the world's round and met its conventional politeness, so selfish and heartless. In addition to this, Miss Barrington was well educated, and had been so long intimate with the aristocratic British families of the city as to acquire a national tone, which attracted a true Briton like Captain Walton. The acquaintance, therefore, readily ripened into intimacy, and, as a natural result, their strong mutual affinities led to a matrimonial engagement. Captain Walton became a constant visitor at Kirtle Grove, as Mr. Barrington's residence was called, and enjoyed that degree of privilege which is accorded to an expectant bridegroom.

Such was the condition of things when the strange and perplexing train of circumstances of which I am about to write took place. They were generally known in New York, and were, at the time, the subject of much remark; but the impression they made on the public mind was greatly abated by that far more astounding event which occurred a few months afterward—the murder of Gulielma Sands. This tragedy was exceedingly mysterious. Weeks was tried and acquitted, though since then his guilt has been made quite apparent. He no doubt seduced Miss Sands under promise of marriage, and then murdered her and threw her body into a well. The latter was in a vacant lot not far from Kirtle Grove, and there the body was subsequently discovered. The popular novel, by T. S. Fay, entitled *Norman Leslie*, is founded upon this affair, which, as I said, absorbed public attention to the exclusion of all other topics.

I have stated that the captain had rooms at the Walton House, in Franklin Square, which was separated from Kirtle Grove by a mile's distance. It would have been farther were it not the captain's custom to take a short cut through several new streets, half built up with small wooden houses. The path thus indicated would be from Kirtle Grove to Broadway, and thence across to Mulberry Street. This street was hardly more than a crooked highway, skirting the Collect, or

pond, which covered what is now the site of Centre Street. After reaching Chatham Street the city was closely built all the way to Franklin Square, but up to this avenue all was rural and lonely.

One night, shortly after his engagement with Anna Barrington had commenced, he happened to remain unusually late in company with his *fiancée* and a lady friend. The conversation had taken a religious turn; and, as Miss Barrington was of a pious and meditative habit, the evidences of revelation were discussed, or, at least, were talked about, and Captain Walton was quite free to utterly deny them. This shocked Miss Barrington, but the hope that her lover might change his views induced her to ply him with arguments until the late hour referred to. I may remark, *en passant*, that French philosophy was then quite fashionable, especially since it was understood that Jefferson had returned from France a confirmed infidel. The conversation shifted from one aspect of the subject to another until it fell on the supernatural and the marvelous, so much of which is found in common life. Miss Barrington, though not superstitious, in the common acceptance of the term, maintained a belief in these things, which the captain, on the other hand, treated with ridicule. This is not at all surprising. Men of the world become hardened in unbelief, because their experience is solely with material objects. Captain Walton could only speak of that which he knew, and the supernatural was to him an unknown world. This fact needs to be borne in mind, because the victim of the fearful work I am now to describe was, from deliberate conviction, an utter disbeliever in the supernatural.

The conversation was so interesting that the hours stole away with unobserved rapidity, and it was one o'clock before the captain bade the ladies good-night and commenced his lonely walk homeward. His mind was so engrossed with thought that he reached Broadway before he was aware, and crossing over that avenue, which then was but a country road, he soon reached Mulberry Street, the upper part of which merely traversed vacant lots. Then came unfinished houses, with heaps of brick and mortar in front, scenes of active labor during the day, but now still and deserted as a grave-yard. There was something painful in that very silence. It was so solemn and almost oppressive that his very steps seemed peculiarly loud and distinct. While thinking upon the contrast which I have suggested, it occurred to him that he was not utterly alone, for he heard other footsteps regularly falling, and near by, too; not over thirty feet behind, it would seem, if one judged by sound. Might it be the city watch? No; for this was out of his regular beat, which did not extend so far from the Park. Then some one must be on his track, "dogging" him, as the phrase is. This suspicion at once aroused the captain, and he turned immediately to confront his pursuer. The moon shone clearly, and would have revealed any human form; but none was to be seen; and the only conclusion was, that it might have been the echo of his own footsteps. To assure himself on this point, he stamped violently on the ground, and then walked rapidly to and fro, in the vain attempt to awaken an echo. After these efforts he considered the whole an illusion, and resumed his walk; but before he had proceeded a dozen paces the mysterious footfalls were again heard in his rear. It seemed as though there was a fixed purpose to prove that they were not an echo, for the steps were varied in a very peculiar manner. Sometimes they were slackened almost to a halt, and then there would be a series of eight or ten rapid strides, and followed by a slow walk. Captain Walton felt the increasing power of this annoyance. He again turned in a very sudden manner, glancing keenly in the rear, but with the same result, for no living thing was visible above the level of the silent and deserted street. He then retraced his steps, determined to give the matter a thorough search; but after walking fifty

feet or more, he found his attempt fruitless. His nervous frame was intensely excited, especially when he found himself thus balked; but what was to be done? Nothing but to return home unsatisfied. As he resumed his walk toward Chatham Street he felt, in spite of his avowed unbelief, that some of Miss Barrington's opinions were taking possession of his mind, and, worse than this, a really superstitious feeling began to creep upon him. He contended in vain with these thoughts, and in this wretched frame he pursued his way. For a time the footsteps were unheard; but when passing the old wooden building which still stands at the corner of Pearl and Chatham Streets they were resumed, sometimes in a slow march, and then with sudden starts, as though his pursuer would run him down. Some strange vagaries marked these movements, for sometimes they seemed to be performing a dance, or beating time, so as to allow him to get on, and thus maintain the same distance between them. Captain Walton was filled with vague and indescribable apprehensions, and his excitement at last found relief in the exclamation, "Who goes there?" No answer was received, and the sound of his voice broke in upon the stillness of the hour with a harsh and grating jar which aggravated his nervousness. He now felt disposed to run, if by so doing he might escape his pursuer. He did so, and immediately heard the clatter of some one of equal speed maintaining the usual proximity. Worn out with the exertion, he then resumed a walk, which was at once followed by his pursuer; and in this manner he at last reached his abode. It was not until he sat in his snug and cozy room, by a bright sea-coal fire, that he could collect his mind sufficiently to reconsider these strange occurrences. His skepticism had not vanished, but it was considerably shaken, and nature was beginning to show in his case that weakness which bids us tremble at the approach of the unseen world.

Captain Walton did not retire before three, and it was a long time before he could sleep. As a consequence, he rose late, and found himself in a nervous and very distressed frame. And yet he reflected on the events of the past night with more surprise than alarm. Daylight had flung its cheer over the world, and the occurrence of a night lost its power. He was endeavoring to reason out the thing on natural causes, when Fensford, his servant, handed in the morning's mail, which was a single letter of small and unimportant appearance, addressed to Captain Walton, Walton House. The contents read thus:

"You appear not to recognize me, but perhaps you may when we see more of each other. Meanwhile it is hardly worth while for you to be so shy. However, I will advise you to keep clear of Mulberry Street, unless you wish to meet.

"THE DETECTIVE."

The captain read the strange epistle several times. He scrutinized the handwriting, and was satisfied he had never met it before. It was a rude, coarse hand, such as illiterate people generally write; but there was a boldness in the characters that spoke the tone of familiarity; and then the term "detective"—what could it mean? Was the writer a friend, or foe? If the latter, why should he send warning? If he was the former, why should he subscribe himself as one whom he had reason to dread? Taking the whole thing into view, it was an inexplicable mystery, and one with very unpleasant associations.

The next question was, should this affair be mentioned to Miss Barrington? It certainly would interest her, inasmuch as she was a believer in the supernatural; but then it might, on the other hand, excite apprehensions, and hence he concluded to say nothing about it. This conclusion was

strengthened by subsequent considerations. The mysterious footfall might be a delusion, while the letter might be a hoax; but yet, while he endeavored to treat the matter with this indifference, it still haunted him, and filled him with perplexing thoughts. One thing was certain, on returning from his next visit to Miss Barrington's, he was careful to avoid Mulberry Street. In order to do this, he took the broad highway on the North River side of the city (at present known as Hudson Street), and then turned up Vesey Street, passing St. Paul's church-yard, crossed Broadway, thence down Partition Street (now Fulton) to Pearl, and up Pearl to his residence. During this long walk Captain Walton heard nothing to disturb or annoy him; and his unpleasant feelings had about worn off when, ten days subsequently, another incident occurred which revived them with full power. He had been to the theatre—the Park Theatre, of course, for it was then the only institution of the kind in New York, and for years afterward headed its posters in this simple but dignified style: "Theatre"—and had escorted Miss Barrington to the carriage which contained her father. The old gentleman seldom went, except when some fine play of Shakespeare's was performed; and on this occasion, having seen one of Cooper's best impersonations, he insisted on taking Anna home, and thus relieving the captain of a long excursion to their residence and back. The latter then turned down Beekman Street, and, as it was one o'clock, this locality was altogether deserted. Walking quietly along, with the poetry and sentiment of Shakespeare welling up in his heart, and mingling with the memory of Miss Barrington's fine thoughts and pleasant conversation, he became suddenly aware of the sound of steps dogging him, as on the previous occasion. Several times he turned back, earnestly hoping that he might see some form from whom these sounds might naturally proceed. But all was quiet, the street was deserted, and no form was visible. He continued his way, nervous and miserable, for the sounds became clear and unmistakable, and filled him with dread. As he reached St. George's Chapel they seemed to strike simultaneously with his own steps. Then they changed, and exhibited the former inequality; sometimes slow, sometimes lagging very far behind, and then hurrying up in a run until the usual propinquity was reached; and this was not subsequently exceeded nor diminished. Again and again Captain Walton turned, glancing over the shoulder or facing square around, but no one was visible. The horrors of this intangible, unseen persecution became intolerable; and when, at last, he reached the old mansion, his nerves were in such an excitement that rest was utterly out of the question, and he did not even attempt to lie down until after daylight. He was awakened by a knock at his chamber door, proceeding from his servant, who had the morning's mail. There were several letters, among which one instantly excited his attention, and he read its contents with an eager eye. They were as follows:

"Do you think, Captain Walton, to escape me? You may as well escape your own shadow. I will be with you when I will, and you shall not only hear me, but meet me also; for I am not disposed to conceal myself, though you may think so. Still, why should this trouble you or break your rest? for, if you have a *clear conscience*, you surely need fear nothing from

"THE DETECTIVE."

It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the feelings consequent on the perusal of this strange and most unwelcome letter. Captain Walton's friends observed that he was unusually moody and absent-minded for several days, but none of them could imagine the cause. As for himself, however he might desire to look upon the phantom steps as a mere illusion, there could be no question concerning the letters. There they lay before him, identical in handwriting; and he not only read but studied them in every word and syllable, until they were printed on his memory.

The whole of this affair gradually became connected with certain passages in his own life which, above all others, he had tried to forget, but which now came fresh into his memory. It was therefore a fortunate circumstance, inasmuch as it assisted to divert and to occupy his mind, that he then conceived the idea of recovering Mr. Barrington's confiscated estates, or, rather, Anna Barrington's. This grew out of a very remarkable position of the case. Mr. Barrington owned, prior to the Revolution, a large tract of land in the suburbs of the city, which was now worth five thousand dollars per acre, and hence would bring an enormous sum of money. This land, however, was the property of his wife; but during the hurry and confusion of military proceedings it had been viewed as belonging to himself; and hence had been sold. Anna Barrington was now her mother's sole heir; and, having been wronged by the sale of the estate, it would be proper for Congress to correct the error and to restore her to her possession. To further this end Captain Walton had obtained the influence of Aaron Burr; and any measure recommended by him was sure to be carried. It is true, Burr was unpopular in New York, but his influence in Congress, notwithstanding this, was very great. The excitement growing out of this claim so engrossed Captain Walton's mind that it lost its gloom, and seemed once more elastic and natural, so that his friends congratulated him on his improved appearance, and Miss Barrington could not conceal her delight. After a while, however, he was dismayed by occasional renewals of the same annoyance, which occurred in the daytime, in lonely places, as well as at night. Sometimes they appeared so faint that it was difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between them and the fancies of an excited imagination; and when he was in company they were heard by him and by none else. For instance, one night he was returning from a public meeting held in Martling's tavern, which afterward became Tammany Hall; for, although not a politician, he would occasionally go to hear a fine speaker, and on this occasion it was expected that Burr would make an address. In this we were disappointed. I say *we*, because I was one of that number, and, though but a boy of sixteen, I took a vast interest in politics, and felt all the importance of my position as one of the rising generation. I well remember that a group, of which I was a member, walked down Frankfort Street to Pearl, and another member of this group was Captain Walton. He seemed taciturn and absent-minded, and so different from his usual conversational mood that one might imagine that some deep anxiety was preying on his heart. I afterward learned that during this walk he heard those footsteps dogging him all the way home. I have understood, though I am not positive, that this was the last time the annoyance appeared in this peculiar shape; and it was soon to take a new and more terrible form.

What this new form was to be might have been supposed from one of the events of this night. We had reached Franklin Square, and the captain was about to cross the street to reach the Walton House, when a stranger appeared in our front. He was a short man, had a foreign look—at least such was my impression from a clear moonlight view—wore a cap, and seemed to be of sea-faring life. We saw him full thirty feet ahead, walking toward us with rapid step and manner indicating fierce excitement, muttering to himself in tones which indicated deep and bitter perturbation. This startling individual walked toward Captain Walton, and then halted directly in his front, and gazed upon him for a moment with a look that seemed almost diabolical with fury and revenge. He then turned abruptly and disappeared in an alley. I must confess that I was exceedingly shocked at this sudden and startling appearance, which impressed me with a sense of danger such as I never before or since have felt in the presence of any human being. I had seen a countenance peculiarly evil lit up by the excitement of bad passions; still it was not sufficient to carry terror to the heart of a brave man. Hence I was much surprised by the effect it had on

Captain Walton; I knew his reputation for courage, which indeed, according to report, he had shown on several occasions, and this made his conduct the more noticeable. As the stranger advanced he recoiled a few steps and grasped my arm in silence, but in a manner which indicated a spasm of terror. Then, as the figure disappeared, he shoved me back and sought to follow it a short distance, when he suddenly stopped, in evident confusion, and sat down upon a door-step. His countenance appeared ghastly and haggard. It was a strange moonlight scene, and we all felt its weird power.

The first to speak was Mr. Melford, on whose invitation Walton had gone to the meeting.

“For God’s sake, Captain, what’s the matter? Did the fellow hurt you? What can it mean?”

For a moment no reply was made, and then Walton looked around distractedly, and exclaimed, in a manner which showed his inattention to the question:

“What did he say? I did not hear it clearly. Did you make it out? I know he said *something*.”

“No matter what he said,” remarked Saunders, another of the group. It’s only some fellow whom rum makes combative—a bad one to meet, though, any where, for he might handle cold steel.”

“You seem unwell, Captain Walton,” rejoined Melford. “We will assist you home; ’tis only across the street.”

“I am not exactly unwell,” replied Walton, evidently trying to rally; “but how it is I can not tell, unless hard work on my land claim had worn me out, and then late hours at a political meeting, you know. I have felt badly all day and evening too, and so this overset me; but I am better now. We’ll go on.”

We accompanied the captain to his lodgings, and then passed down toward Hanover Square, in which vicinity most of us dwelt. As a matter of course, the strange event was the subject of conversation; and though it might have been reasonably supposed that intoxication was the cause of that fellow’s conduct, yet, after all, we could not shake off the idea of mystery which accompanied it.

Although I had but lately been introduced to Captain Walton, I took the liberty to call next day at his lodgings to inquire concerning his health, and learned that he kept his room, though not, as he said, “really ill,” and hoped to be about by the next day. I subsequently learned that a short time after I left he sent for Doctor Hosack, who then was considered the best physician in New York, and there ensued one of those strange interviews which city physicians occasionally meet. The physician felt the patient’s pulse and inquired his symptoms. Instead of making a direct reply, the latter talked in a desultory and abstracted manner, referring but little to the matter of disease, but in some way suggesting that there must be a more important subject on his mind. Still, he complained of occasional palpitation and nervous distress. The doctor was a thorough man, and did not care to dismiss the case so lightly. Hence he asked if there was any painful circumstance or experience which was then distressing his patient’s thoughts. The latter instantaneously denied this, and even seemed worried by the suggestion. Doctor Hosack then remarked that he could see

nothing out of the way in all this, although, perhaps, there might be a slight difficulty in digestion. He then, as usual, wrote a prescription, and was about to withdraw, when Captain Walton suddenly stopped him, as though a new idea was suggested to his mind.

“Doctor, I had almost forgotten a question which sometimes occurs to me. I hardly know, after all, whether it be strictly a medical one, but if not you will excuse it.”

“Well, Sir,” replied the physician, “go on and propose your question.”

The captain seemed either embarrassed by this prompt reply or else he had some difficulty in framing his interrogatory, for he was silent, took a turn about the room, opened a book in an abstracted manner, and then sat down facing the doctor like one who had determined to meet a difficulty, and said:

“I suppose you will think my question a foolish one, but I desire to know whether, when a man is dead, and is pronounced so by medical authority—I mean by a surgeon of respectable standing—may such a person be restored to life?”

Doctor Hosack smiled, and a negative motion of the head indicated his reply.

“But a little farther—I will say a word farther,” remarked the captain. “Suppose a blunder to have been made. Suppose the surgeon to have been a mere quack, could he be so far deceived as to have pronounced a man dead when the case involved only a temporary suspension of nature occasioned by extreme pain or disease?”

“Death,” replied the physician, “is generally unmistakable; the *rigor mortis* soon proves the difference between this and any resemblance, whether it ensue from violence or is the effect of slow disease.”

“That is a very satisfactory reply,” said the captain. “Now one word more, for I presume that you are advised on all such points. If a man be in danger, or may fear that he is in danger, of violence at the hands of a lunatic, can he not get a warrant and have the fellow locked up?”

“I suppose he can,” replied the physician; “though such a matter belongs to the law rather than to medicine.”

Doctor Hosack took his leave. He was a man of rapid perception and deep penetration, and he saw from these questions that the mind rather than the body of his new patient was the seat of suffering. A few days afterward the following advertisement appeared in the *Commercial Advertiser*:

IF GODFREY BURTON, formerly boatswain on board the ship *Petrel*, will apply to Edward King, Attorney, 14 Wall Street, he will hear something to his advantage. Should he prefer to come after dark, he may call up stairs on the family at any time up to 11 o’clock.

The *Petrel* was the vessel Captain Walton had sailed, and as Doctor Hosack knew this, he suspected when he saw the paper that his patient's distress must in some way be identified with the individual to whom this advertisement was addressed. This, however, was mere conjecture, for no information as to the real purpose of the advertisement was ever divulged by the attorney.

Captain Walton's distress had been generally noticed by his friends, who ascribed it to hypochondria, and hence they were gratified to once more see an improvement in his spirits. One of the earliest symptoms of this was his appearance at a grand supper of the Masonic fraternity, to which he belonged. This institution was then strongly established in New York.

On this occasion the captain's friends had their eyes upon him, and observed that he plied the bottle freely, and, though at first gloomy and abstracted, he soon became mellowed and conversational. This was a subject of pleasant remark; but they did not know that a secret anxiety impelled him to this course, and that his excessive vivacity arose not only from the use of wine, but also from a strong counter effort of the mind. He left the table early, and, in obedience to his present passion, he proceeded to the Barringtons', where he spent a couple of delightful hours. At the end of this time his elation of spirits began to flag, and his undefined apprehensions threatened a return; and when he took his leave he felt a foreboding of coming mischief, and his mind was haunted by mysterious apprehensions, which he could not altogether repel. He pursued his way homeward, with a dogged resolution to meet whatever might occur, and, as no return of the footsteps happened, he began to feel a restoration of confidence. He had walked half a mile, and was just reaching the long line of twinkling lamps that marked the city proper, and which then commenced near Duane Street. At this moment he heard the report of a musket behind him, and the whistle of a bullet added a still more startling sensation. His first impulse was to turn in pursuit of the assassin; but the road was much encumbered with heaps of rubbish, and the surrounding fields, so vague and indefinite in the distance, discouraged the pursuit. For a solitary individual to attempt the arrest of a murderer was absurd; and as he gazed around all was dark and solitary. Hence he turned to his onward path, but under the excitement of the alarm his pace quickened rapidly, and he was approaching Broadway, when suddenly he caught a view of the man in the fur cap. They met; but the encounter was only momentary. The figure was walking at the same rapid step and with the same threatening air as before, and as it passed him he thought he could hear whispers of vengeance. This might have been a mistake; but it was enough to have seen that feared and horrid countenance, which he could not banish from his mind. He soon reached his room, and vainly endeavored to seek repose; but the events of the past night awoke a nervous excitement of intense degree—the festive scenes of the supper and the visit at Kirtle Grove, in contrast with murder on himself, and the repeated apparition of this object of dread. The effect of all this was easily seen when the captain once more made his appearance in public. The state of his mind was now shown by its effect on his body, and his friends began to remark this relapse; but still he strove to present to the world a confident and cheerful bearing. The cause of his suffering and every circumstance connected with it he guarded with a reserve of the most jealous character. It evidently was of a nature which he could not, or would not, disclose.

The mind thus turned in upon itself, and haunted by an anxiety which it dared not reveal or confide to any friend, even the dearest, became the scene of extreme excitement. And in this condition the unfortunate man was compelled to endure, with constant repetition, the visitations of the dreaded apparition.

At this time there were several distinguished preachers in New York, the most noted of whom were Bishop Moore of the Episcopal, Doctor Rodgers of the Brick Church (Presbyterian), and Doctor John M. Mason of the Cedar Street Church. The latter institution was of the Scottish order, and the congregation had the name of being clear-headed people. Their pastor enjoyed a great reputation for intellectual power, and was probably the finest pulpit orator New York has ever seen. His logical and metaphysical turn was well known, though as a preacher he was simple and direct.

One day Doctor Mason was visited by a stranger, who, on introducing himself, proved to be none other than Captain Walton. The clergyman was in his study, full of work, when the visitor was announced, and when the latter entered the room the former was impressed with the consciousness that his visitor must have recently been subjected to intense mental suffering. After the usual interchange of courteous greeting the captain, who easily perceived the surprise which his visit had elicited, remarked thus:

“This is a strange call, Doctor Mason. I should not under ordinary circumstances have ventured to disturb you, but my visit is neither idle nor an impertinent intrusion. You are somewhat accustomed, I presume, to have people ask advice. I need not only advice, but sympathy; indeed, I may add compassion, for I have been a great sufferer.”

“Sir,” replied the clergyman, “it will give me great pleasure if I can afford any man relief in mental or spiritual distress; but—”

“I know what you would say,” resumed the captain, hurriedly; “but I am what you call an unbeliever, and therefore incapable of deriving that help from religion which you would recommend; and yet I must say that circumstances have lately forced upon me the study of psychological matters—rather let me say matters of the mind and soul—so that my unbelief has been disturbed, and I am now disposed to review the question in a more teachable spirit than ever before.”

“Am I to understand,” said the clergyman, “that your difficulties refer to the evidences of revelation?”

“I have had such difficulties,” was the reply, “and yet I am not prepared to state them; but there is one subject on which I feel a peculiar interest.”

He again paused, and Doctor Mason urged him to proceed.

“The fact is,” said Walton, “whatever may be my uncertainty as to the truth of what men call ‘revelation,’ there is one fact connected with it of which I am deeply and even horribly convinced—namely, that there is beyond our present condition a spiritual world. This I *know*, although its operations may be in a large part hidden from us, for sometimes it is terribly, even though partially, revealed. I am sure that there is a God,” continued Walton, with increased emotion, “and that to the wicked he is a dreadful God, and I *know* that retribution follows guilt.”

The clergyman looked with intense interest on his visitor, who proceeded as though unburdening a pent-up mind:

“In ways the most mysterious and inexplicable, and even I may say the most terrific, it is proven that there is a spiritual system, and that an implacable and omnipotent power administers punishment. Under this system I now suffer a persecution which no tongue can describe; I may say, indeed, I endure the torments of the damned. Yes, there is a hell, and I feel it.”

As Walton said this his agitation became so vehement that the clergyman was shocked and even alarmed. The wild rapidity with which the former spoke, and above all the undisguised horror which stamped his features, afforded a contrast to his ordinary self-possession striking and painful in the extreme.

“My dear Sir,” exclaimed Doctor Mason, “it is evident that you have been suffering much; but can it not be that your mind is affected by your body? May it not be that the state of mind you describe is due to causes of a physical nature? I am not a physician, and yet perhaps a change of air, or the use of a few tonics, may be of more use than any mental remedies, though, under all circumstances, we need God’s mercy.”

It was evident that the clergyman supposed his visitor to be slightly deranged, or at least in a condition which required other treatment than that purely spiritual.

“Doctor,” replied Walton, “I thank you for this reference to diet, exercise, and change of air; but let me say I can not accept the hope which you would thus establish. No; that would be self-delusion. I am no enthusiast, I know what I say to be awful reality. My only hope is, that by some spiritual agency more potent than that which now tortures me IT may be combated, and its victim be delivered. If this can not be accomplished I am a lost man—lost now and forever!”

“But, Sir, it must be remembered that others have suffered similar conflicts, and have—”

“No, no, no,” interrupted the unfortunate man; “I am neither credulous nor superstitious. I am and have been far the reverse—too skeptical. But now, unless I were beyond the power of all testimony, unless I reject the perpetual evidence of my own senses, I am forced to believe—I have no escape from the horrible certainty—that I am haunted, go where I may, by a DEMON!”

There was an almost preternatural energy of horror in Walton’s face, as its damp and death-like lineaments turned toward his clerical listener. Doctor Mason had attended some scenes of fearful character, but had never witnessed one like this.

“God help you, unfortunate man!” he exclaimed. “You *are* a sufferer, no matter how these sufferings were occasioned.”

“God help me!” said Walton, with a look of surprise. “*Will* God help me? Yes, I ask, will He help me?”

“Pray to Him. He bids us call on Him in the hour of trouble.”

Pray to Him!” re-echoed the visitor. “Pray to Him! I can’t pray. I could as easily move a mountain by an effort of my will. There is something within me that will not pray. You prescribe an impossibility.”

“You might not find it such an impossibility were you but to try.”

“Try! I *have* tried, and the attempt only fills me with confusion and terror. The awful, unutterable idea of eternity oppresses and maddens my brain, and whenever my mind approaches the contemplation of the Almighty I recoil. I am repelled, confounded, terrified. The idea of God is intolerable. I can not support it.”

“Then, my dear Sir, if such be your unfortunate case, say how you would have me serve you. What can I do to relieve you?”

“Listen to me first,” replied Captain Walton, a little subdued in manner, and with an evident effort to abate his excitement. “Listen to me, while I relate the circumstances of the terrible persecution which has rendered my life intolerable, and still makes me fear *death* and the world to come as much as I hate existence.”

The minister then listened to the recital which the captain gave of the incidents which we have described, to which he added: “This has now become habitual. It is a part of my daily experience. I do not mean the actual sight of that man (or thing); that, thank God! is not a daily infliction. From the unutterable horror of that visitation I have been mercifully allowed times of repose, though none of security. But I never have any respite from the consciousness that a malignant spirit is following me wherever I go. I am pursued with blasphemies, with cries of despair and of appalling hatred. I hear those awful sounds calling after me as I turn the corners of streets. They come to me at midnight as I sit in my room. They charge me with hideous crimes, and—great God!—they threaten me with coming vengeance. Hush! do you hear *that?*” he cried, with an expression of renewed horror. There! there! will *that* convince you?”

The clergyman felt his heart chill with horror as, during the sough of a sudden gust of wind, he heard, or fancied he heard, the half-articulate sounds of rage and derision.

“Well, what do you think of *that?*” said Walton, drawing a long breath through his teeth.

“I heard the wind,” replied Doctor Mason; “but what of that?”

“The prince of the powers of the air,” muttered Walton, with a shudder.

“Not quite that,” exclaimed the preacher, with an ill-concealed unpleasantness upon his countenance, the effect of his visitor’s excitement. “You must not give way to such thoughts; truth is one thing, and imagination is another. You should resist them.”

“Yes, of that I have heard; they say, Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee,” said Walton; “but *how* resist him? There is the rub. What can I do?”

“And has imagination no part in this?”

“No, Sir, none! Was it imagination, or even fancy, that made *you*, as well as me, hear but a moment ago those appalling tones of hell? No, Sir, it was not imagination.”

“But, since you have seen this person frequently,” replied the preacher, “why have you not spoken to him, and why have you not arrested him? Is it wise to assume the operation of supernatural agency when this might be explained, if pains were taken to sift the matter?”

“My reply to this, and my reason why I have never employed the police, are found in this fact: there are circumstances connected with this *appearance* which are proof of its unearthly nature. I know that the being that haunts me is not *man*. I repeat I *know* this; and I believe that, were I to undertake it, I could prove this to your own conviction. As to accosting it as you suggest, I dare not; I can not do it. When I see it I am powerless, and I stand thus in the triumphant presence of supernatural power and malignity. Not only my strength, but memory and all other faculties, desert me. Oh, Sir! I am satisfied you know not my case. Mercy! mercy! Heaven pity me!”

He leaned his elbow on the table, and passed his hands before his eyes, as if to exclude some image of horror, repeating the last words of the sentence again and again in a subdued mutter.

“Doctor Mason,” he abruptly resumed, raising himself, and looking upon the preacher with an imploring eye, “I know you will do for me all that can be done. I have laid before you, in all their fullness, the circumstances and agency of which I am the victim. Now, Sir, I tell you I can not hope to escape. I can not escape. I am utterly helpless. Therefore, I conjure you, let my case receive a deep consideration; and if any thing can be done by your prayers, or by the prayers of your people, I do beseech you give me the benefit of that intercession. Deliver me, I pray you, from the body of this death!”

Drops of perspiration gathered on the speaker’s brow as he proceeded: “Strive for me. It is my last chance. Yes, I know you will; you can not refuse such a request. For this I came to your presence. Oh! protect me. Send me away with some hope of ultimate deliverance; and, with that to sustain me, I will nerve myself to endure, day after day, the hideous curse until it be removed.

Doctor Mason was deeply moved by the appeal, as well he might be, and he assured Captain Walton that he would make him the object of his prayers, and that his case should, in an impersonal manner, be brought before their meeting.

Having received this assurance Captain Walton departed, while the preacher returned to the study overwhelmed by the strange interview.

It was not to be expected that Captain Walton’s changed and, so to speak, eccentric habits should long escape general discussion, and the explanations suggested were of a very opposite character. Some attributed the change to secret pecuniary embarrassments, while others ascribed it to a repugnance against his matrimonial engagement; but the most plausible of the different theories was that mental disease was the cause.

From the very commencement of this change Miss Barrington had been aware of it, and its gradual but steady advances had filled her with distress. His visits became at length so interrupted, and his manner, whenever they occurred, so abstracted, and at the same time so agitated, that her father was compelled to demand an explanation.

Captain Walton respected Mr. Barrington's course, and at once laid the matter fully before him. The latter, with all regard for the captain's opinion, was inclined to treat the thing in a skeptical manner.

"Your annoyance, then," said he, "proceeds from the frequent appearance of a man in cap and great-coat, with a red vest and a bad countenance, who meets you without ceremony, and throws you into ague fits. Now, Sir, I will make it my business to *catch* this mischievous fellow, and have him whipped through the city before we are a month older."

"If *you* knew what *I* know," replied Walton, with gloomy agitation, "you would speak very differently. Do not imagine that I am so weak and foolish as to assume, without proof of an overwhelming character, my present conclusions—the proofs are locked up here." As he spoke he tapped on his breast, and, with an anxious sigh, he continued to walk up and down the room.

"Well, well, Captain, though I am not a betting man, I would be willing to wager a heavy stake that I will yet collar the ghost."

He was running on in much the same strain when he was not a little shocked by observing Walton, who had been looking out of the window, stagger slowly back—his arm extended toward the street, his face and his very lips white as ashes, while he muttered, There! there! there! Mr. Barrington started forward instantaneously, and, looking out of the window, saw a figure corresponding with the description of the person who had so constantly terrified his friend. He snatched his hat and cane and rushed into the street, hoping to arrest the mysterious stranger. He looked around, but in vain, for any trace of him. He ran anxiously to the nearest corner, expecting to see at least the retreating figure, but no such figure was visible. Backward and forward, from one corner to the other, he ran, but still remained at fault until the laughter of the populace reminded him of his absurd appearance. Vexed and disappointed he returned to the room, and found Walton pale and trembling. They both remained silent, but under emotions of a very different character. At last Walton whispered, "You saw it, then?"

"*It?* I saw *him*, you mean. To be sure I did! But what of that? Where is either the good or the harm in seeing him? The fellow runs like a thief. I meant to have had him in my hands, but he had disappeared before I could reach the corner where he stood. However, next time I shall be a little more spry, and he shall at least feel the weight of my cane."

But, notwithstanding Mr. Barrington's promises, Captain Walton continued to suffer from the same mysterious cause. Wherever he might choose to go he was still constantly dogged or confronted by the hateful being who had established over him so baleful and so mysterious an influence. At no time and at no place could he consider himself secure against that appearance which haunted him with this diabolical perseverance. His depression and misery became more

settled every day, and his mental agonies began so to tell upon him that Mr. Barrington persuaded him to try a voyage to Halifax, where some of his Tory friends were residing, and where he would be sure of a warm welcome. It was his opinion that a change of scene and the fresh air of the ocean, together with the new society they would meet, would break through the force of local association. Mr. Barrington was now convinced that Walton's persecutor was not an illusion, but a substantial form of flesh and blood, inspired by malignant and perhaps murderous hate. Unpleasant as the theory might be, it was better than Walton's notion that it was an evil spirit, and he thought if he could convince the latter of this, he would remove at least a very important part of the trouble. In order to prevent the enemy from following, the voyage was kept secret from all but the captain and Mr. and Miss Barrington, and at the appointed day the former two stepped on the brig *Penelope*, and in half an hour more were under sail. The trip was a pleasant one, and on the tenth day they made their port. Mr. Barrington's confidence in the result of the voyage rose day by day, for Walton had not suffered any repetition of those experiences which in New York had plunged him in horror. This exemption from what he had been led to contemplate as part of his destiny, and the security with which it inspired him, caused inexpressible delight, and hence he indulged in a thousand happy anticipations. In short, the couple could exchange congratulations on the termination of those persecutions which had created in one of them such unsupportable agony.

It was a beautiful day when they reached Halifax, and the usual crowd of idlers stood on the quay to receive the passengers. They landed, and Mr. Barrington walked a few paces ahead of the captain. As he made his way through the crowd a small man touched him by the arm and said, "The gentleman is walking too fast; he will lose his sick friend in the throng, for, by my faith, the poor fellow seems almost fainting."

Mr. Barrington turned and looked. It was true; Walton had turned pale as death. He hastened to his side.

"My dear Captain, are you ill?" he asked, anxiously.

The question was unheeded, and hence was twice repeated, when Walton stammered:

"I saw him! saw him!"

"*Him*—the wretch! Who—where—when did you see him?" cried Mr. Barrington, looking around him.

"I saw him—but he is gone," repeated Walton, faintly.

"But where—where?" exclaimed Barrington. "For God's sake, speak!"

"It is but this moment—*here*," said he. "But what did he look like—what had he on—what did he wear? Quick—quick!" urged Mr. Barrington, ready to plunge into the crowd and collar the offender.

“He touched your arm—he spoke to you, and he pointed to me. God be merciful to me! there is no escape,” added Walton, in the low, subdued tones of intense despair.

Mr. Barrington had by this time penetrated the crowd, but, although the singular garb and countenance of the stranger were vividly impressed upon him, yet he failed to discover any one bearing the slightest resemblance to him.

“Oh, my friend, it won’t do,” said Walton, with the faltering voice and ghostly look of one who has been stunned by some mortal shock; “there is no use contending with it. Whatever it is, the dreadful association between me and itself is now established. I shall never escape—never—never!”

“Nonsense, nonsense,” replied Barrington; “don’t talk so. You must not, I say. We’ll jockey the villain yet. Never mind, I say; never mind.”

There was a look of dismay on Barrington’s face even while he spoke, and it was evidently lost labor to try to inspire Walton with a single ray of hope. The latter now determined to return to New York, where, as he expressed his belief, he would soon die. They sailed by the next packet, and one of the first faces he saw on his arrival in this city was that of his implacable destroyer. Walton now seemed to have lost not only all enjoyment, and every hope in existence, but also all independence of will. He submitted himself impassively to the management of his friends, whose leading adviser was Mr. Barrington; and, with the apathy of despair, he accepted their suggestions. It was determined, as a last resource, to place him in a large country house near Kip’s Bay, where a family and a special medical attendant should have charge of him. The physician believed that his patient was only subject to a nervous derangement, and that his imagination supplied the fearful apparition. To guard specially against all room for the exercise of fancy, Walton was directed to confine himself to the house and to the yard, which had a high fence whose gates were kept locked. This precaution would secure him against the casual appearance of any one whom he might confound with the spectre which, as the physician maintained, his imagination recognized in every one who bore any similarity of size or shape. It was hoped that a few month’s seclusion would stop this series of terrible imaginations, and eventually break up the associations which had confirmed the supposed disease. Cheerful society was abundantly supplied by his friends, who entertained sanguine expectations that this obstinate hypochondria might thus be subdued. The occupants of the mansion, in addition to the physician, the patient, and the family which kept house, were Mr. Barrington and his daughter. The latter, indeed, desired no other pleasure than to minister to her affianced bridegroom, and to help guard him from the threatening horror. In due time a steady carrying out of this system began to manifest its result in Walton’s continued though gradual improvement, both in health and general spirits. This was welcomed with delight by all, and especially by Anna, whose attachment to him, and whose painful position, rendered her an object of pity. A week had passed, then a fortnight, a month, and yet no recurrence of the hated vision had taken place. Hence the treatment was viewed as an entire success. The chain of association had been broken, and the pressure on the mind had been removed; and under these circumstances a love of society and an interest in public affairs began to reanimate his mind.

About this time Mrs. Anderson, the house-keeper, sent her servant to the kitchen-garden to gather some herbs; but the maiden returned in a state of alarm, before her task was half completed. Her explanation of her retreat was to her mistress rather startling. It appeared that, while in an extreme corner of the garden gathering thyme and rosemary, and amusing herself by singing, she was suddenly interrupted by a loud, coarse laugh. Looking up, she saw, through the loosely tangled bushes, a very strange-looking man, small of stature, and with a countenance of malignant and threatening aspect. She was utterly unable to move while the man was gazing on her. He ordered her to bear a message to Captain Walton, to the effect that he must come abroad as usual, and show himself out of doors, or else expect a visit in his own room. On concluding this message the stranger instantaneously climbed the fence, while the girl turned and ran into the house, in a state of fright. Mrs. Anderson commanded her to say nothing of the kind to Captain Walton. At the same time she ordered search to be made, by some workmen who were repairing the front of the house, through the neighboring fields. No one, however, was to be seen; and with many misgivings she communicated the fact to the Barringtons, who united in the plan of keeping it secret.

Walton had, by this time, begun to walk occasionally in the grounds, which, as has been stated, were guarded by a high fence. Here he considered himself secure from all intrusion; and but for an act of carelessness by one of the laborers, he might have, for some time longer at least, enjoyed the same immunity. The yard was entered from the road by a gate, and strict orders had, as I have said, been given to keep this locked. This order must have been neglected; for one day, as Walton was pacing this inclosure, on turning to retrace his steps he saw the gate ajar and the face of his tormentor gazing upon him through the aperture. For a few moments he stood riveted to the earth—breathless and bloodless—in the fascination of that dreaded gaze, and then fell, insensible, to the ground. There he was found a few minutes afterward, and was conveyed to his room—the spot which he was never afterward to leave alive.

From this time a marked change, and one not easily accounted for, was observed in his mental frame. He was no longer the excited being he had been, no longer oppressed with extreme despair. A strange alteration had passed over him, and his mind seemed so tranquil that it might have suggested the approaching stillness of the grave.

“Mr. Barrington,” said he, one day shortly afterward, with a look of fixed and fearful awe, “I have at last some relief bestowed upon me from that world of spirits out of which my punishment has come. I now am assured my sufferings will soon be over.”

Mr. Barrington listened with sorrowful attention.

“Yes,” said he, in a subdued voice, “my punishment is nearly ended. As regards sorrow, perhaps I shall never, either in time or eternity, escape it. But this, *this* agony is almost over. A ray of comfort has been revealed to me, and in view of this I will bear with submission all that remains of my allotted struggle.”

“I am glad to hear you speak so tranquilly,” replied Mr. Barrington. “Peace and cheerfulness are all that you need to make you what you formerly were.”

“No, no! I can never be that,” said Walton, in a mournful manner. “I am no longer fit for life. I am soon to die; but I do not shrink from death as once I did. I am to see *him* but once again, and then all will be ended.”

“He said so, then?” Mr. Barrington suggested.

“*He?*—no, no! Good news like this would not come from *him*. They came so solemnly and sweetly, with love and melancholy such as I could not relate without saying more than is needful of long passed scenes and characters.” As the captain said this he buried his face in his hands to hide his tears.

“Come, come,” replied Mr. Barrington, who utterly mistook the cause of this emotion. “You must not give way thus. What is it, as the doctor says, but a series of dreams, or, at worst, the practices of a cunning rascal, who enjoys the sport of playing on your fears? Perhaps it is a sneaking scoundrel, who owes you a grudge, and who thus tries to pay you off.”

“A grudge, indeed, he does owe me, replied Walton with a shudder. Then adding, in an abstracted way, and after a brief pause, “When the justice of Heaven permits the Evil One to carry out a scheme of vengeance—when its execution is committed to the lost victim of sin who owes his ruin to the very man he is commissioned to pursue—then, indeed, the torments of hell are let loose on earth. Such, Sir, have been my experiences, but mercy has reached me at last; and if death could come without the dreadful sight which I am doomed to see, I would gladly die this moment. But, though death is welcome, I shrink with an agony you can not understand—yes, with a maddening agony—from the last encounter with that demon. I am to see him once more, but under circumstances unutterably more terrible than ever.”

As Walton said this he trembled so violently that Mr. Barrington was alarmed, and hastened to lead his mind back to the topic which at first seemed to tranquilize it.

“It was not all a dream,” said he, after a long pause. “I was in a different condition. No, it could not have been a dream; for it was all as real, as clear, and vivid as the scene before me. *It must* have been a reality.”

“And what *did* you see and hear?” asked Mr. Barrington, in a most anxious tone.

“When I saw him at the gate I fell, as usual, into a swoon, from which I recovered very slowly. I found myself reclining on the bank of a large lake surrounded by beautiful hills, and all was illuminated by a soft rose-colored light. The scene appeared to be unusually sad and lonely, and yet it was more beautiful than any thing on earth. My head was leaning upon the lap of a girl, and she was singing a strange and wondrous song that seemed to tell of all my life. With that song the old feelings that I thought had perished within me came back, and tears flowed from my eyes. I knew that voice—oh, how well!—and while I listened I was spellbound by it; and, gazing in those lovely eyes, I hardly stirred for fear I should break the charmed scene. Then I turned from that countenance, for painful memories began to shoot within me, and I only listened to the voice; but slowly the song and the scene grew fainter till all seemed lost in darkness again. Then I wakened to this world, comforted, as you have noticed, for I felt that much had been forgiven

me. Yes, *she* forgave me.” As he said this Walton wept bitterly, and with long, protracted emotion, amidst which Mr. Barrington judiciously withdrew.

From this time the tone of Walton’s mind was one of profound and gentle melancholy. But this was not without its interruption. He was thoroughly convinced that he was yet to receive a final visitation which should transcend in point of unutterable horror all that he had yet experienced. From this unknown but inevitable agony he often shrank in paroxysms of abject terror, such as filled the entire household with dismay, and even with superstitious panic. The least skeptical of the family were often visited during the solitude of the night with secret apprehensions which they did not care to confess, and hence none of them sought to dissuade Walton from his new-made resolution to shut himself in his own apartment. The window-blinds were kept closed, and his body-servant slept in the same chamber, and was not out of it day or night. The physician, who had at first dwelt with them, had left, being no longer required, and the servant referred to was fully adequate to his duties. These, in addition to ordinary attentions, were summed up in the precautions necessary to prevent the dreadful recurrence of a visit from the “detective,” as he was generally styled. The door was to be kept carefully closed, not a window to be left unscreened, and the patient was not to be left alone, even for a minute, day or night. Total solitude had become to him unsupportable. It was a distinctive anticipation of some dreadful event.

Miss Barrington, though now all expectations of a matrimonial character were broken, ceased not to minister to Walton with assiduous devotion. She read entertaining books, and sought in every way to win him from himself; but it was apparent that, whatever might be temporary success, his fears soon preyed upon him with increased power.

Such was the state of things in this strange household when the closing scene occurred. It was about two o’clock of a winter’s night, and Walton was, as usual, in his bed. His servant slept on a small couch in the corner of the room and a lamp was burning. The man was suddenly aroused by his master, who said:

“I can’t get it out of my head that there is something strange in the room or passageway. Get up Wilson, and look about. Make a thorough search. Such hateful dreams!”

The servant arose, lit a candle, and examined the chamber, and then entered the passage, and proceeded a few steps, when the door behind him slowly swung to as though moved by some gentle current of air. This brief separation from his master did not disturb the servant, inasmuch as the ventilator over the door was open. As he advanced in the passage he heard his master calling him, but he omitted to reply in the loud tones which distance would have rendered necessary, for fear of alarming the house. However, he walked hurriedly back, when, to his amazement, he heard a strange voice in the room responding to Walton. Palsied by terror, yet still alive to curiosity, he stood breathless and listening at the threshold, unable to summon resolution to open the door. A moment more and he heard Walton exclaim: “Oh God! Oh my God!” which utterance was repeated in agonizing tones several times. Then came a momentary silence, which was broken by a yell of agony so appalling and hideous that, under an impulse of ungovernable horror, the man strove to open the door. This seemed beyond his power; but whether it was really secured on the inside, or whether his agitation prevented him from perfectly

turning the knob, is yet a question. As he stood there, trembling in awful dread, yell after yell rang louder and wilder through the chamber. Almost freezing with horror, and scarcely knowing what he did, he turned and ran up and down the passage until he was encountered by the pallid form of Mr. Barrington.

“What is it? Who—where is your master, Wilson?” inquired the latter, in an incoherent manner. “For God’s sake, is there any thing wrong?”

“Lord have mercy on us!” exclaimed Wilson, staring wildly on Mr. Barrington.

Without waiting for explanation, the latter burst the door open and entered the room, followed by the servant.

“The lamp has been moved from the table,” said Wilson. “See! they have put it by the bed.”

“Draw the curtains, fellow,” replied Mr. Barrington, sternly, “and don’t stand gaping there.”

Wilson hesitated.

“Hold this, then,” said the former, impatiently thrusting his candlestick into the man’s hand; and then advancing to the bed, he drew the curtains apart. The light fell upon a figure huddled together and half upright at the head of the bed. It appeared to have slunk back as far as the solid paneling would admit, and the hands were still clutched in the bed-clothes.

“Walton, Walton, Walton!” cried Mr. Barrington, with mingled awe and vehemence, at the same time taking the light from the servant and holding it so that it shone full on the face. The features were fixed, stern, and white. The jaw was fallen, and the sightless eye, still open, gazed vacantly toward the front of the bed.

“Great God, he is dead!” he muttered, as he gazed upon the fearful spectacle. They both continued to look in silence for a few minutes. “Cold, too!” added the servant, touching the dead man’s hand; “and see, see,” added he, with a shudder, “there was something else on the bed with him! Look there—look there—see that, Sir!” As Wilson spoke he pointed to a deep indenture, as if caused by a heavy pressure, near the foot of the bed.

Mr. Barrington was silent.

“Oh, come away, Sir!” whispered Wilson, at the same time glancing fearfully around. “It is an awful spot.”

At this moment they heard the steps of several of the family approaching, and Mr. Barrington, to prepare them for the sight, loosed the rigid grip with which the fingers of the dead man clutched the bed-clothes, and drew the figure as well as possible into a reclining posture. Then they all gazed with bewildered feelings on the victim of the implacable detective.

* * * * *

I have spoken of these events as first bringing the term to my notice, and, having given this narrative, I am not under any obligations to afford a solution to the mystery it contains. I never heard from Walton's friends that any clue was found by which a solution could be wrought out. On the other hand, they were very anxious to hush the matter up. The house at Kip's Bay was pulled down, and both the Andersons and the servants soon left the city, being, as some supposed, influenced by pecuniary inducements. The Barringtons, and all others who had a family interest in this strange affair, are dead, and they left no record of an explanatory character. Reports, however, floated in from a foreign shore, which took shape, so as to lead to the theory that Captain Walton had, during the latter years of his life, been compelled by a higher power to work out a retribution for some grievous and disgraceful sin. This theory was gradually established in the minds of many who were acquainted with the affair, and their version may thus be put into shape: Captain Walton, ten years before coming to New York, had, while lying at Deptford, where his boatswain kept his family, formed a guilty attachment with the daughter of the latter. The father had visited the frailty of his child with extreme harshness, and she had died of a broken heart. Presuming upon Walton's implication in her guilt, the man had behaved with insolence toward his captain, and the latter degraded him from his office as soon as they were at sea. He also retaliated on him for his cruelty to the girl, and during the voyage subjected him to those terrible severities which are within the reach of a sea-captain. The unfortunate wretch made his escape at the West Indies, and died soon afterward of the wounds received from the bloody use of the cat. Such is the story in connection with the first use of the term "detective," and I never meet it, either in voice or in print, without thinking of Captain Walton, and the fearful retribution unfolded in his history.

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