

## *History of the Red Lion*

In the *Alliance Weekly News* published at Manchester, England, is a capital story with the above title. In the number we have the Chamber-maid's story, which we copy. May not the burning rebuke administered to the elder Crowther be repeated many times on this side of the Atlantic?

### THE CHAMBERMAID BECOMES CONFIDENTIAL

I'll tell you something, Mr. A.M.F.; that stands for A Merry Fellow, he! he! he! I know my letters you see. It's a secret that's been weighing on my mind for a fortnight, and I'm sure I'd never have had my sleep if it hadn't been for taking laudanum in my gin; not that I take much gin, you know, only a drop now and then for the toothache. But about this secret: It's about a lodger we had a month or two since, such a nice young man, but so mysterious, with a black, furru cloak and brown trousers, and such a bright diamond breast-pin, with light blue eyes and white teeth, and such a smile! I'm sure I thought as if I could have given my chance of a new bonnet to see such a smile every day. Well, although he was always smiling, he seldom spoke, and I noticed that he always wore gloves. He drank a great deal, and when he had had a glass or two he would begin to frown, and look gloomy as anything, but he never pulled his gloves off; and every now and then he would begin to smile again and well he might—he was smiling for his life! One day that he was rather tipsy, he put his hand into his pocket to pull out his pencil case to write something, and he pulled a piece of newspaper out at the same time, and it fluttered to the floor unseen. I picked it up, but I didn't give it to him then; because, you see, I was curious to see what it was about. Well, when out of the room I looked at it, and saw it was an advertisement out of the *Times*, but here it is:

V. R.

£ 500 REWARD — MURDER!

Whereas, on the 10th day of November last, George Crowther did, maliciously and wantonly, kill, slay, and murder one John Renshaw: This to give notice that the above reward will be given to any person or persons, who will give such information as will lead to the capture and apprehension of the said George Crowther.

The said George Crowther is of middle height, has straight black hair, black moustache, very white teeth, light blue eyes, and is much given to scowling or frowning. He is also very much given to drinking, and has a severe gash on each hand. Had on when last seen a black cloth coat, blue trousers, and a vest and a white hat.

All communications to be made to Inspector Grabham, Scotland-road, or Sargeant Knalehem, Bow-street Police Court.

Bow-st. P. C., Dec. 21, 1861.

You may fancy how I felt on reading this precious piece of paper. I didn't know what to do. I daresn't, for my life, take Mr. George Crowther the paper he had dropped. I felt sure it was Mr. George Crowther, although he was entered on our books as Mr. John Smith. Although his

appearance differed from that described in the paper, I could trace a resemblance between them. The paper described George Crowther as having very white teeth; so had our lodger; light blue eyes, so had he; given to drinking, so was he. True, it said George Crowther had black, strait hair, our lodger's was black, curly hair; a black mustache, he had none; was given to scowling, he was always smiling; had a severe gash on each hand that I did not know, but what did he wear gloves for constantly? His barber could alter his hair and moustache, and he himself could alter his frown into a smile but he could not alter his hands, so he always wore gloves. "There's no doubt," I said aloud, "there's no doubt Mr. George Crowther and Mr. John Smith know each other very well, and I'm sure that if one's one, he's t'other, and all, Yes, John Smith, with all your smiling and affectation, I know—"

"What?" said a deep breathing voice behind me, and a hand grasped my shoulder, and not so gently, neither. I turned round and there was John Smith; but not the John Smith I knew best. His face was covered with a scowl, and there was a fiery light in his eyes that shriveled my heart up like a piece of paper. His hands were still gloved, I saw, frightened us I was. "Woman!" he said, and his hold on my shoulder tightened so that I was almost screaming with pain, but I stopped myself for I saw his blood was up, and he'd been drinking heavy; and people when they have had too much drink don't care what they do. "Woman, what know you?"

"N—n—nothing, sir, indeed; sir, I'm as ignorant of the murder as a child unborn."

"Ignorant of the murder!" he cried, "What murder? Whose murder? Speak or I'll tear your chattering tongue out."

"N—no murder at all, sir. Indeed, sir, I'm rather wild this evening. I do not know what I'm talking about; I don't, indeed, sir. Upon my word and honor, sir, I never read nothing, sir. I don't know George Crowther, sir, indeed, sir."

"Don't know George Crowther!" he said, and I saw sweat-drops start out on his forehead. "Where did you hear of George Crowther? Answer, quick!" and he shook me till I didn't know where I as properly.

"I didn't sir,—indeed, sir, I didn't," was all I could say.

"Didn't what?" he said, stopping his shaking for a moment or two.

"Didn't read it, sir—indeed, sir, if I may never read it again, sir I didn't sir."

"Read what? Ah!" he yelled, as he saw the piece of newspaper I had in my hand. "So," he added, taking it out of my hand, "that's where you gained your knowledge from, is it?" He looked at me a moment or two, as if he was calculating what bravery and strength I had, and then he walked slowly to the chamber door and fastened it. I opened my lips to scream, but in an instant he pulled out a pistol, and pointing it at me said, in a low voice: "Hold! I am a desperate man and must take desperate measures. Do you think that after all I have dared I am going to be foiled by a woman? Never! I have risked everything—life, reputation, honor, on one throw of the dice, and I must succeed. You see I carry pistols with me always. 'Tis a wise precaution. If I am ever

taken, two lives must be sacrificed before it is done,” another pistol out. “Now,” he continued, “were you to shout, this should send you to eternity, and a bullet from this would be the greeting of the first who came to your assistance. You understand,” he added, and a smile broke out on his face, but such a smile, that I would have preferred his frown a hundred times. I could not speak, neither could I withdraw my eyes from his. He was silent a few moments, all the time watching me with his cat-like eyes, which fascinated me as they say the serpent fascinates its prey. Presently he spoke:

“I had thought my secret was safe, but you know it. If you once get away from this room my life is in your hands. Were I to brain you now, where you stand, or to seize you by the throat, so,” and he grasped my throat with an iron hand— “choke you, and bury you in yonder garden, who would ever be the wiser? No one. But you see I am merciful. One murder is enough for any one, and I don't wish to commit another. But I will unless you swear on your knees never to betray me.” He forced me on my knees. What could I do? I swore an oath, a terrible oath, not fit to tell you, that I would never betray him to justice. When I had done so, he released me, and gazing at me again with his fiery eyes, he said in a cold, measured tone, that made my very blood curdle:

“If you ever break that oath, and I find it out, be sure that before I am taken, I will visit you. Aye! were you in Bow street, itself, and all the police in the three kingdoms keeping watch and ward over you! You understand?” I answered not, but he read in my eyes that I would keep my promise. He went to the door, opened it, and was going back to his own room, when the sound of a carriage stopping at our door stayed him, and he stepped back into the room, and cocking his pistols, peeped at the strangers. His eyes fell on an old gentleman and lady dressed in mourning, who slipped into the Red Lion. With an oath, he said: “Have I not suffered enough, but that I must be followed by these!” and he hid his face on his arm. I now heard the strange gentleman speak:

“I wish to stay here for the night, and in the morning you will have the horses harnessed at eight. I am going to Hickory Hall to see Square Davis, and spend a few days with him.”

“All right, sir,” said Mr. Scott : “What names shall I put down?”

“Mr. and Mrs. Crowther,” answered the old gentleman, flushing, and I fancied the old lady trembled.

“All right, sir,” said Mr. Scott. “The chamber-maid will show you your room. Maria! hang the girl where's she loitering now! Maria” he shouted. I was leaving the room when George Crowther took me by the arm, and fixing his eyes on mine, said in a hoarse whisper, “Remember!” and then released me.

“Show this lady and gentleman up to number eleven,” said Mrs. Scott. I did so, and was coming down stairs, when I met George Crowther creeping up the stairs and then turned back, because I saw George Crowther go into the room, and quick as lightning I ran and put my eye to the key hole. The old gentleman and lady were talking, and I could see that they had not noticed George Crowther's entrance into the room, and they had their backs to him.

“George has got off, after all.” Said the gentleman. “I’m glad of it for his sake, though, heaven knows, he deserves no mercy.”

“Don’t say so, said his wife, “I’m sure George was not in his proper senses when he committed the —” she could not say murder.

“Of course he was not, was the answer. “He’d had too much drink, I suppose. Yet I always told him that drunkenness was wrong. See what it has brought him to. To think,” said Mr. Crowther, warming as he went on, “to think of the pains and anxieties I have had on his account, paying for his extravagances, getting him out of all kind of scrapes, toiling day and night, never ceasing, for his welfare, and he to return it thus. He has disgraced the father who loved him, the mother who doted on him, and himself. I have had no share in his guilt; yet must I hung down my head and bear his shame. Is it fair? Is it right? Did I teach him to gamble? Did I teach him to murder? I will say it, I have done no murder, ‘tis no disgrace to me. Did I teach him these, I say?” and he looked at his wife for an answer.

“No, No,” she answered sighing. “‘Tis his own badness and wickedness. You have taught him none of these sins.”

“Not I,” he answered, “I taught him none of these sins. Then, can his crime disgrace me? Never. No, no, ‘tis not my fault if he gambled; ‘tis not my fault if he committed—a deed. For what wickedness have I taught him?”

“To drink,” said George Crowther, stepping forward. His mother screamed; and his father, rising from his seat, gazed on him steadily and said:

“George Crowther, you are no son of mine. A murderer—”

“Silence!” thundered his son. “If I am a murderer, whose is the fault? What is it that dragged me into debt, brought me to the gaming table, reduced me below the level of the brutes, and made me what I am, a liar, a profligate, a gambler, and — a murderer? What has done this? *The drink*. Now, look in your own heart and tell me who it was that laughed at me when I was young for being a teetotaler, sneered at me, day by day, for my temperance principles, and at last persuaded me to taste of that cup which has ruined and destroyed my worldly prospects, and will be the means of my damnation.”

“I taught you to drink, George,” answered Mr. Crowther: “I did not teach you to be a drunkard. A man may be a moderate drinker, but yet not a drunkard.”

“Pshaw!” was the retort, “seek not to palliate your wrong by such a frivolous excuse. You taught me to drink, and but for you, I might have been a proud and happy man today. Instead of which I am hunted by man, accursed of God, an outcast and a murderer. Yours is the fault, and mine but the misfortune. You have ruined me, and I curse you for it. If my disgrace has fallen heavily on you, may it fall thrice as heavily. If it has caused you sorrow may it cause you to sorrow more. May your heart be broke with sorrow, may—”

“George! George!” cried his mother, throwing herself at his feet, and clasping his knees convulsively, whilst his father trembled with horror and dread. I heard heavy footsteps on the stair, but he heard them not, for he went on—

“May every agony of remorse and terror that I have felt be doubly felt by you, and may your death be thrice as horrible and agonizing.”

“George Crowther, I arrest you in the name of the Queen, for murder!” A heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and he sprang up like an enraged tiger. “’Tis that girl,” I heard him mutter between his teeth.

“No, no,” said the police officer, “there ain’t been any gal wotsomever consarned in his ere affair. Nobody ’cept your humble servant, Detective Sharp, of Bow street.”

“Do you think that you, single-handed can take me?” said George, throwing the officer from him as if he had been a baby; “No, no, I’ve too much to be taken by any man living.” As he spoke he drew his pistols out aimed one at the officer, who didn’t appear in the least disturbed.

“I thought you’d be rather wild,” said Sharp, “so I took the precaution to fetch a little aid. Hallo! without there.” As he spoke four men whom I had seen come up the stairs with him, stepped into the room.

“I ‘spose you see now,” said Sharp, “that it ain’t of no arthly oose whatever to resist?” George returned no answer, but lifting the pistol to his own head fired. I heard a fall and a shriek, and when I looked there was his mother bending over him with a pale, frightened face, and vainly endeavoring to stanch the blood which ran from the wound. The father had fainted. — Sharp looked on with a disappointed air.

“Well, it is aggravating,” said he, “that arter all my troubles and all my struggles, the prize has slipped through my fingers this way. He must have been a dis’prit, dis’prit man.”

I suppose I needn’t tell you anything more. I’ve told my secret, and I hope you’ll not tell it to anybody, because it might do harm to the Red Lion, and as I’m quite pleased with my situation, I shouldn’t like anything wrong to happen.

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