

MURDER AND MADNESS.

HERE is a story of the supernatural. It happened more than a hundred years ago, so that you may hope it is not true. Yet in those days the invention of news was not yet known, and the paper which contains this story was a sober and honest journal. One of the patients in a madhouse—a parish madhouse; I think that of Luncheon—escaped. That was no new thing; they all wanted to escape. As the woman, although very mad indeed, was quite harmless, they went about their search in a leisurely fashion. At last they found her, drowned in a shallow ditch, and carried her back to the madhouse. On preparing the unhappy woman for the grave, they found in her corset—they called her stays—something that rustled. They cut the thing open, and discovered a small parcel rolled up tight in some waterproof stuff—whatever was then invented. The parcel was a document written on parchment. It was written very small, and mis-spelt, and this was how it ran: 'The man came along after dark; he stopped at our door, and said he was a stranger, and would my aunt take him in for the night? He seemed a sailor, and said he was respectable, and showed money. "Elizabeth," said aunt, "he can have your room, and you shall sleep with me." There were two bedrooms in the cottage, up a ladder, both garrets. During the evening he sent me out for drink, and he had a lot, and was drunk; but he got up the ladder safe and so to bed. In the night I heard aunt get out of bed. There was a moon shining in the skylight window. She took something and went into the man's room. Presently aunt came back, and in the moonlight she saw me sitting up in bed. "Get up," she said; "go downstairs and get, if you can, a light." So I did, and brought the rush light up the ladder. Aunt had the Bible in her hand. "Swear," she said, "that you will never tell anyone what has been done." So I swore, trembling, and wished I might go suddenly mad if I told. "Then," she says, "I've killed the lodger. His pockets were full of guineas, and I'm a made woman. But you must help me." So she made me help to drag the body down into the room below and out into the garden, where we dug a hole under the cabbages and laid it as deep as we could. Then we covered all up and went back to the house, and waited till daybreak. As soon as it was light we washed up the place, and nobody ever found out. One night, when I was a woman grown, the dead man came to my bedside and said, "Tell the story;" and I said, "I cannot, because I swore." He said, "If you tell you have sworn to go mad; if you do not tell I will haunt you till you do go mad." So, as I am bound to go mad either way, I have written the story down and sewn it up. When I am dead somebody will find it, and will dig up the poor man and bury him in a church. The house is situated . . . Thus the narrative. And they dug up the garden in the place indicated, and found the dead body in what had been sailor's clothes.—WALTER BESANT.

THE EMPEROR'S BREAKFAST.

FIFTEEN centuries ago
Emperor Nintok of Japan
Walked upon his roof at daybreak,
Watching if the toils began
Well to gild the cedar frieze
Of his palace galleries;
Well, to nail the silver plates
Of his inner palace gates;
For the queen would have it so
Fifteen hundred years ago!

Walking on his roof, he spied
Streets and lanes and quarters teeming;
Saw his city spreading wide,
Ah! but mean and sad of seeming
Show those lowly wooden huts
Underneath the king's house gleaming.
Though each humble wicket shuts
One world out and one world in,
That so great and this so small,
Yet, to the poor hearts within,
The little world their all and all!
Just then the waiting maids bore through
The breakfast of King Nintok

Quoth the Emperor, gazing round,
'Wherefore, when my meats abound,
See I not much smoke arise
From these huts beneath mine eyes?
Chimneys jut into the air,
Yet no chimney reek is there
Telling that the household pot
Bubbles glad with boiled rice hot.

'Gild me no more galleries,
If my people pay the gold!
Let my gates unplated go
If the silver leaves them cold!
This city of all tax I ease
For three years! We decree it so!
From all huts there shall be smoke!
Thus the Emperor Nintok spake.

Sped three years. Upon his roof
The monarch paced again. Aloof
His Empress hung, ill pleased to see
The snows drip through her gallery,
The gates agape with cracks, and gray
For wear and weather. 'Consort! say
If so the Emperor of Japan
Should lodge, like some vile peasant man,
Whose thatch leaks for a load of straw?'
'Princess angust, what recks a flaw,'
Nintok replied, 'in gate or wall
When, far and wide, those chimneys all
Fling their blue house flags to the sky,
Where the gods count them? Thou and I
Take part in all the poor folks' health:
The people's weal makes prince's wealth!'

EDWIN ARNOLD.

A RIDGE OF CORN.

WITH heart grown weary of the heat,
'And hungry for the breath
Of field and farm, with eager feet
I trod the pavement dry as death
Through city streets where vice is born—
And sudden, lo! a ridge of corn.

Above the dingy roof it stood,
A dome of toasting, tangled spears,
Dark, cool, and sweet as any wood,
Its silken gleamed and plumed ears
Laughed on me through the haze of morn,
The tranquil presence of the corn.

Upon the salt wind from the sea,
Borne westward swift as dreams
Of boyhood are, I seemed to be
'Nce more a part of sounds and gleams
Thrown on me by the winds of morn
Amid the rustling rows of corn.

I bared my head, and on me fell
The old, wild wizardry again
Of leaf and sky, the moving spell
Of boyhood's easy joy or pain,
When pumpkin trump was Siegfried's horn
Echoing down the walls of corn.

I saw the field (as trackless then
As wood to Daniel Boone)
Wherein we hunted wolves and men,
And ranged and twanged the green bassoon,
Not blither Robin Hood's merry horn
Than pumpkin vine amid the corn.

In central deeps the melons lay,
Slow swelling in the August sun.
I traced again the narrow way,
And joined again the stealthy run.
The jack o'-lantern race was born
Within the shadows of the corn.

O woe, west wilderness of leaves!
O playmates far away! Over thee
The slow wind like a mourner grieves,
And stirs the plumed ears like a sea.
Would we could sound again the horn
In vast sweet presence of the corn!

CLASS EYES.

THE manufacture of glass eyes is a profession by itself, and a lucrative one into the bargain. Parisian eyes are by far the best. The great artists in this line are chiefly to be found congregated in the Faubourg St. Honore, and some of them are also oculists. You will generally find a one-eyed servant attached to these establishments, who is ready if called upon to exhibit his imitation orb to hesitating customers. Forty or fifty francs is the price of a first-class eye; but in a less fashionable neighbourhood one equally good may be bought for half that sum. After a few months' wear they lose their brilliancy, and some people pay their oculist an annual sum to be kept supplied. A manufacturer, therefore has usually a drawer full of pattern eyes, so that he can at once supply the needs of his regular customers without any trouble to them. A good workman can make an eye in a day, but it is a difficult and tedious piece of work, and if it does not please the customer it is often returned on his hands. Rejected eyes are generally sold to people who cannot afford to be fastidious as to colour and expression; while those that can be disposed of in no other way find a market in foreign parts—in Asia or in the Sandwich Islands. A Hayti general who had lost an eye ordered one from Paris, and the oculist forwarded to him what he considered a perfect triumph of skill. Six months later a letter came back to this effect:—'Your eye is of no use to me. It is yellowish, and recalls the memory of the Spanish flag. I will only wear an eye of the colours of my country.' The oculist, after considering the matter, got a sight of the Haytian flag, and presently despatched to the patriotic warrior a splendid green and red eye, which had the good fortune to give complete satisfaction. The general, in fact, was so charmed with it that he elected to wear it on his breast as an order. It is no uncommon thing for an eye to be hired for the day, on the occasion of some festival, by a workman too poor to have one in general use. Artificial eyes appear to have originated in Egypt, they were made of gold and silver, then of copper and ivory. In the 16th century porcelain was the substance used, and the makers advertised themselves by stamping their names and addresses on the white of the eye, a practice not likely to commend itself to their customers, one would have thought. Porcelain was superseded by glass, which again gave place to enamel, and this, we believe, is the substance in favour at the present day. The best specimens look so wonderfully real, that it is sometimes difficult to believe that they have not the power of vision, and that their chief use is to prevent a person looking unseemly in the eyes of his fellow men.



IN THE LOWER GONGE OF THE TWAIN.