

Tuesday, - - - October 31, 1871.

WHAT I SAW FROM MY WINDOW.

It was a strange scene, and yet there was nothing startling about it. I could tell why my eyes were riveted to the spot. Probably, I said to myself, it can only be accounted for by some occult psychological reason, and I will simply watch and endeavor not to wonder. My library is situated at the third-story back-room of an ordinary built house in the neighborhood of the Heights, and it is here I spend hour after hour in the work, and study, sometimes, as the light fades from the sky, drawing near the window with my book or writing, and semi-occasionally glancing at the backs of the houses opposite. The house whose garden joins ours has always been an object of interest to me, ever since I moved into the neighborhood, on account of an old gentleman who was to be seen in his library at almost any hour of the day. He seemed to be an indefatigable worker, and was generally at his post long before I was. This old gentleman grew to be very entertaining to me, and I came to miss him very much when for any reason he was absent from the library. The time above alluded to was early in the evening in the latter part of February. My neighbor had gone from bookcase to bookcase, and drawer to drawer, arranging and putting away, and at last I noticed, or thought I saw him lock the drawers of his desk and put the key in his pocket. Soon after I heard the ring of their tea-bell, and watched the old gentleman walk out of the room. What was the reason that even then I could not withdraw my gaze? There was nothing particularly inviting about the apartment now that its occupant had gone, but still I could not help looking. The gas was burning very dimly, and I could just make out the different articles of furniture, assisted a little by the light of a very pleasant grate-fire. As I watched, a figure came swiftly in at a door to the right. A cold, nervous tremble took possession of me. Not that I felt there was anything supernatural about the vision. I knew better—for I immediately recognized the form and dress of a lady I had noticed in the garden only an hour or two before. But I did not know that her presence in that room at that particular time meant mischief and was unutterable. I knew that her feet made no noise as she moved hastily about, going over exactly the same ground that the old gentleman had traveled only a few moments previous. Drawer after drawer she ransacked—lifting lids, examining pigeon-holes, and finally, after a second or two, looking over the contents of the old gentleman's desk. I saw her grasp what appeared to me to be a small box or casket, close and lock the drawer, and then, waving her hands aloft, with singular, triumphant gesture, hurry from the room. That this young woman had been guilty of theft I was perfectly aware; also, I felt sure that she was some near relative of the proprietor of the mansion; and more than all did I realize that the fearful consequences of this work would react upon an innocent and formerly highly esteemed member of the household. How did I know this? Perhaps I reasoned from cause to effect without really being aware that such was the case. Perhaps, having been led to see this strange performance, I was peculiarly acted upon as to the result. However that may be, it seemed that the troubled future of that family was thoroughly daguerrotypied upon my heart. After a while the old gentleman entered the library, followed by an elderly lady I took to be his wife, then a young gentleman—I had often noticed him before—and last of all, the lady in white, with a wide scarlet sash and neck-ribbon. Soon after a young woman, whom I had also often seen in the garden, apparently the governess, as she always had a curly-headed little maid, yet this time she was alone, and seem, of bidding them all good-night. The old gentleman took him in his arms and caressed him for a while, after a short frolic with each one he was led off by his governess. Then the young gentleman drew down the shades, and I saw no more that night. It was some time before I could sufficiently banish the occurrence to sleep, and the first thought upon awakening the next morning was the strange scene of the previous evening. My first glance at my neighbor's library was sufficient to assure me that the theft was discovered. The old gentleman, with his hands clasped behind him, paced slowly up and down the apartment. His wife, assisted by the young women who had ransacked every sock and corner the night before, went through the farce of examination. The old man was evidently too grieved and stunned to join in the search. During the forenoon the young governess entered, having to all appearance been sent for, for the purpose of questioning. For a moment she stood, it appeared to me, in silent wonderment; then advanced quickly to the center of the room and confronted the old gentleman. The little boy ran into the library, and caught her by the hand. The owner of the white robe—this morning she was dressed in a white merino wrapper, faced with cherry, and cherry trimmings—arose from her chair by the library table, and with an imperious gesture, perfectly observable from my distance, even, drew the child away from the side of his companion. Then the poor girl hid her face in her handkerchief, and left the room. It was plain then as sun at midday. The governess had been accused of the theft!

To be continued.

Thomas Taylor. John C. Cutler.

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