

THE EVENING NEWS.

Thursday, - - - January 13, 1871.

"THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD."

A Startling Statement from Germany.

BY CLARENCE F. BULMER.

A recent issue of *Die Berliner Zeitung* contains an article of so startling a nature that the editors append a card from the celebrated Dr. Siebert certifying to the veracity of the statement. The article signs the initials "J. R." but is said to be a wealthy and eccentric man whose residence is furnished throughout with articles which have belonged to deceased celebrities, and it is alleged that at the sale of Mr. Dickens's effects he purchased a mahogany cabinet in which he found an outline of the entire plot of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." In the handwriting of Mr. Dickens, in the "outline" the events are of course arranged in the order of their occurrence, and not in the order in which they were to be narrated in the story. I give it verbatim, and it will be observed that "J. R." has interpolated the names of the chapters in which Mr. Dickens has already written up numerous sections thereof. It reads:

A Mrs. Bud is accidentally drowned in England, and one year after her husband dies of a broken heart (9). His only consolation has been a friend named Drood (2). Bud leaves a daughter, Rose, and Drood, who soon follows him, leaves a son Edwin (9). The parents direct in their will that these children shall intermarry when Edwin attains maturity (3 & 9). Meanwhile, Rose lives at the Seminary of Miss Twinkleton in Cloisterham (9), and her guardian is an old dame of her mother's named Grewgious, who has an office in London, (11).

Edwin is educated as an engineer (9), and intends going on an engineering tour directly after his marriage (2). His guardian is his uncle John Jasper, of whose diabolical character he is ignorant. Jasper is a member of the Cloisterham Cathedral, and lives in the Gate House adjoining (4).

The wedding, as arranged, for it is now the close of the year (2), and the marriage is to take place in the coming May (9). Edwin has a dangerous rival in the person of John Jasper, who has fallen in love with Rose, while acting as her musical instructor. She abhors him as she would a snake, but he exerts a snake's power over her with his eyes, and, without uttering a threat, looks one so unequivocally that for a long time she is afraid to acquaint anyone with his persecutions of her (7). Therefore Edwin is so unconscious of it that he hangs her portrait in Jasper's room and exasperates him by frequent allusions to the pending marriage (2). Jasper sees that he can only prevent the marriage by destroying his rival, and resolves to push him from the Cathedral tower and conceal his body in a vault, where, as a direct suspicion from himself. He relieves his mental agony by smoking opium in a London den whose proprietress is known as the Princess Puffer (1 & 23). In his opium dreams he has a vision which takes the semblance of the tower which is to be the scene of his crime (1), and in them he takes a fiendish delight in hearing Edwin from the tower in fancy (23). He is fearful of betraying his secret, but on finding the murderer of his fellow smokers unintelligible (1), he concludes that his own have been equally so. But he is mistaken, for the Princess Puffer has warned him out of him to betray Edwin, and warning he subsequently receives (14).

Jasper learns from Durdles, the Cathedral mason, that the walls of the Sapea vault are uncommonly thick (5) and therefore selects that one for the concealment of his victim. He is continually tapping with his hammer to ascertain where persons are buried (4). He sees Durdles put the key of this vault in his bundle (4), and watches for an opportunity to abstract it. As the murderous deed will be committed at night, he familiarizes himself with the tower after dark by visiting it in company with Durdles, and by studying the latter with drugged liquor he also obtains possession of the keys (13). On leaving the Cathedral, he finds they have been watched by a ragamuffin called Deputy, who recovers a reward for stealing Jasper's keys, and a reward for obtaining possession of the keys (13). On leaving the Cathedral, he finds they have been watched by a ragamuffin called Deputy, who recovers a reward for stealing Jasper's keys, and a reward for obtaining possession of the keys (13).

The opportunity for Jasper to commit the crime and transfer suspicion on another arrives at last. Mr. Crisparkle, the Minor Canon, has a pupil and boarder named Neville Landless, whose sister Helena is at the Seminary (6). They are natives of Cayton, and have hot blood in their veins (7). Edwin and Neville quarrel and Jasper overhears them. Pretending to act as mediator, he invites them to the Gate House, and by means of drugged liquors and tantalizing remarks brings about a collision, after which Neville rushes bareheaded from the house (8). Jasper takes the hat to Crisparkle, and telling him of the affair expresses the fear that Neville will revenge himself on Edwin (8). He also improves the opportunity to prejudice the public against Neville.

The latter admits to Crisparkle that his dislike of Edwin is based upon an attachment to Rose (10), but it is finally arranged that he and Edwin are to meet at Jasper's on Christmas Eve, for the purpose of reconciliation (20). The day before Christmas, Jasper goes about purchasing luxuries and telling everyone they are for his dear nephew (14). He also informs Mayor Sapea, before whom the case of Neville will be arraigned, that the inflammable Neville will dine with his nephew that evening (14). Under pretense of having a cold he wears a large necktie, so that he receives any marks on the throat or the face in his scuffle with Edwin, he can conceal them in that way. Christmas Eve finds him all prepared for the crime, for it is not until after committing it that he finds it was rendered unnecessary by a previous dissolution of the engagement between Edwin and Rose (15). Had they been left to a choice they would unquestionably have formed a match, but as it was, such had a suspicion of being forced on the other (15). Prior to this understanding, Grewgious delivered to Edwin a wedding ring which had belonged to Rose's mother, and which, when he returned, he receives any marks on the throat or the face in his scuffle with Edwin, he can conceal them in that way. Christmas Eve finds him all prepared for the crime, for it is not until after committing it that he finds it was rendered unnecessary by a previous dissolution of the engagement between Edwin and Rose (15).

On his way to Jasper's on Christmas Eve, Edwin meets the Princess Puffer, who warns him that "Ned" is a threatened man (14). Jasper is the only one who calls him that (14), and although he pays no particular attention to the warning, he is more on his guard than he would have been. There is a violent tornado that night (14), and about midnight Edwin and Neville go to see the effects of the rain, and Edwin takes a mouthful which he spits out the moment he gets outside. Jasper little knows he is being watched by his old enemy, Deputy, who is out on his nightly watch for Durdles.

To be continued.

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