

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL."

Cities in flames, hotels burned, with frightful loss of life, last night, murder, foul and most unnatural! We boast of civilization, we prate of justice, we build gorgeous churches in which to worship the Creator one day in seven, and demonstrate our sincerity by breaking His decalogue the remaining six. We have our physical epidemics of cholera, and our moral epidemics of violating all the Commandments, in order to discover which sin has the most power, and consequently the most enjoyable! On the whole we conclude that murder—pre-eminently cold-blooded murder—is that for which we most thank, for which we are grieved by nature, and in which our laws are especially designed to cover with the mantle of charitable forgiveness. Having fastened our affections on the petty crimes of the world, we desire to defy, we display our ingenuity by inventing various sauces piquant with which to flavor this defiance.

There are fashions in the cutting of clothes; why not fashions in the cutting of throats? De Quincy should be alive to-day to paint the beauties of "murder" considered as one of the fine arts. It should have stood on Monday night within the shadow of Liberty street and witnessed how little lower than the angels is man! It is a charming spectacle, ye law-abiding citizens of America, to see a stout cut-throat as we turn on the calcium light which alone was needed to make the bloody deed as dramatic a sensation as ever the modern playwright dared to dream! Two men meet by accident, men who had formerly been partners in the disreputable business of lottery dealing, and had quarreled themselves into dissolution, each taking with him his ill-gotten gains, each living on the fat and the folly of the land. They meet, indulge in language editing their mutual dislike, calling and flouting the man Simmons calls the man Duryea "a thief."

"Don't you call me a thief?" matters Duryea, swearing, "I'll kill you!"

"I will call you a thief," says Simmons, with an obscene oath.

Duryea strikes Simmons. They clash and roll into the gutter. Simmons, the more powerful man, seems to have the advantage, as Duryea tries in vain to free himself from the grasp of his adversary.

"G-d d-n you!" he exclaims, "let me up!"

"You'll die first," replies Simmons, giving him a tremendous blow.

The blood gushes from Duryea's eyes and nose and trickles down his cheeks.

"For mercy's sake, let me up!" he cries.

"Go to—!" Simmons answers, with another blow. The blood covers Duryea's face and streams over his collar and his shirt as he again cries, "For mercy's sake, don't kill me!"

"Kill you!" Simmons exclaims, a fearful paroxysm of rage. "I'll kill you a dozen times if I could."

Duryea succeeds in raising himself a little. He is smothered by the knees of Simmons and attempts to choke him. Simmons gasps for breath. His face is livid, and it seems as if Duryea were to have the best of it after all. He tries to free his neck, but cannot.

"G-d d-n you!" he gasped, "I'll kill you!"

Putting his hand into his pocket he draws forth a knife. It flashes in the air, and in the next moment is buried in Duryea's neck.

"Oh! oh!" Duryea cries as his head sinks back, bathed in blood.

Again the knife flashes in the air, again it descends; the arteries behind the ear have been cut, another stab, and the writhing Duryea is dead.

"By J—," he's dead, Simmons remarks, coolly, as he draws the reeking knife out of the dead man's neck, and looking at it complacently, mutters, "By G—, I thought I'd do it once, and I'm glad I've done it now!"

When all is over to the satisfaction of the by-standers, who have given their moral support to the performance by never raising a hand in defense of the murdered, and when Duryea is quite dead, a policeman appears and demands the knife.

"All right!" answers the hero of the fray, "you can have it now. I don't want it any more." The hero injures his ankle, but what of that? Are there not cars with which to convey his brave person to the police station, and are there not cigars—the very best—for him to smoke after he gets there? Does he not know that murder is made easy, and justice is "played out"? He scolds, sends for a surgeon, desires him to "pull away." He turns round to survey the corpse, as it passes by without a tremor in his face. Why should he be so? Does not Simmons know that courts and juries are on his side? What matters it if journals protest and women shudder for the lives of husbands pursuing the lawless career of murdering their own business, in the region of a street well named Liberty? Ay, our hero can even afford to lose his temper at the delay in furnishing him with an ambulance in which to purr his triumphant way to the hospital.

"When is that ambulance going to come? It's very cruel to keep me here. My foot is very bad." Surely the man who hacks his fellow to pieces has a right to protest against neglect of a lame foot, has a right to be surrounded by confidential friends to whom he communicates in whispers with a view probably of buying up whatever of law is remaining in this land of the free. We leave our hero comfortably housed, with all the facilities of the nearest about his romantic bedside, with, now that blood has been shed, a police officer on guard night and day. Suppose a police officer had been on guard in Liberty street, what then? Why then, murder might not have been possible, and we could not have sat down to Tuesday's breakfast with a fitting relish. So the conclusion of the matter is, public opinion to agree with us in thinking that never have we had more reason to be proud of humanity, whether in the shape of murderer or murderer, ordered, speculators or absent policemen: that never have we been so entertained as by this most playful encounter; that never were we so amused, for the night, so suggestive of romantic adventure, that never did the sight of glittering steel so thrill us with pleasing thoughts of our approaching doom. We are cheerfully taking our pills, and, as just compensation for benefits conferred, leave everything to the charitable souls burning to help us on the road to heaven, knowing that they will gladly pay for us one debt—that of nature. Let us by all means erect a monument to Simmons in Central Park, in commemoration of the triumph of brute force, "murder" and every political instinct over law, justice, decency and every virtue inculcated by the teachings of Christianity. Will not our judges best the subscription list—


N. X. Herald.

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