SINGULAR STORY.

THE FORCE OF IMAGINATION.

'So Brown, you tell me, has been appointed executor to Smith's will,' said our major the other day, as we were lounging against the low wall that divides Carlisle Terrace from the beach. 'I'll venture to say that the trusts committed to him won't be as strange as mine were the first time I was made executor.'

'Some years since, I received a letter from my old friend and comrade, Ellis of the —th, telling me that his health had been for some time declining—that he was about to make his will, and earnestly desired that I would act as his sole executor—there being, he added, a 'trust of some importance to be undertaken, which I wish to confide to no one else but yourself.' The letter concluded with a cordial invitation to pay him a visit at the snug cottage in Devonshire, to which he had retired. Now, Ellis was, like myself an old bachelor; and, except his half pay, was, I knew little burdened with this world's baggage and accoutrement. So it never occurred to me that the trust I was about to undertake could possibly relate to anything more than the bestowal of legacies on his old housekeeper and butler, or his almost equally antiquated cat and dog. I wrote immedlately to accept the invitation, and early the next morning I deposited myself and my portmanteau in the E——— coach, which, after a few days travelling, left me at my friend's abode.—He was himself standing at the garden wicket, ready to give me a cordial welcome. There was nothing very death-like in his clear, bright eye, or in the grasp of his hand; and I wondered internally what the missive he had sent me could possibiy mean. However, I kept my thoughts to myself, and followed Ellis into his little dining-room, where the snowy table-cloth was speedly and satisfactorily covered with a bountiful repast. Ample justice was done to the fare by myself, and, despite his mortuary intention by mine host also. After dinner he procured a capital bottle of port over which we discussed many of our former campaigning adventures.

'Notwithstanding the fineness of the weather, (it was in the beginning of June) I had caught a slight cold on my journey which, towards the close of the evening made itself felt in the very unpleasant form of toothache; and the pain becoming worse, I said to my host,

'I think I must ask your house keeper to-night for some flannel and camphorated spirits to apply to my unfortunate jaw. You, happy fellow ! can't know what toothache is, your teeth look good.'

'Teeth !' cried my host, his countenance changing. 'Teeth,' he repeated, shuddering: 'Ah! you little know—you can't tell.'

'What's the matter, Ellis—what do you mean?'

'I mean a tooth—an unfortunate tooth has been my ruin, and will cost me my life !' and rising from his chair, he paced up and down the room in a violent agitation. Greatly astonished, I tried of course, to soothe him, and induce him to reveal the cause of his strange excitement.

'Well,' he said at last, I will read to you the will for which you have so kindly promised to be executor.'

'I had made no promise of the kind, but my poor friends took it for granted I had done so; and leaving the room, he speedily returned with a folded paper in one hand and a small, round box in the other.

Laying these articles on the table, he seated himself in his arm-chair, pushed aside his glass and making a strong effort to be calm he begun:—

About two months since, I had occasion to visit the town of E———,upon buisness which having speedily despatched, I dined at the best hotel, and afterwards set out for a stroll. I passed through the high street, and walked along the turn-pike road, without meeting any object of interest whatever. A shady green lane opening on my right, invited me to turn into it—the fragrant hawthorn in the hedge, and the cool, fresh grass below offering a pleasant contrast to the hard, dusty road on which I had been walkiag. I soon found that this quiet lane led to a still more quiet and peaceful church-yard; and treading my way among the rude graves and rude headstones, I moralized upon them after my own fashion, if not precisely according to that of Hervey. I had at one time a transient fancy for the study of phrenology, and still retained a habit of examining the cereal developement of every one whom I met. It was therefore, with some curiosity, that I picked up a large, round, well-bleached skull, lying on the ground. What particularly interested me, was the great beauty and regularity of the teeth; they were all perfect and as evenly arranged as if they had been prepared to decorate the window of some advertising dentist. Led by an idle impulse which I could not then, or could I now account for, I pulled out one of the grinders, put it into my waistcoat pocket, and then, carelessly throwing down the skull, returned to the inn. Having partaken of tea, accompanied by some excellent muffins, I went to bed, and being fatigued with my journey, soon fell asleep.

'I had slept some time, but how long I cannot tell, when I was suddenly awaked by the door of my room opening. In stalked a tall figure dressed in black, with a white neck-cloth; his head was large, nearly bald, and he wore a pair of gold spectacles. In his hand he carried a silver candlestick, bearing a lighted candle, and advancing to my bedside in a menancing tone and manner, 'Why did you rob me of my tooth ?'

My tongue suddenly became paralized. I tried to speak but could not utter a word.

'You have taken my tooth,' continued the figure;' and now take your choice, I am not of a revengeful diposition; I dont want to say or do anything uncivil, but one of two things I must have, and that instantly—your life or the best tooth in your head ! So look sharp and take your choice.'

The extremity of terror restored my voice. 'Would it not do, sir, to restore your own tooth !' I gasped.

'No, no !' replied my visitor, shaking his head until the gold spectacles slipped down to the very point of his long nose; I think I am a very good natured fellow to give you the choice; so which will you part with—your life or your tooth !'

'My tooth,' I exclaimed, in agony; and instantly the apparition, with as much dexterity as if he had been bred a dentist, introduced a forceps into my mouth, and neatly extracted a fine, sound molar tooth. Look there, continued Ellis, opening his mouth 'see the cavity it has left.'

There was indeed the space from which a large tooth had been extracted, and I remarked it was the only one that was deficient in the entire range.

Ellis opened the little round box, and showed me carefully enclosed in cotton, the redoubted tooth.

I really knew not what to say; it was certainly very difficult to refrain from laughing, but my poor friend was so evidently in earnest, that I merely remarked—

It is a pity the good spectre was not satisfied with resuming his own property, for really his teeth is so exactly the same size and shape as your others, that I think it would have exactly filled the cavity.'

'It was strange,' said Ellis, without noticing my remark, 'that after such an agitating occurrence, I fell asleep, and did not awake until late next morning. I awoke feverish and unrefreshed and returned home as speedily as possible. Ever since that time my health has slowly but surely declined; not perhaps outwardly, but I know and feel that my hour will soon come, and the dread of the fiend's vengeance will embitter my dying moments, unless you, my old, tried friend, will promise to see me buried in T——— churchyard and with your own hand to place the miserable tooth in my coffin.

What could I do but promise ? The case was one of decided moment—argument and ridicule, both of which I tried, only served to make poor Ellis angry, and he was thoroughly determined not to see a physician—a measure I urged on him strongly.

I remained with him afew days and had the pleasure of leaving him, as I trusted, in better spirits than when we met; and I hoped that the absurd fancy, as I deemed it, would soon pass away. I was therefore greatly shocked when, in about six weeks afterwards, I received a letter from his old housekeeper, telling me that her master had died somewhat suddenly but requested with his dying breath that I should be sent for immediately.

Need I say that I hastened to obey the summons. Very mournful it was, certainly, to enter the silent cottage where I had lately met a warm welcome from my poor friend. A physician was in attendance, and pronounced that death had resulted from disease of the heart. He, the clergyman of the parish and Ellis's solicitor, were all, at my request, present at the opening of the will. After disposing of his trifling property in legacies, the document went on to request that I, whom he styled his beloved friend, should have him decently buried in the churchyard of T———, and followed in all matters concerned with his interment, the instructions previously given to me.

The interment took place without the occurrence of anything worth recording; but after it was over, I felt so wearied and dispirited, that I resolved to take up my abode for the night at the comfortable hotel at T———. After dinner I was suddenly attacked by my old enemy toothache; and the pain, resisting all the usual applications, became at length so excruciating, that, starting up in a sort of frenzy, I enquired for the residence of the best dentist in town, and speedily found myself in his study. Whether it was the effect of the reaction after the rapid exercise I had taken, or the well-known curative influence inherent in the atmosphere of a dentist's house, I knew not, but the pain I was suffering gradually abated; and when the operator entered I felt almost inclined to make a civil retreat without putting his skill to the test. However on second thought I considered it as well to lay my case before him, and try to obtain some soothing nostrum which might stand me instead on future occasions, I therefore told him how I had been affected, and casually mentioned my having come a long journey that morning, and its melancholy cause.

'Ah !' said the dentist, thoughtfully, 'you came from E———, in Devonshire. The name of that village is associated in my mind with a curious incident which occurred to me some three or four months since.'

Now I happen to have a decided hankering, whether natural or acquired, after strange stories; and my curiosity being excited by his allusion, I begged the dentist to have the kindness to satisfy it.

Seating himself opposite me, he complied, and began in those words:

'One night, between three and four months since, I was aroused near midnight by a loud knocking and ringing at the door. I was just about to step into bed, and my servants having long before retired to their rooms, I hastily resumed my clothes, and answered the summons. An elderly gentleman, with a military air and address, entered. There was an odd, startling look in his eyes, but he told me, in a perfectly coherent manner, that he was suffering from a dreadful toothache, and wished to have one of his grinders extracted immediately. Of course I ushered him into the room, placed him in the patient's chair, and proceeded to examine his jaws. I don't think I ever saw a finer or more regular set of teeth—not a vestige of decay could I perceive in any of them, and the one which he pointed out as the offender seemed to be perfectly free from disease. However, he insisted so strongly to have the tooth pulled out, declaring that his comfort, nay. his very life depended upon its being done, that I consented, though most unwillingly, to perform the operation, and in a twinkling the tooth was out.

'Having paid me my fee, the patient deliberately wrapped up his tooth, put it in his pocket, rose wishing me good night, was about to depart, when a suspicion which arose in my mind, caused me suddenly to thrust a lighted candle close to his eyes. They never blinked; the pupils were fixed and distended; in fact, to cut the story short, my visitor was fast asleep and in a fit of somnambulism, had left his bed, and caused me to extract his excellent tooth. As he still continued in the trance, and it would have been dangerous to arouse him suddenly, I prevailed upon him to allow me to accompany him home. He made his way unerringly to the hotel, and the gates happening to be open for the reception of the night coach, I saw him to his room without attracting observation.

'On enquiring after him next morning, I heard that he had left by an early conveyance for E———, in Devonshire.'

I looked attentively at the dentist; he was a tall man, dressed in black, with a white neckcloth: his head was large nearly bald; and he wore a pair of gold spectacles, which had a trick of slipping down to the point of his long nose whenever he shook his head, which he did pretty frequently.

'Did you ever ascertain,' I asked, 'the name of your visitor !'

'Yes,' replied the dentist. He took the blank part of a letter from his pocket, and tore off the corner to wrap up his tooth; the remainder he dropped upon the carpet, and it bore the address:

Capt. H. Ellis, —th Regiment,
E———, Devonshire.'

'Here then was the explanation of my poor friend's monomania. He actually died the victim of somnambulism. And such was my adventure as executor of a will.'

Her Majesty in Scotland.—A few scraps we glean of the Royal bearing. The Duchess of Kent found certain biscuits supplied by an Edinburgh baker to be peculiarly nice, and ordered the host of her hotel to continue the supply. On Sunday the landlord found he had none left, and sent for a fresh consignment. The baker indignantly replied, he would not serve the Queen herself on Sunday. Mr. Barry represented the case to the Duchess just as it stood; whereupon her Royal Highness called in person upon the baker, and ordered 12 dozen biscuits to be sent her every week. The Queen, to whose ears the story came, gets every week a similar supply. Her Majesty, in her walks about Balmoral, dropped into the hut of an old Highland widow and talked very familiarly upon ordinary topics. At last the widow ended, "Ye ne'ver say onything about the Queen; I reckon ye're Mrs. Albert hersel?" Calling in at another boothy, her Majesty found a very aged woman alone at tea. In the course of chat she observed, "You are very old to be alone?" "O'," was the reply, "I've walth (plenty) o' folk to take care o' me; but they're a'oot to see the Queen." "Tell them," rejoined her Majesty, "when they return, the Queen was o'ot to see you." Subsequently her Majesty took shelter in the same hut from an evening shower, and received a very kindly scold for venturing out so late.

Female wages are still very high in California. Advertisements in San Francisco papers offer $60 a month, and $40 for a girl. A letter says—"It would astonish you to see some of our servant girls in full rig in Montgomery street. A $75 blue velvet dress, a $30 bonnet, gold chains and big cameos to match are not at all unfrequent."

MISCELLANEOUS.

A Wrinkle about the Age of Horses.—A few days ago we met a gentleman from Alabama, who gave us a piece of information in regard to ascertaining the age of a horse, after he or she has passed the ninth year, which was new to us, and will be, we are sure, to most of our readers. It is this: After the horse is nine years old, a wrinkle comes on the eyelid at the upper corner of the lower lid, and every year thereafter he has one well defined wrinkle for each year over nine. If, for instance a horse has three wrinkles, he is twelve; if four, he is thirteen. Add the number of wrinkles to nine, and you will always get it. So says the gentleman, and he is confident it will never fail. As a good many people have horses over nine, it is easily tried. If true, the horse dentist must give up his trade.—*Southern Planter.*

Profits of Grapes.—In the neighbourhood of Cincinnatit, is said,there are more than two thousand acres in grapes. The profits per acre average, taking one year with another, about $300 per acre. Much of course, depends on management. The cost of planting ranges from $100 to $300 per acre. The expense, with ordinary land, need not exceed $150 per acre. When trenching machines come into use on land clear of stones, the cost of planting will be materially reduced. Better profits are made on the grapes sold in the market, than on those used for wine.

Art of Milking.—The art of milking is not taught in a hurry. It requires long practice to milk properly, and therefore all the young people on a farm ought to be shown how the labour should be done. It is quite important, that this branch of the dairy should be particularly attended to, for a good milker obtains at least a quart more from the same cow than a poor milker. The first lesson to be taught to young people is gentleness and kindness to the cows. They never need be treated harshly, in case the business is properly commenced. Cows that have been caressed and uniformly well treated, are fond of ha'ing the milk drawn from the udder at the regular time of milking, for it gives them relief from the distension of the milk ducts. Let young people be put to milking the farrow cows first, or such as are to be soon dried, and then the loss from bad milking will be less injurious; the hand should extend to the extremity of the teats, for the milk is then drawn easier. They should be taught to milk as fast as possible. More milk is always obtained by a rapid milker than a slow one. They should, therefore, be taught to think of nothing else while milking, and no conversation must be permitted in the milk-yard. They should sit up close to the cow, and rest the left arm gently against her shank. Then if she raises her foot on account of pain occasioned by soreness of the teats, the nearer the milker sits to hers and the harder he presses his arms against her legs, the less risk will be run of being injured. Cows may be taught to give down their milk at once, and they may be taught to hold it a long time. The best way is to milk quick, and not use the cow to a long stripping or after-stripping.

There is hardly a point at which the fortifications at Quebec are not being repaired or improved. A new and very strong blockhouse is making below the flag-staff, and every extensive work of by no means ancient construction, above the point, have been condemned, and are rebuilding in a more formidable manner, near which a new battery and drawbridge outlet from the citadel have lately been constructed, communicating with the city over the north-eastern glacis.

The monster Ox on exhibition at the Fair, in Cheshire County, New Hampshire, was one of the greatest curiosities of the day. He is 5 years old, weighs 4,200 lbs, girts 10 feet, is 6 feet 7 in. hight, and measures 13 feet in length. In every particular he is a beautiful animal, being well-built of fine proportions, good color, and is perfectly gentle. He was raised in Columbia Co., New York, and is now owned by Messrs. Doolittle of Hinsdale and Vandusen of New York.