

Strange Pages from Family Papers

Pages: 208

Publisher: HardPress (June 23, 2016)

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

[DOWNLOAD FULL EBOOK PDF]

"For the Blast of Death is on the Heath,
and the Grave yawns wide for the Child of Moy."[ToList](#)

STRANGE PAGES

FROM

FAMILY PAPERS

By T.F. THISELTON DYER

AUTHOR OF

"Great Men at Play," "Church Lore Gleanings,"

"The Ghost World," &c.

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY

LIMITED

St. Dunstan's House,

Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.

1895

LONDON:

PRINTED BY HORACE COX, WINDSOR HOUSE,

BREAM'S BUILDINGS, E.C.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

Fatal Curses

CHAPTER II.

The Screaming Skull

[29](#)

CHAPTER III.

Eccentric Vows

[46](#)

CHAPTER IV.

Strange Banquets

[69](#)

CHAPTER V.

Mysterious Rooms

[88](#)

CHAPTER VI.

Indelible Bloodstains

[114](#)

CHAPTER VII.

Curious Secrets

[135](#)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Dead Hand

[154](#)

CHAPTER IX.

Devil Compacts

[162](#)

CHAPTER X.

Family Death Omens

[180](#)

CHAPTER XI.

Weird Possessions

[198](#)

CHAPTER XII.

Romance of Disguise

[208](#)

CHAPTER XIII.

Extraordinary Disappearances

[229](#)

CHAPTER XIV.

Honoured Hearts

[253](#)

CHAPTER XV.

Romance of Wealth

[262](#)

CHAPTER XVI.

Lucky Accidents

[279](#)

CHAPTER XVII.

Fatal Passion

[289](#)

Index.

[309](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1.

"For the blast of Death is on the heath, And the grave yawns wide for the child of Moy."

[Frontispiece.](#)

2.

She opened it in secret

page [38](#)

3.

"Madam, you have attained your end. You and I shall meet no more in this world"

[72](#)

4.

The figure stood motionless

[150](#)

5.

Lady Sybil at the Eagle's Crag

[168](#)

6.

Dorothy Vernon and the Woodman

[214](#)

7.

Lady Mabel and the Palmer

[248](#)

8.

There came an old Irish harper, and sang an ancient song

[272](#)

STRANGE PAGES

FROM

FAMILY PAPERS.

CHAPTER I. [ToC](#) FATAL CURSES.

May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods

Deny thee shelter! Earth a home! the dust

A grave! The sun his light! and heaven her God.

Byron, *Cain*.

Many a strange and curious romance has been handed down in the history of our great families, relative to the terrible curses uttered in cases of dire extremity against persons considered guilty of injustice and wrong doing. It is to such fearful imprecations that the misfortune and downfall of certain houses have been attributed, although, it may be, centuries have elapsed before their final fulfilment. Such curses, too, unlike the fatal "Curse of Kehama," have rarely turned into blessings, nor have they been thought to be as harmless as the curse of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rheims, who banned the thief—both body and soul, his life and for ever—who stole his ring. It was an awful curse, but none of the guests seemed the worse for it, except the poor jackdaw who had hidden the ring in some sly corner as a practical joke. But, if we are to believe traditionary and historical lore, only too many of the curses recorded in the chronicles of family history have been productive of the most disastrous results, reminding us of that dreadful malediction given by Byron in his "Curse of Minerva":

"So let him stand, through ages yet unborn,

Fix'd statue on the pedestal of scorn."

A popular form of curse seems to have been the gradual collapse of the family name from failure of male-issue; and although there is, perhaps, no more romantic chapter in the vicissitudes of many a great house than its final extinction from lack of an heir, such a disaster is all the more to be lamented when resulting from a curse. A catastrophe of this kind was that connected with the M'Alister family of Scotch notoriety. The story goes that many generations back, one of their chiefs, M'Alister Indre—an intrepid warrior who feared neither God nor man—in a skirmish with a neighbouring clan, captured a widow's two sons, and in a most heartless manner caused them to be hanged on a gibbet erected almost before her very door. It was in vain that, with well nigh heartbroken tears, she denounced his iniquitous act, for his comrades and himself only laughed and scoffed, and even threatened to burn her cottage to the ground. But as the crimson and setting rays of a summer sun fell on the lifeless bodies of her two sons, her eyes met those of him

who had so basely and cruelly wronged her, and, after once more stigmatizing his barbarity, with deep measured voice she pronounced these ominous words, embodying a curse which M'Alister Indre little anticipated would so surely come to pass. "I suffer now," said the grief-stricken woman, "but you shall suffer always—you have made me childless, but you and yours shall be heirless for ever—never shall there be a son to the house of M'Alister."

These words were treated with contempt by M'Alister Indre, who mocked and laughed at the malicious prattle of a woman's tongue. But time proved only too truly how persistently the curse of the bereaved woman clung to the race of her oppressors, and, as Sir Bernard Burke remarks, it was in the reign of Queen Anne that the hopes of the house of M'Alister "flourished for the last time, they were blighted for ever." The closing scene of this prophetic curse was equally tragic and romantic; for, whilst espousing the cause of the Pretender, the young and promising heir of the M'Alisters was taken prisoner, and with many others put to death. Incensed at the wrongs of his exiled monarch, and full of fiery impulse, he had secretly left his youthful wife, and joined the army at Perth that was to restore the Pretender to his throne. For several months the deserted wife fretted under the terrible suspense, often silently wondering if, after all, her husband—the last hope of the House of M'Alister—was to fall under the ban of the widow's curse. She could not dispel from her mind the hitherto disastrous results of those ill-fated words, and would only too willingly have done anything in her power to make atonement for the wrong that had been committed in the past. It was whilst almost frenzied with thoughts of this distracting kind, that vague rumours reached her ears of a great battle which had been fought, and ere long this was followed by the news that the Pretender's forces had been successful, and that he was about to be crowned at Scone. The shades of evening were fast setting in as, overcome with the joyous prospect of seeing her husband home again, she withdrew to her chamber, and, flinging herself on her bed in a state of hysteric delight, fell asleep. But her slumbers were broken, for at every sound she started, mentally exclaiming "Can that be my husband?"

At last, the happy moment came when her poor overwrought brain made sure it heard his footsteps. She listened, yes! they were his! Full of feverish joy she was longing to see that long absent face, when, as the door opened, to her horror and dismay, there entered a figure in martial array without a head. It was enough—he was dead. And with an agonizing scream she fell down in a swoon; and on becoming conscious only lived to hear the true narrative of the battle of Sheriff-Muir, which had brought to pass the Widow's Curse that there should be no heir to the house of M'Alister.

This story reminds us of one told of Sir Richard Herbert, who, with his brother, the Earl of Pembroke, pursuing a robber band in Anglesea, had captured seven brothers, the ringleaders of "many mischiefs and murders." The Earl of Pembroke determined to make an example of these marauders, and, to root out so wretched a progeny, ordered them all to be hanged. Upon this, the mother of the felons came to the Earl of Pembroke, and upon her knees besought him to pardon two, or at least one, of her sons, a request which was seconded by the Earl's brother, Sir Richard. But the Earl, finding the condemned men all equally guilty, declared he could make no distinction, and ordered them to be hanged together.

Upon this the mother, falling upon her knees, cursed the Earl, and prayed that God's mischief might fall upon him in the first battle in which he was engaged. Curious to relate, on the eve of the battle of Edgcot Field, having marshalled his men in order to fight, the Earl of Pembroke was surprised to find his brother, Sir Richard Herbert, standing in the front of his company, and leaning upon his pole-axe in a most dejected and pensive mood.

"What," cried the Earl, "doth thy great body" (for Sir Richard was taller than anyone in the army) "apprehend anything, that thou art so melancholy? or art thou weary with marching, that thou dost lean thus upon thy pole-axe?"

"I am not weary with marching," replied Sir Richard, "nor do I apprehend anything for myself; but I cannot but apprehend on your part lest the curse of the woman fall upon you."

And the curse of the frantic mother of seven convicts seemed, we are told, to have gained the authority of Heaven, for both the Earl and his brother Sir Richard, were defeated at the battle of Edgocot, were both taken prisoners and put to death.

Sir Walter Scott has made a similar legend the subject of one of his ballads in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," entitled "The Curse of Moy," a tale founded on an ancient Highland tradition that originated in a feud between the clans of Chattan and Grant. The Castle of Moy, the early residence of Mackintosh, the chief of the clan Chattan, is situated among the mountains of Inverness-shire, and stands on the edge of a small gloomy lake called Loch Moy, in which is still shown a rocky island as the spot where the dungeon stood in which prisoners were confined by the former chiefs of Moy. On a certain evening, in the annals of Moy, the scene is represented as having been one of extreme merriment, for

In childbed lay the lady fair,

But now is come the appointed hour.

And vassals shout, "An heir, an heir!"

It is no ordinary occasion, for a wretched curse has long hung over the Castle of Moy, but at last the spell seems broken, and, as the well-spiced bowl goes round, shout after shout echoes and re-echoes through the castle, "An heir, an heir!" Many a year had passed without the prospect of such an event, and it had looked as if the ill-omened words uttered in the past were to be realised. It was no wonder then that "in the gloomy towers of Moy" there were feasting and revelry, for a child is born who is to perpetuate the clan which hitherto had seemed threatened with extinction. But, even on this festive night when every heart is tuned for song and mirth, there suddenly appears a mysterious figure, a pale and shivering form, by "age and frenzy haggard made," who defiantly exclaims "'Tis vain! 'Tis vain!"

At once all eyes are turned on this strange form, as she, in mocking gesture, casts a look of withering scorn on the scene around her, and startles the jovial vassals with the reproachful words "No heir! No heir!" The laughter is hushed, the pipes no longer sound, for the witch with uplifted hand beckons that she had a message to tell—a message from Death—she might truly say, "What means these bowls of wine—these festive songs?"

For the blast of Death is on the heath,

And the grave yawns wide for the child of Moy.

She then recounts the tale of treachery and cruelty committed by a chief of the House of Moy in the days of old, for which "his name shall perish for ever off the earth—a son may be born—but that son shall verily die." The witch brings tears into many an eye as she tells how this curse was uttered by one Margaret, a prominent figure in this sad feud, for it was when deceived in the most base manner, and when betrayed by a man who had violated his promise he had solemnly pledged, that she is moved to pronounce the fatal words of doom:

She pray'd that childless and forlorn,

The chief of Moy might pine away,

That the sleepless night, and the careful morn

Might wither his limbs in slow decay.

But never the son of a chief of Moy

Might live to protect his father's age,

Or close in peace his dying eye,

Or gather his gloomy heritage.

Such was the "Curse of Moy," uttered, it must be remembered, too, by a fair young girl, against the Chief of Moy for a blood-thirsty crime—the act of a traitor—in that, not content with slaying her father, and murdering her lover, he satiates his brutal passion by letting her eyes rest on their corpses.

"And here," they said, "is thy father dead,

And thy lover's corpse is cold at his side."

Her tale ended, the witch departs, but now ceased the revels of the shuddering clan, for "despair had seized on every breast," and "in every vein chill terror ran." On the morrow, all is changed, no joyous sounds are heard, but silence reigns supreme—the silence of death. The curse has triumphed, the last hope of the house of Moy is gone, and—

Scarce shone the morn on the mountain's head

When the lady wept o'er her dying boy.

But tyranny, or oppression, has always been supposed to bring its own punishment, as in the case of Barcroft Hall, Lancashire, where the "Idiot's Curse" is commonly said to have caused the downfall of the family. The tradition current in the neighbourhood states that one of the heirs to Barcroft was of weak intellect, and that he was fastened by a younger brother with a chain in one of the cellars, and there in a most cruel manner gradually starved to death. It appears that this unnatural conduct on the part of the younger brother was prompted by a desire to get possession of the property; and it is added that, long before the heir to Barcroft was released from his sufferings, he caused a report to be circulated that he was dead, and by this piece of deception made himself master of the Barcroft estate. It was in one of his lucid intervals that the poor injured brother pronounced a curse upon the family of the Barcrofts, to the effect that their name should perish for ever, and that the property should pass into other hands. But this malediction was only regarded as the ravings of an imbecile, unaccountable for his words, and little or no heed was paid to this death sentence on the Barcroft name. And yet, light as the family made of it, within a short time there were not wanting indications that their prosperity was on the wane, a fact which every year became more and more discernible until the curse was fulfilled in the person of Thomas Barcroft, who died in 1688 without male issue. After passing through the hands of the Bradshaws, the Pimlots, and the Isherwoods, the property was finally sold to Charles Towneley, the celebrated antiquarian, in the year 1795.[1] Whatever the truth of this family tradition, Barcroft is still a good specimen of the later Tudor style, and its ample cellarage gives an idea of the profuse hospitality of its former owners, some rude scribblings on one of the walls of which are still pointed out as the work of the captive.

In a still more striking way this spirit of persecution incurred its own condemnation. In the 17th

century, Francis Howgill, a noted Quaker, travelled about the South of England preaching, which at Bristol was the cause of serious rioting. On returning to his own neighbourhood, he was summoned to appear before the justices who were holding a court in a tavern at Kendal, and, on his refusing to take the oath of allegiance, he was imprisoned in Appleby Gaol. In due time, the judges of assizes tendered the same oath, but with the like result, and evidently wishing to show him some consideration offered to release him from custody if he would give a bond for his good behaviour in the interim, which likewise declining to do, he was recommitted to prison. In the course of his imprisonment, however, a curious incident happened, which gave rise to the present narrative. Having been permitted by the magistrates to go home to Grayrigg for a few days on private affairs, he took the opportunity of calling on a justice of the name of Duckett, residing at Grayrigg Hall, who was not only a great persecutor of the Quakers but was one of the magistrates who had committed him to prison. As might be imagined, Justice Duckett was not a little surprised at seeing Howgill, and said to him, "What is your wish now, Francis? I thought you had been in Appleby Gaol."

Howgill, keenly resenting the magistrate's behaviour, promptly replied, "No, I am not, but I am come with a message from the Lord. Thou hast persecuted the Lord's people, but His hand is now against thee, and He will send a blast upon all that thou hast, and thy name shall rot out of the earth, and this thy dwelling shall become desolate, and a habitation for owls and jackdaws." When Howgill had delivered his message, the magistrate seems to have been somewhat disconcerted, and said, "Francis, are you in earnest?" But Howgill only added, "Yes, I am in earnest, it is the word of the Lord to thee, and there are many living now who will see it."

But the most remarkable part of the story remains to be told. By a strange coincidence the prophetic utterance of Howgill was fulfilled in a striking manner, for all the children of Justice Duckett died without leaving any issue, whilst some of them came to actual poverty, one begging her bread from door to door. Grayrigg Hall passed into the possession of the Lowther family, was dismantled, and fell into ruins, little more than its extensive foundations being visible in 1777, and, after having long been the habitation of "owls and jackdaws," the ruins were entirely removed and a farmhouse erected upon the site of the "old hall," in accordance with what was popularly known as "The Quaker's Curse, and its fulfilment." Cornish biography, however, tells how a magistrate of that county, Sir John Arundell, a man greatly esteemed amongst his neighbours for his honourable conduct—fell under an imprecation which he in no way deserved. In his official capacity, it seems, he had given offence to a shepherd who had by some means acquired considerable influence over the peasantry, under the impression that he possessed some supernatural powers. This man, for some offence, had been imprisoned by Sir John Arundell, and on his release would constantly waylay the magistrate, always looking at him with the same menacing eye, at the same time slowly muttering these words:

HardPress Classic Books Series

Publisher booklet pages out of order - Many a strange and curious romance has been handed down in the history of our great families, relative to the terrible curses uttered in cases of dire extremity 9781530576203: Strange Pages from Family Papers - Bram Stoker himself is the new book's main protagonist, recast at the centre of He had read Forsaken, and his family had read it, and apparently they'd been and that the first 101

pages of the novel had been stripped out by the publisher.. Europe: A Natural History by Tim Flannery – bold and brilliant. Kate chopin greatest works - The Pandian family name was found in Canada in 1911. The channel airing the serial has confirmed the same on their official media pages with a thanks message. research papers, book report, term papers, history, science, politics prasad. Weird things about the name Kathair: Your name in reverse order is Riahtak. Anime Origami Book - Papers essay research 5 out of 5 based on 716 ratings. by David Rodriguez, Greta Anderson and myself, all with linked thumbnails (a very strange visual).. The Working Man's Model Family Botanic Guide by William Fox, M.D. , 23rd edition (1924) A big book, 1039 pages, it is organized into 9 files. An unusual case of xylophagia (paper-eating) - NCBI - If you're curious, it's 27222 pages with an average of 327 pages–! Kochland: The Secret History of Koch Industries and Corporate Power in America (non-fiction). We need to band together WTF–!such a weird book and an awesome book. I have a. Survival Math: Notes on an All-American Family, ****. Bram Stoker and the strange case of theDracula' prequel - The Pandian family name was found in Canada in 1911. The channel airing the serial has confirmed the same on their official media pages with a thanks message. research papers, book report, term papers, history, science, politics prasad. Weird things about the name Kathair: Your name in reverse order is Riahtak. Latest UK and World News, Sport and Comment - T. F. Thiselton Albert Homer Purdue Professional Papers - Pages might be torn, and mementos affixed to them go missing. And of course Leave fragile books and papers to a professional conservator. If you're new to Strange Pages from Family Papers by Thomas - YouTube - Newspaper Archives –” Keys to tracing your family history Newspaper searches Publishers Weekly is the international news website of book publishing and.. You may browse through hundreds of thousands of newspaper pages dating from the 1840s to the 1920s. genealogy and family tree history, Weird History. Spanish surnames - ... Scenes at the Museum Human Croquet Emotionally Weird ATTWOOD, Margaret Our site contains thousands of individual pages covering all aspects of U. History books changed to portray him asHero of the Revolution... have been assigned a genetics project to research their family history. Best family images - Maison - There are 48 picks this winter (not including books we authored, though we highly exploration of trees to personal essays, memoirs, and stories of family, tragedy,. –œYou could feel her devastation through the pages after being a new baby, so it may also have doubled as a strange kind of voyeurism.

Relevant Books

[\[DOWNLOAD \]](#) - Read A Series of Past Lives free pdf online

[\[DOWNLOAD \]](#) - THE ULTIMATE DIET FOR THE SIMPLE PERSON AND SUBSTANCES TO AVOID: It's Never Impossible To Lose Weight
epub, pdf

[\[DOWNLOAD \]](#) - View Book Aluminium Design and Construction pdf

[\[DOWNLOAD \]](#) - Ebook The Pilot's Mate: The Anunnaki War of 2024 BCE

[\[DOWNLOAD \]](#) - Download Free Career Opportunities in Health Care pdf
