THE WEDDING

A TALE OF TO-DAY,

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CHAPTER XXI.-Counsel.

GILLIAN had borre herself bravely enough in the detested presence of her husband, but after O'Mara had left her she sank back, all lax and helpless, into the chair from which she had risen, and had to aummon all her strength to ward off an hysterical attack.

The wrook of her hopes could not have been more appallingly complete; the past hour had seen her fall from the summit of happiness to a depth of misery more profound than she had known even in that dreactul time sevou years ago in Westminster, the deeper for the awful suldenness of the plungs. She could reither think nor rest, but sat storing blankly before her, her secsation a chaos, and her mind a whirl of purpes less trifles.

Suddenly a step sounded in her ear. She sprang up with a sudden heart ping, thinking O'Mira had tracked her to this retreat, and stook she inking with repugnance, till a shadow crossed her field of vision,

and she beheld Mr Bream. There was an atmosphere of strength and help'ul-

ness about the man that he came to her troubled mind like sunshine and free air. She grasped his hand with an inarticulate cry of welcome. "I I now," he said, simply; "Sir George has told

me what has happened. It was he who sent me here. Your busband has come to light again. He has Claimed you.

"Tell me," she asked. "what shall I do? Is there any help for me? Any hope?

There are both if you will take them," he answered. "It is a slow business and an unpleasant ere, but y u, at least, have nothing to fear from the inliest publicity. You must divorce him." She shuddered as she leaned upon his arm. "I know, I know," he continued with a quick sympathy. "But think of Dora, think of Sir George! Will you shrink from a little pain when it is necessary for the future of your child, for the happiness of a good fellow who loves you? Let me give you his message, which he gave me scarcely an hour ago. "Tell her," he said, That whatever happens, if all is over between us, Laksolve her from all blame; she is still the only weman in the world to me, and I am her faithful frierd till death." "God b'ess him!" said Gillian, with a sud lou

burat of tears, "God bless him!" He let her weep in peace for a few minutes, glad

that she had found her natural vent for the cruel smotions which tortured her. The crisis passed, and she was wiping away her tears when a step was heard on the gravel outside, and the portly figure of bir Herbert darkened the sunlight pouring through the door. "Pardon me, my dear madam," he said, entering hat in hand, "I must really speak to you."

"I know what you have to say, sir," said Gillian. "Yell come from the man who calls himself my

husband." "From the man who is your husband, yes. Suff.r me to say---'

"I would rather hear nothing from you, Mr Herbert." "Perhaps," said Bream, "you had better leave Mr

Heibert and myself together. If he has any message you ought to hear I will convey it to you." "Thank you," said Gillian; "you are a true friend." She pressed his hand, and with a formal band of

her head to the vieur left the room, in spite of a remonstrant exclamation from him. "Pray be seated, sir," said Bream, offering his superior a chair."

"I will not be seated, sir," said Mr Herbert, with indiguant anger. "As your spiritual superior

demand on explanation of your conduct." "The explanation is perfectly simple. I feel it my duty, as a clergyman and a gentleman, to protect that lady."

"Your first duty, Mr Bream, is to me." "Pardon me," said Bream, with a fine mixture

of firmness and respect. "I acknowledge your

superiority so far as the offices of the parish are concorned; but I have sold you my services, not my conscience." "Does your conscience instruct you to side with a woman against her lawful husband?" asked Mr

Herbert, botly. "I have just left that unfortunate gentleman. He has—ah—been perfectly frank with nie. He admits fully, amply, that his married life was not a happy one, and that he chiefly was to blame. He confessed his errors with a candour, a conscienti umess, which did him infinite cred't and which moved me profoundly. He is heartbroken, and, being in a very delicate state of health, is scarcely able to bear the sufferings of his present situation. His heart is yearning for reconciliation; he begs humbly, yet tenderly, for an interview; with his wife," "You see, sir," said Bream, stroking his chin thoughtfully, "Mrs Dartmouth was taken a little by

surprise. The gentleman had been so long dead and "Dead and buried! The man lives, sir."

"Unforturately." "Let us have no more, sir, of this ravolting ejnicism. For my own part I am astonished to find

in a lady for whom I have a sincere respect and sympathy a tone of such bitterness towards one whom she had sworn to love, honour, and obsy. And I am even more surprised to find a man of your good sense and general right feeling so casily inflaenced by a mere or parte statement." "Even if that were so, sir, I might retort that all you have to go on is a more ex parte statement of the

other side. But it is not so. I was intimately acqueinted with Mrs Dartmouth-Mrs O'Mara, if you prefer the real name—during the most dis istrous part of her married life." "Do I understand, Mr Bream," asked the view. with ponderous indignation, "do I understand, sir,

that you were privy to this lady's concea ment of her name? You knew that circumstance, and did not

report it to me ?" "My dear sir," said Bream, "I am not aware that the circumstance of my being a clergyman absolves me from my duty as a gentleman. Did you expect me to break the confidence this unhappy lady reposed

This was so blank an argumentative "No thoroughfare" that Mr Herbert could only blick and "May I ask, sir," continued Bream, "if you have ever been married?"

"/, s'r?" roared Mr Herbert. "Pardon me, I forgot you stand for the celibacy of

the clergy. But if the vicar has not been married, the curate has."

"Indeed," "So you see I approach this subject with a double advantage. I know something about matrimony in the abstract, and about this particular matriage wa

are discussing in particular. I have an opinion founded, not as you said just now, on the expante statement of an interested and prejudiced person, but on actual knowledge--that this new acquaintance of yours is a whited sepulchre." "Will you explain?" "A humbug, if you like It better. His debaucheries at the time I knew him were open and shameless.

They broke the heart of this unfortunate lady." "Judge not," said Mr Herbert, "that ye be cot judged. He has repented, and I would stake all I. possess that his repentance is sincere. He is a person

of refined tastes, and his whole conversation assures me that he is deeply religious." "h! That looks bad."

"In this case I am sure that it is not. I think I

"No offence. Our religion, Mr Herbert, is often merely a cloak.

krow a little of human nature, and this unfortunat man, I believe, is of a most affectionate and devoted "Pesition. When he spoke of his child he criedactually clied! He did the same this mo ning when he first heard her name, before he knew that she wa. his child. "Yes," said Bream, "crocodiles cry."

"yse'f was deeply affected, sir," said Mr Besluit, "and I presume that you do not call me a Croccdile. I promised as a Christian, as a clergyman, to plead his cause. I feel myself—ab, somewha con premised. I shudder when I think that I was on the point of pronouncing a blessing on a bigamous

Marriage."

"And what do you advise this lady to do?"

To Herhert. "To To do?" repeated Mr Herbert. "To do what ary self-respecting woman, any Christian, sir, would

gentl man to whom she owes a wife's duty, a wife's otedience." "I see," said Bream, "kill the fatted calf, and all that sort of thing. My dear vicar, it can't be done

and it sha'n't if I can help it." "Those whom Heaven has joined----" "The other place often puts asunder."

"You are blasphemous!"

"Not at all. I am practical and honest in the avowal of my ideas. If Mrs Dartmouth--" "Mrs O'Mara," said Mr Herbert.

matter. If that lady ever again vowed allegiance to

a cur like that, I who am her friend would give her up for ever." "For her child's sake. Bream--" "Even a child cannot mend the broken chain of

"As you please. The name does not greatly

"Put love aside—duty!" "Is sometimes another word for immorality."

"Good heavens, Bream!"

"I repeat the word, immorality. For a woman under any protest to live in conjugal bonds with a man ste does not love, whom she does not respect, from whem the shrinks in actual loathing, is an infamy in the eyes of God and man." We are not sent into this world, Bream, merely to

follow our impulses and wishes, but to be chastened and made obedient. The carnal love which you would make the final rule of conduct---" "It is the most divine thing in the world."

"For itself it is nothing."

"It is everything, for it is pric-less, and cannot be bought cr sold; to the blessing from without it adds the sacction from within; with it, marriage is a foreta-te of heaven, without it, a veritable held on earth. I speak from knowledge, sir, from bitter knowledge of what a loveless woman is." "We are—ah—lesing ourselves in generalities,

Bream," said Mr Herbort. ! Let us return to the case in question. Mr O'Mara has undoubted and undeniable legal rights, to put it on the lowest ground. These rights it is his intention to assert." "Mrs O'Mara will deny them on her own respon-

sibility until legal powers can put her beyond his

"Legal powers!" repeated Mr Herbert, with a lorror stricken aspect. "Do I hear you aright, Bream, you as a-ah-a Christian priest counsel divorce!" "Most certainly It is the only common sense

golution of the dilemma." "And how," asked O'Mara's voice from the door,

"doce she propose to procure this divorce.

"By my evidence, Mr O'Mara," said Bream, calmly, "and by that of one or two other people, who will be easily enough found. Her case is perfect. You have furnished her with everything she needscrrelty, unfaithfulness, desertion!" "Cruelty, !" cchoed O'Mara, with an abominably acted air of surprise, "What cruelty, in the name

of heaven?" "She spent a month in St. Thomas's Hospital in consequence of your last assault upon her."

"And where is your witness as to that?" asked O'Mara. It is merely an unsupported statement, to which my denial will be a sufficient answer." "That we shall see," said the curate.

"This is hard," said O'Mara, "After seven cruel years of separation I return with a heart overflowing with affection. I was happy. My nature was full of aunlight and tender anticipations. I know my former infirmities—I have freely confessed them to Mr Herbert—but, ah! how I loved that woman." "You proved it among other things by leaving her for seven years, and making no signs all that time."

"I left her—yes, we were penniless, and I could not bear to see her suffer-I said 'I will cross the seas and labour until I become rich.' I went, I returned, to fit d---." He passed his hand across his eyes. "You have returned, as you say. Rich as you "Alas! no. Fortune has frowned upon me, but I

still retain my old illusions. I am a little older, but still the same." "Yes," said Bream, with a world of meaning in his tone. "That seems the difficulty." "And all you desire," said Mr Herbert, "is a per-

"Precisely," said O'Mara. "I pass my dear wife's unfeeling reception of the news that I survived, I pass over her tendresse for another man, I forget that, with my child's innocent eyes fixed upon her, she was about to marry that person, and I say, 'All is forgetten and forgiven. For our little angel's sake, let us be united!"

Mr Herbert blew his nose sonorous y. "You hear, Bream?"

fect reconciliation!"

"Yes," said Bream, "I hear." "Then join me as peacemaker in invoking on these

good people a Christian blessing." "Thank you, thank you," cried O'Mara, pressing his hand. "I shall never forget your sympathy, sir;" he continued to Bream. "This torture is killing me.

I have an obscure heart affection, and--" "Possibly an aneurism?" "I—I fear so." "Hardening of the great artery, I diagnosed it long

ago; but with great care cases like yours last for

years. Your heart will never kill you, Mr O'Mara" "My dear sir," said O'Mara, with a slight impatience of manner, "all this is apart from the point. I demand an interview with my wife. I shall try gentle persuasion to bring her back to ideas of wifely duty. If those fail I must try other means, though . shall be very reluctant to do so. I ask you as a gentleman to leave this house." Bream considered for a moment with his eyes on O'Mara's face, then, walking to the hall rope, rang.

Barbara entered the room. "Ask your mistress to step this way, if you please "

Barbara went. "I will leave you with your wife, Mr

O'Mara, perfectly confident that since my interview with her an hour ago you can do her no harm." Gillian entered, palo but collected. "This gentleman," said Bream, "Insists on an Interview with you. I see no harm in you grauting

the request. You had better have help at hand in case he should attempt violence, though that is hardly "I am not afraid," said Gillian. "Thank you, and

good evening." She pressed his hand, acknowledging Mr Herbert's embairassed bow, turned to her husband.

CHAPTER XXII, -FACE TO FACE. THEY stood face to face for a minute in silence with the aspect of two duellists taking their places sword

in hand. In Gillian's intense face and in the free and strong poise of her figure O'Mara read a more decided courage than that she had shown in the earlier intercourses. His face were its habitual expression of tired cynicism, touched by the admiration he felt despite himself for her undaunted bearing and by his appreciation of her beauty. He carried in his hand a bunch of field flowers, which he held out to her with a gesture of chivalrous deference. "You used to like them, Gillian," he said. "It was one of the many ties between us in the dear old days

before our dissensions began. Will you not take them?" "Enough of this," she answered. "Why are you

"Why? what a question! Why, because--" "Because the report of your death was a falsehood

invented to destroy me. Recause you know that I have money, not much, but enough to draw you towards me-because all else has falled with you, and in despair you come back to me." "Permit me," said O'Mara, "to set you right on

one point. The report of my death was none of my

doing. The facts are very simple. I was robbed by a desperado, and stripped of all I possessed, even my clothes. In my pocket were letters I had received from you during our courtship, the only possessions I had clung to during all the miserable time that I was separated from you. The man way shot with those letters in his possession. He was unknown, and it was supposed naturally enough, for people do not as a rule trouble to carry old letters addressed to other people—that he was Philip O'Mara. So much for that. I came back to you, you say, because you have money. An accusation like that is hard to fight, but consider the circumstances. I knew nothing of your whereabouts, nothing of your accession to fortune. It is purely by chance that I am here. Being here, I claim you, Gillian, I am your husband. I claim your obedience. If You are not my husband. You are only the man

who betrayed, degraded, and then abandoned me." "You put it harshly, Gillian. I had my faults, I admit. I have deplored them during many a bitter hour ef our term of separation with tears. them. For our child's sake-"

"For our child's sake?" asked Gillian, "If every fibre of my body and every inch of my soul did not loathe you, the thought of her would be as fatal to any idea of reconciliation with you. My life is endedit would matter very little whether I dragged out the remnant of my time in solitude or again become your drudge and slave. But she-I will keep her clear of the pollution of your influence. God helping me, with my life! When I look into her face, and

see in It any likeness to you, I say to myself better that we both were dead." "Gillian, you horrify me; you cannot unders'and

"I understand well, and I have resolved to say it

what you are saying."

once for all. Equivocation is useless between us; as long as we lived together your life was infamy, mia was misery and shame. You left me; I thought you were dead and I rejoiced—yes, I rejoiced. You have returned, and the old horror comes back upon me tenfold. Take everything that I pissess; let me go and live my own life in peace; and promise me that I shall never see your face egain."

O'Mara, "The sacred tie of wedlock is not to be broken so easily. Gillian, my darling, coase those reproaches, and be reasonable. I am a changed man. My old ways are repented of and abandoned: I swea. You are what you were, only, if possible, more brautiful." The admiration that shone in his face was real enough. She felt it; his glance seemed to bura her. "Let me, by devoting my life to yours, atons for the past, Gillian-I love you."

"After what I have suffered from you, you

dare---" "To love you? Who could help it?"

"Silence! Not another word. Turn your eyes away. If you look at me like that ---" "Forgive my admiration. You never looked so

beautiful! The same soft eyes and thoughtful brow. the same golden hair, the same fair form that I have clasped to mine." He c-me forward with extended hands. She made

a step back, with so evil a glitter in her unchanging eyes that he paused. "Don't prompt me to forget my sex," she said,

"as I fear I shall if you attempt to lay a hand upon

me. I have been free from you too long to fall under your power again. I remember too well the shame of our life together." "I remember only its happy moments. Why torture y usself and me by thinking of these little indiscretions, long since repented, which caused au

occasional estrangement? Come, let us be friends. What, will you not even take my hand?" "Not even that! You knew well what you were and are! You taught me long ago to know you also.

You can deceive the world, perhaps, but you can

never again deceive me. Do not approach me! Go

of tone-"forgive the question-if you are quite

"May I ask," said O'Mara, with a sudden coldness

your way, and let me go mine."

ingenuous? Is not your present conduct the consequence less of my misconduct, which I have amply admitted, than of the fact that another man has supplanted me in your affections?" "Infamous! Be silent!" "No, my dear Gillian, I will not be silent. You

ask too much; you would have the charity all on one side. I must remind you of your duty, and command you-yes, command you to admit-my authority as your lawful husband. No, you shall not go; I have not yet done. If you losist on a separation a mensil et thoro, which I deeply deplore, I shall require at least one solatium—the custody of my little daughter." Gillian staggered as if the words had stabbed her

"Take my child from me?" she gasped. "Yield her up to you! I would rather see her dead," "You compel me to remind you again of my legal

position. Do you think a fellow has no rights? Do you mean that I will suffer my darling child to remain under the care of one who has taught her to hate and despise her father?" "I have not done so," said Gillian. "Philip, I swear to you, until to day I had never breathed your

name to her. She had never heard of your existence.' "That is even more unnatural. Gillian, I repeat it, you shock me exceedingly." "Hypocrite!" cried Gilliav. "Ah, you do not know me!"

"To the immost fibre of your being! To the very core of your false and cruel heart! My little child ! Oh, God! Philip," she cried, with outstretched hands and with a sudden intensity of pleading passion, "have pity! Listen to me. I will believe all that you say of your repentance. I will teach her to pray for you night and morning. Have pity! Take all that I possess, but leave me my child." "You ask too much," he said again. "The bribe you offer is a greater insult than any you have yet put

upon me. It is not for the sake of movey that I shall desert my child, or give up my rights as husband. I cannot compel you to believe in the sincerity of my repentance, the ardour of my affection, but I can at least take care that my child is no schooled to detest and abhor her father, or permitted to grow up in ignorance of his mere existence." "Wilt nothing move you?" cried Gillian. The threat about the obild had frightened her horribly.

She had, if such a thing were possible, exaggerated O'Mara's cunning and cruelty, and her thought was that before she could produce the legal protection she reeded, he would steal Dora from her side. "Nothing I" he answered, "I stand here on my

rights Your are my wife, Dera is my child. This house is mine, nothing but process of law can eject me. I see by the unaltered stubbornness of your demeanour that seft measures are of no avail. might as well have acted decisively this morning as now." He took a seat, crossed his legs easily, and took a case from his pocket. "You don't object to a cigar, if I remember rightly. Oh, by the bye, you had better send up to the Pig and Whistle for my portmanteau. You are nearer the bell than I, might I trouble you to ring." Showing consciousness in every line of his face and

curve of his body of Gillian's horrified gaze upon bim, he kept his eyes fixed on the flame of the match at which he lit his cigar. His voice was purely common. place, and having thrown aside the match he stretched out an indolent hand for a book on the table beside A knock came to the door, which Gillian scarcely heard and left unauswered. Barbara entered the room

with a card upon a salver. Her mistress took it mechanically. For a second or two the name it bore meant nothing to her, but at a second reading she cried to Barbara with a stifled pant in her volce. "Yes, show him in." She stood erect again, and quivering as if some

galvanic influence flashed from the scrap of pasteboard held between her fingers. Thirty seconds later, Sir George Vensbles entered the room. He stopped at sight of O'Mara, who looked up at him from the page of the book with an admirably acted cool stare of non-recognition. "A friend of yours, my dear Gillian? Pray present

"I am Sir George Venables," said the baronet, "I

desire to speak a few words with Mrs Dartmouth." "There is no lady of that name here," returned O'Mara. "Do you know her address, Gillian? Perhaps you can direct this gentleman to find the person he requires." "Gillian!" began Venables. "Pardon me," said O'Mara. "That lady is my wife. May I ask what right you have to address her

by her Christian name?" he continued, dropping his bantering tone, and speaking angrily. "Don't you think, under the circumstances, that your visit is misplaced and impertinent, and that you had better go? I am not of a jealous temperament, but I decidedly object to the presence here of one who proposed taking my place and usurping my privileges. To put it on the lowest ground, it is hardly becoming." "I came here--" began Sir George again, "As cavalier in ordinary. Just so; but the proper guardian of a wife is her husband." "You cur !" orled Sir George, making a step to-

"Oh, pray, strike me I You are powerfully built, I am physically delicate; no doubt you would be the stronger. But morally and legally, young man, should be a giant, you a pigmy." "My object in coming here to-night," said

Venables, restraining his passion with a strong effort,

wards him. "Utter another word of insult and--"

" was to offer that lady my protection against a scoundrel." "Indeed! Highly chivalric." "I know what she has suffered. I know the misery you have brought upon her; and now, if she said the word. I would avenge her wrongs upon your miser-

able body." "George, be silent; let me speak." "Wait, my dear Gillian," said O'Mara, "I shall have the greatest pleasure in listening to any semarks you may have to make when we are quit of the presence of this intruder. Sir, I am master

here, as you will find if you intend to deny my authority. That lady is my wife. This is my house. Your presence here is an outrage. Be good enough to make yourself scarce." "I shall not stir a step while you remain." "Reflect a minute," said O'Mara, "and you will see that you are compromising this lady whom you declare it your object to serve. If I were as hot

headed as yourself there would be a deuce of a scandal." Sir George turned to Gillian. Is it your wish that I should go?" he asked. "Yes," she said. "It is my wish you should go

and take that man with you."

of ger uine tri umph, pointing to the door. Pardon me! Deeply sorry, of course, to interfere with your arrangements, but I shall stay here to-

"Then, after you, sir," said Venables, with a flash

night, in famille. Let me remind you, my dear Gillian, that your conduct would suggest to an unprejudiced mind that while I was merely your husband you regarded that gentleman as your lover." "What?" cried Venables, " you dare---"

merely wishes to provoke you to an outrage. Gobut before you go, save me from his presence " "You hear," said Sir George. "Come, sir !"

"Abaurd!" said O'Mara, "I remain." With one strong clutch on his collar the baroust pulled him from his seat. For a moment O'Mara made a show of feigning resistance, but a rat in the fange of a terrier was not more helpless. "I will promise nothing of the kind," answered

"I yield to your force majeure," he said, "but I protest against this violation of my rights." "You can protest just as well outside," said Venables, and with a gesture of impotent rage O'Mara retrested. Sir George shot a rapid whisper to Gillian

as he passed her. "At the bottom of the spinney, at nine, if you ever

loved me, be there." Before she could answer yes or no, he had followed

O'Mara. [TO BE CONCLUDED.]

[Begun January 10. Back numbers may be had.] See the Bristol Mercury Supplement of Saturday

Next, March 28th, for George Manville Fenn's

New Story, " A Golden Dream."

GREAT FIRE IN ST. PHILIP'S. On Saturday evening, about half-past seven, a fire was discovered to have broken out on the premises of the Victoria Pottery Company, Feeder road, St. Philip's Marsh; and it obtained so firm a hold during the few minutes which elapsed before the brigade from the Central police station could arrive, that by the time the firemen commenced operations a large two-storey building, 150ft, by 40ft, situate behind the mill, warehouse, and drying sheds, was entirely in flames, which darted up to a great height, brilliantly illuminating the sky for some distance, and naturally attracting large numbers of people from all parts of the city. Great difficulty was found at the outset in fixing the two standpipes; and, the supply of water from the mains proving insufficient, the manual engine was lowered on to the Feeder towpath, and got to work. Inspector Gotts, who has just received his appointment, Inspector White having returned to his former position in the B Division, realising that a atili greater volume of water would be required in order to prevent the sames from spreading to the engine house, and thence to the mill and drying sheds, sent for the Steam Fire Float from the River Police Station at Prince street bridge, and in the meantime directed the men to play principally on the end of the building nearest Feeder road. To give some idea of the position of the structure in which the outbreak was discovered, we may explain that it lies behind the main block, and is joined to the engine house, forming a cort of right angle. The fire was first seen from Glass Works lane, which is on the Netham side of the pottery, by a man named Charles Ford, who noticed what appeared to be a gas jet burning near the centre window of the first storey. At that moment P.C. Meaker, 12 D, came up the lane, and as the light increased he, with Ford and another man, got through the gate of the yard, burst open the door, and entered the building. They ran upstairs to the next floor, and on opening the door

raw that the place was in flames, which quickly drove them downstairs and out into the yard. The constable sent Edward Payne to St. Philip's police station to give information of the fire, and Inspector Lee, who was on duty, after telephoning to the Central Station, sent off the hose cart and fire escape to the Pottery. The fire spread with such rapidity that the two floors gave way before the brigade reached the spot, and the roof went very soon afterwards. All the work required in the manufacture of pottery, with the exception of the finishing process, is carried on in this building, and as the frames and moulds are chiefly of wood, it can be imagined that there was plenty of material for the flames to feed upon. Although the attack was made by the brigade from both sides, the fire looked as though it would reach the engine house and mill, but furturately there was little, if any, wind at the time, and the firemen managed to confine it to one building until the arrival of the steam fire float, which was in charge of Sergeant Gardiner and a number of the river police. The float was moored to the bank of the Feeder within a few yards of the front of the pottery, and when four h, see had been attached practically all danger of the engine house catching was over, as the brigade had as much water as they required. By a quarter to ten the centre was almost burnt out, but the fire at each end stubbornly resisted every effort, and though it did not spread any further it burnt with vigour for some time afterwards, notwithstanding that tons of water were poured continuously into the burning building. After three hours' well-directed labour, the firemen succeeded in getting the outbreak well under, but the brigade and steam float did not leave until one a.m., by which time all that remained of the building water the four walls and a mass of blackened débris. Tue side walls suffered greatly from the heat, and the one on the Netham side was bulging outwards when the firemen left. It was feared that this would fall during the night, and about six o'clock a large portion of it did so, leaving the other portion of the building in a still more dangerous condition. During the progress of the fire, Superintendent Turner and

He had been in the room in which the fire was first seen at a quarter past five that evening, and everything was alright then. About seventy people were employed in the building, and the fire would undoubtedly throw them out of employment, as all the valuable blocks, frames, and moulds were totally destroyed. Only three months ago new and expensive machinery was fitted throughout that part of the pottery, and all that was of course destroyed. The damage done was undoubtedly very great, but it was difficult at once to estimate it. The pottery was, he believed, insured in the Lancashire and Queen Fire While the brigade were at the fire at the Victoria

Inspector Hardy (D division) and Inspector May

(B division) were in charge of a large body

of police, who rendered efficient aid to the

The foreman at the pottery, Mr Robert Sait, in the

firemen in keeping the crowd out of the pottery yard.

course of a conversation with a MERCURY reporter,

said he could give no explanation of the outbreak.

Pottery information was brought to them at about a quarter to twelve of an outbreak at a house in Atlas terrace, near the Pottery. Two men went there, and found that a paraffin lamp had been upset in a front room on the ground-floor of a house occupied by Mrs Neptune. They were able to put out the flames with buckets of water. Some slight damage was done to the furniture of the room. DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT TAUNTON.

Shortly after two o'clock on Sunday morning, a fire was discovered in the warehouses of Mr H. J. Vau

Trump, pawnbroker and furniture dealer, East street, Taunton. The fire alarm was rung, and the brigade was soon on the spot, but the fire had by that time got complete hold of the whole of a block of two storey buildings in the rear of Mr Van Trump's shop and dwelling house, and it was evident that none of the property could be saved. The attention of the brigade was, therefore directed to the house and shop, and they succeeded in a very short time in preventing the spreading of the flames. The roofs of the warehouses fell in shortly after the arrival of the brigade, and the whole of that part of the premises was gutted. Large quantities of pledged property (roughly estimated at worth £1200) was destroyed, and the whole contents of the warehouses, including 200 new iron bedsteads, new household furniture of all kinds, bedding, pictures, bicycles and tricycles, &c., was destroyed. The property and contents were insured. The total damage is considerably over £2000. If the fire had not been discovered when it was nothing could have saved the whole of the property. As it was the fire damaged the kitchen, and had begun to attack a new warehouse on the other side of the passage. Mr Van Trump is an alderman of the borough of Taunton. FATAL AFFRAY BETWEEN SOLDIERS. A shocking affray between young soldiers, resulting

in the death of Ernest Watts, a private in the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, occurred late on Saturday night in St. Anne's street, Westminster.

The deceased and a comrade from Chelses Barracks were in the Three Elms publichouse, and in the same bar were other soldiers, several females, and civilians, A quarrel ensued, and the disputants were ordered to leave the house. Outside, it is alleged, two soldiers, both belonging to different regiments, knocked the deceased down, kicked him on the head, and jumped upon him. On a constable appearing the assailants decamped, and Watte was removed to the Westminster Hospital. Mr Cato, house surgeon, pronounced him quite dead, the terrible injury to the head, evidenced by external marks, being in the opinion of the doctor occusioned by direct violence, such as kicks with heavy boots. The comrade of the deceased went to the hospital, and then to Rochester Row police station, where he was detained. His statements, together with information supplied by reveral civilians, enabled Detectives Greet and Waldock to arrest Patrick Dufey, a private in the 1st Battalion of the Scots Guards, at Wellington Barracks, and Thomas Rushton, a private in the Medical Staff Corps at Vincent Square Hospital on Surday morning. One of the prisoners has made a statement, Each prisoner described himself as 22 years old. The deceased was under 20, of fine physique, and a native of Cambridge. An inquest was held on Wednesday, when the jury found that the deceased met his death by a kick given by either Duffey or Rushton, but they were unable to decide which. They further found that death was accelerated by the alcoholic state of the deceased.

The United States war vessel Galena, which stranded near Gay Head, while proceeding from New York to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, will be a total

wreck. The new submarine cable for telephonic communication between Paris and London was successfully tested on Wednesday, the conversations being heard with great distinctness. "Do not heed his inpults," said Gillian, "He

do under such eireumetences—to fall upon her knees and humbly to thank a merciful Providence that she has been spared the commission of an act of abomi-Daticn; and then to receive with tenderness the