

A MISSING HUSBAND.

Mrs. Annie Aberle, No. 169 East Fourth Street, Has Searched Two Long Years for the Man Who Deserted Her and Their Five Children.

A Pathetic Christmas Story That Was Rehearsed at the Tombs Yesterday.

The Missing Husband Is Clever at Disguises and Plays a Great Game of Hide and Seek.



MRS. ANNIE ABERLE, THE ABANDONED WIFE.

Filled with some strange foreboding which she could not dismiss, the wife donned her hat and shawl and left the house. She inquired at different stores where they usually did their shopping, but could discover no trace of her missing husband. Thinking that some accident might have befallen him, Mrs. Aberle went to Police Headquarters. There they could give her no information concerning him.

For six months the wife sought in vain for him. She could not account for her husband's absence, and concluded he must have been waylaid and murdered.

Her lot was indeed a sad one. Until she was thirteen years of age Anna Raeder had attended school in the Seventeenth Ward. Her widowed mother was in straitened

circumstances. The young girl then concluded to sacrifice her education and help support her mother. She secured a position as saleslady in a Grand street dry-goods store. Thus at the age of thirteen the young girl had commenced to battle with the business world. Her manner was quiet and reticent. It won for her many friends among her sister clerks. The proprietors, recognizing her many estimable qualities, promoted her from time to time until she was able to give substantial aid to her mother. SHE MARRIED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS HANDSOME.

When at the age of seventeen she met August Aberle she thought her cup of happiness was full. He was a fine-looking young fellow of pleasing address and a subtle flatterer. He was a member of the Eighth Regiment, and when he would call on her on his return from a drill arrayed in a faultless uniform of blue, Anna thought he was by far the handsomest fellow in the whole wide world. She had other suitors, men who would have made honest husbands, but she had always resolved to have a handsome husband.

And so it was that one joyous Christmas day August Aberle led Anna Raeder to the altar, and they were joined in the bonds of matrimony. There was nothing to mar the young wife's happiness until one day Mrs. Aberle found a letter in her husband's overcoat pocket. It was from a woman who believed him to be a single man. When confronted with the letter Aberle denied that it was intended for him. Nothing further occurred to excite her suspicion after that, and Mrs. Aberle thought no more of it.

A TRACE OF HIM AT LAST.

Thus it was that when on a Christmas night two years ago he left the house and failed to return Mrs. Aberle was at a loss to account for his absence. Two months after this disappearance Mrs. Aberle saw a man whom she thought resembled her husband

enter a house on Tenth street, near First avenue. She waited in front of the house until late at night, unmindful of the snow that covered the ground. But she waited in vain.

The following night she placed her mother on the watch. She was more successful. At midnight the form of a man came out of the house carrying a pitcher in his hand. From her place of concealment behind a wagon the woman said that the man was the long-lost husband of her daughter.

He went into a saloon at the corner and was back into the house again before the mother-in-law could decide upon what to do. She concluded to return and tell her daughter her husband's place of concealment.

The next day Mrs. Aberle made inquiries at the place. She ascertained that the man who answered the description of her husband was keeping company with a young woman. Then she went to the mother of the young woman and told her the story of how Aberle had deserted her.

The woman insisted that Mrs. Aberle was mistaken. She said she had thoroughly investigated the man's character before she had consented to her daughter's engagement. The poor wife was in despair.

"You won't give me justice," she said, "but I will take it into my own hands." Had Mrs. Aberle instead have gone to a Police Court and secured a warrant for the deserter she would have been more successful. But she had no one to advise her and yielded to an impulse. The next night Mrs. Aberle's mother again watched the house. She had not long to wait before her son-in-law came along whistling. He was well dressed as usual, and wore a diamond in his polished shirt front. The aged woman thought of her estranged daughter and the five little children whom she was vainly endeavoring to support in comfort. He did not see her until she was close behind him.

"August," said the mother-in-law, "how

can you be so cruel? Think of your wife and children starving at home." He answered by brutally striking her in the face, saying: "It's none of your business."

The old woman staggered from the force of the blow and almost fell to the ground.



AUGUST ABERLE, WHO ABANDONED WIFE AND FIVE CHILDREN TWO YEARS AGO CHRISTMAS EVE.

"You bloody lubber!" cried a stalwart young tar just rounding the corner: "what do you mean by striking an old woman?" The stranger hit Aberle a sledge-hammer blow between the eyes, and he fell to the pavement. Scrambling to his feet, the cowardly husband shouted "Police!" and ran into the house, bolting the door after him. A large crowd had in the meanwhile gathered around the sobbing old woman. "Did he hurt you, madam?" asked the kind-hearted caller. "I'd lose a day's rations to give him just one more."

At this moment the door opened and the young woman whom Aberle had been courting came out.

"I'll have you arrested!" she cried in a rare, and made her way to the Fifth street police station. She was unsuccessful in securing police assistance.

HE ESCAPED AGAIN.

Arm in arm the following day Aberle and a young woman made their way to the Essex Market Police Court. Justice Gorman was on the bench. As they came into the court Aberle noticed his wife and mother-in-law in the room and promptly made his escape. The young woman then approached the desk alone and applied for a warrant for the arrest of Mrs. Aberle's mother. After hearing the evidence Justice Gorman dismissed the complaint and severely reprimanded her.

"You now know that Aberle is a married man," said the Justice, severely, "and if you continue to keep company with him it will be at your own peril."

Then Justice Gorman issued a warrant for the arrest of the husband, but he could not be found.

The little money the wife had saved had long been used up and she was in sore want. In order to fill the little ones' wants she was obliged to take in washing. To add to her troubles, her daughter Annie, aged four, who was named after the mother, died in the mean time. Then followed the funeral and doctor's bills.

A HUSBAND IN DISGUISE.

Mrs. Aberle believes that she has seen her husband several times since the day they met in the court. She says he wears disguises which he constantly changes. At one time she thinks she saw him on the front platform of a First avenue surface car. She hailed the conductor and started for the car. The conductor did not notice her. She ran after the car for some distance and finally gave it up.

At another time, she says, he wore a false beard. He was driving a soda-water wagon. She ran forward to seize the horses by the

bridle, but he eluded her by whipping up the horses.

"Lost again!" she cried, bitterly. The third time Mrs. Aberle learned that her festive husband was at a ball at the Germania Assembly Rooms. She had no money to pay the price of admission, and pleaded earnestly to be allowed to go in from a kind-hearted doorkeeper named to the story she told him, and allowed her to enter the ball-room. There she again saw her husband. He fled at her approach.

Since then Mrs. Aberle has seen nothing of him.

Christmas time is near at hand again, and Mrs. Aberle recalls the Christmas day when she was led to the altar by her heartless husband. She recalls, too, the night two years ago when he went out, ostensibly to buy Christmas presents for the children. There were five children then. Only four remain now, and she can hardly provide for them.

Santa Claus will not call at No. 169 East Fourth street when he makes his merry rounds on Christmas night. Little Lina, August, Amelia and Katie Aberle are four children for whom Christmas has nothing in store.

If the reader should happen to be at the East River docks any early morning in this Christmas-tide he could see a catwren-looking woman, clad in a scant calico dress, picking up lumps of coal here and there to feed the fire at her humble hearth—that is Mrs. Annie Aberle, the deserted wife.

Lawyer Charles Steckler has made application to Sup't. Blake for a ton of coal for Mrs. Aberle. If she receives it perhaps, after all, Mrs. Aberle will not be obliged to hunt for coal along the East River docks Christmas morning.

This is a curious and a sad case. But, as has been stated, 900 warrants for husbands who abandon their wives are issued in this city every year.

Life in New York is full of pathos.