



THE HIRED FLY.

The Story of a Doctor's Strange Experience.

BY R. W. WRIGHT-HENDERSON.

This story is told in the words, as nearly as the writer can remember them, of the late Dr. S—n, the eminent mental specialist. The names of the several persons mentioned have been disguised, and such other alterations have been made in the narrative as the law of libel—in the light of recent judicial decision—seemed to render expedient. The writer may add, out of an abundance of caution, that Dr. S—n was a man of singularly fertile imagination, whose chief regret towards the close of a prosperous and useful career was that he had not devoted himself to the writing of fiction.

HALLUCINATION is a question-begging word, my dear sir! I have had to deal with as many cases of hallucination as any man in Europe, but it would puzzle me to draw any clear dividing line between what you call fact and what you call fancy. Your experience may or may not admit of the explanation you suggest. You say that you were overworked, that your nerves were unstrung, and that you had been smoking too much. I am glad that you omitted the use of the stock expressions—"objective" and "subjective," of which one has become so weary. But I am not sure that "overwork," "nerves," or even "tobacco" are terms any more comprehensible in this present relation. You felt that there was a being behind your curtains. Search convinced you that you were in error. There was no visible being behind your curtains. But let me tell you an experience of my own.

In the year 188— I bought my first practice, for fifteen hundred pounds. It was a practice at Mattersfield, and lay in a populous and rather congested area round about the station and the dye works. My predecessor was a

clever, but pretentious, individual, and had saddled himself with a brougham, which he wished to pass off on me. But a brougham involves the support of a coachman and a horse—expensive retainers upon a young man barely able to pay for his new brass plate. I therefore declined to take over the brougham, and made an arrangement with a cab proprietor of the name of Joyce.

Joyce was a most amiable man. He said at once that he saw I knew my own mind, and that plain dealing was his constant principle; to which I naturally replied that ethics were outside the question. He touched his hat, and admitted that was so, but pronounced the opinion that medical gentlemen were always difficult to satisfy. He then pondered. His one object, he said, was to give satisfaction to those he treated with—and would I step this way?

Men connected with horses combine frankness and mystery in a manner peculiar to their class. Mr. Joyce led me to a coach-house, unlocked a sliding door, and displayed to me a vehicle in no way remarkable. It had evidently seen better days as a private

carriage. Its paint was somewhat faded in lustre, and its upholstery was a trifle worn. It was a four-wheeler, of a very ordinary type, and— I repeat—in no way remarkable. But Mr. Joyce pursed his lips with an air, and looked to see what effect the vision of this wonderful conveyance had produced.

"Well?" I said.

The upshot was a bargain. Mr. Joyce undertook to let me have that particular "fly," as he called it, at tenpence an hour whenever I wanted it—night or day. But I was to guarantee a minimum of use *per mensem*. I forgot the exact figure—but it is immaterial.

Mr. Joyce and I parted the best of friends, and he hoped that I would remember him, he having another side to his business. The card which he handed to me was dolefully explicit, but I promised that should ever misfortune occur—as was frequently inevitable—I would recommend his hearse.

Now, sir—you have talked of nerves and overwork. I can assure you that I suffered from neither. Mattersfield is a manufacturing town, but it is abominably healthy. During the first three or four weeks of my practice I was comparatively idle, but at the same time I was free from anxiety. My patients were increasing in number. I was young, and I was sanguine. I was rapidly making friends. My only vexation of spirit was on the score of Mr. Joyce. Not once had I had occasion to send for his fly.

But the occasion arrived. On a Sunday afternoon—a clear, crisp day in early spring—I was summoned to attend a young gentleman farmer at Ripley Hill, a village about four miles from the town. I rang up Joyce's stables at once, and the fly was sent round. The driver was an elderly, rather depressed individual. The horse was an animal of no particular distinction. And off we went!

Our road lay through pleasant open country. The freshness of the air and the bright sunlight would have cheered a hypochondriac. Now I was in no need of cheering. I set out with every cause for self-congratulation. I had no reason to fear that my patient was in

any danger, or that I was to face any of those sudden difficulties by which we medical men are so often confronted. But as we drove on a sense of uneasiness stole over me. I could not analyse it. I cannot now describe it. I can only say that I felt oppressed, and that by the time we reached my patient's house I was as fidgety as a child awake in the dark.

Happily, that sensation passed off on the moment that I was at work. I found my young farmer was suffering from a slight chill upon the liver, and, like all strong and healthy men, unaccustomed to illness, he believed himself to be dying. I soon persuaded him that his forebodings were false, and he and his wife, both absurdly grateful, saw me to the door.

"Hullo!" said he, looking at the fly. "That's from Joyce's yard, isn't it? Well, good-bye, good-bye!"

I shook hands with the pair, and skipped into the carriage with all the proper professional appearance of haste. But as I waved from the window I heard the wife whisper to her husband.

"It is the one, I think?" she said. He nodded.

No sooner had we started home than the feeling of oppression returned. The sun was still bright. The birds were twittering. The air had the gentle touch in it of approaching evening—and yet I was in the grip of a profound despondency. I struggled against it with all my power of will, but in vain. And the sensation grew more and more intense. It became something not unlike terror. Terror of what I could not imagine, but I confess that when we drew up outside my door I was trembling.

And let me add this, sir! If I was scared, so was that driver. On the moment that I was out of the fly he whipped up his horse, and was off. It then dawned on me that we had covered our return journey at the rate of twelve miles an hour!

Five minutes later I was in my consulting-room laughing at my weakness. My mind was again clear. I had recovered, as you would say, my senses. But a learned judge has declared from the bench that the state of a man's

mind is as much a fact as the state of his digestion. It was a fact, and one that I was ashamed of, that in broad light of day I had been half out of my wits with fear for no reason at all—or shall we say, for no *apparent* reason?

On the following evening I was engaged to dine at a house some little distance out of Mattersfield. My host was a wealthy manufacturer—a rough, full-blooded, hospitable gourmet; and I looked forward to a dinner of no common order. Accordingly, when on my morning rounds, I called at Joyce's office.

"I shall want the fly this evening," I said. "I am dining with Mr. Pratt at eight o'clock. How long will it take to get there?"

"The best part of half an hour, sir," replied Joyce. "Say thirty-five minutes to do it comfortable. Mostly uphill, sir!"

"Good—at five and twenty past seven, then! By the way, compared with the ordinary growler that fly of yours is a luxury. I suppose you bought it at some sale?"

I cannot tell you why I asked that question, nor can I tell you how it was that I knew Joyce to be lying when he replied that he had bought it off a jobmaster at Birmingham. I am not one of those who claim that we doctors can see any deeper into the minds of others than can any moderately shrewd man of the world accustomed to deal with his fellow-creatures. But you, sir—a man of observation, and a writer—will understand me when I say that intuitively I knew Joyce to be lying. He had not bought the fly from a jobmaster.

At seven twenty-five I was ready and waiting on my doorstep. The fly was a minute or two late. I jumped into it, and slammed the door.

"Right away!" I cried.

Again that sense of oppression! I tried to remind myself that I was a grown man, in full possession of faculties at least not below the average. You, when you believed that there was a man behind the curtains, scolded yourself for being a fool. I did the same. But every time we passed a lamp-post I found myself looking round to see who it was sitting next me!

There was some one there—and what is more, sir, between me and that some one was proceeding a struggle of will. I was fighting against the attempt of another to inspire me with his own sense of despair. I say "his" advisedly—for I do not remember having doubted for a moment that it was a male influence against which I was battling. And as the struggle continued so did my dread of its issue increase. I cannot better express my meaning than by an analogy. In a nightmare one experiences, and sometimes wakes with, an impression of the illimitability of things—the sense of void and unfathomable mental darkness, in which one's *ego*, dis severed from the flesh, is wandering, lost and alone. I felt that the some one sitting beside me was striving to draw me into some such region of hopelessness! And so deeply was I engaged in this conflict of will that it was not till Pratt's footman threw open the door that I realised the fly had come to a stop. I required all my self-command not to leap with a bound out on to Pratt's fine marble steps. As it was, something in my look must have betrayed me.

"Are you ill, sir?" asked the footman.

"Not a bit," said I, with some annoyance. But I turned to the driver. "You need not wait," I said. "I shall walk back."

Now, sir, the clock in Pratt's entrance hall struck the chimes as I was ushered into an empty drawing-room. I was a quarter of an hour before my time. We had done a journey for which Joyce had allowed a full thirty minutes in under twenty!

But I was glad of that quarter of an hour's grace. I was in need of every second of it; and even when Mrs. Pratt, rustling in satin, hurried into the room, I was hardly master of my wits.

There is no need to describe at any length either the company or the dinner. Pratt's cook fully justified his, or her, fame in Mattersfield, and though I have lost my taste for champagne, I think it might revive if tempted by any as good as that which I then put down. And the champagne

restored me—so much so that I fear my inconsequence and levity must have caused the good lady on my right to fancy that it had rushed to my head. She was a stiff, highly genteel, but much bejewelled woman—the wife of the chief manager of the dye works, and profoundly dull. My witticisms were lost upon her. I dare say, however, the loss was not great, for my liveliness was at most a reaction, and in part hysterical.

But my other neighbour was of a different type. She was a quiet, unassertive little woman, fragile in figure, with a white face and deep black eyes. Her name was Branston, and from a remark that she let fall I learnt that she was a widow. I had noticed her on her entrance into the drawing-room, and had been struck by the grace of her movement, and also by the charming simplicity of her gown. There are some women, but very few, who can dispense with the fripperies and embellishments of female attire. Of these she was one. You believe I had fallen in love with her? No, sir—but I was interested in her, and for a reason.

Early during the dinner the butler whispered to my host. Pratt, as I may have hinted, was a self-made man—a real good fellow, sir, but rough. He listened, frowned, then looked up, and called to me.

"Dr. S—n," he cried, down the full length of the table, "here's Joyce's man come back to ask whether he hadn't better wait for you after all. It's raining cats and dogs. You mustn't think of walking!"

As you may imagine, I felt a little uncomfortable. Struggling young practitioners are sensitive, and I did not care to have it announced to the whole company that I had intended to save a few shillings by trudging it home on foot.

"Well, if it's raining——" I began, and Pratt interrupted me with a laugh.

"Of course, the man must wait!" he bellowed, and wished that he was as young and foolhardy as I was.

Now, the incident caused a lull in the general conversation. Mrs. Branston was the first to break it.

"Do you deal with Joyce?" she

asked. "I wonder you don't hire your cabs from the Swan Hotel. Joyce is so very unreliable."

"Have you found him so?" said I. "I have an arrangement with him, and have hitherto had no difficulty. He reserves for me a special carriage—or pretends to."

Mrs. Branston turned abruptly to another subject, and it was then that my interest in her was aroused. It struck me—the notion was fleeting—that my mention of a special carriage had been unwelcome to her, and I wondered whether she had ever driven in the fly and suffered as I had. But before the end of dinner I observed that it was her habit to pass rapidly from one topic to another. Her mind was curiously restless. I had already more than dabbled in the study of mental disease, and—well, I had my suspicions. The woman was either a victim of the drug habit, or some shock had slightly—very slightly, mark you—affected her mental balance. I have said that I was interested in her. It would be more correct to say that she puzzled me.

I was given further cause to be puzzled. The guests were departing. I had said good-bye to my hostess, being the last to do so. Mrs. Branston was waiting at the top of the steps for her brougham, and Pratt, very effusive and fatherly with ladies, was bidding her take plenty of time—plenty of time. I was struggling into my great coat, when I heard her utter a faint cry of alarm.

"Stop! stop!" she said, calling to the footman, and stepping back into the hall. "That's not my carriage—that's not my carriage!" She laughed nervously, and Pratt danced down the steps in a rage.

"Drive on and make way, confound you!" he cried—and the man he was shouting at, sir, was the driver from Joyce's. The carriage which had drawn up outside was not Mrs. Branston's brougham, but my accursed fly!

Never have I seen a man so put about as was Pratt.

"Now take your time; take your time!" he kept repeating as Mrs. Branston entered her vehicle, and he bowed her into it with a rough courtesy that

was very pleasing. Once again I heard that nervous little laugh . . .

"Quite a natural mistake!" she said, smiling at him out of the window as her brougham moved away.

Pratt joined me in the entrance hall. "You're not to blame, doctor," he said, "but I wouldn't have had that happen for a thousand pounds!"

"I don't understand," said I.

"Why, man alive, Joyce has sent you out in the carriage her husband died in—and she recognised it!"

"Died in?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, poor fellow," replied Pratt. "Heart, it was. He was found in a heap on the seat, and at first they thought he was— Well, there's no good in saying ill of a man after he's gone, but he took his drop now and then. It was a ghastly thing, but, all said and done, the little woman was well rid of him." He spoke sadly, in the kind way that a big-hearted man will speak of the dead who have gone. But I wanted to learn more.

"A drunkard, was he?" I asked.

"Well, we all have our faults," was the answer. "Now be careful as you go down those steps. Slippery as ice when they're wet. Good-night to you, good-night!"

My friend, what about nerves? I'll admit that my nerves were unstrung. And that being so, you argue, they conveyed a false impression to my brain. You argue nothing of the kind? Very well, then, my brain, being out of order—though I have no reason to imagine that it was—conveyed a false impression to my nerves? Is that what you maintain? But to proceed with my story.

Before the wheels of the fly had turned I was assured of—I felt—the presence of the someone who sat by my side.

But you will note this. I was no longer at the disadvantage of having to fight against a thing unknown and incomprehensible. I had no doubt that the spirit, the soul, or—to be plain—the unseen ghost that haunted the fly was the ghost of Mrs. Branson's late husband. The conviction gave me courage. However supernatural or unholy the influence that sought to dominate my will, it was, at the most, the influence of a being that had

once been enveloped in the flesh—had once been animate. I was opposing my "living" conative powers against those of a dead man. I had, before, been wrestling with a force I believed to be superhuman, and when relieved of the pressure of that belief I felt more confident.

Yes, my dear sir! You have expressed it very aptly. Branson dead was no more to be feared than Branson living!

But there is more to be said. Let me put the case this way. I lean forward to pick up this match-box. That is an act of volition, and a tax—though a small one—upon the mind. Again, I breathe. That is another act of volition, arising from my natural impulse to live. My heart beats. I cannot, you say, stop it beating by any effort of my own that is not physical; but I am hardly prepared to assent to that proposition. There are well testified instances of persons "willing" themselves to death, and in the East they are common. But you perceive the drift of my argument? The living are hampered by that which we call the body; the dead are not. Every physical effort draws upon our stock of will power; the will power of a soul released from mortal life is free from that charge—and therefore gains in strength. Branson dead, in fine, was more to be feared than Branson living. He was superhuman!

But so far from these reflections dimming me, they put me upon my mettle. I was young, and I trusted to my strength. More than once I had experimented in mesmerism, and never had I met with any one who could dominate me. I nerved myself to concentrate my whole sentient being against the lifeless mind opposed to it; and it seemed that my challenge had been accepted. The sense of someone actually sitting beside me had gone. The contest between him and me, for I am bound to use mere pronouns, was one of—what shall I say?—soul against soul.

Slowly, though very slowly, I was being overwhelmed. The wish to live was being taken from me. I was being robbed of all appetite for life. "Hopelessness" was the expression I used a few minutes ago, but it no longer

serves to describe the state of mind to which I was being gradually driven. It is but a contradiction to say there is no hope, and the contradiction presupposes that the word "hope" has a meaning. I was learning that it had none. And if I tell you that I was being impelled towards self-destruction I am again confronted with the fallacy of words. Self, I knew, could never be destroyed. That, indeed, was the burden of the misery which rose in flood throughout my being!

But the fly drew up with a jerk. I was out of it in an instant. I found myself standing before the entrance to Joyce's yard.

Of what I then did I have but a confused recollection. I believe that I helped Joyce's man to unharness, and I can call to mind the fellow's sullen, yet haggard face as I flung at him every word of abuse my scattered thoughts could gather. I was cursing him for having come back for me—and I was whimpering.

But by degrees my self-confidence returned. My professional sense of duty helped me to recover, for the man's face was livid with fright. I led him off to my consulting-room.

"Now sit down," I said, when I had lit the gas. "I am going to give you something to string you up." It was bromide that I gave him. "Toss that down—and don't worry. We're both out of our senses!"

Well, sir, it was past midnight before the fellow left me. I learnt from him that not another driver in the yard would as much as mount the box of the late Mr. Branston's carriage.

"Nor ever again will I, Gawd's trewth!" he said. "Five times now have I taken it out, and each time it's been worse than before. First time was to take Miss Fieldin' to the 'Unt Ball, and she an' the leddy as was with her was out and screechin' in the open road before we was half way. Out in the mud and rain, sir, in their satin and dancin' shoes! Then there was a travellin' gent, with his sample cases, as wanted something to drive round the town in. 'Is sample cases filled both seats—all but what he did, and you'd 'ave thought there wasn't room for much to be feared of. But after an hour of it he skips out—as white as a

schoolgirl. I had to drive back empty, sir—leastways . . ."

I shall never forget the awe with which that man let forth the word "leastways."

"Then there was the young gentleman at Ripley Hill—as I drove you out to. I took him from the station to his house, and when he gets out he was more like a drunk man than ever 'is wife 'ad seed 'im before, I reckon. Could scarce stand, sir, and his eyes fixed 'orrid."

But there is no need to repeat all that he told me about that infernal fly. I asked him what his own sensations were when on the box. He failed utterly when he attempted to describe them.

"But beggin' your pardon, doctor," he concluded, "I'd 'ave sooner driven straight to 'ell, sir, than 'ave taken that bogey trap 'ome alone to-night. With you or any other 'uman bein' sittin' be'ind me it's bad enough, but with you gone, and only 'im inside, it 'ud 'ave been more than mortal flesh could 'ave borne! So I just waits in Mr. Pratt's stables for a while, and then sends in the message I did, reckonin on your understandin' it."

"How long has Mr. Joyce had the cursed thing?" I asked.

"Bought it at the sale, sir! The sale two or three months after Mr. Branston died, an' that was five years gone next November. Mrs. Branston moved out of Hill Lodge, where they used to live, to the Pines, where she is now."

I then dismissed the man. He left Joyce's service, and obtained a job at the Swan. I need hardly say that I, also, deserted Mr. Joyce.

Now, I made many inquiries about the late Mr. Branston. He had not been popular in Mattersfield. I gathered that he was one of those men whom no one liked, though no one could say why. That he was a drunkard, as Pratt had more than hinted, did not entirely discredit him in the opinion of his former associates. Mattersfield, in those days, contained a fair number of gentry of his own type in that respect; indeed, it was counted as a redeeming feature in the man that he had been wont to

take his liquor without stint. And he was, moreover, what is now called "a good sportsman." He was daring in the hunting field; he was reputed to be useful with his fists; and he was a first-class shot. I could, in fine, learn of no distinct fault in his character that seemed entirely to justify the dislike in which he was held. But the opinion was universal—Mrs. Branston had had less reason than most poor widows to wear weeds for long.

I was not content with the results of my inquiries. I found time to visit the public library, and there turned up the back files of the local paper. The report of the inquest upon John Septimus Rugely Branston, who had died so suddenly in his carriage, was a full one. It appeared that for some years past he had suffered from an affection of the heart, and it had been his practice to carry in his waistcoat pocket a glass tube containing in tablet form a certain drug for use in case of an emergency. The drug in question was made up by a foreign firm of chemists, whose preparations are world-famous. You can purchase in the form of these little flat tablets, usually white, almost any poison you like to name.

Now, sir, the drug in question was a heart stimulant, and a very potent one.

Branston, to come to the circumstances of his death, had been out to dinner with a bachelor friend, his wife being absent from home for a day or two—not that I imagine her social engagements much affected his own. He left his friend's house at about eleven o'clock, and the evidence was that he was sober. His carriage reached home some ten or twelve minutes later. He was found, as Pratt said, "in a heap upon the seat." The glass tube was discovered lying upon the floor of the carriage, open; the contents lay scattered upon the mat. The supposition was that he had felt the approach of an attack, had hastily endeavoured to meet it, but that his consciousness had failed before he had time to raise to his lips the one little white tablet that might have preserved his life.

But before I go any further, let me say this: medical evidence, as re-

ported in the columns of a newspaper, leaves wide room for conjecture. I do not wish, you understand, to be positive. At the same time, sir, the condition of Branston's heart, as revealed by the post-mortem examination, did not adequately, in my opinion, account for the startlingly sudden nature of his collapse. It struck me, when I read the report, that the verdict—death from natural causes—was hardly quite justified. Those, however, who had conducted the post-mortem appeared to have felt no doubt, and I am bound to admit that but for the memory of that terrible presence in the fly I would have had little difficulty in accepting their conclusions.

Did I suspect foul play, sir? That is a question I was prepared for you to put. You go too fast, my friend! Suspicion is a superlative word to employ. A variety of theories as to the exact cause of Branston's death occurred to me, but at the most my "suspicion" was that his death had not been the natural consequence of his disease, having regard to the stage which that disease had reached. Put it this way, my dear sir! Your watch has stopped, we'll say. You do not at once suspect that some one has been tampering with it? There are numberless possible reasons why it has ceased to tick, and you go to a watchmaker to discover the truth. I was in the position of a watchmaker trying to determine what had gone wrong with a watch the works of which had been thrown away, and which, he was convinced, had not failed for mere want of winding.

The suggestion of foul play, sir, never occurred to me. I had no more than the customary suspicion of a young man of acknowledged promise—and I had been twice a gold medallist—that my seniors, other than the professors who had taught me, were incompetent, and out of date!

But to proceed.

During the next two or three months I had many opportunities of meeting and of studying John Branston's white-faced little widow. The more I saw of her the more I was puzzled. You will remember, sir, that I described her as "unassertive." I might almost have

said that she was "shrinking." Charming and graceful as was her bearing, she was curiously timid; and that restlessness of mind—which made conversation with her extremely difficult—seemed in great part due to natural shyness. In the end I was forced to the conclusion that she was a woman whose life had been unhappy, who had suffered a severe shock in her husband's sudden death, and whose nervous condition made her dependent, in a sense, upon the society of others.

One night in August, when I was about to retire to bed, a carriage drove up to my door. I went to the door myself, opening it as the bell rang. The carriage I recognised at once—it was Joyce's fly. The driver was a stranger to me. He was, as I afterwards learnt, one of Joyce's new hands. He brought me a message from Mrs. Porter, the wife of Mrs. Branston's medical attendant, begging me to go round at once to the Pines, Porter himself being away from home. The summons was urgent.

"Do you know what's wrong?" I asked.

The fellow was intelligent, and his story was shortly told. Mrs. Branston had had an accident. When driving home from some house in the country her brougham had collided with a waggon, and had lost a wheel. No one, however, had been hurt. Mrs. Branston had waited in a farmhouse, while a lad was sent into the town to fetch a carriage. The boy had gone to Joyce's.

"She were all right when she got in, sir," said the man, on my questioning him, "and wouldn't 'ave any one to drive back with 'er—though Mrs. Burke, the farmer's wife, sir, offered to see 'er 'ome. But when she got out, sir, she was a bit faint like. It was 'er maid as sent me for Dr. Porter."

I made no further inquiries, but clapped on a hat, jumped into the fly, and told the man to drive as fast as he could. In an instant, sir, I was conscious that Branston was again sitting beside me. But on the previous occasions despair had been the sense with which his presence had imbued me, and I take it that his purpose—and

I can think of no other word—had been to transfer to my mind the abysmal misery of his own. But despair was no longer the only, though still the governing, note of his influence over me. Mingling with that awful spell of utter hopelessness was something which no language can express—and which even I, who experienced the emotion, cannot, I thank heaven, now re-imagine. Detestation of self is as near a description as I can offer.

But suddenly, sir, I was free. I was alone. The spirit of Branston had fled. I looked at my watch. It was eighteen minutes to twelve—and at that very moment Mrs. Branston had died.

She had died by her own hand. When her maid's back was turned she had swallowed poison. The drug which she had taken was one I must refrain from naming—though it is not, I am glad to say, easily procurable in England. It is one that leaves no trace, or at least no very noticeable trace, discoverable upon post-mortem examination. Its effect is upon the action of the heart, and is depressing.

And this drug, sir, she had taken in the tablet form in which it is made up by the foreign firm of chemists which I have mentioned. Where, when, or how she purchased the little glass tube which I found clutched in her dead hand no one can say. But her last words, cried pitifully to her maid, were curious.

"I have taken all but the one!" she said.

What did she mean by "the one," sir? The tube was empty when I opened her fingers.

To help you to an inference, the tubes sold by this foreign firm of chemists hold ten tablets. Three, in the case of a person whose heart was in a normal condition, would be a fatal dose. But a single tablet might have killed a man whose heart's action depended upon a stimulant.

Yes, sir. I believe that Mrs. Branston had substituted one tablet for another in the tube that her husband carried. If the man when alive was anything like the man when dead I think she may be forgiven!