A CRIME OF MANY YEARS AGO.
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pg. 8

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Thirty-two years ago a horrible murder was committed on the "Goffle road," about two miles from Paterson. The victims were an old couple, John Van Winkle and his wife. The murderer was one John Jonston, a hired man, who had been taken on the farm a short time before. He was subsequently captured, tried, convicted, and hanged, and was the only person ever hanged in Passaic County. The end of the house where the murder was committed was locked and barred, and has been kept so ever since. The house has been occupied by a man placed in charge of the place, no one seeming disposed to lease the valuable and beautiful property on account of the stories prevalent about its being the abode of unearthly visitants. A few days ago the long closed portion of the house was opened. The vines had grown so thickly around the doors and windows that a way was cleared with much difficulty. The hinges of the doors had rusted almost solid, and had to be pushed open by main force. The room had a damp smell, and everything was partially decayed; the furniture was almost hidden under the dust, and there were masses of cobwebs in the corners. Through a hole in the roof the rain had trickled until there was a hole rotted through the floors and ceilings. The aged couple had been murdered with a carving-knife and hatchet, and as the fatal blows descended on their heads the blood spurted over the walls and the bed clothing. The spots are still there, both on the half-rotted clothing and the faded walls. The murderer made his escape through the garret, to which he climbed by a small ladder which he brought in for the purpose. The ladder was never removed; when the room was opened it lay in pieces on the floor under the garret scuttle-hole. The room is now thrown open, after all these years, in order to reconstruct the house and make it habitable.