

VARIOUS

TALES FOR
YOUNG AND
OLD

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Tales for Young and Old:

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Various Tales for Young and Old

PREFACE

When the older were considerably younger, and young in infancy, the following interesting Tales were written.

W. & R.C.

THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY

BY MRS CROWE

In the year 1809, when the French were in Prussia, M. Louison, an officer in the commissariat department of the imperial army, contracted an attachment for the beautiful Adelaide Hext, the daughter of a respectable but not wealthy merchant. The young Frenchman having contrived to make his attachment known, it was imprudently reciprocated by its object; we say imprudently, for the French were detested by her father, who declared that no daughter of his should ever be allied to one of the invaders and occupants of his beloved country. Thus repulsed, M. Louison had the good sense not to press his suit, and proceeded to Vienna, where he was installed in a lucrative office suitable to his wishes and abilities. Here, however, he could not altogether relinquish the expectation of being one day married to the fair Adelaide Hext, with whom he continued to correspond.

After the lapse of a few months, the aspect of affairs underwent a material change. Hext lay, as he supposed, and as the doctors told him, on his death-bed, and, pondering on the probable destitution of his family, he repented his rash vow, and stated to Adelaide that he should no longer oppose her wishes. M.

Louison, procuring leave of absence for a few days, was speedily on the spot, and, with as little loss of time as possible, was united to the daughter of the seemingly dying merchant. As, in such circumstances, it would have been cruel for Madame Louison to leave the bedside of her aged parent, it was arranged that she should remain till the period of his decease, and then join her husband, who, in the meanwhile, was compelled to return to Vienna. The old man, however, recovered as soon as his son-in-law departed, and he now almost wished the marriage were undone; but as that was impracticable, he, with as good a grace as possible, saw his daughter set out on her journey to Dresden, whence she was to be escorted to Vienna by M. de Monge, a friend of her husband.

Nothing occurred to interrupt the journey of Madame Louison, for the intermediate country was tranquil, and she had the happiness of arriving safely under the roof of her husband's friend. This person was one of those who will act conscientiously in all situations of life, until they encounter an irresistible temptation to error. Such was the present occasion. Overcome with the beauty of his unsuspecting guest, he basely attempted to divert her affections from her husband—an attempt which the noble Friedlander repelled with becoming scorn. To cut short a long tale, this mortification filled De Monge with vengeful sentiments, at the same time that his fears were awakened, as he could hardly doubt that the lady would acquaint her husband with his treachery. He affected to pass off his overtures as nothing

more than a jocular trial of her resolutions, but secretly suffered from the torments of fear and resentment, insomuch that he was at length driven to the contemplation of a dreadful crime. The story is almost too incredible for belief, yet our authority assures us that the facts occurred as we propose to state them.

Having detained the lady in Dresden considerably beyond the day When she expected to set out, De Monge was at length compelled to Allow her departure. Her escort through the partially-disturbed country in which she was to travel, was to consist of an individual who was well acquainted with the roads, and had frequently acted as a the Italian frontier. Mazzuolo, as this man was called, was an Italian by birth, and gladly undertook a commission which promised him a rich harvest of booty. His bargain with the treacherous De Monge was, that if he made away with the life of Madame Louison while on the journey, and before she could communicate with her husband, he was to be at liberty to carry off all her baggage, which contained valuable articles to a large amount. The Italian stipulated that his wife, dressed in male attire, and a lad on whom he could depend, should accompany him.

Everything being settled, the morning of departure arrived. Adelaide had not seen her travelling companions till they with the carriage, into which she was handed by Mazzuolo, with all the deference that her beauty and elegant attire might naturally command. She wore a black velvet bonnet and Chantilly veil, a crimson silk pelisse trimmed with rich furs, a boa of Russian

sable; and, over all, a loose pelisse, lined with fur. Mazzuolo and his wife thought that this augured well for the contents of her trunks.

The length of the journey, the dangers of the road, and the goodness or badness of the inns they should have to rest at, formed the subjects of conversation for the first hour or two. The stage was very long, and it was eleven o'clock before they reached their first relay of horses, by which time the young traveller had decided that she had great reason to be satisfied with her companions. The Italian was polite and entertaining; he had travelled a great deal, and was full of anecdote; and being naturally lively and garrulous, the design he entertained of taking away the life of his charge did not prevent his making himself agreeable to her in the meantime. With his well-seared conscience, he neither felt nervous nor saturnine at the prospect of what was before him—why should he indeed?—for the only part of the prospect he fixed his eye upon was the gain; the little operation by means of which it was to be acquired, he did not think very seriously of; besides, he did not intend to perform it himself.

When they stopped to change horses, a lad of about seventeen years of age, named Karl, nephew of Mazzuolo's wife, came to the carriage door: he seemed to have been waiting for them. Mazzuolo spoke to him aside for some minutes, and when they started again, the youth mounted in front of the carriage. The Italian said he was a lad they had engaged to look after the

luggage, and be useful on the journey. He was, in fact, one who was hired to do any piece of work, good or bad. He possessed no moral strength, could be easily led by the will of his employers; in short, was a very useful ally. He had a broad, fair, stolid German face; and from the glimpse she had of him, Adelaide thought she had seldom seen a more unprepossessing-looking person. His home had been a rude and unhappy one; his manners were coarse and unpolished, and his dress shabby.

The first day's journey passed agreeably enough. When they arrived at their night's station, Mazzuolo having handed out the ladies, bade them go up stairs and order supper, whilst he and Karl looked to the putting-up of the carriage. Agostina, or Tina, as her husband commonly called her, insisted very much on having a room for Adelaide adjoining her own, alleging as her reason that they were answerable for her safety. The bride thanked her for her caution, but added, laughingly, that she did not think she had much to fear. It was some time before the two men joined them; and then they sat down to supper, the lad Karl acting as waiter. As he stood beside his aunt's chair, and exactly opposite Adelaide, he appeared much affected by her beauty; but of this, of course, the lady took no notice. When supper was over, being fatigued, she retired to her room; and then the party that remained closed the door, and bidding Karl sit down and eat his supper, they held a council on her fate.

Mazzuolo opened the conference by mentioning that he had already given the lad a hint of what was expected of him, and

Tina asked him if he thought he was equal to the undertaking. Karl said he did not know; whereupon they encouraged him with promises of a handsome share of the booty, telling him also that they would stand by him, and help him if necessary. But the question was, how was the thing to be done, and where? Whether on the road by day, or in the night where they stopped? In either case, there were difficulties; many parts of the road they had to pass were extremely lonely, and fit for the purpose; but then, how were they to get rid of the postilion? And as they had a fresh one at every stage, there was no time to win him to their purpose. Then, at the inns, the obstacles were also considerable, especially as the houses were generally small Tina suggested that whenever the bride dropped out of the party, she had only to resume her female attire, and the people would never miss her. 'Karl can take my place in the carriage,' she said, 'and I Madame Louison's. Thus we shall appear to be as many as we were; and there will be no discrepancy with the passport.' The hint was approved; but after an hour's discussion, they found it impossible to conclude upon any plan; the execution of their projects must be left to chance and opportunity—all they had to do was, to be prepared to seize upon the first that offered.

During the progress of this conversation, Karl made no observation whatever. He listened in silence; not without attention, but without objection, even although, in the different plans that were proposed, he heard himself always designated as the active agent in the murder. When the council broke up,

the parties retired to bed—their present station being too near Dresden for their purpose. Next day they resumed their journey; and as their way lay through a gloomy forest, nothing but the presence of the postilion saved the young bride's life. The night was passed at a post-house, where there were so few rooms, that Adelaide had to sleep in the same apartment with the daughter of the owner: so here was nothing to be done either. The Italians began to grow impatient at these difficulties, and Mazzuolo proposed a change in their tactics. On the previous evening, the weather being very cold, Madame Louison had ordered a fire in her chamber. She would doubtless do the same on the ensuing night; and all they had to do was to fill the stove with charcoal, and her death would follow in the most natural way in the world. They were to pass the night at Nuremburg; and, as soon as they arrived, Karl was sent out to procure the charcoal; but, after remaining away a long time, he came back saying the shops were all shut, and he could not get any; and as the inn at Nuremburg was not a fit place for any other kind of attack, Adelaide was respited for another four-and-twenty hours.

On the following day, in order to avoid such another *contretemps*, the charcoal was secured in the morning whilst they were changing horses, and placed in a sack under the seat of the carriage.

It happened on this day that the road was very hilly, and as the horses slowly dragged the carriage up the ascents, Madame Louison proposed walking to warm themselves. They

all descended; but Tina, being stout, and heavy on her feet, was soon tired, and got in again; whilst Mazzuolo, with a view to his design against Adelaide, fell into conversation with the driver about the different stations they would have to stop at. He wanted to extract all the information he could—so he walked beside the carriage, whilst Madame Louison and Karl, who were very cold, walked on as fast as they could.

'You look quite chilled, Karl,' said she; 'let us see who will be at the top of the hill first—a race will warm us.'

The youth strode on without saying anything; but as she was the more active, she got before him; and when she reached the top, she turned round, and playfully clapping her hands, said, 'Karl, I've beaten you!' Karl said he had had an illness lately, and was not so strong as he used to be; he had gone into the water when he was very warm, and had nearly died of the consequences. This led her to observe how thinly he was clad; and when the carriage overtook them, she proposed that, as there was plenty of room, he should go inside; to which the others, as they did not want him to fall ill upon their hands, consented. With the glasses up, and the furs that the party were wrapped in, the inside of the carriage was very different to the out; and Karl's nose and cheeks, which had before been blue, resumed their original hues.

It was late when they reached their night-station, and, whilst the ladies went up stairs to look at their rooms, Earl received his orders, which were, that he should fill the stove with charcoal,

and set fire to it, whilst the others were at table. The lad answered composedly that he would. 'And when you have done it,' said Mazzuolo, 'give me a wink, and I will step out and see that all is right before she goes to her room.'

Karl obeyed his directions to a tittle, and when all was ready, he gave the signal, and Mazzuolo, making a pretext, quitted the table. He found the arrangements quite satisfactory, and having taken care to see that the window was well closed, he returned to the supper-room. He was no sooner gone than the boy took the charcoal from the stove and threw it into the street; and when Adelaide came to undress, there was no fire. Cold as it was, however, she had no alternative but to go to bed without one, for there was not a bell in the apartment; and Mazzuolo, who had lighted her to the door, had locked her in, under pretence of caring for her safety. Karl, having watched this proceeding, accompanied him back to the supper-table, where they discussed the plans for the following day. Whether would it be better to start in the morning without inquiring for her at all, and leave the people of the house to find her dead, when they were far on the road, or whether make the discovery themselves? Karl ventured to advocate the first plan; but Tina decided for the second. It would be easy to say that the lad had put charcoal in the stove, not being aware of its effects, and there would be an end of the matter. If they left her behind, it would be avowing the murder. This settled, they went to bed.

What to do, Karl did not know. He was naturally a stupid sort

of lad, and what little sense nature had given him, had been nearly beaten out of him by harsh treatment. He had had a miserable life of it, and had never found himself so comfortable as he was now with his aunt and her husband. They were kind to him, because they wanted to make use of him. He did not want to offend them, nor to leave them; for if he did, he must return home again, which he dreaded above all things. Yet there was something in him that recoiled against killing the lady. Grossly ignorant as he was, scarcely knowing right from wrong, it was not morality or religion that deterred him from the crime; he had a very imperfect idea of the amount of the wickedness he would be committing in taking away the life of a fellow-creature. Obedience was the only virtue he had been taught; and what those in authority over him had ordered him to do, he would have done without much question. To kill his beautiful travelling companion, who had shown him such kindness, was, however, repugnant to feelings he could not explain even to himself. Yet he had not sufficient grasp of intellect to know how he was to elude the performance of the task. The only thing he could think of in the meanwhile was to take the charcoal out of the stove; and he did it; after which he went to sleep, and left the results to be developed by the morning.

He had been desired to rise early; and when he quitted his room, he found Mazzuolo and his wife already stirring. They bade him go below and send up breakfast, and to be careful that it was brought by the people of the house. This was done; and when

the waiter and the host were present, Tina took the opportunity of knocking at Madame Louison's door, and bidding her rise. To the great amazement of the two Italians, she answered with alacrity that she was nearly dressed, and should be with them immediately. They stared at each other; but presently she opened the door, and appeared as fresh as ever; observing, however, that she had been very cold, for that the fire had gone out before she went to bed. This accounted for the whole thing, and Karl escaped all blame.

During the ensuing day nothing remarkable occurred: fresh charcoal was provided; but at night it was found there were no stoves in the bed-chambers; and as the houses on the road they were travelling were poor and ill-furnished, all the good inns having been dismantled by the troops, the same thing happened at several successive stations.

This delay began to render the affair critical, for they were daily drawing near Augsburg, where M. Louison was to meet his wife; and Mazzuolo resolved to conclude the business by a *coup de main*. He had learned from the postilion that the little post-house which was to form their next night's lodging was admirably fitted for a deed of mischief. It lay at the foot of a precipice, in a gorge of the mountains: the district was lonely, and the people rude, not likely to be very much disturbed, even if they did suspect the lady had come unfairly to her end. It was not, however, probable that the charcoal would be of any use on this occasion; the place was too poor to be well furnished with stoves;

so Karl was instructed in what he would have to do.

'When she is asleep,' said Mazzuolo, 'you must give her a blow on the head that will be sufficient to stun her. Then we will complete the job; and as we shall start early in the morning with Tina in female attire, they will never miss her.' Karl, as usual, made no objection; and when they arrived at night at the inn, which fully answered the description given, and was as lonely as the worst assassins could desire, the two men sallied forth to seek a convenient place for disposing of the body. Neither had they much difficulty in finding what they wanted: there was not only a mountain torrent hard by, but there was also a deep mysterious hole in a neighbouring field, that looked very much as if the body of the young traveller would not be the first that had found a grave there.

Every circumstance seemed to favour the enterprise; and all arrangements made, the two men returned to the house. Karl thought it was all over with him now. He was too timid to oppose Mazzuolo, and he had nobody to consult. Tina had found a weapon apt for the purpose, which she had already secured; and when they sat down to supper, considering the completeness of the preparations, nobody would have thought Adelaide's life worth six hours' purchase. However, she was not destined to die that night. Just as they had finished their supper, the sound of wheels was heard; then there was a great noise and bustle below; and Karl being sent down to inquire what was the matter, was informed that a large party of travellers had arrived; and as there

was a scarcity of apartments, it was hoped the lady and gentlemen would accommodate the strangers by allowing them to share theirs. Consent was inevitable; so, like the sultan's wife in the Arabian tale, the victim was allowed to live another day.

'Now,' said Mazzuolo, 'we have only two nights more before we reach Augsburg, so there must be no more shilly-shallying about the matter. If there is a stove in the room to-night, we may try that; though, if the house be in a pretty safe situation, I should prefer more decisive measures. The charcoal has failed once already.'

'That was from bad management,' said Tina; 'we could be secure against such an accident on another occasion. At the same time, if the situation be favourable, I should prefer a *coup de main*.'

When they had arrived at their night's station, the absence of a stove decided the question. It was merely a post-house, a place where horses were furnished; the accommodation was poor, and the people disposed to pay little attention to them. Close by ran a river, which obviated all difficulty as to the disposal of the body.

'The thing must be done to-night,' said Mazzuolo; and Karl said nothing to the contrary. He also feared that it must; for he did not see how he could avoid it. His aunt said everything necessary to inspire him with courage and determination, and made many promises of future benefits; whilst Mazzuolo neither doubted his obedience nor his resolution, and spoke of the thing as so entirely within the range of ordinary proceedings, that the boy, stupid

and ignorant, and accustomed, from the state of the country, to hear of bloodshed and murders little less atrocious committed by the soldiery, and neither punished nor severely condemned, felt ashamed of his own pusillanimity—for such his instinctive pity appeared to himself.

But as he stood opposite Madame Louison at supper, with his eyes, as usual, fixed upon her face, his heart involuntarily quailed when he thought that within a few hours he was to raise his hand against that beautiful head; yet he still felt within himself no courage to refuse, nor any fertility of expedient to elude the dilemma.

When supper was over, Tina desired Karl to bring up two or three pails of warm water, and several cloths, 'for,' said she 'it will do us all good to bathe our feet;' whereupon Adelaide requested one might be carried to her room, which was done by Karl. He was now alone with her, and it was almost the first time he had been so, except when they ran up the hill together, since the day they met. When he had set down the pail by her bedside, he stood looking at her with a strange expression of countenance. He knew that the water he had fetched up was designed for the purpose of washing away the blood that he was about to spill, and he longed to tell her so, and set her on her guard; but he was afraid. He looked at her, looked at the water, and looked at the bed.

'Well, Karl,' she said laughing, 'good-night. When we part the day after to-morrow, I shan't forget your services, I assure you.' The lad's eyes still wandered from her to the water and the bed,

but he said nothing, nor stirred, till she repeated her 'good-night,' and then he quitted the room in silence.

'Poor stupid creature!' thought Adelaide; 'he has scarcely as much intelligence as the horses that draw us.'

'Now we must have no bungling to-night, Karl,' said Mazzuolo; 'we will keep quiet till two o'clock, and then when everybody is asleep, we'll to business.'

'But what is it to be done with?' inquired Tina.

'There's something in the carriage under the seat; I brought it away the night we slept at Baireuth,' replied Mazzuolo; 'I'll step and fetch it;' and he left the room; but presently returned, saying that there were people about the carriage, and he was afraid they might wonder what he was going to do with so suspicious-looking an instrument. 'Karl can fetch it when they are gone to bed.'

As it was yet only midnight, Tina proposed that they should all lie down and take a little rest; and the suggestion being agreed to, she and her husband stretched themselves on their bed, whilst Karl made the floor his couch, and, favoured by his unexcitable temperament, was soon asleep, in spite of what was before him.

It was past two o'clock when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder. 'Come, be stirring,' said Mazzuolo; 'we must about it without delay—the house has been quiet for some time.'

Karl was a heavy sleeper, and as he sat up rubbing his eyes, he could not at first remember what he was awakened for, nor how he came to be upon the floor. 'Come,' said Mazzuolo, 'come, she's fast asleep; I have just been to her room to look at her. You

must step down now to the carriage and bring up the axe I left under the seat.'

Karl began to recollect himself, and awkwardly rising from his hard couch, shaking and stretching himself like a dog, he prepared to obey, indifferent to everything at the moment but the annoyance of being disturbed in his slumbers. 'If you should meet anybody,' said Mazzuolo, 'say that your mistress is ill, and that you are going to fetch the medicine-chest.'

By the time he got below, the motion and the cool air had aroused the lad, and with his recollection, revived his repugnance to the work before him; but he saw no means of avoiding it, and with an unwilling step he proceeded to the yard where the carriage stood, and having found the axe, he was returning with it, when he observed hanging against the wall, a large horn or trumpet. Now, he had seen such a thing at several of the post-houses on the road, and he remembered to have heard one sounded on the night they slept in the mountains, when the travellers arrived late, and prevented the projected assassination. Instinctively, and without pausing to reflect how he should excuse himself—for if he had, he could not have done it—he placed the instrument to his mouth, and lustily blew it: and then, terrified at his temerity, and its probable consequences, rushed into the house, and up the stairs, again to his master.

'The travellers' horn!' said Mazzuolo frantically. The lad was too frightened to speak, but stood still, pale and trembling. 'Wait,' continued the Italian; 'perhaps it may only be for horses, and they

may go on again. I hear the people stirring.'

Feet were indeed heard upon the stairs, and presently a lantern gleamed beneath the window. 'I hear no carriage,' observed Mazzuolo. And for some time they sat listening; but there being no appearance of any travellers, he said he would go below and see how matters stood.

'Nobody is yet arrived,' said the master of the post-house in answer to his inquiries; 'but doubtless the signal was given by the avant-courier, who has rode on to the next station; and the carriage will be here presently. We must be ready with the horses.' As the travellers, however, did not arrive, but continued to be expected, the postmaster and the postilions remained up to watch for them; and when four o'clock came, Karl was bidden go to bed, as nothing could be attempted under such circumstances.

'Now,' said Mazzuolo, on the following day, 'we sleep to-night at Meitingen, which is our last station. I know the place; it is too busy a house for a *coup de main*; we must try the charcoal again; but this time we must be sure of our game.'

Karl hoped there might be no stoves in the bed-chamber; but it was a well-furnished house, and there were. Adelaide said how glad she should be to have a fire again, she had suffered so much by the want of one, and desired Karl to light hers early. It appeared, however, that the servant of the house had already done it. Mazzuolo said: 'So much the better. The stove will get well heated, and when you put in the charcoal, there will be no danger of its not burning.' And Tina suggested that that should

not be done till just before Adelaide went to bed, lest she should perceive the effects of the vapour whilst she was undressing.

The young traveller had never, on her journey, been in such high spirits as to-night. Well she might; it had been so prosperously performed, and to-morrow she was to meet her husband. She prattled and laughed during supper with a light heart; expressed her gratitude to the Italians for their escort; and said that, if Monsieur Louison could be of any use to them, she knew how happy he would be to acknowledge their kindness to her. 'Really,' she said, 'travelling at such a period, with so many valuables, and such a large sum of money as I have with me, was a bold undertaking!'

Mazzuolo, during the first part of her speech, was beginning to weigh the advantages of the commissary's favour against the dangers and difficulties of the assassination—difficulties which had far exceeded his expectations, and dangers which were of course augmented by the proximity to Augsburg—but the latter part of it decided the question; the money and valuables preponderated in the scale, and the good opinion of the commissary kicked the beam.

Partly from the exaltation of her spirits, and partly because the day's journey had been a short one—for the stoppage at Meitingen was quite unnecessary, they were within four hours of Augsburg, and might very well have reached it—Adelaide was less fatigued and less willing to go to bed than usual. She sat late; and it was past twelve when, having asked for her candle,

Karl received the signal to go and prepare the stove. Mazzuolo followed him out, to see that the work was well done, and the charcoal ignited before she went to her room. When all was ready, her candle was put into her hand, and Mazzuolo having conducted her to the door, took the precaution of turning the key, which he afterwards put in his pocket. She rallied him on the strictness of his guardianship; but he alleged gravely that the house was a busy one, and she might perchance be disturbed if her door were not secured.

They listened till she was in bed, and then Mazzuolo said that they could not do better than go to bed too; 'for,' said he, 'the earlier we are off in the morning the better. There will be the fewer people up, and the less chance of her being missed.'

When Karl reached his room, he sat down on the side of his bed and reflected. He had observed that the last thing Mazzuolo had done before leaving Adelaide's chamber, was to see that the window was well closed. 'If I could open it,' thought he, 'to-morrow we shall be at Augsburg, and then I should not be told any more to kill her. I wish I could. They'll go away in the morning before she is awake, and so I should never be found out.' With this idea in his head, he went down stairs, and letting himself out, he crept round to the end of the house where her window was.

She slept on the first floor, and the difficulty was how to reach it; but this was soon overcome. In the stable-yard stood some high steps, used for the convenience of passengers when they mounted the wagons and diligences. These he carried to the spot,

and having reached the window, he was about to break some of the panes, since, as it fastened on the inside, he could not open it, when it occurred to him that the noise might wake her, and cause an alarm that would betray him. The window, however, was in the lattice fashion, and he saw that by a little contrivance, he could lift it off the hinges. He did so, and drew aside the curtain; there lay the intended victim in a sound sleep; so sound, that Karl thought he might safely step in without disturbing her. There she lay in her beauty.

He could not tell why, but, as he stood and looked at her, he felt that he *must* save her at all risks. The air he had let in might not be enough; he would take the charcoal from the stove and throw it out of the window; but what if she awoke with the noise and screamed? He hesitated a moment; but he remembered that this would be a safer plan than leaving the window open, as that might be observed in the morning from below, and he would thus be betrayed. So, as quietly as possible, he emptied the stove, and then, having sufficiently aired the room, he hung on the window again, and retired.

During the whole of these operations Adelaide had remained quite still, and appeared to be sound asleep. But was she? No. The opening of the window had awakened her: surprise and terror had at first kept her silent—a surprise and terror that were by no means diminished by discovering who the intruder was. Although she had always spoken kindly to Karl, and even endeavoured, by the amenity of her manner, to soften his rude

nature, she had from the first moment disliked him exceedingly, and felt his countenance most repulsive; so that, when she saw him entering her room through the window, she did not doubt that he was come for some very bad purpose, probably to rob her, although the booty he was likely to get was small, since her trunks, with all her valuable property, were nightly placed under Mazzuolo's care for safety. Still, the little money she carried in her purse, together with her rings and watch, would be a great deal to so poor a creature; and expecting to see him possess himself of these, she thought it more prudent to lie still and feign sleep, than to disturb him. But when she saw that all he came for was to take the fire out of the stove, she was beyond measure puzzled to conceive his motive. Could it be a jest? But what a strange jest! However, he did nothing else; he touched neither her money nor her watch, though both were lying on the table, but went away as empty-handed as he came.

The amazement and alarm that so extraordinary a visit necessarily inspired, drove sleep from her eyes, and it was not till the day dawned that she so far recovered her composure and sense of safety, as to close them in slumber. Then, however, fatigue got the better of her watchfulness, and she gradually sunk into a sound sleep.

In the meantime, Karl, whose unexcitable temperament insured him his night's rest even under the most agitating circumstances, was in a happy state of oblivion of the whole affair, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and heard his

uncle say: 'Come, come, rise, and make haste! The sun is up, and we must get the horses out and be off.'

Karl was as anxious to be off as anybody: the sooner the better for him; for if Adelaide should awake before they started, he, on the one hand, dreaded that he might incur his uncle's suspicion, and, on the other, that some new plot might be formed, which it would be impossible for him to evade; so, between the exertions of one and the other, the horses were out, the bill paid, and the carriage at the door, very soon after the sun had shown his broad disc above the horizon. Tina, in female attire and a veil, was handed down stairs by Mazzuolo; the waiter stood on the steps, and bowed, for the landlord was not yet up; they all three stepped into the carriage; the postilion cracked his whip, and away they drove rejoicing.

In the meantime, Monsieur Louison had become very uneasy about his wife. He had received no intelligence since she quitted Dresden; for although she had, in fact, written more than once, Mazzuolo had not forwarded the letters. Day after day he had waited in impatient expectation; till at length, unable to bear his suspense any longer, he resolved to start on the road she was to come, in the hope of meeting her. When he reached the gate called the Gozzinger, his carriage was stopped by a berlin containing two men and a woman. It was loaded with luggage; and thinking that this might be the party he expected, he jumped down, and put his head into the window of the berlin, to ascertain if his wife were there. She was not: so, with a bow and an apology,

he proceeded on his way. At Meitingen he stopped to change horses; and the first question that was asked him was, if he had seen a heavily-laden berlin, containing two men and a woman. On answering in the affirmative, he was informed that they had gone off with the property of a lady, whom they had left behind, and who was then in the inn; and in a moment more the young husband pressed his bride to his heart. But, eager to chase the thieves, they wasted no time in embraces, but started instantly in pursuit of them. On reaching the same gate where the berlin had been seen, the officers described in what direction the party had driven; and the police being immediately on the alert, the criminals were discovered and arrested just as they were on the point of starting for Vienna.

The ample confession of Karl disclosed the villainy of the Italians, and made known how narrowly the commissary had escaped the loss of his fair young bride; whilst, as he told his rude and simple tale, without claiming any merit, or appearing to be conscious of any, Adelaide learned that to this repulsive stupid clown she had three times owed her life.

The Italians were condemned to the galleys; whilst Monsieur Louison and his wife discharged their debt of gratitude to Karl, by first educating him, and then furnishing him with the means of earning his living with respectability and comfort.

De Monge was degraded from his situation, and the universal execration that pursued him drove him ultimately to America, where, under a feigned name, he ended his days in obscurity.

THE HOME-WRECK

A few years since I visited Devonshire, to make the acquaintance of some distant relations, whom circumstances had prevented me from before seeing. Amongst others, there was one who lived in a decayed family mansion about six miles east of the pretty town of Dartmouth. Before calling on her, I was prepared, by report, to behold a very aged and a very eccentric lady. Her age no one knew, but she seemed much older than her only servant—a hardy old dame, who, during the very month of my visit, had completed her ninety-ninth year.

The mistress never allowed any one to see her, save a young and interesting cousin of mine. She seldom went out except on Sundays, and then was carried to church in an old sedan-chair by a couple of labourers, who did odd jobs of gardening about the house. She had such an insuperable objection to be seen by anybody, whether at home or abroad, that she concealed her face by a thick veil.

These, with other particulars, were narrated to me by my cousin as we rode towards Coote-down Hall, in which the old lady resided, and which, with the surrounding estate, was her own property. On approaching it, signs of past grandeur and present decay presented themselves. The avenue leading to the house had evidently been thickly planted; but now only a few stumps remained to mark where noble and spreading elms once

had been. Having arrived at the house, my cousin reined up at the steps of the hall, upon which she, in a low cautious voice, desired me to alight. Having assisted her out of her saddle, I was about to utter some exclamation of surprise at the extreme dilapidation of the place, when she whispered me to be silent; adding, that I must not stir until she had returned from within, to announce whether my visit would be accepted or not.

During her absence, I had full leisure to look around and note the desolate condition of Coote-down. The lawn—thickly overspread with rank grass—could scarcely be distinguished from the fishpond, which was completely covered with water-weeds. The shrubbery was choked and tangled, whilst a very wide rent in the wall laid open to view an enclosure which had once been a garden, but was now a wilderness. For a time the sorrowful effect which all this decay produced on my mind was increased by the extreme solitude which reigned around. This, however, was presently relieved by a cackling sign of life which issued from a brood-hen as it flew from the sill of a side-parlour window. On casting my eyes further into the landscape, I also perceived a very fat cow lazily browsing on the rich pasture of a paddock.

On turning round to view the house, new tokens of desolation were visible. Its shattered casements and worm-eaten doors, with tufts of weed growing at each corner, showed that for many years the front of the mansion had not been inhabited or its doors opened. One evidence of fallen grandeur was highly

characteristic—over the porch the family-arms had been carved in stone, but was now scarcely distinguishable from dilapidation: a sparrow had established a comfortable nest in the mouth of the helmet, and a griffin 'rampant' had fallen from his place beside the shield, and tamely lay overgrown with weeds.

These observations were interrupted by the light step of my cousin, who came to inform me that the lady of the house, after much, persuasion, had consented to receive me. Conducting me to the back of the mansion, my fair guide took me through a dark passage into a sort of kitchen. A high and ample 'settle' stood, as is usual in farmhouses, before the hearth. In one corner of this seat reclined a figure bent with age, her face concealed by a thick veil. In the other corner was an old cheerful-looking woman, busily knitting, and mumbling rather than singing a quaint old ballad.

The mistress of Coote-down made a feeble attempt to rise when my cousin presented me; but I entreated her to keep her seat. Having procured a chair for my fellow-visitor (for the old domestic took not the smallest notice of us, but went on with her work as if we were not present), I established myself beside the hostess, and addressed to her a few common-place words of greeting. She replied in a voice far less feeble than I had expected to hear from so decrepit a person; but what she said was no answer to my salutation. She went on with surprising clearness, explaining to me the degree of relationship which we bore to each other, and traced my pedigree till it joined her own; continued

our mutual genealogy back to the Damnonii of Cornwall, hinting that our ancestors of that period were large mining proprietors, who sold tin to the Phoenicians! At first she spoke with doubt and hesitation, as if she feared to make some mistake; but the moment she got to where our branches joined—to the trunk, as it were, of our family-tree—she went on glibly, like child repeating a well-conned lesson. All this while the old attendant kept up the unceasing accompaniment of her ballad, which she must have sung through several times, for I heard the first line—

'A bailie's daughter, fair was she'— at least thrice.

Though I addressed several questions to my singular relation, she made no attempt to answer them. It seemed that what she had uttered was all she was capable of; and this, I learned afterwards, was partly true. Circumstances of her early life had given her a taste for family history, particularly that of her own, and her faculties, though otherwise impaired, still retained everything relating to what concerned her ancestry.

On our way back from this singular scene, my cousin remarked that it had saddened me. 'It would sadden you more,' she continued, 'were you to know the history of the domestic wreck we have just left behind.'

'That is precisely what I intended to inquire of you.'

'It is a deeply-affecting story; but'—and here the young lady blushed and hesitated—I think it would not be right in me to reveal it. I believe I am the only person existing who knows the truth; and the means by which I obtained my knowledge

would be deemed scarcely correct, though not perhaps exactly dishonourable.'

This avowal sharpened my curiosity, and I entreated her to say at least how she became possessed of the story.

'To that there can be no objection,' was the reply. 'In one of my rambles over the old house, I espied in a small escritoire a packet of letters bound up in tape, which was sealed at the ends. The tape had, however, been eaten by moths, and the letters liberated from it. Female curiosity prompted me to read them, and they gave me a full exposition of our great-aunt's early history.'

During the rest of my stay in that part of the country, I never failed to urge my cousin to narrate the events which had brought Coote-down to its present melancholy plight. But it was not till I called to take leave of her, perhaps for ever, that she complied. On that occasion, she placed in my hands a neatly-written manuscript in her own handwriting, which she said contained all the particulars I required. Circumstances have since occurred that render it not indelicate in me to publish the narrative, which I do with but little alteration.

In the middle of the last century the proprietor of Coote-down was Charles James Hardman, to whom the estate lineally descended from a long line of ancestors. He was from his youth a person of an easy disposition, who minded very little, so that he could follow his ordinary amusements, and could see everybody around him contented; though his habits were too indolent to improve the condition of his dependants by any efforts of his

own. At the age of twenty-five, he married the heiress of a baronet belonging to the northern side of the county. She was a beauty and a belle—a lady full of determination and spirit; consequently the very opposite to himself. She was, moreover, two years his senior. As was predicted by those who knew the couple intimately, the match was not productive of happiness, and they had been married scarcely a year and a half when they separated. It appeared that this unpleasant step was solely the fault of the wife; and her father was so incensed at her rash conduct, that he altered his will, and left the whole of his property to Hardman. Meanwhile, it was given out that the lady had brought her lord a son, and it was hoped that this event would prove a means of reconciling the differences which existed between them. Despite all entreaties, however, Mrs Hardman refused to return to her husband's roof.

Ten years passed, and she lived so completely in retirement, that she deprived herself even of the society of her child; for when the period of nursing was over, she sent him to Cootedown Hall, where he was educated. At the end of that period her father died; and, to her great disappointment, instead of finding herself uncontrolled mistress of a large fortune, she discovered it was so left, that unless she returned to her husband, she would be unable to benefit by it in the smallest degree. Mutual friends again interfered, and, after some difficulty, persuaded her to meet Hardman at her father's funeral, which she appeared to have no objection to attend. The happy result was that a reconciliation

took place, and she resumed her proper station as the lady of Coote-down Hall. It was, however, observed that before she returned, the little son was sent away to continue his education in a foreign seminary.

Privy to all these arrangements, and in fact the chief mover in them, was Hardman's attorney. Such was the squire's indolence of disposition, that to this individual he confided everything; not only the management of his estates, the receipt and payment of all monies, but the arrangement of his most secret transactions. But, Mr Dodbury bearing the character of a highly just and honourable man, no suspicion ever existed that he abused the absolute unbounded trust reposed in him in the slightest degree. Indeed, putting aside the native honesty of his character, his position in the district was so good, that it would have been very bad policy for him to jeopardise it by any abuse of the confidence reposed in him. Being the younger son of an ancient family, and a distant relation of Hardman, he was received in the best society. Dodbury was a widower, with an only daughter, an amiable and elegant girl. She was just budding into womanhood, when it was announced that the heir of Coote-down would shortly become of age, and that the event was to be celebrated with the utmost pomp. Many strange conjectures had for years been current to account for his being kept so long away from home; but they were partially silenced when it was known that the young man was on his way to his paternal roof.

Extensive preparations were made for his reception: all the

tenantry, not only of Coote-down, but those from the maternal estate near Ilfracombe, were invited to attend his debarkation at Dartmouth. The lawn, paddock, and parks were strewed with tents for their accommodation, and refreshments of the most expensive kind were provided without limit. Several distinguished and noble friends of both families were invited to join in the festivities; and though every corner of Coote Hall, as well as the surrounding farmhouses, were made available for sleeping-room, yet there was not a bed to be had in Dartmouth a week before the day named in the invitations 'for love or money.' It appeared that the neglect which had been shown to young Hardman for so many years was to be atoned by the magnificence of the fête to celebrate his return.

Dodbury's share in managing the affairs of the family had declined every day since Mrs Hardman's resumption of her proper position as his patron's wife. She was a woman of strong intellect, and perfectly able to superintend what had been before so much neglected by her husband. She had an ambitious spirit, and Dodbury doubted not that the grand reception-fête was organised for the purpose of carrying out some great project connected with her son.

The day of Herbert Hardman's arrival from France proved auspicious. It was a lovely day in the middle of June. When he landed at the village of Kingswear, opposite to Dartmouth, the fishermen saluted him with a discharge of all the firearms they could collect. His parents received him at the landing-place, his

mother embracing him with every outward and public mark of affection. A long cavalcade followed the carriage in which he was conducted to Coote-down Hall, consisting of the tenantry, headed by the most distinguished of his father's guests.

At the entrance of the domain, new tokens of welcome presented themselves. The gates were plentifully adorned with flowers, and at a turn of the thickly-wooded avenue, an arch of garlands was thrown across the path. The lawn was covered with lads and lasses from the surrounding farms, who, when Herbert appeared, set up a joyous cheer, whilst the drawing-room windows of the house were filled with ladies waving handkerchiefs.

The hall of the mansion was lined with servants, who obsequiously bowed as Herbert passed them. When he made his appearance in the drawing-room, there was almost a struggle amongst the ladies for the earliest honours of salutation. One maiden, however, stood apart, drinking in deeply the attestations of favour with which the heir of the estate was received, but too timid to share in, or to add to them. This was Miss Dodbury. The gentlemen, most of whom had accompanied Herbert from the landing-place, now joined the ladies; and Mr and Mrs Hardman entered the room amidst the hearty congratulations of their guests.

The fashionable dinner hour at that period was much earlier than at present, and but little time elapsed ere the important meal was announced. Mrs Hardman led forward a tall, handsome, but

somewhat haughty-looking girl, whom she introduced to her son as the Lady Elizabeth Plympton, desiring him to lead her to the dining-room. She attentively watched Herbert's countenance, to observe what effect the damsel's beauty would create on him; but to her disappointment she saw that her son received her with no more than the politeness of a young gentleman who had been educated in France.

Nothing occurred during the day worthy of remark. The usual toasts and sentiments were drunk at the dinner-table, and the usual excesses committed; for at that time it was thought a mark of low-breeding for a man to remain sober all the evening. Out-of-doors there were bullocks roasted whole, barrels of cider and butts of ale set constantly flowing, with dancing, cricket, and Devonshire skittles, and other country games and comforts for the amusement of the peasantry.

About a fortnight after the rejoicings had subsided, Mrs Hardman, while conversing with her son on his future plans and prospects, startled him by inquiring whether he had formed any attachment during his residence in Paris? The young man hesitated for a short time, and declared that he had not; upon which Mrs Hardman asked somewhat abruptly, what he thought of Lady Elizabeth Plympton?

'That,' returned Herbert, 'her ladyship is an extremely tall, handsome, proud girl, who would evidently glory more in breaking half-a-dozen hearts than in winning one.'

'Take care she does not break yours!' rejoined Mrs Hardman

playfully.

'There is little fear of that, mother.' Herbert was right. He had seen, one of humble pretensions, but of unbounded worth, for whom he began to feel already a more than ordinary sentiment.

Months rolled past, and Herbert began to find his position at home far from agreeable. His father had sunk into a mere nonentity through his mother's superior energy. Hence, in her hands rested the happiness or misery of all connected with the household. It soon became evident that her grand project was to effect a marriage between Lady Elizabeth Plympton and Herbert; and when she found no inducement could warm her son's heart towards that lady, her conduct altered. From being kind and indulgent, she was exacting and imperious: an old and scarcely natural dislike of her son seemed to be reawakened, and which she now took little pains to conceal. It was therefore to be expected that Herbert should spend as little of his time at home as possible. He became a frequent and welcome visitor to the happy and well-ordered house of the Dodburys.

The sharp eyes of the mother were not slow in detecting the attraction which drew Herbert so frequently to the lawyer's house. Though grievously disappointed, she was cautious. Nothing could be done at present; for, though her son was manifestly 'entangled,' yet no overt declaration had been made, and there was nothing to act upon. She had the worldly foresight to know that opposition was food and fuel to a secret attachment, and abstained from giving grounds for the belief that so much

as a suspicion lurked in her mind. In this way months rolled on, Herbert becoming more and more captivated. On the other hand, Miss Dodbury had striven against a passion with which *she* also had become inspired. Her father discouraged it, though tenderly and indirectly. It was a delicate matter for a man to interfere in, as no open disclosure had been made from either party; but this embarrassment, felt equally by the proud mother of the lover, and the considerate father of the girl, was speedily but accidentally put an end to.

An equestrian party had been formed to see, from Berry-head, a large fleet which had been driven by a recent storm into Tor Bay. Mrs Hardman had purposely invited Catherine Dodbury, that she might observe her son's conduct towards that young lady, and extract from it a sufficient ground for taxing him openly with a preference for her over the belle she had chosen. It was a lovely day, and the party was all life and gaiety, as almost all such parties are; for nothing tends to raise the spirits so effectually as equestrian exercise.

Herbert laughed and chatted with the rest of the ladies, and seemed to pay no more attention to Catherine than was due to her as the belle of the party, which she was universally acknowledged to be. As, however, they passed over the drawbridge of the fort, built on the terminating point of the little promontory, they were obliged to dismount. Herbert offered Catherine his arm, and Mrs Hardman narrowly watched them. Her son said a few words in a low tone, which caused the colour to mount into the young lady's

cheek; the listener overheard her reply—'Mr Hardman, it can, it must never be!' and withdrawing her arm from his, entered the fort unsupported. These words at once pleased and displeased the ambitious mother. The girl evidently did not encourage her son's suit—that favoured the Lady Elizabeth project; 'but,' thought Mrs Hardman, drawing herself up to her full height, 'does a lawyer's daughter reject the heir of the Hardmans?'

The truth is, Hardman, the night before, had declared his love; it was on the drawbridge that he pressed her to give him hopes; but her reply repressed rather than encouraged them.

The servants had brought the horses into the fort, that, mounted, the spectators might see over the ramparts the noble scene which lay before them to greater advantage. The fleet consisted of a number of merchant vessels, with a convoy of king's ships, which were just preparing to sail out of the bay. When the men-of-war had spread their canvas and begun to move, a salute was fired, quite unexpectedly by the visitors, from the fort. Catherine's horse immediately took fright, and darted across the drawbridge with the speed of lightning. Herbert lost not a moment; but spurring his own steed, galloped away, taking a circuitous route, lest the clattering of his own horse's hoofs should impel Catherine's to run the faster. On she sped, and as long as she remained within sight, her friends trembled lest some frightful catastrophe should happen. Presently she darted out of view. Herbert, meanwhile, galloped to meet her, and at last succeeded; but, alas! When it was too late to render any

assistance. On coming up, he found both the horse and its rider prostrate, the latter motionless and insensible. He lifted her from the ground, and took her into a neighbouring house. The usual restoratives were applied without effect, and it was not till a surgeon appeared and bled the patient that any signs of animation returned. It was discovered that the right arm and three of the ribs on the left side were fractured. It was necessary that the utmost quiet should be observed, lest any further and more dangerous injury might, unknown to the medical man, have taken place.

Though, therefore, the whole party assembled near the house, they were not allowed to enter it. Herbert insisted upon remaining with the father, despite Mrs Hardman's repeated strictures on the impropriety of his doing so.

Scarcely a week had elapsed, after the accident already recorded, ere it became a matter of gossiping notoriety that the young squire of Coote-down had fallen in love with the lawyer's daughter. In truth, he had not stirred from the vicinity of the cottage in which Catherine lay, that he might get the earliest information from the medical attendants concerning her condition. From day to day, and sometimes from hour to hour, he watched with intense anxiety. The symptoms improved daily; the anguish caused by the fractures having subsided, the patient was in progress of slow, but to all appearance, certain recovery.

Mrs Hardman now had sufficient cause to ground a strong opposition to the match her son was endeavouring to make. She spoke to her husband; but he, good easy man, could not, he

said, see any objection to the alliance. She was of their kindred, and although poor, would doubtless make an excellent wife. The imperious and disappointed lady next applied to Dodbury. She placed before him the inequality in the position of Herbert and his daughter, and was very vehement in her arguments against the marriage.

'Your fears, madam,' said Dodbury calmly, 'are at least premature. However passionately your son may express himself in reference to my daughter, she, I know, feels what is due to herself, as well as to Mr and Mrs Hardman. She would never consent to become a member of a family in which she would not be cordially received. Besides, I have yet to learn that she reciprocates the attachment which you say Mr Herbert evinces for her.'

The correct light in which Dodbury thus considered the matter, induced Mrs Hardman to change her policy. After complimenting the lawyer and Catherine for their honourable forbearance, she went on to say that she unhappily had but little influence over her son. 'Would *you*, therefore, endeavour to point out to him the folly of his persistence in following a young lady whom he can never marry?' Dodbury promised to do so, and the lady departed so well pleased with the interview, that she wrote to Lady Elizabeth Plympton, inviting her to spend the ensuing month at Coote-down.

That day, after hearing the most favourable report of Catherine's recovery which had yet been made, Dodbury invited

Herbert to dine with him. After the cloth was removed, the subject of the morning's conversation with Mrs Hardman was introduced. Herbert stammered and blushed: he was not prepared to talk about it just then, and endeavoured to change the topic more than once; but Dodbury kept to the point, till Herbert owned, in fervent and glowing words, that Catherine had completely won his heart, and that he would rather die than be forced into a match with another woman.

'All which,' replied the matter-of-fact man of parchment, 'is very spirited and romantic, no doubt. But let us look at the affair with calm and clear eyes. You profess to love my child with strong and unquenchable passion?'

'Profess! Do you doubt me?'

'I do not doubt that you are perfectly in earnest *now*; but my knowledge of mankind forbids my putting much faith in the endurance of the sort of feeling with which you profess—I cannot give up the word, you see—to be inspired. My child, so says the world, is beautiful—very beautiful. Yours may be a mere passion for her beauty.'

'You wrong me,' replied the young man; 'I have known and admired her long enough to appreciate her intrinsic worth. Her image is as dear to me as my own life'

Dodbury bent on his young friend a long and earnest look of inquiry. He was a good reader of human nature. He saw that, as the lover spoke, his eye lightened with enthusiasm, his lips quivered with emotion, his cheeks glowed with blushes. 'I have

little faith in these violent emotions,' thought the wary man of the world, as he leaned back in his easy-chair for a moment's reflection. 'Fierce flames burn out quickly. This affair surrounds me with difficulties.'

About a month after Miss Dodbury's complete recovery, her father opened the same topic gradually and delicately to her. Catherine had scarcely nurtured a thought which she had not confided to her father; being her only parent, she looked up to him as the directing source of all her actions. He was 'the king of her narrow world.' In discussing this matter, therefore, though overwhelmed with a maiden shame, she was not reserved. From what she said, the sorrowing father gathered that her maiden affections *were* twined around a man whom her own innate propriety and pride, not to include other obstacles, should prevent her from marrying. This disclosure gave Dodbury great pain. He determined to use more vigilance, caution, and prudence, than ever. His obvious course was to bring about, if possible, a reconciliation to the match with Mrs Hardman; but he refrained. The purity of the young lover's sentiments had yet to be tried. Time, he determined, should put that to the test.

Meanwhile, Lady Elizabeth had accepted Mrs Hardman's invitation. She and Herbert Hardman were constantly thrown together; and it was manifest, after a time, that despite the almost studied neglect with which he treated her ladyship, she entertained a strong feeling in his favour. This Mrs Hardman endeavoured by every means in her power to induce Herbert to

reciprocate; but in vain—the attraction of Catherine Dodbury was too powerful. It must be owned, however, that his vanity *was* a little flattered by the haughty beauty condescending to feel a sentiment for him.

This state of things was too equivocal and uncertain to last. Catherine strove, as long and as firmly as maiden could strive, against her love; whilst Herbert fed his by every sort of attention it was possible to evince. At length Dodbury felt the necessity of some strong measure. He perceived that consent to the match was less likely than ever, since the tender regard which Lady Plympton had evinced. He, therefore, after a long interview with Mrs Hardman, penned a kind note to Herbert, in which he, with every expression of regret for the step he felt bound to take, forbade him his house, or any further communication with his daughter.

Though long anticipated, this was a bitter blow, Catherine strove not to check the master-feeling which had now taken possession of her whole thought and being, for she knew that was impossible; but, in the purity of her heart, she felt she could love on—more tranquilly, more calmly, now that all hope was abandoned, than when it was nursed in suspense. Deprived of Herbert's presence, she would love him as an imagined, ever-remembered being—an abstraction, of which, the embodiment was dead to her for ever. With this *new said* consolatory sensation she determined, without a tear, never to encounter his real presence again. She wrote him a note to that effect, and,

accompanied by her father, went immediately to London.

Herbert was frantic. He upbraided his mother with unfilial earnestness. He appealed to his father, who consoled him by saying he was sorry that, as he always left these matters to his mother's management, he could not interfere; adding, that so far as he was a judge, the Lady Elizabeth Plympton was an uncommonly fine young woman.

After calm consideration, Herbert made up his mind as to what he should do. The estate was entailed; that made him comparatively independent; and he would endeavour, as well as his impetuous passion would allow, to live on in the hope that at length his mother would give her consent, and that Catherine would retract her determination. In pursuance of this plan, he apologised to his mother for his previous wrath, and treated Lady Elizabeth, during the remainder of her visit, with politeness; but it was a studied, constrained, and ironical sort of courtesy, which pained the unoffending but humbled beauty much more than overt rudeness. When the young lady was about to depart, he surprised his mother by the gallant offer of accompanying her and their visitor to her father's, near Plymouth.

These favourable symptoms Mrs Hardman reported to Dodbury, who, seeing his daughter's perfect resignation, thought it might be not imprudent to return home, especially as young Hardman was to remain at the Earl of Plympton's for a few weeks. He, however, carefully concealed the apparent attachment of Lady Elizabeth from his daughter. Accordingly they returned

to their home, Catherine appearing but a slight degree saddened and changed in spirit. A feverish languor, however, of which she neglected to complain or to ask medical advice for, was making inroads on her health.

Mrs Hardman, after staying a week at the earl's, returned, congratulating herself on the seeming change which was gradually creeping over her son's sentiments. She allowed him to remain a month unquestioned; but after that time, family matters required Herbert's presence at Coote-down, and she wrote, desiring him to come home. To her surprise, her letter was returned unopened, franked by the earl. Herbert must have left Plympton Court then, and would doubtless be home in the course of the day.

But that day passed, and another, and another, yet no tidings of Herbert. Mr Hardman now became alarmed, and wrote. The answer was, that his son had started for Coote-down that day-week! Inquiries were set on foot in all directions. Every house was sent to at which the young man was known to visit. Advertisements were circulated throughout the country, and afterwards published in the London newspapers, for tidings of Herbert Hardman, but without effect. The most distressing fears were apprehended respecting his fate. His parents were distracted; and the only conjecture which could be formed was, that as war had just broken out with America, he had been kidnapped by a press-gang for the sea-service.

This was a last hope, and Hardman hung upon it as upon

life. He wrote to the Admiralty, and, starting for Plymouth, made every inquiry likely to settle the doubt. Alas! though press-gangs had been busy at their oppressive work, no such name as Hardman had been returned as having been one of their victims. The conviction slowly stole over him, that some fatal accident or rash determination had ended Herbert's term of life. The dislike of her son, of which Mrs Hardman had been suspected, now melted completely away into the fondest affection for his memory. She, however, did not entirely abandon the hope of seeing him again.

What, however, of Catherine all this while? Alas! a misfortune had overtaken her, in the midst of which the mysterious disappearance of Herbert had not reached her. While in London, she, by some unknown means, had contracted that fatal disease, then violently raging in the metropolis—the small-pox. For months her life was despaired of, and of course all knowledge of the absence of Herbert was kept from her.

Mr Hardman grieved to that excess, that he gradually sunk into the grave. His funeral was a melancholy spectacle, for all knew the cause of his demise. His good easy disposition made him extensively regretted. Mrs Hardman's native strength of mind, however, kept her up amidst her double loss. She found a great consolation in assiduously attending Catherine's sick-bed. Misfortune had schooled every particle of pride from her breast, and she was a prey to remorse. She accused herself—not indeed entirely without justice—of having caused the miseries, the

effects of which she was now suffering. 'Would,' she exclaimed to Dodbury one day, 'I could recall the past!'

Catherine's recovery was protracted; and, alas! when she appeared in public, it was perceived that the disease had robbed her of her brightest charms. Her face was covered with unsightly marks. Still, the graceful figure, the winning smile, the fascinating manner, remained; and few, after the first shock of the change had passed away, missed the former loveliness of the once beautiful Catherine. A year passed. By slow and cautious hints and foreshadowings, the truth was revealed; but Miss Dodbury bore all with resignation. 'It is perhaps better for me,' she one day said to Mrs Hardman, 'that it is so. Had he loved and wedded another, I dared no longer to have cherished his image as I do. But now it is my blessed privilege to love him in spirit as dearly as ever.'

The hitherto proud, tearless woman of the world wept a flood when unconsciously, innocently, Catherine spoke of the lost Herbert. On one such occasion she threw herself on the girl's neck, exclaiming, 'Oh, what have I done! what have I done!'

Mrs Hardman never spent a day apart from Catherine. What a change of feeling one short year had wrought! Formerly, she looked on the girl as a bar to her ambitious projects; now, she could not lavish love and kindness enough to satisfy her sentiment of atonement towards the same being. One evening they were walking in that part of the park which overlooks the sea, when a sail appeared in the horizon, then another, and another. The

sight of ships never failed to remind the mother of her son; for the presentiment regarding his disappearance never forsook her. 'Dearest Catherine,' she exclaimed, 'would that one of those sails were wafting him back to us.' The girl trembled, and Mrs Hardman begged forgiveness for an involuntary allusion which deeply affected her companion. 'But I *must* be forgiven for telling you that I cannot, will not, abandon every hope of seeing him again. If you knew the pictures of happiness I sometimes draw, in which you and he are the chief actors, I am sure they would please instead of paining you. I sometimes fancy him returned; I go through in imagination your marriage; I feel a real delight in fancying myself placing your hand in his at the altar; I'— Here the speaker was interrupted. Her companion, clasping her suddenly for support, had, overcome with emotion, fainted in her arms!

From that day Mrs Hardman forbore all allusion to her lost son.

That summer went by, and grief had made such inroads on Mrs Hardman's mind, that her health gradually declined. Catherine also was weaker than she had ever been for a continuance previous to her last illness. Besides the disfigurement the disease had made in her countenance, grief had paled her complexion and hollowed her cheek. Yet she kept up her spirits, and was a source of unfailing consolation to Mrs Hardman, who gradually weaned her from her father's house to live entirely at Coote-down, where Dodbury also spent every hour he could spare from business. He had recovered all his

lost influence in the family affairs, and was able, by his good management, to avert from the estate the embarrassments with which his fair client's former extravagances had threatened it. Mrs Hardman was now gradually becoming a rich woman.

Ere the winter arrived, she expressed a wish to pay a visit to her late father's attorney, who lived at Barnstable. Dodbury offered to accompany her; but she declined this civility. She wished to go alone. There was something mysterious in this journey. 'What could its object be?' asked the lawyer of his daughter. 'Surely, if Mrs Hardman require any legal business to be transacted, I am the proper person to accomplish it.' Catherine was equally ignorant, and the mistress of Coote-down was evidently not inclined to enlighten her.

The journey was commenced. 'I shall return in a fortnight,' said Mrs Hardman. 'Should anything occur requiring my presence earlier, pray ride or send off for me.' These were her parting words. They did not surprise Catherine, for well she knew that an irrepressible presentiment kept possession of the mother's mind that the lost son would one day return. There was not a morning that she rose from her pillow, but the expectation of seeing her son before sunset existed in her mind.

Mrs Hardman had been away a week. Catherine had removed to her father's house, and was preparing to sit down to sew, as was her custom, when her father, returning from the office adjoining, brought her a letter. 'It is very odd,' he remarked, 'but amidst my business communications I find this epistle addressed to you.

See, it is marked "sailor's letter." I imagine it must be intended for one of the servants.'

Catherine made no reply; a presentiment darted into her mind. Usually a quiet, calm girl, her nature seemed suddenly to have changed. She snatched the letter from her father's hand, tore it open, looked at the signature, and fell into his arms in an agony of emotion. Absorbed by her painful struggles, Dodbury overlooked the cause of them; and Catherine, with one intense, overwhelming thought burning within her, placed the letter before him. She tried to speak, but the agony of joy which she felt choked her. The father read the signature; it was 'Herbert Hardman!'

The reaction came, and Catherine for a time was calm. She said she could listen to the contents of the letter; and Dodbury began to peruse it. Hardman was alive and well; and a new tide of emotion gushed forth from the panting listener. With the ardent impulse of a pious heart, she sunk upon her knees, and uttered a fervent thanksgiving to the universal Protector. It was long ere she could hear more. There might be something behind—some dreadful qualification to all the rapture with which her soul was flooded. This thought was insupportable, and as Dodbury saw that his child *must* hear the whole, he read the epistle word for word. It was a strange narrative.

When Herbert left Plympton Court, he determined to stay a night at Plymouth. Walking on a place called Britain Side, near the quay, he was unexpectedly seized by a press-gang.

They hurried him on board the tender, lying off Cat-down; and immediately draughted him to a small frigate, which was to sail the next morning, as part of a convoy to some Indian ships. Accordingly, they sailed. The frigate was commissioned to drop dispatches at Gibraltar, and arriving off that place she was obliged to lag some miles behind, to fulfil her orders. After having done so, and made all sail to rejoin the convoy, she was attacked by a Barbary rover of superior strength, was beaten, most of the crew captured, and conveyed into port. They were taken to the market-place, and sold as slaves. Herbert described these extraordinary events as occurring so rapidly, that it was not till he was established with his purchaser—a man of some property, who lived on an estate at the edge of the Sahara desert—that he had time to reflect on them. Hoping that some of the officers or crew had escaped, and would take means to ransom him, he worked on from day to day for a whole year. At last an Egyptian merchant came to visit his master, to whose servant Herbert entrusted a letter, addressed to the British consul at Alexandria. This letter was fortunately delivered, and after a time, his liberty was procured. The moment he got on board ship he wrote the epistle which was now being so eagerly devoured.

Dodbury sent instantly to Mrs Hardman such a letter as was calculated to break the news not too abruptly to her. *No* time was mentioned for Herbert's arrival, so that suspense and some degree of uncertainty tempered the joy both father and daughter felt in making this communication.

Dodbury busied himself in corresponding with the navy-office to obtain Herbert's release from the service; but to his mortification, a reply arrived, stating, as was announced before, that no such name was in the books. It was, however, added, that a person entered as 'H. Hard' was pressed on the identical day that Herbert was, and it was suggested that his name may have been misspelled. That, however, remained to be seen.

By the time Mrs Hardman arrived at Coote-down, a second letter, addressed to her, had come from her son. It was dated 'off Havre,' and mentioned the probable time of his reappearance in England. The mother's joy was intense; yet the news had not fallen like a shock upon her, as upon Catherine. Holding fast by the daily hope that her son *would* some day reappear, the event was vaguely expected. Hence she was filled with unalloyed delight. All the old gaiety and pride of her disposition returned, and her first thoughts were expended on plans for once more receiving her son—now, by right of inheritance, the possessor of Coote-down—with a splendour to exceed that which welcomed him from France on attaining his majority. *Nor* was Catherine for a moment forgotten. Every particular of the nuptials was sketched out, and every preliminary prepared. Never were two minds so filled with happiness.

Dodbury started off a little before the time Herbert was to arrive at Portsmouth. On arriving in London, he endeavoured to pave the way for Herbert's discharge, by clearing up the mistake about the name. Luckily, Lord Plympton held office, and a

note from him to the proper authorities was of great service. How eagerly were the lawyer's letters to Coote-down looked for by its inmates! The first announced that, thanks to Lord Plympton's influence, everything had been arranged, and that, on producing Herbert, and proving him to be the representative of the name 'Hard' found in the list of seamen, his discharge would be granted. The second letter was dated Portsmouth. Herbert had arrived! He was much browner than heretofore, but more robust and manly. His manners had altered most: from bordering on the polite and finical, adversity and rough usage had made them more direct and blunt. The third communication was from London, and stated that the Earl of Plympton had insisted on Herbert making his lordship's house his home. Nothing could exceed the friendly warmth with which he had been received by the whole family, especially by the Lady Elizabeth. After some difficulty, the discharge was obtained, and the letter concluded by actually fixing a day for Herbert's appearance in the hall of his fathers.

The vastness of Mrs Hardman's preparations were equal to the greatness of her joy. The scene of the former reception was to be enacted over again, but with additional splendour.

The time came, and with it the long-lost son. Mrs Hardman met him on the hall steps, and clasped him in her arms with a fondness she had never evinced before. But he was impatient. There was another being whom he longed to fold in his arms. Mrs Hardman conducted him, impelled by impatience,

into her dressing-room, where Catherine waited, trembling and expectant. Herbert rushed forward and clasped her in an embrace which seemed to pour forth an age of long-suppressed and passionate affection. The mother looked on in silent delight. She seemed to share in the lovers' slightest emotion.

The first raptures having subsided, Herbert gazed upon the face of his mistress. At the first glance he would have started back, had not the firm affection of Catherine's embrace detained him. From the most vivid signs of love and hope fulfilled, his countenance altered to an expression of doubt and disappointment. 'Catherine?' he said in a tone of inquiry—'*my* Catherine?'

'Yes,' replied the mother sorrowfully. 'But how changed,' replied Herbert somewhat abruptly; 'how very much changed!'

A mass of thought and recollection, a revulsion of feeling, passed through Catherine's brain; but tears burst forth to relieve her. Herbert gradually released her from his embrace, and his mother stepped forward to support her. She gazed steadfastly at her son, and read in his countenance a presage which she dreaded to interpret. After a time Hardman withdrew to receive the congratulations of the guests, amongst the foremost of whom were Lord and Lady Elizabeth Plympton. He had scarcely closed the door, ere Mrs Hardman placed her weeping charge gently in a chair, and sat beside Catherine, holding her hands to her bosom.

At this moment Dodbury entered to share his daughter's joy. But what a reverse was here! Tears, silence, despondency. He

was amazed, disappointed; and anxiously inquired the cause. 'My son,' said Mrs Hardman calmly, 'was a little shocked at Catherine's altered appearance. Doubtless, when his first emotions of surprise are over, all the happiness we anticipated will be realised.' But she mistrusted her own thoughts: a dark presentiment had cast its shadow over her mind.

That night was spent in festivity, in which Catherine was too ill to join. She retired to her chamber, not to give way to unavailing grief, but to fortify her mind against the worst. Mrs Hardman's duties as hostess could not be neglected, and she mixed with her guests with the dignified affability of former years. In watching her son's proceedings, she had frequent occasion to bewail a coarseness and impetuosity of manner, which had doubtless been imbibed from his recent adventures. His attentions to Lady Elizabeth were as incessant and warm as on a similar occasion they were cold and distant. When the guests were retiring, he asked in a careless tone, 'By the by, mother, what has become of Catherine?'

The answer to this question implied an accusation of cruelty in the interview with Catherine. This brought a retort from Herbert, that time was when Mrs Hardman pleaded another's cause. 'True,' replied the mother, 'but since I have known Catherine's unmatched excellence, I have grievously repented that I ever contemplated *that* alliance. Tell me, Herbert, at once, and honestly, have your feelings changed towards Catherine?'

'When I left her she was beautiful,' was the reply; 'now she is!—'

'You need not finish the sentence,' rejoined Mrs Hardman. 'I see it all, and will urge you no further: our household's happiness is wrecked.'

The sorrowing lady sought Catherine's chamber. She took her in her arms, exclaiming, 'Catherine, we are women, but we must act like men.' A flood of mingled tears relieved the dreadful emotions which agitated the wretched pair. One moment's consideration showed them the worst—a future of hopeless despair. Hardman's love *was*, then, a mere fitful passion, lit up by Catherine's former surpassing beauty.

Upon her face and form, with their matchless loveliness, his fancy had fed since his banishment; his imagination, rather than his heart, had kept her image constantly before him. But when he beheld her in reality, so different from the being his memory-dreams had lingered over, his passion received a sudden check. When he beheld her pallid cheek, there was no heart-love to tell him it was grief for him which had hollowed and blanched her beauteous face. His lightly-based passion all but extinguished, instead of soothing the misfortune which the ravages of disease had brought upon her, gradually became colder and colder. In two months after his return the final blow was struck, and Herbert Hardman became the husband of the Lady Elizabeth Plympton!

From the day of the nuptials, Catherine Dodbury covered her face with a thick black veil, and no mortal had ever seen her face, except her faithful domestic, to the day of her death. She and

Mrs Hardman retired to a distant part of the country, to leave the bride and bridegroom in undisturbed possession of the estate. Mrs Hardman did not long survive her son's marriage. On her death, it was discovered that all the property at her disposal she had left to her son—to be enjoyed after his death by Catherine—who, the testatrix never doubted, when she executed the will (for which purpose she made her solitary journey to Barnstable), would, if ever he reappeared, become Herbert's wife.

But how fared the married pair?

At first they lived happily enough; but, when the enthusiasm of love was over, other excitements were sought. They removed to London. Herbert became wildly dissipated, and his wife habitually expensive. The estate was soon impoverished, trees cut down, and the whole steeped in mortgages. Crime succeeded. By a legal juggle, Catherine was deprived of her reversionary rights; and when every penny was gone, the wretched Hardman ended his days in a debtor's prison. His wife followed him, leaving no child to inherit the estates.

Catherine had, during all this while, lived with her father till his decease, which took place just before that of Herbert. She then removed to Coote-down, which had come into her possession, failing nearer heirs—her father having been a cousin two degrees removed from the late Mr Hardman, senior. There she had lived on for years, without any attempt to improve the ruined property, and in the seclusion in which I saw her at my visit.

Such is the history of the 'Home-wreck,' whose effects I witnessed in my visit to Coote-down. Since then, however, things have materially changed. A very short time ago, I received notice that the heroine of the above events had sunk into the grave, leaving most of her property to my cousin and fascinating cicerone, who is now happily married. By this time the estate has resumed its former fertility, and the house some of its past grandeur.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

A TALE OF THE SIOUX INDIANS

BY PERCY B. ST JOHN

In the very centre of one of the thickest and heaviest woods of the American continent, where now stands a busy manufacturing town, there was, some forty years ago, an Indian camp occupied by a small band of the wild and warlike Sioux. They were not more than fifty in number, having visited the spot merely for the purpose of hunting, and laying in a store of provisions for the winter. It chanced, however, that, coming unexpectedly upon certain Assineboins, who also were outlying in the woods, following the exciting duty of the chase, a quarrel ensued, ending in a bloody contest, in which the Sioux were victorious. With rude tents pitched, without order or method, in an open glade of the forest, with horses tethered around, and little dusky imps fighting with the lean dogs that lay lolling their tongues lazily about, there was yet a picturesque air about the place and its extraneous features, which would have captivated the eye of one in search of nature's sunshiny spots. Deeply embosomed within

the autumnal tinted wood, a purling spring that burst from the green slope of a little mound was the feature which had attracted the Indians to the locality. Rank grass had once covered the whole surface of this forest meadow, but this the cattle had closely cropped, leaving a sward that would have rivalled any European lawn in its velvety beauty, and that, falling away before the eye, became inexpressibly soft as it sunk away in the distance.

The setting sun, gilding and crowning the tree tops in wreathed glory, was gradually paling behind the heavy belt of forest that enclosed the Sioux camp; the animals, both plumed and four-footed, that filled the woods, were seeking their accustomed rest; the squaws were busily engaged in preparing for their expected husbands their evening meal, just as a long line of grim and painted warriors issued from the shelter of the trees. A loud cry from the urchins that squatted round the purlieus of the camp, with a growl of friendly recognition from the ragged dogs, brought the women to the entrance of the camp.

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