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THE MILL HAND'S PLEA.

"Give me labor and the light!" Cried one, gaunt and weary handed, Sorrow worn and trouble branied. "Spare me vigil and the night!" Oh, for midday's honeyed balm! Oh, the welcome crash and rattle Of the noontime toll and battle! Oh, the inner strength and calm! Soul of mine, what seest thou Ere the evening thread thou breakest In the warp and woof thou makest? While the sweat hangs on thy brow? Naught indeed of vain complaint, Naught of care and care unproven 'Mid the web deep interwoven, Till thy toil doth make thee faint. Only mute and tireless threads Running out and in together— Seers that prophesy not whether Foul or fair be overhead. Give me labor and the light! 'Tis to tell a sure forgetting Of life's fretting and regretting. Spare me vigil and the night! —Frank Walcott Hunt in Boston Transcript.

A SPECTER.

"I don't think I am more superstitious than the general run of men, and I know I am no believer in this table waiting, wall tapping sort of spiritualism, but I did once run across a queer thing not to be explained on natural grounds." This was said by the tall man in gray tweed and smoking cap as the train drew out of the station. The party in the smoker bound for the Windy City was good for all night and ready to be amused, so pleas for the story suggesting the opening words were put forth, with this result: As most of you know, I am a native of England, and for seven or eight years of my early manhood served in the royal navy as lieutenant. In 1866 I sailed in the Princess Alice, where I first became acquainted with a young fellow a little older than myself, named, or I shall call him, Freeman Lovelace. While I cannot say I ever conceived any real affection for him, we became rather good friends as such friendships go. He was clever, full of good stories, had seen much of life, though perhaps too much of its worse side, and was well liked by all on board. He was just the sort of man that women love to infatuate and throw themselves away on, and from what he would sometimes in confidential words let drop I fancied he was pretty much entangled in half a dozen different directions ashore. When we left on the cruise I am going to tell you of, I thought that he seemed to have something on his mind, and once I saw him tear up some letters he had and heard him murmur several times, "Poor girl, poor girl!" But this unwonted seriousness wore away in a week or two, and I thought nothing more of it. But one night when he and I had just parted for the night and I had started for my cabin he called me back. "Trescott," he said, "did a woman pass you just now?" I looked at him in amazement. We were 300 miles from any woman, and he knew it. "A woman?" I echoed. "Why, how should a woman come aboard the Princess Alice?" "Oh, all right," he answered lightly, although I could now see by the hinculce lamp that his face was singularly colorless. "It must have been imagination that made me think I saw some one in woman's dress steal out of the shadow of the mast there. Good night!" We were to touch at Gibraltar, Malaga and Barcelona as we entered the Mediterranean, and it was at the first of these ports that the next of the extraordinary events I have to relate took place. We had passed the mighty fortress and lay at anchor near the town when Lovelace and I got leave to go ashore for a couple of hours. As we passed along a street lined with houses closely shuttered, as it was noontide, I observed a woman standing half concealed by the pillars of a church. I was just about to call the attention of my companion to the fact that she seemed to be an English woman and that her quiet English costume seemed out of place in this essentially foreign town when I saw him start back and turn pallid. I caught him, thinking him faint, but soon saw that it was unmistakable terror I detected on his face. The woman was in black, and in London would have been taken for a sort of superior working woman, probably the forewoman in a mantua making establishment. But what struck me as strange was the fact of the unusual intensity of her gaze fixed immovably on Lovelace, and that she held her hand to her throat in a way that concealed it from view. In another moment Lovelace seemed to rally and started forward with a cry of "Lucy, you here!" on his lips. But as my eyes went from him back to the spot not 30 feet away, where the girl had stood, I saw that she was gone. My companion now became excited. "Where did she go?" he asked. I was as much puzzled as he, for it was hardly possible that she could in that mere moment of time have gained one of the adjacent houses or have gone down the street unseen by us. Indeed in both directions there was no one in sight. There was only the church, but on our entering we were confronted by a priest speaking very fair English who assured us that no one had entered the edifice within the last hour. I was, as I have said, puzzled by this, but thought nothing of any supernatural element it might have. Lovelace, on the contrary, returned at once to the ship and for days secluded himself from all companionship. When we reached Malaga, he did not wish to go ashore, but the commander of the ship detailed him, together with three others, to carry a dispatch to the consul at that port. I remained aboard, but on the others returning I heard what was designated as a queer story on Lovelace.

It seemed that he, with the rest of the party, stopped on the street to buy some fruit, when all at once the fruit seller's little child cried out in terror something about a woman in black that was standing just back of Lovelace. All looked around, but could see nobody there, and they went on choosing the fruit, when the child gave another still louder shriek and fell down. Its mother picked it up, and the little fellow clung to her, sobbing out that the woman had taken her hand from her throat, and that it was all bloody. As there was plainly no such woman about, the other young officers would have laughed at the child's fancy, but Lovelace had been obliged to borrow the fruit seller's chair, so agitated was he for some minutes. "He looked as white and weak as a woman," concluded my informant. On getting to Barcelona Lovelace refused to leave the ship, but during the day there arrived an invitation from a mutual friend of his and mine, whose yacht was lying there, to dine with him, and after some difficulty I succeeded in getting Lovelace to consent to go. We spent a pleasant hour aboard Lord

STORY OF THE PRAIRIE

—a beautiful craft and were just going in to dinner, Lady — on Lovelace's arm, when all at once that lady gave a scream and looked around in haste, only to scream again and to faint dead away. I stared in amazement with the rest of the guests, but just beyond Lovelace I saw the woman in black standing quietly gazing into my friend's face. Then she slowly dropped her white hand from her throat, and I saw a gash across it from which the blood still flowed in heavy, sullen drops. I understood then what had made Lady faint, though when she recovered her consciousness and tried to combat her husband's and friends' attempt to persuade her that the woman had existed only in her imagination I kept silence, and so did Lovelace, from whom fortunately attention had been attracted in the stir over our fair hostess. She had felt, she said, an icelike hand on her arm, and looking about had seen the ghostly figure I have described. When we got back to the ship that night, I put aside the reserve I had hitherto maintained toward Lovelace on this subject and asked him for an explanation. He was very much embarrassed, and I have never known whether he told me the whole truth or not. At any rate, this was his story:

His sister, whom he had visited in London before starting on this cruise, had had a decayed Church of England clergyman's daughter employed as a nursery governess for her children, and in his idle moments Lovelace had amused himself by making love to this poor girl. He swore it went no further than this, but that was a question as to the amount of confidence one could put in the man. At last, as the time drew near for him to sail, he had tried to withdraw from this flirtation, when the girl exhibited a despair and grief for which he was not prepared and declared that if he proved faithless to her she would kill herself. Not believing this threat, he saw her no more and left for this cruise without a farewell word to her. He knew as yet nothing of her fate and had had his apprehensions only aroused by seeing her that memorable night in the bay of Biscay looking at him from near the mast. From what had happened since he could not help but believe that she had fulfilled her desperate threat.

Resolved on reaching Naples to know the truth, he there telegraphed to his sister to know what had become of Miss Raymond. She replied coldly, with a plain intimation that she disliked his manifest interest in her poor dependent, that on the day he had sailed Miss Raymond had been found in her room with "that" across her throat which he had hardly cared to see.

On learning this for some time Lovelace acted like a thoroughly broken man, but after some months his spirits began to somewhat recover. We were still at Naples when the end came to the retribution that followed his heartlessness. Though I had taken a real dislike to the man after hearing his story, we were still much thrown together, and one evening we had gone to call on some English ladies at the consul's. We had taken our leave, but one of the ladies to whom Lovelace had been paying some rather zealous attentions appearing on a balcony above he stood up in the open carriage we occupied to catch the flowers she half mockingly threw down to him.

All at once he turned his laughing eyes on me, and as he did I saw his face freeze suddenly with the horror I knew so well. He started backward, and at the moment the horses reared slightly, and before I could catch him he had fallen from the carriage into the street. As he did so a long sigh caught my ear, and I turned my head to see for a brief second the woman in black at my side still holding her gashed throat. She was gone then, and I hastily tumbled from the carriage and joined the driver, who was bending over Lovelace's dead body.

He had broken his neck on the stones! Some days after I called on the lady referred to, who had also witnessed the accident, and one of her first questions was: "Who was the girl in black in the carriage with you two that dreadful day?" Take the story for what it is worth, gentlemen. Explain it if you can. These are the bare facts.—Philadelphia Times.

A Countess' Diamond. For many years the rumor of a magnificent diamond, said to be in the possession of a tribe dwelling in a faraway region vaguely indicated by the expression "Up country," had tickled the ears of adventurers. Many had gone in search of it; none had come within measurable distance of obtaining it.

About this time, however (1869), a Dutch farmer named Van Neikerk got upon the track of the diamond. He wandered from tribe to tribe and from village to village, one day hopeful of success, and the next disappointed. At length he was directed to a medicine man, or witch doctor, residing in certain Kaffir village, and, sure enough, after a good deal of palaver and plentiful libations of Jowala, discovered him to be possessed of a pure white stone of extraordinary size and luster, which he had little doubt was the diamond referred to. The witch doctor, however, was extremely unwilling to part with it. A high price was offered, then a higher still, but he remained immovable. The Dutchman now became excited and offered him his whole span of oxen. To this had of necessity to be added the tent wagon which he had fitted out for his journey, together with his appearance. At last, stripped of all his belongings save his gun, and ammunition, he departed with the gem safely concealed somewhere about his person.

The bargain nevertheless was a good one, as the stone was found, when brought to the frontier, to be a beautiful, flawless diamond of the purest water and worth \$25,000. This diamond—which is now in the possession of the Countess of Dudley—may be called "the foundation stone of the diamond industry."—Good Words.

Pigeons Not Guided by Sight. Numerous experiments made by balloonists have proved that pigeons are incapable of flying at any great height. Birds thrown out at 6,000 meters fell like dead, and even at the moderate height of 300 meters pigeons liberated by the balloonist Gaston Tissandier approached the earth in a spiral course. It is evident, hence, that they are not guided wholly by sight. To bring a point 300 miles distant within the range of vision it would be necessary to ascend nearly 30,000 meters. The carrier pigeon starting on such a journey must consequently start with faith in the unseen.—New York Advertiser.

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