

LAURA'S ROMANCE



THIRTY years ago there was a grand brick house standing in the midst of a sweet old garden, on one of the pleasantest sites of the famous Richmond hill.

It had once been the residence of a noble family, but it was at that time only a celebrated school for young ladies. The house itself was a plain, substantial brick one, and there were plenty in the vicinity that in every point excelled it; but nowhere was there a garden of greater loveliness than its high brick walls shut in.

This was especially so in the mornings and evenings, when the alleys and the hazel walks and the woodbine arbors were full of groups of beautiful young English girls—girls with flowing brown hair and eyes as blue and clear as heaven, and faces innocent and fresh as if each face had been made out of a rose.

On one of these excursions she had met Ernest Trelawny, and it is of this gentleman she is so confidentially talking to her chief friend, as they walk in the loneliest part of the garden together.

"I am so glad, Clara, that we met him this afternoon; I wanted you so much to see Ernest. Is he not handsome?"

"I never saw such eyes, Laura! And figure! And his stylish dress! Oh, I think he is so grand and so—well, so mysterious-looking, as if he were a poet or something."

"And then his conversation, Clara! He talks as I never heard any one else talk—so romantic, dear!"

"Oh, I think you must be a very happy girl, Laura! I often wish I had some one to love me as Ernest loves you."

Laura sighed and looked up sentimentally. "You have a father and mother, Clara. I am quite alone. Ernest says that is one reason he at first felt as if he must love me."

"What would Mrs. Mere say?" "Madame must not know for the world, Clara. She would write to my guardian. Oh, Clara, I am going to tell you a great secret! Ernest and I have determined to run away to Gretna Green and get married."

"Oh-h-h-h! Laura, how dare you? Madame will be sure to find it out. She never looks as if she knew things, but she always does. When are you going?"

"To-night, Ernest will be waiting with a carriage at the end of the garden wall. I have bribed a cook to leave the kitchen door unlocked, and I shall go through her room and down the back stairs."

Thus, until the nine o'clock bell rang, the two girls talked over and over the subject and never found it wearisome, and when they bade each other good night in the long corridor it was a very meaning one. They were both greatly impressed with the romance of the situation, and timid little Clara envied and admired her friend, and could not sleep for listening for the roll of a carriage and the parting mal which Laura had agreed to take on her friend's door as she used it.

When Laura made her few preparations and sat down in the moonlight to wait for the hour. She thought of her favorite heroines who had had a similar part, and tried to feel her part as they would have felt. Half-past eleven!"

She rose and laid her bonnet and the ready, but, in spite of her rosy situation, she was really sad and unhappy and conscious of an unnatural depression of spirits. Then the door opened softly, and Laura, with a candle in

her hand, entered the room. She was a very small, slight woman, with a grave, lovable face and a pair of wonderful eyes. In their calm, clear light lay the secret of her power over the fifty girls whom she ruled absolutely with a glance or a smile. She came gliding in more like a spirit than a woman, and putting the light down, said:

"Laura, I have had a dream, dear girl—a dreadful dream—and I am afraid. Let me stay here with you."

So she sat down and began a low, trembling voice to tell of Laura's dead mother; of her pure lofty womanhood, and of her love of her child. Laura scarcely heard her; the time was going faster, it was close upon midnight, she must make an effort at once. So, during a moment's pause, she said:

"Will madame try to sleep now?" "Yes, I will put out the light, and we will both try."

"First, will madame permit me to go to Clara's room? I have left my things there. I shall not disturb anyone."

In a moment madame's attitude changed; her eyes scintillated with light; all the caressing tenderness and sorrow of her voice and manner were gone. She was like an accusing spirit.

"Down on your knees, false girl, whom no memory of mother's love could soften! Down on your knees, and let your prayers strengthen the hands of those good angels who are fighting your evil genius this very moment! Pray as those should pray whose purity and honor, whose very life and salvation hang upon a villain's word!" And, drawing the girl down beside her, she watched out with her those dangerous midnight hours.

At 2 o'clock Laura was left to weep out alone her shame and her disappointment. Madame had kissed and forgiven and comforted her with such comfort as was possible; but youth takes hardly the breaking of its idols, and it was bitter and humiliating to hear that this handsome Ernest was better known to the police courts than to the noble houses he talked about, and yet that she had chosen his society and had been willing to become his wife. Madame had not spared her; she had spoken plainly of a gambler's wife and of a thief's home—of shames and horrors Laura trembled to recall—adding:

"I had willingly kept you ignorant of such things, for the knowledge of them takes the first bloom of purity from a good girl's heart; but, alas, Laura, if you will go forbidden roads, you must at least be warned of the sin and the sorrows that haunt them."

Laura was ill many days afterward. Madame had indeed forgiven her, but it was hard to forgive herself, and for a long time even a passing memory of her first lover brought a tingling blush of shame to her cheeks and a sickening sense of disgrace and fright to her heart.

It was ten years after this event, and Laura, with her two daughters, was driving slowly across Canoeck chase. The pretty children sat on either side of her, and she drove the ponies slowly, often stopping to let the little girls alight and pull a bluebell or a handful of buttercups. During one of these stoppages, as she sat, with a smile on her handsome face, watching the happy little ones, some one, coming from behind, touched her rudely on the arm. She turned and saw a man in grimy leather clothing, with an evil, cruel face, at her side.

Supposing him to be one of the men employed in her husband's iron works, who had been discharged or who wanted help, she said:

"Well, what is it, sir?" The man answered curtly: "Then Laura looked steadily into the dirty imbruted face. And in spite of soot and scars and bruises, she knew it."

"Mr. Trelawny, why do—" "Josh! My name is Bill Yates. You fooled me once, my lady, but you will pay me for it now. I've been lagged since then—sent across for seven years—only got back six months since. Glad I have found you, for I won't work any more now. Come, I want a five to start with."

"A five?" "Yes; a five-pound note." "I shall not give you a penny." "Then I shall take one of them little girls—the youngest is the prettiest—"

"For God's sake, don't go near my children! I will give you the money." "I prefer the money, it will save me the trouble of selling the child to the mere gypsies."

Laura hastily counted out the sum; there was seven shillings more in her purse, and the villain said:

"I'll take the change, too. Shall I lift the children into the phaeton?" "Don't touch them! Don't look at them! Oh, go away! Go away!" "Go away, indeed! You were glad enough once to come to me. I have your letters yet. It would be a sweet thing to show them to your husband."

"You had better murder me." "I have half a mind to; but it suits me better to keep you for my banker. In here next week with five pounds seven shillings, and every week after, until further notice, or else I will steal your child and send them letters to your fine husband."

Then, with a threatening scowl and the shake of a clenched fist in her face, he went away, taking with him all the joy and peace out of poor Laura's life.

She now lived in constant terror, and such a dreadful change came so rapidly over the once happy, handsome woman that her husband was exceedingly anxious, both for her health and her reason. What did she do with the unusually large sums of money she asked him for? Why did she go out riding alone? Why would she not suffer her children to leave their own grounds? Why could she not sleep at night? Why was her once even, sunny temper become so irritable? Why did she search his face so eagerly every night? These and twenty other anxious, suspicious questions passed through his mind continually, but he hoped that by ignoring the change it would disappear.

Alas! Things got worse and worse, and one day, after ten miserable months, he was sent for from the works in haste. Laura was raving and shrieking in the wildest paroxysm of brain fever.

"Where are the children? Save them from that man! Henry, please take him five pounds—no, he wants ten pounds now, and I can't get it!" In such piteous, moaning ejaculations she revealed the secret terror that was killing her.

But perfect love casts out fear and jealousy, and Laura's husband did her no injustice. Tenderly he nursed the poor, shattered wife and mother back to life again, though it was an almost hopeless task with that nameless horror ever beside her. One night, when she was a little stronger, he had her to talk of the past, and he was so loving and so pitiful that in a flood of life-giving tears she poured out to him the whole miserable story. Then the burden fell from her life, and she dropped happily into the first sweet, healthy sleep she had had for nearly a year. She never asked again for her tormentor; she only knew that he had disappeared from South Staffordshire, and joy and peace came back to her heart and home.

But one day, after the lapse of four years, she received a dirty, anonymous letter full of threats and insolent demands for money. This time she went at once to her husband with the trouble.

"Don't be frightened, Laura," he answered. "I know the fellow. He is one of a gang of four who have just come to Sackett village. He will be in jail before to-morrow night. This time he shall not escape my vengeance."

He had scarcely finished speaking when a couple of men ran up to the house, crying:

"Measter! Measter! Here be Dimmitt's height slobbered away and there's a 'crowning in'!"

The iron master leaped to his feet and was soon following the evil messengers to the village. He knew that Sackett was all undermined with pits and workings, and it was possible the whole village was in danger. The disaster was right in the center of it, and he was not long in reaching the great yawning chasm, where the earth had given away and down which two cottages, with their inhabitants had gone.

As soon as the master appeared the pitmen and ironmen gathered round him, though all knew that succor or help was perfectly hopeless.

"Where is Bumby?" "Here I be, measter." "What mine was under this?" "Dimmitt's, measter, worked out." "Is it deep?" "Six hundred feet." "Dry or wet?" "Deep water."

The master looked blankly at the black abyss.

"It's the third 'crowning in,' my time. 'T last were in to Cavill's mine. Six decent families went down at midnight; they were dashed to bits on 'r rocks at bottom."

"Do you know who lived in these two cottages?" "One were empty, thank God. Four strange lads that worked 'Sackett's mine, had 't other; they nobbut worked there a week, they wor glad to get shut on them at end of it."

"Do you know their names?" "I know, measter," said Michael Raine, the publican, "for they owe me for a week's beer and 'bacca—the score is set ag'n' John Todd, Tim Black and Bill Yates."

"Bill Yates? Are you sure?" "Sure to certain of that name, measter, for he said he wor come special to get up sides w' you."

Then the ironmaster turned thoughtfully home, and as he kissed his wife, said:

"Bill Yates is dead, Laura. My vengeance has been taken from me by him to whom vengeance belongeth. You may rest safely now, darling."

"But, oh, Henry, what a destiny might have been mine!" "Don't say 'destiny,' Laura. Our choices are our destiny. Nothing is ours that our choices have not made ours."

This is a true story, and I tell it to many thousands of young girls with just as much earnestness as Laura told it to her daughters, to show them that clandestine love affairs are always highly dangerous; for a passion that is cradled in deceit is pretty sure to end in sin or shame or sorrow.—Amelia E. Barr, in N. Y. Ledger.

Kind Hearted Maiden (fishing for a stray penny in her purse)—"I suppose you poor blind people feel your misfortune keenly." Blind Mendicant—"Yes, indeed. The Lord only knows how I miss the pleasure of being able to look into the beautiful faces of the handsome and lovely ladies who are kind enough to donate." Kind Hearted Maiden (fishing out a quarter)—"Here, poor fellow, take this. I'm sure you are deserving."—Ariansau Thomas Cat.

Lulu R. George, a wall paper designer in New York, drew a Chinese pattern which proved so popular that 300,000 rolls of the paper have been sold.

According to the Catholic Herald, there are about 152,000 colored Catholics in the United States.

A new porch and towers are to be added to Trinity church, Boston, an object for which the late Bishop Brooks left \$2,000.

George E. Hardy has been elected professor of English language and literature in the College of the City of New York.

The number of educational institutions of one kind or another in India is put down in Chambers' Cyclopedia (1892) at 133,000.

Gen. Booth of the Salvation army, and his captains of either sex have been officially declared to be ministers of religion within the meaning of the law.

It is claimed that a college graduate's chances of obtaining a fair degree of eminence are as 250 to 1 as compared with the men who have not been at college.

It requires a sum of upward of \$10,000 a year, voluntarily provided, to maintain and educate the 500 fatherless children of the Spurgeon orphans' homes, Stockwell.

Dr. Buckley says he once attended a service in a Presbyterian church where every man present, except himself and the preacher, was asleep, and every woman was awake.

A striking proof of the growth of the missionary spirit is seen in the fact that Australasia has recently sent missionaries to Ceylon, Africa, China and Japan.—Chicago Standard.

The recent parliamentary elections in Japan have resulted favorably to the friends of Christianity and the policy of encouraging foreigners.

The fact of being a Christian has not operated unfavorably in the case of any candidate.

A sister of the late Mr. Spurgeon preached twice recently to crowded congregations at the handsome church in Hampstead road, in connection with the service. Her manner is impressive, and she bears a personal resemblance to her eminent brother.

The diplomas received by the recent graduates of Radcliffe college will some time possess great historic value. They are the first to bear the signature of the president of Harvard, which they do in addition to that of Mrs. Agassiz, president of Radcliffe.

Rev. Sam Bettis, cowboy evangelist, thus sums up the results of his recent revival at Bay City, Mich.: "I had over 3,000 conversions, 1,256 old-timers signed the pledge, \$802 was raised for expenses, \$500 clear for Sam, and 6,000 people were fed free meals."

The business college idea in education, which has taken so firm a hold of the popular mind, is not a sudden growth, but is a natural development of the industrial conditions and requirements of our time.

The fact that our ordinary schools and colleges did not prepare for practical business life gradually became apparent, and thus the business school grew up to supply the deficiency.

Seven Chaldean priests from eastern Turkey have come to this country to beg money for rebuilding a church in their native land. Some showed a letter of introduction, in very bad French, said to be from the bishop of Mesopotamia. Others claimed to be Presbyterians. One said that he came from the city of Van, in Asia Minor. At first there was some hesitancy about allowing them to land, as they appeared to be very like paupers. They were, however, at last released.

HE GOT THE PLUME. But He Was Not as Happy Afterward as He Had Been.

An ludicrous incident occurred in one of the prominent churches in this city on a recent Sunday which is liable to cool the churchgoing ardor of the young man in the case and be a feature in the experience of the young lady that she will not soon forget.

The young man, immaculate in a long coat, light creased trousers and spotless linen, was ushered to a seat directly in front of a bewitching and stylishly dressed young lady, on whose curly head reposed an elaborate and expensive model of milliner's art; the principal feature of which was a very large and beautiful plume.

When the good dominie commenced his long prayer the young man's thoughts were evidently on his fair neighbor, and consequently he neglected to assume an attitude of reverence. Not so with the young lady. She immediately bowed her head on the back of the seat in front, and the plume of her hat brushed the back of the young man's neck.

Thinking it a fly, he tried to scare it away with his hand; but, like the cat, it "came back" with the persistence of a book agent, and after several vain attempts to keep it off his neck visions of centipedes, scorpions, tarantulas and other poisonous monsters filled his agonized mind.

With desperation born of despair, he made one grand grab, secured the troublesome object, gave a quick strangle jerk and landed the gorgeous plume in his lap.

Of course the young lady was surprised and indignant, and the young man was so embarrassed that he forgot to apologize at the close of the service.

—Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat.

Opposed to Coercion. The knight of rest slipped into the backyard as if he had been guilty of some offense, and putting an empty tomato can out of sight under his tattered coat, he approached the portcullis of the kitchen and tapped on it with his halldom. In response, a wiry-haired girl, with a towel tied around her head, made her appearance.

"Well?" she said interrogatively, as she took his measure with her eagle eye.

"I just thought I'd strike you for breakfast," he answered apologetically.

"We don't believe in strikes in this neighborhood," she said emphatically and slammed the door with a bang that knocked the dust out of his toga.—Detroit Free Press.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. "MOTHER'S" ROCKIN' CHAIR.

There it sets beside the window, Where it used to rock an' creak To the lefty weight o' mother Settin', darlin' stockin' feet.

An' sweet-smellin' honeysuckles Straggle round the window-pane, But they've stopped a-sittin' sunshine Onto mother's smilin' face.

Winter snowin's, summer rainin's, Half a score has rained an' snowed Since the rockin'-chair set, lonesome, Empty of its dear old load.

Time is, when I set here quiet, 'Cross the room, an' seem to hear, Nat'ral-like, the stiddy creakin' 'O the rockers to her chair.

Then I look up sudden, thinkin' Mother must 'a' got back home, But the window's always empty, An' the chair sets there alone.

Well, they ain't no use a-frettin', An' I think somehow or 'nother, That there won't be much more waddin' 'Till I go up home to mother.

An' I hope there's rockers ponder, For it won't seem homelike there To see mother settin' restin', Only in her rockin' chair. —Andie H. Donnell, in Once a Week.

LEARNING TO SWIM. Easiest and Quickest Way for Girls to Acquire the Accomplishment.

The best way to teach a boy to swim is to toss him over the side of a boat with a rope about his waist, and let him plunge and tumble in the water until he catches the movements of arms and legs that carry him lightly along the surface. A girl should be sent to swimming school if there is such a convenience in her town or city. Or if at the seaside many a girl who was never in the salt water before can quickly acquire this most graceful and serviceable accomplishment by a very simple method. A comfortable flannel bathing suit and a strong-armed brother or other companion who swims well

are the chief equipments for this practical beginning.

Wade into the water until it is waist deep, and then ask your brother to put one arm under your body about the waist line and place his other hand under your chin. Then lift your feet off the bottom and lie in the attitude shown in the picture. Have never a bit of fear, you are well supported, your face is out of the water, and you will feel your body lifted up by it as though pushed from beneath. Now, with arms and legs stretched to their full length, make the first stroke. Draw your hands up to your chest, the finger tips nearly touching, the palms turned out. Then sweep your hands out in the half circles through the water until they stretch out straight on either side from your body. Your legs meanwhile must also be drawn up until your toes almost touch, then stretched out quickly, the feet far apart. When your hands are drawn up against your chest your knees must be simultaneous-

ly crooked to bring your feet together and arms and legs propelled through the water at the same moment.

Go through these movements for at least ten minutes every day in the water, having some one to hold you up and resting for a bit every two or three minutes. By perhaps the fifth morning you will be able to be in the water with only your chin in your brother's hand. You are feeling by this time how buoyant the salt water is and you are beginning to trust it. After that you will feel yourself moving along an inch or two, and anyone's forefinger lightly pressing up will keep your head up at the level shown in the picture. About the tenth morning you will be able to dispense with even a helping finger and will swim a few feet at a time. After that the old rule of prac-

tice makes perfect must be followed in order that you may learn to swim twenty yards at a stretch, which is a fine feat for one's first summer in the water.

To hasten your progress as a beginner try to remember and follow closely these two or three simple rules, the violation of which greatly retards one's progress:

When in the water never open your mouth. Breathe through your nose. Never when learning to swim go in water over your waist in depth. Never go with any but a person who knows how to swim, who is kind and cautious, and who would not play pranks or practical jokes. Never fail to go in every morning regularly. Never be discouraged.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

CRABS AS MOWERS.

They Harvest Crops of Rice with Their Powerful Pinchers.

Perhaps you think that this can't be done. Probably it could not be done by anything except a crab; but crabs of all sorts are very queer fellows, and some of the sorts do most unexpected things.

You know that crabs are amphibious creatures—that is, they can live both on the land and in the water. They usually divide their time about equally between the two.

But there are also land crabs which live on vegetable foods, and apparently prefer to pass most, if not all, of their time on the land, and that not always of a swampy nature.

At any rate, one kind of crab has been found in great numbers on table lands 4,000 feet above the sea level, and

many miles away from any considerable body of water.

This strange crab is a native of Hindostan, where, in one province at least, and perhaps in others, the young grass fairly swarms with myriads of them.

They burrow in the ground. They can run with considerable swiftness even when carrying in the long claws which serve for both arms and hands a bundle of grass or young rice stalks as big, and sometimes even bigger, than themselves.

Nature is very generous with all her children, giving to each one just the powers and faculties which it needs to enable it to provide for all its wants. So this humble inhabitant of the table lands of India is provided with a capital mowing machine in the shape of a pair of remarkably sharp and strong pinces.

To harvest his abundant crops, the comical-looking creature assumes a sort of sitting posture, so that he can use his pinces to advantage. He works very rapidly, using one pair of claws to cut and another to bind his sheaves at the same time.

As soon as he has gathered all he can carry he scuttles off with it, in a funny sideways fashion, and with an air of solemn importance that is a very amusing contrast to his clumsy motions and queer shape.

But the human inhabitants of the districts preferred by this queer little mower and reaper do not find him at all amusing. They say that one of these crabs will destroy an amount of young grass and rice in one year which, if allowed to reach perfection, would keep a laboring man in health and strength during that time.—H. E. Smith, in Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE INDUSTRIOUS WASP. He Has Many Useful Trades and Never Neglects His Work.

Wasps act as architects, builders, carpenters and paper-makers. They go abroad into the fields and gardens in search of provisions; with exemplary care for the public welfare they eat out the sunny side of your peaches and carry away meat from the lamb chops in your larder. Math, base man, who robs the busy bee of its hard-earned honey and slays the gentle calf for the production of veal cutlets, usually speaks of the socialist insects as robbers and deprecators. But he forgets that the generous and public-spirited wasp does not levy tribute on his apprentices of the republic. Each worker hurries back to the nest the results of his fruit hunting or his marauding expeditions, and shares them among his fellow subjects with that distributive justice which Aristotle preached and which nobody in our human communities practices. He carries out the principles of the Fabian society.

Every successful wasp, when he returns to the nest with a piece of prime beef or a wingless fly, or a cargo of sugar saved for the community from the grocer's barrel, perches on the top of the dome among his assembled fellows, and, disgorging all his spoils, divides them equally among nurses and paper-makers. His two main doctrines are: "If any wasp will not work, neither shall he eat," and "every wasp to labor according to his capacity and receive according to his needs in a free community."

Division of labor, I believe, goes a long way in the nest. Some of the workers seem to be specially employed as foragers and soldiers; others appear to be told off as nurses and guardians, while yet others are engaged as paper-makers and masons. It is even said that these last work by definite shifts (I know not by what authority) and that they each have a space of about a square inch allotted to them to fill with cells, on which no neighboring worker is permitted to encroach with impunity. But these are perhaps the fictions of imaginative observers. At any rate the eight hours act is not yet in operation; wasps work early and late of their own mere notion.

Why Tommy Shed Tears. "What are you crying for, Tommy?" "Because my brothers have a holiday and I haven't."

"But why haven't you a holiday, too?" "Because I'm not old enough to go to school."

THE ANGLE OF THE HEAD WITH THE WATER.

ly crooked to bring your feet together and arms and legs propelled through the water at the same moment.

Go through these movements for at least ten minutes every day in the water, having some one to hold you up and resting for a bit every two or three minutes. By perhaps the fifth morning you will be able to be in the water with only your chin in your brother's hand. You are feeling by this time how buoyant the salt water is and you are beginning to trust it. After that you will feel yourself moving along an inch or two, and anyone's forefinger lightly pressing up will keep your head up at the level shown in the picture. About the tenth morning you will be able to dispense with even a helping finger and will swim a few feet at a time. After that the old rule of prac-

tice makes perfect must be followed in order that you may learn to swim twenty yards at a stretch, which is a fine feat for one's first summer in the water.

To hasten your progress as a beginner try to remember and follow closely these two or three simple rules, the violation of which greatly retards one's progress:

When in the water never open your mouth. Breathe through your nose. Never when learning to swim go in water over your waist in depth. Never go with any but a person who knows how to swim, who is kind and cautious, and who would not play pranks or practical jokes. Never fail to go in every morning regularly. Never be discouraged.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE SIDING.

He found his cow with a shot in her quiet rest.