



You saw it?

HERE," said Marlowe to his wife, tossing a letter into her lap. "I hope we have seen the last of him."

"From Roger," said Mrs. Marlowe, with a sigh.

Then she read these lines:

"Here I am at Flagstaff, Ariz., and within two weeks I start with three other good men and true on a prospecting tour. One of the men says he knows of a mine of marvelous richness, once worked by Indians or Aztecs, or some long forgotten beggars of antiquity. Perhaps he's a liar—you know I don't place much faith in human nature—but the other men say that he has shown up nuggets as big as your thumb, so there may be something in it. Imagine me as a millionaire! I have a present in mind for Milly. At any rate this is touch and go with me. I've been down on my luck so long that if I don't strike it rich now I'll leave my bones in the mountains."

"Poor fellow," said Mrs. Marlowe, trying to wipe away a tear, unobserved.

"Poor humbug!" roared her husband, savagely. "If anything shows the degeneracy of woman it is her fondness for rascality. Roger is a liar and a cheat and you know it, yet you have always an excuse for his follies and an apology for his crimes."

"He has been unfortunate," she began.

"Unfortunate," he interrupted, "in that he was not killed long ago in his escapades or jailed for his villainies. He might have then been saved from some punishment in the next world."

"Of course I know," she returned, with a pitiful attempt at fairness, "that he has not been exactly good, but you must consider his disposition. He is so impetuous, so careless, that he never stops to think of the consequences of his actions."

"How logical and at the same time how touching," retorted Marlowe, bitterly. "He is only a mere child of 32, not old enough to know the difference between right and wrong. So careless that he has twice written another man's name to notes that I have been compelled to pay; so impetuous that he has been four times in hiding for assaulting people who were wicked enough to thwart his cheating. He thinks so little of the consequences of his actions—the dear child!—that he has been false to every promise and deceived every man or woman who trusted him."

"O, Walter!" she cried, entreatingly. "Dare you deny it? Shame on you to waste tears or regrets on this disgrace to humanity. Of what value are love, charity, kindness, and benevolence when bestowed on a monster and withheld from real suffering? I have never heard you become sentimental over the woes of the poor washerwoman on the back street with a crippled son and a daughter little better than an idiot; you are not noted for your charity or visiting the sick; but Roger!—in possession of perfect health and all his senses, but without a single good trait, a villain who never did an honest deed!—Pah!" he wound up in utter disgust.

Pretty Mrs. Marlowe buried her face in her handkerchief, and had nothing to say. In fact, there was nothing she could say. The small portion of fairness and common sense she possessed acknowledged that Roger, her handsome cousin, was a thorough villain, and a curse and a burden to every one he met; that he had deceived her honest, manly husband; that she would be happier if she never saw the scoundrel again—and yet?

Meanwhile Marlowe was pacing the floor and when he came to a halt in front of her his face was set with resolution.

"Now, Milly, listen to me," he said, sternly. "I know that you have written to him. That must stop. You have sent him money. Send no more. I will not argue; I will command. One word of correspondence, one cent of money, that goes from you to him will mark our separation."

"Walter," she cried, rising to her feet, and clasping her hands in horror, "you do not mean that?"

"Yes, I do, every word. I hate, despise, and loathe the man; his presence is a stain. The wretch would sell your letters if he could raise money in no other way. I will write to him, and I'll warrant he will not show my letter. He will get no more money, and you shall take none of his. If he becomes a billionaire. If you communicate with him I will leave you; if he comes to see you I think I will kill him."

Some men might have been touched at this juncture by the aspect of Mrs. Marlowe in a dead faint, but Mr. Marlowe was too thoroughly angry to be softened by any cause. But he raised his authority enough and laid her on a sofa, and waited until she began to

open her eyes, and then he left her to write a letter to Roger Arnott that would sting his soul to silence.

Apparently it did, since no word came from the ne'er-do-well for six months, and then arrived a box addressed to Mr. Walter Marlowe.

The servant brought the express man's book to Mrs. Marlowe to sign, and told her that the box was in the hall.

She went to look at it with inward quaking, although it was a prosaic wooden affair, and might have come from Hoboken. But her presentiment was correct. In the upper left hand corner was rudely printed: "From Roger Arnott, Tombstone, Arizona."

"Is it for me?" she asked quivering.

"No, ma'am; it's for Mr. Marlowe."

"Thank goodness!—I mean let it lie there, and give it to him when he comes home."

Then she hurried away and hoped that her husband would not tell her what the box contained, while at the same time she was burning to know.

Mr. Marlowe made no remark on the subject until after dinner, and then he said, with an ominous frown:

"A box came from the rascal to-day."

"Yes," she assented, faintly.

"A present for you, I suppose. After all I have said!"

"Please don't," she said, with a half-frightened shrinking away from him.

"Really, I have had nothing to do with it. I never wrote to him, or sent word in any way, after what you said."

"Of course not," he said, with open eyes. "My dear, I don't suspect you of deception—only of feminine weakness. I blame Roger for his audacity, after my distinctly telling him that he must send you nothing. However, it shall go back."

"But," she corrected, mildly, "the box is directed to you; perhaps the present is yours."

He frowned vexatiously over this suggestion and then, rising impatiently, said: "Let us see."

The box was brought into the library and put on the table. When opened it disclosed a lot of straw on which lay a letter.

Marlowe tore it open contemptuously and read with rising wrath:

"Dear Old Boy—I know you ordered me to not write to you or Cousin Milly, but I never promised to abstain. I have a habit of having my own way, you know."

"You will be delighted to hear that I did not succeed in locating the mine. After a month of horrible hardship one man died and we three survivors got back just as poor as we started, and reduced to skeletons in flesh. No one welcomed us; in fact, no one seemed to care, one way or 't'other. But we got money somehow, and as fools never learn by experience we three started out again."

"This time we actually found a mine, or at any rate struck a rich lead of ore; so rich that I might have been a millionaire if I could have got the stuff out of the mountains. The ore was almost as soft as clay, and we had shoveled up I don't know how many tons when a cursed band of Indians swept down on us, killed my two chums, and took me prisoner."

"O, heaven!" cried Mrs. Marlowe.

"I had better not read any more," said Mr. Marlowe, gravely. "Why does he tell all this, anyhow?"

She gave him a reproachful glance and said: "Do go on."

He had been scanning the following pages and now looked up with a troubled face.

"This is too horrible," he muttered. Then, with sudden resolution, he read rapidly.

"The devils dragged me around with them for a week or more, and then tortured me in a fashion that I believe to be unique. They brought me to a place beside a running stream and set up a post on its verge. On a flat rock near by they laid out a quantity of jerked meat, and then they spiked my left hand to the post and left me."

Marlowe looked at his wife. Her eyes had a half-glassy stare and every vestige of color left her face, but she motioned him to go on.

"It is too dreadful to give in detail. When you are calmer you can read it yourself—if you care to do so. I will give you the substance. For two days he suffered agonies of thirst and hunger in addition to the heat and the pain in his hand. He could not pull up the stake or get the spike out of the wood, and on the third day—are you sure you want to hear it?"

"Yes—yes."

"With his hunting knife he severed his hand at the wrist. It was the only way to escape from the imprisonment, and between death and—"

He stopped and caught his wife as she pitched forward.

"What a fool I was to gratify her

curiosity," he said sharply to himself. "The villain! He seems always destined to cause her pain. And to think that he lived through all that agony and can write about it in this strain! The devil takes care of his own."

Meanwhile he was chafing her hands, and when she revived he was about to help her from the room, when she pushed him away and ran to the table.

"The box—the box," she cried, feverishly. "Let me see it!"

"The box? See—what?" he asked, wondering if she had gone mad.

"Don't you know—can't you understand?" she exclaimed with an impatient stamp. "He has sent us—you—something. I want to see it."

"A piece of mineral, perhaps some of the ore for which he paid so dearly," he replied. "Of what consequence is it? To-morrow will be time enough. You had better go to bed now."

"You'll drive me crazy," she said, trying to push him aside. "If you will not look at it—"

"There, there," he said, soothingly. "You shall see it. What a foolish girl you are. I believe the fellow has hypnotized you, or rather charmed you like a snake. To be anxious to see some trifling—"

He checked himself with a gasp. A misshapen package came to view, too light for ore—no form. An indefinite shudder ran through his hand and up his arm as he slowly unrolled the casings and then dropped on the table—a human hand.

Roger's left hand complete, even to the silver ring on the little finger, shriveled and wan, distorted at the palm, the fingers drawn in as if clutching something, and the muscles of the wrist stump haggled and discolored with blackened blood. A hideous object at the best to be displayed in a civilized house and doubly repellant when connected with its taking off.

For the space of a minute neither spoke and it seemed as if the thing had been a serpent to charm them. Then the woman touched it shiveringly, and that broke the spell.

"What hideous prank is this?" cried the man, passionately. "The fellow would jest with Satan himself! I'll burn the thing."

"Wait!" said the wife, picking up the letter. "He must have had some motive. See! He says: 'My dear cousin, I pray you take good care of this part of me. It is my left hand—I never did much harm with that. Keep it as a memento until I come to claim it. Then I trust you will not refuse me my property.'"

Marlowe smiled grimly.

"He seeks to torment me and perhaps work on my sympathies," he said, with recovered nerve. "Is there no postscript asking for money? I am surprised! But that will come later. Well, I will gratify your precious cousin; I will keep his hand. It will make a novel ornament for the library table."

"How can you be so heartless?" she cried.

"My dear, what will you have? Am I not carrying out his wishes? Shall I bury it in the cellar, or put it in a safe deposit vault at bank? He is evidently proud of what most men would want to forget. It is an eccentric notion and I'll humor it. I can be eccentric, also. Let it lay where it has fallen."

"I cannot bear to look at it," she moaned.

"You need not," he responded, coldly. "There is no necessity for your visiting this room. Please to remember also that you brought this on yourself. Had you been less inquisitive I would have opened the box and thrown the thing away, and you would have been none the wiser. But you would not have it so. Now let it lie. I forbid you to touch it—as you have already," he added, quickly.

"You will keep it?" she stammered.

"Of course; at least until he sends for it."

"But he says he will come for it."

"He had better not. I have warned him that he must not enter these doors. When he wants his hand he may send for it; if he comes in person—well, he knows what will happen to him."

She looked at him with swimming eyes and then went slowly out of the room, saying, "Poor Roger!"

The hand laid on the table as Marlowe had promised—a hideous paper weight, at which no one cared to look twice except Marlowe. He took a grim delight in gazing at the thing, examining the nail hole in the palm, and trying to get off the ring, which resisted all his efforts. Then he would indulge in frequent speculations over the owner of the hand.

"He is well punished, the rascal, but I cannot find it in my heart to pity him. Many an honest man has suffered more. And it is not much loss to him, whatsoever the inconvenience. He makes a

living by scheming and cheating and his mutilation will be a sympathetic aid. I suppose he sent me this hand to horrify and torment me. Well, he misused his guess."

But Mrs. Marlowe was not so philosophical. She never got over her horror, and kept her word by not entering the library. She would not even talk about it, and soon Roger's name was no more heard between these two.

Thus matters stood for four or five months, until one day toward the end of January when they were sitting at dinner.

Mr. Marlowe had been particularly vivacious, having made some specially good business deal that morning, and it was some time before he noticed that his wife was nervous and abstracted.

"Well, what is the matter?" he asked, at length. "Has the milliner disappointed you?"

"You think I am a child," she replied, with a pout. "I'll not tell you."

He laughed in an irritating way until she was plucked into speaking.

"I saw Roger to-day."

"What! Has he dared—?" There was danger of his sweeping everything off the table in his excitement. "After all I have told you!"

"Don't be hasty," she returned, with a little ring of resentment in her tones. "I did not speak to him or he to me; in fact, I doubt if he saw me."

"Yet he came to see you?"

"There you go again with your inferences. How do you know he did? He may have been looking for you."

"For me? Tell me about it," he demanded, impatiently.

"There is not much to tell," she answered, slowly. "I was coming downstairs when I saw Roger in the lower hall. He went into the library, and I—well, you know I never go in there; so I called Susan and told her that there was a visitor in the library."

"And what did he want?"

"He wasn't there."

"He wasn't there?"

"No. There was no one in the library. Wasn't that strange?"

"Not at all. You were simply mistaken."

"No, sir," she protested. "I saw him as plainly as I see you. Haven't I seen him often enough to know him?"

"Too often," he retorted bluntly. "Well, I'm going to investigate this affair."

Which he did, but to no effect. No one had seen Roger except Mrs. Marlowe; no one had admitted a visitor that day or let any one out.

"It was an optical delusion," said Marlowe, with a laugh. "Such things are not uncommon, and generally mean biliousness."

"A delusion?" Mrs. Marlowe laughed, too, but nervously. "Perhaps it was, but I'm sure I have not felt at all ill. Perhaps—?" Then she shuddered and became so distraught that Marlowe, who dearly loved his pretty, foolish wife, gave up all idea of going out and stayed at home to keep her company.

He took up the latest magazines and read bits here and there, she ran over some new music on the piano, and between whistles they chatted, until a charming evening was developed.

"I declare," said Marlowe, at length, looking at his watch, "it is 11 o'clock. How time does fly when a man is in love!"

Mrs. Marlowe blushed charmingly and laid her dimpled hands on his shoulder. Then she gave a terrible cry and pointed to the hall with a shaking finger.

Marlowe turned like a flash and saw—or did he see Roger's mocking face peering in from the semi-darkness?

With a fierce imprecation he dashed into the hall and in a few minutes came back with a bewildered face.

"You—you saw it?" she whispered in a faint voice.

"I thought I saw something," he admitted, reluctantly, "but I was mistaken. It was the shifting of the gas-light on the curtains."

"No, no," she insisted, clinging closer to him. "It was he—Roger."

"How could it be?" he demanded sharply. "Still," he added with a frown, "it may be after all. It would be in keeping with his malicious spirit to conceal himself and play these baby tricks. If I catch him—"

At that moment the door bell sounded with a clang that caused Mrs. Marlowe to utter a little scream, and Marlowe, in spite of his habitual self-command, gave a nervous start. Then he recovered himself and went to the door to receive a telegram.

He glanced at its contents as he came into the parlor and would have hid it from his wife, but she was too quick for him and read it over his shoulder:

"Tombstone, Ariz., Jan. 23, 1895.—To Walter Marlowe: Roger Arnott killed to-day in quarrel. Shall we ship body?"

"H. B. CURZON, Liberty Hotel."

"He is dead!" she exclaimed wildly. "And yet I saw him—you saw him!"

"Come, come," he said, checking her evident tendency to hysterical alarm. "We will talk this over to-morrow when you have become calmer."

"But you will send for—you will take care that he—"

"Yes, yes; I will attend to all that. Don't talk any more to-night."

She submitted to being led away to her room, and when he had seen her safely bestowed he returned to the library and wrote a letter to "H. B. Curzon," giving directions for the decent burial of Roger's body, and prepared it for dispatch next day.

As he arose to retire his eye caught Roger's hand, and the strangest feeling came over him, as of something cold creeping up his back, until he felt as if standing in a current of damp air. It required a vigorous effort for him to overcome this weakness, yet somehow he could not bring himself to touch the hand, and after a moment spent in protesting with himself against his weak-

ness, he laid the letter on the table and went to bed.

It was some time in the middle of the night that he was awakened by his wife.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Why are you sitting up in bed?"

"I hear something," she replied, with quivering lips. "I have been listening for a long time, and it is driving me crazy."

"You have a nervous spell," he said, holding her reassuringly.

"No, I am not imagining—I hear it. Something is moving around the house as if searching for something. I hear it above and below and on the stairs. It is walking—walking—and—Oh, if it should come in here!"

To his dismay he saw her eyes dilate again while her face became deathly pale. He was out of bed in an instant.

"Moving around, is it?" he said, going to the closet for his revolver. "I'll make it move if I meet it."

"No, no," she pleaded, following him and holding him fast. "I shall go mad if you leave me alone."

"Milly, for heaven's sake! There—there—I'll not go. Wait. Let us listen. I hear nothing; do you?"

"Nothing," she said, after listening intently.

"You see you were mistaken."

She shook her head in mute protest, but after a while consented to lie down again. He sat up and smoked a cigar by the fireplace, keeping his ears pricked up, but heard nothing. Finally sleep overcame him and he returned to bed.

Once he thought he heard a noise, a faint rustling below, and once he was awakened by his wife's troubled moaning in her sleep.

In the morning she arose with him, something unusual for her, and they went downstairs together. She made no comment on the happenings of the night, but to his surprise she walked to the library and directly to the table.

"Look!" she said, with a little cry of terror.

The letter he had written was lying as he had left it, but on the envelope was faintly scrawled "Roger."

"And the hand!" she cried. "It is gone! I knew it—I knew it!"

"You knew?" he questioned, wonderingly.

"It was Roger. He was looking for his hand!"—Chicago Tribune.

LEGITIMATE GOLD BRICKS.

Their Sale at the United States Assay Office in Wall Street.

Beneath stout bars guarding a wide, arched window of the United States army office in Wall street thousands of dollars' worth of little gold bricks, the honest and true kind, pass every day from Uncle Sam's coffers to the hands of jewelers and bankers. And all that Uncle Sam charges for the exchange is 4 cents on \$100 dollars for the large bars and 5 cents on \$100 for the small ones.

For the week ending July 28 the gold bars (they did not call them bricks in the assay office) exchanged for gold coin amounted to \$190,750.17. This is a small figure compared with what the office has done on a busy day. Once, six or seven years ago, when a large quantity of gold was to be shipped to Europe, the assay office exchanged \$8,000,000 into bars.

The bars Uncle Sam dispenses are of two general sizes, the \$5,000 size for the bankers, and the \$150 size for jewelers, the small size being about 4 inch and a quarter long, three-quarters wide, and perhaps half an inch or less in thickness. Very often they run up to \$200 or even more in value. Their size adapts them to the size of the jeweler's crucible. As for the banker, he does not melt his gold; he contents himself with shipping it back and forth across the ocean.

A remarkable feature of this exchange of legal tender for gold bars is that one can not always get just the amount he wishes. If a jeweler or a banker wishes \$10,000 in gold bullion, Uncle Sam gives him as near that amount as he possibly can. It may be \$9,970.50 or \$10,000.30, because the bars vary in size and weight, and practically all of them have odd cents in their value. Two bars the cashier handed out one day this week were stamped \$531.70 and \$123.10.

In buying gold bars the purchaser first tells the cashier at the assay office how much he wishes; the cashier comes as near this amount as he can with the bars on hand, and then the purchaser goes next door, to the sub-treasury, where he deposits his legal tender, gold certificates, greenbacks, or gold coin, for the amount designated by the assay office cashier as the nearest to the desired amount, receiving therefor a certificate which, upon presentation at the assay office, insures the delivery of the bars. But before they may be taken away the recipient must sign for them in the register which lies open beneath the bars of the wide-arched window.—New York Post.

She Understood Them.

Here is an extract from a girl's essay: "People are composed of boys and girls, also men and women. Boys are good till they grow up and get married. Men who don't get married are no good either. Girls are young women who will be ladies when they graduate. Boys are an awful bother; want everything they see except soap. If I had my way half the boys would be girls and the other half dolls. My mamma is a woman and my pa is a boy. A woman is a grown-up girl with children. My pa is such a nice man that I guess he must have been a girl when he was a little boy."

When a woman who has chased a man wins what she started out for, it has a very unhappy tendency to encourage others.

PAGAN RITES IN SCOTIA.

Many Scottish Customs that Originated in Superstition.

Nearly all travelers in central Africa have referred to the curious customs prevalent among all pagan native tribes of driving quantities of nails into sacred trees and other objects that have been adjudged worthy of veneration and this not in malice, but as a religious rite, the nails in question being intended as votive offerings. Exactly the same thing may be witnessed to-day at the sacred well of St. Maebriha, in Loch Maree, Ross-shire, where is an ancient oak tree studded with countless nails of all sizes, the offerings of invalid pilgrims who came to worship and be cured, says a writer in *Stray Stories*.

Pennies and half-pennies also are to be seen in enormous quantities drives edgewise in the tough bark, and a friend of the writer's who visited the spot some little time back discovered in a cleft high up in the trunk what he took to be a shilling. On being extracted, however, it proved to be counterfeited. Probably the donor, finding that he could get no value for his coin in the natural world, concluded he might as well try, as a last resort, what effect it might have on the spiritual.

Of course, the poor cottars and others who flock to St. Maebriha with their nails and their pence do not for a moment admit that they are assisting at a pagan ceremony. But they most undoubtedly are. Well worship has all ways occupied an important place in paganism, and the sacred oak, before which each pilgrim must thrice kneel ere humbly presenting his offering—what is it but an obvious survival of the sacred groves of Druidical times?

THE FUN OF CAMPING OUT.

More and more popular is camp life becoming each year, says *Country Life* in America. With those who go into the deep woods in quest of big game and fish the camp life is, after all, the real attraction, and not the mere desire to kill. But where one can make these trips there are thousands who cannot. For these there are peaceful rivers, wood-girt lakes and ponds and beautiful spots on the shores of Old Neptune available for quite as charming a two-weeks' outing beneath canvas. In making up a camping party choose you such congenial spirits as shall be foresworn to philosophic optimism.

And let there be a wag among them who, catching the humor of every situation, puts to flight all thought of discomfort. A level site near a spring with plenty of shade, a pleasant sheet of water with good fishing, pine boughs for a bed and driftwood for a fire and who would trade his life for a king's patrimony? How delicious the fish flavored with the pungent smoke of the fire! How rarely satisfying the simple bill of fare, and how few, after all, are the needs of this life! Yours is the joy and happy freedom of the gypsy and vagabond. You have become a species of civilized barbarian and it is good. Sunshine or shower what matters it? You take what comes and give thanks, and if you are of the right sort some of the beauty of each is absorbed into your very nature. Long days, lazy days, but happy days, are the days in camp. Hag and mishap will don the jester's cap and bells and parade through memory many a time during the after months

BANKRUPTS IN LIVERY.

Curious Laws Once Enforced in England and Scotland.

At one time England and Scotland bankrupts were compelled to wear a distinctive dress. This was a result of enactments passed at various times in Scotland from the year 1296 to 1688. The Edinburgh Court of Sessions specified the dress to be of parti-color, one half yellow and the other brown, some thing after the style of the dress now worn in English prisons by the worst class of prisoners, those who have attempted to escape or been guilty of murderous assaults on officers. The enactment also provided that the bankrupt should be exhibited publicly in the market place of his town for a period of two hours and then sent away, condemned to wear the dress until such time as he had paid his debts or some one else had done it for him.

Although this was a period of law which can only be described as ferocious, this law was such an outrage on public sentiment that in 1688 it was so far repealed that the wearing of the dress was only compulsory in cases in which fraud had been proved, or curiously enough, if the bankrupt had been convicted of smuggling. The same practice was legal, but not generally in force in England down to the year 1836. The idea was, of course, to warn persons who might have given credit that the bankrupt was not able to pay, but popular sentiment soon recognized that it was wholly unfair to impose excessive penalties on a man who might have become bankrupt through no fault of his own, and, as usual, when the law became contrary to public feeling it ceased to be operative.

Higher than a King.

"I have played cards enough to become fairly familiar with what slang," said one American financier, "but I don't quite see why you refer to as ace as a Pierpont Morgan."

"Because," replied the other, "it's bigger than a king."—London Answers

According to statistics, out of each 1,000 people in love sixteen become hopelessly insane. The other 984 are only temporarily out of their heads.