

# MY POOR WIFE.

BY J. P. SMITH.

## CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

As she looked the prayer for help died on her lips, the tumult in her heart ceased, and she knew Edith's husband was at that moment as safe from molestation from her as if already ten thousand miles of water flowed between them. No impulse urged her as she had feared, to throw herself at his feet and tell him she could never leave him again, that he must give up home and children for her sake. No, she felt she could sit in his presence till morning, watch him playing with his children, chatting familiarly with his so-called wife, and never even wish to claim him as her own, because her love for him was dead. She cared no more for him for whom she had sacrificed her youth, almost her life.

She watched him passing out, followed by his family, then rose with a bewildered gesture, scarcely knowing where she was. She looked at her companion, still sleeping in her corner, from her to Mrs. Dennys, who came frowning in for the fourth and last time, and who addressed her unceremoniously.

"Oh! Can you tell me, please, if my maid has returned? No? If she does will you tell her the box has been found, and we—" Then the maid appearing, she went on, "Oh, here you are! The box has turned up and we are ready to start at last. Are the children in the landau? I am taking Master Percy in the brougham with me. Be sure to put my dressing-gale on the front seat. I think that's all. Oh, if ever I travel with such a nursery again!" she muttered, impatiently fastening on a gauze veil before the glass. "I wonder where Paul is? Does he intend driving in the brougham or laudau? I haven't seen—"

"Mr. Dennys, madam, has gone on foot—he said it was such a fine night he would like to walk across the fields."

"Fine night! Why, it is raining hard and blowing almost a gale. Extraordinary idea!"

At last the station was clear of Mrs. Dennys, her nursery, maids and footmen; and Helen, unable to bear the air of the room where so many emotions had been crowded, went out to breathe in the gale.

She hurried along heedless of where she was going, her cumbersome bonnet swinging in her hand, her cloak flying out behind her like a great black wing. Was she glad or sorry, relieved or disappointed? Had she ever loved him at all, even in those sunny days before she had heard Edith's name? If she had lived out her life in peace by his side, if he had never wanted to desert her, never cared for another, would she in time have come to feel towards him as she had felt at that moment? Would he have fallen by degrees from the pedestal on which she had placed him, or would he have always remained enthroned in her foolish infatuated eyes?

These and a hundred other questions she asked herself vainly, as she hurried through the storm; but she could find no answer, her mind was racked for the moment, the only feeling clear to her was a sense of self-pity and contempt for the years she had wasted in futile anguish.

Even now the tempter whispered, was it too late? After all she was only twenty-six—years of youth lay before her if she wished. Why not coax fire and life back to her dimmed eyes, paint her pale cheeks, let her dark hair grow, and taste pleasure after her long fast therefrom? Why not bring men to her feet, shallow faithless men, as she had done before—make other wives weep as she had wept? Surely she had endured enough already; was there sense in donning sackcloth and ashes to the end, denying herself constantly, living in the midst of misery, disease and death, when she had been no wilful sinner, but one who had been sinned against from the beginning?

Thus cynically musing, she leaned over the bridge under which she had once passed, fighting unconsciously for the life she had longed to destroy, and peered into the dark water.

"What a fool I was—what a wild mad fool," she laughed bitterly; "and my mother before me! Only there was no turning back for you, poor mother—no turning back for you!"

With a shudder she passed aimlessly on, her short hair blowing about her face, and went into the churchyard again. She paused among the reeds; then, turning down the side path that led to the cross, the moon shone full for a moment upon the dreary spot, and she distinctly saw the figure of a man stretched face downwards on her grave, and that man was Edith's husband.

With a stifled scream, her hands instinctively flying to her face, she started back, and Paul, looking up, saw her. She heard his voice upraised in a loud cry—a cry that went to her heart like a knife and sent every nerve in her body quivering with a fierce pain of old, which she had believed stilled forever; one second's scared inaction and the next she was across the churchyard, flying as if for her life.

Soon she heard his voice, then footsteps following eagerly. Redoubling her speed she struggled on, knocking

against headstones and cypresses, stumbling over the low grassy mounds that covered the nameless dead, longing for some grave to open and engulf her, for the suffocating waters to close round her again and bear her out of reach of him, whom she, alas, still loved better than her own life or her eternal welfare, whose peace, home, happiness she was about to destroy forever.

Her breath came in panting gasps, the ground surged under her feet. Nearer and nearer came the pursuing sounds, and clearer the entreating voice. Unless the moon would slip behind that bank of heavy cloud, towards which it was traveling, oh, so slowly, and enable her to drop into the ditch that lined the churchyard in three more strides, she felt that all was lost, the purpose of her seven years' struggle in vain—in vain—oh, worse than a thousand times in vain, she knew!

It was. She never reached the sheltering ditch, his hand fell heavily upon her shoulder, and with a moan of despair, the poor soul dropped to the ground and lay at his feet cowering and whimpering in the wet grass like a frightened child.

After a short silent struggle he lifted her up and plucked her hands from her face.

"It is you—you!" he cried. "Helen, my wife, oh heaven!"

The moon just grazing the murky mass of vapour, covered them in her wan white glare. Helen, numb with horror, looked at him whom a short half hour before she had seen in the bloom of prosperous comely prime, now changed—changed into a haggard, storm-beaten aged man, with dimmed heavy eyes, worn wistful face, and hair plentifully sprinkled with grey, robbed of youth, health, hope, peace, by that moment's glance at her.

At this piteous sight love rose in arms, quickened her fainting soul, and roused her numbed limbs to resistance. She struggled and shook him off fiercely.

"Who—who are you? How dare you—you touch me? What do you mean? Are you—you mad or—tipsy, to assault a harmless stranger like that? I—I—"

"Helen, Helen," he exclaimed, in a sighing whisper—"oh Helen!"

She stammered, stopped, swayed irresolutely, then burst out violently—"Helen! Why do you call me that? I—I am not Helen. She—she was drowned seven years ago in that water. You know it—you know it as well as I. You must be—must be mad! Oh, go back—go back, I tell you, to your wife, your children, your home—go, let me depart."

"I have no home, no children, no wife but you."

His arms were round her, pinioning her tightly to her side, his hot breath fanning her face.

"Liar!" she panted, pushing his lips from hers. "Liar! I saw you, not an hour ago, at the station with her, your children in your arms—I heard you—"

"You saw my brother, Arthur, with his children and wife, to whom he has been married for the last ten years—not me. Helen, my wife, love of my life, how could you treat me so—how?" he asked, tears choking his voice.

"Your brother, Arthur, and his wife—not you—not you!" she murmured dizzily, and closed her eyes. "I think—I think—I knew it all along. Oh, I think I knew it wasn't you!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

He took her to a little quiet village within sound of the sea, she loved so well, and then by strict medical injunctions kept from her all subjects likely to disturb or agitate her mind. It was no difficult task; she never once alluded to the past, or showed any anxiety to learn the history of the seven years they had spent apart—a blissful lethargy came over her, and the mere fact of living, of being together again, was sufficient for her. She wanted no explanation, no mutual confession, no explanation, no mutual confession, no cursing back into the land of trouble and sorrow she had left, he assured her, behind forever. But it was different with him. Jealousy even in the supreme moment of his happiness was already gnawing at his heart and he knew he could not live with her in peace and let those seven years sleep.

One day, about a week after their reunion, she was well enough to take a little turn on the shore; the soft salt breeze blowing in her face brought there a tinge of returning health and youth that tempted him to make an effort to recall the past. She looked at him with mournful eyes, then said with peevish pathos—

"What—can you not let me be, Paul? I am alive and happy now—why drag me back to death and torment? I want to forget it all—"

"And so do I," he answered eagerly; "but I cannot, I cannot, my wife, if you will not speak. Men are different from women, and, if I do not know how and where you spent those seven years, they will poison my peace until the day I die. Tell me now, and I will forget them, put them from me after this hour, no matter what—what you tell me."

She sighed restlessly, then spoke.

"So be it. The first three years after I left home. I—I spent, Paul, in—a—"

She stopped, her eyes fell, she slipped her little wasted hand wistfully into his.

"Go on," he said hoarsely. "You—you have begun; I must hear all now. You spent in a—"

"Lunatic asylum, a pauper lunatic asylum outside London."

"My darling! Oh, my poor darling!" he cried, covering her hand with kisses, in a burst of compassion and relief.

"Our—our little son was born there," she continued softly, after a slight pause, "and after a few weeks of life went peacefully to Heaven. He—he was a nice little child, they told me, Paul, with fair hair like yours, and very dark eyes. I—I don't remember him at all; but they kept me this lock of his hair; it's pretty and soft, isn't it? Poor little mite! I never gave him a thought or a tear; he was as well without, I dare say."

"The night you left me you went straight to—the asylum?" he prompted, after a long pause, during which they had sat with trembling hands close clasped.

"No, no, to the river—to the river," she answered quickly and feverishly, a bright spot burning on her cheek. "I was mad, you know, quite—quite mad, though I knew what I—I was trying to do, and remembered it afterwards. You got my letter? You heard about my poor mother, how I deceived you—how they all deceived you—yes?" She paused to take breath, then went on quickly as if she were repeating a lesson she loathed, but was forced to say—

"I wanted to kill myself and end it all—I saw no harm. I jumped off the first bridge above the churchyard where the water was deep, and the weight of my clothes kept me under until I was half drowned; then nature asserted itself. I could swim, you know, in the wildest seas, and, no longer able to bear the agony of suffocation even in my madness, I struck out for the bank, and then I suppose—for I remember nothing clearly after that—wandered aimlessly across the country all night and next day. I was taken up as a homeless vagrant, lodged in a poor-house, and thence sent to the asylum, where after a couple of years memory by degrees came back to me.

(To be Continued.)

## "COLD" ICE HIS SPECIALTY.

Peculiar Cry Adopted by an Itinerant Vendor of Chicago.

From Chicago Democrat: "It is queer what devices men will resort to in order to sell their wares," said a well known man about town yesterday. "Advertising is quite a science these days, but a friend of mine from the south side tells a good yarn of an ice dealer. This dealer was one of those wanderers who have a few pounds of ice in a spring wagon and who have no regular customers. They haunt the alleys on hot days bawling their wares after the regulars' have made their rounds. They pick up quite a few nickels in the course of a day. It was one of the hottest days of the late fall, a Sunday, and the regular wagons had long since retired for the day. My friend was about half out of ice and placed his fate in the hands of the peripatetics. He was on watch to nail the first one who came along. He has a keen sense of fun and enjoyed the sport. Finally, when he had about given up, he heard the long and eagerly wished-for cry. An iceman was progressing down the alley. My friend went forth, waited and was rewarded. The dealer was a colored man who was earnestly appealing for all to buy. 'Ice!' he bawled, looking about as his nag moved slowly along. 'Ice, cold ice!' 'What kind of ice is that?' asked my friend, dubiously. 'Cold ice, sir; it's the coldest in town.' 'Well, I'd take some if I wasn't afraid the heat would spoil it,' was the retort, as my friend turned to re-enter the house. The colored man looked after him in amazement, but made no reply. He proceeded on his rounds, but changed his cry, for he seemed to fear the coldness would prove a hoodoo instead of a blessing."

## Plants Killed by Heat.

The ordinary furnace-heated house is a bad place in which to grow plants. The air seems to have had all the dampness removed, and that moist condition so conducive to a good growth in plants is not found. This may in a measure be overcome by means of evaporation, which, while not supplying a great amount of moisture, should do something toward relieving the bad condition of the atmosphere. Place jars or pans of water in, around or about the furnace, hang buckets of water down inside the furnace pipes, below the registers, or place them anywhere that rapid evaporation may be induced. Keep all the plants in light, airy locations, but away from drafts. Never consign a well-grown specimen palm to a corner of the room, though it may look better there. Its beautiful appearance will last a short time only in the dark, close place. It may seem strange to some, but the very best place in the house, if the temperature can there be maintained at an even point, is the kitchen, because of the constant evaporation of the water as it puffs forth from the spout of the tea as it puffs forth from the mouth of the teakettle.

## Bravery.

Watts—I noticed a photograph of a wildcat not long ago, taken just when the beast was about to spring at the photographer. Potts—That is nothing. Peck has a snapshot he took of his wife as she was coming at him with a kettle of hot water.—Indianapolis Journal.

## WORK OF PROTECTION

### OUR FOREIGN TRADE AND ITS VAST SIGNIFICANCE.

James R. Keene Points Out the Tremendous Increase of National Wealth Resulting from the Increase of Exports and the Decrease of Imports.

A notably impressive statement is that of Mr. James R. Keene regarding the present fiscal position of the United States, chiefly as the result of an economic policy which has increased the use and consumption of our domestic products while at the same time diminishing our use of the products of other countries. Nobody will accuse Mr. Keene of talking politics when he draws attention to this wonderful development of national prosperity. Indeed, so far as any public expression of his on that subject goes he can hardly be said to have any politics.

Jay Gould once said that while he belonged to any or all parties, his only politics was the Erie road. Mr. Keene's politics may be said, in the same sense, to be the stock exchange. Judged by the authorized interview which he gave out for publication a few days ago he ought to be a Republican and a protectionist, but if he has not said so. In that interview, while testifying to a condition which could only proceed from eighteen months of protection, he refrains from the acknowledgment of any obligation to the system which defends the great home market as a means of enabling American producers to successfully reach out after the world's markets. But we should let Mr. Keene tell the story of protection's grand achievements in his own way. He says:

"To my mind the foreign trade of the United States is the fundamental factor in the present situation. Most people have apparently not yet appreciated its significance. The government figures of foreign trade show: Excess of exports year ending June 30, 1896, \$85,997,983; excess of exports year ending June 30, 1897, \$265,621,112; excess of exports year ending June 30, 1898, \$6,615,259,124. Total for three years, \$966,878,219. Excess exports July 1 to October 30, 1898, four months, \$165,799,884, making a total of \$1,100,000,000.

"Here is an addition of over \$1,100,000,000 to the wealth of the country from surplus products in a little over three years. There is a persistent and importunate demand for our grain, provisions, cotton and manufactured products, which insures for the fiscal year ending June 30 next another large excess of exports. The total gain to the country in four years will probably be in excess of \$1,500,000,000.

"The trade statement for the three preceding years is important, showing the gradual growth of foreign trade: Year ending June 30, 1893, excess of imports, \$18,735,728; year ending June 30, 1894, excess of exports, \$237,145,950; year ending June 30, 1895, excess of exports, \$64,076,782. These net sales of surplus products must be paid for in some form. Foreign nations did not have \$1,100,000,000 gold to remit, they sent us some gold and some securities. Today they owe us in various forms large amounts of money in the shape of liabilities, as, for example, exchange, the collection of which has been deferred. The debt, moreover, will grow instead of decreasing. We have not demanded money due us by foreign nations, because of the fear of disturbing momentary affairs in England, Germany, France and other countries, and because it pays us to leave it at interest.

"A gratifying feature of our foreign trade is the growth in exports of manufacture. In 18 years these have nearly trebled. Last year they were nearly \$300,000,000. There is every prospect that this growth will continue. We have imported fewer manufactured goods because we have learned how to make our own, and with improved machinery, abundant raw material and skilled and well-fed workmen, we compete with the world in manufactures as never before. The opening of Chinese and other eastern markets will furnish new and almost unlimited opportunities.

It is this enormous debt of foreign nations to us which has made money so easy throughout the country, flooded the west with capital, filled western banks to repletion, and brought western men in large numbers to invest in our securities.

"Hardly one man in a thousand in the United States realizes this change. The power of \$1,500,000,000 increased wealth no one can controvert. The figures are so stupendous and the logic is so irresistible that the student stands aghast. Few have ever seen these figures grouped in this form, and even the financial writers of the press, clever and able as they are, have not seemed to grasp their magnitude and the irresistible investment and speculative momentum they have unquestionably exercised. It must also be remembered that while this increased wealth is from exports only, the country itself has grown richer in even greater proportion. There has been nothing like this foreign trade statement in the history of the commerce of any country."

This picture, drawn by the master hand of one of the world's leaders in finance and business, is remarkable for its truth, its simplicity and its power. Nothing need be added to it.

## Answered in Thirteen Words.

The American line of steamships, plying between New York and Southampton, is in existence, but is heavily

subsidized for carrying the mails. Our coastwise marine is large, because foreign competition is excluded by law. Will the Republican leaders permit Americans to buy vessels in Europe, and then nationalize them? If they will not do that, nor remove the tax from building materials and the vessels when launched, then how is the American merchant marine to be rebuilt?—Paris edition New York Herald.

You have already answered the question, if you were logical enough to know it. Here is the answer out of your own mouth:

"Our coastwise marine is large, because foreign competition is excluded by law."

There is the whole thing in thirteen words. Exclude (that is, penalize, by means of discriminating duties) by law foreign competition in our foreign carrying trade, and will not our over-sea marine be large? Discrimination has built up Great Britain's merchant navy to its present tremendous proportion; discrimination maintains British marine supremacy today. It will do the same for the United States. What we want to do is to exclude foreign competition on the sea, precisely as we do on the land.

## FOREIGN LABELS.

Popular Increase Regarding the True Value of American Products.

It is a reflection upon the intelligence of American women when the "American Silk Journal" asserts that even at this late day, when everybody should know better, American silks are in some instance marked "imported" as a means of persuading people to buy them. A similar ignorance and prejudice prevails among men regarding American wines. No matter how perfect the champagne or the still wine, no matter how much purer and more wholesome they may be than the average of imported goods sold at the same or even a higher price, there are plenty of otherwise intelligent men whose taste is governed by the fact of a foreign label, and who refuse to drink American wines.

It is a well-established commercial fact that American silk fabrics are not now surpassed by any in the world, and it is equally a fact, though not so generally known, that, price for price, American wines are positively better than imported wines. There is too much ignorance on these subjects. Americans should understand once for all that the boasted superiority of foreign silks and foreign wines is for the most part a bogus pretense, and that if not a yard of imported silk or a bottle of imported wine should come to this country American ladies could still wear as fine silks and American gentlemen could be provided with as fine wines as would be required to satisfy the demands of style in the one case and the demands of the palate in the other.

Encle Sam's Educational Chart.



## Apparent Even to Mugwumps.

Our anti-protectionist friends should study the export statistics of Bradford, or in fact of any other place which was specially favored under the Wilson tariff. The best demonstration of the efficacy of the Dingley tariff to provide for the domestic manufacturer may be found in the developments among importing houses. When houses which have in the past ignored and scorned accounts of domestic mills turn to these accounts in an appealing and solicitous way, it may be inferred that the business for which they have been organized has become a thing of the past. The fact that several of these importing houses are to retire from business is significant. So, also, is the fact significant that nearly all of those intending to remain in business are today reaching for domestic accounts. When importers go out of business, when Bradford looms which have been formerly employed on American business are idle, when a tariff bar which is insurmountable has been imposed, it may be inferred that it will not be long before domestic manufacturers will reap the benefit of their home market, before the effects of the Dingley law, which effectively keeps out foreign goods, will be apparent even to such rampant anti-protectionists as the New York Post and the Boston Herald.—Textile Manufacturer's Journal.

## A National Necessity.

"The part which American merchant vessels and their seamen performed in the war with Spain demonstrates that this service (the American merchant fleet), furnishing both pickets and the second line of defense, is a national necessity, and should be encouraged in every constitutional way."—President McKinley's message to congress, Dec. 5, 1898.

Of about thirty recognized sailing stations in the Pacific, Great Britain owns at least twelve, and the United States six.

## SHOULD THE SKIES FALL?

Free-Trade's Foolishly Foreshadowed the Abandonment of Protection.

The Wheeling (W. Va.) News expresses the belief that protection has been practically abandoned, and that another great political battle will never be fought on that issue. The reasons for this belief are stated as follows:

"Our industries have long since passed the swaddling clothes period; our manufacturers, who ten years ago were ardent protectionists, are now confident of their own ability to compete with the world in the world's markets. For the great majority of our more important industries, the tariff duty has ceased to be a protection; it is simply a tax, and in many cases a hindrance to the upbuilding of foreign trade. The necessities of revenue will hereafter be the important consideration in the regulation of tariff duties, and in a few years we may confidently expect to see the complete disappearance of the protective policy."

One by one the Democratic newspapers are taking their cue from Cobdenite headquarters and joining in the assertion that protection has outlived its usefulness and is about to be abandoned by its friends. This line of argument is now taking the place of the abuse and denunciation which free trade writers formerly indulged in regarding the defensive policy. Not so much is heard nowadays as formerly about the "failure of protection," its "robbery of the many for the benefit of the few," its "destructiveness of all possibility of foreign trade expansion," and all that sort of thing.

The present attitude of the enemies of home development is not so openly aggressive as before, for it implies a tacit acknowledgment of the effectiveness of protection in building up domestic industries to the self-sustaining point, and in enabling American manufacturers to successfully invade the markets of the world. All this is necessarily granted, for otherwise there would be no ground for the contention that the manufacturers themselves are leading the way in the movement for a complete abandonment of the protective system.

Of course, the contention is false and foolish, but it is none the less popular among free traders on that account. Nobody possessed of a logical mind and a fairly developed faculty of discerning the difference between the probable and the impossible will fail to perceive the utter absurdity of a proposition that involves the sacrifice of \$3,000,000,000 safely in hand in exchange for \$288,000,000 mostly in the bush. The bird-in-the-hand proverb never contemplated so wild and hopeless a disproportion of risk and profit as that which is expressed in the surrender to foreign competition of \$3,000,000,000 worth of home trade for the possible acquirement of a little more than 3 per cent of that amount in foreign trade. Yet that is precisely what is involved in the proposition that the manufacturing interests of the United States are now ready for the abandonment of protection and the inauguration of free trade as the American policy. If the skies should fall it would be easy enough to catch larks. Such is the cheerful and expectant feeling of free traders regarding the probable course of American industrial interests. When the manufacturers are agreed that protection is no longer requisite for the control of the home market and the occupation of foreign markets at one and the same time, then shall we have free trade. The Cobdenites are waiting for the skies to fall.

## A Good Thing to Learn.

Consular reports from several of the wine districts of Europe are very unfavorable. This year's yield of the vineyards is smaller than usual, and the grapes are sour and of an inferior quality. On the contrary, the yield in the grape-growing districts of the United States for 1898 has been fully up to the average, while in quality the grapes have never been surpassed. Experience and the knowledge gained therefrom have done wonders for the grape and wine industry of the United States. Nowhere in the world is a higher degree of skill or a greater care exercised in grape culture and wine production than in our own country. As a consequence the question of equality or quantity as regards the European vintages is becoming less and less important to the American people. They are beginning to learn that in wines, as in many other articles of use and luxury, America can get along very well without any importations. It is a good thing to learn.

## Bad for Spanish Merchants.

Porto Rico continues to buy large quantities of supplies from Spain. That is because under existing arrangements the Spaniards are the most favored nation dealing with Porto Rico. When the Porto Rican tariff is the same as that of the United States, some of the Spanish merchants who have been getting wealthy off the trade with the islands will discover a sudden and disastrous falling off in their business. The majority of the ships delivering goods at Porto Rico will be sailing under American register soon after the tariff is extended to our new possession.—Buffalo Review.

## Under the American Flag.

"There should be established regular and frequent steamship communication, encouraged by the United States, under the American flag, with the newly acquired islands."—President McKinley's message to congress, Dec. 5, 1898.