

their glance, I gave that promise, which, as God helped me, I remembered to the end.

My almost unconquerable dislike for the society of other children was quickly dispelled by the winsome, winning ways of little Mary Clifford. My father's house-keeper a woman of superior attainments, became her governess; but she soon learned to come to me for help in her lessons, and for sympathy in all her childish sorrows. Before she was a month beneath our roof she had become, indeed, my playmate and constant companion in all my boyish sports. A quick, thoughtful child, gray beyond her years, she seemed to love solitude, and make rapid progress in her studies. But at any moment she would joyfully throw her books aside to accompany me to the river for a morning's fishing, or to the woods behind the house on a bird-nesting expedition. It has been said, with truth, that while youth lives in the future, old age exists in the past; and I could linger for hours now among the memories of those childhood days. But it must not be.

In my seventeenth year I left my home to enter the Belgian college I have already named, as a student; and how bitterly I felt the parting with Mary Clifford.

I remained five years abroad before I again returned to Ireland, for it was my father's wish that I should spend each succeeding vacation in travelling through the country in endeavoring to acquire a general knowledge of the methods of Flemish farming. Those five years of my student life were not the least happy of my existence; but as the period of my college course was drawing to a close, how impatiently I looked forward to a meeting with my former playmate. The picture of Mary Clifford as I had last seen her, remained through all those years, photographed on my memory. A dark-eyed, dark-browed and somewhat untidy little girl, whose unruly curls had shaded her tear-stained face, as she gave violent expression to her feelings on the morning of my parting, and sobbed out her sorrow in my arms, as if her very heart would break.

I had anticipated the date of my expected arrival home by a day or two, I believe, and therefore no vehicle awaited me at the little station where my journey by rail terminated. Avoiding the ordinary road I choose a narrower pathway that led more directly to the Willow Farm. A walk of half an hour through meadows fragrant with the breath of the new-mown hay, through cornfields where the full-eared golden grain awaited the sickle of the reaper, and I was at home. The hall door, as I was usual, lay hospitably open, and unnoticed I entered the house. Let me confess, it was with an accelerated action of the heart that I turned to the quaintly door, and passed into the quaintly furnished old-fashioned parlour. I had prepared this surprise for Mary Clifford herself. Almost every woman who had consummate a mistress I argued, who, with slight preparation to sustain a role rarely fails to hide her real feelings, when it is not her one to "wear her heart upon her sleeve for daws to peck at." Entering on her presence unexpectedly, Mary Clifford was taken at a disadvantage, and by some apparently trivial sign, a heightened color on her cheeks, a tremor in the intonation of her voice, perhaps, I might discover with what feelings she remembered me. As I closed the door behind me, a young girl entered the open French window from the garden, and pausing abruptly, regarded me earnestly for a moment. Could I believe the evidences of my startled senses? Had the little girl with whom I had parted five years ago ripened into the promise of such a glorious womanhood? Was this tall and stately and beautiful girl who stood before me, with a smile upon the sweetly mobile mouth, and a slender hand stretched out to greet me, the Mary Clifford whom I had known?

"We did not expect you until Thursday, Lloyd," she said quietly, "and my father is at the fair of T—but I am glad to be the first to welcome you home."

"Mary," I said, "Mary can this be you?"

"It would be strange if you doubted my identity," she said meaningly.

The perfect composure, the sang froid of her manner annoyed me. Her imperturbability was in striking contrast with my own nervous excitement. This conveyed an idea, which I thought suddenly would effectually turn the tables on Mary. By a rapid motion I seized her in my arms, and before she could resist, I pressed a dozen kisses on her lips and cheeks and brow. With an effort she released herself from my embrace. Her face was crimsoned with blushes, and although I thought a smile still lurked around the corners of her mouth, her voice was grave almost to severity as she said:

"Mr. Leighton, you may have acquired the intellectual culture of a scholar in the University of Louvain, but I fear you have not learned the manners of a gentleman."

I was profuse in my apologies for my ebullition of feeling, and really sincere, for I felt that Mary was angry. However, I had made my peace with her before my father returned.

The days passed on, and the knowledge had already dawned upon me that I loved Mary Clifford. How could it be otherwise, living as I had in the closest intimacy with a refined and lovely girl, whose every thought and every word was womanly. Was there ever yet a young fellow of two and twenty who believed in that stupendous sham called Estatic love? Such an intimacy as existed between Mary and me could only result in a passion warmer than friendship or a feeling born of indifference. A frosty platitudinist I admit, but in its very truthfulness lies its application.

After the lapse of many years, how well I remember the day when I revealed the secret of my love to Mary Clifford, and asked her to be my wife. It was an evening late in October, and down among the willows by the riverside. The keen air and a brisk walk from T—had brought the color to the pale olive complexion which she had inherited from her Castilian mother, and never had I seen her look more lovely. It was not in the stilted phrases which a modern novelist puts into the mouth of a lover, but with a plainness which suited me best, that I spoke to Mary. It may be that she was not unprepared for the avowal. She looked with girlish frankness in my eyes, and placing her hands trustfully into mine she said: "If you wish it, Lloyd—if you are willing to take me with all my faults and imperfections, I will try and be a good wife to you."

And that was all. A very prosaic wooing, no doubt; but, my God, what a full tide of happiness surged upon my heart as I pressed the betrothal kiss on the lips of my affianced wife.

"That night I told my father all," Lloyd, he said, "it has been my hope for many years to see you and Mary united. I congratulate you, for the man who succeeded in winning the affections of my darling little girl, may, indeed, be envied."

And it was arranged that we should be married in the following spring.

Early in December business of some importance with my father's lawyer brought me to Dublin. I was detained in the city a much longer period than I anticipated, or, indeed, desired, for with the anxiety of a lover, I counted the hours until I would be back again at the Willow Farm with Mary. What puppets mortals are in the hands of destiny. On the morning of my last day in town, I was walking rather aimlessly down Graston street, when an arm was thrust within my own, and a familiar voice exclaimed: "Dread Leighton, my dear friend, I am here!"

A cry of "Dread!" I heard, and I had left behind me at Louvain, and between whom and me a very warm friendship existed. A well-built, athletic young fellow of my own age, handsome as an Apollo, and possessing talent which in his college days distinguished him above all his competitors. But, like many young men of undoubted ability, he had neither the industry nor the capacity for steady work, which enabled others less gifted and less brilliant to bring the most coveted prizes from his grasp.

Leisurely strolling down the pleasant city thoroughfare, I learned from O'Donnell all that had happened to him since we parted in Louvain.

"You see," Leighton, the death of an old relative, a maiden aunt left me two thousand pounds. I immediately left college determined to see life as you, and I often dreamed of seeing it. I spent the summer in that delightful Val d'Arno we had often read of, scribbling sonnets to every Italian girl whose face or figure chance had caught my fancy, and for the rest enjoying the dolce far niente so grateful to a lazy beggar of a poet. In winter I formed acquaintance with one Baron Von Fingerstruik and the blue-eyed, fair-haired fraulein, his daughter. My days were impartially divided between the pair. In the mornings the Baron obligingly initiated me into the mysteries of eacute, and in the evenings the charming, staid and dignified German was in the conjugation of German from its beginning and ending with "Ich liebe."

"I got through half my inheritance before I escaped from Baden, and now here I am on a farewell visit to this dear, delightful Dublin before I leave the haunts of civilization behind me forever. In a week I depart for the backwoods of Canada to begin life anew as a frontiersman."

"Well, O'Donnell, you will remember the promise you made me long ago to visit the Willow Farm. Come and spend the Christmas with us."

"Agreed; and now you will be my guest for the remainder of the day. A dinner at the Shelbourne, a visit to the Jude's. That's the programme, old man."

That Christmas at the Willow Farm was the pleasantest I can remember in all my life. Aubrey O'Donnell would have been a welcome addition to any family circle. He possessed a tuneful voice, and was a capital raconteur, while his high animal spirits and unflagging good humor were positively infectious. His visit had been prolonged to a month, and my father, with whom he had become a great favorite, readily pressed him to spend the summer with us; but Aubrey resolutely refused. He was impatient, he told us, to begin his new life on the Western Continent.

On the evening before his departure he rode into L... to bid farewell to the dispensary doctor, whose acquaintance he had formed at the Willow Farm.

"We shall be very lonely when Aubrey leaves," my father remarked in the course of the evening. "Do you not think, Mary, you could induce him to remain until after your wedding even?"

"I think not, sir," was Mary's answer, "and, indeed, I believe he is wise in his resolve no longer to fetter away his time in idleness here. When a young man has his way to make in the world the sooner he takes up his sleeves to the work the better for himself."

We had waited long beyond our usual dinner hour for Aubrey, who promised us when leaving that morning that nothing would detain him in T—more than a couple of hours. The night had already fallen, and he did not return. "There is no sign in waiting room, and letting the dinner spoil, if it isn't spoilt already," my father said, "Prosby old Dr. Kerr has held fast to the poor boy, and is boring him for the last time with some of his infernal crochets about evolution and the origin of species."

We had just taken our places at the table when a man servant, pale and agitated, entered the room. He approached my father, and in a voice little above a whisper, said: "There was an accident, sir, I am sorry to say, Mr. O'Donnell—"

My father started from his seat in a state of excitement as he exclaimed: "What of him—what accident has befallen him?"

"He was thrown from his horse at the lodge gate below, and I'm afraid he's badly injured. They're bringing him up the avenue now."

My father rushed from the room, bare-headed as he was, and I turned to where Mary sat. She had grown very pale, but sought to hide her agitation under an outward show of calmness, which, it was evident to me, she was far from feeling.

"Mary," I said, "Our poor friend, Aubrey, may not be seriously hurt; but as they are likely to bring him in here, had you not better retire to your own room. I shall immediately ride into T—for Dr. Kerr."

"No, no, Lloyd," she answered somewhat impatiently. "Do you think a woman must necessarily be a coward in such an emergency as this. Surely I may be of some use in attending on the sufferer."

There was a shuffling of feet in the hall as she spoke, the door was opened by my father, and four farm laborers bore the unconscious form of Aubrey O'Donnell into the room. They laid him gently on the sofa, and my father, who possessed some little skill in such matters, proceeded to make a hasty examination as to the nature and locality of his injuries.

"Is he dead, do you think, Lloyd?" Mary whispered, in a voice that trembled despite her effort to control it. "He looks so pale and still."

My father overheard her question, and answered quickly, "No, no, Mary, his heart still beats; but I fear he is badly injured. Lloyd, you had better go at once for Dr. Kerr; and do not let the grass grow under your horse's hoofs."

Within an hour I returned, accompanied by the doctor. By the use of restoratives, Aubrey had been brought back to consciousness, but he was still suffering great pain. "From the extent of the stroke," he said, "I apprehend that the injuries he has sustained will be severe, but not dangerous. A displaced shoulder, and fractured rib would, however, hold him a prisoner in the house for many days to come."

As Mary Clifford nursed the patient through his illness, they spent of necessity much time in each others society. The spring work on the farm kept me out of doors from early morning until the dinner hour; and it was only in the evenings I had a chance of seeing either. A change had come over the girl, which, as the days passed on, became more and more apparent. She had grown pale and thinner, and seemed to have altogether lost her spirits. The sweet melody of her voice was no longer heard in the house, and she had lost all interest in pursuits which had formerly filled up the measure of her duties and enjoyments. I spoke to her once regarding my fears of her health; but she told me those fears were altogether groundless. Unsatisfied with this assurance, I pressed her to consult a doctor, and she answered me almost impatiently. "No, no, Lloyd, there is no necessity. My spirits are not the best of late, I admit; but with the coming of spring flowers, you will see me myself again. Under her care, Aubrey O'Donnell had rapidly recovered strength, and was already making preparations for his departure, when a telegram from my father's lawyer one morning suddenly summoned me to Dublin. I would just have time to walk over to the railway station to catch the mid-day train, and as the day was a particularly fine one I decided not to bother with a car to take me over. As the lodge gate I met Mary, who had been out for a morning walk, and was aware of the messages that called me away from home. Her face flushed suddenly when I told her, and as she quickly pale. A frightened look stole into her eyes, and a shiver ran through her frame, as I placed my arm round her waist and drew her gently to me.

"This is our last parting, Mary," I said. "In another month you will be all my own. I wish we could induce Aubrey to remain until after our marriage."

To my surprise she was weeping; weeping bitterly in my arms; and the memory of the day five years before, when on that very spot I held her a sobbing little girl to my breast, came back with tender recollection to me.

"O, Lloyd, Lloyd," she exclaimed. "I am not worthy to be your wife."

"My poor child, you are growing quite nervous, and I shall insist on you seeing Dr. Kerr when I return."

I pressed a kiss upon her lips and said good by. Mary had always been chary of her caresses; but now, with an impulse of tenderness which was not usual with her, she returned the kiss.

"Good by, dear Lloyd, and may Heaven guard you."

Though many years have passed away, the memory of that parting with my affianced wife has never faded from my memory. Even now as I write these lines I can, in fancy, see her as she stood there at the gate, wearing a last farewell before, at a turning of the road, I was lost to her sight.

On the evening following I returned from Dublin, and somewhat to my astonishment, my father was awaiting me at the railway station. His manner was unusually grave as he caught my hand; and the fear that he was the bearer of evil tidings, made my voice unsteady, as I asked, "Is there anything wrong, sir, is Mary ill?"

His eyes flashed angrily as I asked the question, and thrusting his hand within my arm, he said in sharp, stern tones, "I brought no car over. We will walk home, I want to talk to you."

"For God's sake, tell me, sir, is Mary ill?"

"I wish she were dead," he exclaimed, and his voice trembled with the passion he could not suppress. "I wish she had died before she came beneath my roof, dissembling, hypocritical wretch. "My poor boy," he continued, in a calmer voice, as he marked the look of seared amazement on my face, "I have had news for you. I know, Lloyd, there are sorrows in life for which there is no antidote in the pharmacy of philosophy, yet I interrupted impatiently. "What is your news, sir? What of Mary?"

"My son, my son, your betrothed wife, Mary Clifford, has died with your dear friend, Aubrey O'Donnell."

"Mary died with Aubrey O'Donnell," I echoed hoarsely.

The hedgerows were swinging before my eyes. As a drowning man will hear the sound of surging waters in his ears, so I heard my father's voice, but his words to me were meaningless. We had reached the lodge gates before I could fully realize the bitter truth that Mary Clifford was lost to me for ever. 'Twas here I parted with her yesterday. Her kiss gave me even white spirit mediated her flight with Aubrey O'Donnell.

Here is a letter for you, directed in her hand-writing; my father said we entered the parlour, and placing the missive in my hand, mechanically stretched forth to receive it, he quietly left the room, and I was alone.

I broke the seal of Mary Clifford's letter, and read the story of a sweetheart's treason and the treachery of a friend. It was the confession of her love for Aubrey O'Donnell—a love which overmastered reason, she confessed; and tempted her to repay all the love which had been lavished on her since her childhood by ingratitude too base for the hope of forgiveness on this side of the grave.

A week later I received a Dublin newspaper containing a brief announcement of her marriage with Aubrey O'Donnell.

Two years passed, and I was alone in this old house of the Willow Farm. My father died after a brief illness, six months after Mary Clifford's flight. Never once, from the day she left our house, did he mention her name to me. It would seem as if he had blotted every remembrance of the girl he loved with a paternal affection from his memory. But I knew he thought of her constantly, and felt her desertion with a bitterness that soured the milk of human kindness in his breast. I knew how keenly he felt the disappointment to his most cherished hope on the very eve of its fruition.

Well, two years had passed, and one gloomy evening in March I was seated in this room musing, as some men will, on the vain regrets which add a poignancy to sorrow—thinking of Aubrey O'Donnell's wife, of whom I had never heard since I read the announcement of her marriage. To distract my thoughts with another channel I took up at haphazard one of a dozen newspapers lying on the desk beside me. It was an old copy of the London Times, and almost the first lines which met my eyes was the following short notice in the obituary column: "On Dec. 19th, at 4 Cambridge Grove, London, Aubrey O'Donnell, aged 24."

The paper fell from my trembling hands, and may heaven forgive me if my first feeling was a mad joy that Mary was again free; but the next moment my conscience smote me with a sense of my own baseness. She had lost the husband she so passionately loved; and the grief of

the young widowed wife had thrilled my being with a selfish exultation. She was friendless, amongst strangers in a strange land; and then flashed on my memory the promise I had made my father when I first beheld her: "If, in an hour of need, she should ever want a friend, I would sacrifice everything to secure her happiness."

Two days later I rang the bell at the door of No. 1 Cambridge Grove. A grave, elderly woman answered the summons, and, in answer to my inquiry, informed me that Mrs. O'Donnell still resided in the house.

"The poor lady has been ailing since a month before her husband's death, and saw no visitors," she told me; but upon my assurance that I was a very old friend of Mrs. O'Donnell's she consented to bring up my card, and ushered me into a sitting-room to await Mary's answer.

Five minutes later the door opened softly, and Mary O'Donnell and I stood face to face.

If I had ever entertained a feeling of bitterness towards the woman who had jilted me, it would have been dissipated as I gazed on the pinched and pallid face, that retained little traces of its former beauty. In a moment her hands were clasped in mine, as she said:

"Oh, Lloyd, you have come at last, when I was almost despairing of seeing your face again."

"It was only by the merest accident I saw the announcement of Aubrey's—of your husband's—death, and thus learned where you resided."

But we lived here from the time we came to London, as the three letters I wrote to your father should have informed you. How I waited and waited for one word of forgiveness, Lloyd—the word of forgiveness that never came."

Then she had written; and my father had concealed all knowledge of her letters from me. Truly he was relentless in his anger.

"Tis he who needs forgiveness now, Mary. He is dead."

The next moment I regretted that I had so abruptly broken the sad intelligence to her.

"Dead!" she repeated in a faint voice, as she sank to a seat, and covered her face with her hands. The heaving of her bosom told me of her agitation, and when she spoke again her voice trembled with emotion.

"Dead! My guardian, benefactor, father, dead, without a word of forgiveness from his lips!"

"Mary," I whispered, as I took a seat beside her, "believe me, he had no anger toward you in his heart on his death-bed. He always loved you, as if, indeed, you were his own child."

Before I left Mary that evening, I learned the story of her brief married life from her own lips. Aubrey O'Donnell had brought his young wife to London to spend the honeymoon. Always improvident and reckless in money matters, what remained to him of his fortune quickly melted from his hands; and when his pocket had dwindled to shillings, he turned to literature as a means of earning a livelihood, with a light heart. London embraced a wide field for men of brains and education, he argued. To be sure it was the city where Goldsmith drugged for booksellers, and Otway died from starvation; but times had changed since then, and fame and fortune might be won by the man of talent, who believed with Richelieu, "there is no such word as fail." And so Aubrey O'Donnell wrote articles and stories and poems for various magazines, and poor Mary, who had unbounded faith in her husband's abilities, could not conceal her contempt for the mental stupidity or aberration of editors, when his manuscripts were returned to him with the ominous words, "Declined with thanks, or as suitable."

I afterwards learned from some Bohemian friends of Aubrey O'Donnell, that repeated failures and disappointments drove him to excesses; but his wife was silent about his follies. Well, let us think charitably of those poor wayward sons of genius, who, if they err much, suffer more, it may be, than other mortals for their sins.

Success, however, came to the struggling litterateur, but when it was too late. A novel he had written in those days when despair had fastened on his heart, had been accepted by one of the leading magazines; but the letter that brought the welcome intelligence found him on a sick bed, delirious from brain fever. And the end soon came. Ten days later he was laid to rest in the quiet cemetery of Kensal Green.

As I looked into Mary's eyes she told me that mournful story of her husband's last illness and death, I knew as well as if she revealed the truth to me herself, that all her earthly love was buried in the lowly grave she visited every day. And yet not all. There was something left to her still to love. The baby girl twelve-month old, which later that night she placed in my arms—a pink and white morsel of humanity, that showed a chubby little fist between my eyes as I attempted to kiss her.

"I called her Grace because it was your mother's name," was Mary's simple remark.

No persuasion of mine could induce Mary to return to Ireland.

"It would break my heart if I could not daily visit his grave," she said to me once, "and I know I have not long to live, Lloyd."

With the exception of a week's visit to the Willow Farm, I spent the whole of the weary summer months that followed in London. I now know that the foreknowledge of approaching death haunted Mary at the time, although she bravely strove to hide the bitter knowledge from me. Doctors the most eminent in their profession were consulted with the forlorn hope that their skill might conquer her insidious disease, but only to hear the one verdict repeated. All earthly aid was unavailing to prolong her life. When the yellow autumn leaves were scattered on the roadside, the only woman I had ever loved was lying on the bed of death.

In the twilight of an evening in October I was seated by her couch, and the little Grace was sleeping calmly at her side.

"Lloyd," she said in a feeble voice, "have you truly forgiven me the wrong I once did you? It was a bitter wrong—but, oh, my best of friends, the temptation was greater than I could struggle with."

How often she had spoken to me like this before; and the Alpha and Omega of her plea, in extenuation of her flight with Aubrey O'Donnell was even the same. She was a woman and she loved him.

"Before I die, dear Lloyd, say that you forgive me, and have forgiven him."

"My darling, my darling, the heart that loved you through a lifetime had no room for bitterness towards you and him."

"Lloyd," she murmured, after a painful silence of some duration, "your father took me, when I was a little child, to his heart and home. Will his son not take the little one who will be motherless before the light of another day, and—love her for my sake?"

I can write no more. In the grey dawn of the following morning Mary O'Donnell breathed her last. We laid her beside her husband in Kensal Green; and I was, indeed, alone in the world with the little girl she had left in my keeping.

That little girl has grown into a woman now, and to-morrow, for one sweet moment, I shall hold her in my arms as I welcome her back to the Willow Farm; and some day in the future she will learn the secret of my lonely life when she reads this story of "Lloyd Leighton's Wooing."

### LOST FORTY POUNDS.

AN ILLNESS THAT ALMOST CARRIED AWAY AN ONLY CHILD.

She Suffered Terribly From Pains in Back, and Heart Trouble and Debility. Her Fortunate Almost Disputed Her Recovery—How It Was Brought About.

From the Axtor-Chronicle.

Perhaps there is no better known man in Arripport and vicinity than Mr. Martin Brennan, who has resided in the town for over a quarter of a century, and has taken an active part in many a political campaign in North Lanark. A reporter of the Chronicle called at his residence not long ago and was made at home at once. During a general conversation Mr. Brennan gave the particulars of a remarkable cure in his family. He said: "My daughter, Eleanor Elizabeth, who is now 14 years of age, was taken very ill in the summer of 1892 with back trouble, rheumatism and heart disease. She also became terribly nervous, and could not sleep. We sent for a doctor and he gave her a medicine which seemed to help her for a time, but she continued to lose in flesh until she was terribly reduced. When first taken ill she weighed one hundred, but became reduced to sixty pounds, losing forty pounds in the course of a few months. For about two years she continued in this condition, her health in a most delicate state, and we had very little hope of her ever getting better. Our friends advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I bought a box, and she was slightly improving, and by the time she had used the second box, a decided improvement had taken place. By the time she had used four boxes more she had regained her former weight of one hundred pounds, and was as well as ever, she had been in her life. Her back trouble, heart affection, rheumatism and sleeplessness had all disappeared. She now enjoys the best health, but still continues to take an occasional pill when Our foals a little, and she has not passed away. Mrs. Brennan, together with the young lady who is an only child, were present during the recital, and all were loud in their praises of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mr. Brennan also stated that he had used the pills himself and believing that there was no other medicine like them for building up a weakened system or driving away ahead of all other medicines."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills act directly upon the blood and nerves, building them anew and thus driving disease from the system. There is no trouble due to either of these causes which Pink Pills will not cure, and in hundreds of cases they have effected other cures that had failed. Ask for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and take nothing else. The genuine are always enclosed in boxes the wrapper around which bears the full trade name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." May be had from all dealers or sent post paid on receipt of 50 cents a box or 6 boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.