

A TERRIBLE WEDDING TRIP.

CHAPTER II.
CONCLUSION.

That month passed rapidly. Herbert, who had left us in London, in order that he might return to Cambridgeshire and make certain arrangements of his own, had promised to rejoin us on the day before that fixed for the wedding. He did not, however, make his appearance at Woodbine Cottage until late in the evening—so late that mamma, annoyed by his dilatoriness, hurried him off, almost before we had finished our greetings, to the hotel. At the same hotel my cousin, Hugh Fernley (with the exception of Dr. Adair, the sole guest invited to the wedding), was already located; and the two young men were standing together at the door of the church when upon the following morning we arrived there. I had not seen my lover distinctly upon the previous evening. But now, as he advanced to meet us, I was much startled by the alteration which a fortnight's absence had wrought in his appearance. There was, I thought, a change in his expression—an indefinable peculiarity about his whole aspect which alarmed me.

'Dear Herbert, you are ill!' I exclaimed as, the salutations over, we turned to enter the church.

'O, no! I am not,' he replied hastily. 'Don't be alarmed, dearest, but things are all wrong at my place near Madrid, and I am anxious to be off. We must go to Spain at once. Come, let us be quick and get married; and then I will bear my tender blossom to the sunny south.'

The form of endearment employed in the last sentence was not such as Herbert had been accustomed to address to me, and I did not quite like it. Moreover I felt greatly disappointed, for it had been arranged that our wedding trip should have for its destination the Italian lakes; and now it appeared we were to travel in Spain. Giving vent to my feelings of vexation I said: 'Then we shall have to give up Italy?'

'Not at all; we shall do nothing of the kind,' he returned with a smile. 'We shall go to Spain and Italy, and Kamtchatka too.'

There was no time to ask what he meant, for the clergyman was already in his place, and the service commenced without delay. The hour which followed was one of much confusion, for, upon coming out of the church, we were informed by Mr. Fernley, to whom the travelling arrangements had been confided, that he had made a mistake about the time at which the London express from the north would pass a certain junction where we were to join it, and that it would be necessary for us to leave Elstonlee much earlier than we had intended. So our hurried breakfast was soon over and a hasty leave taken of mamma. Dr. Adair and Hugh accompanied us as far as the junction referred to. Upon entering the carriage my husband placed himself by my side, whilst my cousin and the doctor had taken the seats opposite to us, and I had scarcely had time to regain my composure after the bustle and excitement which had attended our abrupt departure from home when it was again disturbed by the singular conduct of the latter.

Fixing his eyes upon Mr. St. Julien, the physician appeared to be studying him closely, and put to him question after question as if to draw him into conversation. I could not attribute this to jealousy, for there was no sign of the existence of that feeling; but I began to feel annoyed with what I considered his rudeness, especially when I saw that Herbert noticed and disliked his obtrusive attention. That he did so was evident, for whilst he replied to all his questions very quietly, he seemed to grow uneasy beneath the doctor's gaze, and once or twice I caught him returning it with a resentful glance.

We had to wait a few minutes at the station; and whilst Herbert, apparently glad to escape further observation, promenaded the platform with Hugh, Dr. Adair drew me a little aside and said: 'Pray, tell me, do you notice anything peculiar about Mr. St. Julien's aspect this morning?'

'O, doctor! do you think he is ill?' I enquired in return, alarmed by my friend's serious manner.

'Well, no; I do not think that,' he replied; 'but I fancy he seems more excited than the occasion warrants.'

'Excuse me,' I said angrily; 'but I cannot listen to such remarks about my husband's appearance, Dr. Adair.' And turning away with a feeling of relief at his assurance that Herbert was not unwell, but of annoyance at his last remark, I was about to leave him.

'I will say nothing more to offend you, Mrs. St. Julien,' said the doctor. And introducing another subject of conversation, he drew my attention to a cord which ran along at the tops of the carriages and extended the whole length of a train. This, he explained to me, was a signal which any person might use who desired to stop the train when in motion between one station

and another. And whilst I listened he carefully pointed out to me the manner in which it was to be worked.

Scarcely had he finished his instructions, when the express rushed into the station; and in another instant Herbert and I had taken our places in a carriage.

My good bye to Dr. Adair had not been a very warm one; and just as the train was upon the point of starting a sudden remorse came over me. I looked out of the window with the intention of signing him a more kindly farewell. As I did so, a head was hastily drawn into the next carriage. An absurd fancy seized me that it was his, and in order to dissipate it I turned to the platform.

Hugh stood alone where we had left him, and Dr. Adair was nowhere to be seen.

Calling my husband to the window, and pointing to the figure of my cousin, I asked what he thought could have become of the physician. And then I told him of the impression I had that the head I had seen protruded from the adjoining carriage was Dr. Adair's.

'No, no; it was not; I know better than that,' was the reply I received, in a tone which startled me by its vehemence; and drawing me back into the carriage, Mr. St. Julien closed the window. Then he added in a whisper: 'I'll tell you what; that man is the devil, and I'm glad he is gone.' I was so thunder struck by these words, and by Herbert's singular manner, that I sat looking at him in silent surprise, wondering how he could have allowed his resentment at Dr. Adair's conduct to have carried him so far. But if I expected any apology I was doomed to disappointment; none followed, and Herbert himself appeared to be quite unconscious that he had given me occasion for offence. After sitting for some time with his gaze directed through the window he rose, and without taking any further notice of me, drew out a travelling bag, which he had insisted upon having placed beneath the seat at the further end of the carriage. This he unlocked, and extracting from it a brilliant scarlet and white cricketer cap, he placed it upon his head, with the peak turned towards the back; then he asked how I liked it. Trembling, as an indefinite terror was creeping over me, I replied that it was 'very pretty'; and stretching out my hand I attempted to adjust it correctly upon his head.

'Let it alone!' he exclaimed angrily, seizing my hand. 'Don't you see that it is more like a turban that way? And as we are going to Turkey we must do in Turkey as the Turks do.'

'Going to Turkey! What do you mean, dear Herbert?' I cried in serious alarm.

'How can we go to Spain and Italy and Turkey, and yet get back to England in a month, as we promised mamma to do? And why do you speak to me so strangely, Herbert? Oh, Herbert, you are ill! I am sure of it. You don't act or look in the least like yourself,' I continued, bursting into tears.

'I don't look in the least like myself, don't I?' he repeated laughing. 'Ha, ha! that's good. Probably, then, I look like a Chinaman?' And lowering his voice again to the mysterious tone in which he had already twice addressed me, he added: 'Do you know, love, but I had a letter this morning from the Emperor of China, in which he tells me that three large estates of mine at Pekin have been burned to the ground by the natives. The news has rather upset me.'

'O Herbert!' I began.

'I say, are you my first wife or my second?' was the irrelevant remark with which my pleadings were interrupted.

I looked at my husband in dismay. Was he drunk? or what was the matter with him? 'Herbert, Herbert!' I cried, as a dreadful suspicion suggested itself, 'please don't frighten me so! You know very well that you never had any other wife than myself. Why will you persist in saying such odd things?'

'Was it a diddle daddle darling, then?' exclaimed my companion, his excitement evidently roused by the expression of my alarm. 'Don't cry, Ada; we are going to visit our estates, you know, one after another of them. We're off to Spain and Portugal and the north pole and the south and the meridian and the new moon. We will set everything in order and bring home cart loads of diamonds and rubies and bank notes. You shall have a palace of pearls and I will crown you like a queen, for I'm as rich as Croesus. Rich! rich! rich!' The last words rose to a shrill scream, and Mr. St. Julien's arms moved in wild gesticulations as he uttered them.

My horrible suspicion passed into a still more horrible certainty. A great change passed over me. My courage and spirits rose to meet the emergency, and from a timid, helpless girl I was transformed at once into a woman strong and independent. I endeavored to grasp the situation in which I was placed. In all innocence and unsus-

picion I had that morning married this man, and now I was alone with him. What was to be done? I took up a Railway Guide which lay by my side, and consulted it with the deepest anxiety in order to learn at what station the train would first stop. To my dismay I found that an hour must elapse before there would be any chance of escape; and I could only resolve to remain perfectly quiet, and to pray that Herbert might not in the meantime become violent. My resolution was soon put to a severe test. I was striving to make a soothing reply to a remark which he had just made, when, with a shrill whistle, the train rushed into a long tunnel. A strange laugh, ending in a wild shriek, was uttered close by my side, followed by another and yet another. To my terrified imagination hours instead of minutes elapsed before the train glided out again into the daylight. As it did so I glanced at Herbert and perceived that he had now grown perfectly calm. There was, however, a new expression in his eyes, which warned me to keep full possession of all my powers of mind.

'I say, Ada,' he remarked presently, addressing me by the name which was not mine, 'I have got such a capital idea; it will amuse you, I'm sure. I've just decided upon paying a visit to the Cyclops, and I know they would take it as a great compliment if my wife had only one eye like themselves. Ha, ha! isn't it a good joke? You won't mind it, will you?'

The last question was asked in a conciliatory tone, but as he spoke I observed a pen-knife in his hand. With a palpitating heart I sought about for some method of escape. The train was still going at full speed, whizzing with rapidity past the minor stations, whilst the one at which it was to stop was yet far away. What was to be done? I again asked myself in perplexity. A sudden inspiration occurred to me—there was the signal! I had been ignorant until that morning of the existence of such a thing. My heart bounded with gratitude to Dr. Adair for having pointed out to me the manner of working it, whilst a vague wonder crossed my mind whether he could have had any suspicion that the knowledge might prove useful.

These thoughts passed through my brain with the rapidity of lightning. One moment only had elapsed since Herbert's horrible proposition had been uttered; and to avert attention from my movements I began to reason with him, and suggested that the Cyclops, having seen quite sufficient of the species with one eye, might be interested and amused by an introduction to a variety with two, and that it would therefore be much better that I should be allowed to visit them in my natural condition.

Whilst speaking I slipped into a seat nearer the window, for I had been occupying one in the centre of the carriage, and as I did so the thought occurred to me that the signal cord ran along only one side of the train, and that it might possibly not be on that towards which I had moved. The idea turned me sick with apprehension, for on this sole chance rested my fate, my husband having taken the seat I had vacated, repeating his belief that the mutilation which he desired would be a gratifying compliment to the Cyclops.

'Oh, very well! I daresay you are right,' I replied with an indifference which was becoming momentarily more difficult to maintain. 'But, Herbert, dear, you know we are a long way off the country yet, and if you don't object I should prefer waiting until we are a little nearer.'

Whilst offering this new suggestion I placed my hand upon the sash of the window and was just about to lower it, when a strong grasp was laid upon my arm.

'No, no; I'm not going to wait!' he screamed. 'I shall be busy by-and-by looking after my estates; it will be better to get it done at once.'

'But, Herbert,' I cried, making this further objection rather faintly, for my courage had almost vanished at his touch, 'you might possibly make some blunder over it. Let us wait till we get to the hotel in London, and then we will send for a doctor and have it done properly.'

This remark, probably because it taxed him with want of skill, greatly infuriated him, and as he gave a wicked refusal to my request, the cruel hands tightened upon my arm. I neither fainter nor screamed. My eyes had fallen upon my dressing case, which had been placed upon the parcel rack running along at the top of the carriage. I observed that I would merely take from my case a handkerchief and I would then be at his disposal. My cheerfulness completely disarmed suspicion; and passing over to the further end of the carriage, I suddenly lowered the window, stretched out my hand and groped for the signal cord. In vain, in vain! There was no cord. I was at the wrong side of the carriage. A cry of despair burst from my lips as I felt my husband seize me by the wrist and throw me into a seat. He stooped to pick up the knife which the shock had knocked from his grasp, and was it fancy? Or, oh! could it indeed be reality? As he sought upon the ground unsuccessfully the train appeared to be slackening speed. I strove to realize

the truth. O, yes! it was moving more slowly; I was certain of that. We must be nearing the station; I must have exaggerated the time it would take. Hope revived; but a yell of satisfaction announced the recovery of the lost knife; already it was brandished in my face, when, with the energy of desperation, I grasped the cruel hand which held it. Another moment and I felt myself flung violently down; blinding sparks flew before my eyes; then a figure slid between, and all was darkness.

When I recovered consciousness I was lying upon my own little bed in the cottage at Elstonlee, where for weeks I had been in the delirium of brain fever. It was but slowly that recollection of the terrible scene through which I had passed returned to me; and only by degrees did my mother communicate to me the following particulars. The head which I had seen withdrawn into the adjoining carriage at the junction station was indeed that of Dr. Adair; for, suspecting the truth and filled with anxiety upon my account, he had at the last moment stepped into the train. The shriek uttered by Herbert in the tunnel had been heard by him, and he had immediately used the signal; but the rapid rate at which the train was travelling had prevented it from being quickly responded to. In suspense he had stood at the door of his compartment whilst the speed gradually slackened; and the instant he could do so with safety he had rushed, aided by a guard, to my assistance, and had succeeded in overpowering my assailant in the very nick of time. On reaching the town a few miles distant, Mr. St. Julien was carried at once to an asylum, whilst I was brought home by my rescuer. The following morning a sensational paragraph appeared in the newspaper, describing the affair; and upon the succeeding day a lady called at Woodbine Cottage. She introduced herself as the sister-in-law of Mr. St. Julien, and informed mamma and Dr. Adair, who was present at the interview, that the poor young man had some time previously gone down to his house at Cambridge in what she considered an unsettled state of mind; and that he had been obliged to be placed under the care of a keeper. Managing to elude the man's vigilance, he had effected his escape so cleverly that his friends had been unable to trace him, and had only done so by means of the newspaper paragraph.

The further information elicited from this lady may be condensed into a few words. In his youth my unfortunate husband had been distinguished for learning and studious habits. He had married a beautiful girl, to whom he was ardently attached, and who had almost immediately been accidentally drowned; and following closely upon this disaster had come the failure of a bank in which the bulk of his property was invested; and although no symptoms of insanity had previously exhibited themselves in him, poor Herbert's mind had been seriously affected by his troubles, and for some months he had been violently mad. His recovery, when it took place, appeared to be a most perfect one; but he had always retained peculiarities upon the two subjects which had originated his derangement. Never had he been known to allude to his wife even in the most distant manner; though, as has been seen, he once or twice, in his second fit of insanity, addressed me by the name she had borne, probably mistaking our identity. The other singularity was the delusion, under which he constantly labored, that he was the owner of immense wealth and of numerous estates and properties. So entirely sane was he in every other respect that it was by no means remarkable that two simple women like my mother and myself should have remained in ignorance of his condition. Still I can see clearly that during the latter weeks of our intercourse in Torquay and London Mr. St. Julien's mind had already begun to waver, although it was not finally thrown off the balance until the excitement attendant upon the thought of immediate marriage.

Whilst in Cambridge he had not, it appeared, mentioned that subject to any person; but upon being placed under restraint he had exercised much shrewdness in evading his keeper and had contrived to reach Elstonlee in time. Little now remains to be told.

During that terrible ride in the express train every feeling of love for my husband was extinguished as completely as though it had never existed. Horror took the place of every other sentiment; and when, upon his restoration to health, he besought me to live with him, I not only refused to do so, but declined even to see him again. Too delicate to press the matter, my unhappy husband relinquished his claim, and settling through his lawyer a liberal annuity on me, he started once more for the continent. Two years afterwards I received the announcement of his death, which had taken place in Rome, and had been occasioned by rheumatic fever; and three years later I again stood before the altar, and left it the wife of a sober middle-aged gentleman, whose constancy and devotion had won from me a depth of affection never accorded to my poor Herbert, but fully deserved by Dr. Adair.

BALLOONING IN ASIA.

A WELL KNOWN AMERICAN AERONAUT'S QUEER EXPERIENCE.

T. S. Baldwin, the San Francisco aeronaut, who has just come back from various Oriental countries, succeeded in thoroughly astonishing the Mongolian race by his exhibitions. Mr. Baldwin has traveled extensively in Asia. He has looked down from mid-air on the temple of Delhi, the wharves of Calcutta and the jungles of Su-matra and other Oriental regions rarely treated to the excitement of balloon ascensions. It was not until a few months ago that the daring aeronaut resolved to explore China as far as it is possible to do so, and with his brother and wife he began to gather in the small change of the Mongolian sight-seers.

The aeronaut's experiences were generally of the most pleasant kind, for the pig-tailed patrons responded enthusiastically, and the novel amusement set all China a-og. The attendance at some of the exhibitions in the large sea port cities was enormous. The aeronaut found some difficulty in obtaining suitable places for corralling the cash of the native populace, for fenced grounds are not to be had, and in most places the inclosure was made by a rope and the assistance of the native police. The Mongolian dead head has a more wholesome dread of the official guardian of the peace than his American confrere, and few persons ventured inside the roped circle without paying the admission fee. This was 10 cents for the outer circle, 20 cents for the intermediate and \$2 for the inner ring. The aeronaut found the swell Chinese perfectly willing to pay this high tax. The only trouble was that every pig-tailed swell brought a retinue of servants with him, and when a big mandarin strutted in to see the show the army of retainers, from his teapot-bearer to his grand high chamberlain, took up most of the dress circle.

Baldwin gave his first exhibition at Hong Kong, and the native shouts and yells that greeted his ascent were only excelled by the roar of amazement that met his brother when he came flying back to earth with a parachute. In all the towns the balloon proved the greatest attraction ever brought to the Celestial land by the bearded white devils from foreign parts.

Having soon relieved their minds of any lurking belief that the white balloonists were possessed of supernatural powers, the Chinese set themselves to work to imitate him. Several adventurous Mongolians broke various portions of their anatomy from their necks to their legs by trying to descend from lofty temples and tall trees with parachutes constructed out of native umbrellas. Toy balloons, constructed with great skill and attention to detail by natives, became part of the stock of the bazars.

At Foo Chow a native genius constructed a mammoth hot-air balloon, with flaming dragon head and great paper wings, and made an ascension which will be long remembered by his townsmen. Baldwin gave all his exhibitions with hot-air inflated balloons, that style of inflation being cheapest, quickest and otherwise most acceptable to a skilled aeronaut for such work as was there needed. The simple method of expanding the balloon pleased the native imitators, and the Foo Chow genius copied everything to a nicety, except the very important part of how to cut loose at the proper moment without accident. The result was that the balloon, which was of enormous size, shut up with such terrific and unexpected velocity that it carried with it a score or so of the Mongolians who were steadying it with the guy ropes while the aeronaut was getting ready to cut loose. The great bag of air kept scattering Mongolians over the suburbs of Foo Chow until it turned a regular flip-flap, being improperly ballasted, and fell into one of the large ponds in the outskirts of the city. This adventure had a very depressing effect on the native aspirants, but the mania had taken too firm a hold to be eradicated by any ordinary increase of the mortality rate, and when Mr. Baldwin left China for Japan pig-tailed aeronauts were regularly soaring through space in various sections of the Celestial empire.

The Japanese took almost as enthusiastically to the sport as the Chinese, and native imitators also appeared in a short time. From Japan the American aeronaut traveled along the southern sea coast of Asia through India and to Madagascar.

Thought He Had Made a Lucky Haul.

Farmer Squash (mysteriously, to Wagner porter)—Say, has anybody complained o' losin' a pair o' boots this mornin'?

Porter—Why—why, no, sir.

Farmer Squash—Wa-al, I left mine, covered with dust under my bunk las' night an' to-day I found these, all slick an' shiny. Don't say anythin', boy, an' here's half dollar for ye.