

## The Shepherd's Crook

Utterly unconscious of the blow Fate had in store for her, Mary Tredgold was waiting in the lane for her lover, Bob Cheriton.

It was a glorious spring evening. The boisterous March winds had swept the sky clear before they died down at sunset, and the moon was flooding the countryside with silver.

Bob Cheriton was a sheep-farmer, and the Easter market was approaching. Everything depended on his getting his lambs to market in the pink of condition, and he was determined to leave nothing to chance.

First thing in the morning and last thing at night he paid visits of inspection to his flocks—"Worryin' the life out o' me," as his shepherd put it. He was resolved upon securing the highest possible price at the Easter sheep and lamb market, for a very special reason. The difference between top and middle price would mean close upon fifty pounds; and one can spend a very comfortable little honeymoon on fifty pounds, with a bit to spare when it is over.

Every night, when he was returning from his last round to the old farmhouse he fondly hoped soon to make her mistress of, Mary made a practice of meeting him, and shyly inquiring after his sheep. Knowing that his capital was small, and that the refurnishing and partial refurnishing of the dilapidated old farmhouse had proved expensive, she it was who had insisted that there should be no honeymoon unless his lambs sold well.

To-night, however, he was long coming, and she was just beginning to wonder if anything had gone amiss with the sheep, when she heard footsteps. She started forward, and paused. Her lover's car told her that the footsteps were not Bob's, even before her eyes showed her that the man approaching was a stranger.

Tall, burly, he came striding along as if the road belonged to him; and, though in the moonlight she did not recognize him, she felt instinctively that there was something familiar about his figure.

"Evening, Mary!" he said gaily, doffing his cap as he came up to her.

She shrank back, her heart beating wildly against her ribs, her body trembling.

"Don't be frightened!" he laughed. But she was frightened. She had always been afraid of him. "I've come back," he went on, after waiting for her to speak. "It is Alfred West himself, and not his ghost, who has taken you by surprise, my dear."

He came closer, and held out his arms; but she shook her head.

"Your welcome is a cold one, Mary!" he exclaimed. "And her spirit rose."

"So is my heart—to you!"

"I have come back thousands of miles to claim you!" he protested.

"Maybe. But why did you go? Why did you leave me, five years ago, without a word?"

"I—I went off on the impulse of the moment," he explained lamely. "Those fresh discoveries of gold in the Yukon fired me to go out and try my luck. So I went—"

"Without a word, leaving me in the lurch," she interrupted.

"Of course, I might have written—I ought to have written; but, you see, I was so terribly busy, so engrossed in finding things out. He waved his hand magnificently in the air, and his "casualness" saddened her. This—this was his apology—his explanation—and her satisfaction was to be taken for granted.

"Thank Heaven you went!" she cried, in a fury, her wrongs over-coming her inherent dread of him. "Thank Heaven the marriage didn't take place!"

He looked at her, astonished. "Peculiar creatures, women," was the thought that flashed through his brain.

"I've come back, if not exactly rich, still, with enough," he answered, in a tone he imagined soothing. "Of course, you are angry; but you'll forgive me, won't you? The marriage shall take place as soon as you please."

"Oh, can't you understand," she cried, "that, after the way you have treated me, I wouldn't marry you if you were the only man left on earth?"

He couldn't understand; he was built like that. What he did was always right in his eyes. He began to feel disappointed, aggrieved; he had expected her to receive him with open arms. Over the camp-fire he had dreamed many a time of her joy when she beheld him again.

"Come, Mary," he exclaimed, in his old, bullying way, "you must be reasonable! I've had about enough of this!"

"Reasonable!" she jeered. "I am reasonable! Five years ago I was a girl—a foolish girl, to be lectured into thinking that I loved you. You deserted me. To-day I am a woman, able to see through

you. Do you think I don't understand? Out there you were lonely, and it comforted you to think of me waiting like a dog or a slave for you to come back and hold up your hand. But I am not your dog, or your slave. I will have nothing to do with you!"

He began to shake with anger. How dared she scorn him like this! Hadn't he come back to her? Hadn't he always taken it for granted that she would be true to him? "There is someone else!" he said furiously. "And she did not deny it. 'Who is it?'"

"Go!" she cried. "I tell you I am done with you!"

"Who is it?" he demanded again. "Move an inch, and you are a dead man!"

For a few seconds they all stood there silent and still; then West spoke:

"Give me your word that you will not marry this girl!"

"Never!" said Bob.

"Very well." Still keeping his eyes on Bob, he addressed Mary. "Swear on your honor, my dear, that you will keep your old promise, and marry me," he said.

White and trembling, she shook her head.

"Then I'll tell you what I shall do," he went on. "If you won't marry me, I shall shoot him dead where he stands. Don't move, on pain of your life," he added, as Bob started. "Come along, Mary! Promise to marry me, or I fire!"

She moistened her lips in a vain effort to scream. It was awful to be confronted with this terrible choice of promising to marry him or seeing her lover shot before her eyes. It flashed across her mind that she might promise, and then refuse when Bob was safe; but before she could force her tongue to speak West made it clear that the same idea had occurred to him.

"Mind you," he added, after making a threatening motion to Bob, who seemed inclined to move. "I mean it. I am not to be trifled with. You won't be able to promise, and then come back because it was forced out of you. Night and day I'll lay in wait for him if you do. You are fairly cornered, you see—isn't she?" he asked playfully of the man who was covering with his revolver.

It was hopeless. There was nothing for it but to yield. Again she moistened her lips, and gulped at the lump in her throat that was choking her; but still she could not speak.

At last she spoke—at last she managed to compel her tongue, cleaving to the roof of her mouth in a nightmare of horror, to obey her. But what she said was very different from what either of her hearers had expected.

"Bob," she gasped, "your crook—like you do the sheep!"

Her woman's wit, inspired by love and dread, had seen a way, and as she spoke Bob saw it, too. He still had his long shepherd's crook in one hand, and West was only a few feet away.

In a flash—while the ruffian was still wondering what Mary meant—she flung the crook round one of his legs, and West fell helplessly backward. But as he tumbled he pulled the trigger, and the noise of the shot was followed by a piercing scream from Mary, who fell prone on the ground.

That scream turned the bully's heart to water, drove all the jealousy out of his soul, and filled it with fear—fear for his own neck. Dazed by the suddenness of his fall, he believed that he had shot Mary, and, leaping to his feet, fled wildly into the night.

Bob rushed to his sweetheart's prostrate form.

"Are you hurt, dear?" he asked anxiously. "Did he hit you? Speak—oh, speak to me, Mary!"

Just as he was preparing to carry her bodily to the nearest house she opened her eyes.

"Is that you, Bob?" she murmured. "Are you wounded?"

"No, no; I'm not hurt! Are you, dearest? Did the bullet—"

She sat up, suddenly recovering her full senses.

"No, Bob; I'm not hurt. I—I swooned with fright when he fired, because I was afraid that, through trying to carry out my plan, you had been shot, after all."

He gathered her in his arms.

"He has fled, dearest," he whispered. "and I don't expect we shall ever see him again!"

And they never did.—London Answers.

### LADIES OF OLDEN TIME

#### IN THE DAYS WHEN KNIGHTS WERE BOLD.

##### Man Never So Entirely Under the Thumb of Woman as at the Present Time.

It is generally supposed that the age when steel-clad gentlemen tutted with long spears in honor of their Dulcineas was the golden age of ladies; but on looking closely into the household annals of the days of chivalry, we discover that the "queens of love and beauty" for whom so many midriffs were pierced and caputs cloven, worked rather harder than modern domestics.

#### SOMETIMES, NOT ALWAYS.

Now and then they sat in state in galleries hung with brocaded tapestry, and saw cavaliers wearing their scarves and mittens let daylight into other cavaliers who disputed the potency of their charms; but those gratifying spectacles were luxuries too expensive for the ordinary routine of a "lady's" life in the chivalric era as at once monotonous and laborious.

The stately countess of the olden time spun and carded and wove as industriously as any of her handmaidens, served out bread to the poor on "loaf days" at the castle gate; shaped and helped to make her husband's and children clothing, and her own (for in those days tailors and dressmakers were few and far between); supervised the laird and the dairy; carried the ponderous keys of the establishment, and in short, played to perfection the careful housewife in the stronghold of her lord, while he rode about the country with curial axe at his saddle box, and a longer, ash skewer at his stirrup-leather, in a chronic state of wolfishness and ready to do battle for any cause, or no cause at all, with whomsoever it might or might not concern.

#### NOT SO TO-DAY.

In this delightful modern era of Fine Ladyism, a fashionable woman does not perform half the amount of useful labor in a year that a high-born dame of mediaeval times accomplished every month of her life.

Instead of skeins of flax she spins pretty yarns; her carding is done with bits of painted pasteboard; and if she weaves at all, it is meshes for eligible young men—on her own account if single, for the benefit of her daughters if a matron.

She has no objection to being fed from her kitchen, her pen-haps; but as to serving out bread to them with her own delicate hands, after the manner of the fair "bread dividers of the olden time," she couldn't think of it.

If her husband should wait for even the lightest of his garments until she found leisure to make them, the chances are that he would go shirtless to his dying day.

#### SEWING TABOOED.

She seldom sews. Sewing spoils the tips of her fingers.

In point of fact, the aristocratic dame and demoiselles of old were mere druggies and dowdies as compared with the female patricians of this our day and generation.

Nay, even our housemaids and cooks have more leisure and take things more easily than did the duchesses and countesses of the Iron Age.

Modern chivalry accords to ladies all the privileges they ought to desire, and such liberties as the "tyrant sex" does not voluntarily concede they generally manage to take.

Never at any former period in the history of man was he so entirely under the thumb of woman as he is now.

And now the ladies are not satisfied, but like Oliver Twist, clamor for more!

#### DANCING AND FIGHTING.

##### In Montenegro They Have Their Own Way of Doing Each.

The national dance of Montenegro is the kolo, somewhat similar to the horo of Bulgaria. Both sexes take part, crossing hands and forming an unjoined circle. The music they supply themselves, each end of the horn alternately singing a verse in honor of the Prince and his warlike deeds.

The kolo is always danced at any great national festival, and the effect of the sonorous voices and swaying ring is very fine. Then there is another dance performed by four or five, usually youths, to the accompaniment of a fiddle, the leader setting a lot of intricate quick steps which the rest imitate at once. It is really a sort of jig and makes the spectator's head swim if he watches it for long.

"I never saw any dances in northern Albania," says a writer in The Wide World, "though certain Slav artists love to depict wonderful sword dances, with beautiful maidens swaying gracefully after the style of nautch girls. A casual observer who has seen the Albanians come into Montenegro

### MURDERESS TO LECTURE

#### COUNTESS WHO KILLED HER BAND OFFERED CHANCE

##### Trial of Woman, Brother and Other Accomplishes was a Sensational One.

A well known Italian impresario has made a tempting offer to the Countess Bonmartini to deliver a series of lectures in Italy and abroad. She has not decided yet whether or not she will accept the offer. The Countess has just been released after serving a term in prison for the murder of her husband.

The murder was committed in Bologna in 1904. In the dock was the Countess when the trial began at Turin were Tullio Murri, the Countess' brother, who afterward confessed to the actual murder; Dr. Carlo Secchi, the Countess' lover, with whom she formed the plan for the killing of the Count; Dr. Pio Naldi, who was a tool of Murri's, and a maid named Bonetti, who fetched and carried for the conspirators.

#### A SENSATIONAL TRIAL.

The trial was sensational. Nearly 400 witnesses were called, including a cardinal, two generals, several Senators, the grand master of the Italian Masons, ten famous experts on the nervous diseases of women, and sixty medical experts. The grand master of the Masons was called to testify that when Murri, who was a Mason, was in danger of arrest some of the murderer's relatives approached the grand master and begged him to screen Murri. He indignantly refused.

Among the letters written to her brother by the Countess were some containing phrases like these: "Who will deliver me from this imbecile? I still stand in need, and now more than ever, of love; of being loved."

After a trial that lasted months a verdict of guilty was brought in, and the following sentences were imposed: Tullio Murri and Dr. Naldi, thirty years each; the Countess and Dr. Secchi, ten years, and Bonetti, seven years.

#### SOMETHING LIKE SHOOTING.

##### Remarkable Shots For a Humane Object.

The champion marksman of the world has been discovered at last. He is Arthur Douglas, a hitherto unknown American, who has leaped into prominence through an exhibition of shooting that had for its object a humane act.

Douglas has always been skilful with the rifle. He hunted moose in its fastnesses, and followed the deer and wary bear through Southern Canada; but he is a modest, retiring man, and few knew his skill until a few mornings ago.

A white dove that had freed itself from a snare became entangled in a telephone wire through a piece of string that was hanging to one of its legs. The bird vainly fluttered for freedom. There were no ladders to be found, and since there seemed to be no other way to reach it the men who had gathered in the street made preparations to shoot the bird and free it thus of its misery.

When the gun was produced, however, no one volunteered to shoot. Then Douglas came down the village street. He took careful aim, and, without removing the pipe from his mouth, fired. The dove shook its wings, free once more, for Douglas hit the white string which held the dove's leg to the telephone wire.

Then something happened that changed the joy of the onlookers to sorrow, for the dove, hovering on the wire, became entangled a second time.

Without a word to anyone, Douglas slowly raised the rifle, squinted along the barrel, and fired.

Great was the wonder of all who watched to see him repeat the first shot, for once more he succeeded in freeing the dove.

#### KITE SWIMS UNDER WATER.

A strange kite has been devised by a Swedish engineer, which is made to swim under water. It is constructed of canvas adjusted to a light but strong metal frame, and in shape is not dissimilar to the aerial kite, except that it is made in two sections, the lower and smaller one depending from the upper, with which it is connected by a sort of coupling. The object of the engineer is to provide ships with an ever-ready automatic guard, or watch, that will give instant alarm if the vessel enters shoal waters, and is approaching a spot where the depth is not sufficient for safety.

#### A CLEVER COOK.

Mrs. Nurich was in the jewelry store.

"Here are some new souvenir spoons we have just got in," said the clerk, placing a tray for her inspection.

"Oh, ain't those lovely!" she exclaimed. "I must have some of those! Our cook makes such lovely souvenirs!"

markets or to their great weekly gathering in the bazaar of Scutari could never picture these stern men dancing or at play.

"They never smile and they look the life they lead, each clan ever ready for war with its neighbor and absolutely pitiless in the vendetta. When fighting the Turks the Montenegrins evince a heroism and utter fearlessness that is remarkable. The strongest men carry bombs, or rather hand grenades—things the Turkish soldier particularly abominates.

"I was told once how a certain man whom I knew well saved his band from destruction. They were fairly cornered, and the Turks closing in, when the bomb thrower stood up amid the hail of bullets, lit the fuse with his cigarette and rushed toward the soldiers, who, seeing his intention, promptly made tracks.

"It was, of course, lucky that the Mohammedan soldier, who does not much mind being sent to Paradise with a bullet, thinks his chance of eternal bliss very doubtful if he is blown up with dynamite. The nerve required to be a bomb thrower is worthy of a little reflection. He must absolutely expose himself, and as the fuse is very short the ignition must be coolly considered.

"If premature it means the destruction of himself and comrades, and when it is fairly aight the bomb must be thrown with mathematical exactitude. In other words, the man must leave his cover and charge an overwhelming force alone and not throw till he is close up to it."

#### TEACHING A HORSE TO JUMP.

##### It May be Done by Coaxing, Lunging or Driving.

There are three methods of teaching a horse to leap—coaxing, lunging and driving. In the coaxing method the young horse is turned into a small paddock having a low hedge or hurdle across the centre. In plain view of the pupil a rider on a veteran jumper should take him over this hurdle several times.

The trainer then goes to the opposite side with a measure of corn or oats and calls the horse, shaking up the grain and pouring it in with his hand back and forth in the receptacle. The boundary will soon be cleared, and when a few mouthfuls have been eaten the station of the instructor should be at the other side of the hurdle and the lesson repeated. If this be done daily the hurdle may be gradually heightened.

The habit of jumping is thus acquired without those risks which attend a novel performance when a heavy burden oppresses the strength and whip and spur distract the attention. The horse's body, says Country Life in America, is not partially disabled by the imposition of a heavy load before the powers are taxed to the utmost and his capabilities are unfettered.

The second method is termed lunging. A long rein or cord is attached to the bit and the animal is exercised in a circle in which a hurdle has been placed or a shallow ditch dug. A long lasbeu whip, used only to keep him in motion, or lightly applied at the proper moment, will keep him up to his work. Soon the horse will enter into the spirit of the occasion, and by unmistakable signs will manifest his enthusiastic enjoyment of the exercise.

The third method, driving, is exactly what its name implies. At first the obstruction should be slight. Any open space will answer the purpose, an earth or sod surface of tanbark being preferable. Long reins, a straight bar or snaffle bit, a long whip and patience and perseverance are required.

All things considered, the driving method is the quickest and surest way of teaching the horse to leap. When he has become somewhat proficient, having thoroughly learned what is required of him, the saddle may be called into requisition and the practical lessons begun.

Almost any young horse can be taught to leap. Of course his proficiency will depend on the care bestowed on his training and on his general characteristics of wind, limb and nerve. An ordinary cob or Morgan will attain the proficiency of an Irish hunter, but any horse that is used for a saddle will be of far greater value to his owner if he can be taken occasionally for a cross-country ride and put over ditches and low obstructions.

#### DUSTY.

And yet, you know, expensive porch furniture will get just as dusty as any other kind.

#### SAID UNCLE SILAS:

"Say, you fellows like to dance—why don't you ever dance with your own sister, hey?"

The man who makes up his mind to do nothing soon discovers that there's an awful lot to do.

The smart man knows when to quit the game, but the fool keeps everlastingly at it until he advertises his failure.

Jack: "Yes, poor John may have had his faults, but his heart was on the right side." Wagge: "Is it possible? No wonder he died."

Wife: "John, there must be a lot of iron in your system." Husband: "Why do you think so?" Wife: "Because you invariably lose your temper when you get hot."