

MARGUERITE'S SECRET

Margaret withdrew to her own sitting-room, and threw herself upon her knees to pray. Soon rising, she touched the bell and summoned Forrest.

"The old man came in looking very sorrowful."

"How did it become known that you left the premises last night, Forrest?"

"Somebody must 'o' spicined me, chile, an' been on de watch."

"Yes! yes! I see now! that was it; but, Forrest, this is what I called you to say: In future, whenever Mrs. Houston asks you a question about your services to your mistress, refer her to me."

"Yes, Miss Margaret."

"You may go now."

"Pardon, Miss Margaret; I want to say something as I set your mind at ease 'bout dat letter."

"Ah, yes, you mailed it?"

"True for you, Miss Margaret; but listen: De post office was shut up. So I jes' drap de letter inter de letter-box. Same munit de was two colored boys an' a white man drap as many as five or six letters in 'long o' mine. So even de de post-masser could o' see me 'tough de winder, which he couldn't, how he gwine know which letter 'mong de half-dozen I drap in?"

"True! true! true! Oh, that was very providential! Oh, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Margaret, fervently clasping her hands.

The old man bowed and retired.

After breakfast, Mrs. Houston, without explaining the motive of her journey to any one, ordered her carriage, and drove to the village as upon a snipping excursion.

Now, you have not known Mrs. Nellie Houston thus long without discovering that with some good qualities, she was, in some respects, a very silly woman.

She drove up to the post office, and by her indiscreet question respecting a certain letter mailed the night before by Forrest, the messenger of her ward, Miss Helmsstedt, set the weak-minded young postmaster to wondering, conjecturing, speculating. And when she found that he could give her no satisfaction in respect of the letter, she made matters worse by directing him to detain any letters sent there by her ward, Miss Helmsstedt, unless such letters happened to be directed to a Helmsstedt or a Houston, who were the only correspondents of Miss Helmsstedt recognized by her family.

The postmaster thereupon informed Mrs. Houston that she wished to interfere with the correspondence of her ward, she must do so at her own discretion, and necessarily before they should be sent to his office, as he had no authority to detain letters sent thither to be mailed, and might even be subjected to prosecution for so doing.

Mrs. Houston was thus baffled and angered, and also totally unconscious of the serious mischief she had set on foot.

To an idle and shallow young man she had spoken indiscreetly of the young maiden whose orphanage she had promised to cherish and defend, exposing her actions to suspicion and her character to speculation. She had left the spotless name of Margaret Helmsstedt a theme of low village gossip.

And thus having done as much evil as any foolish woman could well do in an hour, she entered her carriage, and with the solemn conviction of having discharged her duty, drove home to the bluff.

"God defend me, only, from my friends, for of my enemies I can take care," prayed one who seemed to have known this world right well.

From that day Margaret Helmsstedt, whenever she had occasion to write a letter, took care to turn the key of her room door; and whenever she had occasion to mail one, took precaution to give it, unperceived, in the hands of Forrest, with directions that he should drop it into the letter-box at a moment when he should see other letters, from other sources, going in. Poor girl! she was slowly acquiring an art hateful to her soul. And one also that did not avail her greatly. For, notwithstanding all her precautions, the report crept about that Miss Helmsstedt had a secret correspondent, very much disapproved of by her friends. And in course of time also, the name of this correspondent transpired. And this in the manner in which it happened. Young Simpson, the postmaster, to whom Mrs. Houston had so imprudently given a portion of her confidence, found his curiosity piqued to discover who this forbidden correspondent might be, and after weeks of patient waiting, convinced himself that the letters addressed in a fair Italian hand to a certain person were those dropped into the box by Miss Helmsstedt's messenger, old Forrest. A few more observations confirmed this conviction. Then wishing to gain consequence in the eyes of Mrs. Houston, he availed himself of the first opportunity presented by the presence of that lady at the office to inform her of the discovery he had made.

"You are sure that is the name?" inquired the lady, in surprise.

"Yes, ma'am, that is the name, in a regular slanting hand. I always find a letter bearing that name in the box the moment after that old man has been seen about here, and never at any other time."

"Very well; I thank you for your information; but mind! pray do not speak of this matter to any one but myself; for I would not like to have the subject discussed in town," said Mrs. Houston.

"Oh, certainly not, madam! You may rely on me," replied the young man, who, in half an hour afterward, laughed over the whole affair with a companion, both making very merry over the idea that the wealthy heiress, Miss Helmsstedt, should be engaged to one lover and in private correspondence with another.

And so the ball set in motion by Nellie's indiscretion rolled finely, never wanting a helping hand to propel it on its course, and gathered as it rolled. The rumor changed its form; the gossip became slander. And every one in the country, with the exception of Miss Helmsstedt and her friends, "knew" that young lady was in "secret" correspondence with a low, disreputable sailor, whose surreptitious visits to the island had been the proximate cause of her mother's death.

Could Mrs. Houston have imagined half the evil that must accrue from her own imprudent conversation, she would have been touched with compunction; as it was, hearing nothing what-

ever of this injurious calumny, the guilt revealed in the rewards of "an approving conscience." She kept her discovery of the mysterious name to herself; hinting to no one, least of all to Margaret, the extent of her knowledge upon this subject. And in order to throw the girl off her guard, she was careful never to resume the subject of the letters.

And the plan succeeded so far that Margaret continued, at intervals of three or four weeks, to send off those mysterious letters, and thus the scandal grew and strengthened. That upon such slight grounds the name of an innocent girl should have been assailed may astonish those unacquainted with the peculiar character of a neighborhood where the conduct of woman is governed by the most stringent conventionalism, and where such stringency is made necessary by the existing fact, that the slightest eccentricity of conduct, however innocent, or even meritorious it may be, is made the ground of the gravest animadversions.

Mrs. Houston, unconscious, as I said, of the rumors abroad, and biding her time for farther discoveries, treated Margaret with great kindness. Nellie had always, of all things, desired a daughter of her own. In her attached stepchild, Franky, she felt that she had quite a son of her own, and in Margaret she would have been pleased to possess the coveted daughter. As well as her capricious temper would allow her to do so, she sought to conduct herself as a mother toward the orphan girl; at times caressing her with flippant caresses and puerile attentions, which she might have mistaken for "the sweet, small courtesies of life," but which were very distasteful and unwelcome to one of Margaret Helmsstedt's profound, earnest, impassioned soul, and mournful life experiences.

The malaria of slander that filled all the air without must necessarily at last penetrate the precincts of home.

One day, a miserable, dark, drizzling day, near the last of November, Mr. Wellworth presented himself at the bluff, and requested to see Mrs. Houston alone.

Nellie obeyed the summons, and went to receive the pastoral call in the front parlor across the hall from Margaret's wing.

On entering she was struck at once by the unusually grave and even troubled look of the minister.

He arose and greeted her, handed a chair, and when she was seated resumed his own.

And then, after a little conversation, opened the subject of his visit.

"Mrs. Houston it is my very painful duty to advise you, the existence of certain rumors in regard to your amiable ward that I know to be as false as they are injurious, but with which I am equally certain you should be made acquainted."

Nellie was really amazed—so unconscious was she of the effect of her own mischief-making. She drew out her pearl necklace, and looked at it with a reverent eye, and then inquired:

"To what purpose should I be informed of false, injurious rumors, sir? I know nothing of the rumors to which you refer."

"I verily believe you, madam. But you should be made acquainted with them, as, in the event of their having been occasioned by any little act of thoughtlessness on the part of Miss Helmsstedt, you may counsel that young lady and put a stop to this gossiping."

"I do entreat you, sir, to speak plainly."

"You must pardon me then, madam, if I take you at your word. It is currently reported, then, that Miss Helmsstedt is in secret correspondence, secret no longer, with a person of low and dissipated character, a waterman, skipper, or something of that sort, whose acquaintance she formed in her mother's lifetime and during her father's absence, while she lived almost alone, on her native island. Now, of course, I know this rumor to be essentially false and calumnious; but I know also how delicate is the boom on a young girl's fame, and how easily a careless railing will smirch it. Some thoughtful, perhaps some praiseworthy act on the part of this young creature—such as the sending of charitable donations through the post office, or something of the sort—may have given rise to this rumor, which should at once be met and put down by her friends. But I advise you, my dear madam, to speak to Miss Helmsstedt and ascertain what ground, if any, however slight, there may be for this injurious rumor."

For all answer, Mrs. Houston put her hands—relief to her face and began to weep.

"No, no, my dear Mrs. Houston, don't take this too much to heart; these things must be firmly confronted and dealt with—not wept over."

"Oh, sir! good sir! you don't know! you don't know! It is too true! Margaret gives me a lot of anxiety."

"Madam! you shock me! What is it you say?"

"Oh, sir! I am glad you came this morning! I have been wanting to ask your advice for a long time; but I did not like to. It is too true! Margaret is very imprudent."

"Dear heaven, madam! do you tell me that you knew of this report, and that it is not unfounded?"

"Oh! no, sir, I knew nothing of the report, as I told you before! I knew that Margaret was very, very imprudent, and gave me excessive uneasiness, but I did not dream that she had compromised herself to such an extent! Oh, never!" exclaimed Nellie, still and always unresponsive of her own great share in creating the evil.

"You said that you had thought of asking my counsel. If you please to explain, my dear Mrs. Houston, you shall have the benefit of the best counsel my poor ability will furnish."

"Oh! heaven, sir! girls are not what they used to be when I was young—though I am scarcely middle-aged now—but they are not."

"Oh, sir! Margaret is indeed in correspondence with some unknown man, whose very name I never heard in all my life before! She does all she can to keep the affair secret, and she thinks she keeps it so; but poor thing, having very little art, she cannot succeed in concealing the fact that she sends off these mysterious letters about once a month."

"And do you not expostulate with her?" inquired the deeply shocked minister.

"Oh, I did at first, sir, but I made no more impression upon her than if she had been a marble statue of Firmness. She would not tell me who her correspondent was, where he was, what he was, what was the nature of the acquaintance between them; in short, she would tell me nothing about him."

"And can neither Colonel nor Mrs. Compton, nor your husband, impress her with the impropriety of this proceeding?"

"Oh, sir, they know nothing about it. No one in this house knows anything about Margaret's conduct but myself. And the rumor you have just brought me has never reached them, I am sure."

"Suppose you let me talk with my young friend. She means well, I am sure."

"Well, sir, you shall have the opportunity if you desire. Excuse me for quoting for you benefit a homely adage—'Trot sirs, trot dam, and the colt will never pace!' Margaret Helmsstedt takes stubbornness from both parents, and may be supposed to have a double allowance," said Mrs. Houston, putting her hand to the bell cord.

A servant appeared, and Mr. Wellworth desired to see her," said Mrs. Houston.

The messenger withdrew, and soon returned with the answer that Miss Helmsstedt would be glad to receive Mr. Wellworth in her own sitting room.

"Will you accompany me thither then, Mrs. Houston?"

"No, I think not, sir. I fancy Miss Helmsstedt prefers a private interview with her pastor. And I believe also that such a one would afford the best opportunity for your counseling Margaret."

"Then you will excuse me, madam?"

"Certainly, and await here the issue of your visit," said Mrs. Houston.

With a bow, the clergyman left the room, crossed the hall, and rapped at the door of Miss Helmsstedt's parlor.

It was opened by Hildreth, who stood in her starched puritanical costume, curtseying while the pastor entered the pretty boudoir.

Margaret sat clothed in deep mourning, with her black hair plainly banded each side of her pale, clear, thoughtful face, sat in her low sewing chair, engaged in plain needlework. She quietly laid it aside, and with a warm smile of welcome, arose to meet her minister.

"You are looking better than when I saw you last, my child," said the good pastor, pressing her hand, and mistaking the transient glow of pleasure for the permanent bloom of health.

"I am quite well, thank you, dear Mr. Wellworth, and you?"

"Always well, my child, thank Heaven."

"And dearest Grace? I have not seen her so long."

(To be continued.)

LABOR MEN HUFFY.

THREATEN NOT TO ATTEND THE KING'S NEXT GARDEN PARTY.

Keir Hardie and Victor Grayson Received No Invitation to Windsor—Other Labor Members Were Asked and Attended in Lounging Suits and Bowler Hats.

London, June 28.—Members of the Labor party are nursing a grudge against King Edward, and indeed, threaten to boycott His Majesty. It appears that Keir Hardie and Victor Grayson were not included among the members of Parliament invited to the royal garden party at Windsor. All other Labor party members of Parliament were invited, and a good many of them, in order to display their Socialist beliefs, appearing in unconventional attire, such as lounging suits, bowler or soft hats, and one even sporting a red tie.

Mr. Asquith, the Premier, however, frequently indulges in cravats of that color, and this Labor member's choice of neckwear was not necessarily regarded as Anarchistic. It may even be that he was following the fashion set by royalty.

Keir Hardie asserts that he and Grayson should have been invited, and wants to raise the question of their exclusion in Parliament, while the majority of the Labor members profess that the exclusion of two of them was inevitable, and say that on the occasion of the next royal garden party the whole party will decline the invitation.

It is unlikely that Keir Hardie will be allowed to bring the matter up in the House, for the Windsor party is entirely the King's own affair. His Ministers have nothing to do with it, and cannot answer questions on the subject. Nevertheless, there is much feeling in the lobbies of the House of Commons, and while the omission of any names cannot be regarded as a breach of Parliamentary privilege, the fewness of those omissions makes the action rather pointed and suggests that a new element is being introduced into the relations between Parliament and the Crown.

Altogether four members of Parliament were left out of the royal invitations, those not so honored being, besides the two men already mentioned, Harry Marks and Arthur Ponsonby. In the case of three out of the four the indication of royal disfavor must have been dictated by political considerations.

The exclusion of Arthur Ponsonby has aroused considerable surprise. He was the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's private secretary and the son of Sir Henry Ponsonby, who was Queen Victoria's secretary. He is not an extreme Radical, much less a Socialist. His Parliamentary career has been very brief. He was elected for Stirling district only a few weeks ago in succession to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and since his appointment in St. Stephen's has done only one conspicuous thing. This was to vote against the proposed visit of King Edward to the Car, and there, it is suggested, is to be found the reason why his name was expunged from the royal hand from the list of Parliamentary guests invited to Windsor.

In some quarters it is inconceivable that the Court should have considered a vote on an open question in foreign politics as implied disloyalty to the throne, and it is suggested that the omission was accidental. Others, however, contend that the King wanted to make an example, and selected Ponsonby to do it conspicuously.

There is no question that His Majesty was deeply hurt by the fact that any of his subjects were raised to his level. There is no monarch more susceptible than he to public opinion, and that even a section of his subjects disapproved of his policy in regard to Russia came as a painful surprise to him.

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25 dozen of very fine Lisle Gloves, mousquetaire, in white and black, plain or lace, elbow length, special values 49, 69, 89c pair

24-inch Silk Gloves 79c Pair

Heavy Milanese Silk Gloves, in white and cream, Jersey wrist and mousquetaire, full 24-inch length, regularly \$1.25 and \$1.50, for 79c pair

Long Silk Gloves 89c, 98c Pair

20 and 24-inch Milanese Silk Gloves, in the following shades: tans, navies, browns, grey, pinks, skies, champagne, cream, black and white, single and double tips, with or without buttons, regularly \$1.25 and \$1.50, for 89 and 98c pair

Silk Lace Elbow Gloves, \$1.39, \$1.69, \$1.98 Pair

Full Elbow Length Gloves, in heavy silk hands with lace arms, come in white and black only, regularly \$1.50, \$1.80 and \$2.25, on sale \$1.39, \$1.69, \$1.98 pair

White and Cream Ribbons, 19, 25, 39c Yard

Greatly in demand for hair bows and sashes, 4 1/2 to 6-inch Ribbons, in white and cream only, in satin duchess and satin taffetas, regularly 29, 35, 59c yard, special for the holiday 19, 25, 39c yard

Latest in Elastic Belts 59c

Another shipment of Elastic Belts come in the following shades, Copenhagen, navy, green, cardinal, brown, tan, black and white, steel or gilt studded, with handsome gold and steel buckles, regular \$1, for 59c

Fancy Elastic Belts 89c

Heavy Silk Elastic Belts, in green, navy, tan, brown, white, black, heavily studded in steel with handsome cut steel buckle to match, regular \$1.50, for 89c

Shirtwaist Belts 25, 29, 49c

Dainty white Canvas and Batiste Belts, nicely embroidered with hem stitching all round, and white pearl buckles, regular 35c, 50c, 60c, special for the holiday 25c, 29c and 49c

Embroidered Handkerchiefs 25c for 25c

Fine Swiss Handkerchiefs, beautifully embroidered in the scalloped edge, and hemstitched, regular 20c and 25c, special for the holiday 2c for 25c

Special in Leather Bags for the Holiday 25c off

Real seal, walrus and alligator bags, mounted on 6 to 10 inch frames, nicely lined, with inside purse, some with heavy gilt frames, very new range from 75c to \$15, selling at 25 per cent. off.

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50 dozen Odd Napkins, slightly imperfect, 3/4 size, worth up to 24 dozen, special 20c each

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44-inch Circular Pillow Cotton, clean and free from dressing, special 15c yard

Ducks 12 1/2c

Indigo Ducks, in light and dark blues, for children's wear, regular 15c, for 12 1/2c

R. MCKAY & CO.

TWO CHILDREN BURNED.

Lightning Struck Farm House in Ardcho, Village.

Kingston, June 27.—An awful occurrence is reported from Ardcho, a village on the Kingston & Penbrooke Railway. Lightning struck a farm house occupied by Ernest Bauder and burned it to the ground. His two infant children were consumed in the flames, rescue being impossible. The rest of the family barely escaped.

RIDES IN WATER TANK.

Dead-beat Performs Almost Impossible Fete.

Wilkesbarre, Pa., June 28.—After riding from Buffalo to this city, 260 miles, in the tank of a Lehigh Valley Railroad passenger locomotive, a feat which trainmen considered impossible, William Bahmuller, of Mauch Chunk, was arrested yesterday.

He had been in the tank over six hours, up to the neck in water most of the time and having great difficulty when the train was going fast and swinging around curves from being drowned by the water which dashed over him.

TIED UP ALL DAY.

Port Arthur Youth Cruelly Treated by Thieves.

Port Arthur, June 28.—With heavy ropes on his feet and arms, with lacerations on his neck, and rags jammed in his mouth, Joseph Babb, aged nineteen years, was for 24 hours tied to a post behind a shed back of Guerard's livery. After a day of agony and suffering he managed to break away last night and tell his story. He was knocked down on Thursday night by two unknown men, and, after being robbed, was tied up. He had only a few cents, and it is believed his assailants were looking for another man. His injuries are not likely to prove serious.

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LAKE SUPERIOR DIVISION—Leave Sarnia 3.30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for Sault Ste. Marie, Port Arthur, Port Wilfrid, and return—Friday, 1.30 p.m.

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