

A LUCKY BARGAIN

[BY MAGDALEN ROCK]

It was market day in Carndaisy; and the farmers and farmers' wives and daughters, for many miles round the prosperous Ulster town, were disposing of their butter and eggs and fowls in the spacious market-place, with a good deal of talk and gesticulating. In the principal streets the shop windows, with their carefully arranged merchandise of various kinds, invited customers; and before one of these a woman, who looked much older than she really was, stood ruefully contemplating the lavish display of hats and bonnets, jackets and coats. Her gaze rested longest on a web of bright blue material that bore the legend, "Genuine bargain, four shillings per yard"; and it was with a sigh that she at length turned her head away and moved a few steps onward.

"Why, Mrs. Nugent, is it here you are?" said a brisk, hearty voice beside her. "Sure I didn't think you were coming to the market this day."

"I had little notion of it till yesterday, Mrs. O'Donnell," the woman answered. "But the doctor was seeing James, and he recommended him to wear new flannel on account of the pains, and so I came out to buy a bit."

Mrs. O'Donnell glanced quickly at Mollie Nugent's right hand, which was closed on a few coins of the realm; but she only said:

"Aye; I believe flannel is good for rheumatism. And how is James?"

"Much as usual," Mollie responded, with a sigh that she tried to repress. "I wonder where a body would get the flannel cheapest? I—I haven't a deal of money to put in it." And Mollie tried to smile.

"Mr. Todd, they say, is selling things cheap enough," Mrs. O'Donnell remarked, looking towards the window that had attracted Mollie's attention. "And he's not over-hard to deal with. He threw a penny a yard off a piece of cotton I bought from him last Saturday."

"Did he now? But, then, you're a great one for getting a bargain, Mrs. O'Donnell."

"Troth, then, that's what I am," Mrs. O'Donnell readily agreed. The speaker had been brought up in Carndaisy, and was supposed to have much more worldly wisdom than the womenfolk of the counter district in which her marriage with Ned O'Donnell had placed her a year or so previously.

"Tell me what the doctor say yesterday?" Mrs. O'Donnell enquired, as she and her friend walked back towards Todd's.

"He talked about nourishing food and a mouth at the sea," Mrs. Nugent said, in a tremulous voice; "and sure, ma'am, he might as well have mentioned a journey to the moon."

"Aye, aye!" Mrs. O'Donnell agreed. It was a marvel to many how James Nugent and his wife and two children managed to exist. He had been employed at the time of his marriage to Mollie Toner, and for some years afterwards, as gardener at Ferryloran Manor, the "big house" of the district; but he had been speedily deprived of his place on his attack of rheumatic fever nearly three years before.

"Now, come on," Mrs. O'Donnell said, when she ascertained the quantity of flannel required by Mollie; and so skillfully did she bargain with the owner of the warehouse that she was able to lay three shillings in Mrs. Nugent's hand when her purchase was complete. She did not say that one of them, originally destined to provide a new ribbon for the bonnet she wore, had been abstracted from her own pocket.

"There now!" she said triumphantly; and Mrs. Nugent made an exclamation of astonishment as she fingered the money. She drew Mrs. O'Donnell back a little from the counter.

"Do you think it would be wise to take three or four yards of that blue stuff there? It is cheap and Mary, the creature, is badly in need of a frock."

"That! There was contempt in Mrs. O'Donnell's tone. "It is only a rag, and the colour wouldn't stand the sun two days. No, but wait till I tell you. There is a tweed dress on one of the second-hand stalls round the corner that you'd get for next to nothing."

Her companion demurred. She had a country woman's dislike for second-hand garments.

"Nonsense!" Mrs. O'Donnell said, energetically. "The dress is not a half-penny the worse for wear, and you'd get it for a couple of shillings. Then you could have a suit out of it for Mickey, I believe. Come on till we look at it any way."

Mrs. Nugent allowed herself to be led to the side street, where a number of vendors of second-hand clothing had attracted a crowd. Mrs. O'Donnell pointed out the article she admired on one of the stalls.

Mrs. Nugent was persuaded. In a few moments the purchase was made, and the two women turned their faces homeward. Mrs. O'Donnell was full of the cheapness of the tweed dress, and the bargain to be had at the old clothes' stall, so that it was some time before the conversation turned on Mollie's sick husband.

"And it's two years and better you say since he had the rheumatic fever?" Mrs. O'Donnell asked.

"Nearly three," Mrs. Nugent answered; and I doubt he'll ever be the same."

"I'd be afraid of it," Mrs. O'Donnell said. "But many a time I thought that whoever owns Ferryloran Manor should have done something for him, on account of him being about the place, as I believe he was for a long time."

"The Manor belongs to strangers now, Mrs. O'Donnell. Old Mr. Lyndsay left it to a cousin of his wife's—Mr. Patchell, I think his name is; and sure Richard Mason has the managing of everything."

"Ah, he's a man I can't abide!" Mrs. O'Donnell declared decisively.

"I don't want to say any harm about him. Maybe he's better than he seems."

"He may be," Mrs. O'Donnell replied, doubtfully. "Did he not dismiss James in the first week of his sickness?"

"Yes."

"And because he wouldn't work for him one holiday?"

"Well, we thought so," Mrs. Nugent admitted. "It was this way. Mason has a farm of his own, you know; and one first of November he gathered a lot of hands to dig out his potatoes. James, to be sure, couldn't go—he'd have given him a day and welcome at another time—and Mason told him he'd make him rue his Popish nonsense."

"And he sent him off afterwards?"

"He did. He didn't interfere with him till he got sick, to tell the truth," Mrs. Nugent said.

Mrs. O'Donnell gave a little sniff.

"And did you never write and explain things to his master?" she asked.

"We did that; and Father Duff wrote also. But Mr. Patchell said he couldn't interfere. He was just after coming into the property."

"Oh, I see!" Mrs. O'Donnell observed. "He wanted to send James to the right about till Mr. Lyndsay was dead. I suppose he would have known James."

"Deed he would. Wasn't it himself that engaged James when he was only a lad? And any time he came to the Manor—and that wasn't often—he'd have a word for him."

"Mr. Lyndsay had no children of his own, I believe; had he?" Mrs. O'Donnell inquired, after a pause.

"Oh, he had, to be sure! He had one daughter—Miss Clara; but she never came to Ireland from the time her mother died. She died when Miss Clara was seven or eight years old, of a fever she caught in some of the cottages about; so Mr. Lyndsay would never consent to let his daughter over here at all."

"He might have let her to a worse place, then," Mrs. O'Donnell said, looking towards a small cabin from which a thin line of blue smoke was ascending. "Ned hasn't forgotten the fire, I see," she went on; "but how was it the daughter didn't get the place?"

"Oh, you know she became a Catholic! It was said, too, she went into a convent—but no one was sure of that—and her father was in a terrible state."

"And that was why he wouldn't leave her the estate? Well, God forgive him!" Mrs. O'Donnell exclaimed. "Deirdrauding his own child like that?"

"He never was in Ireland since," Mrs. Nugent said. "I believe he lived with this Mr. Patchell, or maybe it was Mr. Patchell and his wife that lived with him. The Lyndsays, you know, had large estates in England, too."

"Well, well, 'tis the queer world, any way!" Mrs. O'Donnell said, as she reached the narrow lane that led to her abode. "And, Mrs. Nugent, I'm after noticing that one of your shoes is in need of a patch. Send it over and Ned will mend it."

"Sure 'tis thankful I'll be if he will," Mrs. Nugent responded. "But maybe he has work enough to do."

"He's not busy now. Send Mary with it," Mrs. O'Donnell ordered; "and I hope you'll be able to get a nice wee frock for her out of my bargain."

II.

"Do you know, Ned, I think I'll run across to Nugent's with a jugful of this soup?" Mrs. O'Donnell said to her spouse as they finished dinner on the day after her visit to Carndaisy market. "It is fine and nourishing."

"You may as well," Ned replied, as he rubbed his hands on the leather apron he wore and took up a half-finished boot. "I mind when poor James was as smart as any of us."

Mrs. O'Donnell tidied up her house ere she set out on her charitable errand. The good nuns of Carndaisy, whose pupil she had been, had given her some lessons in cookery that had proved useful to her; and Ned, who had at one time his country people's contempt for broths and soups, marvelled at the excellent meals his brisk, energetic wife manufactured out of a bit of bone and plenty of vegetables.

Mrs. O'Donnell reached her neighbour's house in a short time. Several fragments of tweed lying about the kitchen showed that Mollie had been engaged in dressmaking; but she herself was not visible. Mrs. O'Donnell coughed to announce her entrance; and in a moment Mrs. Nugent, flushed and excited, came to the door of the room where her husband lay.

"Mrs. O'Donnell, Mrs. O'Donnell, come here," she cried—"come here till you see what I've found!"

Mrs. O'Donnell, nothing loth, stepped into the room. The much-admired tweed dress, partly ripped out, lay in a heap on the floor; while James Nugent, as excited as his wife, was examining an open letter which he held in his hand.

"I can't make out no sense of it at all," the sick man said, without any regard for his grammar or greeting for Mrs. O'Donnell. "There's neither top nor tail, beginning nor end to it."

"What is it?" asked Mrs. O'Donnell, laying down the jug she carried.

Mrs. Nugent, in all her agitation, began to murmur a word of thanks.

"Och, what, woman! and let us hear what the letter's about," Mrs. O'Donnell said, abruptly.

"Tell her, Mollie," James Nugent said.

"Well, about an hour ago I began to see what I could make out of that"—Mollie indicated the heap on the floor—"and inside the lining of the skirt, I found that letter James has in his hand, and this," Mollie held forward a thin slip of paper; and Mrs. O'Donnell, after one quick look at it, gave a cry of surprise.

"Five pounds! A Bank of England five pound note, as sure as I'm a sinner!"

"It mayn't be good," James Nugent said.

"Good! As good as was ever made, then," Mrs. O'Donnell declared. "Now, isn't it lucky! Why, James can have a turn at the salt-water, now."

"But it isn't ours, you know," observed Mrs. Nugent, slowly.

"Not yours! And whose is it, then?" Mrs. O'Donnell demanded, sharply.

"That I can't say. Maybe it should go to the man we bought the dress from."

"Him!" Mrs. O'Donnell indignantly interrupted. "Why, like as not he got the gown for a few pennies."

"Or maybe it is to the woman whose name is on the outside of that letter it should go," Mrs. Nugent continued. "The letter and money" (notre were money in Mrs. Nugent's belief) "were together. Including had been ripped a bit."

"Well, I can't see why you shouldn't keep it. Maybe it was that woman's and maybe it wasn't. What's the letter about?"

"Not a bit of me can tell," James Nugent made reply, handing the letter to Mrs. O'Donnell. "See if you can make anything out of it."

His neighbor took the sheet in her hand and examined it carefully.

"It is to a Mrs. Cresswell, any way," Mrs. O'Donnell said slowly after a lengthy survey of the pages. "But what in the world is I can't guess."

"Oh, aye! the Mrs. Cresswell is plain enough, and so is the address—Pont-street, London," James said.

"Maybe 'tis in some foreign tongue," Mollie put in. "It doesn't look like any sense at all, at all."

Mrs. O'Donnell returned the sheet to James.

"I think the best plan is to write at once to this Mrs. Cresswell," Mrs. Nugent said. "Maybe that writing is something she values; it was carefully folded. And maybe she's in need of the money, too."

"And so I had to write for them there and then," Mrs. O'Donnell remarked, when relating the circumstances to her husband a couple of hours later. "Aye, and I sent the letter to the post office with a little lad of Rodgers to get it registered. Now I don't think it would have been a great s' for them to have kept that note. I would in a like case."

"Deed you wouldn't," Ned O'Donnell answered. "Not a bit of it!"

"But they need the mo'ey so badly. Well, I wonder will they get an answer?"

The answer that James Nugent and his wife soon received was certainly a surprising one, and afforded a subject for conversation for many an after day. Mrs. Cresswell was no other than the daughter Mr. Lyndsay, of Ferryloran Manor. She had not become a nun, but married a young Catholic journalist; and the pair, after a hard struggle in London, had been on the point of emigrating for Australia when they had received the letter written by Mrs. O'Donnell and its inclosures. The note of which she said the Nugents could make no sense at all was in cipher, to which Mrs. Cresswell held the key. It had been written by her father during his last illness. By it, it seemed that Mr. Patchell and his wife had acquired an ascendancy over him which he could not resist; and they had endeavored to keep alive the bitter feelings he entertained towards his daughter at the time of her conversion to the Catholic faith. He had written several times to Clara, but he had reason to fear the letters never reached her. He had also been induced to make a will in favor of his daughter, and had signed it in the presence of two of the servants. He had been afraid to trust the will to them, but he had placed it in a secret hiding place, of which the Patchells did not know the existence. The writer described the position of the place very minutely. It was as possible the letter might fall into the hands of Patchell or his wife, and therefore he wrote in cipher. It ended with a prayer for pardon for his long years of harshness and neglect.

"I beat all ever I heard or read of!" Mrs. O'Donnell frequently declared. "For old Mr. Lyndsay's will was found in the identical spot he wrote of, and the Patchells were glad enough to keep quiet over the matter. Troth, I suppose they could have been transported. Any way, they deserved to be. The two witnesses to the will were living; and one of them confessed how he had given Mrs. Patchell the old gentleman's letter to his daughter, and he even remembered that she slipped it into the pocket of the dress she wore. Good luck to the dressmaker who made that same dress, for the seams were not too well sewed, and so the letter and five-pound note as well slipped in between the lining and the material. I suppose the lady gave the dress to her maid, who pawned it, like as not. At any rate, it came to Mollie Nugent's hands, and well it was that it did reach honest hands. I'm ashamed to tell that I did my best to induce Mollie to keep what she had found—and she was in sore need of it at that same time—but she wouldn't, but packed off the five-pound note and the letter in cipher—what ever language that is—very day she found them. Didn't I write the letter to Mrs. Cresswell for her and James? And Paddy Rodgers registered it. And that's how it comes that Mr. and Mrs. Cresswell are living at Ferryloran Manor at all. And James Nugent is wonderfully well. Sure they don't know what to make of him and Mollie at the Manor. He has an elegant cottage in the park, and just limps about among the flowers all day giving directions. And Mollie's as happy as a queen. I never see her—and many a time I do see her—without thinking how I tried to make her keep that five-pound note of Mrs. Patchell's. Mrs. Cresswell sent it to her, and more along with it. Ah! indeed there's truth in the saying that, 'honesty's the best policy' for this world as well as the next—Ave Maria."

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Adapted From An Old Tale.

The following story reads well, but under one suit of clothes or another it has gone the rounds of the press for the last century. It is a striking example of the old saying that great minds run in the same channels. No doubt not a few of the readers of the TRUE WITNESS have heard of the anecdote, told with so much unctious, of Wellington and the

private at the battle of Waterloo and the commander's order, on seeing this redoubtable hero in the ranks, of "now let the battle proceed." The story told of Mr. Forbes is very similar in plot and explosion:—

"A good story is told of Mr. Archibald Forbes, while he was special correspondent in the Russo-Turkish war, and was thrilling the public day after day by his vivid dispatches from the scene of action. One day a certain German journalist met the English correspondent at the seat of war, and, after the usual courtesies had been exchanged, complimented him on the power and accuracy of his work, and implored him to reveal the secret of it. "On," said Mr. Forbes, with the utmost nonchalance. "It's all very simple, indeed. 'Simple!' exclaimed the German, 'I really don't know what you mean.' 'Well, I just manage it in this way,' explained the other. 'I prepare a full description of the battle in advance. I next go to the Russian commander and say to him: 'Here is a fine description, now get up a battle accordingly.' The commander, being an obliging man and a friend of mine, does me the little favor, and then it's all right!'"

AFTER MANY YEARS.

A SUFFERER IS RESTORED TO HEALTH AND STRENGTH.

SUFFERED FROM WEAK HEART AND COULD NOT SAFELY WALK ANY DISTANCE—HOW THE PULSE OF LIFE WAS ADJUSTED.

From the Cornwall Freeholder.

The romance of unwritten facts of real life far exceeds the rich elaborations of fiction. A peep behind the scenes would furnish us with adequate proof that there is more of care, trial and severe anxiety in human life than floats on the surface. We find many whose experience has almost incessantly fluctuated between health and sickness; little if any of this is obtruded upon the notice of the world, or breathed into human ear. You may secure the confidence of some of these sufferers who will retrace to you dark catalogues of pains and aches that are often ill understood by the friends and inadequately treated by the physician. Thanks to the mighty genius that discovered the now famous panacea for the ills to which humanity is subjected when suffering from impoverished blood or a shattered nerve system. Thousands have, and thousands are still using to the greatest advantage Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They have passed the ordeal of experiment again and again with ever increasing honor. The following statement is from one who was rescued from seeming permanent enfeeblement and distressing heart action. Mary Fisher, of Lancaster township, Glengarry county, is a maiden lady. About eight years ago Miss Fisher was seized with weakness and a distressing sensation in the region of the heart. It was attributed to several causes, all possibly more or less true; they were overwork, exposure, etc. She was certainly weak, and the action of the heart was abnormally rapid. The doctor in attendance pronounced the ailment nervous palpitation of the heart, and she received treatment accordingly for two years. At this stage she took to her bed she was so low. For twelve months she lay receiving only domestic attention. She improved somewhat, however, and was able to be taken to a friend of hers near Lancaster village, Mrs. J. Hancov, where she was under medical attendance and took medicine for about three years. At the end of this time she could not safely venture to walk out even a short distance. All this time she complained of her heart. About two years ago she began taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills; from this date she began what proved a steady restoration of nervous energy. During the summer of 1896 the improvement was marked. She was able by the middle of the summer to do as much work and walking as most ordinary women, and so satisfactory and apparently permanent is the cure that Miss Fisher has gone to her former home. Such are the unvarnished facts of a remarkable case. The malady was persistent, tenacious and hard to fight. But the constant use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills wrought a marvellous change, which Miss Fisher's friend said might be profitably known to many others.

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IN BRAVE LITTLE JAPAN.

Both Men and Women Are Barbers But the Women Talk the Most.

Shaving in Japan is a peculiar operation. F. A. Bather, M. A., of the British Museum tells us much that is interesting in connection with it in the first number of East Asia, a promising new quarterly. The differences between the Japanese and English barbers, Mr. Bather says, do not lie merely in externals. Your Japanese makes no lather; he merely pastes your face over with lukewarm water, rarely using soap. He then takes a small razor with no handle, and this he applies in the most delicate manner to each separate hair. From this it may be gathered that he is very thorough in his work; more thorough, indeed, than the average European cares for, since he shaves right up to the cheekbones, and if you do not stop him he may go on a la mode japonaise, to shave not only cheeks and chin, but also the forehead, the space beneath the eyebrows and the interior of the nostrils and ears. For the latter purposes there are, of course, special razors. It is surprising that in this land of paper the barber should prefer, as a rule, to wipe his razor on the bare forefinger of his left hand; this he does after almost every stroke. At the close of the operation he wipes one's face with a wet towel and then he applies rice powder.

THE WOMAN AT WORK.

It may be imagined from the above description that the performance, even without native extras, is a long one.

Joy and Smiles
In place of sighs with SURPRISE SOAP.
Easy, quick Work--Snow white Wash.

Rarely, however, does it stretch out so long as it did for me in Hamamatsu, where the barber took over twenty-nine minutes.

The Japanese razor costs at most 200 or 250 sen (100 sen=1 yen, about half a crown); it is of soft steel and is sharpened on a stone before each shave. When a foreigner with his thicker board of bone along the razor generally needs a second sharpening. The charge for a shave is three to five sen; for shaving and hair-cutting, ten to twelve sen. The foreigner, however, must not always expect such cheap rates.

While I am sitting in the barber's chair I see his wife attending to a girl in a back corner. The damsel is sitting on her heels, while the old lady, squatting in front of her, is patiently shaving away the superfluous hairs beneath the eyebrows. This done the girl's face is well powdered and a dab of red placed in the middle of her lower lip. This red, often called vermilion by travellers, is really extracted from red poppies.

In small towns, as of old England, the barber's shop is the centre of the news, and here are loafers who spend their days at the barber's, chatting with all who enter. In Japan, however, it is not the barber, but his better half, whose loquacity is proverbial, for she, going round from house to house to dress the heads of the female inhabitants, necessarily accumulates a load of scandal too great to carry for long.

WHY BARBERS PROPER IN JAPAN.

No Japanese woman could possibly do her own hair; so once a week the hairdresser is called in, establishes herself in a corner of one of the rooms and attends to the whole of the household in order, from the mistress to the scullery maid, including, if the house be an inn, any lady guests that may be there. Her operations, which I followed when at Ishiyama, so far as politeness permitted me, are interesting and complicated, involving a liberal use of stiff grease (camellia scented) and string. The complete structure due to her efforts has often been described; it is quaint rather than beautiful, and requires real care in its owner to keep it intact till the next visit of the hairdresser. This, no doubt, partly accounts for the universal use of the wooden pillow applied to the nape of the neck—a method by which the ordinary European would woo Morpheus in vain.

There are plenty of barbers in Japan and they may be of all ages or either sex. The barber's wife does not disdain to wield the razor on a male customer, while in the village near the long bridge of Setsu I saw two boys who seemed not more than fourteen years old, but regular youths, shavers.

Those who are shaved are likewise of any age or sex. The heads of children are shaved clean almost, then patches are allowed to grow according to the caprice of the mother. There is no thought of a tuft by which the believer may be dragged up to Heaven. Little girls generally have a square patch shaved in the middle of the crown, and this seems connected with the dressing of the hair at a later age. One of the first things that caught my attention in Nagasaki was a boatman with a similar toucure. I thought it was an atrophied relic of the old fashion of doing the hair. The fashion may still be seen in country districts, but you will find it with more certainty on the figures at the Crystal Palace. The middle of the crown is shaved and the back hair gathered into a pigtail, which is brought forward until it reaches the level of the eyes, then doubled back on itself, the end again brought forward and the whole bound with a string.

A mirror could not lie if it wanted to. The glass has nothing to gain by flattery. If the roses of health and plumpness of beauty are leaving your face, your mirror will tell you so. Health is the greatest beautifier in the world. When a woman sees the indications of ill-health in the face, she may with almost absolute certainty look for the cause in one or both of two conditions—constipation, and derangement of the organs distinctly feminine. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription will cure permanently and positively any so-called "female complaint." Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets will cure constipation. There is no reason in the world why a woman should not be perfectly healthy. She will gain in health, strength and flesh. Hollows and angles will give place to fullness and grace. She will be that noblest and most beautiful of all creation—a perfect woman.

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