

At Thompson's Inn.

"What you need, Herbert Brant, my boy, is quiet and rest—mean, rest and quiet," said my old friend the doctor, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes which belied the genuineness of the advice.

and on. There seemed less sunshine streaming through the arches; the shadows on each side glowered more densely. I caught myself glancing hither and thither, and listening, not in hope, but in apprehension. "Well," I soliloquized, "it was about time for you to knock off, if your nerves are thus easily shaken."

Time passed along in accord with my horse's amble, the miles leisurely elapsed; I was surely nearing my journey's end, and still that sombre expectancy pervaded me. What was it I anticipated? Not another glimpse of the wood nymph entwined with her shapely head, over a splendid coil of golden hair, and still that sombre expectancy pervaded me.

"Don't know nothing about it," said the landlord, doggedly, turning away. Through the open window leading into the dining room I could see my good horses' heads, to use her own expression, "setting things to rights."

"I think you say that you were an author, Mr. Brant?" drawled Mercedes. "A newspaper man," I replied modestly. "All very much the same thing, I presume, see, Thompson, what a gift it is to have imagination. Through it our friend here has been able to transform a stout country wench into a beautiful woman."

"What is he?" "Who is the man?" "Let us have him!" roared the throng. "He has fled in terror from my words," cried Gertrude. "The seducer, the villain, the murderer, is James Mercedes."

her subjects, a sorrowing Queen, but one obliged to regal deced, advanced a maiden— I gasped, I shook myself free from my captors, I covered at her feet. "Annabelle! Annabelle!" I implored. "Are you alive? Are you well? Speak! Oh, speak to me, speak to me!"

"I felt misgivings, which reason annihilated, yet which straightway showed stronger than before. If Mercedes was so repugnant as to be an enemy to her, which I believed, why were they gayly chatting together in the evening as I knew? Was not the friendship of French a man more dangerous than his hatred's, since it induced, only masked? Why should not pure, single devotion, from its very essence, be more potent than manifold deceit? Could she not see, as I did see, and so seeing, trust? Such questions would come to me in mournful iteration, but kept from bitterness by the permuting serenity. For, as the shades settled around me I seemed to feel the light stroke of regretful pity, and when the stars glimmered, and then sparkled, s. too, they said, shall hope revive and promise and fulfil."

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