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[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

## TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

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### LILLYMERE.

#### CHAPTER XX.

LILLYMERE, WHEN FOUND, IS TOO MUCH LOVED—  
DUSKY INDIAN, INAWENA—QUADROON NEGRESS,  
BERTHA MERLY—CONWAY BEAUTY, EMILY  
INKLE—LONDON LADY, AGNES SCHOOLAR—  
AND ANOTHER.

THE Island of El Abra, the magician, may not be quite forgotten; nor the summer encampment of the Donna Euryntia in the sylvan glade, beside one of the inner lakes of Michigan.

Into the silken tents of the Donna Toby Oman, a stranger, was carried, wounded and bleeding.

Earlier on that day, as on previous days, the youth had been pertinaciously followed by the tall, sallow-skinned, white and yellow-eyed gipsy; a man, hideous in aspect, yet so handsome in form and well-dressed as to attract the notice of passing citizens in Detroit. The two came together by train from Hamilton city in Canada; a casual conversation at the depot of the railway skillfully conducted by the gipsy drawing the unsuspecting Toby into a travelling companionship. First the world was pronounced by the man of bad designs as all bad and false; no truth in it, no worth, no honour; lies and deceit the only policy of conduct by which persons of small fortune, or of no fortune, might acquire competence, wealth, power.

To which Toby responded in earnest denial, pained to listen to indiscriminate defamation of mankind. In his moral impulses arising, not from education, for that was imperfect, but attaching to him through inheritance like features of face, form of body, colour of eyes, hue of hair, he felt that all human kind were not false. Toby recoiled from a lie as from a snake. A proposal that he should join an enterprise of deceit, though promising a fortune of splendour, was rejected by natural instinct with a repulsive shudder.

Yet Toby had weaknesses, which cultivated in bad society might have bloomed like the night shade, though not to the infraction of integrity, veracity, generous regard for another's rights.

Nor was he exceptional in this instinctive abhorrence of deceit. True, he was of patrician lineage, though not then knowing it, descended from two families where moral rectitude was a common heritage, and in recent generations cultured as essential to social respectability; cultured also, it may be hoped, as indispensable in pretensions to religion.

But in many a lowly cottage with clay floor and straw-thatched roof, with hardly window glass enough to admit the light of the sun, yet where the light of Heaven comes, children are born inheriting from parents and a far reaching plebeian ancestry, a sense of honour which revolts at falsehood, fraud, avarice, cruelty, deception. From such clay-floored cottages in old Europe much of America has been peopled; including the French and English speaking Canadas.

But for this heritage of plebeian chivalry, in a lowly domestic sanctuary with floor of clay and roof of straw, the boy Roy Reuben might not have shuddered with Tobias Oman at the flippancy and falsehood of that unreal gipsy. Gateways to wealth and distinction, other than succession to an English Earldom, have stood open to youths bred in the moral chivalry of veracity and personal honour, at which they did not enter; but despised and turned from away.

The initiatory defamation of all men and women as alike wicked, was followed by the gipsy with proposals that Toby should consent to personate the lost heir of Lillymere. Go to England with the deceiver; impose on the aged Earl Royalfort, and on the Committee of Privileges—to whom the House of Lords would refer the questions of identity and legitimacy.

They were singular coincidences, that this proposal should have been made to the youth who, unknown to himself, was really the heir. Should have been made to the agent whom Solicitor Schoolar of London, unwitting of who the youth was, had despatched to America in search of the heir. Should have been made to this true heir of Lillymere by an evil agent of wickedness who believed that more than twenty years previously he had occasioned the death of the babe, now the man standing before him.

Toby sought to escape the evil being following him around and through the city of Detroit; on the river in ferry steamers; down by Fort Wayne; up by Red Run—the streamlet once reddened with white men's blood; at which the gipsy muttered as a maniac; drank of, and washed hands in; following and glar-

ing on Toby with eyes magnetic; eyes of rattle-snake or demon.

To escape him the harassed youth journeyed westerly into the interior of Michigan, but was still followed; and told that now he must comply, go to England and pretend on forged documentary evidence—all in the tempter's power to obtain—that he was true heir of Lillymere. Must comply now, else—else—take heed—else—

"What else?" demanded the bold boy.

"This. I have committed secrets to your confidence. You must now comply, go to England guided by me, else—else—take heed—take warning."

"Against what am I warned? What is that 'else' you insinuate?" cried Toby, facing the gipsy with the defiance of a bold nature insulted; the indignant eye glowing, nostril distended, bosom of conscious probity advanced, but in his innocence unguarded; "what am I warned against, man of lying words, wicked designs?"

"Against that, you beggar's brat, as Adam Schoolar called you; and that!" stabbing Toby in the breast, and under the shoulder with a poniard—both stabs going to a bone, fortunately. Then at the sudden scream of a woman who had witnessed the murderous assault, turned glaring, cursing, and fled; fled to Detroit; across to Canada; out of Canada at Niagara Bridge; into the State of New York; down to an inferior Atlantic port, and off to sea. All trace of him lost at that port, a fishing harbour lying east of Boston.

Toby staggered to a tree, pressing hands against the wounds to repress blood flow; then sank to the ground in faintness; giddy head, quivering eyesight, tingling ears, parched tongue.

Yet he remained long enough conscious to know that something more than his own ears was ringing. He heard a bell. It might be the bell of some remote chapel in the forest; the chapel of a new settlement. Would the woman who screamed desert him? Would he bleed to death, or fainting, starve, perish? That bell; it had a familiar sound; strange hallucination he felt it to be, that fainting in this solitude of a Michigan forest, a wild and wayward fancy should carry him to the depths of a thicket of small streets and lanes in the great city of London. And that he should hear the workshop bell of Yerker, the trunk maker of Greystoke Passage. The bell which he had himself rung on occasions when a boarder with Mrs. Yerker. That kindly London land-lady who, when he was leaving the clerkship at Schoolar & Schoolar's of Chancery Lane, said:

"Well now, after all said and done, you be the first to go to America. I often says to the master—I mean Yerker, as is not a man of much speech himself, that we be so cramped up with houses here the business has no room to grow. A climbing up and a tumbling down, living like cats on the roof, as I may say, so crowded in with the houses, we must emigrate to a new country, I says to the master—a new country with plenty of wood and plenty of room for the business to grow, as it has not, and never will have room to grow in Greystoke Passage."

Strange flight of fancy; poor, desolate, wounded Toby felt this to be. To imagine he heard Yerker, "the master," ringing himself to begin work—his sole self, for he had no co-worker but his wife—ringing his one man power to meals; ringing to resume tools; and ringing to quit at night. Ringing at all the stated times to advertise the neighbourhood, as if he employed a hundred hands.

Strange indeed the fancy, yet not less singular the fact. It was the Yerker bell; not ringing now to advertise the neighbourhood of one trunk-maker at work, but to summon more than a hundred men, raftsmen, barge-men, teamsmen, saw-mill hands, to gather quickly, quick, danger, danger at the mills and shanties, a man murdered!

The Yerkers emigrated. Joining with an English capitalist, and that financier uniting with a lumberer already settled in Michigan State, but previously with insufficiency of money power, Yerker was already a saw-mill master and lumberer. The bell used in London had been carried to Michigan, and erected in a frame tower for uses of the establishment.

Mrs. Yerker seeing two men loitering in the forest near her residence, had a suspicion they were not the most amiable of visitors. Taking her spy-glass, a necessary thing of daily use in the wilds, she brought them under scrutiny distinctly enough to remark the ill-favoured countenance of one, and the youthful, comely, beautiful features of the other; which, with graceful form, reminded her much—very much indeed—of Toby, her lodger in London. "A young gentleman," she now said, in recalling his excellencies, "who was the very model of boarding lodgers; so regular in hours, so good pay, so well mannered, and always cheerful."

With such impressions of the two strangers hovering on fringe of the walnut grove, Mrs. Yerker kept them in view as they slowly moved, loitered, and again moved away. At a distance she followed, seeming to look for wild strawberries, that they might the less suspect her. She took the impression strongly that the younger of the two steep as if de-

siring escape from the other. At last she saw the murderous assault, and screamed. Screamed and fled to her house. The murderer cursing, and pursuing with the frightful poniard.

He hesitated to advance quite up to the house; for soon the woman set loose her dogs. The assassin then fled, and she running to the bell tower rang, and rang, and rang; first a common peal, then a wild alarm of danger, danger, danger! as the affright took deeper hold on her; intensified by the loudness and wildness of the alarm she sounded.

Saw-mill hands, teamsmen, axemen came. Yerker came and one of the financial partners. The dogs barking, the bell ringing, the dread of the murderer pursuing, horror at the foul assault she had witnessed; all distracted Sabina Yerker's brain and brought on her "palpitation." A brain not the clearest at any time; a palpitation got when "climbing up, and a tumbling down" in the old home. Sabina led into the wood, but mistaking the way, took the party of rescue farther and farther wrong. Ultimately they came on wounded Toby; but by that time the Donna Euryntia's people had arrived with a surgeon to dress the wounds, and litter to carry the patient to the encampment.

"Think it be; think it may; think it may be Toby, your London boarder," said the "master," slowly.

Mrs. Yerker insisted it was, and no other. The patient lay unconscious, and pale as death; yet, to the womanly, motherly eyes of Mrs. Yerker: "Beautiful, most lovely; the same lovely lad he were in London; all but speech and life and laughter; the happy, happy young gentleman! Oh, that he should come out here to his death! That he should come to such a death! Come to it by hand of a murderer, and before my own eyes, as it were. Oh, me! oh, me! Sabina Yerker, what have you lived for your eyes to behold?"

The "master, most of his time a silent man," to use Sabina's words, remarked now:

"No proper kind of murderer did that on Toby—an' it be Toby. A lunatic; a Wiltshire moonraker, escaped from a madhouse, the gilded cage at Eccley Manor. Lunatic! Lunatic! Eccley the moonraker. An' that be Toby, 'tother were Eccley the moonraker."

Yerker was right; it was Eccley the lunatic, otherwise named Irlam; but under both names designated a Wiltshire moonraker. A maniac for whose safe detention Dame Eccley of the Manor of Eccley undertook to provide, once upon a time. To humour whom in his mania, as possibly to indulge a slight craze of moonraking in herself, she constructed the sumptuously furnished cage within the great conservatory and gardens at the Manor House. Yerker, as it now appeared, knew much about the Eccley and Lillymere affairs, but had been so much and long a silent man that none knew he had been, in early life, termed a Wiltshire moonraker. A mild designation for lunatic; one touched by influences of the moon inherited from birth.

It were not easy to otherwise account for his ringing the workshop bell so many years in London, to regulate his own one man power at trunkmaking. With new aspects of industry opened under another sky, in another country, by the capitalist who had him in hand—also from Wiltshire once—the old moonraker emerged upon new enterprises a vigorous man.

You remember the occasion of El Abra's visit of ceremony to the Euryntia encampment in the Sylvan glade; the superb chariots of state and splendour of the magician's suite?

You remember the Donna's retinue of pony and palfrey cavalry; the mounted guardsmen; the duennas of observation; the hundred musicians; the men of science, the chamberlain, the pulpiter, orators, and chancellor of the conscience. The assemblage of young gentlemen, exquisitely arrayed, charming in their purity of character, graces of person?

You remember that retinue so numerous, so dazzling in splendour, and why the Donna Euryntia's mistress remained in the encampment when El Abra departed, not escorting him a part of the way as expected?

Yes; one told her that a young gentleman was out in the forest, whom she had spoken with at the City of Hamilton, in Canada. Whereupon a messenger of state was despatched to invite the stranger to the tents; his remarkable similarity in form and features to persons once her friends, impelling to persistence in discovery of his family and name. The messenger returned at a gallop announcing that the young gentleman lay weltering in blood—murdered.

Then a surgeon of the encampment, and bearers with a litter went and brought the youth in, who proved to be yet alive though dangerously wounded.

During days and nights of watching by the sufferer's couch, the Donna read, or pleased the fancy believing she read in Toby's eyes, the soft blue orbs of Edith Ogleburn.

In the curling brown hair, the repetition of the auburn curls of Sir De Lacy Lillymere, Colonel in the army killed in battle.

In the clear skin of delicate rosy tinting, the complexion of Lady Lillymere—Edith Ogleburn.

In the brow of mental power, and contour of manly beauty, the face of Colonel DeLacy Lillymere.

A nurse discovered the mark behind the shoulder—shape of a sword, which to the Donna was a seal of identity. Left alone with the foundling, Euryntia gave joy a gush.

"The lost jewel of jewels. Of all on earth none so precious. One perhaps, but he—ah, he? Where is he? Roy? Where is Roy Roy? But Lillymere found is joy of joys today; never to be lost again, never, never!"

In fancy, touching the lips of Edith Ogleburn with her own—the lips sleeping—the Donna gushed again:

"Would that Edith were alive to know I've found her babe, her boy, her son, her joy! the long lost babe of Edith. Woo is me, that she is not alive! Joy, joy, joy that he is found; young Lillymere found."

Left alone with her foundling his lineaments were again perused, as a romance of richest poetry might be read. Ideality, soul—twin doves, escaping the cage on wing and away! Soaring, circling, flying; loving and flying! Enjoying enchantments which none but winged doves may know.

Left alone with her foundling the lineaments were again, and many times read; now, with the addition of the imprint of nature; the stamp of identity printed before the babe was born.

Gazing into the imperfectly opened eyes of tender blue-gray, where she had joy in discerning Edith; contemplating the slumbering lips of eloquent beauty, where spirit beheld spirit—the undeparted beauty of Edith;—she softly whispered a name:

"DeLacy Lillymere!"

No sign, nor seeming consciousness of the name. Then she whispered others:

"Edith! Edith Ogleburn! Lady Lillymere!"

No recognition of sounds, nor sign of emotion at their import. The Donna tried other words:

"Your mother—dear mother, Edith. Edith, your mother! Know the name of the mother who loved you?"

A spasm, a start; eyes opening as they might at a sudden vision in dreaming

"DeLacy Lillymere? know that name?"

A relapse to seeming sleep, and no sign.

"Earl Royalfort, who is to be! Eustace DeLacy Lillymere, the future Earl Royalfort, lord of Lillymere Hall in England, and its princely revenues. Does Tobias Oman know the meaning of what I say? That he is now known to be young Lillymere, and may be at another day, one of England's lords, the Earl Royalfort?"

At sound of the words "Earl" and "Royalfort," the patient rose on the couch, gazing in the lady's face, vacantly a moment, inquiringly an instant. Then, wildly—wildly, and affrighted, he demanded in terror:

"Where, where is the fiend?"

And the lady, in gentle accents, responded:

"You are lost Lillymere; the future Earl; lord of Lillymere Hall, and its great revenues."

The words stung Toby; striking his heart and quivering there as might the stings of snakes; presenting in the dread association of terrors the hideous form of the assassin.

In a paroxysm the patient sprang from the couch, wounds bleeding afresh, exclaiming:

"Villain! Murderer! Murder!" Then fell on the floor.

The Donna summoned aid, which coming on the instant, the patient was replaced in bed and soothed, care being taken by the alarmed lady that her precious charge should not be again disturbed with words carrying fear to a disordered brain.

The faithful negress, who by signs to retire, was out of sight, yet not out of listening and observing distance, only behind a mosquito muslin, gathered up the words: "Future lord of Lillymere;" "princely revenues;" "great English lord;" "Earl Royalfort;" and at a time deemed convenient, whispered them in her patient's ear. In the intention this confidential woman of colour was true to her beloved mistress, but had not comprehended the full limit of the injunction to silence.

So in gulety of negro nature, without a sorrow in Euryntia's service, the nurse in the dead of night whispered the words in Toby's ear.

In terror, the fevered youth discerned in the dim light of a taper and of the flitting fireflies, the black figure of the woman bending over him. The fiend returned! He felt the dread presence to be that of the assassin! Watching its motions, noting its disappearance, Toby rose from bed, the coverlet around him, slippers on feet, no other clothing, and creeping out of the tent, passing the drowsy camp guards, stole away into the woods, and wandered he knew not where.

Wandered not knowing whither, but feeling as if driven; driven by terror to escape from the hated fiend.

When day-light came, Toby lay shivering at root of a tree, on brink of a rapidly running stream. Within sight were piles of sawn lumber, and close beside the tree a tower of frame-work. After a time, as the sun rose glittering on tree tops and on the water, a bell rang in the frame of timber overhead. It rang, and rang: "Ding, dong, tinkle, ding, dong! Ding, dong, tinkle, ding, dong!" Very much like a bell he knew in London; once, and had dreamt of not long ago; dreamt of not long ago.