

COMPRESSED NOVELS.

No. 1.

GRANDSPILL DE CREAM.

MOTTO.—A young man married is a man that's Par-red (after a while).—SHAKESPEARE.

BY WREEDER.

CHAPTER FIRST.

The De Creams were a noble family. Their blood was second to none in the country, and it they were devoid of title it was that they scorned such empty honour. Many times had a coronet been offered them, on two occasions the throne of England had been placed at their disposal. But they scorned alike the Sceptre and the Coronet. They did not trace their genealogy back from Adam, through the Antediluvian period and right up to the original porch, (from which, according to Darwin, have sprung all living beings) for nothing. No, they had reason to be proud, and they were proud. Throughout all their long pedigree no blot had appeared upon their still spotless escutcheon.

And the last member of the family was no exception to the general rule. I thin. I behold him now (we were school-fellows together under Doctor Syntax) turning to ice the marrow of a tyrannical gamekeeper who had dared to insult a particular friend to both of us. A glance from the irate eye of a De Cream in the early history of the country once turned the course of a river, and left its bed high and dry for time everlasting. The gamekeeper fared no better than the river. The eye of the lust of the De Creams was upon him; his blood congealed, his senses swam, his marrow hardened, his heart ossified, he died!!! And his corpse still stands in the old Doctor's garden, and the nurses tell strange stories, and I perchance am telling strange stories too.

Grandspill had been moody for many days. More than moody, he had been taciturn. More than taciturn at times, he had been gruff. And even my marrow at times shivered and grew cool as I approached him. One evening as I drew near him, he called out, "Beware!!" My marrow trembled. "Come not within glance of my eye" he cried, "if you would save yourself! Look at yonder oak tree!!"

I looked.

It had been a noble tree in its time. That morning saw it nobler ever, its wide branches green with a multitude of leaves. Now it was blighted, and only a mockery of its former self. Grandspill's eye had done it; his eye had lit upon it and blasted it. A strange fascination caused me to look after him. I elevated my eyes. He was just in the act of crossing the stream. He seized hold of a small sapling, and aiding himself with it, crossed the stream with a hop, step, and a jump, and landed on the other side with safety; a distance of about 150 feet.

Ha! I started!

He was not alone!!

A female form was by his side!!!

The wildness of his eye lit up the place! And she lived through it! His voice assumed a pleading tone. He was asking for something. She boxed his ears playfully, and I trembled for her safety. They were for a moment hid in the midst of some young alders; suddenly an unnatural light gleamed from the spot! An unearthly sound like the report of a 300-pounder

Armstrong crashed on the air! Another! Another!

My senses could not bear it! I rushed home and lay for some time half unconscious on a sofa.

A light bounding step sounded on the corridor. I knew whose it was. It was Grandspill's. He entered. His bearing was prouder than usual, and his face was radiant. He seized my hand and squeezed it until I groaned again.

"I did it," he cried.

"What?" I hinted mildly.

"Kissed her, kissed her! Yes," he cried, rushing frantically round the room and jumping six times consecutively over the large dining room table, "I kissed her!"

"Kissed whom?" I asked.

"Kissed her! my own! My Susan Brown!"

His eye was getting dangerously bright, but still I questioned on.

"Was it with her you were were walking in amongst the alders?"

"Yes! Yes! with her my own heart's —" here he stopped.

"And that fearful noise?" I suggested.

"Was the kiss of a De Cream" he responded.

All that night I lay awake, and I could hear Grandspill tossing in his bed and groaning "Susan," He had fallen in love with a milliner's apprentice, and I was too craven to endeavour to save him. How could it end? Not satisfactorily. So we had better begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER SECOND.

Grandspill and I had both grown up together until the time this chapter opens. He was now twenty-four years of age, "going on twenty-five," as the nurse said, or rising twenty-five as Grandspill's hostler would have said had he deigned to ask him such a question. But Grandspill would disdain to ask such a one such a question. He was prouder than ever. We were both officers in the Guards. His eye was brighter than ever, his temper was more fiery; but his will and command over himself had increased in greater proportion, and he was a much safer companion than of yore.

We spent a jolly time together, and bade fair to continue to do so until the arrival on the scene of a lady character, who is to play a notable part in this condensed drama.

She was a brunette, beautiful and like Grandspill himself, haughty. Their natures were similar, they cottoned to one another. He grew madly in love with her. She drew him on and on, and I saw that the poor fellow was being driven mad.

I spoke to him one evening. His eye was dangerous. The house cat had been found dead in the passage. Grandspill turned it over contemptuously with his toe, and said rather sorrowfully. "That confounded eye of mine again."

I spoke to him, but avoided his gaze.

He told me the reason of his madness. He was mad with love of the brunette. She was commonly known as "The Tricosis." This was the nature of his complaint—"Tricosis," and on the heart at that. I pitied him. He told me moreover that his mother was violently opposed to his strange attachment. His blood boiled when I proposed a trip to the North Pole, where his misplaced ardour might cool a little. He had made up his mind to make the

"Tricosis" his wife. He would have "Tricosis" on the heart for ever.

I was silent.

He gulped down a case of brandy and left the room. I followed him.

There was a grand ball in the house that evening. Grandspill attended in full uniform, and the "Tricosis" was there too. He danced with her, talked with her, flirted with her, danced again with her, and only left her company a moment. He came to me and said—never shall I forget those words; how they thrilled through my very soul with an indescribable delight—he came to me and said, "Come and have a drink old fellow."

We adjourned into the supper room.

Grandspill glanced with *hauteur* at a servant. "Bring me a case of brandy, and mix this gentleman a cocktail." (The De Creams prided themselves upon supplying the delicacies of all nations at their *recherche* table). I had travelled a summer in the States.

The case of brandy and the cocktail being duly demolished, we mixed once more with the whirling throng of dancers.

Grandspill and "Tricosis" bent a measure, and I knew he was excited beyond control, inasmuch as the perspiration burst freely from his face and trickled drop by drop from his aristocratic nose.

He led her to the conservatory!

I trembled.

I saw her face for a moment as he led her to one of its many nooks and corners, and proud and haughty though Grandspill might be, there was an insolent glare of satisfied pride in her face that his had never won.

I was conning over that look, and must have been rather inattentive to the fair partner who was hanging on my arm, when a most unearthly noise burst upon the air, and left the dancers horrorstruck in the middle of the mazes of the waltz. My partner clung to my side shivering with terror. Some ladies fainted. In the midst of the confusion another report burst upon the air. Mrs. De Cream, Grandspill's mother was carried out of the room by two John Thomases. "What is it?" "What is it?" burst simultaneously from 50 voices. I bid them be quiet, and at the top of my voice told them to fear nothing that it was only "the kiss of a De Cream."

The ball broke up, and, like a great many other such social entertainments, amongst other mischief arising from it there arose a marriage, the particulars of which are reserved for another chapter.

(To be continued.)

BEING GENEROUS TO A FAULT.—Giving away what don't belong to you.

APPROPRIATE.—It appears that the annual meeting of the St. Patrick Society takes place on the 1st of April in each year. It has been suggested that, however appropriate this day may be, the fifth of November would be still more so.

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