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OUR MOTTO IS, PROGRESSION.

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SLANDERED.

BY H. PERRY SMITH.

God reared her sweet and fair and undefiled,
As chiseled marble is!
The angels even walked with her, beguiled
By her rare loveliness.

A reckless gabbler found two willing ears,—
She fell—a stricken bird,—
Drowned in the hot lava of her tears,
Slain by a cursed word.

THE JEWELLED KEY;

—OF—

Right Restored to Might!

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG GARDENER.

Big loomed the setting sun through the chill, rose-coloured mist, one frosty afternoon in November, lighting up the many windows in the huge pile of buildings called The Priory, a fine old mansion belonging to Viscount Cleveland. The red, wintry mist was not the only bit of colour in the landscape, for along the unculating road, leading through the park to the stately dwelling, a stripling in a red coat rode slowly homewards after his day's hunting.

Every earthly possession seemed to have been showered on this young fellow of eighteen, the sole heir to this magnificent property, yet discontent and a sneer sat on his youthful face.

"Who's that rascal skulking near the woods at this time of day?" thought he, as a tall athletic young fellow, a couple of years or so his senior, emerged from a side path, and opened a gate to let the young heir, Leinster Cleveland, pass. "Oh, it's you, is it, Somerset? What are you doing here? Your place is in the gardens!" (This churlishly.)

"Mr. Granger sent me over to Ham-borough this afternoon about the camellias you ordered, sir, and—"

"There! I don't want to hear a long rigmorale story about nothing! The plants ought to have been sent or fetched yesterday! I don't know what Granger, or, for the matter of that, his lordship, sees in you to keep you hanging about at all seasons! There! no more words—that's enough!"

And on went the horseman, leaving the other young fellow he had addressed so

haughtily, flushed with rage and indignation.

The latter strode on hastily till he turned into a by path leading to a small cottage almost hidden among trees.

A light gleamed through the tiny window, and showed the figure of a tall and very comely woman, who was busy about some household duty. She looked up as he entered.

"Is that you, Somerset?" she asked. Then, noticing his disturbed look, "But what is the matter?"

"The matter! Oh, mother! why can't we go and work on some other estate? That lout of a boy, Leinster Cleveland, has been more insolent to me than ever! I remember what is due to him from his position; let him remember what is due to me, his servant!"

Very dark grew the woman's handsome face as she listened to these words. "Oh, that I may yet avenge this!" she muttered.

"I don't want, revenge, mother," said the young fellow. "I only want for you and me to go and find a home and a living far away from The Priory. I shall give that young scamp a horsewhipping soon if we stay, and get imprisoned for assault!"

"If you did, you would undo the work of years, Somerset!" We will go away some day—that is to say, you shall never take service under that boy. But it suits me to stay just now. Try, for your mother's sake to be patient!" And she rose and drew the curtain over their tiny window, stirred the fire into a blaze, drew a chair nearer the hearth, and then hastened to set a savoury dish on the table. "Forget Mr. Leinster Cleveland," she said, persuasively.

"He will not let me, mother," said Somerset, sitting down. "And, mother, you always pool-pool me when I ask you why we are so different in our ways to other people—I mean, to the cottages around us? You do not speak like them, and your ways are not like theirs; our cottage is not like any other of the cottages, small as it is; and we have books, and can read them. Why, you yourself have taught me German and French, and brought me up more like a gentleman's son than a labourer! And you have a little money, mother, though only a little; and now that I am nineteen, it seems to me that I ought to be doing something better than the head gardener's work here for an under gardener's pay."

His mother's face had flushed painfully during this address, but she heard it to the

end without interruption. Somerset continued eagerly. "May I give Mr. Jones, the Viscount's man of business, notice about leaving our cottage, mother, next quarter? My place in the garden is soon thrown up."

"Give notice?" she cried. "Not for the world! Somerset, I am trying to save money on purpose that we may move—that we may go somewhere where you will like your work. Don't defeat all my plans! They so often want me to help nurse at The Priory, now that the old Viscount is ill, that I can soon save enough for what we want. For your mother's sake, then, be quiet a little longer!"

"But, mother, tell me, why we are so different to other people? Of course I would do anything you wished; but don't keep me in the dark if there is any mystery about us. I've tried to think it my fancy, but—"

"Somerset," interrupted his mother, "I will tell you to night what I never told you before. My father was a clergyman, a man who had received a university education, and who taught me himself with the most diligent care. That is one reason why we are so different in our ways from other cottagers. But he died when I was eighteen, and left me homeless; for he was poor as he was clever, and" (her face flushed so that she rose hastily to hide it from her son)—"and I married to escape poverty; but your father left me penniless, and I had to earn my own living and yours. But mind, say nothing of this to our neighbours; it would not be very pleasant to me to accept employment at The Priory if my story was known."

Somerset had kept his eyes fixed on his mother's handsome but careworn face as she spoke, and was about to make some eager rejoinder, when an impatient knock sounded at the door, the latch was lifted, and a young man, whose dress proclaimed him to be a footman, entered.

"Good evening, Mrs. East. Mrs. Jones, the housekeeper, has sent to say she hopes you can come up to The Priory to night, for his lordship is ill again, and doesn't like to be left, and none o' the servants don't like sittin' up."

"I'll come!" said Somerset's mother, rising with alacrity. "Is his lordship confined to his bed?"

"Yes, but we don't think nothin' o' that, he's so fanciful! Lor! Mis. East, between ourselves, he's cracked. He's always havin' some new fancy. What d'ye think it is