

'Let nothing be mentioned out of doors,' said he, 'of what has lately passed within, especially in the east apartment. The young gentlemen had not so much reason to be frightened as they apprehended. A piece of furniture fell down in the room underneath, which made the noise that alarmed them so much; but I can testify that all things in the room were quiet, and there is nothing to fear. All of you attend me in the chapel in an hour; do your duties, put your trust in God, and obey your lord, and you will find everything go right as it used to do.'

'They dispersed. The sun rose, the day came on, and everything went on in the usual course; but the servants were not so easily satisfied. They whispered that something was wrong, and expected the time that should set all right. The mind of the Baron was employed in meditating upon these circumstances, that seemed to him the fore-runners of some great event. He sometimes thought of Edmund; he sighed for his expulsion, and lamented the uncertainty of his fate; but to his family he appeared easy and satisfied.

From the time of Edmund's departure, the fair Emma had many uneasy hours; she wished to inquire after him, but feared to show any solicitude concerning him. The next day, when her brother William came into her apartment, she took courage to ask a question.

'Pray, brother, can you give any guess what is become of Edmund?'

'No,' said he, with a sigh; 'why do you ask me?'

'Because, my dear William, I should think, if anybody knew, it must be you; and I thought he loved you too well to leave you in ignorance; but don't you think he left the castle in a very strange manner?'

'I do, my dear; there is a mystery in very circumstance of his departure; nevertheless I will trust you with a secret—he did not leave the castle without making a distinction in his favor.'

'I thought so,' said she; 'but you might tell me what you know about him.'

'Alas! my dear Emma, I know nothing. When I saw him last, he seemed a great deal affected, as if he were taking leave of me; and I had a foreboding that we parted for a longer time than usual.'

'Ah! so had I,' said she, 'when he parted from me in the garden.'

'What leave did he take of you, Emma?'

'She blushed, and hesitated to tell him all that had passed between them; but he begged, persuaded, insisted; and at length, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy, she told him all.

Edmund's behavior, on that occasion, said William, 'was as mysterious as the rest of his conduct; but now you have revealed your secret, you have a right to know mine.'

He then gave her the letter he found on his pillow. She read it with great emotion.

'Saint Winifred assist me!' said she; 'what can I think? The peasant Edmund is no more, but there lives one—; that is, to my thinking, Edmund lives, but is no peasant.'

'Go on, my dear,' said William; 'I like your explanation.'

'Nay, brother, I only guess; but what think you?'

'I believe we think alike in that respect, that he meant to recommend no other person than himself to your favor; and, if he did not dispose of my hand or heart, till I know the end of this affair.'

'Bless me,' said she; 'do you think it possible that he should be of either birth or fortune?'

'It is hard to say what is possible. We have proof that the east apartment is haunted. It was there that Edmund was made acquainted with many secrets, I doubt not; and, perhaps, his own fate may be involved in that of others. I am confident that what he saw or heard there was the cause of his explanation.'

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Emile him, though at ever so great a distance.

Edmund was never weary of hearing the actions of this truly great man, nor Wyatt of relating them; and, during three days' journey, there were but few pauses in their conversation.

The fourth day, when they came within view of the house, Edmund's heart began to raise doubts of his reception.

'If,' said he, 'Sir Philip should not receive me kindly, if he should resent my long neglect, and disown my acquaintance, it would be no more than justice.'

He sent Wyatt before to notify his arrival to Sir Philip, while he waited at the gate, full of doubt and anxieties concerning his reception.

Wyatt was met and congratulated on his return by most of his fellow-servants. He asked:

'Where is my master?'

'In the parlour.'

'Are any strangers with him?'

'No, only his own family.'

'Then I will show myself to him.'

He presented himself before Sir Philip.

'So, John,' said he, 'you are welcome home! I hope you left your parents and relations well.'

'All well, thank God! and send their humble duty to your honor, and they pray for you every day of their lives. I hope your honor is in good health.'

'Very well. Thank God for that!'

'But, sir, I have something further to tell you. I have had a companion all the way home, a person who comes to wait on your honor, on business of great consequence, as he says.'

'Who is that, John?'

'It is Master Edmund Tysford, from the castle of Lovel.'

'Young Edmund?' said Sir Philip, surprised.

'Where is he?'

'At the gate, sir.'

'Why did you leave him there?'

'Because he bade me come before, and acquaint your honor that he waits your pleasure.'

'Bring him hither,' said Sir Philip; 'tell him I shall be glad to see him.'

John made haste to deliver his message, and Edmund followed in silence into Sir Philip's presence. He bowed low, and kept at a distance.

Sir Philip held out his hand and bade him approach.

As he drew near he was seized with an unaccountable trembling; he knelt down, took his hand, kissed it, and pressed it to his heart in silence.

'You are welcome, young man!' said Sir Philip; 'take courage, and speak for yourself.'

Edmund sighed deeply. He at length broke silence with difficulty.

'I am come thus far, and some time, to wait myself at your feet, and implore your protection. You are, under God, my only reliance.'

'I receive you,' said Sir Philip, 'with all my heart. Your person is greatly improved since I saw you last, and I hope your mind is equally so; I have heard a great character of you from some that knew you in France. I remember the promise I made you long ago, and I am ready now to fulfill it, upon condition that you have done nothing to disgrace the good opinion I formerly entertained of you; and am ready to serve you in anything consistent with my own honor.'

Edmund kissed the hand that was extended to raise him.

'I accept your favor, sir, upon this condition only; and if ever you find me to impose on your credulity, or encroach on your goodness, may you renounce me from that moment.'

'Enough,' said Sir Philip; 'rise, then, and let me embrace you; you are truly welcome.'

'Oh, noble sir,' said Edmund; 'I have a strange story to tell you; but it must be by ourselves, with only Heaven to bear witness to what we say; but first go and get some refreshment after your journey, and then come to me again. John Wyatt will attend you.'

'I want no refreshment,' said Edmund; 'and I cannot eat or drink till I have told my business to your honor.'

'Well, then,' said Sir Philip, 'come along with me.'

He took the youth by the hand, and led him into another parlor, leaving his friends in great surprise what this young man's errand could be. John Wyatt told them all that he knew relating to Edmund's birth, character, and situation.

When Sir Philip had seated his young friend, he listened in silence to the surprising tale he had to tell him. Edmund told him briefly the most remarkable circumstances of his life, from the time when he first saw and liked him, till his return from France; but from that era, he related at large everything that had happened, recounting every interesting particular, which was imprinted on his memory in strong and lasting characters. Sir Philip grew every moment more affected by the recital; when Edmund related his dream, he breathed short, and seemed to devour him with attention; when he described the fatal elopement, he trembled, sighed, sobbed, and was almost suffocated with his agitation; but when he related all that had passed between his supposed mother and himself, and finally produced the jewels, the proofs of his birth, and the death of his unfortunate mother, he flew to him, he pressed him to his bosom, he strove to speak, but speech failed him for some minutes. He wept aloud; and, at length, his words found their way in broken exclamations.

'Son of my dearest friend! dear and precious relic of a noble house! child of Providence! the beloved of Heaven! welcome! thrice welcome to my arms, to my heart! I will be thy parent from henceforth; and thou shalt be indeed my child, my heir! My mind told me, from the first moment I beheld thee, that thou wert the image of my friend! My heart then opened itself to receive thee, as his offspring. I had a strange foreboding that I was to be thy protector. I would then have made thee my own; but Heaven orders things for the best; it made thee the instrument of this discovery, and in its own time and manner conducted thee to my arms. Praise be to God for His wonderful doings towards the children of men! Everything that has befallen thee is by His direction, and I trust that I shall be His instrument to do justice on the guilty, and to restore the orphan of his friend to his rights and title. I devote myself to this service, and will make it the business of my life to effect it.'

Edmund gave vent to his emotions, in raptures of joy and gratitude. They spent several hours in this way, without thinking of the time that had passed; the one enquiring, the other explaining and repeating, every particular of the interesting story.

At length they were interrupted by the careful John Wyatt, who was anxious to know if anything was likely to give trouble to his master.

'Sir,' said John, 'it grows dark, do you want a light?'

'We want no light but what Heaven gives us,' said Sir Philip; 'I know not whether it was dark or light.'

'I hope,' said John, 'nothing has happened. I hope your honor has heard no bad tidings;—I—I—I hope no offence.'

'None at all,' said the good knight. 'I am obliged for your solicitude for me. I have heard some things that, grieve me, and others that give me great pleasure; but the sorrows are past, and the joys remain.'

'Thank God,' said John, 'I was afraid something was the matter to give your honor trouble.'

'I thank you, my good servant! You see this young gentleman. I would have you, John, devote yourself to his service. I give you to him for an attendant on his person, and would have you show your affection to me by your attachment to him.'

'Oh, sir,' said John, in a melancholy voice, 'what have I done to be turned out of your service?'

'No such matter, John,' said Sir Philip; 'you will not leave my service.'

'Sir,' said John, 'I would rather die than leave you.'

'And, my lad, I like you too well to part with you, but, in serving my friend, you will serve me. Know that this young man is my son.'

'Your son, sir?' said John.

'Not my natural son, but my relation; my son by adoption, my heir.'

'And will he live with you, sir?'

'Yes, John, and I hope to die with him.'

'Oh, then, I will serve him with all my heart and soul; and I will do my best to please you both.'

'I thank you, John, and I will not forget your honest love and duty. I have so good an opinion of you, that I will tell you of some things concerning this gentleman that will enable him to your respect.'

'The enough for me,' said John, 'to know that your honor respects him, to make me pay him as much duty as myself.'

'But, John, when you know him better you will respect him still more; at present I shall only tell you what he is not, for you think him the only son of Andrew Tysford.'

'And is he not?' said John.

'No, his wife named him, and he passed for her son.'

'And does old Tysford know it, sir?'

'He does, and will bear witness to it; but he is the son of a near friend of mine, of quality superior to my own, and, as such, you must serve and respect him.'

'I shall, to be sure, sir; but what shall I call him?'

'You shall know hereafter; in the meantime bring a light, and wait on us to the other parlor.'

When John withdrew, Sir Philip said:

'That is a point to be considered and determined on immediately. It is proper that you should assume a name till you can take that of your father, for I choose you should drop that of your foster-father; and I would have you be called by one that is respectable.'

'In that, and every other point, I will be wholly governed by you, sir,' said Edmund.

'Well, then, I will give you the name of Scargrove. I shall say you are a relation of my own; and my mother was really of that family.'

John soon returned, and attended them into the other parlor. Sir Philip entered with Edmund by the hand.

'My friends,' said he, 'this gentleman is Mr. Edmund Scargrove, the son of a dear friend and relation of mine; he was lost in his infancy, brought up by a good woman out of pure humanity, and is but lately restored to his own family. The circumstances shall be made known hereafter. In the meantime, I have taken him under my care and protection, and will use all my power and interest to see him restored to his fortune, which is enjoyed by the usurper who was the cause of his expulsion, and the death of his parents. Receive him as my relation and friend. Zedick, do you embrace him first. Edmund, you and this gentleman must love each other for my sake; hereafter you will do it for your own.'

They all rose, each embraced and congratulated the young man. Zedick said:

'Sir, whatever griefs and misfortunes you may have endured, you may reckon them at an end from the hour you are beloved and protected by Sir Philip Scargrove.'

'I firmly believe it, sir,' replied Edmund; 'and my heart enjoys already more happiness than I ever yet felt, and promises me all that I can wish for future; his friendship is the earned heaven has given me of its blessings hereafter.'

They sat down to supper with mutual cheerfulness; and Edmund enjoyed the repast with more satisfaction than he had felt for a long time. Sir Philip saw his countenance brighten up, and looked on him with heartfelt pleasure.

'Everytime I look on you,' said he, 'reminds me of your father; you are the same person I loved twenty-three years ago. I rejoice to see you under my roof. Go to your repose early, and to-morrow we will consult further.'

Edmund withdrew, and enjoyed a night of sweet undisturbed repose.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

At a New York wedding, the bride couldn't get her glove off when it was time for the ring feature of the ceremony, but was equal to the emergency, and asked the bridegroom for his penknife and deliberately cut it off.

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General Agent. January 3, 1883.

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THE OLD BARON;

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THE CHAMPION OF VIRTUE.

[CONTINUED.]

Father Oswald and Joseph went into the bedroom in the haunted apartment, and found everything quiet there. They put out the fire, extinguished the lights, locked the door, and brought away the key.

'I thought how it would be,' said Joseph, as they returned.

'Hush! not a word,' said Father Oswald; 'you find we are suspected of something, though they know not what. Wait till you are called upon, and then we will both speak to some purpose.'

They carried the key to the Baron.

'All is quiet in the apartment,' said Father Oswald, 'as we can testify.'

'Did you ask Joseph to go with you,' said the Baron, 'or did he offer himself?'

'My lord, I asked if anybody would go with me, and they all declined it but he; I thought proper to have a witness beside myself, for whatever might be seen or heard.'

'Joseph, you were servant to the late Lord Lovel; what kind of a man was he?'

'A very worthy man, please your lordship.'

'Should you know him if you were to see him?'

'I cannot say, my lord.'

'Would you have any objection to sleep a night in that apartment?'

'I beg—I hope—I beseech your lordship not to command me to do it!'

'You are then afraid. Why did you offer yourself to go thither?'

'Because I was not so much frightened as the rest.'

'I wish you would lie a night there; but I do not insist upon it.'

'My lord, I am a poor ignorant old man, not fit for such undertaking. Besides, if I should see the ghost, and if it should be the person of my master, and if it should tell me anything, and bid me keep it a secret, I should not dare to disclose it; and then what service should I do your lordship?'

'That is true, indeed,' said the Baron.

'But Joseph,' said Sir Robert, 'is both a simple and an artful one. You see, however, that Joseph is not a man for us to depend upon. He regards the Lord Lovel, though dead, more than Lord Fitz-Owen, living. He calls him his master, and promises to keep his secrets.'