

## REPAYING.

Because I have kissed you, Mingullo,  
My mother is scolding me so,  
Quick! quick! give me back the kiss, darling,  
I gave you a short time ago.

As it's done we have got to undo it—  
For mother, you see, is so cross;  
But a kiss given back to the giver,  
After all, is not much of a loss.

But, heyday! Mingullo! what's this, sir?  
Why, here we are, worse than before!  
I bade you restore me my kiss, sir,  
And now—you have taken two more!

## 'S TELEGRAM.

BY NUGENT ROBINSON.

In the year 186—I was a "rising junior." I had luckily inspired a feeling of confidence as to my working capabilities in the flinty bosoms of some three or four solicitors, which had led to their giving me such of their business as required an immensity of careful brain-work, and did not demand a very exhaustive pull upon their respective exchequers.

I had been fagging cruelly; sparing myself no amount of labor, shirking no responsibility, and now the long vacation had come at last, and I was free to throw myself on the purple heather on the mountainside, or to wander by the brooklet, or to listen to the murmur of the sad sea waves—free and fresh as a schoolboy going home for the holidays.

My bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne, and in addition to the pleasures of my anticipated hours of idleness, I was in a position to fling aside the swing doors of the London and Westminster Bank with the feeling of one who held a stake in that highly respectable and respected establishment.

It was a frizzling morning in August, people persistently sought the shady side of the street, and iced beverages were uppermost in the minds of many of the sterner sex, who wended their ways hither and thither in accordance with the decrees of their respective destinies.

I strolled up Oxford Street, with a view of telegraphing to my friend Freddy Corbet, who had implored me to join him *instantly* at the village of Luss on Loch Lomond, where he had pitched his tent for the purpose of "doing" some of the exquisite scenery by which that hamlet is surrounded. Freddy was then a clerk in the F. O., with a very respectable "screw," which he spent like a man and a brother, in addition to "a couple of mouldy hundreds" allowed him by a maiden aunt, who up to the hour of her exit from the stage of life labored under the delusive idea that her nephew was a diplomatist of very distinguished abilities, and to whose secret services the country owed much, if not the entire of its vast political influence.

The venerable lady bequeathed to her nephew one thousand a year, and the F. O. saw Freddy Corbet no more.

Freddy and I were fast friends, and we had arranged to spend the long vacation together in such localities, as, upon interchange of opinion and mutual resolve, seemed most suitable to our respective inclinations.

I entered the telegraph office, and found that the compartments were filled; the first by a servant in livery, the second by a portly elderly gentleman who wished it to be known to all comers that he was telegraphing to "my son, Captain Smotsbee, of the 95th," and the third by a young lady, richly but plainly attired, whose figure was simply perfection, and whose golden hair was wound round the back of her graceful head in massive and luxurious plaits.

I felt strongly interested in this girl. Of course every man of a certain age obeys the impulse which bids him gaze upon a fair face or a faultless form—it is but nature's tribute to the beautiful, and in obedience to this mysterious law, I strained eagerly forward to obtain a glimpse of her features, but without success. She was engaged in filling up the telegraph form, and her head was bent over the desk.

"When will this message be forwarded?" she asked in a low and musical voice.

"Can't say, miss; it depends on the number before it," replied the clerk.

"It is important—very important."

"It must take its turn."

"How much am I to pay?"

The phlegmatic clerk proceeded to count the words, and announced that the message would cost "Seven and tuppence."

The young lady put her hand in her pocket—started, colored, became deadly pale, and exclaimed, "I have left my purse on my toilette table, what am I to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said the clerk, biting the tip of his pencil, "except you go home for it," he added with a grin.

"I live out of town, and the message would be too late; what am I to do?" and in her perplexity, she turned and faced me.

My heart rushed up through my hair, and then descended with equal rapidity to the soles of my boots.

She was lovely.

Lustrous violet-blue eyes, and long sweeping lashes—eyes sad, yet joyous, bright yet tender. A delicately formed nose, slightly *retroussé*,

which imparted a piquancy to the face such as one only sees in a portrait by Greuze. Lips red, ripe, luscious, and a set of brilliant pearly teeth. Her golden hair came low upon her forehead, and she wore a hat surmounted by a rich dark blue feather, which almost swung across her shoulders.

She was not thinking of me, although her eyes met mine. She was gazing beyond me, into the depths of her perplexity.

My voice was scarcely audible as I said, "I beg your pardon, I inadvertently heard your conversation with the clerk; will you permit me to relieve you from any embarrassment by allowing me to pay for the message?" I stammered and stammered, but nevertheless got through the sentence.

She started as I spoke, and bestowed upon me a haughty glance, almost amounting to defiance.

"We are strangers, sir, and I cannot accept your offer, however courteously meant."

"Excuse me, but I infer that your telegram is of importance, and that time is precious?"

"Time is precious;" this was uttered like an echo.

"Then surely you are not so firmly bound in the iron fetters of conventionalism as to reject my offer?"

I spoke hotly, for she never relaxed her haughtiness.

"I regret I cannot accept your offer," and she turned from me.

I felt nettled and strongly irritated. A keen sense of injury tingled through me; I resolved to act. I plunged my hand into my pocket, seized upon three half-crowns, threw them to the clerk, exclaiming, "Send that lady's message," and indulging in a laugh like that of the second ruffian in the melodrama, strode from the office, sprang into a passing hansom, telling the driver to drop me at Charing Cross.

"What an ass!" I muttered to myself as we dashed through the crowded thoroughfare. "What an idiot, to throw seven and sixpence into the air for a mere idea! Seven and sixpence worth of chivalry. Pshaw! it was too absurd," and then her defiant loveliness smote me, and I merely rejoiced that I had gained the best of the struggle. I felt elated, triumphant. This haughty woman had smitten down my honest offer with contempt, and I had returned the blow by disarming her. She struck with cold steel, I turned her weapon with my glove. She might be Lady Clara Vere de Vere for aught I knew to the contrary; but, be she gentle or simple, she was in my debt, and she owed me, in the words of the phlegmatic telegraph clerk, the sum of "Seven and tuppence."

I sent my telegram, and left Euston that evening by the Scotch limited mail.

It was my first visit to the land of Walter Scott, and as I sped onwards towards the country of Rob Roy, I bethought me of my youthful longings to stand, claymore in hand, by the side of that daring outlaw, and of my tender and passionate love for the wayward and fascinating Diana Vernon.

Heigh-ho!

"Shadows, my Lord."

Freddy Corbet met me at Balloch, the romantic outlet of Loch Lomond, looking ruddier than a cherry, browner than a berry, and clad in a nondescript costume, varying between that of a club-lounger and one of those lay figures, supposed to represent Highland chieftains in the garb of their native country, which adorn the entrances to long-established residences sacred to the sale of the soothing weed.

The view of Loch Lomond from Balloch, bathed as I saw it in a sheen of golden splendor, was perfectly entrancing. The broad expanse of bluish-grey water, smooth and glassy as a mirror, Ben Lomond looming upwards, its lofty summit hidden in a white cloud soft as a snowflake, the emerald upon the surrounding hills, mingled with the delicate tints of the newly-blossoming heather, the thickly-wooded islands, reflecting their shadows in apparently unfathomable depths, formed a *coup d'œil* for which I was utterly unprepared, and upon which I gazed with feelings of enthusiastic and unalloyed admiration.

"You never beheld such a charming digging as I have dropped on," exclaimed Freddy, after we had exhausted the preliminaries attendant upon such a meeting; "all honeysuckle and sunshine, and birds whistling, and a rustic porch over every window, and summer-house at every door, and a landscape at every corner, and pretty girls in profusion, and beer! such beer!—ah!" and he joyously kissed the tips of his fingers, waving them in the direction of our temporary homestead. As we neared the picturesque wooden landing-place, the village of Luss commenced,

"Like a nymph to the bath addressed,"

to reveal its beauties. Situated in a hollow, and backed by heather-covered hills, it lies encradled in a nest of the rarest and softest verdure—a beautiful suppliant at the feet of its giant captors. Quaint and picturesque villas, covered with graceful creepers, dotted here and there, pertly pop their roofs above the surrounding foliage, like vigilant sentinels from behind the ramparts of a well-defended fortress, while blooming gardens, rich in color as Arabian carpets, stretch down to the Loch to be laved and wooed by its transparent and amorous waters. Seen as I beheld it, in the drowsy, dreamy, voluptuous glow of the ripe autumnal sunlight, it was a scene so perfumed with the very essence of the beautiful, that for the moment I felt as though the dust of poor humanity had flown with the four winds of heaven, and

that I had entered upon the ecstasies of a new and untasted existence.

Our "digging" was all that Freddy Corbet painted it, giving upon the Loch, and commanding its glorious and varied scenery.

As we sat that evening by the water's edge, lazily smoking the calumet of peace, I related to my companion my adventure with "the fair one with the golden locks," which afforded him intense enjoyment.

"Such a duffer!" he exclaimed, when I had concluded. "If you had been in the vicinity of a knacker's yard, every dead horse would have had a kick at you. Why, Charley Bentick, I used to consider you a blue-bag of sense; but now I shall never see half-a-crown without thinking of my excellent friend Bentick Bayard, who prowls about telegraph offices for the purpose of paying for the messages of damsels in distress."

Our life at Luss was an enchanting monotony. A plunge in the Loch at seven, breakfast at nine, no letters to read or write (thank heaven), a prolonged smoke, Freddy sketched, I read a trashy novel, with the full knowledge that it was rubbish of the most uncompromising description, but revelled in its flimsy fiction nevertheless; and then to the pier to meet the steamers. This act we regarded, in common with the entire population of the village, in the light of a serious duty; and be the weather fair or foul, wet or dry, stormy or calm, the arrival of the boat found us at our post like a pair of detectives awaiting the landing of some party telegraphed as "wanted." I may add, by way of confession, that we dressed à *outrance* for these occasions, invariably giving a finishing touch to our respective toilettes ere we sauntered to the rendezvous.

Six weeks had glided away as though I had been in dreamland, and the hour was not far distant which was to summon me to work. The shadow of the City was already upon me.

One exquisite afternoon found us, as usual, on the look-out for the steamer from Balloch. Tourists from all climes under the sun were still passing backwards and forwards through those picturesque regions, and the boats were as crowded, possibly more so, than when I had come up the Loch in the early part of the preceding month.

"I say, Seven and tuppence," exclaimed Freddy—I should mention that since my narration of the telegraph adventure he invariably addressed me by this classical appellation, sometimes varying it to "Seven and two"—"I say, Seven and tuppence, did you ever see such a lot?—all as ugly as my grandmother's cat. Let's count the women with spectacles."

It may be ungracious, it may be ungallant, it may be unchivalrous, but I am bound to declare that the ladies who "tear round" the Scottish lakes are not of the highest order of female beauty.

"One, two, three, four, five. Hallo! Seven and two, there's a stunning pretty girl!"

The steamer was getting under way.

"Where?" I listlessly asked.

"There, opposite you."

"With the old gentleman with the white hat?"

"No, stupid! close to the creature in spectacles."

"In a scarlet cloak?"

"Not at all. There, in deep mourning, with the bay-colored hair."

My heart gave one great throb. It was the girl whom I had encountered at the telegraph office.

The steamer began to move. My first impulse was to jump on board.

My eyes caught hers; she flushed.

The steamer was passing along the jetty.

She spoke rapidly to her companion, a tall, gentlemanlike-looking young man, towards whom, in that single instant, I conceived a deadly aversion.

The steamer was passing along the jetty.

He quitted her side, and rushing to the extremity of the vessel, shouted to me:

"I wish to get out of your debt, sir. Your name and address, please."

His tone was as though he were addressing a lackey.

The steamer was passing away from the jetty.

"You are not in my debt," I cried defiantly. The steamer had passed from the jetty.

He sprang upon the seat, and rapidly detaching a sealskin purse from his pocket, seized a sovereign, and holding it between his forefinger and thumb, cried:

"Catch. Debt, with interest and thanks."

The steamer was passing away. I did not keep the wicket of the second eleven at Oxford without being able to make a fair catch. I caught the sovereign as it twirled through the air. With all my strength I sent it flying towards him. It struck him. A savage thrill of pleasure ran through me as I saw him apply a white handkerchief to his face.

The steamer had passed away; and, in spite of all my fierce determination to kill the thought ere it could burst into blossom, my heart's longings were with that fair girl who was being borne from me, whither I could not tell.

At my suggestion, we started next morning for a short excursion across the Loch to Inversnaid, on to Stranachlachar, down Loch Katrine, through the Trossachs, and *via* Callendar to Edinburgh. I traced her to Callendar; but here I was brought to a standstill. I assumed, not unreasonably, that she would visit the Scottish capital, as Glasgow afforded but little of interest to any traveller, save, perhaps, a commercial

one. We put up, in the modern Athens, at the Queen's Hotel, where I cross-examined the waiters as to the personal appearance of the lady visitors, as though they were being tried for their respective liberties and lives. It was childish this, weak, stupid and silly. What was the haughty beauty to me? what sympathy between us? None, save an act upon my part for which a newly-breeched schoolboy would scout me. Her husband, too! Strange to say, I never for an instant admitted the possibility of her being united to that man. Whenever the thought came to the surface I did not give it breathing time, but sent it down to the unfathomable depths of undefined idea. Yet the chase, if I may call it, possessed a strange fascination for me; and I followed up the slightest clue with the eagerness of an amateur detective.

At Holyrood, on the very spot where the ruthless assassins flung the quivering body of the ill-fated Rizzio, a low, musical voice startled me. For an instant I could not summon sufficient resolution to turn round. *Ay demt Alabama!*

The voice, though low and sweet, and "of the purple," was attached to a dumpy little lady, as broad as she was long, who wore corkscrew curls, and whose nose led the unruly imagination straight to the idea that she loved gentle stimulants "not wisely, but too well."

I hung about Holyrood for two days, cozening myself into the belief that my sympathy for the ill-fortune of the beautiful Queen of Scots and the luckless chivalrous Charles Edward was the immediate cause of my dalliance; and there is a probability that I should have tarried under the same specious mental pretext for a considerably longer period, had not Freddy Corbet announced his intention of "doing" the Iona, which meant a trip to Ardrishag, and back through the Kyles of Bute, on board the most remarkable steamer afloat upon European waters.

We "did" the Iona and the Kyles of Bute, and Ardrishag, and revelled in the beauties of the ever-varying scenery, returning by the same route to Glasgow, and back to our Highland home; but of the fair unknown I had no further sign or token.

"A letter for you, sir," said our landlady, handing me a square envelope, with a monogram in scarlet and gold. The superscription was in an unknown female hand. I hesitated before opening it. It must be from her.

I studied the monogram; but, like unto the majority of those facetious epistolary adornments, it was as undecipherable as the hieroglyphics upon the exterior of a tea chest.

The letter ran thus:—

"Miss Chandos begs to thank Mr. Bentick (it was from her) for his great kindness in saving her poodle from drowning in the Loch on Thursday last."

"Pshaw!"

We broke up our little establishment, engaged the same apartments provisionally for the following July, August and September, and bade adieu to Loch Lomond. Freddy Corbet started for Italy, and I set out for Dublin, to visit some Irish friends, with whom I passed the remainder of my vacation.

While sojourning with them, I received a telegram from Mr. Chadd, the senior partner of the firm of Chadd, Twiss and Webster, requesting my attendance in London upon the following day, if possible, for a consultation upon a very important case in which I had the pleasure of being retained.

The single hair had broken. The Damoclean sword of work had fallen upon me.

I started that evening from Kingstown by the seven o'clock boat, reaching Holyhead at midnight. It was a cold and cheerless night, and I was anxious to secure a compartment in the wild Irish mail, roll myself up like an Esquimaux, and take a good honest sleep, of which I was in sore need, as my hospitable hosts had given a succession of revelries in my honor, which led to a complication of hours inimical in the highest degree to the best and most vital interests of the drowsy god.

Having "tipped" the guard, secured sticks, *alias* two broad laths, upon which to deposit an extra cushion, so as to form a bed, and requesting him not to disturb me at Chester, I turned in for the night; and remember nothing except a hoarse shriek and terrific crash, as we rushed through the iron tube across the Menai Straits.

"Ticket, please, sir."

"Where are we?"

"Rugby, sir."

I handed him my ticket.

"You'll want the lamp lighted, sir?"

"Leave it as it is," and I re-rolled myself into a shapeless mass of railway rug.

"Quick, ladies! jump in! the only seats in the train. We are very full this morning, and we're late," cried the guard, as he thrust two females into the carriage—a lady and her maid.

My *devoir*, as a gentleman, was to apologise for my recumbent position, and surrender my extra cushion. I resolved to feign sleep, and thus avoid the "bother" (I like that word) of disturbing myself.

"Mocking is catching," is an old and a very wise saw. I slept like a dormouse.

It was bright daylight when the guard shook me up.

"Please to let the ladies pass, sir."

My fellow-travellers were standing, anxious, like Mr. Sterne's starting, to get out: my sticks blocked the way. I rolled off the improvised