

Thy Neighbor's Wife.

CHAPTER I. IN CHURCH.

'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife!'

Solemnly the words of the decalogue rang through the little mountain church. To Basil Montague, sitting in one of the front pews, they seemed like words of fire scorching his heart, and making the blood flow like a torrent of lava through his veins.

For his neighbour's wife was kneeling beside him in a pew, with her fair Madonna-like face bowed low over her prayer-book, and—oh! the grim irony of Fate!—his neighbour, in this particular aspect, was the minister himself, the Rev. Paul Martyn, who stood before the communion table, in his white surplice and purple bands, enunciating, in his clear penetrating voice, the law as given by God to man.

All through the rest of the service—sermon, and hymn, and prayer—those words kept ringing through Montague's brain.

'Thy neighbor's wife! Thy neighbor's wife! Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!'

Alas! he did covet her—coveted her with a mad, despairing longing.

He was a strong man—a veritable Hercules, who had borne the palm among the athletes of his college; but he was trembling like a leaf as he knelt beside Eva Martyn in her husband's church.

Not much of a church-goer he.

But he was spending part of his summer holiday with his old college chum Martyn in his Welsh home, and, of course, it was only decent to go and hear him preach in his own pulpit.

It was such a tiny church, perched halfway up a mountain side, and there was such a primitive simplicity about the service, that Montague felt as though he were inhaling a breath of his bygone boyhood—as though he were slipping back into those times when belief was easy, and he had not learned to scoff and doubt.

If only Eva Martyn had not knelt beside him, with her pure profile, and her eyes which reminded him of a summer lake, or of a freshly gathered forget-me-not!

How had he come to love this woman?

She was his friend's wife, and he had hitherto accounted himself a man of honor.

He was no saint, but assuredly he was no villain.

Ten days ago he had not even heard the name of Eva Martyn, and now her mere touch—nay, less than a touch, one glance from those soft blue eyes of hers—was enough to send the blood running riot through his veins.

How had it come about?

There had been no deliberate running into him.

How, then, had this mad fever come upon him?

A thousand times he asked himself this question; a thousand times he told himself he did not know.

At last the service was over.

That is, three-fourths of the congregation turned homeward, and a mere handful of worshippers, half-a-dozen at most, remained behind to partake of the sacred bread and wine.

Eva Martyn turned to go, casting a slightly wistful look at the Communion table, where her husband knelt.

Montague followed her out of the church.

They two would have to walk home alone.

'How is it you are not saying?' he asked, breaking the dangerous silence which so often fell between them.

'I did not intend to stay today,' she answered, low and hurriedly; 'I—I was not prepared.'

A faint, shell-like pink tinged the pure whiteness of her skin as she spoke.

Her eyes sought the ground.

The man who was walking beside her

dared to tell himself he knew what that flash and that tremor meant.

He fancied this pure-faced Eva Martyn loved him—loved him against her will.

He fancied she dared not approach the Holy Table while he was beside her, because she loved him with a love she had never felt for the good man who was her husband, and whom she had married three years ago, before she knew her own heart, when she was a child of seventeen.

He told himself she was pure but weak. Pure as the mountain snows, but weak as they beneath the kisses of the sun.

He told himself that, if he were to speak he could win her—he could persuade her to give up all for him.

And yet he did not speak.

'No; although he felt at that moment willing to lay down his life for the privilege of holding her but once to his bosom, he walked beside her, and marked her flushing cheek and drooping eye, and spoke no word her husband might not have bidden to hear.

What was it that held him in such strong restraint?

Not honor—not dread of shame. These things would have melted like wax beneath the fire of a passion such as his.

It was simply that a voice was ringing through his brain as though uttered direct from the skies above him.

It was simply that he had just listened to the plain command of Holy Writ—

'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!'

Paul Martyn's vicarage was fully a mile from the church, but it, too, was perched on the side of the mountain; a lovely old house with many gables, and all but covered with roses.

Behind it the mountain, crimson and purple with heather; before it, a shining stream rippling merrily over a pebbly bed.

Here Paul Martyn lived, supremely happy with his books, his young wife, his flowers, and his work.

He himself was nearer forty than thirty, and he had but one gratified wish, to write a book on his darling theme—botany—such as might win from his fellow botanists some meed of gratitude if not of applause.

When he came home from church that Sunday morning, he found his wife in the porch looking for him.

She ran down the garden path to meet him, and slipped her hand in his.

'You are late, Paul,' she said, softly.

'Where have you been?'

'Peggy Jones was waiting for me as I came out of church. She wanted me to baptize her child. Poor little mite! I am afraid it will be gone before morning.'

He sighed as he spoke, even though he was looking down into his wife's fair face.

He had so tender a heart that all human suffering moved him almost as though it were his own.

They passed into the house together, and dinner was served in the pretty, low-ceiled dining room, whose windows, thrown wide open to admit the summer air, looked out over a wide expanse of mountain, lake, and sea.

Surely, if any place on earth were an abode of peace, Paul Martyn's vicarage seemed so that summer afternoon.

The girl-wife seated at the head of the table, dispensing the viands with a simple grace, the calm-faced, scholarly vicar at the foot, the handsome aristocratic guest seated between the two, made such a charming little family party, that one would have said, surely here was a home as peaceful as a mountain lake, as unruffled by the storms that rend and tear the outside world.

And yet, so deceitful are appearances, two of that trio hid in their bosoms an agitation too deep for words.

Dinner over, all three repaired to Eva's dainty drawing-room, a tiny room, furnished with the most exquisite taste.

The hearth flled with ferns, and foxglove, and heather; and garden flowers, roses, and lilies, and sweet scented pinks, shedding forth their brightness and fragrance from every available nook and corner.

The vicar took a chair near the open window; Eva nestled down on a footstool at his side, and sat with her hand in his, her graceful, willow form pressed close against him.

Basil Montague, watching her every movement with jealous eyes, told himself she had never clung and nestled to her husband in that way before.

It was as though she knew she was in some great danger, and was mutely beseeching him to save her from it.

Was it so? brooded Montague, as he sat in a shadowy corner, and watched the pair.

Was it that she mistrusted her own strength, and was beseeching her husband to save her from herself?

From that shadowy corner of his, he noted, for the thousandth time, low fair she was.

His eyes dwelt hungrily on her every feature, and he told himself over and over again that no other woman in the world was half so fair.

She wore a grey gown, almost Quakerish in its simplicity of make, and her soft, nut-brown hair was worn somewhat in the fashion of a bygone day.

There was something saintly in the character of her beauty—it was so soft, so gentle, of such an exquisite purity.

A painter in search of a Madonna, or of a guardian angel, would have said his search was ended at sight of her.

And yet, for all that angelic purity, she was sweetly human.

The tender-loving woman breathed from her in her every look.

That, though the reverend esteemed her husband, she did not love him with a full, wildly love, Montague had been certain from the first day of his arrival there.

There is a wonderful freemasonry in love, and he who himself loves greatly may be trusted to read its signs in others.

Circumstances had led her, as he knew, to marry the grave, kindly scholar, who was nearly twice her age.

Her father, on his death-bed, had committed her to his care, and she, in her child-like simplicity, had suffered him to make her his wife, in order that he might have the right to protect her and to take her to his home.

But she did not love him; she had not learned to love him even now—not with the love of a wife; it was rather the calm affection of a sister, or the grateful devotion of a child.

CHAPTER II. A RESOLUTION.

'Are you coming to church to night, old man?'

It was the vicar who asked this question, as he rose from the tea-table.

'Thanks; but if you won't think it rude of me, I should prefer a walk.'

'Just as you like,' said the vicar, with his better self, 'Eva, my dear, had better go to bed, and get your bonnet on? We have not too much time.'

She went away at her husband's bidding, and when she came back and stood in the full sunlight in the porch, Montague noticed that her face was almost colourless, and that there was a look of sadness and of secret anxiety in her sweet blue eyes.

'There must be an end to this,' he muttered, sternly, within himself. 'There shall be an end—y, to-morrow! I swear it!'

He watched the husband and wife walk away together, she with one hand resting lightly on his black coat sleeve, her prayer-book carried in the other.

They disappeared round a curve mountain, then Montague crushed his soft felt hat hard down upon his head, set his teeth to gnaw almost fiercely, drew a long deep breath, and strode away in the opposite direction.

The man was torn by conflicting passions—by love on the one hand, by honor and duty on the other.

On the battle-ground of his soul the fight raged fiercely.

It was as though he was torn this way and that way by wild beasts.

He himself, seemed almost without volition in their grip.

He knew not which were the suggestions of his own mind, and which suggestions from without.

That things had come to a crisis with him he knew.

Another day, at furthest, must needs decide it.

Either he must go away from Paul Martyn's house upon the morrow, or he would stay and proclaim himself a villain.

He could not trust himself to spend any longer time in Eva Martyn's presence, and not declare his love.

There was no safety but in flight.

'Shall I stay, or shall I go?' That was the question he wrestled with as he tramped through the lonely mountain pass.

He gave up love for duty and honour? Shall I give up love for duty and honour?

He flung himself down on a patch of ground, soiled and odorous with wild thyme and looked around him with a steady eye before he answered that fateful question.

He was in the heart of a great mountain pass.

Before, behind, and on either side of him, mountains reared their shaggy heads to meet the sky; twenty yards away a cascade of water hurled itself over a precipice of two hundred feet, and close beside him a lake, dark and gloomy, reflected the purple of the evening sky.

The moon, a pale clear crescent, hung high in the heavens, and a single star, like the eye of an angel, pure but awful, looked down into his face whenever he raised his head.

Where there is no place on earth where a man feels so strongly the importance of eternity, and the littleness of things that pertain to human passion, as in the midst of lofty mountains.

They oppress him with a sense of his own insignificance; they awe him into some measure of communion with the wide heavens which stretch above their loftiest peaks.

Such, at least, was their effect on the

Didn't Dare Eat Meat.

What dyspeptics need is not artificial digestants but something that will put their stomach right so it will manufacture its own digestive ferments.

For twenty years now Burdock Blood Bitters has been permanently curing severe cases of dyspepsia and indigestion that other remedies were powerless to reach.

Mr. James G. Keirstead, Collina, Kings Co., N.B., says:

'I suffered with dyspepsia for years and tried everything I heard of, but got no relief until I took Burdock Blood Bitters.'

'I only used three bottles and now I am well, and can eat meat, which I dared not touch before without being in great distress. I always recommend B.B.B. as being the best remedy for all stomach disorders, and as a family medicine.'



among them in the purple twilight.

The very sight of those everlasting hills made him think of the mount that burst with fire—the Sinai whence the Eternal Law went forth to man.

'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.' No, and I will not! he exclaimed almost fiercely.

'At least, I will flee the temptation. She is not for me. I know it, and will avoid her while some little sanity, some little power of self-control, remains. If I were to stay here, Eva Martyn would drive me mad, and I will go.'

He sprang up in haste, all eagerness to put his new formed resolve into execution. It was ever thus with this man.

He was always either hot or cold. His worst enemy could not have accused him of being lukewarm.

'Before this time to-morrow, I will be far from here,' he muttered, as he hurried along the narrow path. 'It will be easy to plead business of importance. By the first train in the morning I am gone.'

He hurried on faster and faster. And, at every step, his resolution increased rather than weakened.

He came within sight of the vicarage. It was quite dark now, and lamps were lighted inside the house.

He wondered whether he should find Eva sitting as she had sat in the afternoon, nestling close to her husband's side, and holding his hand.

'It does not matter. Nothing matters now,' he muttered. 'All I have to do is to go away and—forget.'

He had reached the little brawling stream which ran at the foot of the vicarage garden.

It was full of great boulders, and he and he crossed on them rather than go a dozen yards out of his way to the bridge.

The last boulder he sat his foot upon was slippery.

He missed his footing, fell heavily forward, and, trying to rise, found he could not without great pain.

He dragged himself to the house as best he could, but he knew there would be no travelling for him upon the morrow.

Fate had overruled his resolution; his ankle was either badly sprained or broken.

CHAPTER III. THE VICAR Schemes.

The reverend Paul Martyn looked grave enough when his friend limped into the parlor with a white, set face, and announced that he had hurt his ankle; but, grave as he looked, Eva looked graver still.

She was color in her cheek came and went with a curious fickleness, and a close observer would have said that the look in her blue eyes was one of dread.

The sprain proved to be a bad one. A doctor who lived half a mile away was summoned, and his instructions were imperative: Mr. Montague must consider himself as chained to the sofa for at least a week.

'It's no use talking, I'm bound to get away from here,' said Montague, gloomily.

'My dear fellow, what nonsense!' returned the vicar. 'You had promised to spend another week with us, and surely you can turn it into a fortnight if you like you,' he added, with simple heartiness of look and tone.

'You're very good; but, to tell the truth I'd found I couldn't stay the week. Circumstances have arisen,' he added, very slowly, and letting his eyes rest on Eva as he spoke, 'which will compel me to get back to town at once. I had meant to be in France by to-morrow evening.'

'Well, that's out of the question now, so you must just content yourself as well as you can. Come, old fellow, don't look so glum about it, or we shall begin to think there is a lady in the case. Has he some sweetheart in France, think you, Eva that he's so eager to be gone?'

The good, simple-hearted vicar had uttered these words simply to rally his friend who he fancied seemed rather more dejected than the sprained ankle, and the consequent enforced confinement, could justify.

But, if he had been a close observer he would have wondered at their effect on both his hearers.

Montague's dark face flushed a sudden dusky red, and Eva turned quite pale.

'Come, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, went on the vicar cheerily. 'We shall have your company, and that'll be famous; and you'll be well attended to. My little girl here is a capital nurse; it's worth while being sick only to be nursed by her.'

And he laid his hand on his young wife's shoulder with a tender, fatherly like pressure, which had the singular effect of bringing the tears into her eyes.

'You are very good,' said Montague; but it was said without heartiness—moodily almost. After a moment or two, he raised his dark, glowing eyes, and looked full at his friend's wife. 'Shall I be a trouble to you if I stay?' he asked.

'To me! Oh, pray don't think of that! I shall be very glad,' she answered hurriedly.

'Then I will stay—indeed I must,' said he a little grimly. 'I don't know how to thank you. Thanks are so little use; however, I'll try to show you I am not ungrateful.'

'Why, what a fuss your making over a trifle,' said the vicar, laughing; 'you're in quite a tragedy humour, Monty. I never saw you more serious in my life.'

The next morning the vicar came into his wife's room as she was dressing.

He had been up, a couple of hours or more, had taken a long, solitary tramp over the mountain, and on his return, had met the postman at the garden gate.

'I've got a surprise for you dearest,' he said, stooping to kiss his wife, and passing his arms fondly around her pretty, bare neck, as she sat brushing out her hair.

'Here's a letter from Caroline; and—would you believe it!—she's actually coming to us to-morrow. It appears that Foster wants to spend a month in Norway. Caroline

hates the sea, if you

mined not to go with them.

'She suggests that she should come to us instead. We're to wire it we can do with her. Of course we can—ah dear!'

'Oh yes,' said Eva, a far-away look in her blue eyes. 'To-morrow did you say, Paul?'

'Yes; but here's her letter. Read it for yourself; it's short and sweet as usual.'

Caroline was Paul Martyn's sister. She was twelve or fourteen years younger than he; and, as she was an orphan, her home hitherto had been made with her married sister, Mrs. Foster, the wife of Major Foster.

She was, however, a young lady of rather unsettled temperament, and every few months her brother was informed—usually by telegram—that she intended to come and make her temporary abode with him.

Eva read the letter and went on dressing. The vicar, who had got an idea, and was anxious to be delivered of it, looked at her with a beaming countenance.

'Eva, wouldn't it be rather nice if Caroline and Montague were to fall in love and make a match of it?'

A faint pink flush ran all the world like the lining of a sea-shell, overspread Eva's face.

With a sudden movement she let her hair fall about her in a soft shower, and so concealed the flush.

'I—I hadn't thought of that, Paul,' she answered, softly.

'Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know how I came to think of it,' said the vicar, with a frank, hearty laugh. 'You always tell me I'm slow in these matters; but as I came up the garden, it flashed on me all at once. Caroline is so beautiful and graceful, anyone might love her, mightn't they my dear?'

'And as for Monty; well, you see he is the best and dearest of fellows. There's hardly a man in the world I like so well as I do Basil Montague. It would be a splendid arrangement, wouldn't it?'

'Perhaps it would,' said Eva.

But she spoke listlessly, without heartiness.

'You like Montague, don't you dear?'

Asked the good, simple-hearted vicar, a little anxiously.

It would have hurt him to think his wife did not like the friend he himself had loved and esteemed so many years.

'Oh yes; I like him well enough.'

'He is such a thoroughly manly fellow,' went on the vicar. 'That is what I so admire in him. Now, I myself am so much of a dreamer. I go about with my eyes shut half half of the time. Oh, I know that well enough; but Montague is so refreshingly strong and vigorous, amazingly clever too, and the very soul of honour.'

He and Caroline would harmonize beautifully, I should imagine. She has lofty ideas of what men should be, but I verily believe he would come up to them; and he would be proud of such a wife.'

'I never gave a thought to match-making before, but I'm going in for it now with a vengeance, ain't I? Don't laugh at me, dear. I know it sounds a bit ridiculous, but I should like Montague for my brother-in-law. We'll help it along between us if we can.'

Eva did not answer.

'Have you a headache dear?' asked her husband anxiously.

'Yes—no I mean that I'm a little tired nothing to signify, but I didn't sleep very well; I shall feel better after breakfast. We'll go down, shall we? I'm quite ready.'

When they entered the breakfast room, they found Montague there. Martyn had meant to assist him downstairs, but he had managed to hobble down alone, and was lying at full length on the couch, his face set and pale.

Of course he was told of the expected arrival.

'You will like Caroline, old fellow,' said the vicar. 'What a lucky thing it is she's coming to us just at this time. She'll keep you from feeling dull.'

Montague did not answer in words, but a smile that was haggard, and strangely grim, passed over his face.

CAROLINE.

It was a lovely summer evening when Caroline Martyn arrived at her brother's home.

He himself drove her from the railway station, in the old-fashioned phaeton, drawn by the stout brown cob.

Eva had begged, with curious earnestness, to be allowed to go with him, but this he would not hear of.

'My dear, think how rude it would be to Montague, to leave him alone,' he said. 'It must be very dull to be tied to a sofa all day—such an active fellow, as he is, Continued on Fifteenth Page.

With Years WISDOM.

The answer to that old query, 'What's in a name?' was not hard to define in the case of one justly celebrated Family Remedy that had its origin a way down in Maine, which proves that with age comes wisdom about

JOHNSON'S ANODYNE LINIMENT

An old lady called at a store and asked for a bottle of Johnson's Anodyne Liniment; the clerk said "they were out, but could supply her with another just as good."

The engaging smile that accompanied this information was frozen stiff when she replied: "Young Man, there is only one Liniment, and that is Johnson's."

Originated in 1816 by an old