

The True Witness,

AND

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MY FUTURE HUSBAND; OR, MAGGIE'S SECRET.

"MARRIAGE.—The great astrologer, Signor Morgani, will return a correct likeness of your future partner upon receipt of thirty stamps. Name, age and sex must be given, with a slight description of personal appearance. Address Signor Morgani, etc., etc."

"And this is your advertisement, Morgan?"

"Ah well!—I suspect your dupes are principally old maids and school-girls."

The speaker, a young man about five-and-twenty, threw down the local paper with a merry peal of laughter. He was very handsome, with fine dark eyes, that sparkled beneath the long lashes with almost boyish gleam. The person addressed, known in the advertising columns as the Signor Morgani, was no other than a certain plain Tom Morgan, a regular slipshod, careless fellow, who, after trying his hand at various trades, and failing in all, had finally hit upon the above mode, which gratified his indolent disposition, by calling forth little exertion save the exercise of that literary ingenuity of which he possessed a large share.

He had formerly been a school friend of Jack Carleton's who, an hour or two before the opening of this story, had fallen in with him on his return from a prolonged Continental tour, undertaken nominally for the benefit of his health, but more possibly to help to get rid of the large income left him by his father.

The young men had grasped hands cordially enough when they recognized each other, and soon after adjourned to the lodgings of Morgan, to have a talk over old times.

It was during this talk that Morgan confided to his friend his present mode of living, with strict injunctions to keep it a profound secret; "as of course, you see, old fellow," said he, "it might prove my ruin if known."

Jack, however, did not see how his friend could be in a greater state of ruin than he appeared to be at present.

"You were always a good-for-nothing scamp, Tom," said he.

"And you were always a lucky dog, Jack," returned Tom. "By the by, what are you going to do with yourself this Christmas?"

"Why to spend it in the jolliest style at the jolliest place in Christendom," replied Jack.

"They have not seen me at Barby Holt for eight years, and I expect grandmother and the rest of them will go mad with joy when I make my sudden appearance there."

With this flattering conclusion Mr. Jack Carleton elevated his legs till his feet reposed on the mantel-piece.

"Barby Holt Manor, in Nottinghamshire?" inquired the signor, suddenly.

"The very same, old boy," said his companion. "Why do you ask?"

"Only that I had a letter from there today," replied Tom.

"A letter! what about?" inquired Jack, with innocent coolness.

"Why, concerning my advertisement, of course," answered Tom, rummaging among some papers.

"Ah, one of my grandfather's guests, I suppose, in for a lark," said Jack. "What's his name?"

"It is not a man," replied Tom; "she signs herself 'Maggie Barton.'"

"Maggie Barton!" exclaimed Jack. "I know her—at least I did. May I read it?" he asked, eagerly.

It was a short letter, in a girlish handwriting, describing herself as tall and slight, with golden hair and hazel eyes, and requesting to be favored with a *carte de visite* of her future husband, by return of post, of course. Enclosed in the envelope was the fee of thirty stamps.

Carleton had the letter before his eyes long after he had read it. The writer's name, "Maggie Barton," was associated with a very pleasant picture in this young man's mind. Long ago, on a bright summer day, in the woods, the sunlight glancing through the boughs fell on the gay figures of a picnic party. One figure in particular seemed very plain in his memory; it was that of a girl about twelve years old, with her golden hair falling from under the broad brim of a sun-hat with blue ribbons. He could see her distinctly now. The graceful figure, raised on tiptoe, to reach some unattainable flower or fruit, the white arms reaching high, the beseeching eyes under the shadow of the hat—and this was Maggie Barton! Then he, a tall lad of seventeen, easily reaching the coveted treasure, caught wilful beauty by the hair, saying, "You owe me a kiss for this, Maggie. Will you pay me whenever I choose to claim it?"

"I'll pay you a dozen, if you like, Jack," was the careless reply, as she broke away, and joined her companions.

But the very next day Jack departed, without his kiss, for a Continental education; and, as you see, Maggie Barton's name was almost one of the first to cross his path on his return.

And so she was one of his grandfather's guests at Barby, and he (Jack) would see her in less than forty-eight hours; and, standing there, with her letter in his hand, a scheme entered this young man's head worthy of such a reckless fellow as he was.

"I'll do it," he thought. "I don't care for any one else, and of course she is not engaged, or why did she answer such an advertisement?"

"Morgan," he said, suddenly, "will you do me a favor?"

"Anything you like," replied the signor, in a preoccupied tone.

Jack drew an envelope from his pocket, and, selecting one likeness of himself from about a dozen, he laid it on the table.

"Morgan," said he, "I want you to send this to Miss Barton, in answer to her application; and I mean it shall come true, old boy."

* * * * *

It was Christmas Eve, and Miss Maggie Barton was putting the last touches to her evening toilet for the forthcoming ball. She was tall, and you would think stately, till you saw her face; and then the piquant expression of the brown eyes and the demure laughter of the lip led you to suppose she was more merry than dignified; and if your observation extended to her conduct during a whole evening, I am sorry to say you would be compelled to acknowledge her a little "fast."

She had dismissed her maid, and, with her pretty head a little on one side, was trying the effect of a scarlet geranium among the ambrosial puffs of her hair. Of course, Miss Barton wore a *chignon*—all young ladies do, nowadays—and a long curl behind her left ear. Presently the geranium was settled satisfactorily, and, with a quick movement, Maggie fastened the door, and drew from beneath a book cover a *carte-de-visite*; and the gentleman on the card was Mr. Jack Carleton.

But, of course, Maggie did not know this. The very existence of such a person had long ago escaped her memory; and even had she remembered the name, it would have been difficult to associate the stripling of grandfather's picnic with the elegant, moustached, young gentleman before her.

In truth he was elegant. Leaning upon a carved pedestal, upon the top of which reposed the most stylish of Newmarkets, in company with a graceful vase with drooping flowers, an ample curtain and a bookcase filled with all the gems of literature, composed the background. Miss Barton surveyed it with satisfaction.

"So this is my future husband, according to the astrologer," said Miss Barton. "The gipsy woman said I should marry a curate. Pshaw! what an idiot I am to have written such a fool's letter! I dare say I am duped along with many others. I wish I had not written. It is a good thing none of the girls know it. Of course I am a dupe, and I suppose the very existence of this piece of elegance is a myth. More fool I!"

The *carte* was held off to be viewed in a more favorable light. "Very good, certainly!"

With another look, she placed it between the pages of a copy of "Lara," and hastened down.

There were merry doings at Barby Holt that night. Squire Martin Barby, or Grandfather Barby, as the young people—children of his many sons and daughters—always called the old gentleman, and Lady Ursula, his high-bred genial dame, always gathered a large circle round them at Christmas. And where could you spend a jollier Christmas than at the Manor?—and who could make such mince-pie and turkey stuffing as grandmother's old house-keeper at Barby?

Well, as I said, there were grand doings at the Manor on Christmas Eve. Lady Ursula

in her black velvet and Mechlin lace and the squire in his low shoes and silver buckles, led off the stately country dance from the top of the hall; the married sons and daughters came next, then the young people, the children and "Grandfather's guests," as all who were not related were styled by the rest.

The dancing was at its height; the holly and ivy quivered on the panels, and the oak floor was becoming more and more slippery; when, unannounced, and with a powdering of snow on his cloak, a tall figure dashed among the dancers, seized the squire's hand and wrung it violently, fell on Dame Ursula's neck and gave her a hearty kiss before any one had time to think what the disturbance was about.

But the squire's eyes were keen, and after the first moment he retured the grasp with a hearty "God bless you, my boy! welcome home!" and "Welcome to Barby, grandson," said the kindly voice of Dame Ursula, albeit some tears of joy shone in her soft eyes.

"Uncle Jack! Cousin Jack!" came from twenty mouths, and the favorite grandson threw aside his cloak, and flung away his hat to shake hands with all the aunts and uncles, and many of the guests who remembered him.

And one of the guests, seated under the holly decorations of a great oak panel, leant her white, terror-stricken face against the woodwork, and pressed the slender gloved hand against a heart beating strangely fast.

"What can it mean?" she thought. "Why am I so struck at the appearance of an utter stranger?"

And yet it was not a stranger. The face of the favored grandson was the one whose image lay between the leaves of her "Lara," up stairs. Ah, Maggie, it is dangerous to have dealings with astrologers. Here was this girl, who had answered a mysterious advertisement for mere fun's sake, astonished and terrified beyond measure at what seemed the sudden realization of the astrologer's mute prophecy.

Not the folds of her crepe dress looked whiter than her face; all the joy of the Christmas party was gone for her, and a sickly feeling of superstitious terror possessed her. The spiritized girl was now a faint, drooping figure, with only just strength enough to creep up stairs to her bed-room, where she crouched down before the fire, a crumpled mass of white lace and clinging crepe, shivering with fright at every wail of the wintry wind howling round the house.

"Oh that I had never written to that terrible astrologer—that horrid, mysterious man! Fancy the very person appearing in my path—the very person! I declare I should have known him among a thousand, though he is not terrible, for he looks very nice. Oh, it is dreadful! I have heard of such things as fates in the stars, told by wise men, but I never believed it. I do now though. How fortunate it is that nobody knows it! I will take good care they never do."

With this thrilling secret at her heart, Maggie sat and shivered another twenty minutes. Then came footsteps, followed by a troop of girls rushing in.

"Why, Maggie, where have you been?" cried one. "We wanted you for a cushion dance."

"Oh Maggie, where are you? Have you seen grandpapa's pet—such a romantic stir when he arrived!" exclaimed a rosy girl, with forget-me-nots in her hair.

"And he's adorable!" said a third.

"He's a dear," chimed in another.

"He's the son of grandfather's eldest daughter, and she is dead, so the old gentleman thinks worlds of him," said a matter-of-fact young lady, adjusting her *chignon*.

"I have heard he is a terrible scamp," said another.

"Rubbish," said another. "He is a regular jolly fellow, Mary. I never saw such eyes; and he gazes so anxiously around, one would think he was looking for somebody."

And so he was, you know, reader.

The girls' fingers had been as busy as their tongues, and, wreaths being settled to their satisfaction, they made a move to go down for snap-dragoons; and Miss Barton, with the awful secret locked in her breast, went too, for fear of exciting surprise.

Meanwhile Mr. Jack Carleton was in his element. All the time he was joining in the dancing and games his eyes were diligently seeking among the guests for the signor's fair correspondent. A dozen times he thought he recognized her in some fair yellow-haired lady, till some unfamiliar feature altered his opinion. "I'm sure I should know her," he said to himself, "though all the girls are exactly alike."

Mr. Carleton's eyes, therefore, did double duty; and presently, when a pale girl, with a drooping geranium in her hair, entered in the rear of a dozen more, down went Mr. Carleton's glass of sherry; and, forgetting the lady by his side and Lindley Murray, an energetic "That's her," burst from his lips.

"That's who, Mr. Carleton?" inquired his astonished companion.

"That? Why—she—will you take some negus, Mrs. Allerton?" he said, suddenly recollecting; but his eyes were following Miss Barton, and he scarcely heard the reply—

"That's her!—yes, I'm sure of it. How scared she looks. There's something on her mind, I conclude. She's very pretty, though. I wonder if she has got my *carte*. Ha! ha! what a spree. Lemonade? Yes, madam, I'll fetch you some." And he darted away, fully determined not to return to that part of the room for some time.

A servant was standing near the door, and Mr. Carleton addressed him in an undertone.

"What is the name of that young lady standing near the fire-place and talking to my grandmother?"

"With the red flower in her hair? That's Miss Barton, sir. She came with Mr. Frances and his daughters. She was here last Christmas, sir."

Jack worked his way dexterously round the room, and by the time he was within ear-shot of the young lady there was a cry to put out the lights for snap-dragons; and while they went out with a whiff, a sharp spring placed him at her side. "Miss Barton—Maggie—how do you do?"

There was a little glow from the fire, just enough for him to see the shiver his words caused. She raised her dark eyes, with a shade of displeasure overcoming her fear; but of course he could not see that; and he continued to murmur unintelligible nothings till, in common politeness, she was bound to murmur unintelligible nothings, back again. But of course the ice had to be broken. "I shall arrive at the deep waters of friendship by-and-by," said Mr. Carleton to himself. He was apt to be carried away by poetical enthusiasm at times.

A few more sentences, and then, while the rest were pressing round the burning dish, Jack made a bold stroke.

"Do you know you owe me a kiss, Miss Barton?"

The experience of the last few hours had already reduced her to a state of mute resignation. Nothing he could say would much astonish her now, so to this remarkable question she only answered, "Do I?"

"Do you? why yes, Maggie. Don't you remember Jack Carleton?"

"Are—you—Jack Carleton?" came from lips that were returning to their natural color.

"Yes, indeed!" he replied. "Am I so much altered?"—Perfect astonishment and silence. "And you owe me a kiss," Jack continued; "you remember that, don't you, Maggie? I'm going to have it now."

Quick as thought an impromptu kiss was taken in the dark, while the rest were burning their fingers, and then shrieking in the usual senseless way that people do in these days.

Well, by degrees Miss Barton became more reconciled to the existing state of things; so by the time the blue flame waxed dim, and the rains were all consumed, it seemed the most natural in the world for Mr. Carleton to place her hand upon his arm and march her off to a quiet corridor for a *late-te-tete*, while the company in the great hall were flying up and down to the tune of "The Parson kissed the Fiddler's Wife."

What can't be cured must be endured. Here was this young gentleman—a stranger for years—taking the most complete possession of her, and all the time his likeness was in her "Lara" as that of her future husband; so of course, when after about two golden hours, spent in each other's society, he requested the honor of her hand, what could she say but "yes;"—for was it not her fate as told by the stars by a wonderful astrologer? Of course she said yes.

Then, in a perfectly cool and collected manner, acquired on the Continent, Mr. Carleton took Miss Barton in to supper, and joined in the festivity just as if nothing had happened out of the common. He was quite satisfied for his part. Maggie Barton was the prettiest girl in the room, an orphan with three hundred pounds a year in her own right, and the ward of Mr. Frances, the husband of the squire's second daughter. She—Miss Barton—was the sort of girl fast young men call a "stunner." She was a pretty dancer, could sing songs of the "Barney O'Hea" school in a ringing soprano voice, and play all the waltzes of the season. She was a good skater, could sit square in her saddle, handle a gun, or hit the bull's eye three times out of four at an archery meeting.

In fact, I believe, with all carelessness, she was hardly the sort of a girl Jack Carleton could have chosen for a wife, had he waited to form an opinion; but he acted upon impulse; and, strange to say, he never had occasion to repent, for Maggie was the sweetest and tenderest of wives. But her secret was her secret for ever.

DELICATE APPETITE.—The daily allowance to the maids of honor attached to the Court during the reign of Henry VIII., was a gallon of ale for breakfast and a chine of beef; a piece of beef and a gallon of beer for dinner; in the afternoon, a gallon of ale and a maniple of bread; and for supper a mess of porridge, a piece of mutton, and a gallon of ale; after supper, half a gallon of wine and bread. If the Court beauties at that time needed three or four gallons of ale daily, Falstaff's craving for sack at an earlier period need not be wondered at.

The sweetest cheek is that which never blushed—A pig's.

IRELAND'S LIBERATOR.

FATHER BURKE'S LECTURE

ON THE "Life and Times of O'Connell."

(From the *New York Irish American*.)

On the evening of the 13th of May, the Very Rev. Father Burke delivered the following lecture, in the Academy of Music, New York, to a large and highly appreciative audience. The Very Rev. Father Starrs, in a few appropriate remarks, introduced the lecturer, who, on coming forward, was received with an outburst of applause which lasted several minutes. After silence had been restored, he said:—

Ladies and Gentlemen.—The history of this age of ours tells us of many men who have used their energies and their powers for the purpose of enslaving their fellow-men, and for the purposes of injustice and persecution. This age of ours, however, has had the grace to produce one man who received from a grateful nation the proudest title that ever was accorded a man,—he was called the "Liberator of his country" (applause). I need not mention his name—his name is written upon the history of the world, under this grand title of "Liberator;"—his name is enshrined in every Irish heart, and in the memory of every Irishman, under the glorious title of the Liberator. When we hear that word, those amongst us who are advancing into the vale of years, remember, as he seems to rise before them, at the sound of the name of "Liberator," the colossal, gigantic figure, the brows overlaid with mighty thought; the Irish eye beaming with intelligence and with humor; the uplifted arm, embracing every glorious maxim of freedom and of religion; and at the sound of the word, "Liberator," we behold rising out of his grave and standing before us as he once stood and held sway over millions of Irishmen, the glorious figure of Daniel O'Connell (applause). There is nothing, my friends, that ought to be more grateful or more instructive to every high-minded man than to recall the deeds by which a man gained that well-deserved glory; for such a man not only binds to his own brows the crown of immortal fame, but he also leaves behind him for the consideration of those who come after him, a glorious example of manliness, integrity, and virtue. This should be the study of every man among us; and never can we study them more favorably, than when we see them embodied in the life and the acts of one who dazzled the world by the glory of his genius, and left behind him, in the hearts of his fellow-men, traditions of mighty admiration, and of tenderest love. Who, therefore, was this man? For whom did he contend? By whom was he crowned with his glorious title of the Liberator of his country?

Oh! my friends, before we sketch his life, it is well for us to cast our thoughts back some eighty years, and consider what Ireland was at the close of the last, or the 18th century. It seemed, indeed, as if the closing of the century should have been bright and peaceful and happy; it seemed as if the sun of Ireland had risen at last, and the night of the 18th century would have passed into the roll of ages under the full blaze of noontide prosperity, and happiness for Ireland. In 1782, eighteen years before the final close of the century, there was in Ireland a reunion of the grandest intellects, and the brightest names, that, perhaps, ever adorned the pages of our national history. The walls of the Parliament House, in College Green, resounded to the glorious appeals of a Grattan and a Flood; while the stately and dignified Charlemont upheld the honor of the nation in the Irish House of Lords. They demanded of England a full recognition of Ireland's rights, and of Ireland's independence as a nation (applause). Their voices were heard and were unheeded, until, in a happy moment, the necessities of the times obliged England to permit an organization of armed Irishmen, called the "Volunteers of '82." The men of Ireland took arms into their hands, and it is well that, Catholics as we are, we should not forget that glorious movement originated among our Protestant brethren of the North of Ireland, (applause). The men of Ireland took arms in their hands, and when Grattan spoke again, he spoke with a hundred thousand armed and drilled Irishmen at his back; and England was obliged to listen and to pay the greatest attention to his words (applause). He demanded the charter of Ireland's independence, and he obtained it, because he spoke in the name of an organized and an armed nation; he arose in the House of Commons and he pronounced these words: "I found my country in the dust; I raised her up; she stands to-day in her queenly independence, and nothing remains to me but to bow before the majestic image and say *esto perpetua*—be thou perpetuated in thy freedom, O Ireland."

Fair, indeed, and bright was the vision;—industry developed, trade encouraged, magnificent buildings,—such as the Four Courts and Custom House, of Dublin,—erected, and the people speaking with a nation's voice: fair and bright was the prospect; only it was too bright to last. The Irish Parliament, at last, con-