

eyes formed a prominent object. At times the breeze gently stirred the hop vine, which garnished the window, and a few stray tendrils wafted in brushed the pure fair cheek as it rested on the little brown hand. I observed all this; I, seated at the other window, looking out upon the sunset, and talking to Walter. At this late date I cannot tell you exactly what we talked about; I only know that Walter spoke in low, earnest tones, that I answered him principally in monosyllables, and that I studiously avoided encountering the glances of those brown eyes (so like Fanny's), and found an absorbing study in those crimson and gold tinted sunset clouds.

We separated early, for "early to bed and early to rise" was the good old maxim daily acted up to in that household, and perhaps might have accounted in no small measure for the comfortable sum lying by in bank, the product of the good farmer's unwearying industry.

I retired to my chamber in a happier frame of mind than on the preceding evening. The events of the last few hours had left their mark on my impressionable temperament. Feelings hidden away deep down in my heart had sprung into activity in that hour of summer twilight, beneath the fascination of my companion's whispered words.

The only daughter of a reputed wealthy merchant, and, if I say it myself, passing fair to look upon, I had had many admirers. In the bright glare of the ball-room, amid the sweet melodies of the concert hall, beneath the cold wintry stars gliding over the glossy roads in a comfortable sleigh drawn by a spirited horse, I had listened to the breathings of open admiration and covert affection; and had heard with a deprecating laugh, a gay word, even a feeling of gratified vanity, perhaps; but not with downcast eyes, throbbing heart, or quickened pulse. How different on this eventful evening. Surrounded by all the associations which go to make up an existence of perfect beauty, I had felt that our conversation, Walter's and mine, though trivial sounding enough, had a deeper meaning for both than the mere words of honeyed flattery or empty phrases of conventional courtesy. How could it be otherwise? Looking out upon that quiet scene of pastoral beauty, in the presence of the gray-haired father, the kindly mother, the gentle sister. No wondrous music to stir the depths of young hearts; no exciting influences of noisy pleasure to prompt words forgotten or regretted, perhaps, under the calmer influences of the morrow. No, the events of this night, a subtle instinct warned me, were to give a colouring to my whole future.

Standing before the mirror, musing thus while unbraiding my hair, a remark of one of my sometime admirers suddenly occurred to my mind. He prided himself on being poetical, and had assured me "the whiteness of my neck had shamed the pearls I wore." The thought struck me to clasp the necklace once more upon my neck, now, I imagined, somewhat embrowned by my sojourn in the country. I passed to the trunk where, ever since my arrival, I had kept locked up the casket containing my trinkets, and in my hurry, not remarking that it now stood unlocked, I placed my hand with assurance on the very spot where had rested the box. *It was not there!*

A frenzied search through all my effects, even where I felt previously certain I would not find it, and then scarce knowing what I did, I ran out of the chamber screaming for Fanny! She had been more expeditious than I, for she had already retired. The farmer and Mrs. Burt had not, however, and, attracted by my frantic calls, they, together with Walter, made their appearance. Fanny, too, arrived upon the scene while I was still incoherently attempting to explain the cause of my alarm. With the commendable prudence that always distinguished her, though in my agitation I scarcely noticed the action then, she sent away the two maid servants, who were staring and listening open-mouthed.

It was Fanny who first gained from me a clear knowledge of what had occurred. Of course another futile search followed, the result being that we all stood speechless at this mysterious loss.

The tell-tale glances of my companions convinced me, however, that one name was uppermost in the minds of all; that name was McCabe, and I believe we were equally unanimous in feeling, with what pain may be imagined, that Walter, who had sent him there, was the indirect cause of the present trouble.

Of course no other conclusion was open to us than that the jewel box had been stolen.

On being cross-examined by Mr. Burt, I had to confess that I was totally at a loss to know whether I had locked my trunk the night before or not. My impression was that I had. One thing was certain, I had not examined the trunk that morning on getting up, so was unable to judge whether my chamber had been entered at that time or subsequently. We all inclined at first to the belief that the robbery had taken place in the day time, for I was certain I had locked my door at night and found it locked in the morning. Then again the question rose who had access to the chamber then or opportunity to carry off such a large object unnoticed. No one but Sarah, the girl who did the chamber work, had entered my room, and she only for a brief period before she went to the hayfield. At this juncture the two girls, who had again unobserved stolen to listen, burst forth into the demand that their effects should be searched forthwith. In justice to them and to me, this was done, but the solution of the mystery was as far off as ever.

I know not when the unwelcome idea first forced itself upon me, that Walter Burt was something more than indirectly to blame for what had happened. Certain it is that though I scouted it at first as the absurd vagary of an over-excited mind, each new result of our enquiries seemed but to enhance the probability of this monstrous supposition. When the farmer demanded if there were more than one key to fit the lock, his son was forced to confess there had been two. The room was formerly occupied by himself, one key had been lost; and another procured; the first one had subsequently been recovered, so that there were two in existence. No one, however, could tell the whereabouts of the other key. Mr. Burt then proceeded to make enquiries of the men, who slept in a room above one of the outhouses; but here again we were at fault. McCabe and his companions had been absent the night before at a wake, where they remained all night, as there were plenty of witnesses to prove. Not one of the men could have been suspected of perpetrating the robbery in the day-time; it was simply impossible.

Wearily and heart-sick we all once more retired, convinced that nothing more could be done till next day; but sleep was a stranger to my pillow that night. I tossed about, revolving in my mind the strange events of that day. Thinking of Walter's prolonged absence, of his return in an unnatural flow

of spirits, and of his scared, haggard look when I made known my own loss. He had had money difficulties, and after all what did I know of the principles of this young man. I knew his parents and sister believed in him, and my rebellious heart pleaded for him; but still the grim fact remained—the jewels were gone, and their loss could be explained only by the painful theory I had formed, or rather had forced upon me. Dearly prized as were the ill-fated trinkets, their loss faded into insignificance before the untold bitterness that accompanied my surmise. If Walter were guilty, it meant that I might never place faith in human being again—a dreadful state of feeling to arrive at the age of twenty years. So much did I repel the idea of having to mistrust the owner of those brown eyes, so honest and true in expression, that a prayerful feeling welled up in my heart that night, to the end that the man McCabe, or some of his *confrères*, might be found missing in the morning. But so it was not to be.

Morning dawned on my wakeful eyes, and I descended to the breakfast-table, where we all, except Walter, assembled to make the pretence of eating. Pretence and nothing more, for even the burly farmer's healthy appetite had forsaken him.

Walter's absence seemed another confirmation of my worst fears. Through the open window I saw him thoughtfully pacing the garden. Could it be that he dared not meet me?

The morning passed in a repetition of the previous night's futile investigations; when, as a forlorn hope, Mr. Burt mounted his horse and rode away to the railway station of L—, there to make cautious enquiries as to the proceedings of McCabe the day before; for all but myself seemed to cling to the belief that this poor fellow was guilty. If any of them suspected the son and brother they commanded themselves wonderfully, for not a look of suspicion escaped them; and I had rather have bitten out my tongue than given utterance to my dark doubts.

Noticing my wan and weary looks, motherly Mrs. Burt persuaded me to lie down. Scarcely had my head touched my pillow than tired nature gave way, and I slept profoundly till sunset. On awakening I was told that Mr. Burt had sent back his horse by a boy from the station, together with the message that he had gone in pursuit of a strange-looking man, who had been seen in conversation with McCabe. On hearing this I knew we must expect no more development that night; but man proposes, God disposes.

I did not fall asleep very soon that night, which did not surprise me, considering the beneficial nap I had enjoyed in the afternoon.

At length I knew no more—I was asleep.

I awoke with a start and a cry of dismay. The feeble rays of a candle revealed to my upturned eyes the brown rafters of the farm-house kitchen. Somebody held me in their arms. I was clad in my white wrapper, with a breakfast shawl about my shoulders. Walter's brown eyes were looking down anxiously into mine, and Walter's voice calling his mother had awakened me. Just as Mrs. Burt and her daughter entered I burst into a wild fit of weeping. The truth had burst upon me—I was a somnambulist!

Tenderly I was carried into the parlour and laid upon the soft couch; motherly and sisterly caresses were lavished upon me to restore my calmness. My passionate weeping was merely the result of the nervous shock; truth to say I was rather glad of this *dénouement*. One word of Walter's had enkindled a ray of hope in my heart: as he carried me into the parlour he said, "I think, mother, I have caught the thief."

When I was tolerably calm we questioned 'him' as to the mode of my discovery. He answered readily that, being disturbed in his mind by the inexplicable event that had occurred, he had been unable to sleep, but had sat up dressed, and tried to occupy his thoughts in reading by the light of his bed-room candle. In this situation he heard light steps descending the stair, and hastening to the landing, light in hand, had observed the flutter of my white garments. He followed me hastily, and had been just in time to prevent my egress by the back door, by means of the key which I had taken from the nail where it always hung.

His mother censured him for putting such a summary stop to my proceedings, as in all probability if left to myself I would have revealed the whereabouts of the missing box; for we all were now satisfied I had stolen my own property. Circumstances seemed to point to the garden as the probable hiding-place, for it would seem to have been the destination for which I had set out.

Furnished, then, with this new clue we recommenced our search at sunrise, by exploring every nook and cranny of the garden. After spending some time vainly, we were about to give over in despair, when I recollected the little hidden grotto. Without a word, but with a renewed hope which seemed almost a certainty, I took my swift way thither. Rolling away the stone from the little impromptu cupboard of Fanny's childish days, the welcome sight of my precious casket met my eyes!

Laughing and crying in a breath, I hastened back to my companions, and placed the box in Walter's arms, more delighted for his sake than my own, I must confess.

When the farmer returned, dispirited, and weary, having overtaken his man and found in him an honest storekeeper of the village, he was met by the gratifying intelligence that the painful mystery was now cleared up. His low spirits disappeared immediately and he became the jovial centre of one merry group.

I was happy in the restoration of my cherished possessions, but happier far in the thought that I could now return Walter's warm hand pressure, without one lingering shade of doubt, and meet the gaze of those truthful eyes without suspicion.

I will not dwell on the details of the remainder of my story, those sweet expressive lines of Tennyson embody all that I would say:—

"Love took up the glass of time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
"Every moment lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands."

When papa returned, having satisfactorily arranged his affairs in England, he was much troubled on my account, fearing that the habit of sleep walking might again manifest itself, although such an event had not occurred since I had found my jewels. Dr. A—, however, gave it as his opinion that no fears need be entertained as this particular freak of mine might be easily traced to my sensitive imagination, and the facts that my nerves had at that time scarcely recovered their healthy tone, since the immense strain to which they had been subjected. I may add that time has but confirmed the doctor's opinion, I have been no more troubled with somnambulism.

It was September when I returned to town. Autumn, winter, and spring passed away, and when June came, rose crowned, and sun bright, there was a wedding, at which I figured as bride and Walter as bridegroom, where pretty Fanny officiated as first bridesmaid, and a certain broad-shouldered blue-eyed personage as best man.

Farmer John Burt and his kindly wife were present of course. Uncle Walter, now on the best of terms with his nephew and namesake, was also present, felicitating the happy couple in a neat speech, which he supplemented by a handsome cheque, an example which was followed in the most liberal manner by Walter's father.

The firm is Gower & Burt. The infusion of fresh capital and young healthy energy into the business, has enabled my father to tide over the pressure in his affairs, and he and Walter declare that all looks bright and promising for the future, while I, living in the light of my husband's unvarying love, have never found reason to regret my summer sojourn at the "Old Farm-House."

MARY J. WISE.

THE LITERARY WORLD.

Mr. R. B. Wormald, B.A., has been appointed successor to the late Mr. Staunton as editor of the chess column in the *Illustrated London News*. The whole of the deceased gentleman's chess memoranda have been placed by his widow at Mr. Wormald's disposal. He is writing a memoir of Mr. Staunton.

The Petrarch Centenary Committee sitting at Aix has received more than a thousand poems in French, Provençal and Italian. The prizes will consist of gold and silver flowers, crowns, gold, silver-gilt, silver, and bronze medals, cups, &c.

Professor J. E. Cairnes is engaged in writing a reply for *Macmillan's Magazine*, to Mr. Goldwin Smith's article, "On Women's Suffrage," which recently appeared in that periodical.

Among some books and MSS. shortly to be sold in England is a rolled manuscript of the Hebrew Pentateuch, acquired a few years ago from a synagogue in Palestine. This manuscript was written in the twelfth century on sixty skins of leather, and measures 120 feet in length by 2 feet 2 in. in breadth.

"Out of the Hurly Burly," by Max Adeler, is one of the best books of American humour. It professes to relate the experiences of a gentleman who has retired to a country village for quiet, but is replete with anecdotes that keep the reader anything but quiet, and it may be recommended to every one desirous of a good laugh.

Mr. Winwood Reade, the traveller, and who was special correspondent to the *Times* during the Ashantee war, has been elected a member of the Royal Institution of Great Britain.

Mr. J. T. Field says, in one of his lectures, that the extravagant indolent man who, having overspent his income, is sumptuously living on the principal, is like Heine's monkey, who was found one day hilariously seated by the fire and cooking his own tail in a copper kettle for dinner.

"THE PRICE OF A SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY."—It is said that the expense of keeping the Shakespeare fountain playing in Leicester-square is 25s. an hour.

MATHEWS QUITE AT HOME.—The dinner to Mr. Toole at Willis's Rooms was strongly dramatic, all the principal actors and managers being present in force. A screaming speech was made by Mr. Mathews in proposing the toast of the "Drama." He said, "I have been called upon rather suddenly for this toast. My extemporaneous speeches are always the better for a little preparation. (Loud laughter.) I have been acquainted with the drama for some years—(a laugh)—a sort of distant connection—(a laugh)—a sort of bowing acquaintance; but I cannot do justice to its beauties. (Cheers.) However, I do not see what the drama has to do with our meeting to-night. It is not the drama that is going to America; it is Mr. Toole. (Great laughter.) I have heard people say that all his pieces have been played to death in America; but people do not go to see the pieces, they go to see Toole, and they care no more about the authors than Mr. Toole himself." (Tremendous laughter.) And so he went on in this strain.

APPROPOS of the large cheque for Northumberland House, £497,000 (at which our readers can exercise their hands as a good copy), it is not generally known that the largest Bank of England note is only for the miserable sum of £500,000, and that there are but three of them, very disappointing to those who have big notions. The Bank of England Directors, when old Mehemet Ali visited the city of bullion, put a parcel into his hand to astonish him, saying it contained two millions sterling. He replied "Thank you," and it was long before he could understand the nature of the illustration of compressed values, as he was on the point of putting it into his pocket as a present.

Galignani's Messenger has just completed its sixtieth year. It was established shortly after Louis XVIII. had made his entry into Paris, when the Continent having just been thrown open to travellers, English people in large numbers were availing themselves of the facility allowed them of visiting the French capital.

A female, who had a large collecting-book, went into the office of Messrs. Jones Brothers, when Jones was alone, the other day. The lady began to say that she was collecting for the Ladies' Emancipation and Precipitation of Female Rights Society. Jones said, "What did you say? We're deaf." She started again in a loud voice, and repeated her rigmorole. When she had finished, Jones went and got a roll of paper, made it into a speaking trumpet, placed one end to his ear, and told her to proceed. She nearly broke a blood vessel in her effort to make herself heard. She commenced—"I am alone in the world—" "It doesn't make the slightest difference to us. We are a husband and a father. Bigamy is not allowed in this country. We are not eligible to proposals." "Oh, what a fool the man is," she said in a low tone. Then, at the top of her voice, "I don't want to marry you. I want you to subscribe to," &c. This last sentence was howled, "I don't want a cook," Jones remarked, blandly; "our wife does the cooking, and she wouldn't allow as good-looking a woman as you to stay in the house five minutes." She looked at Jones in despair. Gathering her robes about her, giving Jones a glance of contempt, she exclaimed—"I do believe that if a great cannon were let off alongside of that deaf fool's head, he'd think somebody was knocking at the door." She went out and banged the door like that cannon.