

The Man With Two Mouths

—By F. Tennyson Jesse
ILLUSTRATED BY J. FLETCHER WHITE

Smuggling Story of Tense Drama, Action and Suspense By the Grandniece of the Poet Tennyson—A Girl Saves a Man's Life and Is Repaid in Queer Fashion.

ma, Action, Suspense, by the and Niece of the Poet, Tennyson.

On a grey day a girl was walking along a crescent of sand that curved at the cliff's base. She went the water welled up in slanting hollows left by her feet. The fat, evil-looking leaves of cliff plants glistened with spray. At the end of the little path the girl paused, and then turned to look out to sea, balancing her on a slab of wet shiny granite. The cone-shaped shellfish clustered and from which the long weed floated out and in on the edge of the tide. The girl held back her hair that whipped about her head and stared from under an eyelid.

.....
"Tee-naught but a plaguey do!" she muttered, yet stayed for one more glimpse of dark thing that was bobbing up and down in the curdling foam-pattern, mingling scatter of spray blew in her eyes, blinding her, and when she looked again the dark thing had become a nearer, and she saw it to be the body of a man caught in the meshes of some shrouds that the action had lapped around a dingy mast.

The Rescue

HE felt at his heart, then laid her ear to the glistening chest where dark hair was matted to a point on the breast; she beat that chest with her hand, and at last the faint red responded to blows of her fingers. On that day of hope she desisted, seemed to breathe, then half-hauling him up, hand beneath each shoulder, she dragged him towards where cliff curved outwards again to sea. At a point some three or four feet from the ground the cliff hung so that it was possible to creep beneath it at low tide, though a curtain of glossy seaweed hung down so thickly it was difficult to tell. Going upon her hands, the girl crawled backwards, a dripping dark green fringe, pulled the man in after her. In a tunnel, in which it was possible to walk upright, led at an angle up to what was apparently the heart of the cliff, that was honeycombed into those jagged caves of the west of England. Even now all the secrets and known. Up this incline she got herself and him, and at last dragged triumphantly into the big cave where she and her father, Bendigo, stored the smuggled goods in which they traded successfully. It was very dark, but with accustomed she felt for the small iron box which the flint and tinder were soon a tiny flame sprang to and she passed it on to a wick floated limply in a little cup of fish oil on the floor. In the breath of light thus given the of stacked barrels loomed, the outermost curve of each hanging faintly, while between shadow lay banded.

omasin Keast ran some brandy a little keg near into her palm tilted it between the man's and then slopped the raw spirit on his shirt, drenching it again. "Not surprised him for the sty of a Cornish woman, who she shame to show even her feet, ended that she filled her hands with brandy and ran them in under his clothes, rubbing tirelessly up and till the flesh began to dry and and all the time that his life coming painfully and reluctantly back to him under her strong hands, she felt as though prestage of new life was flowing

ing into herself. The old saw has it that the saving of a drowning man brings ill-luck to his rescuer; but Thomasin, as she watched grow in his features that intangible something which makes the face human instead of a mere mask, scorned the superstition, and still more she scorned it as her urgent hands felt the rising beat of his pulses and arteries. For she felt him hers—hers by right of discovery as well as right of salvage.

Keast's Cottage

THOMASIN KEAST and her father lived in a little four-square cottage set about half a mile from the headland—a half-mile of thorn and bracken, of tumbled boulders and wedges of furze almost as solid. Here in the spring the yellow-hammer and the linnet, the stonechat and the whinchat, shrilled their first notes, and at dawn the grey-bird thrust a thirsty beak into the dewy blackthorn blossoms; here the dun-colored rabbits darted in and out of their burrows with a gleam of white scuts. Here, too, Keast and his daughter herded the moorland ponies that, well soaked, were loaded with the barrels of spirit and packets of lace which had been brought from France at dark of the moon. The cottage was of rough grey granite, with a roof crusted with yellow stonewort that looked as though it had been spilled molten over the slates. On either side of the door a great wind-buttress, reaching to the eaves, swept out like a sheltering wing.

This was the place to which Thomasin Keast brought her man on that stormy evening. Dusk was already making the air deeply, softly blue, and through it the whitewashed lintel gleamed out almost as clearly as the phosphorescent fish mailed against the wall. Half-leading, half-supporting him, Thomasin steered the stranger between the buttresses and through the narrow doorway into the living-room. A peat fire glowed on the hearth and against it the figure of a crouching man showed dark. At the noise in the doorway he thrust an armful of furze on to the fire, and the quick crackling flare that followed threw a reflection like the flashing of summer lightning over the whitewashed walls, sending the shadows surging into the corners and revealing the man whose big hand, ridged with raised veins that ran up to the wrist, was still upon the furze-stem.

Bendigo Keast was not long past his prime of strength and could still have out-wrestled many a younger man. Through his Jersey the working of his enormous shoulders showed as plainly as those of a cat beneath her close fur, and under his chin the reddish beard could not hide the knots of his powerful throat. His eyes, blue and extraordinarily alert, were half-hidden by the purple lids, and the massive folds of his cheeks that came down in a furrow on either side of his slightly incurved mouth looked hard as iron. Like most seamen when within doors, he was in his stockings, and as he rose and his bulk swayed forward, his feet broadened a little and gripped at the uneven flagstones like those of a great ape.

Thomasin's Secret

"Tee-naught but a plaguey do!" she said, and in her voice uneasiness mingled with a readiness for defiance. "He's most dead w' salt water, and cold. We must get en to the bed to wance. Da—"

"Where did ee find em?" asked Bendigo Keast, without moving.

"To cove."

"Did a see aught?"

Fearing For His Secret

HOW should a and him high drowned?" evaded Thomasin, then as the stranger sank on to the settle and let his wet brown head fall limply back against it, she went over to a crock of milk that stood in the window-sill and poured some into a saucer.

"Get en to the bed, da," she said more sharply. "I'll see to your supper. He must have nowthen but milk for the night."

Bendigo came forward, and, swinging his long arms round the man, carried him off up the stairs that led from the living-room into the first of the two tiny bedrooms. He soon came down again.

"Tell me how tes a smells of brandy," he demanded.

"I rubbed en down w' et to put life into en."

Thomasin spoke quietly, but the sound of her stirring spoon grew less rhythmic.

"Then a did see?"

"Da, listen to me," said Thomasin, turning round. "S'pose a did see, what then. He'n naught but a foreigner from up-country, and wouldn't know to give we away. And s'pose he'm minded to stay by us—we'll, you d'know we'm needing another hand. We must find one somewhere, and there's none o' the chaps to the church-town would come in w' us, because us have allus stood by ourself and made our own profits. But now Dan's dead, you d'know as well as I us must get another hand to help in the Merrymaid. If you weren't so strong and I as good as a man, it would ha' needed four of us to ha' run her."

"How can us know whether to trust en?" asked Bendigo suspiciously.

"Tee bad luck to save a man from the sea, they do say."



She clung to the rock with one hand, and, leaning forward, made snatches at the spar whenever it surged towards her.

The Stranger's Story

ON which he was mate had been returning from France when a squall overtook her, and she became a total wreck. He had clung to the floating spar for several hours before losing consciousness, when the tangled ratlines had borne him up and the tide had swept him into the shoreward current which set round the headland.

"And the first thing I knew," he ended, "was your face, mistress, bending over me in your cave."

Keast shot a glance at his daughter. They had exchanged looks before, at the man's mention of France, and now Bendigo flung a few veiled phrases, which he hid in a cant term common to smugglers, at his guest, who understood him perfectly, and himself became entirely frank. His name, he said, was Robin Start, and that there was mixed blood in him he admitted. A more gracious race showed itself in his quick turns of wrist and eye, his ease of phrase, in his ready gallantry towards Thomasin. Yes, said Robin Start, his mother was a Frenchwoman, and had taught him her tongue—a fact he found useful in his dealings on the other side of the channel.

A bargain is an intricate and subtle thing in Cornwall, a thing of innuendoes and reservations, and the one Bendigo Keast struck with the stranger was not without subtleties on both sides. Robin Start had quite understood all he had seen in the cave and had made a mental note of the way out, which gave him a hold over Bendigo. On the other hand, Robin, who suffered paroxysms of craving for safety in the intervals of delighting in danger, knew it was safer to come in with Bendigo and make something for himself smuggling than it would be for him to think of escaping from that muscular father and daughter if he declined. As for Keast, it was true

men, Thomasin had never known of the sphere which began to be revealed to her that evening. For one thing she was plain, though in certain lights or effects of wind she looked fine enough in a high-boned, rock-hewn way. Though she was only twenty-two, hundreds of nights of exposure to wind and wet had roughened her skin, but at the opening of her bodice, where a hint of collar-bones showed like a bar beneath the firm flesh, her skin was privet-white. The slim, brown-haired Robin with his quick eyes was a contrast in looks and manners to anyone she had ever met, and mingled with her awe and wonder of him was the fierce sense of possession that had entered into her when she passed her hands over and over him in the cave.

Thomasin's Loves

It was a stormy autumn that year, and little was possible in the way of business; but for Thomasin, who up till now had lived so wholly heartily for her partnership with her father, it became that time of which at least the mirage appears to every one once in life. For her happiness she and Robin repainted her own love, the Merrymaid, together, giving her a new black coat and a white ribbon, and changing the green of her upright stem to blue. The Merrymaid was constantly adopting little disguises of the sort, running sometimes under harked sails, sometimes under white, and alternating between a jib and a gaff-topsail with a square head. Then in the long winter evenings the Keasts and Robin would sit by the fire, Bendigo pulling at his clay pipe, and Thomasin in knitting a perpetual grey stocking—surely as innocent and law-abiding an interior as could have been found.

While Robin told them tales of all he had seen and done. He told of the thick yellow sea towards the north of China, so distinct from the blue sea around that it looked more like a vast sheet of sand, stretching for miles upon miles. He told, too, of the reddish dust, fine as mist, which once fell for days over his ship when he was far out at sea. His captain said it was blown along the upper air all the way from the Mongolian plains.

So Robin talked and Thomasin listened, and with the coming of

spring new portents woke in her blood and stirred the air. Thomasin would sometimes close her eyes for the happiness she dared not yet acknowledge; yet those days of soft joy and beauty were as nothing to the night of hard work and danger that finally brought her surging blood to acknowledge him as lord.

They were running a cargo of thirty barrels over from France—he, she, and her father, the Merrymaid, which was sloop-rigged and of about twenty tons burden, was quite enough for the three to handle, laden as she was with the corded tubs slung together with the stones already attached; for it was proposed to sink the cargo and then run on to the shore openly, a thing frequently done when the preventive men were known to be on the watch. Robin was suffering from one of his nervous revulsions; he dared show no sign of it, but as he sat in the bows, keeping a look-out through the darkness, he told himself that if this trip were brought off in safety it would be the last as far as he was concerned. He could stand the portentous figure of Bendigo looming at him through the little cottage no more, and he knew what to do. As for Thomasin, he would not lose her a woman surely sticks by her man.

And if not, she would never harm him; and there were other women in the world.

Chasing the Smugglers

THOMASIN sat with her arm along the tiller, keeping the Merrymaid on a nor'-nor'-west course so as to make the Lizard light. They were running under their foresail and close-reefed mainsail only, for the south-west wind for which they had waited was swelling to storm-fury. The Merrymaid lay right over, the water seething past her dipping sunshade and the clots of spindrift that whirled over the side gleaming like snowflakes in the darkness, which was of that intense quality which becomes vibrant to long staring. Robin, straining his eyes, was only aware of the danger when they were almost on it, but his voice shrieked out on the instant to Thomasin: "Hard-a-port!" and again, in a desperate hurry of sound, "Hard-a-port!"

Thomasin jammed the helm up as Bendigo, with the agility of long use to sudden danger, eased off the sheets, and then Thomasin could see what menaced them. A preventive boat, like themselves with no light save the wretched glimmer over the compass, had been lying to under her mizzen, and already her men were making sail. Thomasin sat gripping the tiller while the voices of her menfolk came to her ears.

"The topsail!" shouted Robin; but

Bendigo's voice made answer. "Not till us has to—it might en mast off in this gale. Try the jib!"

They set the jib and shook out the reef in the mainsail, and the Merrymaid answered to it like a ruckus to the whip. She quivered all her length, the tiller pushed like a sentry thing against Thomasin's palm and they went reeling on.

For nearly an hour they ran before the wind, helped by the flood-tide, and all the time the preventive boat was slowly gaining on them, for she was carrying a larger stretch of canvas. She was nearly upon them when the sound of breaking surf told that they were nearing the Manacles, and the tide was still fairly low. Suddenly Robin's voice came again, this time with a thrill in it: "Now's our chance!" he called. "We'll hoist the top-sail and make a run for it inside of the Manacles."

He was at the mast as he spoke, and Thomasin heard the thin scream of the unhoisted shroud as the topsail halliards ran through it. The next moment the mast creaked and bent, the almost useless jib slackened as the other sails took all of the wind, and the Merrymaid shook her nose and plunged into the broken water that gleamed between the blackness of the mainland and the Manacles.

"They'll never dare follow!" cried Bendigo; and even as he did so, the preventive boat, trusting to her superior speed to make good, began to come round to the wind so as to pass the Manacles on the outer side. The added strain proved too much, and her mast snapped with a report like a gunshot—the one clean, sharp sound through all that flurry of rushing, edgewise noise, and it told its own tale to the eager ears on the Merrymaid. She, under the influence of the topsail, was burying her bows at every plunge, and Thomasin knew by the sudden cessation of the tiller's tug, that the rudder had lifted clear of the racing water, only to drive into it again with a blow that sent her reeling to the outer side. The boat she loved began to heave in earnest. Yawing stubbornly, the Merrymaid pulled against the tiller, so that the rough wood seemed to burn into Thomasin's flesh, so hard had she to grip it to keep the boat's head from going up into the wind.

The Traitor

WITH the breath falling in her throat, she had none left to cry for help; she could only wrestle with the tiller, which, all the weight of the yawing Merrymaid against it, seemed about to crush her.

Then hands came over hers in the darkness, and even at that moment her flesh knew Robin's.

"Tell me if I make a mistake: you know this hell-pool better than me," he called to her through the noise of the surf, and, with an easing of the muscles so exquisite as to be almost a pain in itself, she felt him absorb the weight of the boat into his grip. With the lifting of that strain from her shoulders and arms came the realization of how mercilessly his hands were grinding hers against the tiller. There was no need for her to call directions to him—he and she were so welded in one at the tiller that the unconscious pull of her arm beneath his told him, in his state of receptive tension, what to do more surely than any words.

They were through and safe, and five minutes more they rounded the point and in the calmer water, where they slipped the cargo, and soon after they had made the harbor under easy sail, innocent of contraband from stem to stern.

All danger over, Thomasin felt oddly faint, and let her father go on ahead across the moon while she hung heavily on Robin's arm, her numbed hands slowly tingling back to life as they went. Arrived at the cottage, a faint light, that went out even as they looked, told of Bendigo's entry, and Robin set the lantern he carried on the flagstones between the buttresses. Thomasin leant back against one of them, and

the dim light, flickering upwards, softened her marked bones and brightened her eyes. Every defect of skin was hidden; it showed pale, and her mouth velvet dark upon it. Robin's lips fastened on her throat below her ear and stayed there till she stirred and gave a little cry, then his mouth moved on and up till it found hers.

Robin Start waited till the cargo had been safely run and sold, and then he went across the moor to the village and made a compact with the preventive men. The excitement of that night had had its usual way with him, and he wished never to meet danger again as long as he lived. He was suffering from a somewhat similar revulsion as regarded Thomasin, though there he knew the old allure would raise its head again for him. Bendigo's suspicious guard of him had relaxed, partly because the elder man admitted that it was Robin's nerve which had planned the dash that saved them, partly because he regarded Robin safely his daughter's. And Robin had at last done that which had been in his mind ever since the beginning, and had sold the secret of the caves to his Majesty's government.

"Double Mouth!"

NERVOUS of being overheard in the village inn, Robin took the two head men with him over the moor to the headland, safe in the knowledge that Bendigo was drinking heavily in the cottage—the way in which he always rewarded himself for a successful run. Robin showed the men the cunningly hidden entrances to the passages, and then for a few minutes they all three stood making their final arrangements. Robin found it wonderfully simple, the step once taken. It was agreed that the officers of the law were to surround the cottage that night after its inmates were abed, all save Robin, who was to be sitting in the kitchen ready to open the door. No harm was to be done to the girl—and, indeed, the preventive men knew enough of Cornish juries to know that Bendigo Keast himself would get an acquittal, but his claws would be drawn, which was all they wanted. Robin, unaware of this peculiarity of a Cornish jury, would have been considerably alarmed had he known of it. Bendigo free to revenge himself had not entered into the scheme of the man from up-country, where the law was a less individual matter.

"At ten o'clock then, my man," were the last words of the preventive officer, but he added to his companion as they walked away: "The dirty double-mouth!" and the distaste of the official for the necessary informer was in his voice. "At ten o'clock," echoed Robin, who then was aware of a quick rustling behind him—much as he would have added makes as it heaves its way through a dry tuft of grass. The sun was already setting, and the glimmerous light made vision uncertain, yet Robin thought he saw a movement of the coarse more than the breeze warranted. The bush in question was one of those which conveyed an opening to the caves, and Robin pulled it aside and peered into the darkness. Silence and stillness rewarded him, and he swung his legs over and descended a little way. All was quiet and empty in that passage; he turned into another—that too, was innocent of any presence save his.

He went through up that exit, and still uneasy, stared across the moor. If anyone—if, by chance Thomasin had been in the passage, she could have slipped out that way while he was entering by the other, and he out of sight by now. The sweat sprang to Robin's brow. Then he took counsel with himself. There was no reason why Thomasin should be at the caves; nothing was doing there. It would be the most unlikely thing on earth, because neither she nor her father ever ran the unnecessary risk of going there between the cargoes. Robin knew this, and felt reassured—how, after all, could he imagine that Thomasin, sick at the reaction she felt in him, might have gone to re-gather force at the place where she had first felt him hers?—He thought over what

he had said, and took still more heart when he remembered he had not let fall a word that showed a hint of holding of Thomasin; and that, he told himself, was the only thing a woman could not forgive. Besides, it was impossible that anyone could have been there, and Thomasin was his. He gave himself a little shake and set off to the cottage, and such was the force of his revulsion against a life of dangers and the sinister suggestiveness of the Keasts' muscular superiority that he felt his heart lighter than it had been for months past.

A Weird Discovery

HIS was even pleasantly aware of the poignant beauty of the evening, and noted the rich shilling of a thrush from the alders by the stream. Wind-colored showed the stems of the alders, the lines of blackthorn hedges, the distant drifts of elms, whose branches were still only faintly misted with buds. Beneath Robin's feet the yellow red-tipped blossoms of the birds-foot trefoil, borrowed of the flushed radiance till they seemed as though burning up through the ardent grass, and on the alders the catkins gleamed like still thin flakes of fire. The whole world for a few magic moments was lapped in an unarmful flame that had glow without heat, and through the gentle glory of it Robin went home.

At ten o'clock that night, with no lanterns to betray them, half a dozen preventive men, followed by several of the leading men in the village, who had got wind of the affair and were eager to see the self-sufficient Keasts brought to book, all came over the moor through the darkness. No light showed in the cottage as they neared it, but that was merely because the buttress, sweeping at right angles to the windward, obscured it from the approach. The buttress once rounded, the men saw the light shining as Robin Start had promised. The officer motioned the others to stay quiet, and then he was a mere lad, and eager to be the first in everything—he tiptoed to the window and peeped through.

Robin Start was sitting quietly in the armchair, a candle burning on the stool beside him. There was nothing alarming in that, yet the next moment the boy at the window stepped back with a great cry.

"He's got two mouths!" he shrieked. "He's got two mouths!"

Far out on the dark Channel father and daughter were drawing away in the Merrymaid, the rising wind and some other urgent thing at their backs, but the sense of justice done as their solace.

And in the cottage, his wrists tightly roped to the arms of the chair and his silky beard shaved away, sat Robin Start. The foot-light effect of the candle eliminated all shadow under his sloping chin, making it seem one with his throat, and that was cut from ear to ear.

Copyright 1924.

No Pleasure in Smoking

TWO Scotsmen sat by the roadside, talking and puffing away at their pipes.

"There's no muckle pleasure in smokin', Sandy," said Donald.

"How dae ye mak' that out?" questioned Sandy.

"Well," said Donald, "ye see if ye're smokin' yer ain tobacco, ye're thinkin' o' the awfu' expense, as if ye're smokin' someither body's, yer pipe's rammed sae tight it winna draw."

Loves Wife No More

WOMAN: "I don't think my husband loves me any more."

Magistrate: "Oh! what makes you think that?"

Woman: "Because when I get home the other night instead of kissing me he hit me with a bar of iron."—Pearson's Weekly.



IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI AND HIS WIFE

The world-famed pianist and former premier of Poland, is shown above with his wife, as they appeared just previous to sailing from New York for a four months' rest in Europe. Paderewski's American tour was brought to an abrupt end by the sickness of his pet poodle, "Ting Lung," gift of a former Chinese mandarin. Despite the tender ministrations of five of Chicago's most skilled veterinarians, the dog died. Its ashes are being taken to Europe by the Paderewskis and will be interred—together with the mortal remains of other pets such as Madame's dog, goldfish, her birds, her mountain goat—in the miniature cemetery in the Paderewski chalet in Switzerland.



A bottle of smuggled rum sealed the bargain.