

Return of the Prodigal

The air was growing chill in the early twilight when Mary Hamerton opened the little garden gate and went swiftly down the path to her father's house. How familiar everything looked. How few changes fifteen years had wrought. No doubt the greatest change was to confront her within the old home. She slipped through the unlocked doorway into the kitchen. There was a young woman there, a young woman who looked up with startled eyes when Mary entered. But Mary explained her presence in a few words, and the young woman, whose heart was tender, listened with a suspicion of tears in her eyes and gladly seconded her suggestions.

And Mary learned that the young woman was the daughter of a neighboring farmer, who had come over to care for Gilbert Blair and his home. No, the old man was not, as Mary had feared, in failing health. He was feeble, it was true, and kept to his chair and his reading more, but he was not ill. Yes, he was in the sitting room now in the old rocker by the fireplace. The young woman had just fixed the lamp for him and he had taken up his book. Would Mary go to him now? No, Mary would wait a little.

As she looked about the familiar room memories rushed upon her that filled her eyes with tears. The gentle mother who had passed away when she needed a mother most; the aunt whose rigid rule had embittered the child's life; the father, whose iron will had found in her a will fully as strong, and whose harsh words had driven her from his door and into the great world beyond. Perhaps she had been wrong to brave him as she did, but her soul rebelled against the narrow limits of her life in the dull little hamlet, she wanted knowledge, she wanted society. There had been a wordy strife, and she had gone forth.

Later on, when she had established herself in the city by the lake, and the cruel days of the early struggle seemed passed, she had written to him, but he had not answered. She wrote again. Her letter was returned. He was very hard and very unforgiving. Occasionally she heard of him in indirect ways. Once she met a man from the neighborhood and he told her that her father never spoke of her, and never permitted her name to be mentioned in his hearing. And so the years passed, fifteen of them and then a great longing to see her father came to her. It came to her after the death of her child. And so she was here.

Mary put a huge apron over her traveling dress and went to work. She had not forgotten her cunning. The abiding places of the dishes came back to her. The recipes of long ago were swiftly recalled. The young woman watched her quick movements with fascinated eyes. Mary wanted to prepare the evening meal alone and she had her way.

Presently she glanced a little anxiously at the clock. Then she smoothed down her apron and went forward to the sitting room door. The old man did not hear her approach. She looked at him a moment before she spoke. No, he was not greatly changed. Grayer and thinner, that was all.

"Father," she said. He looked around.

"Why, it's Mary," he said, "I was just dreaming of you. I had fallen asleep. So you have come back?"

Mary did not move from the doorway.

"Yes," she said. "I have come back." A whimsical smile fluttered across her face.

"Do you want wheat cakes for supper tonight, father?"

The old man started a little. Then he nodded and turned and looked closer at his prodigal daughter. But she did not wait for him to speak.

"Very well," she said, and vanished.

She laughed as she came back to the kitchen. There was a suspicion of sadness in her merriment, but she nodded as if satisfied with her reception.

"It is the right way," she said. She was busy with her cakes when a slight noise in the doorway drew her attention. She turned and saw her father looking at her.

"I dreamed just now that you came to me and said you had come back," he cried in a querulous tone.

"Yes, I have come back," returned Mary, as she bent again over her cakes.

"It's really you, Mary, is it?"

"Yes."

Muttering softly to himself the old man turned from the doorway and sought his accustomed place by the fireside.

As he seated himself a smile crept over his features. It was a smile of triumph.

When Mary had the meal quite

ready she left affairs in charge of the young woman and sought her father. He looked up as she paused in the doorway. He had been nodding at the fire. The smile of triumph still lingered on his wrinkled face.

"So you've come back, Mary," he said, again, as if he loved the sound of the words.

"Yes, father."

"I knew you would," cried the old man. "I knew you would! I told you you'd be glad to come back."

"I am glad to come back, father."

The old man nodded as if with satisfaction.

"It's a bitter world, Mary. A bitter world for those that disobey, and rise against their elders, and flaunt their foolish pride."

"The world is very much what we make of it, father."

"And what have you made of it, Mary?"

"I have tried to make the best of it, father."

"And you have come back?"

"Yes, father."

The smile of triumph deepened and widened.

"You have come back, as I said you would," cried the old man. "You have had your day of pride and folly and you have come to the husks and the humiliation. Then you thought of the dear old home, the one place where you would find a welcome and a shelter, and you have come back. I knew it all these years. I knew the punishment of the prodigal would break your haughty spirit. I knew you would come back."

His voice had risen as his vehemence increased, but it dropped at the closing words, and he sank back in the chair, nodding and trembling.

Then Mary went around the little table and faced her father.

"Father," she said, and her voice was clear and calm, "you are quite wrong. Your dream has been a false one. Look at me, my father." And she drew herself up before him and his smile faded as he gazed up at her with troubled eyes.

"Do I look like the prodigal suppliant? Do I look like one whom the world has cast off? No, my father, I am an honest woman and a good woman, and there is naught in my past of which I should be ashamed. It is not the story of a prodigal that I am about to tell you. It is the story of a woman who went out into the world and fought her way upward and kept herself unsmirched through through the struggle. Your dream was all untrue, my father."

She paused and leaned her hand upon the table.

"When I went from you," she resumed, "I was determined that I would not return until I had shown my independence. You called it a wicked pride, but it was that that kept me up and spurred me on.

"The great city seemed cold and forbidding, but I did not despair. I found a place where honest work was honestly rewarded. I was faithful and loyal and my services were appreciated. I made friends as I rose, one of them a young man in whose ambitious hopes I became deeply interested. Perhaps it seemed foolish, but we fancied we could be of greater help to each other if we were married. Now we know that we were right."

She paused again. "Your dream was all untrue, my father."

The old man's smile had quite faded. But there was no tenderness in his voice.

"Your pride is still your master," he said. "But you are a married woman?"

"Yes, father."

"You have a home?"

"Yes, a beautiful home."

"Children?"

"I had two, but God took one from me. It was that, I think, that turned my thoughts to you. We have a boy, a sturdy fellow of twelve. Do you care to know his name? It is Gilbert Blair Hamerton. Some day you shall see him."

The old man winced a little.

"Your husband's name is Hamerton?"

"Yes, father. Philip Hamerton."

The old man nodded his head.

"I shall not forget that name, he muttered. "It is the same as the new senator's."

Mary smiled.

"The same name and the same man, father."

The old man started up.

"Your husband!"

"Your son-in-law, father."

"Your husband," the old man murmured, "the idol of the public, the man who may be president."

"Yes, father," said Mary. "And when he comes he will tell you that in all he has accomplished I have been his adviser and his faithful helper."

"Coming here!" cried the old man.

"Yes, father, I left him behind at Judge Northmore's with instructions

Shady Advertisements

Complaints are heard at times of indecent or at least objectionable advertisements in Canadian newspapers. The evil here, however, is slight compared to its gigantic proportions in Berlin, Germany. The correspondent of a London paper goes fully into the subject.

An examination of the advertisement columns of some of the leading Berlin newspapers (he says) proves that these journals are either extremely careless regarding the notices they accept, or that their proprietors for mere gain permit whole columns of advertisements to appear which no self-respecting British newspaper would think of publishing. Some of these advertisements may be innocent and perfectly legitimate, but I hope I do not pass too harsh a judgment

when I maintain that the majority of them are inserted by persons who are engaged in nefarious practices which decent men and women cannot countenance.

In one largely-circulated newspaper, a journal which is widely read in the families of the lower and middle classes, the Sunday edition usually contains four or five columns of the most nauseous advertisements conceivable. These advertisements are widely read by young and old alike, and their influence must be pernicious in the extreme. Women, evidently persons of dubious character, advertise, for example, that they can secretly take charge of a child; that they can give advice and assistance which is both cheap and secret; that they send no reports home to the parents of girls seeking their assistance. Such notices appear by the score, and anyone reading between the lines knows what a world of iniquity lies hidden behind them. Among these women were the friends of Sternberg and other monsters of his class.

More numerous still are the advertisements inserted by the masseuses and manicure women. The police watch these advertisements and endeavor as much as possible to mitigate the offensive nuisance, but with only indifferent success. Women and girls who take up this occupation are in too many cases the refuse of the city. In their notices they call themselves Madame So-and-So, and Mademoiselle So-and-So, adding mellifluous French names, Seraph, Leon-tine, Blanche, Cora, Lili, and the rest, with the object, apparently, of giving their clients the notion that there is something exceptionally attractive about their operations.

The number of advertisements euphoniouly described as "Matrimonial" is also indicative of a very grave state of affairs. No one believes that the majority of these notices are genuine. The law demands that in advertisements of this class the words "with a view to matrimony" must appear, and in order to avoid the attentions of the police the newspaper offices insist on the insertion of this masking clause. So general, however, is the belief in the malafides of the majority of the advertisements, that in not a few cases we find the words "seriously intended," or "genuine," or "strictly genuine," added, presumably as a warning to adventurers of either sex. These matrimonial advertisements are sprinkled

up and down the columns of even the more respectable journals, and one is amazed that it does not occur to the leaders of newspapers like the Vossische Zeitung to close their columns once and for all to such pestilent stuff. The leading Radical newspaper with its great wealth, its undoubted influence, its high tone, should be above accepting the suspicious notices of "Rich young ladies," "Rich Israelites," "Ladies with good hearts," "Educated ladies with good figures," "Imposing widows who are amiable and 35 years old," "Dear and tender girls of 25 with pleasant appearance," "Educated Evangelical gentleman with 20,000 marks income," and a score of others.

Other journals tell their readers of a "Dressmaker with an elegant figure," of a "Domesticated young lady of good family and well looking," of a beautiful lady, educated, who wishes to correspond with a gentleman "with a view to matrimony," of two sisters, good looking, with fine figures, who would like to make the acquaintance of two gentlemen, "with a view," etc., of a "successful journalist" who is looking out for a lady with "lofty ideas on art," of a "Jewish lady," "pretty and coquettish," whose relatives want for her a well-to-do widower. It is added that the Jewess has a beautiful and rich trousseau. Finally, there is a gentleman of "highest mental culture," and "most ideal in his views," who wants to correspond with a lady with the intention of marrying her later.

Another class of advertisements is concerned with widowers and gentlemen of mature years who require housekeepers, and with housekeepers of goodly presence, musical, and who speak French, who are on the lookout for widowers and gentlemen of mature years. Were such advertisements to appear in obscure journals read only by the class of people who insert them, it would perhaps not so much matter, but they occupy prominent places in newspapers with the very highest pretensions.

The advertisements of quacks I will pass over. One cannot touch this subject very well. Besides, on this point the Berlin police have brought about a better state of affairs than existed some years ago. But what are we to say to the journal which inserts advertisements from dealers in books that are quite obviously immoral? One of these is headed

"Father will not see it," another "these women." They are described as "Peppery pictures for good children" as "Paris albums."

Among the widely-circulated journals of Berlin there is, perhaps, only one, the Socialist journal, Vorwaerts, whose columns are clean in this respect, and which consistently raises its voice against the evils I have indicated. The journals whose circulation is limited are not patronized by advertisers. But the great advertising mediums deserve the severest censure for permitting their columns to be degraded by matter which is so wholesome and impure. — Canadian Printer and Publisher.

Choicest cuts, beef, mutton and pork, at Bonanza Market, next Post Office.

Pacific Coast Steamship Co.

Affords a Complete Coastwise service, Covering

Alaska, Washington, California, Oregon and Mexico.

Our boats are manned by the most skillful navigators. Exceptional Service to the Coast.

All Steamers Carry Both Freight and Passengers.

TRAVELERS TO KOYUK

TAKE NOTICE

That the N. A. T. & T. Co. at Fort Yukon has a stock of goods for outfitting at reasonable prices. In shortages arising will be ported to their Circle Station.

INVEST BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

Lone Star Stock Is the Best Investment Ever Offered to the Public.

We claim we have the mother lode. Can you deny these facts. The mines are situated at the head of the two richest creeks on earth—Eldorado and Bonanza. Gold is found on every claim on Bonanza creek, and up Victoria Gulch to the quartz mines. If it did not come from this ledge, where did it come from?

The gold found in the creek is the same as that found in the ledge.

The gold is found in slide matter on Seven pup. Where did it come from?

The best pay found in Gay Gulch is at the head of the gulch, below the quartz mines. There are eight gulches heading at the Lone Star mines. They all carry gold. Where did it come from?

Lone Star stock is the best investment ever offered to the public. Buy now. The books will soon be closed and you will be too late. Don't let the man who knows it all tell you that there is no quartz in this country. The fools who make that statement have no bank account, which is the proof of their wisdom.

Every placer camp in the world turned into a quartz camp.

Cripple Creek was a placer camp. The men who knew it all were there. They made the same statement. A carpenter found the quartz after the wise men had left.

Have you ever visited the Lone Star mines? If not, you have no right to even think. Go up and satisfy yourself. Yours for business and a quartz camp, LEW CRADEN.

LONE STAR MINING AND MILLING CO.

LEW CRADEN, Acting Manager.