

Pranks of the "Mad Hatter."

Halston Hall, near Oswestry, England, which was sold recently, was the scene of the maddest exploits of the 18th century.

It was the home of Jack Mytton, whose eccentricities earned him the title of the "mad hatter," or the "mad quire of Shropshire."

His career was crammed full of excitement from the time he could toddle until his death at the early age of 38 in a debtor's prison in London.

He started by being expelled from school more than once, and at the age of 14 he was said to have overpaid double his income of \$2,000 a year.

A fortune of from \$150,000 to \$200,000 was squandered in a few years.

Mytton kept both a bear and a monkey as pets, and was fond of terrifying his visitors with them.

One day, disguised as a beggar, he called at his own hall, and rated the servants for the mean fare they had given him.

The bear was brought out of the hall to frighten the "beggar" away, but he recognized Jack.

On another occasion when a man applied for the post of gamekeeper, Mytton disguised himself as a sweep, and it was part of the test that the gamekeeper should fight the "sweep."

There was a great set-to, and after the fight Jack engaged the man. Who won is not stated.

Mytton was very fond of his monkey, which used to ride a white horse and accompany his master on some of his wild expeditions.

Jack had held a commission in the 7th Hussars, but, tiring of it, sold out of the Army and, at the age of 23, married Miss Jones, a daughter of the late Sir Tirwhitt Jones, Bart., of Stanley Hall, Salop.

She lived only a few years after the birth of a daughter—Jack Mytton's only child.

After his death, in 1834, Mytton's body was brought to Halston and laid in the private chapel.

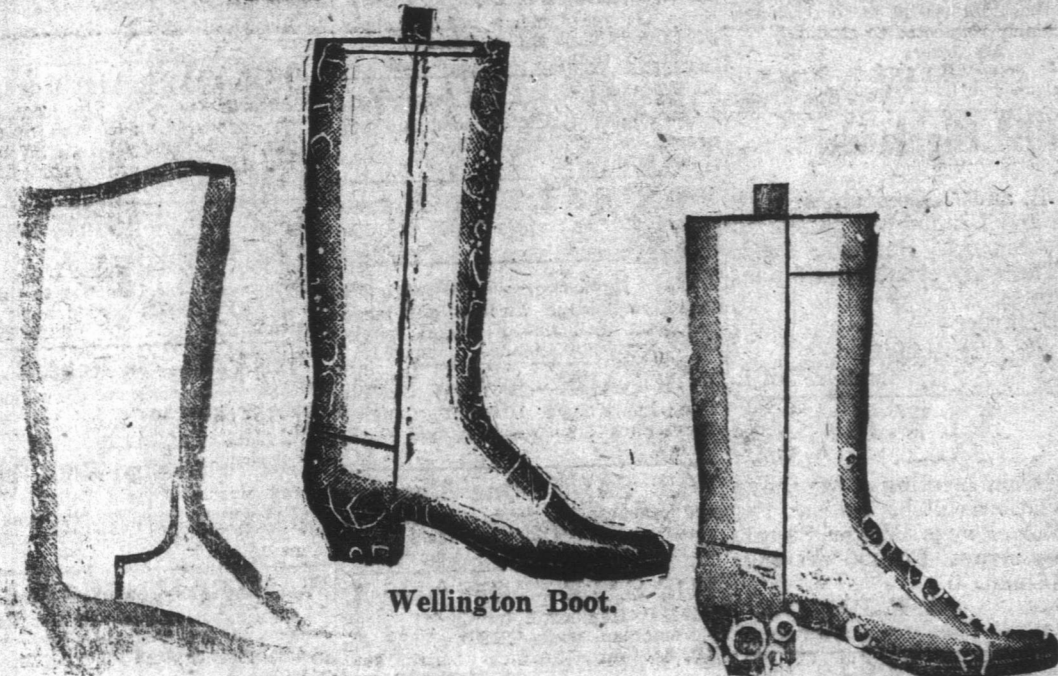
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Lady Wyverne's Daughter.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I will tell her," replied Inez, and for the first time her lips quivered and her eyes grew dim. He thought she sympathized with him.

"Good-bye," she said; "I shall not see you again before I start."

"Good-bye," she replied, calmly; but the hand he held grew cold in his grasp. The next moment she was gone.

She clinched her delicate hands as she went hastily up to her sister's room again.

"I hate myself!" she murmured. "I am a traitress—a false, living lie! Yet I swore to win at any risk, and I will!"

Agatha still slept, although the morning sunbeams were playing upon her face. Inez replaced the flower, and then bent again over her sister. There was something like triumph in the beautiful dark face as she watched the unconscious sleeper.

"I have done no harm," she thought; "she is not capable of loving, and he will be happier with me."

When Agatha woke she was startled to find her sister bending over her.

"How late I am!" she said; "but I was so tired; and I have had such pleasant dreams."

Then Inez knew by the rush of warmth and light over the fair face that she remembered all. Her eyes fell upon the flower—the flower that she was to return to-day. She did not understand why Inez, who rarely entered her room, lingered near and would not leave her—why she talked so wittily and amusingly of the tableaux and the ball, that simple, sweet Agatha could have listened all day—why she delayed her and kept her from dressing, or from going down-stairs, by saying that she was tired, and should have some tea brought to her.

The first part of her plan had succeeded even beyond her most sanguine hopes. She lingered in her sister's room, keeping watch and guard, lest there should come some note or message, which, unless she were quick enough to intercept, would spoil all. Her vigilance never relaxed until she heard the sound of car-

riage-wheels, and then she knew that the danger was past, that explanation was impossible, and that Lord Lynne had left the Hall.

Agatha wondered why all at once her sister's gay words ceased, why a stillness fell like a mask upon her face; but she had to wonder yet more, for the first news she heard was that Lord Lynne had left the Hall.

CHAPTER IX.

Agatha was sorely puzzled. She could not understand what Lord Lynne had meant. Why had he taken her into the conservatory purposely to speak to her? Why had he given her that flower? What answer did he want, which was of so little importance to him that he had left without even a message to her?

She had never been a vain girl; it was not in her to think much of her own powers and gifts; she had not felt quite sure that Lord Lynne loved her. In her sweet humility, it did not seem natural to her that he should prefer one like herself to her beautiful sister. He was always kind and tender; but then he had always been so; during her father's lifetime he had petted and loved her. What could he have meant? She wished Evelyn Leigh had waited three minutes longer before she had interrupted them.

"You know what I have brought you here to say," he had said to her. "Nay, that she did not. Her heart had warmed and thrilled when he uttered the words—a sweet, vague hope had come to her—but she was not sure. Had he brought her there to tell her that she loved her? It seemed like that. At the time she had felt sure. Yet it could not be so; or why had he gone away that morning without waiting for her to give him either the flower or any answer at all? It was simply incomprehensible. Only one thing was plain—he did not love her, and he had not meant that."

All day Inez watched her sister's face; it was paler, and had lost something of its bright, happy expression; there seemed to be a wondering question always in her eyes.

"When is Lord Lynne coming back?" she heard Agatha asking Mrs. Lynne.

"I hardly know," replied her mother. "He left rather suddenly; he did not say much to me. He spoke of going to Scotland for shooting in September."

"Perhaps he will not come back until after then," said Agatha, gently. She would have given much to understand his strange behavior.

"I hate lies," said Inez Lynne to herself; "they blister and burn my lips—they make me hate and scorn myself—but I must imply, even if I do not tell one more."

She sought her sister's room again that evening. All day she had watched the pain and wonder in that gentle face. She saw that in some measure her simple, guileless sister must be satisfied. If she were allowed to go on wondering what Lord Lynne had meant, she would probably ask him the first time they met.

"I must manage two things," she said to herself. "I must satisfy her, and I must prevent them from meeting again until I am his betrothed wife."

The inflexible will, the iron resolution, the dauntless spirit never failed. She had good qualities; used for a good purpose, they might have made Inez Lynne remarkable even in a remarkable age; as it was, they helped to lose her. She hated herself with a bitter hatred for the part she had played, and for the part she had yet to play.

"Send away your maid, Agatha," she said, "and let us have a chat. I am not in the least tired."

Agatha wondered again at her sister's kindness, and felt a glow of happiness, believing that she was beginning to love her at last.

"Let us sit by the window," said Inez; "I am never tired of watching the moonlight on these trees."

Agatha drew her chair to the window, and they sat side by side, the betrayer and the betrayed. There was a strange look on the beautiful Southern face—something of shame and of pain. Her breath seemed to come in thick, hot gasps, when Agatha laid her head carelessly upon her shoulder, and said, "It is delightful to have a sister; after all, Inez, no one in the world can be quite like one's own sister."

"But I am not your own sister," said Inez.

"Do not say so," replied Agatha, with a sound of reproach in her gentle voice. "I never remember that we had not one mother."

"I remember it," said Inez, and her face grew dark with the words. They seemed to nerve her and give back the resolution that the sight of that fair young head resting upon her shoulder had half shaken.

"Agatha," she said, suddenly, "one year of the time my father named has expired."

"Yes," replied her sister, and the words seemed very much like a long-drawn sigh.

She felt her sister's breath like a hot scorching flame upon her cheek. She looked up and saw the beautiful face all glowing.

"Agatha," whispered the same clear voice that had deceived Lord Lynne, "if ever our cousin tells you he loves me, what shall you say?"

She felt the quick tremor that shook the young girl—she saw the gentle face grow pale.

"If ever he comes to you," continued Inez, "and tells you that he loves me, but that I am so proud and reserved he does not dare to ask me to be his wife, but wishes you to intercede for him, what shall you say?"

The fair head was raised from her shoulder, and two pure sweet eyes looked searchingly into her face.

"Do you care for him, Inez?—do you love him?" she asked.

Inez was almost frightened at the expression that came into her sister's face and lingered there for some moments.

"Yes, I love him," she replied, at last; "not as you would, quiet English love, but as we Spaniards, Daughters of the Sun; who would think nothing of giving a life for those we love. If ever he comes to you, little sister, and asks you to speak for him, what shall you say?"

"Is he likely to do so?" asked Agatha, her gentle face growing paler with each word.

"I think so," was the false reply. "I have been so proud, so haughty, so reserved; but I cannot doubt that he loves me."

"If ever he comes to me with that request," said Agatha, "I shall remember what you have said to me to-night and I shall tell him to hope—to speak for himself."

"Would you like me to be Lady Lynne?" asked Inez, gently.

Agatha waited two or three minutes before she spoke, then she laid her head down upon her sister's shoulder again, and said, "Yes, if it would make you and Philip both happy, I should like to see you Lady Lynne."

(To be continued.)

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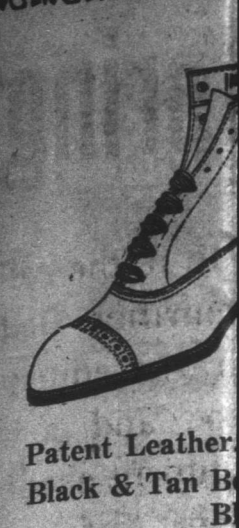
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