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be a witness to our interview, it may end fatally for one."

"Look here," said Mr. Fowler, catching Morton by the arm and placing his own back against the door, "this sort of thing won't do at all, Charlie; no case of a coffee for four, pistols for two," when I am concerned. No sir. If you want a little of the manly art, I don't mind holding the sponge for you, and wiping your mouth out with a drop of vinegar when you can scarcely come to time; but, none of this blood and thunder business shall go on while I stand around. As soon as you get sane I shall be happy to go up with you, and we'll interview the doctor together. I don't mind trying to hang him in a square sort of way, you know; but I won't have any unfair business while I am around; so you must promise me, Charlie,—I can trust to your word—that there shall be no violence, or you shan't go to see him to-night."

Mr. Morton laughed a little at this outburst of his friend's, and his ill-humor seemed to pass away in a moment.

"Gus, old fellow, you need not be at all alarmed," he said. "I shall not make this a desperate case; come with me, if only to convince you how mild and amiable I can be."

"Charlie," responded Mr. Fowler, moving from the door, and extending his hand, "put it there! You're a brick, that's what you are; and I'll see you through this business as long as I have a leg to stand on; and if the doctor's head wants punching we'll do it together, old fellow, and I'll introduce him to a few of the dodges I learnt from Joe Coburn, while I was in New York."

The pair departed arm in arm for Dr. Griffith's office, and Morton tried hard to be merry and jolly as they went along. But the effort was a severe one; the strong feeling which had been raised within him by the story he had heard, could not be easily controlled; and Mr. Fowler noticing his companion's excitement was making mental bets with himself as to the probability of the doctor's head being "punched" as soon as Morton met him.

The meeting, however, was not destined to take place. On reaching Dr. Griffith's office they were informed by the servant that the doctor had left town and would not return for two or three weeks.

"Where has he gone?" asked Morton.

"I don't know exactly, sir; but I think it must be somewhere west, as I heard him say he had to catch the eight o'clock train."

Mr. Morton looked at his watch. It was no use trying to catch him at the depot now as it was already past eight, and the train had started.

"Gus," he said, "I don't know what to do; whether I ought to follow Harry, or wait quietly until his return. What do you think?"

"I think it's no use trying to think about it to-night. You can't follow him now, for you don't know where he has gone, and even if you did there is no train now to go by. Wait until to-morrow, old fellow; sleep over it, and perhaps some bright inspiration might come to you in your dreams."

To tell the truth Fowler was rather glad that the doctor was absent, for he feared the consequences of a meeting with Morton in the humor that gentleman was in. "Better give Charlie a chance to cool off," was Mr. Fowler's mental soliloquy, "it can't do him much harm to wait until to-morrow."

Morton turned impatiently away, and walked rapidly down the hill in silence. Mr. Fowler was a good walker, but he found some difficulty in keeping up with his companion, and he felt very much as if he was in for a walking match; still he said nothing until they had descended the hill and were turning into St. James street, when Mr. Morton suddenly stopped and said:

"Gus, I have thought it over. I'll put this matter into the hands of a detective. I have great faith in detectives, they are wonderful fellows for finding out things. I'll set Murphy or Cullen to work to-morrow morning, and I'll soon know whether there is any truth in Mr. Harway's story or not."

"That's right, old boy, let the matter rest until to-morrow; and, as you've nothing special to do to-night, come up to my room and smoke a quiet pipe; perhaps, Frank may be able to give us an idea, he's a wonderful fellow for ideas altho' his head is always so full of hip bones, and all that sort of things, you know."

He linked his arm through Mr. Morton's, and they strolled up St. James street, towards Mr. Fowler's boarding house.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD BACHELOR'S STORY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

I am an old bachelor. At sixty-five I can say I shall never be anything else while I live; but, like all other men—all I have ever met, at least—I have loved, and hoped to be happy with my chosen bride.

That passion, those hopes, faded forty years ago. Since then I have done penance for the hasty act of one night; I have shunned the society of women, and forbade myself the shadow of a hope that I might patch my tattered joys with new ones.

To none who know me have I ever told the tale. I should have been esteemed a liar, or a

madman, and no one would willingly accept such a reputation. To you, unknown reader, I dare to recite the events of those four and twenty hours—events which turned my life into its now well-worn channel, and made me the lonely, hopeless man I am.

At the age of twenty-four I was a clerk in the establishment of Messrs. Carp and Cavil, lawyers. I had energy and ambition, health and opportunity—everything, in fact, that could be wished for by a man who hoped to fight his way up in the world, and win wealth and reputation.

I was engaged to a young lady by the name of Grace Hunter, a pretty, delicate creature, so quiet that her pet name, Snowflake, seemed the only one suitable for her. Her step was noiseless; her movements soft; her voice sweet and

I was young and light of heart, and when I had once entered the lighted parlors I did not sit silent in the corner.

I talked; I sang; I turned the music for musical ladies; I walked through the Lancers. At last I found myself flirting with one of the female guests.

There are women a man is obliged to flirt with. He does not admire them, respect them, or love them one whit; he does not even desire their society; but he must be more than man ere he can refuse to respond to their advances. One of these women, I know now, having played the looker-on for so many years, can make any man appear to other women desperately in love with her, while he almost detests her. A woman of this kind was among the company. She had hands that delighted in

Perhaps she expected me to plead for pardon. God knows what possessed me. I answered only:

"May I not talk to a pretty woman because I hope to marry you some day?"

"You were flirting—almost making love to her," she replied.

"She is the sort of woman with whom men fall in love," I said. "Irresistible in her manner, I've heard she makes conquests everywhere; I don't doubt it."

Grace looked at me with a stern face—white in the starlight, as a marble statue.

"Other women are always jealous of such women," I added.

Her lip curled.

"I am not jealous of her," she said. "I would not be like her for a kingdom. She is a terrible woman. But since you admire her so, you are free to tell her so after you have seen me to my door."

"Grace!" I said.

"Miss Hunter, if you please, Mr. Rutherford," said she. "We have both made a little mistake easily rectified; that is all."

I felt, as I stood looking at her, that the effect of the wine I had drunk upon me was stronger than I had thought, but I gave no heed to the warning of my giddy head and rapid pulse.

"Just as you please," I said. "I should think that a jealous woman would curse any man's life. I'll go now. I won't trouble you longer. Good-bye."

We were not at the door of her home—we were about half a block from it; but I turned on my heel then and there, and left her. I staggered a little as I walked, and I was hot and angry. I made my way home, and without undressing, fell upon my bed and dropped asleep.

In two hours I awakened sober. I sat up and looked about me. The scenes of the evening recurred to me vividly. I saw how blameworthy I had been, and a terrible grief possessed me. I put my head down upon my hands and burst into bitter tears. I had lost her, and with her all that made life precious. Then hope dawned upon my soul. I would write to her; tell her how unused to liquor as I was, the wine had effected me. I would tell her that to my sober self there was no charm in the woman who had seemed to enchant me the evening before. I would draw the comparison that I felt so keenly between her pure self and that bold-eyed flirt. I would pray for forgiveness, and she would forgive me.

Springing to my feet, I rushed to my desk. I drew from it pen and paper. I wrote a letter overflowing with remorse and tenderness. I read it and re-read it. Then leaving it lying upon the spot where it was written, I stood at the window waiting for the tardy dawn, jealous of the slow hours that kept my missive from my darling.

The night was at its stillest. The stars were bright as ever, but the moon had set.

I had put out my candle when I left my desk, and the room should have been dark; but as I turned my head after a long and anxious reverie, I saw that it was full of a pale radiance like that of moonlight. It startled me. Whence did the light come? Had a miracle occurred—had the moon risen again?

Suddenly, amid this silvery light appeared a still whiter radiance. It slowly took form. A female figure, in white garments so bright that they dazzled the eyes, stood bending over my letter.

I remained motionless—to speak or stir was not in my power—and gazed on the strange object with terrified intensity. The figure seemed to turn the pages of my letter with its transparent hand. I heard a gentle sigh; then the head turned toward me, and I saw a face I knew—the face that seemed the loveliest of all on earth to me, endowed with a mysterious and divine beauty for which no man on earth could find words—the glorified face of sweet Grace Hunter.

At the sight I burst the bonds which held me—bonds as tangible as though I could have seen them—and rushed forward. I strove to clasp my love, or her shadow, in my arms. A shock such as one might experience from an electrical machine flashed through me, and I fell powerless to the floor.

When I recovered the day had dawned, and under the blue morning sky the city had awakened; but my day never dawned again. My heart never awoke to life's sweetness.

To end this story in a few short words, Grace Hunter never reached her home that night, and never was heard of again. The family imagined that she had remained with her friends, and were not anxious about her. I had left her within sight of her own door, and why she did not reach it I shall never know. But I do know that in some woeful manner she died that night, and that her parting spirit paused in its flight to bid me a long farewell.

I have outlived my youth, and the suspicion that fell upon me and embittered many years of my existence; but I never shall outlive my love for Grace Hunter, or my remorse for that night's woeful work. I shall never outlive the knowledge that, in the madness caused by wine and an evil woman's enchantment, I was the cause of my darling's unknown death.

A Parisian paper, reporting a duel which had just taken place, stated that "the seconds, on arriving on the ground, placed the adversaries at an equal (!) distance from each other."

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"TIS THE OLD, OLD TALE."—SEE PAGE 130.

low. She never herself entertained a large company by her conversation, or did any of those things that give a woman the reputation for brilliancy; but her mental powers were very fine, and in a *little-à-little* she was enchanting. A lady to the heart's core, in my eyes at least, a perfect beauty, she might yet have been forgotten by most men in a room full of giggling, chattering girls.

I adored her. I had felt that her love was a jewel worthy of an emperor's wearing, and I had scarcely dared to utter the words that told her all I felt. Even now her high-bred reserve kept me at a little distance. I was proud of her. I felt unworthy of her. She was at once the saint whom I revered, and the being whom it was to be my delight to cherish and protect until death should part us.

Six months had passed since she had promised to be mine. At the end of six more, she was to give me her hand. I had a small salary, but my grandmother had left me a legacy which would enable us to go to housekeeping in plain but comfortable style, and Grace was willing to fight life's battles by my side.

Life seemed bright and joyous to me on that night of midwinter, forty years ago, when I walked through the city streets with Grace upon my arm, and looking down at her in her white wrappings, with gleams of frosty starlight touching her black hair, wondered if the angels were fairer than she was.

We were going to spend the evening at a mutual friend's residence. There was to be music and dancing and cards, and a sociable supper. I went because Grace desired to go.

Her sole society at her own home was more delightful to me than any other company; but

soft touches of hands masculine; eyes that could cast glances bright and enchanting. She possessed attraction rather than beauty. What she said was nothing; her conversation had no interest, but I knew that I seemed absorbed by her—that I really was absorbed; in two words, that I flirted abominably with her.

Grace, meanwhile, sat apart from me. She talked to others in her low, sweet tones. Once she sang a pretty love song. Quite calm and self-possessed, with no appearance of noticing my conduct, the thought that it troubled her never occurred to me. So that when the evening was over, and we had left the house together, I was astonished beyond measure to see an offended look upon her face, and to hear an offended tone in her voice. I offered her my arm. She rejected it, replying that the ground was damp, and that her hands were occupied with her dress, but I knew that this was merely an excuse; and feeling myself in the wrong, and having swallowed more wine than I should at the supper table, I grew very angry.

"May I ask what I have done?" I said.

"You know," said Grace.

"I know!" I repeated. "Nay, I know nothing of a woman's fancies. You must explain."

"I scarcely think it worth while," said she.

"If you do not know that you have done wrong to-night, I really should not care. You have neglected me, and devoted yourself to that vulgar woman. I heard a lady near me say that you seemed to be tired of your bargain. She thought that you were in love with that creature. So did other people. Under the circumstances, I have a right to feel offended, insulted."

Perhaps she thought I would deny her charge.