

TRUTH'S BEACON



engleine

It was a dull threatening day, .but there was a deeper grayness than the sky's on the face of the solitary occupant of a compartment in the Great Western train which drew up at the Reading, on its way to Cornwall, on a Septem-ber morning some two or three years ago. Since leaving Padding-ton he had neglected his newspa-per, ignored a novel and with little observation and less interest had observation and less interest had observation and less interest had watched the passing scene. Now he was looking out on the busy platform without definite vision of anything, but with a vague perception of a tall dark object individualizing itself from the crowd and moving towards him. Then he became less vaguely aware of an outstretched hand a smilling face and

stretched hand, a smiling face and a cheery voice saying:
"Noll Vernon, of all fellows in the world! How are you, old man? You seem quite disguised without your well-known smile."
The solitary passenger awoke to

interest. "Are you coming on by this

train? "Yes, I'm booked for Exeter and jolly glad I am to meet you. I am fond of more agreeable company than my own."

And cheery Dick Maynard pro-ceeded to make himself as comfortabl as the compartments would nermit. fortable

Later, when the train was rac-

"7, ater, when the train was racing westward again, he leaned toward Vernon and said:
"What is it, Noll? You look as gloomy as if you were going to your own funeral."
"I hope, Di k," Vernon replied, "that I should attend such a function with a lighter heart than I have just now."

have just now.! "What is it? May I know?"
Dick asked, sympathetically. "Oh, yes, you may know." Vernon answered. After a slight pause he went on: "You remember Cyril Grev?"

The ornamental boy; I should think I do remember him." "He should kave been making this journey with me."

"God knows!"—But the remark was made quite seriously and reverently—"I saw him last at Dieppe, three weeks ago, I have waited for him a fortnight."
"And he hash't turned up?"
"Who We hash't turned up?"

"No. His yacht did in a double sease." Wreckage came ashore; two dead bodies have been recovered, but no sign or word of Cyril."

"And you have given up all. hope?"

hope?"
"Absolutely. I st m to have seen nothing for a week but his handsome, graceful figure lying with the deep, clear water tossing

ver him,"
"Do his people know?"
"He hadn't any,"
"And he wasn't married?"

"He was to have been married at the end of this month."
"Poor old Cyrili"
"Your sisters would know the girl — Muriel Bentley," Oliver add-

ed. "Poor girl!"

"Poor girli"
"She doesn't know yet. I wish
to heaven she did, for I am on my
way to tell her."
"Poor old Noll! What a task!"

"Poor od Noill what a task!"
It was surely one of the saddest of possible tasks, and Oliver had been vainly "trying to think of some means of lessening the force of the blow which his message was bound to give. He was trying till when he reached his journey's bound to give. He was trying still when he reached his journey's end, long after Dick had left the train at Exeter. A drive of six miles brought Oliver to the Cornish village of Terruth, near which the Bentlaye lived But he felerad he Bentleys lived. But he delayed his going to the house for a little while. He dreaded his task and to convey his news. He turned down to the shore. He had always loyed the sea, and perhaps it would teach him how to tell of its cruelty: But that day the water maddened Oliver. It was so wickedly calm — a oreat gray waste beneath a sullen, leaden sky. The wind was rising, too; there was ev-ery promise of a storm by night-fall.

What a strange, wild, cruel coast it was, with its treacherous rocks and narrow channels. Oliver did not wonder at a beacon being nenot wonder at a beacon being necessary. He recalled old stories of the terrible dangers and of the many wrecks which had taken place before Mr. Bentley has caused Terruth's Beacon, shortened to Truth's Beacon, to be built, to be lighted in bad weather whenever any of the local fishing boats were out. Truth's Beacon. It stood any of the local fishing boats were out. Truth's Beacon. It atood, firm, clearly outlined against the gray sea and grayer sky, and it touched Oliver's hesitation into, resolution, and he turned towards the Bentleys home, Litermined towards the menteys home, Litermined towards the menteys home, and simply the property of the property of the same fulls and simply. give his news fully and simply.

At the house Oliver was admit-

ted by the oldest, most trusted

Servant.

(Pkh, master will be mighty glad to see you, sir, and Miss Muriel.)

"Is she about?" interrupted Olive

"That is right. Say nothing about my coming to Miss Bentley and take me to your master."
"Is it bad news?" queried the

old man. Oliver nodded, and nothing was spoken till the servant opened a door and announced him.

Within the room Mr. Bentley started up and advanced to meet started up and advanced to meet Oliver, but the words of welcome died on his lips, chilled by the sight of his visitor's gray face."
"What is the matter? You bring bad news?" he asked, quickly.
"Yes," was the quiet, but sad,

response.

About Cyrill Is he ill? Dead?" came the startled questions. "I am afraid so."

"But how? When? We never heard he was ill. Why were we not told?" And Mrs. Bentley joined her husband in quick, anxious inquiry. So Oliver told his story. Himself a prisoner in the hotel through a straight only. The hot deep Caril a sprained ankle, he had seen Cyril sail away to return, he hoped, in four days, he had waited and Cyril had not come. He told of the upturned boat, of the bodies of two drowned sailors being washed ashore, of the fading away of every hope during the following fort-

Then a voice - a merry voice singing was heard and Mr. Bent-ley said imperatively:
"Muriel — she must not be

"But-' Oliver was beginning. "No, not to-day, nor to-morrow.

She must be prepared for the shock gradus 'y. Not a word of your real news to her, Mr. Vernon, please."

And Muriel came into the room. How her face lighted up when she saw that her parents were not Alone! "Oliver!" she said, stretching out

"Oliver!" she said, stretching out, both of her hands in greeting; "I am glad to see you!" Then, looking around the room, she asked: "Where is Cyril?"

"Cyril, my dear, is delayed. He will be here, I think you said," turning to Oliver, "in two or three days?"

Oliver nodded acquiescingly; he felt that there was nothing else to do.

felt that there was nothing else to do.

"But what is the matter? Why couldn't he come?" Muriel went un.

"Well, you see, my dear," faltereo Mr. Bentley, "he has met with a slight accident — only a very short one — he has aprained his ankle."

ankle."
Oliver turned away, annoyed and hurt by Mr. Bentley's childish stupid invention. He looked out through the window over a stretch of gray sea to where the beacon was standing firm and clear.

But Murici was pressing another question upon her lather.
"Why didn't he write? It is more

than six weeks since we heard from him,"

"He hurt his hand as well as his ankle."

"He might have wired," was the natural and impatient comment from Muriel.

Mr. Bentley looked helpless, and

Mr. Bentley looked helpless, and Oliver was constrained to say: "Don't you think, Muriel, that a telegram would have been terribly upsetting? You see, you have simply thought during the past three weeks that Cyril was cruising about and might sail into the bay here any day."

"I would have preferred to be told," Muriel seld simply, and she left the room, evidently a little

hurt.
"You will tell her the truth?" Oliver said pleadingly to Ar. Bent-

ley. "Not to-day nor to-morrow. She expected him to-day; to-morrow is her birthday, always a feest day with her."

"But we cannot keep t from her. And is it right to deceive?".

"The question of right scarcely comes in," Mr. Bentley replied, stiffly; "we are deceiving her for her own good."

Again Oliver turned away annoved by the sorbleters.

noyed by the sophistry. And Mr. Bentley's voice broke in upon him: "Besides, Mr. Vernon, we know

"Besides, Mr. Vernon, we know what is best for our dear child."
"You will remember, Mr. Vernon, please," Mr. Bentley said, imperatively, "that our poor friend Cyril is suffering from a sprained ankle."
"And an incapacitated right hand, I think," Oliver said, dangerously near a scornful tone.
"You will occupy your usual room, Mr. Vernon. Baker will see to you. And we dine at 7."
Oliver murmured his thanks as the Bentleys left the room.

the Bentleys left the room. "Not even the slightest

"Not even the slightest prayer, not an expression of regret for him or Muriel; only a coward's fear of telling her," he said to himsel".

Oliver's preparations for dinner were quickly made, and he was standing again by the window alone when Muriel came in. The

moment he dreaded had come.
"Oliver," she said, seriously. "Will you look at me, please, straight at me?" she asked. "Yes," he replied, still looking

He turned slowly. "Why, what is it?" "Cyril always said you were the most honorable and truthful boy or man he ever knew. Tell me your real news."

And her eyes - the most candid in the world he thought—were look-ing at him from the most innocent the most trustful face he knew. Whatever came or went, he could not lie with those eyes looking into his. And yet, how could he tell her the truth? His eyes fell and he turned his face aside.

"Ah, don't turn away; tell me what you know," she urged. "Has he gone away from me?"
"Not that, not that," he replied,

eagerly.
"Has he gone away from all of "Yes, we think so."

"Dead! Is he dead?" And her startled eyes looked wildly at him.

Oliver grew afraid, yet her face demanded the truth more than "We are afraid so," he murmur-

ed, gently.

The life died out of her face. She swayed for a moment and Oliver was just in time to catch her as

fell forward in a dead faint. He supported her to the couch and was ringing violently for assistance as her parents entered the

sistance as her parents entered the room. They saw at a glance what had happened.

"You have told her?" Mr. Bentley asked with vexation as Mrs. Bentley ran to the white-faced, un-

conscious figure.
"Yes; I couldn't help it," Oliver

repned.
"Couldn't help it!" Mr. Bentley repeated, scornfully. "And perhaps your foolishness has killed my child."

Certainly Mariel's condition was Certainly Mariel's condition was alarmingly serious. After a strangely long periou of absolute unconsciousness she came back to a half comatose life, to a listlessness of body and mind more distressing to see than any kind of pain could possibly have been. Nothing interested her; she ignored all questions and sat staring at the fire, muttering uncannily.

Two hours passed bringing no change. Daylight faded, the room remained unlighted save by the red fire into which the pale face Muricl was peering so fixedly with a look which told of a mind straying on the border line of reason. Fitful gleams of the moon came through the wreck of flying clouds and the wind had arisen to a perfect hurricast. feet hurricane. The scene was burn-ing itself into Oliver's brain, and he felt, that each moment was felt that each inoment was terrible with the promise of a travedy.

An exceptionally loud gust wind shook the house and seems to fill the room with noise, awoke Muriel from her lethargy. seemed

"What is that?" she asked.
"The wind," replied her mother; 'a storm is raging."
"Is the beacon lighted?" came

the quick question.
"Oh, yes, dear," answered her mother. Muriel started up, stepped to the

window and looked out. She saw at a glance that no light shone from where the beacon stood.

"It is not lighted; it must be," she said, firmly,
"We cannot reach it now. No boat could live in such a sca," Mr.

Bentley said.
"It must be lighten," Marielere-peated, resolutely, her eyes flash-

ing.
"But, Muriel, dear," her father urged, more coaxingly, "there is no necessity. It is never lighted ex-

necessity. It is never lighted ex-cept when hoats are out at right;"
"Light it, light it," Muriel re-peated again and again. And then she burst forth more sconfully:
"You are cowards all; you will let good men go to their death while you stand idle."

"I tell you, Muriel, that no boats are out," her father said, sternly.

She ignored the remark and demanded:

"Where is David?"

David, a weather-beaten old fish David, a weather-beaten old fish eman, was brought to her, and sad and very much startled he looked when he saw a pale, wild-eyed figure asking him to light the beacon, which stood with a quarter of a mile of raging sea between it and the shore.

"All right, missy; don't ee worry; there and to boats out."

"All right, missy; don't ee worry; there am't no boats oat."
"You won't go. Then I'll go mysself. Mr. Vernon, will you come
with me? Truth's Beacon must be

lighted to-night."
Oliver would have welcomed cer-

tain death as a relief from the hor-rible torture of the last two hours. He looked at David inquiringly. "I am willing to try, sir," the ex-fisherman replied to the unspoken

"Muriel, we will light that bea-con for you," Oliver said, adding to himself, "or we shall not come

back. Two hours later Oliver and David returned. Drenched, sore and ut-terly exhausted, they had the gratification of knowing that the beacon was lighted. Oliver had hop-ed that the news would rouse Muriel from her terrible lethargy; but tet from her terrible letnargy; but no, she simply thanked him and relapsed into semi-lifelessness. All food or stimulants she bushed aside; she was heedless alike to her aside; she was heedless alike to her father pacing the room still furious-ly angry with Oliver, and of the mother seated near, anxiously and helplessly watching the marble-like figure of Muriel. The doctor had been sent for early in the evening and had not come. No one seemed to thing of retiring to rest.

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Oliver, despite seeling in the way, could not withdraw. He waited and watched and wondered as midnight came and passed, and I o'clock struck and then 2. The silence within the room was oppressive and made the sound of the wind and the booming of the waves more terrible, whilst the broading sense of impending tragedy made Oliver curiously nervous.

"Would morning never come?" he groaned to himself. And then he half thought he heard the sound of a bell. On the instant Muriel started un.

"He has come! He has come!" she cried, facing the door. "Why don't you let him in?" she added, angrate as no one stirred.

Mrs. Bentley wrung her hands degratifully.

despairingly. "Oh, my poor child!" broke from Mr. Bentley.
"He has come! He has come!"

Muriel cried again, and the strange set look in her lace broke into a

set look in her lace broke into a smile of welcome as another and louder peal rang through the house. Oliver threw open the door, a servant was heard shooting back the bolt of the front entrance and the almost impossible happened—the dead came back—Cerilla voice. the dead came back — Cyril's voice was heard. A moment later Cyril himself bounded into the room, and Muriel with an inarticulate cry of welcome, fell unconscious into his arms.
An hour later, when wine

gladness were bringing back the color to Muriel's cheeks, Cyril told his story. When his yacht capsized his story. When his yacht capsized he had clung to a spar for hours and had been picked up by another yacht. Then he had been ill for a tortnight and had been unable to tell his name or residence. When he had recovered his rescuers had endeavoced to make for Falmouth and had been caught in the storm. As a last desperate resort Cyril had taken charge of the vessel and had made for the little harbor which he knew so well. He had re-lied upon the beacon being lighted. Had Muriel not been told, had

she not in her strange unreason insisted upon the bracon being lighted, Cyril would have steered himself and his rescuers to certain death.

death.
As Cyril ended his narrative, Mr
Bentley rose and shook Oliver
warmly by the hand
"beg your parton, Mr. Vernon," was all he said. But Oliver
understood fully and both men
glanced across at the beacon. For
both of them a beacon had been
newly lighted in their lives — the
beacon of firm, unfaltering truth.—
The Catholic Fireside.

IRISH FAIRIES.

Country of rain and cloud, with Country of rain and cloud, with the trooping mists ever stealing from the hills, the wide, lonely stretches of brown bog walled in by purple fortresses of mountains, is it any wonder the people should see visions of many kinds? The visions are usually of the dead or of fairing of fairies.

I like best to think on the pret-

tier fairies, who lend themselves so delightfully to poetry, writes Kath-arine Tynan. There is the leprearine Tynan. There is the chaun, the fairy shoemaker. tumn fields would seem to be his natural setting. As Allingham sings in one of his delightful

Little cowboy, what have you heard,
Up on the lonely rath's green mound?

mound?
Only the plaintive yellowbird
Piping to sultry nelds around,
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee.
Only the grasshopper and the beel
"Tip-tap, rin-rap,
Tick-a-tack, too,
Scarlet leather sewn together,
This will make a shoe.
Left, right, pull it tight;
Summer days are warm;
Undergound in winter,
Laughing at the storm." Lay your ear close to the hill,

Do you not eatch the tiny clamor, Busy click of an old elfin hammer, loice of the leprechaun singing shrill,

As he merrily plies his trade?

If you could only catch the leprechaun at his work and hold him, he would tell you where the crock of gold, the hidden treasure, is to be found. Nor would it turn into fairy gold, once found. But the leprechain is artful and plays shab-by tricks sometimes. He was once caught by a peasant, and in return

for his release indicated where a crock of gold lay. It was under a spike of ragweed in a thirty acre field. The peasant cautiously took care to mark the ragweed, since such things flourish commonly. He

ticd his garter about the neck of this one, and returning at dawn with his spade to dig up his treas-ure, lol all the field was thich with ragweed, and every one carried a garrer round its neck! And though he dug and dug and dug, he never came upon that crock of gold.

The ragweed, no doubt, would laugh at such a trick, for he is the fairy's horse. He looks only a brown weed in the daytime, but if you were to see him under the moon when the fairy rings form on the grass and all the fairy riders come down from the rath, would never know him—champing and neighing and shaking his buck-les of gold. He is surely a most lucky mortal who can see the lucky mortal who can see the dainty fairy fold and escape un-scathed, for often they hold as close communion as Freemasons and tolerate no spying on their do-main and punish severe those who intrude.

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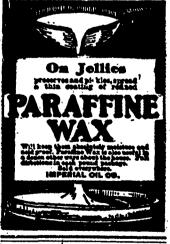
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