

For the Favorite.
DEAD ON THE OCEAN.

BY E. A. SUTTON.

[A few days ago a despatch stated that the steamer "General Sedgewick," from New Orleans to New York, fell in with several pieces of wreck with two dead bodies attached. As an item of newspaper intelligence, the matter may seem of little importance; but when we consider that there are probably some to wait and mourn for the hapless pair, who were, doubtless, never recognized, the case assumes a phase of melancholy interest.]

I.

Dead on the ocean! Who heard the last groan?
Who saw them how the ne'er ending sleep?
Tossed by the billows—uncared for, alone,
Dead! far away on the breast of the deep.

II.

Mayhap some mother is lonely to-day,
Fervently breathing to Heaven a pray'r
Counting the hours for the one far away,
Who, ne'er to return, lies slumbering there

III.

Or yet a wife who, with tear filling eyes,
Starts at each footfall she hears at the door;
Alas! for her hopes, her tears, and her sighs,
She waits for one who will greet her no more

IV.

Yes, pray'r and watching is vain now for them,
'Neath the dark waters they'll find them a grave,
Night winds will chant them a wild requiem,
Dead on the ocean! entombed 'neath the wave!

V.

Sweep on, ye billows! and yawn for your prey,
Their hour of strength and of struggling is o'er
The victory was yours—now, sport as ye may,
Bound with Death's chain, they can battle no more.

Querec, 30th Nov., 1872.

LESTELLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND SHAMROCK," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

AT THE INN.

There had been a sad railway accident; one of which the public talked and thought more than of any similar disaster that had occurred for some years. There were several attendant circumstances that rendered it remarkable; and perhaps it weighed not a little with many, that one of our ambassadors, then proceeding with his family and suite to the foreign court to which he had been delegated, was amongst the sufferers.

The Earl of Glenaughton had, however, escaped with no greater injuries than a broken arm and a few bruises; but his less fortunate Countess received some severe contusions, while his nephew and ward, the Honorable Darcy Lesmere, was seriously, if not dangerously, hurt.

With all possible speed the medical men summoned to their aid hastened to the spot where the accident took place—a wild, treeless moor in Hampshire, at the foot of a range of hills, amidst which lay embosomed such lovely glades and dells, that artists haunted them through the summer months, and transferred faint copies of their beauty to the walls of the Royal Academy. The nearest village was two miles from the scene of the catastrophe, and it was the work of time to house those who were too much hurt to proceed on their journey in the special train despatched from the next station for that purpose.

The Earl and his family found temporary accommodation at a farm belonging to a bustling, money-making widow, named Price. Not content with the profits accruing to her from the ground she rented, she had opened a grocery store besides converting part of her roomy dwelling into an inn; and, by dint of using hands, feet, and eyes with vigilance, she contrived to exercise the necessary surveillance over all her helpers, and to add considerably to her savings, which report said were by no means small.

Widow Price had a large family of children; but these were unceremoniously hustled aside to make room for the aristocratic guests who filled all her spare apartments, and even overflowed into an adjoining cottage, which was given up to the Earl's young son, Viscount Branceleigh, his sister, the Lady Ida Lesmere, and their personal attendants. Mrs. Price's neighbours were never tired of staring at the smart livery servants, the ladylike governess, the Swiss house, and the dignified valet, as great a gentleman in their eyes as his master, and as they noted the lavish style of all the arrangements, openly envied the lucky widow for having secured such guests.

"Indeed, then," Mrs. Price would retort with a jerk of her head, "I don't see no such great fork in having work enough thrown upon me for forty pair of hands, whether I like it or no. I'm upset, and my house tumbled inside out just to accommodate a lot o' strangers—that's all. An'

I don't like sish folk in my place; an' having to move a tip-toe, and speak in a whisper, till I feels just as if the rooms wasn't one's own."

"But it's something to have even lodgers as saria and such like! Why, it might be the making of ye, Mrs. Price!"

The widow smiled contemptuously.

"It's more like to worry me into my grave. Look at them, lazy men-servants dawdling about, and hindering everybody! My bread was heavy last week, because Sally was giggling wif them instead o' minding her own business; and I don't like my sarcepans used for no and o' messes. There's my lady cau't eat nothing but what's cooked a purpose for her! If I must have lodgers, I like decent folk as can sit down to a bit o' pork and greens, or a hook of bacon and dumplings, as us do."

"But you'll be well paid for your trouble, Mrs. Price," she was reminded by the woman with whom she was holding this conversation while weighing out her weekly quantum of groceries.

Even this prospect only drew from the busy widow a dissatisfied reply.

"I'll have earned all I shall get, goodness knows; and the place'll want cleaning from eend to eend after so many feet in and out all day; and who's to do it but myself? It's getting near the hop-picking season, and if I says six words sark to Sally, she'll pack up her box, and away she'll go. And there's that Esie that ought to be paying me back what she's cost me—why, she ain't a mossel o' good 'cept for looking to the children."

"She's so little, poor dear!" replied the woman, in such compassionate accents that the widow's brows lowered.

"Little is she? Tain't because she's stunted in her vitals. I had to turn up my sleeves and work when I wasn't as big as she. But them as does least is always most thought of; and some gals seems to me to be nought but a plague to everybody. There's the flour; and that's all, ain't it, Mrs. Jones?"

The woman nodded, and began to deposit her multifarious packages in her marketing-basket, saying, as she did so, "The girl's willing enough, isn't she?"

"Willin'—yes, to eat, and drink, and sleep. That's all the willingness I ever see in her. Two-and-tenpence and fourpence is three-and-two; and six is three-and-eight; and the coffee, and the sugar, and the tea makes a shilling more. Thank ye."

And Mrs. Price, dropping the money into her large pocket—the only till she employed—whisked off to see how the churning had gone on in her absence, and to administer sundry cuffs on her way to the diminutive girl called Esie, for letting the baby—a fat, ill-tempered boy nearly three years of age—soil his pinafore with the mud pie he perished in making.

Mrs. Price seldom had occasion to come in actual contact with her lodgers. Their own servants waited upon them, and she had wisely given up one of her kitchens to the cooks, whose delicate dishes she regarded as a ridiculous pampering of the appetite. The Earl had so far recovered from the effects of his accident in the course of a few days as to contemplate resuming his journey, leaving his lady to follow at her convenience; and now Mrs. Price was summoned to his presence to explain something in the account she had sent in.

With rather more respect than she generally vouchsafed to any one, she curtsied to the imposing-looking gentleman, who, with his left arm in a sling, was languidly turning over the pages of a pamphlet. The Earl bent his stately head in return, gave one careless glance at the stiff, angular figure of the widow, asked the question the crabbd spelling and writing of the bill had induced, and briefly communicated his plans while paying it.

"I shall leave here to-morrow; Lady Glenaughton will most probably follow me with the children in the course of a few days; but as my nephew will not be fit to travel for some weeks to come, he will remain here under the care of his tutor until his physicians consider him capable of undertaking the journey."

Here the widow broke in upon him rather abruptly.

"Ha'n't I seen you before, sir?"

The Earl, astonished at the unexpected query, surveyed her with uplifted eyebrows and then, with a slight curl of the lip, replied, "Possibly you have. I am well known in London."

"I ha' never been there in my life," Mrs. Price exclaimed. "No offence, sir, but I ain't one as forgets people I've seen; an' I made sure I knowed your face. No offence, sir," she repeated.

"For once, your memory must be at fault, my good woman," said his lordship, coldly. "I have never visited this place—Arlwood, don't you call it?—till now."

"I ain't lived all my life in Arlwood," Mrs. Price observed, as she deliberately picked up the money he had pushed towards her. "In my master's lifetime we kept the 'Sun Hotel,' at Halesby, over the hills yonder; and a good many of the artises as used to come there stayed at our place, 'cause it was cleaner than any of the other inns, though I say it that shouldn't!"

"I am not an artist," said the Earl, resuming his pamphlet, and frowning slightly, as if her persistence had annoyed him.

"No, sir—my lord, I means; and I shouldn't think o' being so rude as to liken you to them shifty sort o' chaps that never keeps their hair cut, nor their coats brushed; but still it's in my head that I ha' seen you before. This is a good sovereign, isn't it, sir?"

"Yes; from the Australian mint, that is the

only difference. Halesby, did you say? I remember going there once; but it is so many years ago, that I forget the name of the inn where I located myself."

"I knowed I was right!" cried Mrs. Price, triumphantly, as she dropped the last coin into her pocket. "Good morning, sir, and thank ye."

"Stay," said the Earl, as she was opening the door; "I have just recollected that I visited Halesby about the time there was some cholera-dre connected with the daughter of the—the curate, or the doctor, and her elopement with a young man who had been stopping in the neighbourhood. Do you remember this?"

"I should think I ought to, sir, seeing as Esther Waverill was my husband's own cousin."

The Earl politely apologized. "I would not have mentioned the circumstance had I been aware that it was a family affair."

"It's no matter," Mrs. Price answered, shortly. "If you didn't speak of it, sir, other people do; and it was partly because I was sick of having it thrown in my teeth that I left Halesby after my master died. 'Poor Esther's child oughtn't to be let do this, or that, or t'other?' Why didn't them as pitied her so take her off my hands—a widow with five of her own to keep?"

Mrs. Price was so wroth at the recollection, that she wrung her own nose viciously, and tied the strings of her spotless white apron a little tighter.

"Then there is a child still living?" Lord Glenaughton observed, as he drew the ink towards him to jot down some remark on the margin of the paper he had been reading.

"Esther brought one with her when she came back to Halesby—did ye know us she came back, sir, cast off by her husband, as she called him?—a little woiny girl, as died before its mother. And there was another, born a few days after she came, as well I ought to know, for my master brought the foolish thing home to me when she were found in the churchyard, lying on her father's grave. He hadn't a bit o' thought—though he's dead an' gone, I must say it; and so I had all the trouble and expense of her illness."

"And so Esther Waverill died? Poor girl! Yours is a sorrowful tale, Mrs. Price," said the Earl, with more feeling than any one would have credited him for who saw the firm, resolute mouth, the strongly-marked brows, and the will evinced even in the white, well-shaped hand, that how partly shaded his face from Mrs. Price's observation.

"Sorrowful, sir! You'd ha' more cause to say so, if you knowed all I've had to do and put up with through playing the good Saritum, and taking Esther in. 'Twasn't as if she were common grateful to me, and put her hand to anything when she got better. Not she. As soon as he could rise from her bed, what does she do but go an' sit in the church porch, with her baby in her arms, a-waitin'—so she used to say—for the angels to fetch 'em."

"Tell me no more!" exclaimed his lordship, rising and walking to the window. "My nerves are weak, or else your narrative is unusually saddening. Yet stay, Mrs. Price; I should like to know whether she gave any clue to the name of the young man, the artist, with whom she went away?"

"No, sir; she didn't," Mrs. Price replied. "I used to say—and for once my master couldn't contradict me, though he were one of those silly, good-natured creturs that's always getting put upon—we both 'greced that the rascal ought to be punished for serving her so, and we wouldn't ha' minded laying out a trifle to get her righted, though lawyers is dreadful expensive. But she must ha' been off her head, for all we could get out of her were, 'Leave him to God. He's my husband in the sight o' heaven, and I'll never hurt him!'"

"Poor Esther! She deserved a better fate. Poor, pretty Esther! I think,"—and the Earl turned suddenly towards Mrs. Price,— "I think you said this young girl was very pretty?"

"No, sir. I couldn't ha' said it, for I never thought it. She were too pale and thin—and I don't like them big, dark eyes"—(Mrs. Price's were of the palest shade of greenish gray). "I won't say but what there were a many as used to think a sight of her looks; but give me pertly behaviour, and any one else may have the outside show. Good day, sir!"

"The child you spoke of, the little girl of Esther's, is she still in existence?"

Mrs. Price turned back from the threshold to reply.

"Yes, sir; the youngest is alive, and I've had the rearing of her; and it'll be the last time I ever burden myself with another person's child. She's more plague to me than all my own!"

"Is she as good-looking as her mother?" Mrs. Price gave vent to a little laugh of derision. "She's no more like Esther than if she weren't akin to her; a little brown, awkward, stupic thing, that I can't knock any sense into nobow!"

"Ah!" said the Earl, returning to his chair, and stifling a yawn, as if the subject was beginning to bore him. "If you see Wyatt, my valet, anywhere, will you be so kind as to send him to me? Good morning."

"If the curiosity of these gentlefolks ain't enough to make one sick!" Mrs. Price indignantly told herself as she founced down the passage. "Here have he kept me chattering for this quarter of an hour about what didn't concern him; and then he sends me off as if I'd been a hindering of he, instead of him keeping o' me, when I did ought to have been measuring them beans!"

CHAPTER II.

MY LORD'S VALET.

Apparently, Lord Glenaughton had returned with increased interest to the pamphlet he had laid aside while conversing with Mrs. Price, for when Wyatt, the valet, tapped at the door and gazed noiselessly into his master's presence, he found him with his head bent over it, too much absorbed to notice his entrance.

At last the Earl raised his eyes.

"Is that you, Wyatt? I had forgotten to mention to you that Sir Jervas Lookwood's opinion of his patient has led me to make a slight alteration in my arrangements."

Wyatt was a tall, thin young man, with a colorless complexion, sandy hair, and, by a freak of nature, eyes of the darkest hazel—keen, quick, fiery orbs, that flung their glances everywhere, and contradicted by their restless light his subdued demeanor. The Earl valued him, for he was an excellent servant; active, intelligent, yet always unassuming and respectful. In the soft tones of a voice that never rose above a certain pitch, he regretted to hear that Mr. Daroy was not so well.

"You mistake me. He is progressing favorably, but Sir Jervas dwells upon the great, the very great care that he will require till he is perfectly convalescent. Now, with all possible respect for his tutor, Mr. Haynes is scarcely the sort of person to whom Daroy should be entrusted, and so I have been thinking of leaving you with him, Wyatt. Have you any objection?"

Wyatt looked at the floor for a minute, as if debating the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal, but finally answered that he was willing to fall into any plan which would relieve his lordship's anxiety about his nephew.

"Thanks. I shall not forget your readiness to oblige me. Of course, you will resume your usual duties as soon as Daroy is able to join me at Madrid. I cannot spare you to him altogether."

With a gracious gesture, he dismissed the man, who went away with his brows knitted, and those far-seeing eyes half-closed, as if he were seeking within himself some other reason for the Earl's arrangement than the one his lordship had so frankly given.

He had scarcely, however, gone many steps from the door, when a sharp peal of the hand-bell at Lord Glenaughton's elbow recalled him.

"I am strangely forgetful this morning, Wyatt. The woman of the house has been telling me a long story about a relative of her late husband—a young female, who e'ped some years since with an artist,—who, if I am not mistaken, came to this neighborhood through a suggestion of my own. Of course, I cannot repair the mischief of his folly occasioned; but there is a child—a daughter—to whom I should like to atone for my share in the transaction."

"And yet it was a very small one, my lord," Wyatt commented, on finding that he passed.

"True, and so I do not wish my name to appear in the matter," the Earl hastily replied.

"All I propose is that, while you are here, you shall ascertain whether the girl is well used, and if not, seek out some decent school where she would be educated and taken care of. You must thoroughly understand that, if she is contented in her present position, you are to take no steps in the affair, nor must you, under any circumstances, mention that I have interested myself about her. It would only draw upon me a host of applicants for similar assistance."

"Am I to apply to Mrs. Price for information respecting this young person?"

"By no means. You are shrewd enough to learn all you want to know without that. After all, Wyatt, it may be as well to leave things as they are," he added, irresolutely. "Mrs. Price is evidently a grasping woman, and might impose upon my good nature, and grow troublesome if she learned from whom the aid came."

Again Wyatt pondered. "I think, my lord," he said, at length—"I think you may trust me to do just as much as is necessary for that orphan, and no more. And Mrs. Price shall not know anything that I do not choose to tell her."

The man spoke confidently and significantly—too much so to please his exclusive master, who dismissed him with a curt, "That will do. Remember, you will be left here solely to attend to my nephew; and the affair of which I have been speaking is of so little consequence, that it must not be made an excuse for any neglect."

Wyatt bowed and withdrew, taking his way to the moor, where, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth, he began to tread one of the many winding paths that intersected it. He had not gone far, when he met the governess returning with her charge from a long, healthful walk. Lady Ida was a beautiful child, about ten years of age, tall and stately, like her sire, and inheriting from her mother the blonde prettiness that made the Countess of Glenaughton one of the most courted and flattered belles of the day. Her governess—a dark, sleepy-eyed, elegant girl, whose abilities were obscured by a want of energy which Lady Ida was quick to perceive—crimsoned painfully as the valet politely raised his hat, blushing all the more because her precocious charge detected her emotion.

"Miss Hill, you shouldn't color like that when Wyatt bows to you. Mamma says you ought to look higher than such a man as he is. Valets take public-houses when they leave their situations; and you are a lady, you know—at least, nearly one."

"Too much so, I hope, to chatter as ridiculously as you have been doing," Miss Hill retorted.