

"Rica, for heaven's sake how you look!" He started forward and steadied her into a chair. While she, perfectly unnerved, burst into violent weeping. The nerves, strained to their utmost the past weeks, whatever they might have undergone before, were taking their revenge, Hugh's inopportune visit being the last straw. It was some time before she could control herself; she cried from sheer mortification at last, at showing herself so weak to Hugh, of all others in the world.

"How came you here?" she asked, after regaining control of her tongue.

"I came for you," said he quietly, "and it is well. I was detained on the yacht and only reached Newport yesterday. George told me you had gone crazy; had come to this place to nurse a Mason's baby through scarlet or spotted fever, or small pox, for all he knew. And begged me, if I had any Masonic power, to use it here, and take the child from you, if I could not take you from the child, before you had taken the disease yourself and died. I promised to bring you back with me to-morrow, but you must leave this house immediately." He spoke in his old imperative way. It was pleasant to Rica to hear it again, and she lay back in the chair watching him walk up and down the room, thinking how quick he had fallen back to his old natural manner, and how like "old times," it was.

He turned, caught the amused smile on her face—she looked more natural with it—and coloring slightly, he said, taking her hand in his. "Rica, there is not to be any more foolishness between us, and we will not mind for explanations. I have the right to take you away, for you are worn out and ill. We will have a dozen nurses for the baby, but you must go with me."

"I must not go with you," she answered gently, but she left her hand in his; "the baby needs me—"

"No do I need you ten times more than she."

"Do you? You are looking very well. May moaned and grieved for me day and night, until she was worn to a shadow, and you did not even get sick, said Rica, saucily.

"I did not suppose you would go out as a nurse among the Masons," said he, with a frown.

"I would not, had they all been like you," she retorted, with a pout. "Mr. Gerard converted me," he added, mischievously.

"Thanks to Mr. Gerard," said Hugh, dryly, "and I will take the new convert to my heart."

"You will have to take May, if you take me," said Rica, soberly. "We are not to be separated again."

"We might open an asylum for unfortunate Masonic orphans," said Hugh, with an air of resignation.

"It's, indeed! You may consider yourself fortunate if you are taken in as an 'unfortunate,' sir."

"Taken in, I may be, but unfortunate no more; thanks to little May Mason's influence over her 'Anti-Masonic' auntie."—*Voice of Masonry.*

THE SAILOR FREEMASON.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

It was in the winter of 18—, when the *Cherokee* sloop of war dropped anchor in Leith Roads, after a very stormy cruise. Having for some time labored under a pulmonary disease, from cold, I was sent ashore to recruit my health; and from the long-boat I made my way to a Leith stage-coach—one of the most lubberly conveyances I ever travelled by, for the horses had scarcely anything like legs to stand on, and fairly came to anchor once or twice in ascending the steep called Leith walk, the connecting link between the port and city of Edinburgh, whither I was bound.

On my arrival in the city, a Highland porter assisted me to alight, and proceeded me to my dear home, where I was cordially received by my mother, brothers, and sister; and here my shattered hulk was laid up for repair; and, thanks to my kind family, I soon found myself in ship-shaped order to move about, and revisit the scenes so dear to my boyish days.

It was one night during my stay at home that I accompanied my brother and sister to the ball of the Celtic Lodge of Freemasons, in the Calton Convening-rooms. The company consisted chiefly of Masons, their wives and relatives—many of them dressed in the Highland garb, or sporting ribbons and sashes of the clan tartan. On entering the hall, my brother and party were received, with every welcome demonstration, by one of the strangest-looking characters I ever beheld. My brother, perceiving I was preparing for a good laugh, frowningly informed me that this was Mr. Richard Simpson, the W. M. of the Celtic Lodge; and I therefore struggled hard to contain myself in the presence of the worshipful figure now before me.