

## MATT.

A TALE OF A CARAVAN.

(Continued.)

"Don't you believe him, sir," said the old salt, "if he tells you he's poor. He's a shark, William Jones is, and couldn't own up even to his own father. It's my belief he's gold hidden somewhere among them sandhills, let alone what he's got in the savings bank. Ah, he's an artful one, is William Jones."

Brinkley had said nothing of his own private suspicions, but had merely introduced in a general way the subject of Jones' worldly position. Further conversation with Tim, who had made a few straggling acquaintances in the district, corroborated the other's testimony. The young man became more convinced that William Jones was worth studying.

Matt had not turned up that morning. Instead of looking after her, Brinkley took another stroll towards the vicinity of the Devil's Caldron. He had not gone far before he discovered that he was watched again. The figure of William Jones followed in the distance, but keeping him well in view.

It was certainly curious.

He walked over to the cliffs and looked down at the scene of yesterday's bathing adventure. A strong wind was blowing, and the waves were surging up the rocks with deafening roar and foamy spume. The place looked very ugly, particularly near the Caldron. All the passage was churned to milky white, and the sound from beneath was, to use an old simile, like the roar of innumerable chariots.

He glanced over his shoulder and saw the head of William Jones eagerly watching, the body being hidden in intervening rock.

"Strange!" he reflected. "My predatory friend can't keep his treasure, if he possesses any, down in that watery gulf. Yet whenever I come near it his manner tells me that I am 'warm,' as they say in the game of hide and seek."

To test the matter a little further he set off on a brisk walk along the cliffs, leaving the Caldron behind. He found, as he suspected, that he was no longer followed. Returning as he came, and resuming his old position, he saw William Jones immediately reappear.

That day he discovered no clue to the mystery, nor the next, nor the next again, though on each day he went through a similar performance. Strange to say Matt did not put in an appearance, and for reasons of his own he had thought it better not to seek her.

On the morning of the third day—a dark, chilly morning, after a night of rain—Tim put his head into the caravan, where his master was seated at his easel, and grinned delightedly.

"Mr. Charles! She's come, sir!"

"Who the deuce has come?" cried Brinkley.

"The lady, your honor, to have her picture taken. Will I show her into the parlor?"

But as he spoke Matt pushed him aside and entered. She wore her best clothes, but looked a little pale and anxious, Brinkley thought, greeting her with a familiar nod.

"So you've come at last! Tim, get out, you rascal. I thought you had given me up."

He assumed a coldness, though he felt it not, for he had made up his mind not to "encourage" the young person.

"I couldn't come before, they wouldn't let me. But last night William Jones he didn't come home, and I broke open the box and took out my clothes and ran straight off here."

Her face clouded as she proceeded, for she could not fail to notice the coolness of the young man's greeting.

"Well, since you have come, we'll get to work," said Brinkley. "It's chilly and damp outside, so we'll remain here in shelter."

Matt took off her hat and then proceeded to divest herself of her coarse jacket, revealing for the first time the low-necked silk dress beneath. Meantime the young man placed the sketch in position. Turning presently, he beheld Matt's transformation.

Old and shabby as the dress was, torn here and there, and revealing beneath glimpses of coarse stockings and clumsy boots, it became her wonderfully. As a result of much polishing with soap and water her face shone again, and her arms and neck were white as snow. Thus attired Matt looked no longer a long, shambling girl, but a tall, bright, resplendent young lady.

It was no use. Brinkley could not conceal his admiration. Matt's arms alone were enough to make a painter wild with delight.

"Why, Matt, you look positively magnificent. I had no idea you were so pretty."

The girl blushed with pleasure.

The young man worked away for a good hour and a half, at the end of which time he put the finishing touch to the sketch.

"Finis coronat opus!" he cried. "Look, Matt!"

Matt examined the picture with unconcealed delight. It was her self a little idealized, but quite characteristic and altogether charming.

"May I take it home?" she asked, eagerly.

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"I'll get you to leave it for a few days longer. I must get a frame for it, Matt, and then you shall have it all complete. Now, let me look at you, again," he said, taking her by both hands and looking up at her sunny face.

"Are you pleased? Will you take care of the picture for the painter's sake?"

Matt's answer was embarrassing. She quietly sat down on his knee and gave him a smacking kiss.

"Matt! Matt!" he cried. "You mustn't."

But she put her warm arm round his neck and rested her cheek against his shoulder.

"I should like to have pretty dresses and gold bracelets and things and to go away from William Jones and stay with you."

"My dear," said Brinkley, laughing, "you couldn't. It wouldn't be proper."

"Why not?" asked Matt, simply.

"The world is censorious, little one. I am a young man; you are a young lady. We shall have to shake hands soon and say good-by. There, there," he continued, seeing her eyes fill with tears. "I'm not gone yet. I shall stay as long as I can, only—really—you must look upon me as quite an old fellow. I am awfully old, you know, compared to you."

He gently disengaged himself, and Matt sat down on a camp-stool close by. Her face had grown very wistful and sad.

"Matt," he said, anxious to change the subject, "tell me something more about William Jones."

"I hate William Jones. I hate everybody—but you."

"Really?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I feel greatly flattered. But about the gentle Jones? You say he was out all last night?"

Matt nodded.

"He goes out nigh every night," she said, "and often don't come home till morning. Sometimes he finds things and brings 'em. He finds bits o' gold and old ropes, and bottles o' rum."

"Very odd. Where?"

"He don't tell; I know."

"I wish you'd tell me, Matt. Do. I have a particular reason for wanting the information."

Matt hesitated.

"You won't say I told? William Jones would be downright wild, he would."

"I'll keep the secret faithfully. Now?"

Thus urged, Matt informed her friend that on two occasions, out of curiosity, she had followed her guardian on his nightly pilgrimages and watched him go in the direction of the Devil's Caldron. On both occasions the night was very dark. On getting clear of the coast-guard station, and among the sandhills, Jones had lighted a lantern which he carried. Trembling and afraid she had followed the light along the cliffs, then out among the sandhills. But all at once the light and its bearer had disappeared into the solid earth, leaving her to find her way home in terror.

The explanation of all this was, in Matt's opinion, very simple. William Jones was a bad man and went to visit the fairies."

"Yes," she cried, "and every time he goes the fairies give him summat, and he brings it home."

"Each time you followed him," asked Brinkley thoughtfully, "he disappeared at about the same place?"

"Yes," said Matt, "and the light and him sunk right down and never come up again."

The result of the information thus communicated was to leave the young man of the caravan far more curious than ever. He determined to turn the tables on William Jones, and to watch his movements, not in the daytime, but during the summer night, waiting for his appearance in the immediate neighborhood of the Devil's Caldron.

The first night he saw nothing—it was stormy, with wild gusts of rain. The second night was equally uneventful. Nothing daunted he went for a third and last time, and lay in the moonlight on the cliff, looking towards the village.

The night was dark and cloudy, but from time to time the moon came out with sudden brilliance on the sea, which was gently stirred by a breeze from the land.

He waited for several hours. About midnight he rose to go home.

As he did so he was startled by the sound of oars, and, lying down, perceived a small boat approaching on a silver patch of moonlit sea.

The moon came out, and he saw that the occupant of the boat was a solitary man.

It approached rapidly, making direct for the Devil's Caldron. Lying down on his face and peeping over, Brinkley saw it stop just outside the passage, while the man stood up, stooped, lifted something heavy from the bottom and threw it overboard. Then, after watching for a moment a dark object which drifted shoreward, right into the Caldron, he rowed away.

## "IT CURED MOTHER."

My mother was suffering from dyspepsia and had no appetite. Everything failed to cure her until one day, while visiting a friend's house, I saw a bottle of B. B. B. on the table; on inquiring what they used it for, I soon found out what it cured, and when I went home I told mother she should try it. She said she had no faith in anything and objected to try it. Notwithstanding her objection I went in the evening and brought home a bottle but it was in the house for a week before we could induce her to take it. At last, as she was getting worse all the time, she consented to try it, and on taking half the bottle found it was curing her. Another bottle cured her and we believe saved her life. We are never without B. B. B. now. It is such a good remedy for headache as well.

E. WILSON, 15 Dalhousie St., Montreal.