**$200.00 Reward!**

Will be paid for the detection and conviction of any person selling or dealing in any bogus, counterfeit or imitation HOP BITTERS, especially Bitters or preparations with the word HOP or HOPS in their name or connected therewith, that is intended to mislead and cheat the public, or for any preparation put in any form, pretending to be the same as HOP BITTERS. The genuine have cluster of GREEN HOPS (notice this) printed on the white label, and are the purest and best medicine on earth, especially for Kidney, Liver and Nervous Diseases. Beware of all others, and of all pretended formulas or reciepts of HOP BITTERS published in papers or for sale as they are frauds and swindles. Whoever deals in any but the genuine will be prosecuted.

HOP BITTERS MFG. CO.,
Rochester, N. Y.

REST AND COMFORT TO THE SUFFERING.

"BROWN'S HOUSEHOLD PANACEA has no equal for relieving pain, both internal and external. It cures Pain in the Side Back or Bowels, Sore Throat, Rheumatism, Toothache, Lumbago and any kind of a Pain or Ache. "It will most surely quicken the Blood and Heal, as its acting power is wonderful." "Brown's Household Panacea," being acknowledged as the great Pain Believer, and of double the strength of any other Elixir or Liniment in the world, should be in every family handy for use when wanted, "as it really is the best remedy in the world for Cramps in the Stomach, and Pains and Aches of all kinds," and is for sale by all Druggists at 25 cents a bottle. [G26

Consumption Cured.

SINCE 1870 Dr. Sherar has each year sent from this office the means of relief and cure to thousands afflicted with disease. The correspondence necessitated by this work becoming too heavy for him, I came to his aid. He now feels constrained to relinquish it entirely, and has placed in my hands the formula o that simple vegetable remedy discovered by an East India missionary, and found so effective for the speedy and permanennt cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Diseases; also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Its remarkable curative powers have been proven in many thousand cases, and, actuated by the desire to relieve suffering humanity, I gladly assume the duty of making it known to others. Address me, with stamp, naming this paper, and I will mail you, free of charge, the recipe of this wonderful remedy, with full directions for its preparation and use, printed in German, French or English.—W. A. NOYES, 149 *Power's Block, Rochester, N.Y.* 16-13eow

MOTHERS! MOTHERS!! MOTHERS!!!

Are you disturbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with the excruciating pain of cutting teeth? If so, go at once and get a bottle of MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately—depend upon it; there is no mistake about it There is not a mother on earth who has ever used it, who will not tell you at once that it will regulate the bowels, and give rest to the mother, and relief and health to the child, operating like magic. It is perfectly safe to use in all cases, and pleasant to the taste, and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States. Sold everywhere at 25 cents a bottle. [G2

SOUTHWARK (LONDON) BRANCH LAND LEAGUE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

The following is the resolution referred to in our London letter:

SURREY ROOMS, BLACKFRIARS ROAD,
LONDON, Eng., S.E, April 25, 1882.

SIR,—It is my pleasing duty to transmit to you for publication copy of a resolution passed unanimously at a special meeting of our body last evening.

RESOLUTION:

Proposed by Mr. Peter O'Leary, seconded by Mr. Martin Kelly, and supported by Mr. Fairbairn, an Englishman:

"That this meeting of the Southwark Branch of the Land League of Great Britain return its sincere thanks to Mr. Costigan, M.P., and to both the leaders of the Government, and the Opposition in the Canadian Parliament for the sympathetic vote recently passed by that Assembly in favor of Ireland and her suffering people, and that the Secretary be instructed to forward copies of the resolution to the hon. gentlemen above mentioned, and also to the Canadian press."

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant,
THOMAS MCSWEENY,
Hon. Secretary.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE, DIABETES.

Beware of the stuff that pretends to cure these diseases or other serious Kidney, Urinary or Liver Diseases, as they only relieve for a time and makes you ten times worse afterwards, but rely solely on Hop Bitters, the only remedy that will surely and permanently cure you. It destroys and removes the cause of disease so effectually that it never returns.

CABINET CHANGES.

OTTAWA, May 23.—The Cabinet was in session until a late hour this afternoon. The following Cabinet changes have taken place Hon John Carling to be Postmaster-General, in room of Hon John O'Connor; *Mr Costigan*, M P, to be Minister of Inland Revenue, instead of Hon Mr Aikins. Hon John O'Connor's retirement is due to ill-health. It is understood he will soon receive a judicial appointment. It is also stated that Hon Mr Aikins will fill a position of eminence and responsibility.

EPPS'S COCOA—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well selected cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavored beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—*Civil Service Gazette.* Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold only in packets and tins (½ lb. and lb.) labelled—"JAMES EPPS & CO., Homœopathic Chemists, London, England." Also makers of EPPS'S CHOCOLATE ESSENCE for afternoon use.

# CARRIED BY STORM!

By the Author of "Guy Earlscourt's Wife," "A Wonderful Woman," "A Mad Marriage," "Redmond O'Donnell," etc.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

He has a chivalrous veneration for all things feminine, engendered by his beautiful and stately mother; but this changeling—it is difficult to imagine her belonging to the same order of beings as his sister Leo or Olga Ventnor. This evening, her best frock, such as it is, has been donned; she wears shoes and stockings, and an effort has been made to brush down the thick shock of darkly-reddish hair. He sees the pale, pinched features—features not homely in themselves, but spoiled by an expression of settled sullenness and gloom. She looks uncanny, and most pathetically unchildlike. When Dan Sleaford girds at her she shrinks as if she expected a blow. Her hard life is written in every line of her downcast and smileless face.

Inside the fun waxes fast and furious; peals of laughter ring out, the house quivers with the tread of the dancers. Jud's fiddle never falters nor fails. A schottishe follows the waltz, then a quadrille, then a polka; then George Blake performs a solo, the Highland Fling—a dance which has more genuine fling about it when executed by Mr. Blake, than any of the oompany has ever before beheld. Then there is a contra dance. Then Dan Sleaford, crimson of visage, presents himself at the parlor door, and in stentorian accents announces the chowder and accompaniments, and tersely commands them to "come on!"

"What, Geoff, old boy! taking lessons in cooking?" cries Frank, wiping his hot face. "Phew! what a blazer of a night!—and, by Jove! what a girl Lora Sleaford is to spin! There's more "go" in her than in any human being I ever met. She has been dancing every time and hasn't turned a hair, while I—I give you my word, old fellow, I'm fit to drop.

*But a bumper of foamy iced lager restores* the exhausted one, and the company sit down to supper. A very noisy company it is, a very hungry company too, and despite the height of the thermometer, boiling chowder, *steaming tea, roast lamb, and mutton pies disappear* with a celerity that speaks well for the faith the consumers have in their own powerful digestions. Every one helps himself and his partner to whatever chances to be handiest; cheese and pickles vanish in company, lamb and pound-cake, mutton pies and peas. The gentlemen slake their thirst with flagons of lager beer, or the most potent whiskey; while the ladies genteely partake of hot tea and iced champagne, one after the other, and with perfect equanimity.

It is all a wonderful experience to Geoffrey Lamar. For Frank—he and George Blake—they are the choice spirits of the board. He is amused, a trifle disgusted also it may be, but the hilarity carries him away, and he *finds himself laughing almost as noisily as the* rest. Once or twice he glances about for the attendant sprite, but he is no longer in waiting; every one helps himself. She is in a corner of the fire-place, as though she felt the heat no more than a salamander, munching her pilfered dainties, and staring, with bright, watchful eyes at the people before her. No one notices her, or thinks of offering her anything to eat or drink. The dogs get an occasional morsel thrown them—she gets nothing.

Supper over, dancing is resumed with ardor and vigor. There is singing too, spirited songs with ringing choruses, into which the whole strength and lungs of the "swarry is thrown. Miss Lora gives them—to a banjo *accompaniment*—"Sing, oh! for a brave and gallant bark, a brisk and lively breeze,"—which having a fine resounding chorus, goes near to lift the roof off. Liz does the sentimental, and warbles "Thou hast learned to love another, thou hast broken every vow." Frank Livingston trolls forth in a very nice tenor, "Sarah's Young Man," and the Messieurs Sleaford uplift their voices in a nautical duet. The remains *of the plum cake and* some cool lemonade are passed around among the fair sex. The gentlemen adjourn at intervals to the kitchen cupboard for a "modest quencher," and a quiet cigar; and Geoffrey Lamar, growing rather bored, keeps his seat on the window-sill, and wishes it were time to get out of all this noise and heat, and go.

His interest in Joanna does not flag. She is a curious study, and he watches her. After supper she clears off the things, washes the dishes, puts them away, sweeps up the floor, all in profound silence, and with deft, swift hands. Then instead of going to bed, although it is past midnight she produces a tattered book, and resumes her corner to read. With hands over her ears, her eyes riveted to *to the page, she is sleepingly lost to all the* tumult around her. He watches her in silence for awhile, then he speaks.

"What are you reading?"

He has to touch her to make her hear—then she looks up. How changed her look! the sullen moodiness has passed away, her eyes are eager, her face bright with the interest of her look. But in that instant, the old look of dark, frowning distrust returns. She points to the page without a word.

"Monte Cristo," he reads. "Do you like it?"

She nods.

"But the first and last seems to be torn out—that must spoil the interest, I should think. Do you read much?"

She purses up her mouth and shakes her head.

"Why?"

"No books—no time."

"You are fond of stories?"

"Oh, ain't I?—just!"

"Would you like me to bring you a book the next time I come?"

She looks at him, wondering, distrustful. *He* is a young gentleman, and he is taking notice of her—he is speaking to her kindly. No one does that. He is offering her a book—no one ever gives her anything. Her sullen look comes back; she does not know what to make of it.

"I will bring you some books," he says, "and I will ask your sisters to let you read them. Books that will suit you better than "Monte Cristo."

"Sisters!" she repeats. "I ain't got no sisters. But if you hain't foolin'—"distrustfully. "You are foolin' ain't you, mister?"

He assures her of his sincerity.

"Well, then, don't you go and bring no books here. 'Cause I wouldn't be let to have 'em; old Giles would burn 'em up. But I know what you could do—" with a cunning look.

"Well—what?"

"Do you know Black's Dam, and the old mill down there in the woods?"

"Yes, I know them."

"Then—if you ain't foolin'—fetch 'em there, and leave 'em in the mill. I'll find them; no one else ever goes there. But I know you won't."

"You will see. You will find one there tomorrow night. What's your name?"

"Sleaford's Joanna," she says, with a shrill laugh. "or, Wild Joanna—'tain't no odds which. I'm both."

"What is your other name?"

"Got no other name. Got no father, no mother, no friends, no nothin'. I'm only Sleaford's Joanna."

She goes back to her book, and when, hours after, the soiree breaks up, she is bending over Dumas' extravaganza still. Geoffrey bids her good night—the only one of the party who has addressed her the whole evening.

And that brief conversation is the mustard-seed, so small as to be hardly visible, from which all the dark record of the future is to grow. There are many memorable nights in Geoffrey Lamar's life, but none that stands out more ominously, vivid than this.

CHAPTER X.

GEOFFREY LAMAR.

Geoffrey Lamar goes to no more Sleaford soirees; he has no taste for that sort of revelry, but he does not forget the odd, elfish child, who wastes midnight oil over the adventures of Dumas' wonderful hero.

He goes next day to Black's Dam with a volume under his arm, and places it on a rude seat he finds in the ruined mill. It is a dull sunless day, and the evil look of the place depresses him. What a strange, hideous retreat this child chooses; it is like herself—eerie and frowning. The dark, stagnant pond lies under the gray sky, green and poisonous, the dull croak of a frog making itself heard now and then. It looks black and bad, so too does the deserted mill, falling dry and tindery to decay. Heavy woods and rank undergrowth shut it in on every hand. There is no path—long ago it was overgrown and forsaken, only a slender line worn by the bare feet of the desolate child. A great pity for the forlorn, ill-treated little creature fills him.

"Poor little wretch," he thinks, "all work and no play—ignorance, brutality, starvation—it is hard lines for her."

He leaves the book and returns to the village. He and Leo are due at the villa today; they are to dine with convalescent Olga. *It is the first time she had left her* chamber, and, robed in the daintiest of all her dainty white robes, she is carried down by papa to where the table is set under the trees, and where she is received with acclamations *by Frank and Geoffrey and Leo. All the* long ringlets are gone, she looks pallid and thin, but very, very pretty. She is the little queen of the feast, she is petted and spoiled to her heart's content. And Olga likes to be petted, and ceases to regret the loss of her lovely long hair, and decides there are worse things in the world than brain fever, after all.

Late that evening, after a hard day's work—for it is wash-day at the farm-house, and she has to carry water from early morning—Sleaford's Joanna steals out by the back way, and darts off to her castle in the wood.

Some faint hope that the young gentleman who spoke to her last night may keep his word stirs within her, but it is very faint. Joanna is not used to people who keep their *word, and why should he ever think of her* again? It surprises her when she remembers he noticed her at all.

Frank Livingston has been coming to the house for months, and has never spoken to her a single word. She has provided herself with a candle in a bottle, and some matches, in case the book should be there. And if it does not rain, as it looks very much like doing, she will stay at the mill all night.

The gray light of the overcast day is dying out when she reaches her gruesome retreat. But it is not ugly or forbidding to Joanna; the quietest, the happiest, the most peaceful hours of her life are spent here. The frogs that croak in the green, slimy water, croak at her with the voices of friends; their ugly faces uplifted from the ooze are the friendliest faces she knows. She has read Robinson Crusoe of late, and wild visions of flying from Sleaford's farmstead, and taking up her permanent abode here, rises before her ecstatically. To live here all by herself, never to work, never to be scolded or beaten, that would be bliss. But it is not practicable—the Sleafords would never let her go like that—who *would fetch water, and carry wood*, and wash dishes, and scrub floors, and make beds, and see to the dinner, and run errands, if she left? And grapes do not grow in Brightbrook woods, nor wild goats run about, waiting to be caught and eaten, as in Crusoe's lovely isle.

Still she has done the best she can; she has brought an armful of clean straw, a pillow and a quilt or two, a supply of candles and matches, and spends many a tranquil summer night here, watching the stars shining down on her, through the broken roof. These nights are the nearest approach to happiness Sleaford's Joanna knows.

She reaches the mill, enters, and finds a book in red and gilt binding lying on the bench. *Her heart gives a bound, she has a* passion for reading; such a volume as this she has never before beheld. She wipes her grimy fingers on her frock, and takes it gingerly up. There is still light enough to read the title, the "Old Curiosity Shop." It is full of pictures; she gloats over them; the sentences look short, the print is large and clear.

There seems to be plenty of conversation as Joanna expresses it, "it looks open-worky." She hugs the book to her breast, her eyes shine with delight. Oh, how good of him—that nice, pleasant-spoken young gentleman, to remember her—her! whom nobody ever remembers, to come all this way and leave this beautiful book.

A great throb of gratitude fills her; all good is not crushed out of the child; then a pang, swift and sharp follows. If he knew how bad she is, how she has nearly killed poor little Miss Ventnor, would he have been so kind? No, she feels sure not, he would shrink from her as from a toad. She is a toad, a venomous toad, Liz says so—an imp, Jud calls her—a little devil is Dan's pet name for her, *lazy little hussy Lora says, and Old* Giles' names mostly are too bad to repeat. No, if he knew what she was like, he never would fetch her any books.

It is dark now; she lights her candle, and begins to read. She is not afraid of being interrupted—no one ever comes to Black's Dam. More than one wretched suicide has sought its villainous waters, and it is of evil savor in the nostrils of Brightbrook. It is a weird picture, the dark stagnant pond, the dark woods, the dark night sky, the deep and mysterious stillness, that glimmering light among the ruined timbers of the old mill, and the strange little creature crouched in a heap, devouring with greedy eyes the story of little Nell.

Presently the sighing wind rises, falls, stills *the trees, wails lugubriously through the pines*, and then great drops begin to fall and splash heavily on the roof.

She neither hears nor heeds, she is far away amid the Kentish meadows with Little Nell, held breathless and enchained by the pathos of the tale.

She has never read anything like this; she laughs with Dick Swiveller, she identifies herself with the Marchioness, she is lost in wonder at the goodness and wisdom of Nelly. It is very late, and she has read quite half the book, when a large drop falls directly on the glittering candle, and it splutters and goes out. It is burned nearly to the end anyhow, it is useless relighting the fragment. She closes her book with a profound sigh, and for the first time becomes conscious that it is raining hard and that a gale is surging through the woods.

Well, it does not matter; her truss of straw and quilts are in a dry corner, but she would as soon go home in the rain as not. But before going anywhere, she sits for nearly half an hour, her knees clasped in her arms, her black melancholy eyes staring out at the wet wildness of the lonesome night.

*The story of* little Nell troubles and disturbs her. How different from Nell is she—how wicked, how miserable! But then no one ever loved her, or cared for her, or taught her. No nice old grandfather has ever doted on her; no funny Kit Nubbles has ever been her friend; no Mr. Jarley has protected and been kind to her.

She wonders what it is like to be happy, to have father, mother, *friends; a home* without cursing or drinking or whipping; nice dresses and plenty of books to read. would be easy enough to be good then, but she—a strange mourful wonder fills her as she looks back over the brief years she can remember.

She is bad, no doubt; she is very bad, but what has she done to have such a hard, hard life? She is only a poor little thing, after all; only twelve years old. Was she born wicked, she wonders, and different from other children? In a blind, pathetic sort of way she tries to solve the riddle, but it baffles her. She gropes into utter darkness of heart and soul. It would be pleasant to be good, she thinks, but it cannot be; no one *could be good at Sleaford's. And, if she was* born a little imp, as they tell her, it is of no use trying. She can no more be like little Nell than she can be like Miss Olga Ventnor, or Miss Leo Abbott, with their floating perfumed hair, and silk dresses, and fair faces, and pretty glittering trinkets. No, and she will not try; and so, with another great hopeless sigh, Sleaford's Joanna gives up the puzzle and goes to bed. Three days after this, it occurs to Geoffrey Lamar to take a second look at the sad child at Sleaford's. So he *mounts his horse and rides slowly into the* woodland path that leads to the Red Farm. It is a mystery to him, as it has been to others, why Mr. Abbott lets this shiftless lot run riot in the best farm he owns, but it is a *mystery he cannot fathom, unless Frank Liv*ingston's unpleasant hints have some foundation.

In his secret hear he neither likes nor respects his step-father; he distrusts him, he shares his mother's unspoken shrinking and aversion. All the man's tastes, and instincts, and ways are low. Geoffrey is a gentleman, lad as he is, and the son of a gentleman; his feelings are by nature refined; he hates coarseness, vulgarity, pride of wealth; his intellect is beyond his years, and his reason tells him Frank's hints are more than likely to be true. Mr. Abbott is good to him, is proud of him, is fond of him, is lavishly generous to him, and the boy fights with his feelings and keeps them down. He *ought to be grateful*, and he is, but despite all that Mr. Abbott can come not one whit nearer to the son than to the mother.

As he rides along, a sudden joyous carolling overhead makes him pause and look up. Twit, twit, twit—twee-e-e-e! A whole shower of silvery notes, but the bird is nowhere to be seen. Then the warble changes; a blackbird whistles, a Bob-o-link calls, it is the chatter of a squirrel, the to-whit-to-whoo of an owl, the harsh croak of a frog, the shrill chirp of a cricket, then sapidly the clear, shrill song of a lark.

Geoffry sits dumbfounded. Has a mocking-bird been let loose in Brightbrook woods? Suddenly a wild peal of laughter greets him, there is a rustle of boughs, and from a tree *under which he stands*, a thin, elfish face looks down.

'It's only me, mister, mocking the birds. I often do it. I can whistle, too. Listen!"

The sweetest, shrillest whistle he has ever heard takes up the air "Sweet Home," and performs it as he could not do to save his life.

'There!' says the voice. 'I'll sing for you now, if you like. *Didn't know I could sing*, did you? All the Sleafords sing, law bless you! but I only do when I feel like it. Did you ever hear "Lanigan's Ball?"'

A sweet, strong voice begins that classical ditty, and the woods give back the melodious echo. Geoffrey Lamar listens in silent amaze. Why, the elf is a prodigy!—a musical prodigy! Where in that small, starved body has she room for a voice like that?

She finishes at last, and whistles a bar or two of the air by way of closing symphony.

"That was an awful nice book you lent me," she goes on. "I've read it through twice. I haven't soiled it a mite, and it's down at the mill. I—I'm lots obliged to you, you know. *Didn't think you'd ever* fetch it."

She descends a branch or two from her lofty roost, and brings herself to a level with the rider.

"It *is* Sleaford's Joanna!" says Geoffrey, his breath nearly taken away. "Why, you must be a witch! Who taught you to sing and whistle, and twitter like a bird, in this fashion?"

'Nobody taught me—taught myself. It's as easy as nothin' at all."

"Can you sing anything but 'Lanigan's all?'"

Joanna nods.

"Know a hymn. Lora heard your mar sing it at her meeting'. Goes like this."

*The silvery childish treble uplifts and* peals out with a force that fairly amazes him. The hymn, from those lips, amazes him still more It is "Rock of Ages."

"Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!"

How strangely from those impish lips sound the grand, strong words!

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace.
Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!"

"Upon my word, you are a marvel!" Geoffrey says, catching his bated breath. "And so you like the book? Would you like another?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Joanna, rapturously; "wouldn't I just!"

'Well, you shall. I will leave it this evening at the mill. Who taught you to read? Have you been at school?'

'School!' Joanna echoes scornfully; I *guess not. Catch old Giles sending me to* school. Not but that I'd like to go, mind you. No, Jud teaches me. He ain' so bad, Jud ain't—don't curse nor hit me like the rest. Teached me some writin', too, but not much.'

'And you would like to learn more?'

'You bet! But tain't no use. Old Giles would beat me to death if I spoke of such a thing.'

"Do you mean to say he really beats and swears at you?"

Joanna laughs shrilly.

"Oh, no, not at all! He wouldn't hurt nobody Look here, mister!"

She uncovers her shoulders by a dexterous hitch, and shows him long black and blue welts purpling the flesh.

"Did that last night; was drunk, you know. Beat me till I couldn't stir."

"What had you done?" Geoffrey asks, sick at heart.

"Nothin' 'tall. Didn't fetch the boot-jack quick enough. Got me into a corner where I couldn't wriggle away, and lashed me till Jud took the whip out of his hand. Says he'll beat my soul out next time. May it he likes. I don't care."

She begins to whistle defiantly, but tears of pain and wrath well up in spite of her, and she winks them angrily away.

"Poor little soul!" the lad says, strongly touched. And at the pitying words all her bravado breaks down, and she suddenly covers her face, and sobs wildly:

"I wish I was dead—I do. I wish I was *dead and buried!*'

"Hush" he says, distressed, "that is wicked. Don't cry; I am going to try and do something for you. I am going to help you if I can. I am sure you would be a good girl if you had a chance. It is a shame—a shame! They use you worse than a dog;"

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!" the poor little wretch sobs. It is the first time in her life the floodgates have thus been opened. She cries wildly now, as she does all things, as if her very heart were bursting. It is the first time any one has ever been sorry for her, and the sympathy goes near to break her heart.

"Do not cry," he says. "Look here, Joanna, I will leave the book for you to-night, *and I will come to see you* again in—let me see—two days. Now, good-bye, and do not get whipped, if you can, till I come back."

With which the youthful knight-errant of tattered damsels in distress turns his horse's head and rides slowly and thoughtfully homeward, revolving in his mind a decidedly bold project, which, if carried into effect, bids fair to alter the whole future life of the Sleaford's Joanna.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH MR. ABBOTT ASSERTS HIMSELF.

The light of the August sunset lies low over Abbott Wood as young Geoffrey Lamar *rides slowly up the shaded avenue, still lost* in thought. And yet not so deeply absorbed but that the growing beauty of green glade, and sunny slope, scented rose-thicket, waving depths of fern and bracken, ruby lines of light slanting through brown boles of trees, strike him with a keen sense of delight. It is his, all this fair domain, this noble inheritance; no birthright, but the generous gift promised him often by the master of Abbott Wood. And that sense of proprietorship accents vividly his pleasure in its green loveliness, as he rides up under those tall, arching elms. He is not an embryo artist, as is Frank Livingston. He does not rant of light and shade, of breadth and perspective, of tone and colour, and backgrounds and chien-oscuro, or the rest of the art-jargon in which his flighty friend excels, but he loves every tree, and stone, and coppice, and flower, and bird about the place, and means, please Heaven, it shall be his home, wander whither he may, through life.

Mr. Abbott is in the stables, smoking and lecturing the grooms, when Geoffrey resigns his horse to the boy who caters to him. He nods *affectionately to his step-son. It has* been said he is fond and proud of him—proud after an absurd fashion, that the lad is a gentleman by birth and breeding, while resenting at the same time the grave reserve the youth maintains between them. But Geoffrey is in a grateful and gentle mood at this moment; moreover, he is in the character of a suppliant, and returns his step-father's greeting with cordiality.

"I've been deucedly put out just now, Geoff, my boy," Mr. Abbott says, quitting the stables with him; "not so much with these fellows, though they are a set of lazy dogs, who shirk work whenever they can. But I was down at Cooper's this afternoon, and the way that place is going to rack and ruin under *that shiftless lot is enough to turn a man's* hair gray. I gave old Job a bit of my mind, let me tell you, and they go out next quarter-day, by the Lord Harry! Mind you, Geoff, when you're master here, keep no tenants on your land like the Coopers. Out with 'em, neck and crop!"

"Cooper is not a model farmer," says Geoffrey, coolly, "but in comparison with another of your tenants, his place is a paradise. I *mean* Sleaford's—the Red Farm."

A dark frown bends Mr. Abbott's brows. He takes out his cigar and looks at the boy.

"Sleaford's!" he growls. "What do you know of Sleaford's! What takes you there?"

"Frank Livingston took me the other evening. They had a dance of some sort. *But I have passed the place often and can* see. Besides, every one is talking of it, and wondering you do not send them adrift."

"Every one be—every one had better mind his own business! You too." Mr. Abbott would like to add, but he knows the stare of haughty surprise Geoffrey's face can assume when it likes, and does not care to provoke it. "I don't explain to all Brightbrook—hang 'em—my reasons, but I don't mind to you. Black Giles Sleaford was a—well, acquaintance of mine out in San Francisco some fourteen years ago, and he did me—well, a sort of service in those days. He's a worthless fellow, I allow, but what's a man to do? Turn his back on an old fri—acquaintance, and leave him to starve when *he's rolling in riches himself? It's the way* of the world, I know, but, by Jupiter, it ain't John Abbott's way. So he's at the Red Farm, and there I mean to let him stay. It ain't the same case as the Coopers, at all. But look here, Geoffrey, boy, don't you go there. I don't like it. I don't ask many favors; just grant me this one. They're low, dear boy, and it ain't no place for a young gentleman born and bred like you. Livingston may go if he likes; he's a good-for-nothing rattle-pate at best, but you're not of that sort. Don't go to Sleaford's, Geoff, any more—to please the old man."

He lays his hand, in his earnestness, on the lad's shoulder, and looked with troubled, eyes down into his face. Geoffrey shrugs his shoulders, the old instinctive feeling of shrinking from his step-father never more strongly upon him.

"I am not likely to go there as Frank does," he answers, carelessly; he likes that sort of thing—I do not. But once or twice more I believe I must. I have a little project on hand connected with one of that family which will take me there again—at least as often as that."

Mr. Abbott's gaze grows more and more perturbed.

"One of that family?" he repeats. "You don't mind my asking which one, do you, Geoff? It ain't——" he hesitates; bully, braggart, bold man that he is, he has a strong respect for this boy. "It ain't—excuse me—one of the girls?"

He fears to meet that icy stare he knows so well from both mother and son, and resents so bitterly. But to his surprise Geoffrey only laughs.

"Exactly, sir, one of the girls—the youngest. I will not tell you what it is just now. You will think it absurd, I dare say. I will speak to my mother first, and she will inform you. There! I see her on the terrace. Excuse me, sir, she is beckoning."

He darts away, his face lighting. As a sculptor may regard some peerless marble goddess, almost as a good Catholic may reverence some fair sweet saint, so Geoffrey Lamar looks upon his mother. To him she is liege lady; to him she stands alone among women for beauty, culture, grace, goodness. Her very pride makes a halo around her in his love-blind eyes.

John Abbott does not attempt to go after him. Neither mother nor son need him or desire him; he would be but a barrier to their confidence, a blot on the landscape. He feels it now, as he has felt it a thousand times, with a silent impotent wrath, but his anger is mingled just at present with another feeling—fear.

*'His mother!' he says, vacantly; 'he is* going to tell his mother! One of the Sleaford girls—the youngest. I—I don't like the look of this.'

*Mrs.* Abbott stands on the terrace, the crimson western light falling full upon her, and smiles as her son draws near. She is a beautiful woman, tall, slender, olive-skinned, with dark, solemn, Southern eyes, and languid, high-bred grace in every slow movement. She is like a picture as she stands here—like a Titian or a Murillo stepped out of its frame—in her trailing dress of violet silk, the delicate laces, the cluster diamond at her throat, the guelder-rose in her hair, she looks as a queen might—as a queen should—regal, royal, superb.

"I hope you are in very good humor, mother," is Geoffrey's greeting, plunging into business at once, "because I have come to ask you a favor—a very great favor, you may think."

Mrs. Abbott's smile, faint but very sweet, answers. Her eyes rest on her boy lovingly, lingeringly—he is very, very dear to her. She loves her little Leo, too; but there is this difference—she loves Geoffrey for his father's sake as well as his own.

"Do I ever refuse you anything, I wonder?" she says, *slightly amused*. "You are a tyrant, Geoff, and abuse your power. It is one of my failings, but I cannot say no."

"But I am uncommonly afraid you will this time. It is no trifle. It will be a re*sponsibility, and you may think it derogatory* besides."

The smile fades from her face.

"You could never ask me to do anything you thought that," she quietly says.

"Nor do I—you may. It will be a bore, I am sure. The only thing to be said in its favor is that you will be doing good."

"Doing good can never be derogatory. Go on, Geoffrey; out with this wonderful request. What a philanthropist, by the by, you are getting to be."

The proud smiling look returns—she takes his arm, and they saunter slowly up and down the terrace.

"Don't call names, madre mio," laughs Geoffrey. "Well—here goes! But thereby hangs a tale, to which you must listen, by way of prologue or argument. The favour comes after. Lend me thine ears then—I will a tale unfold."

And then—not without dramatic power and pathos—he tells the story of Sleaford's Joanna.

"She is treated as you would not see a dog in your house treated, mother; she is in a very hot-bed of ignorance, and vulgarity, and vice. And, I am sure she is not naturally bad. She has a love for reading which speaks well for her, and her voice—ah! well, you will have to hear that before you can believe it. This is the story, mother—the favor is, will you stretch out your hand—this beautiful hand," the young artist exclaims, kissing it, "and save that wretched child?"

"My Geoff!" the lady answers, a tremor in her voice now?

"Send for her here—make Miss Rice give her lessons in English and singing, lift her out of the slough of darkness in which she is lost now. Save her, body and soul! You can, mother."

There is emotion in the lad's voice, in his *earnest face, in his deep glowing gray eyes.* His mother stops in her walk, tears on her dark lashes, both hands on his shoulders.

"My boy! my boy! but it is like you. Oh! I thank the good God for giving me such a son. Yes, what I can do, I will. It is an awful responsibility, an awful thought, that the life, the soul of any human creature may be in our hands. If I can help her, save her as you say, I am ready. I say nothing in your praise. Heaven has given you a great heart, my Geoffrey—your father's noble soul. To lift the lost, to save the unfortunate, what can be nobler? Yes, I will do it. Send her here when you will."

The outburst is over—she pauses. She seldom gives way to her feelings like this. *There is silence for a little; both descend to* the lower earth again.

"But she cannot associate with Leo," Mrs. Abbott says, in her usual manner, "such a child as that!"

"Certainly not. What I thought was, that after Miss Rice had finished Leo's lessons for the day, she should dismiss her, and take in hand Joanna. Her name is Joanna. Leo always finished by three—Joanna could come from three to six. Of course, Miss Rice will be willing, and glad of the extra salary."

"Of course, these people will make no objection to the little girl's coming, will they? They must be very dreadful from what you say. I wonder that Mr. Abbott, particular as he is, allows them on his land."

"*Others wonder too," Geoffrey responds* dryly, "The fact remains—he does. I really do not know whether they will object or not. I spoke to no one, of course, until I had spoken to you. If they refuse, why we can do no more. I will ride over and see to-morrow. Meanwhile, I suppose it will be necessary to mention it to Mr. Abbott."

"I suppose so,"—the smooth brow of the lady contracts a little—she does not *like* mentioning things to Mr. Abbott—"but it cannot matter to him."

"No, but still he likes—"

"Yes, yes, it shall be done. I see him yonder, and will speak to him at once, if you lide."

"Thank you mother."

She approaches her husband. She walks with the slow swaying grace of a Southern woman, the lights and shadows from sunshine and trees flecking the violet sheen of her dress. Her son watches her, so does her husband, both with eyes that say, 'is she not the fairest of all the fair women on earth?'

Mr. Abbott removes his cigar, and stands with a certain deference of manner, as his wife draws near. If her dark head is lifted a trifle higher than usual, it is instinctively with her when about to ask what sounds to her like a favor. If the voice in which she speaks has a prouder inflection than customary, it is unconsciously, and for the same reason. In briefest words she tells the story Geoffrey has taken a fancy to help a poor little village child—may she some here and receive lessons from Miss Rice, when Miss Rice has finished every day with Leonora?

It is not often Mrs. Abbott voluntarily seeks her husband, or asks him for favor.

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