

# The True Witness,

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## KATE LANDOR'S WEDDING.

### CHAPTER I.—KATE LANDOR'S HOME.

"Villain! I will never marry you! I will die first!"

"Now, Kate, what is the use of acting so.—I am not half so bad as you think me; but I love you, and I am determined you shall be my wife. I will be a good husband to you—only marry me quietly. I know I am acting wrongly, but it is the only way in which I can induce you to be mine; but mine you must be unless a miracle interposes, for all around us is the deep ocean, and in this vessel there is no one to aid you. I have arranged all in such a manner that there is no possible means of escape. This is my worst crime, abducting you. I love you as I never loved any being, human or divine, and I will strive to make you happy. You loved me once, Kate, and I believe you will again—when you are my wife."

"Leave me, Hugh! Leave me alone, while I beg you! Let me think—my brain seems crazed—I must be dreaming! I cannot love what is bad—I never did. Do be merciful, Hugh, and send me home. I'll forgive and bless you all my life! I should always hate you—I should make you miserable."

Hugh Leonard stood, with folded arms, leaning carelessly against the wall of the room, watching her, and thinking what an admirable little actress she was. He was capable of experiencing no such emotions himself, and he could not believe them unfeigned in another. Her distress moved him somewhat, but he had no idea it would be lasting; although he loved her, he loved himself very much better. He waited quietly till the paroxysm subsided, and she sank, with a low moan, unconscious at his feet; gently raising her, he placed her in a chair, sprinkled water in her face, chafed her hands, and when she had revived sufficiently to swallow, gave her a stimulant. He then left her thinking that when she reflected how vain were all her attempts to thwart him in his schemes, she would act sensibly, as he termed it, and marry him without further opposition.

Let us go back five years and visit Kate Landor in her home, whose wildly grand scenery, clear, health-giving atmosphere, inspire the soul to noble purposes, and awaken in almost every heart a love of the grand and beautiful, a love of harmony, for right is the harmony, wrong the discord of life.

She was the only daughter of parents in comfortable circumstances, descendants of the Puritans, who firmly believed that the follies of life were crimes. Possessing stern, fixed principles themselves, they taught their child that in unerring rectitude alone could she ever obtain happiness; that faults could never be countenanced either in herself or others. As her associates must be of this class, she had few; thus with a few choice books, and Nature, for constant companions, she became an ardent lover of scientific grandeur and human excellence.

When she was about fifteen her vague dreamings and half formed desires began to take shape, and a thirst for knowledge was aroused which would not be allayed until a more liberal course of studies was provided.—She was accordingly permitted to attend school in an adjoining town, her parents hoping the severe discipline would soon cause her to return home, for they believed the district afforded all the instruction which could be of any advantage to a woman.

"What's the use, wife," her father argued, "to throw away money sending the child to school any more? She can read an' write, an' knows rithmic an' geography, and what's the use, I say, of filling her brains with grammar? If she was a boy now, it might be of some benefit; but as it is, I say, it's just like heaving money into the fire. Better save it for somethin' else."

"Oh, Well, Jacob, you know the child has set her heart on going, an' may be, when we're dead and gone, it'll help her to get along in the world. I'd as soon work for that as anything. You know learning is thought more on, now-a-days, than when you and I were young."

So it was finally arranged that Kate should have the desired instruction, though her father persisted in considering it of no use.

In personal appearance Kate was rather below the medium height, erect, and supple, with tiny hands and feet. Her head was firmly poised, and carried with a somewhat independent air. She had large, hazel eyes, deeply set, and thoughtful in expression. They were her chief claim to beauty.

She soon became a favorite with all, and as she gradually developed in intellectual ability, many predictions were passed, she found her desire to learn intensified rather than diminished. She began to realize how little she knew, and to have some slight idea of the vast literary treasures in store for the student.

Her father, aided and abetted by a couple of maiden aunts, constantly opposed her course; her mother alone was her champion. But, amid all the prophecies of evil by the aunts, who, like birds of ill-omen, were constantly

foretelling misfortune, Kate improved her time.

### CHAPTER II.—THE MISSING TEACHER.

Hugh Leonard was an orphan. His parents died in his infancy, and he had been reared in the family of an uncle, upon whose bounty he had solely depended for support and education. Young, passionate, and not over-scrupulous in his conduct, when he was about sixteen years of age he quarrelled with his best friend—his uncle—which resulted in his leaving his only home in unreasoning anger, and with base ingratitude.

Food of books, he had made unusual advancement at school, and when left to himself, his taste for knowledge probably prevented his yielding to the vicious propensities of his nature and becoming a vagabond. He was aware how to display to the best advantage, which he was not lacking, a kind of assurance that often supplied with him the place of real knowledge. In appearance bright and active, keen and observant, a stranger would unconsciously be prepossessed in his favor; and this he readily learned, and turned to account.

For some years he shirked along, doing whatever came in his way, teaching, book-keeping, sometimes in one place, and again in another. At last he determined to practice the medical profession for a livelihood; and he had been devoting himself to its pursuit with considerable ardour for more than three years, teaching a portion of the time, when he obtained a situation as tutor at a school in a town near the village in which Kate Landor lived.

At this time he was twenty-three years of age, and strikingly handsome in person. His character had developed into a singular combination of the noble and base, refined and vulgar—a gentleman and vagabond in one; all that was noble and aspiring at one time, low, grovelling at another. He could readily adapt himself to circumstances, and the company he chanced to be in, and such was his power and tact for pleasing, that his associates were invariably blinded as to his real character. Life, to him, was a vast fraud, and he considered those who gleaned the most pleasure therefrom the smartest men. Ever following the promptings of inclination he made self the god to which all must pay tribute.

Kate Landor came to him as a private pupil, and he loved her. To the task of winning the pure unsuspecting girl, he directed all his energies, and it was not difficult to lure her with his sophistries, and awaken love for one whose intellectual endowments she so ardently admired.

The purest are most easily deceived, for self is too often the criterion by which others are judged. An idolator of unattained excellence, Kate knew nothing of the cunning devices employed by the artful, and for a time love yielded her its full share of bliss. The awakening came, however, and she wondered she could have been so deluded. It was no sudden revelation that startled her, but a gradual undermining of her confidence by trifling acts of deceit, complicated falsehood, and sacrilegious scoffing at the truths and principles held dear in every honest heart.

To assume a false character requires a wonderfully correct memory; and his failed too often for the ever-ready excuse "mistake" to conceal the defect.

"Why, my little girl," he said to her one day, "you certainly are not so simple as to believe that people in this world do rightly for the sake of right? No one speaks the truth because it is truth. It is advocated by all, I admit, because, you must understand, if everybody should speak falsely, it would set the world in a greater snarl than it is enjoying at present; but a little fib now and then is quite convenient. Though I want you to remain just as exact as you are now, you must learn to expect less of others."

"Hugh, I love truth because it is God's law, because—well, because there is a something right here in my heart that tells me He wishes us to be brave and truthful for His sake; because there is also that in my nature which makes me feel more proudly noble in its presence. I do not think I have any affinity for evil, since I am unhappy whenever I discover it. I always feel like flying away, out into the bright sunlight beneath the blue sky, which bears no impress of sin. Moreover, the man who seeks personal gratification only, who appropriates, so far as lies within his power, the sources of the universe to the indulgence of self, scorning justice as obsolete, and virtue as the phantasm of the transcendentalist, I will never marry. I do not love you—no, I do not love you—you are not what I thought; the man I loved was an ideal. I shall grieve for my mistake, never for Hugh Leonard."

"Kate, wait! Let me talk to you—let me explain!"

"No," she replied, "I am convinced at last, thoroughly." And she walked deliberately from the room.

Though Hugh afterwards made many attempts to gain an interview with her she would not listen to him again, and finally, concluding all his efforts vain, at the expiration of a few weeks he quietly took his departure from the

town, saying naught of his designs to anyone and none knew whither he had gone.

Kate received a note, soon after he left, bearing no signature, and containing only the words, "You shall yet be mine." She knew very well from whom it came, yet thought little of the threat, as she considered herself secure.—She made no confidants, and endeavored to bear a sorrow silently, proudly shrinking from the sympathy her sensitive spirit taught her would be only pity for her ignorance of the world. Though young, she had learned the very important fact that however people may pity, true sympathy is rare.

She felt she did not understand the greatest of problems, the deepest of mysteries, broadly and commonly termed human nature. She had failed to deduce any theory by which she could unerringly judge a person's character, except as circumstances might develop it; yet she did not know that the most profound thinker had been forced to acknowledge his efforts likewise vain, that those who boast, "I can read a person the moment I see him"—"A man's face tells just what he is"—are wise only in their own opinion.

She applied herself assiduously to books, resolutely shutting out the past by allowing her mind no time to dwell upon its darkness. Yet all her heroic exertions failed to make her happy or contented. Every moment when the will relaxed its hold of the mind, memory would assert its prerogative, banishing refreshing sleep from her pillow, and though she would read and study till she could scarcely see the blurred pages, her thoughts would be busy still, and she would raise from her couch, and walk till mentally and physically exhausted, when she would sink into the repose that follows utter prostration.

Her health was at length seriously affected, and would soon have altogether yielded to the excessive nervous tension, when she was suddenly summoned to the death-bed of her father. Her new grief nearly overwhelmed her, but her anxiety for her sorrowing mother drew her mind from nursing personal troubles, and gave her strength to bear what otherwise would have crushed her.

Her misfortunes, it seemed, had just begun, for her mother, whom she almost worshipped, in a few short months went to join her father, and Kate was alone in the world. But again necessity for action saved her, and this time personal necessity, for every one must have a home, a shelter from storm, a refuge at night, and creditors claimed the one which had been hers. She was enabled to save a few hundred pounds only—all she possessed—hence work was before her.

Her nearest relatives were the two maiden aunts already mentioned. From them she received, in her unhappy dilemma, little consolation. She was almost despondent when she dared to think what might befall her should she fail in what she felt was the only course open to her. The idea of becoming a mere household drudge was repulsive in the extreme for if she once entered upon such a life, she saw no probability of escape from it. She knew how to do nothing else well enough to gain a livelihood, and she therefore resolved to invest what she possessed in education, and fit herself for a teacher.

In due time she bade a silent farewell to her home, hers no longer—to the hills where the birds carolled in summer and bleak wind whistled in winter—to the valleys where mute voices had taught her what time itself might not efface—and, lastly, when twilight gloom rested upon the grassy slope where were two new-made graves, she knelt above all that remained of her dearest friends, whose places would evermore on earth be vacant.

She bore away a sad heart to the home she had selected—a boarding-school situated in the West of England—and where she hoped to remain till she could go forth to earn her own living in the way she felt would be congenial.

For two years she had been an inmate of the seminary alluded to, and, having studied with almost superhuman energy was fast nearing the goal, when she suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

Search was immediately made, and continued till, no traces being discovered, it was decided that she must have fallen into the river, whose current flowed within half a mile of the seminary, and along the banks of which she had been in the habit of strolling. The stream was dragged, but without result, and the search was finally given up as hopeless, as the body was supposed to have been carried into the ocean.

She was mourned as dead, and the sorrowful circumstance having been duly discussed and lamented, it was buried with the past and the name of Kate Landor in time became dim in memory's tablet.

Conjecture was right in regard to her walking along the river's bank at the time of her disappearance, which was a bright September afternoon; but, instead of falling into the deep water, she was borne by strong arms into a boat, which the same arms sent skimming over the river like a bird. Kate knew nothing, however, of what transpired after she felt something heavy and dark thrown over her

head and face, as she was walking along the border of the river.

She was speedily conveyed on board the vessel where we first met her, and the crew of which consisted of a band of smugglers, bound to a foreign port, and over whom Hugh Leonard had acquired an influence by having rendered their leader and captain some important service at a former period.

The uncle of whom mention was previously made, and whom Hugh had not seen for many years, died intestate, and as he was the nearest heir he came to the possession of quite a fortune, much to his surprise and gratification; for, by this freak of fate, he would be enabled to suspend the practice of his profession.

He had obtained the title of M. D., one year previously. He determined to compel the only girl he ever loved to be his wife.

He knew well the unbounded pride of Kate, and he felt sure that, if once in his power, she would ever remain silent as to the manner in which she was won. She had no parents to seek her, and he could easily evade others, less interested, by remaining abroad a few years, and, when he did return, would settle on the estate left by his uncle. Thus far removed from all her former connections, he would be enabled, he thought, to lead a very happy life.

He had studied the heart of woman, and knew that love is the desired boon of her life; and he flattered himself that when, as his wife, Kate learned that the wrong he had committed was for love only, she would readily forgive and adore him for the boldness of his scheme.

### CHAPTER III.—HAPPY AT LAST.

Fearful was the thought to Kate that she must marry, must live with one she hated a lifetime; and yet she saw no alternative except death, and she dared not end life. No, there was no escape, and she promised to be Hugh's wife when they arrived at their destination. She never dreamed of breaking her word—such were the principles engendered in her heart that she would as soon have leaped into the dark waves at her feet.

Her promise ensured to her due courtship while a prisoner, and left to herself nothing remained to hope for on earth. A sort of numb, stupid despair settled upon her soul. The power of thought seemed to have deserted her, and she moved like one in a dream, manifesting no interest in anything.

But time passed, and again her feet pressed the solid earth; yet she was in a strange land. She stood before the man of God and heard the words that united her to the man beside her; but they were sounded far away, and the response died in her throat unuttered. She did not swoon—she did not weep—but Hugh Leonard possessed a very pensive bride.

After a time he became somewhat alarmed at her apathetic state, from which he tried every means in his power to rouse her. She obeyed his wishes mechanically, and witnessed the gaiety of various cities; but "no lightsome land of social mirth" had any charm for such as she, and until she visited those lands whose histories are written in blood, she was indifferent alike to all.

When contemplating a nation's woe, she could not but feel the insignificance of individual grief. Yet, when removed from the temporary influence of such scenes, she relapsed into the stupid calm which had become habitual, and her husband bitterly repented the wrong he had committed. He felt himself balked in his purpose, and found that happiness, had, after all, eluded his grasp. The fear constantly tortured him lest reason should entirely desert her, and he would be obliged to return to his native land with a maniac for his bride.

But at length a new love awoke with his magic power. The soft touch of helpless fingers first drew sweet music from the one hidden chord of affection. Infantile eyes melted, at last, the icy heart, and velvet lips sent thrills of happiness once more through her soul.

A new life was infused into every nerve and fibre. The world again looked bright, and she felt there was nothing she could not brave for the tiny form she clasped so tenderly in her arms. She could scarcely bare to have the little one taken from her a moment, lest the former darkness should envelop her in its folds. When she had him with her she forgot her trials; even her unhappy wifehood ceased to trouble her.

For the first time since her marriage she expressed a desire to return home, and her husband rejoicing immeasurably at her restoration, readily acquiesced in whatever she might suggest. They accordingly, as soon as practicable, took passage on board a steamer homeward bound after an absence of nearly four years.

Silently we will allow another year to pass, and then, in the twilight of a summer evening, look in upon Kate Leonard. She is rocking her little one to sleep, for although no longer a babe, she cannot forego the pleasure of soothing him with soft lullabies. 'Tis early summer, and the warm, soft breezes stealing through the open casement, are redolent with odors of rarest flowers.

For many months she had not allowed her

thoughts to dwell upon the past, but strove to banish recollection by burying herself with her child. Yet somehow, the stars twinkling in the distance, the deep blue sky, and profound stillness reigning over all, awoke old memories, and again she reviewed the years, one by one, of her wedded life. Scenes rose before with vivid reality, and she saw herself, as never before, culpable, she feared, in many respects. For the first time she realized that duty had been neglected; that she had not sought to influence for good, as she might, by trying to love him; for love, she well knew, was the key to a man's heart. Her retrospection was severe and searching, and much she discovered to condemn.

What mysterious, magnetic chain of sympathy that sometimes influences its object from afar, drew, as if in obedience to her wishes, her husband to her side. He sat down and bowed his head upon her shoulder. No word was spoken, but in that silence they understood each other better than years could have taught them.

It is said that better moments come to all; that none are so bad that they are not sometimes good; and surely that was the hour when Hugh Leonard's good angel was triumphant. The bold man's heart was touched, and he wept as only the strong can weep—convulsively, like the mighty tree shaken by the tempest.

"Kate," he said at last, "can you forgive the great wrong I have done you? Will you help me to become a better man? I will try as never before, to lead a better life. Be my Beatrice, my guide, and I will follow you where you lead. You alone have taught me to believe that human beings are not only assigned for a noble end, but can attain it if they will not misuse and subvert that God-given power, mind. At this late hour I see the truth. I repent—Heaven alone can know how deeply."

Kate moved with sincere sympathy, replied—"Hugh, I have sometimes thought I have been hard and unforgiving towards you. I placed my standard of human excellence too high—scorning those who failed to reach it. Had you been reared as I have been, you might have been immeasurably my superior. I—what should I have been, my poor husband, in your place? Yes, I freely forgive you, and hope that now, when we see the truth, we may grow better and wiser for our sad experience, and that our child may reap the benefit of the bitter lesson that has cost us both so much."

"Heaven help me to be ever worthy of such a wife!" was his fervent response.

Time lingers not, but scatters, in its onward march, trials and temptations, joys and sorrows in the pathway of even its most favored subjects. It failed not to test the strength of Hugh Leonard's resolutions, and the result proved that his "better moments" quickened into life the germ of reformation which eventually subdued the evil tendencies of his nature by convincing him that the truth is all that is really worth pursuing in life. If that is not, then all is vain, and nothing is that is.

MABEL DELAFIELD;

OR,

THE WIFE'S SACRIFICE.

"Why are you so sad, dear Mabel?"  
"I feel as if this were the last evening we should ever spend together, Harry; a long, long time must elapse before we meet again."  
"Pshaw!" said Mr. Delafield. "You are so desponding, it is enough to discourage me, Mabel. A wife should always encourage her husband by a cheerful spirit."

"I should like to do so, dear Harry," and she laid one arm around his neck and looked earnestly in his face; "but indeed I cannot be cheerful to-night—my heart will have its way I cannot control it. A sad and fearful presentiment tells me we shall part to-morrow for ever."

"Presentiment! What folly!"  
"It may be folly; but if I loved you less, the presentiment would not have fixed itself in my heart."

"Have done with this nonsense, Mabel—I cannot endure it; you have given me the vapors already," and Mr. Delafield left his seat and walked with impatient steps backward and forward, muttering to himself about the folly and superstition of women.

Mrs. Delafield remained silent. She knew her husband's temper too well to attempt to disturb him, but her thoughts were sad and bitter. She thought of her apparently happy marriage season five years before—of how ardently her husband seemed to love her then, how careful he was to note her every want and regard her slightest wish. But he was changed; his manner was cold and reserved; he had closed the sanctuary of his heart against her. When she spoke of it he listened unwillingly, and gave as excuses his many cares and anxieties. She knew that much of this was true, for the riches that were theirs at their union had taken to themselves wings and flown away; but she also knew, as only a woman can know, that she was not loved as she had been, as she desired to be loved. Then hope whispered gently that the future was not all dark, and