

reply I expected from the just, considerate men I served. They wished me a pleasant voyage; my desk and seat would be ready for me on my return. The day I was to leave the office I told Mr. Walter Edmonston that I was to sail on the morrow. He became white and red like a girl as I spoke, half asked me what business I was going upon, and then checked himself. In the evening he joined me just as I was stepping on board the boat at Longueuil ferry. Taking my hand to help me on board, he led me to a seat, and sitting down beside me, said:

"I came here to ask you to allow me to see you home. I have something I wish to tell you, which cannot be said in the office."

As he spoke he took off his hat, and holding it in his hand, addressed me with the same air of consideration he would have used in speaking to the first lady in the land. Something in the courtly dignity of manner he assumed reminded me of "Vashti the beautiful," whose cheek I had seen him kiss so fondly, and while signifying my willingness to accept his escort, I mentally asked myself for the hundredth time, "Who is Vashti?"

When we landed, Mr. Walter drew my arm within his own, and thus we walked on. The evening was lovely, the bright moon throwing one half of the street into deep shadow, while the other seemed as bright as day. He spoke of the commonplace things around—the beauty of the stars, the moonlight on the waters of the St. Lawrence, seen in bright streaks and flashes as it streamed through the branches of the dark firs.

I listened but did not attempt to utter a word in reply. My heart was beating hard and quick; what he wanted to say to me I thought not of; I cared little. I was happier then, than I ever expected to be again; whatever was the cause of his accompanying me home that night, it was not likely he would ever do so a second time.

As we came to the corner of the street turning down to the cottage he said, "Will you walk with me half an hour on the river bank. What I have to say, is for your ear alone."

I tacitly consented, and we walked on until we reached a grassy knoll, shaded by a row of dark fir trees overlooking the river. The fatigue of walking so far, together with the excited state of my own feelings, made my steps falter and my heart beat almost audibly.

Throwing a light coat he held on his arm over part of the knoll, he made me sit down, saying, "You are tired, rest here, we will talk under the shade of these grand old trees and this pleasant 'light of stars'."

As we seated ourselves he took the hand which had rested on his arm, and held it in his own. I endeavored to draw it away, but he held it with a firm grasp and said:

"I will only detain you a very little while; let me have my own way."

We sat some minutes without speaking. Sitting beside Walter Edmonston thus, was dear happiness to me, yet, I felt as if I had been guilty of an indiscretion, and wished myself at home in my mother's house. I half rose from my seat. With a gentle pressure of his hand he resealed me, saying: "Wait for just five minutes; look, you can count the time." As he spoke he opened his watch and placed it on my lap. A second after, he abruptly said, looking full in my face. "Why, did you think I was a married man?"

"Because," I answered, "some years ago, I went, accompanied by our servant, to a villa above Sherbrooke street, for Dr. Turnbull, and while waiting in the avenue, I saw you come out from a room full of gayly-dressed people, with a lady attired as a bride, beautiful and dignified as Vashti. Her bracelet fell and you clasped it on her wrist—" I stopped short. He laughed a light ringing laugh.

"I remember well; how strange you should think of Vashti. That lady is my twin sister, and I have called her Vashti as a pet name since she was eighteen."

He paused for a second or two, and then resumed. "Dora is beautiful and good, my dearly beloved only sister, and she is as you say, dignified as Vashti. But I want a wife loving as Rachel; that if God takes her, ere I finish the days of my pilgrimage, I may at the last look back to the lonely oak of weeping where she sleeps as to the place of my one great sorrow."

He paused—lifted the watch from my lap, looked at and then replaced it; the five minutes were already gone. He then took my hand in both his own and looking into my eyes said in a low but strong voice:

"Isabel, will you be my wife?"

Could I have lost my senses, or was I in the land of dreams? My breath came faint and quick until with very happiness my beating heart grew sick. The man who in my sight was set so high above his fellows; the one of whom in four years close fellowship I could find naught of blame—the one I had striven so hard to copy, prayed to be made like unto.

I had no power of speech left, but my trembling hands which he held in his were more eloquent than words. He gathered me to his bosom and pressed his lips to mine; tears came to the relief of my overcharged heart: tears of thankfulness and joy.

He begged of me to delay my journey for a few weeks, in the mean time we would be married and it was possible with his help my business would be more easily accomplished. A moment's reflection told me this could not be; in the first place, my mother, on the eve of becoming (as she felt certain she would) Lady of Morton Castle, would be highly indignant at the idea of my marrying a tradesman; accomplished, noble gentleman as she allowed him to

be. And then, in the eyes of his mother and sister I was only one of his father's employees; proud women were they all, and would ill brook such a mate for their only brother. I well knew after six years' residence in Montreal that the pride of position and riches was as rife and strong there as that of ancient name and high degree in the land of their forefathers. I resolved I would never enter a house to set sister against brother, mother against son; no, when I plighted my faith to Walter Edmonston I saw clearly as I was looking down the long vista, the future before me.

If I succeeded in my mission to Britain, I would then be Lady Morton's daughter; descended from a long line of noble ancestry this would at once gain me a sure welcome. Should I fail, I would then return to Montreal and try to win myself a name in the paths of literature, so dear and honoured by every Canadian heart. I told him that such an arrangement was impossible. I must go home alone and bear my maiden name.

I was five days on board ship before I could stand steady enough to venture on deck, and when I did I found I was the only lady there, and must have fallen before I could reach a seat but for the kindly assistance of a man who wore a whole suit of coarse grey clothes and green spectacles. The ship was rocking terribly and sent my grey friend—I may call him so for his beard and hair were as white as his clothes were grey—and myself, first to one side and then to another, in our efforts to reach a seat.

"I am glad to see you," said he; "I almost began to think we were going to land without seeing one of the ladies."

The passage was a stormy one, and with the exception of two, none of the other ladies ventured on deck; so by the end of the eleven days we were on board, Mr. Taylor (the grey man) and myself had become almost intimate friends. As we neared our destination he asked me whether any of my friends were to meet me on landing.

"No," replied I. "I will drive to the Crown Hotel. It is kept by the son of an old acquaintance of our family—it will be pleasant for me to go there for the night and proceed to Edinburgh next morning."

"Your programme is exactly my own," said he, "although my residence in Edinburgh will probably not exceed a few days."

With the pilot, a young man came on board who introduced himself to the Captain as the son of Mr. Morton, of Haughton, to whom my mother had written saying I was to be a passenger by the *Adria*, and requested I should be pointed out to him. The Captain introduced the young man, willing I suppose to be rid of the trouble he had entailed on himself.

Mr. Morton almost at once congratulated me on finding the will; told me he was a distant relative of mine and in the same breath feared I would not be able to make people believe that the will I brought home with me was other than a "Kanuck dodge" to get hold of the property. I felt indignant and said so, adding that the property being taken possession of by the man who made the will was a "Scotch dodge" of greater magnitude and crime than fifty Kanuck dodges put together.

He laughed good-naturedly, said he saw that I, like all who lived a few years in Canada; had become a thorough-bred Canadian.

"I am proud of being called a Canadian," replied I, with I fear a little show of temper. "I dearly love Canada, it is my adopted country; I mean to live and die, and be buried there. I would rather own a little cottage with its orchard on the Island of Montreal, than Morton Castle and all its lands."

This was not the conversation he wanted; he returned again to the will.

"Of course we would rather your family have Morton Castle than old Peter Morton who is in possession. We don't like a bit of him; but I tell you the truth when I say that every one looks upon the finding of this will as a sham. It seems so unlikely to be anything else after having been lost for thirty years to come to life in Canada."

"It is no sham in my eyes as I saw it found."

"Of course it is in reality no sham," replied he, "but I feel quite sure it will be treated as such in the Court of Session; and so does every one else who has heard of it. If it were mine, I continued he, looking sharply in my face as he spoke, "I would burn it, and my right hand with it, rather than bear the odium which will attach itself to the finder of that will; particularly to you, as Mrs. Morton writes my mother, you are quite remarkable for your penmanship."

This was a view of the case which had not yet presented itself. I did not like the speaker, his face and manner were sinister in the extreme; yet, there might be much truth in his words; they were at all events very plausible. He said no more on the subject; but by and by asked if I had much luggage.

"Only one small valise about a foot and a half square," was my reply.

"Is it among the passenger's baggage or in your own state-room?"

"In my state-room."

"We are very near the wharf. I think you had better let me bring it here so that when the boat stops we may get on shore as quickly as possible."

"I wish we could reach Edinburgh to-night," I said, speaking my thoughts aloud, more than addressing Mr. Morton.

"There is a ten o'clock train. If you do not think it too late we can take it," was his reply.

I brought the valise, it was of light weight and

contained little more than one change of clothing.

"Is this the parchment chest where the will is stowed away?" he asked with a good-natured smile.

"No, it is in this satchel which I always carry in my hand. I am so afraid of it that I put it under my pillow by night, and carry it in my hand by day."

"Oh, capital!" exclaimed he with a hearty laugh, "that is as good as a farce. I suppose you think it worth its weight in gold."

We were now at the wharf and my companion giving me his arm, lifted my valise and away we went.

The wharf was quite dark except where here and there a light from a lantern shed its fitful rays for a moment and was gone. There were several barrels ranged side by side in two rows a little way up the wharf. Mr. Morton bidding me wait there and guard my valise, put it down while he went for a carriage, enjoining me not to stir from the spot on any account until he came back.

I promised obedience and away he went. He was not gone many seconds, I am sure not a full minute, when some one from behind threw me over upon one of the barrels; scarcely had I fallen when my satchel was wrenched from my hand. I screamed with all my might "Stop thief! stop thief!" A man with a lantern held it over me and helped me to rise, saying as he did so:

"Whist! w' your stop thief! Wha do ye think could stop a thief on this dark night. What hae ye lost?"

"My satchel; a small black satchel."

"Nae fear o't, is there siller in't?"

"No, only papers."

"Fient a fear o't; naeboddy wad steal a satchel w' only papers in't; it's lying somewhere about yon' feet."

"No, no," replied I; "some one took it from me by force. I kept it firm in my hand and it was wrenched from me."

"Let me look for it, Miss Denholm," said a voice close by, with a sweet, familiar tone like the sound of pleasant waters, speaking to my heart of bright, sunny Montreal in the midst of this cold, dark wharf with its drizzling rain. I looked up, and, to my great delight, saw Mr. Taylor's grey beard and green glasses.

"Thank you, Mr. Taylor, it is of no use looking for it. I was thrown down and the satchel snatched from my hand, and it is full of valuable papers of no use to any one but myself."

"Let me assist you into this coach," said he; I doubt not the police will soon bring the satchel into your hands again. When I see you safe at the Crown I will go and inform them of the affair."

In a few minutes we were at the Crown where Mr. Taylor consigned me at once into the hands of Mrs. Johnston, the large, good-tempered-looking landlady, who, on being informed who I was, expressed the utmost pleasure, overwhelming me with all sorts of questions. "Come up stairs and take off your things," said she; "I have just one room vacant, but if I had none, your mother's daughter would get my own."

On arriving at the first landing, she took a bunch of keys from her pocket, and, opening a door marked No. 11, ushered me into a nice comfortable room with the gas turned up at full height. "Did you ever see the like o' thea cutties o' chambermaids!" exclaimed she; "they're enough to ruin a' body; look at that gas blazing away to a shut door and bare walls!" I was terribly excited by my loss; the kindly woman saw I was in trouble, and, putting her hand on my shoulder, said: "You are weary with travel, and perhaps there's something vexing you. Sit down, my bairn, and tell me what it is; you'll be the better for telling me your trouble, whatever it is, and you can't tell it to safer ears. I know more about your mother's family than I could tell in a long summer's day; and you'll not want money at any rate. I have plenty, and all that began us in the world was won in Morton Castle."

I felt as if I would gladly tell everyone of my loss, in hopes that it would help me to recover my satchel. I sat down and told her about our finding the will, and also all that had occurred since my landing, at the same time regretting that I had left the wharf before young Morton, of Haughton, returned with the carriage. In my distress I had quite forgotten having promised to wait for him when I left the wharf with Mr. Taylor.

"Ye need na' be a bit sorry for that," replied she. "Mrs. Morton o' Haughton has no son, and it's my thought that the young man was Peter Morton's son; and, if so, he's ta'en your satchel, and no one will ever set eyes on it or the will more. Peter Morton is a writer in Edinburgh," continued she, and it was his five fingers made the will, his brother Andrew, a poor paralyzed man, came into the property as heir-at-law. Andrew is dead these twenty years, and Peter has the Castle and the land. I'm as sorry for your loss as if it were my own, but twa blacks, wonna make a white, so put your things off and come down and take a cup of tea; don't be down-hearted, perhaps that decent-like man w' the green goggles has heard some word o' your satchel at the police."

I put off my bonnet and shawl, and went to refresh my poor, hot face with cold water, accusing myself bitterly for being so stupid as to carry the title to my mother's birthright across the ocean in my hand. Mrs. Johnston folded my shawl, and, opening a drawer in the bureau, placed it there, exclaiming in a surprised tone as she did so: "My goodness! the lady that

slept here last night has forgotten her night-clothes bag, and that careless cutty, Jenny, has slipped it into the drawer and never said a word about it. It would have been a pretty story if she had written for it and we had sent her word that it was na' here!"

I turned round as she spoke, and beheld my satchel in Mrs. Johnston's hand!

"My satchel, my satchel," cried I almost wild with delight, and seizing it I opened and beheld the will all safe.

"Look here," cried I, "there is the will," pulling it out as I spoke.

"Na, well then, was ever the like heard o' since Adam was a boy," exclaimed the good woman, in nearly as much delight as myself, "however could it come here? We'll see if Jenny kens anything about it."

Jenny was rung for, and asked if she knew anything of the satchel being in the drawer. "Surely I do," said the girl. "It belongs to the gentleman who took this room."

"This room taken; why there's no baggage or greatcoat or anything here?" said Mrs. Johnston interrogatively.

"No," replied the girl. "He had nothing with him only that bag; and he said he hoped no one would open his room. He locked the door himself and put the key in his pocket, and he said he only wanted his supper as he was going off by one of the trains to-night. Better to put the lady into No. 12," continued the girl "he'll be mad at putting anyone into his room."

"May be he will," was her mistress' reply, uttered in a cool tone; "but I'm not easy put in a hobble w' their anger, or I would no ha' kept a house like this so long. Come down-stairs, Miss Denholm, and we'll see what my son says about this."

The old lady locked the door of No. 11, leaving my shawl and bonnet inside. I followed her down stairs into a parlor, where I found Mr. Taylor and the landlord, to whom the former had recounted my loss. They were now made aware of how I had recovered my satchel and its contents so unexpectedly, and at once came to the conclusion that the gentleman who hired No. 11 and Mrs. Morton's pretended son were one and the same person.

While they were speaking Jenny came into the room, almost breathless, saying that we had scarcely left No. 11 when the gentleman who had taken it came up-stairs, and going straight to the drawer at once missed his leather bag, and asked, with a great oath, what had become of it. She showed him my shawl and bonnet, saying: "The lady who had on this shawl has it down in my mistress' parlor, and my master and another gentleman are all speaking about it; I'll show you the parlor, if you like." While the girl was speaking he turned on his heel, ran down stairs and out at the door, without paying his bill, which last item was what caused Jenny to bring the intelligence of his flight so quickly.

I went to Edinburgh next day, accompanied not only by Mr. Taylor, but the good, kind landlady of the Crown.

Mrs. Morton of Haughton received me very kindly, and ordering her carriage at once, took me to the office of Carnegie & Macduff, writers to the signet, and old friends of my father, who, looking over the will, said it would make short work of Peter Morton's right to Morton Castle. Mr. Carnegie accompanied me to the office of Mr. Dundas, who had been my father's lawyer. The old gentleman seized the will with such avidity, one would have supposed it was to prove his own title to the property. He laughed heartily as he pointed out to Mr. Carnegie several clauses in the will.

"This will bear hard on cheating Peter, seeing it was himself that made the will," said he, and both gentlemen seemed to enjoy their brother lawyer's discomfiture.

I was three months in Edinburgh, and before one-half of that time had elapsed, a cable telegram was sent for my mother to come back to Scotland, that she might take possession of Morton Castle, its lands, and one of the handsomest houses in Edinburgh, together with fifty thousand pounds, with its accumulated interest, which, fortunately for us, Peter Morton's parsimonious habits prevented him from using.

The very morning after mamma's arrival in Edinburgh, our old home of Marsdon was offered to her, it having been sold conditionally—that is, if claimed within twenty years, it would be ours at the price paid for it. The first letter I had from Walter Edmonston—and it was longer in coming than I expected—ended by saying: "I would have called to bid you good-bye, and make you a present of my green glasses, but I found, on leaving you with Mrs. Morton, that I had just time to reach the train to Liverpool, which would join the first boat for Montreal." His green glasses! It was no wonder the grey man's voice reminded me of home on that dark, wet wharf. The letter concluded thus:—"On my arrival at Montreal, before going home I went to tell Mrs. Denholm that I had left you well; the cottage door was open, the parlor empty, but in the breakfast-room beyond I saw the one I had come to see, dispensing charity, in the shape of old clothes, to a poor woman. In the hands of the latter was a certain grey worsted dress, partly burnt, for which my father has in vain been offering five thousand dollars. The woman parted with the precious garment, well content to exchange it for a few dollars. On shewing the prize to my father, he advised me to try my best to gain the one who had worn it for my wife, and I told him my heart was lost and won long before Edmonston & Fornam's printing-house took fire."