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## THE NEW MAGDALEN.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

SECOND SCENE—*Mablethorpe House.*

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

With those words he began his first extract from the consul's letter.

"My memory is a bad one for dates. But full three months must have passed since information was sent to me of an English patient, received at the hospital here, whose case I, as English consul, might feel an interest in investigating."

"I went the same day to the hospital, and was taken to the bedside."

"The patient was a woman—young, and (when in health) I should think, very pretty. When I first saw her she looked, to my un-instructed eyes, like a dead woman. I noticed that her head had a bandage over it, and I asked what was the nature of the injury that she had received. The answer informed me that the poor creature had been present, nobody knew why or wherefore, at a skirmish or night attack between the Germans and the French, and that the injury to her head had been inflicted by a fragment of a German shell."

Horace—thus far leaning back carelessly in his chair—suddenly raised himself and exclaimed: "Good heavens! can this be the woman I saw laid out for dead in the French cottage?"

"It is impossible for me to say," replied Julian. "Listen to the rest of it. The consul's letter may answer your question."

He went on with his reading:

"The wounded woman had been reported dead, and had been left by the French in their retreat, at the time when the German forces took possession of the enemy's position. She was found on a bed in a cottage by the director of the German ambulance—"

"Ignatius Wetzel?" cried Horace.

"Ignatius Wetzel," repeated Julian, looking at the letter.

"It is the same!" said Horace. "Lady Janet, we are really interested in this. You remember my telling you how I first met with Grace? And you have heard more about it since, no doubt, from Grace herself?"

"She has a horror of referring to that part of her journey home," replied Lady Janet. "She mentioned her having been stopped on the frontier, and her finding herself accidentally in the company of another Englishwoman, a perfect stranger to her. I naturally asked questions on my side, and was shocked to hear that she had seen the woman killed by a German shell almost close at her side. Neither she nor I have had any relish for returning to the subject since. You were quite right, Julian, to avoid speaking of it while she was in the room. I understand it all now. Grace, I suppose, mentioned my name to her fellow-traveller. The woman is, no doubt, in want of assistance, and she applies to me through you. I will help her; but she must not come here until I have prepared Grace for seeing her again, a living woman. For the present, there is no reason why they should meet."

"I am not sure about that," said Julian, in low tones, without looking up at his aunt.

"What do you mean? Is the mystery not at an end yet?"

"The mystery has not even begun yet. Let my friend the consul proceed."

Julian returned for the second time to his extract from the letter.

"After a careful examination of the supposed corpse, the German surgeon arrived at the conclusion that a case of suspended animation had (in the hurry of the French retreat) been mistaken for a case of death. Feeling a professional interest in the subject, he decided on putting his opinion to the test. He operated on the patient with complete success. After performing the operation he kept her for some days under his own care, and then transferred her to the nearest hospital—the hospital at Mannheim. He was obliged to return to his duties as army surgeon, and he left his patient in the condition in which I saw her, insensible on the bed. Neither he nor the hospital authorities knew anything whatever about the woman. No papers were found on her. All the doctors could do, when I asked them for information with a view to communicating with her friends, was to show me her linen marked with her name. I left the hospital after taking down the name in my pocket-book. It was 'Mercy Merrick.'"

Lady Janet produced her pocket-book. "Let me take the name down too," she said. "I never heard it before, and I might otherwise forget it. Go on, Julian."

Julian advanced to his second extract from the consul's letter:

"Under these circumstances, I could only wait to hear from the hospital when the patient was sufficiently recovered to be able to speak to me. Some weeks passed without my receiving any communication from the doctors. On calling to make inquiries I was

informed that fever had set in, and that the poor creature's condition now alternated between exhaustion and delirium. In her delirious moments the name of your aunt, Lady Janet Roy, frequently escaped her. Otherwise her wanderings were for the most part quite unintelligible to the people at her bedside. I thought once or twice of writing to you and of begging you to speak to Lady Janet. But as the doctors informed me that the chances of life or death were at this time almost equally balanced, I decided to wait until time should determine whether it was necessary to trouble you or not."

"You know best, Julian," said Lady Janet. "But I own I don't quite see in what way I am interested in this part of the story."

"Just what I was going to say," added Horace. "It is very sad, no doubt. But what have we to do with it?"

"Let me read my third extract," Julian answered, "and you will see."

He turned to the third extract, and read as follows:

"At last I received a message from the hospital informing me that Mercy Merrick was out of danger, and that she was capable (though still very weak) of answering any questions which I might think it desirable to put to her. On reaching the hospital I was requested, rather to my surprise, to pay my first visit to the head physician in his private room. 'I think it right,' said this gentleman, 'to warn you, before you see the patient, to be very careful how you speak to her, and not to irritate her by showing any surprise or expressing any doubts if she talks to you in an extravagant manner. We differ in opinion about her here. Some of us (myself among the number) doubt whether the recovery of her mind has accompanied the recovery of her bodily powers. Without pronouncing her to be mad—she is perfectly gentle and harmless—we are, nevertheless, of opinion that she is suffering under a species of insane delusion. Bear in mind the caution which I have given you—and now go and judge for yourself.' I obeyed, in some little perplexity and surprise. The sufferer, when I approached her bed, looked sadly weak and worn; but, so far as I could judge, seemed to be in full possession of herself. Her tone and manner were unquestionably the tone and manner of a lady. After briefly introducing myself, I assured her that I should be glad, both officially and personally, if I could be of any assistance to her. In saying these trifling words I happened to address her by the name I had seen marked on her clothes. The instant the words 'Miss Merrick' passed my lips a wild vindictive expression appeared in her eyes. She exclaimed angrily, 'Don't call me by that hateful name! It is not my name. All the people here persecute me by calling me Mercy Merrick. And when I am angry with them they show me the clothes. Say what I may, they persist in believing they are my clothes. Don't you do the same, if you want to be friends with me.' Remembering what the physician had said to me, I made the necessary excuses, and succeeded in soothing her. Without reverting to the irritating topic of the name, I merely inquired what her plans were, and assured her that she might command my services if she required them. 'Why do you want to know what my plans are?' she asked suspiciously. I reminded her in reply that I held the position of English consul, and that my object was, if possible, to be of some assistance to her. 'You can be of the greatest assistance to me,' she said, eagerly. 'Find Mercy Merrick! I saw the vindictive look come back into her eyes, and an angry flush rising on her white cheeks. Abstaining from showing any surprise, I asked her who Mercy Merrick was? 'A vile woman, by her own confession,' was the quick reply. 'How am I to find her?' I inquired next. 'Look for a woman in a black dress, with the Red Geneva Cross on her shoulder; she is a nurse in the French ambulance! What has she done?' 'I have lost my papers; I have lost my own clothes; Mercy Merrick has taken them.' 'How do you know that Mercy Merrick has taken them?' 'Nobody else could have taken them—that's how I know it. Do you believe me or not?' She was beginning to excite herself again; I assured her that I would at once send to make inquiries after Mercy Merrick. She turned round, contented, on the pillow. 'There's a good man!' she said. 'Come back and tell me when you have caught her.' Such was my first interview with the English patient at the hospital at Mannheim. It is needless to say that I doubted the existence of the absent person described as a nurse. However, it was possible to make inquiries, by applying to the surgeon, Ignatius Wetzel, whose whereabouts was known to his friends in Mannheim. I wrote to him, and received his answer in due time. After the night attack of the Germans had made them masters of the French position, he had entered the cottage occupied by the French ambulance. He had found the wounded Frenchmen left behind, but had seen no such person in attendance on them as the nurse in the black dress, with the red cross on her shoulder. The only living woman in the place was a young English lady, in a grey travelling cloak, who had been stopped on the frontier, and who was forward-

ed on her way home by the war correspondent of an English journal."

"That was Grace," said Lady Janet.

"And I was the war correspondent," added Horace.

"A few words more," said Julian, "and you will understand my object in claiming your attention."

He returned to the letter for the last time, and concluded his extracts from it as follows:

"Instead of attending at the hospital myself I communicated by letter the failure of my attempt to discover the missing nurse. For some little time afterwards I heard no more of the sick woman whom I shall call Mercy Merrick. It was only yesterday that I received another summons to visit the patient. She had by this time sufficiently recovered to claim her discharge, and she had announced her intention of returning forthwith to England. The head physician, feeling a sense of responsibility, had sent for me. It was impossible to detain her on the ground that she was not fit to be trusted by herself at large, in consequence of the difference of opinion among the doctors on the case. All that could be done was to give me notice, and to leave the matter in my hands. On seeing her for the second time, I found her sullen and reserved. She openly attributed my inability to find the nurse to want of zeal for her interests on my part. I had, on my side, no authority whatever to detain her. I could only inquire whether she had money enough to pay her travelling expenses. Her reply informed me that the chaplain of the hospital had mentioned her forlorn situation in the town and that the English residents had subscribed a small sum of money to enable her to return to her own country. Satisfied on this head, I asked next if she had friends to go to in England. 'I have one friend,' she answered, 'who is a host in herself—Lady Janet Roy.' You may imagine my surprise when I heard this. I found it quite useless to make any further inquiries as to how she came to know your aunt, whether your aunt expected her, and so on. My questions evidently offended her; they were received in sulky silence. Under these circumstances, well knowing that I can trust implicitly to your humane sympathy for misfortune, I have decided (after careful reflection) to ensure the poor creature's safety when she arrives in London by giving her a letter to you. You will hear what she says; and you will be better able to discover than I am whether she really has any claim on Lady Janet Roy. One last word of information, which it may be necessary to add and I shall close this inordinately long letter. At my first interview with her I abstained, as I have already told you, from irritating her by any inquiries on the subject of her name. On this second occasion, however, I decided on putting the question."

As he read those last words, Julian became aware of a sudden movement on the part of his aunt. Lady Janet had risen softly from her chair and had passed behind him with the purpose of reading the consul's letter for herself over her nephew's shoulder. Julian detected the action just in time to frustrate Lady Janet's intention by placing his hand over the last two lines of the letter.

"What do you do that for?" inquired his aunt sharply.

"You are welcome, Lady Janet, to read the close of the letter for yourself," Julian replied. "But before you do so I am anxious to prepare you for a very great surprise. Compose yourself, and let me read on slowly, with your eye on me, until I uncover the last two words which close my friend's letter."

He read the end of the letter, as he had proposed, in these terms:

"I looked the woman straight in the face, and I said to her, 'You have denied that the name marked on the clothes which you wore when you came here was your name. If you are not Mercy Merrick, who are you?' She answered instantly, 'My name is—'"

Julian removed his hand from the page. Lady Janet looked at the next two words and started back with a loud cry of astonishment, which brought Horace instantly to his feet.

"Tell me, one of you!" he cried. "What name did she give?"

Julian told him.

"GRACE ROSEBERRY."

(To be continued.)

M. Michelet's second volume of the "History of the Nineteenth Century," is exclusively devoted to the career of Napoleon, as the first was to his origin, and promises some very interesting revelations on the Consulate and Kleber's expedition to Egypt, in lieu of Bonaparte.

Exhaustion and degeneration follow the excessive use of the senses, without due intervals of rest for repair. In order to maintain the wanted energy, the force expended, whether of body or mind, must be restored. When the expenditure of brain matter and other nervous elements is continued by overwork, the early extinction of life itself may be looked for as the result of such degeneration. The ingredients composing Fellows' Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites are such as constitute healthy blood, re-establish sound nerves and senses, and will consequently not only prevent this exhaustion, but in most cases restore such as have lost.

## Varieties.

A St. Louis maiden explains that "Dolly Varden was a character in Thackeray's play of the 'Terrible Temptation.'" Thanks, dear.

One of the newest novels speaks of its heroine as returning to her humble home "when evening approached clothed in the habiliments of woe."

A LONG SERVICE.—A Cheltenham paper has the following announcement:—"St. James's Church.—On Sunday next the afternoon service will commence at half-past three and continue until further notice."

The *Courier-Journal* is hard on Susan when it says:—"We shall never know the age of Niagara Falls, because Susan B. Anthony is the only person now living who was alive when the Falls were built, and she has forgotten the date."

A good, innocent Philadelphian thinks that newsboys should be more honest. He paid four cents for a paper because the boy cried: "Battle in North Carolina! Horace Greeley wounded in the leg!" and there was no such thing in it.

The saddest incident of misplaced confidence on record is that of a Connecticut man who rescued another from a watery grave only to find that instead of his long lost brother, it was a person to whom he owed three dollars and a half for turnips.

An Irish gentleman of a mechanical turn took off his gas meter to repair it himself, and put it on again upside down, so that at the end of the quarter it was proved with arithmetical correctness that the gas company owed him three pounds seven and sixpence.

A little girl went up to her mother the other morning and said: "Mamma, the children in the garden would not play with me at first, because you did not wear as nice a bonnet and shawl as theirs, but I told them that you were not my mother, only my lady's-maid."

A Titusville wife placed a toy snake in her husband's boots, and then could hardly get breakfast because of her sickening at his performance when he discovered it. He first looked in the mirror, then went and threw his demijohn of old rye into the mill race.

When you see an old gentleman of sixty on a clear bright day carrying a blue cotton umbrella, tied tightly about the waist with a shoe-string—the umbrella tied, not the old gentleman—you may look out for rain before night, but the probabilities are that you will not see it.

A fellow coming from the top of the Alleghenies in New York, in winter, was asked whether it was as cold there as in the city. He had probably been at some march of intellect school, for he glanced at a thermometer. "Horribly cold," said he, "for they have no thermometers there, and, of course, it's just as cold as it pleases."

One day Hiron went to see Voltaire, but did not find him at home. In order to excite his ire, he wrote on the door: "Old villain." Two days afterward he met the author of the "Henriade" in the street. "I was at your house," he said to Voltaire, with a sneer, "but did not find you at home." "I know it," replied Voltaire; "you left your name on the door."

The customers of a cooper in the Highlands caused him a vast deal of vexation by their saving habits and persistence in getting all their tubs and casks repaired, buying but very little work. "I stood it long enough, however," said he, "until one day old Mac'awhrie brought in an old bungale, to which he said he wanted a new barrel made. Then I quit the North in disgust."

A weaver, who lives in a village in Ayrshire, and occupies every Sunday a conspicuous "bottom-room" in the front "loft" of the parish church, was a shameless votary of Morpheus. Day after day, for years, John Thomson regularly laid his head upon the book-board at the reading out of the text, and there did he sleep, yes, sometimes snore, till the conclusion of the discourse. John seemed to think the text all that was necessary; he "dreamed the rest." This at length became intolerably annoying to the clergyman, and two elders were sent to remonstrate with him on the exceeding slowness of his behaviour. "I'm a hard-working man at the week but Sabbath; and though I like the kirk and the minister well enough, unless ye ca' my head off, I canna keep my een open." "Well, John," said the remonstrants "if you will allow Satan to exercise his power over you in this dawning, dawning way, in the very kirk itself, what gars ye sit in the front loft, where a' body amass sees you? Can ye no tak a back seat, where your sin micht be less seen and heard?" "Tak a back seat!" exclaimed John; "na, na, I'll never quit my cosy corner; my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather a' sat there; and there sit will John, come o't what will." This remonstrance being found ineffectual, the minister resolved upon the desperate measure of affronting John out of his truly anti-Christian practice, by rebuking him before the congregation, and while he was in the very act. Little, however, did he know the principle of resistance which glowed within the bosom of the drowsy wabster. Next Sunday afternoon, as soon as John had, as usual, sunk into slumber upon the desk, and fairly begun his serenade, he cried: "Sit up, John Thomson!" "I'm no sleeping, sir," quoth John. "Oh, John, John! can ye tell me what I said just?" "On ny, sir; ye said, 'Sit up, John Thomson!'"

Jacobs' Rheumatic Liquid is all that it is recommended.