

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

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LILLYMERE.

CHAPTER VIII.

SALE OF LOST LUGGAGE.

THE first small drop of rain, source of the mighty Niagara, falls somewhere. The speck of vapour on a brilliant summer sky giving out that drop of rain is a cloud somewhere. Without sunshine there would be no cloud. Without love no eclipse in the joys of lovers.

This is day of the sale of unclaimed luggage at the Great Western depot. The youthful lovers of yesterday are not yet ready to attend as they promised, and it is doubtful when they may, or if they will attend.

Emily Inkle, after that sweet delicious time in society of Tobias on Barton heights above the city, drove out to Ancaster eight miles to the female relative dwelling there, and found at that gentleman's house a messenger from Conway with a letter desiring her to return home by earliest train. Adding, to quicken the return, that a certain military gentleman had arrived. Emily had faintly hinted at this personage to Toby more than once, not to distress him, but possibly to suggest the propriety of early explanations about his personal fortunes and family.

This letter very much ruffled the tranquil fountain within the gentle bosom, already disturbed a little. A clear shallow fountain not often dimpled even with a thought of unhappiness, except by its own mild breezes of self-willed waywardness. Some trifles had occurred in the city after the pleasant hours on the mountain. Silly enough and groundless, but they emanated as vapour from the very warmth and brilliancy of the atmosphere of the day's love. These were the trifles:

On James street Tobias and Emily met two ladies. One, seemingly about her own age, was like herself graceful in figure, pleasing in features, with the nose perfect in beauty—not as Emily's own nose, a shade too short. The other, some years older, a lady of fine form in the ripe bloom of beautiful womanhood. Tobias in passing saluted them, and the elder in her magnificent beauty smiled, bending the head to the young man gracefully, Emily thought graciously.

"Who are they, Tobias?"

"The Donna Eurydia of Florida is the one who returned my salute. The other she addresses as Lucy; more of the name I don't know."

"How is it they know you?"

"They arrived two days ago from the States, and occupy a suite of apartments at the Golden Joy Hotel where I am staying. I met the Donna Eurydia at Detroit last summer."

"And so this Donna now visits you. Is she a Spaniard?"

"Of mixed descent I am informed. Partly a Floridian Spaniard, and partly Scotch, but in the immediate parentage a native of York State, on the frontier down by the Thousand Islands. She owns great properties of land and slaves in the South. By reputation the Donna is one of the richest ladies of America, as certainly she is one of the most beautiful."

"Upon my word! you seem to know all about this Donna Eurydia down to the pedigree?"

"Know this much and nothing more; and only this by hearsay; at least nothing more worth naming."

"What is the something more not worth naming, Tobias?"

"They say she is a sorceress?"

"A sorceress! what is that?"

"She owns immeasurable wealth, and nobody can tell how she came by it."

"Don't like you to know that woman, Tobias. She seemed quite familiar with you."

"The Donna had some friend once, or knew some one, an English Colonel of dragoons I think it was, who fell in battle, whom I resemble she is pleased to say, and has addressed me on that topic, desiring to know my family pedigree, which I do not choose to tell her. Farther than this we have no acquaintance."

"You are reserved in talking of your family connections."

"Not if I found any one entitled to enquire, perhaps."

"How much of your confidence and esteem would entitle one to enquire?"

"Emily, observe this carriage. That plain modest waggonette with the pair of sleek black horses. No livery on the coachman you see, and no other servant in attendance. No show. Yet the comely matron sitting there is a lady born. One of old Scottish lineage. By inheritance wealthy, and now wife of a distinguished gentleman. Remark her benign countenance; its intelligence, mildness. Always doing some charitable, noble angelic

thing, that lady. Keeps carriage and horses only for the uses of her blessed visitation, not from vain pomp and show. That is my ideal of the adorable creature woman in her highest character. One always doing good, not from effort, nor within the circumscription of any sect, but from a purely benevolent nature, trained by intelligent sagacity. Administratrix of Heaven."

"Who is she, pray?"

"Lady Lomond Benleddi."

"Married?"

"Yes, married. I said her husband is rich and distinguished."

"A family?"

"Yes. Quite a family."

"And daughters of course; one or two old enough and lovely enough to attract Mr. Tobias Oman; aren't they?"

"Never saw any but children; don't think any are grown up."

"Sure of that, Toby?"

"I am sure; indeed I am."

"You enquired, then?"

"No, I'm in no way interested in that direction."

"You seem vastly interested in extolling Lady Lomond Benleddi."

"I am. What a happy world this might be if mothers were all, or they possessing wealth were all like Lady Benleddi."

So, in the morning when Tobias drove to Ancaster to bring Emily to the city to enjoy another delightful day in manner of the enchanted yesterday, she saw him only a minute in the porch, the aunt standing as guard, to say she would be otherwise engaged; that a special letter called her home; friends had arrived, at least one friend, and she must go at once. No, he could not accompany her all the way, nor any part of the way. She would drive with aunt to the town, and so go express to Toronto and to Conway.

Tobias thus rebuffed Emily retired within doors and wept. And he returned sadly, solitarily to the city; the bright morning of a fresh summer day glowing all around, glorious in loveliness, but in his heart like death. Like beauty bereft of the soul.

Not before had Emily Inkle suffered in the mind's heart a real pain. In broken dreams all night Donna Eurydia of Florida and the fair young Lucy reappeared; Lucy with that perfectly formed nose. And the praises of the high born beneficent Lady Benleddi, and the plain waggonette, came ever and anon in the dreams from the lips of Tobias as if reproaching Emily's own lowly born, ambitious and showy, dearly loved mother, and the liveried servants with the sumptuously appointed family chariot at Conway. Reproaches from the lips that yesterday touched hers in moments of sweet forgetfulness. And, to be now summoned peremptorily home; that military wooer come! What if she must at once decide on yes or no to him!

And again: the Donna Eurydia had enquired about the family and pedigree of Tobias, which said he: "I did not choose to tell her." And Emily had said to this: "How much of your confidence and esteem might entitle one to enquire about your family connections?" To which he replied not, but by preference expatiated on the humble equipage of Lady Benleddi. Ah! he may be a youth of low tastes. Something must be wrong. Either Tobias is a real Prince in disguise, or he is a wif, and has a mystery he dares not confess. Such were Emily's dreams, asleep or awake or half asleep all night.

Sorrowfully, sadly the maiden went home to Conway. She had come purposely in hope that the young English gentleman would declare intentions, and disclose himself. He had not. As he returned to Hamilton city, so she to Conway town, the morning of flowery summer lying around as if dead, the living soul of the beauty gone.

Tobias walked to the headland overlooking the bay where he watched and awaited the arrival of Emily's train yesterday. Now he saw it depart. Emily's train. Yonder it goes around the curve at head of the bay, carrying all his treasure. Emily's train. Going to cold, empty Conway, the town now cheerless as a coffin. But to be replenished, enriched and jewelled casket presently, Conway town, with Emily in it.

ADVERTISEMENT.—Annual sale of unclaimed goods and luggage at the Great Western Railway central depot, Hamilton, Canada West, on Wednesday at 9 a.m. Fortunate investments may be made. Offered to highest bidders. Sale without reserve.

TRENT VALLEY.

Auctioneer.

It is now 8.30 a.m. Groups of people loiter in the waiting-rooms and on the platform. Some stand by the viaduct, foot of Bay Street, and remark on people going to the sale in quest of fortunes to be looked for in partially empty valises, or in trunks altogether empty, containing nothing but, perchance, a lady's old dress, or a lawyer's fragmentary papers.

Two men stand together on the green knoll near that under feet of disconsolate Tobias. One in conversation breaks away from subjects broached by the other, pretending to muse on the scenery before them. But he is intently studying the other; teasing and alluring from topics he would talk on; mentally wrestling or fooling him to reach by a chance at some of his secrets.

This artful man is De Peri. A drowsy-looking simpleton with incomprehensible grey eyes, now dull as orbs of a cat in the sun, anon glaring and electric. Muscular and strong; short in stature, but taller some days than others. Manly or erect, or crouching and low, as occasion arises.

The tall, whiskery, elegant elderly gentleman is Oliver Iram the gipsy, recently out from England. On pleasure, so far as society knows. Pretendedly on service of Government when talking with De Peri. For the peace of Dame Dorothy Eccley at her dying day—a time lying not far out in the future—when he left the gilded cage at Eccley Manor. On his own secret affairs about succession to the Lillymere title and estates, should the real heir not appear, as the art of the detective enables him to guess. He addresses De Peri:—

"You say two ladies arrived from the States day before yesterday. What ages?"

"One about eighteen, the other older."

"What did you discover or surmise about them?"

"My profession implies silence, sir, even as to surmises."

"I speak pointedly, because the philosophy of detectivism seems as much a mystery and a difficulty as any secret undetected. From information received, as they say in London, you did something; what was it?"

"The correct London phrase, sir, but not the exact fact. I had no information outside of my own perception."

"You followed them in the streets, why?"

"This may have been why; they selected three bed-chambers and three drawing-rooms at the Golden, wherefore I inferred they expected friends to follow."

"What next?"

"They walked out and separated. The younger called at a bookstore on King Street and purchased a dream-book. Must have had, or desired to have, some peculiar dream. An hour later the elder lady, by herself, purchased a dream-book at the depot from Tunis's man. The younger was then in her chamber writing letters of impassioned tenderness."

"Dream-books; what does this incident suggest?"

"That they are not ordinary women. Either very silly, or very strong-minded."

"Why strong-minded?"

"To resort to dreams and interpretations for a clue to something they want to know."

"Is not that weak-minded?"

"In women poorly clothed, with insufficiency of money, it would be superstition, or speaking a local dialect, even with money, it would indicate ignorance. The ladies at the Golden are well dressed. Occupy expensive apartments, play newest operatic music, sing, the younger sweetly, the elder like a Prima Donna. They converse in correct literary English, but with a slight Vermont tone. A pleasing inflection of the voice colloquial you may not be acquainted with, probably? In them, or ladies such as they, reference to dream-books suggests a tendency to mental development. In the spirit forces they must be vivacious. That is, strong-minded."

"Are common sixpenny dream-books authorities with spiritualists?"

"Possibly not. But concentration of thought on the functions of a dreamy brain, may induce the mental phenomena desired."

"Desired? What may they desire?"

"Last night, to see the interior of portmantaus and valises, to be sold to-day."

"From which you infer?"

"From which I infer they have personal interest in one particular trunk, portmanteau, or valise, but do not know its shape, size, colour?"

"You think they expected to see the contents in a dream?"

"In a dream. And, seeing them, take note of the external form and colour of the trunk, or valise, so as to know it again?"

"What do you propose doing?"

"Watch their motions. Observe what kind of unclaimed luggage attracts their attention. What they bid for. What they buy. Or who buys what they bid for but do not obtain."

"How did you at first suppose they came to attend this sale?"

"They went to the placards first thing on arriving at the depot. They passed the office of Vallery, the auctioneer. Returned. On frivolous pretence went in. Talked with the clerk, pricing this article and that in the warehouses. The elder gazing on Vallery through the glass screen of his private office, and on the young Englishman, Mr. Oman, who happened to be there. Looking them in the face as if through and through."

"Did they tell this?"

"I saw it."

"De Peri, some other circumstance led you to observe them; may I know it?"

"There was another circumstance. They have in private keeping, in the elder lady's travelling luggage, an English newspaper of old date, and a later American paper, containing the same advertisement: One thousand pounds reward."

"The same reward now offered?"

"Yes, the same advertisement I am acting on."

"How do you know they have such newspapers in private luggage?"

"Ha! I'm a professional gentleman, sir. Not to be caught tripping."

"But to me?"

"Not even to you. Any way, not yet."

In silence Iram shrinks from what he deems the vulgar pretension of this rude, sharp-witted colonist. The secrets of two or more great houses to be unfolded even partially to this roving, homeless, unknown, or, at best, irresponsible person, is a thought inducing revulsion.

The other knows this. He knows, at least, the alphabet of the gipsy's share of the secret. De Peri is also testing new inventions in science, and expects immense results as operator. And for the inventor, one Roy Reuben, boundless endless renown. He thinks faint traces of thoughts passing through the mind of his colloquiter have been obtained by the psychoscope and mentograph, a compound instrument. When perfected they expect it to write from mental images in the eye every subject, object, and form of thought of any person looking on the small disc. And magnetism of the operator's eye is to constrain the victim to select the desired topic for thought. As yet success is not perfect, the mentagraph makes the blunder of writing images from the cat's orbs of De Peri as from the eyes of another. And the psychoscopic is not supplied with a complete alphabet and lexicon of eye language, but Roy Reuben, working in some secret place, is supposed to be evolving that coming triumph.

A penetration this the gipsy mysticist little suspects. Did he know his dark thoughts to be gathered in by the psychoscope, and written legibly, indelibly, by the mentagraph, both within that small cabinet partially covered by the travelling cloak hanging on De Peri's arm, Iram would recoil in horror.

Yet possibly not. The mysticist may desire to privately possess this agency of power should he come to know it when perfected. For social and political uses in London what an acquisition. But the inventor, in the interests of society, resolves to give all the world its advantages without reservation. No patent rights. Justice on the Bench may then read what a witness knows before he speaks. Lovers will not deceive unless by accident. The state of a merchant's accounts may be written and read from his eyes. Lying will cease as useless and dangerous. The new moral world will dawn in truth. Oh, for that day, that day of truth! The psychoscope and mentagraph; make haste with the instruments, Roy Reuben.

Dreaming not of De Peri's penetration Iram indulges in a moral deflection. The detective having said: "No, not even to you. Anyway not yet," the other dissembles.

"You seem a gentleman of singular ability. Qualified for higher employments than the functions of your present position. I taken, you to be a gentleman of birth and education pre-eminently intelligent. Is it not so? In a colony, too, your avocations must be far beneath natural social position. In London you might be more worthily employed, don't you think?"

"Would be only a criminal officer there. Here I am in a manner private diplomatic surveyor of America, with occasional runs to Europe in like capacity. London has no professional gentleman similarly employed, if indeed there be any qualified for a branch of the profession so high. You have good men in the Metropolitan Force, I admit. One, an honour to the nation, Mr. Barb Dublu, poet, patron of poets; artist, patron of artists; scholar, bibliopolist, with hand of a lady; its calligraphy excelling all writing previously known. Don't you know him? Handsome in person, intellectual in features."

Iram winces. He knows Dublu too well. Which perceiving, De Peri says: "Better go to the place of sale separately, if you go at all. I go now."

They part. On way down the detective takes a soda-water at the Station Hotel, by way of observing who may be around. Then crosses to the depot and immigrant sheds, the last the place of sale. On edge of the assembly he perceives the ladies from the Golden. He would set the psychoscope at them to penetrate and write their thoughts, but as yet the instrument does not work well, and it is a secret, to remain concealed until the philosopher Roy Reuben elaborates the lexicon of the occult languages.

Others coming under scrutiny of the electric eyes are: Pursley of Waterdown; Tom Begbie of Lot Seven; and Barbara Meston of Lot Three, Second Concession of Bettybury; John of Ancaster; Doctor Tunny of the city; Eyebird of the Railway; the Mayor, the Reeve of Barton. And there is an orator of God present, probably looking for incidents to be aptly used in future sermons of marvellous power; the Reverend Isaiah Hosannah Tweedbouney, a minister mild and genial as the Gospel he preaches; or, flashing as unlooked-for lightning; or, sublime as the rocks by road to Ancaster in blasts of summer thunder. Storms electrical. Bulmy ruin and sunshine following. Time when souls grow and blossom.

"Seen one like it?" The younger of the ladies asks the other.

"More than one. Two so nearly alike that either may be it."