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"Love in the Wilds"

—OR—

The Romance of a South African Trading Station.

CHAPTER XLVI.
CLOSING TIME AT THE DOCKS.

What you must do is to keep him in the docks here until you can communicate with me.

While he spoke the young gentleman took from his pocket a neatly-clasped purse and extracted something that sounded crisp and bank-note-like.

Mr. Wiley, with an eye on the pocket-book, smoothed his chin. "Hem!" he ejaculated. "Suppose I do find him from your description—he might come into these docks, you know—it'd be a difficult job to keep him here."

"It might, I admit," replied the youth; "it would, without doubt, give you some little trouble, and as I could not think of giving you trouble without some remuneration I would be glad if you would accept this as an earnest of the reward I should be willing to pay for the service."

And he held out a bank-note. Mr. Wiley took it with sparkling eyes and unfolded it.

"Twenty pounds!" he exclaimed, eying the young gentleman almost suspiciously.

"Is not that enough?" asked the youth. "It is only an installment, you must remember."

"Enough? Well, I should call it good pay!" replied Mr. Wiley, putting it into his pocket; "but, as you say, it might be a difficult job to keep him, even if I got hold of him—which, by the way, I'll do, if he turns up at either of the other docks, for, you see, now you've been so liberal, I shouldn't mind speaking to a pal or two and putting them up to letting me know if such a person did arrive at their docks."

"I see—I see," said the young gentleman, rising and trembling slightly. "I thank you. You will not find me ungrateful if success should attend your efforts."

Mr. Wiley rose. "One thing more," he said, as the young gentleman stood on the threshold. "It'd be as well, perhaps, if I knew the name as he sailed under. He might be kept to it, you know—there's no knowing."

The red-headed youth came back to the little oil-cloth-covered table and, with his back to the light, so that they could not see his face—though they could see that he was trembling badly—said, brokenly: "Laurence Harman."

CHAPTER XLVII.
LOVE'S SPRING-TIME.
The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.—SHAKESPEARE.

The Skipper comes aboard

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"Skippers"

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to me."

"Do not forget my greater wish, then," murmured Rebecca, earnestly. "Rebecca," replied Sir Charles, gazing at her with his deep, brown eyes earnestly, almost imploringly, "look at me. I tell you I am utterly changed—changed for good, thanks to you and the Warren; I am on a new track, and I promise you that I will not run off it."

"I believe you, Charlie," she said. "Good-by."

"Good-by," he said; then, after starting, came back. "One thing more," he said, in a low voice. "Supposing I discover anything—something slight or important, yet that you ought to know—how shall I communicate with you? I must not see you you say."

Rebecca thought a minute. "Send a letter with a bouquet of flowers by one of the servants—by the quiet, red-haired clerk; he sometimes goes with Mrs. Lucas."

"Ah, he is a new arrival; I have not seen him; but all right, I will do so. Good-by, Rebecca, once more."

Then he was gone, passing rapidly down the path in his long, tree strides, just a little shortened by his late illness and weakness.

Rebecca, quiet Rebecca, looked after him with a sigh and a slightly heightened color.

"Poor Charlie!" she murmured, quietly. "Poor Charlie!"

Pity is akin to love. Reginald Dartmouth had been informed of his friend's recovery, and had sent word by one of his gold-laced retainers that a carriage would be in waiting to convey him to the Hall, but Sir Charles had sent word back that he should prefer to walk, and so he came upon the terrace without warning, surprising a group consisting of the duchess, the countess, Sir Bois, and Reginald Dartmouth. They all looked up and greeted him warmly—Sir Charles was a favorite with every one—Reginald Dartmouth taking his hand and shaking it with most unusual ardor.

He manifested so much affection, indeed, that Sir Charles felt dreadfully uncomfortable, and shifted on one side uneasily with a natural repugnance to listening to the protestations of a dark and fearful crime.

"Oh, I'm all right again, thanks!" he said, as cordially as he could, vowing to himself as he spoke, that he would seize the first opportunity and return to town. "I'm all right again. How are you? Don't look quite the thing."

This was true, for there was a worried look upon the schemer's face, which it was impossible for him to conceal at all times.

"I'm perfectly well, I assure you!" replied Reginald Dartmouth, with a sudden change in his manner; "perfectly, and very glad to see you back. Only half an hour ago we were wishing you were among us."

"Oh, that is only natural!" retorted Sir Charles, with a touch of his old humor. "I am always missed, am I not, your grace?"

"Yes, always, my dear Sir Charles," murmured her grace, waking from an amiable half-slumber. "Really I have felt quite blue sometimes for want of your lively and amusing little stories. I was saying to Annette only this morning that I really did hope you would be able to return to us this week."

"And I was very angry, and have been saying a hundred times, Sir Charles," the countess, with a charming sadness, "that I wished my poor ring had been—oh, at the bottom of the sea before it had anything to do with your unfortunate accident!"

Reginald Dartmouth smiled and turned the precious ring round on his finger, with a significant glance, which brought the color in a faint flush to the countess's beautiful face.

Sir Charles laughed. "Oh, a 'more tumble! Nothing to speak of. Hello, here comes Leon!" and he turned to shake hands.

"And how have you fared, Sir Charles?" asked the duchess, who seemed to be in a conversational mood that morning. "How have you fared at the ogre's castle?"

"Ogre's castle!" repeated Sir Charles, echoing her grace's laugh, but not looking very pleased at the witicism. "If you mean at the Warren, most excellently, I assure you. I never knew ogre softer-hearted or more kindly-minded."

"Dear me!" responded her grace, opening her eyes to their widest extent. "Why, my dear captain—that

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was the style in which she was always good enough to allude to the host—"my dear captain gave me to understand that Miss Badwell—"

"Goodman," suggested Sir Charles, in an undertone.

"Oh, yes; Goodman—I beg your pardon; I am so very bad at names—Miss Goodman was a very terrible sort of a person, an old maid, stern and dragon-like."

Reginald Dartmouth frowned slightly, but only for a moment; then, before Sir Charles could reply, said, in his most dulcet tones:

"Your grace misunderstood me. The lady is still single, but a most amiable, sweet-tempered lady, though reserved—rather reserved."

"Oh, is that all?" said her grace, with still wider eyes. "Well, I shall most surely go and thank her for her kindness to my favorite, Sir Charles."

"Miss Goodman lives a very retired and reserved life, your grace," responded Sir Charles, quickly. "I doubt whether the honor of a visit from your grace would not embarrass her."

"Well, well, just as you like," said her grace, good-naturedly, dropping back into her easiest of easy lounges and closing her eyes ready for another nap, while Reginald Dartmouth, upon whom nothing of the conversation or the expression on Sir Charles's face had been lost, moved away to meet the count.

Sir Charles found that many of the visitors had taken their departure, and the duchess and the Vitzarellis intended leaving the Dale in a few days.

(To be continued.)

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