



(J. L. Harbour, in the 'Youth's Companion'.)

No one ever knew the exact cause of the estrangement between Maria Devlin and her distinguished brother, the Hon. Horace Devlin. The Devlins had always been wisely reticent regarding their family affairs. It was understood that there had been a violent quarrel over the large estate left by the father of the brother and sister, and that they had never spoken to each other since the division of the property. The estrangement must have been embarrassing to both of them, since they lived in a small town and could not help meeting frequently.

The Hon. Horace was much more popular than his sister Maria. She had always been somewhat eccentric, and this eccentricity had become more marked after her quarrel with her brother.

Her father had been a man of very simple tastes, and had lived all of his life in the plain old red house that had been his father's and his grandfather's. It was a great and bitter trial to Maria when her brother, not long after their father's death, tore down the old house and built on its site a very large and pretentious modern mansion.

Miss Maria had her father's simple tastes, and the associations of the old house were very dear to her, even when it was no longer her home. The big, showy mansion was an offence to her eyes every time she passed it. In marked and striking contrast to her brother's house was her own. It was as much an eyesore to her brother as his house was to Miss Maria.

When the Devlin estate had finally been divided, Miss Maria moved into a tiny old house once occupied by her father's gardener. It was hardly tenable, and Miss Maria made few repairs before moving into it. It stood directly across the road from her brother's fine home, and was a decided blemish on the landscape seen from his spacious front piazza. He had, through his attorney, made his sister an offer to buy it at a price far more than its value, but the offer had been so promptly and so decidedly rejected that it had never been repeated.

It was thought that Miss Maria allowed the old house to remain in a state of neglect, and the premises to be in a state of continual disorder, for the sole purpose of adding to her brother's annoyance and mortification. She also added many irritating traits to her natural eccentricities of character, and was nearly always spoken of by the people of the town as 'queer Miss Maria.'

Her sister-in-law was an extremely fashionable lady, while Maria went about in the

shabbiest and most antiquated of garments. She was far from being scrupulously tidy, and seemed to take delight in setting aside the ordinary conventionalities of life. It was known, however, that she was very good and kind to the poor, while her brother was by no means noted for his generosity toward them.

The Hon. Horace Devlin entertained lavishly, while his sister never entertained at all, and did not go into society. It was re-



HON. HORACE DEVLIN.

garded as scandalous that Miss Maria should have chosen to spend the afternoon in her front yard with a man's hat on her head, and her skirts pinned up about her waist, on the day of her brother's grand lawn party, when he had a car-load of guests out from the city.

So the breach between the brother and sister widened until there was no probability that it would ever be bridged over. When they met they stared at each other in stony silence.

Wenfield, the town in which the Devlins lived, was a small manufacturing place. Most of its inhabitants worked in the mills. Many of them were thrifty men and women, who saved as much as they could of their earnings, and deposited them in the one savings-bank in Wenfield.

The Hon. Horace Devlin was cashier of the Wenfield savings-bank, and never had there been such wild excitement throughout the town as on the morning when a placard appeared on the bank door bearing the two ominous words:

**BANK CLOSED.**

Men and women left their work and hurried to the bank with eager and anxious faces. Many had in it the savings of a lifetime, and they stared at the portentous words with wildly beating hearts. There was the most outspoken indignation when the truth became known. The fact was that the Hon. Horace Devlin had brought shame and disgrace on an old and honored name, and privation and possible poverty to many homes, by becoming a defaulter.

It was discovered that he had for years been speculating with money belonging to the bank, and his defalcations were sufficient to embarrass it. It was feared that its doors must be permanently closed, and that the depositors would lose all, or at least the most, of their savings. The Hon. Horace Devlin was missing, and no trace of his whereabouts could be found.

A week after the closing of the bank another notice appeared on its doors. The second notice was as follows:—

**NOTICE.**—All creditors of the Wenfield Savings-Bank are hereby requested to meet in the Town Hall on Friday evening at eight o'clock.

Many who were not creditors of the bank crowded into the Town Hall with the bank depositors on Friday evening. Indeed, the hall was filled to overflowing, and no one seemed to have any definite idea of what was to be done.

When eight o'clock came no one had yet appeared on the platform, but a few minutes later a door at the rear opened, and to the amazement of all present, Miss Maria Devlin walked forward and faced the people.

There was an instant hush. One could almost hear the breathing of the spectators. Miss Maria herself seemed calmer than any of them. Her voice was perfectly steady when she began to speak. Every word could be heard in all parts of the hall.

'My friends,' she said, simply, 'I am here to make reparation for the wrong done you by my brother, Horace Devlin. The Devlins have always been honest people. No man ever had a higher or a more deserved reputation for honesty than my father. He owed no man anything, nor do I. I feel that I owe it to my father to make full amends for his son's wrong-doing, and to do all that I can to remove the shame and disgrace he has brought on a good and honorable name.

'Now I am here to say that I will pay every dollar due the depositors who had money in the Wenfield Savings-Bank, and—'

'Hooray for Miss Maria!' shouted a wildly excited man in the rear of the hall. 'Hooray!'

The crowd took up the cry, and the hall rang as it never had before.

'Hooray for the Devlin name!' shrieked some one else, when partial order had been restored. 'Hooray for old Judge Devlin, as