

THE SHIP OF SOLOMON.

By Arizona's sea of sand
Some bearded miners gray and old,
And resolute in search of gold,
Sat down to tap the savage land.
They tented in a canyon's mouth
That gaped against the warm wide south,
And underneath a wave-washed wall,
Where now nor rains nor winds may fall,
They delved the level salt-white sands
For gold, with bold and horny hands.

A miner stood beside his mine,
He pulled his beard, then looked away
Across the level sea of sand,
Beneath his broad and hairy hand,
A hand as hard as knots of pine.
"It looks so like a sea," said he,
He pulled his beard and he did say,
"It looks just like a dried-up sea."
Again he pulled that beard of his,
But said no other thing than this.

A stalwart miner dealt a stroke,
And struck a buried beam of oak;
An old ship's beam the shaft appeared,
With storm-worm faded figurehead.
The miner twisted his long beard,
Leaned on his pick-axe as he spoke;
"Tis from some long-lost ship," he said,
"Some laden ship of Solomon
That sailed these lonesome seas upon
In search of Ophir's mine; ah! me,
That sailed the dried-up desert sea."
JOAQUIN MILLER.

THE COLONEL'S WIFE.

When we first heard that the Colonel was to bring home a wife when he returned from leave, we all entirely disbelieved the rumour.

The idea that Colonel Carlton would ever marry seemed utterly absurd; we had all settled that years ago; and, indeed, in every respect he appeared the most confirmed old bachelor imaginable.

When my husband first joined the regiment, years before the time I am speaking of, Colonel, then Major Carlton, used sometimes to be made the object of attack by some match-making mother or mature damsel; but even these had desisted long since; and at length it seemed to be a recognized fact, that nothing would ever induce him to change his condition. His extreme unsociability, even with his own brother officers, and the great dislike he evinced to ladies' society, strengthened us in this opinion; so that, when one morning we saw the rumour confirmed by the announcement of his marriage in the paper, it created quite a little stir among us; and when my husband read it out to me at breakfast: "On the 28th inst., at St. Jude's, Parkhill, Surrey, Colonel Thomas Carlton, to Mabel, youngest daughter of John Percy, Esq.," I confess that I put down my cup in quite a little flutter of excitement and curiosity. "So it is true, after all," said my husband. "I'm not easily surprised, but I must own this does astonish me. I did not think any woman living could have caught Carlton."

"Caught?" retorted I, rather indignantly; "how do you know she caught him? I am sure I pity her, poor thing, whoever she is; his fussy, fidgety ways would drive me distracted in a month."

"Ah! yes, but then you've been spoiled, old lady, by having caught me."

"By having caught a goose," I replied. "But seriously, George, dear, I wonder what sort of woman could have been induced to marry such an old fossil as Colonel Carlton? You must confess it's not likely to be an enviable fate."

"Oh! I suppose he's found some middle-aged woman with money. By-the-way, Mary, you'll be deposed from your position as senior lady. I hope, for your sake, she'll be pleasant, and not take the entire management of your schools and old women out of your hands." And so saying, my lord and master betook himself to parade.

As I went about my usual household occupations that morning, my thoughts would continually wander away to Colonel Carlton's new wife. It was a matter of some importance to me that she should be nice and pleasant. The Colonel having been so long a bachelor, I, in virtue of my husband's position as senior major, had had all arrangements for the comfort of the women and children vested in my hands; and I was conscious of a slight thrill of vexation, as I reflected that I might have to give all this up to a woman quite unacquainted with the troubles and worries which beset the soldier's wife, and with which I had been familiar for the last fifteen years.

I had my own pet theories, too, about the schools, and one or two clothing-clubs I had established; and I knew I could not bear to see them upset without a pang. Of course, it did not follow that they would be upset; but thinking it probable that a middle-aged woman, such as the Colonel's wife would surely be, would very likely have theories of her own also, I tried to prepare myself to surrender the reins of government with a good grace. I did not think I should mind it so much, if I saw her tender and pitiful to my poor women; but should she be (oh! horror) a strong-minded woman, full of wise sayings and good advice, I felt as if I should be obliged to rebel against her authority.

Going out in the course of the day, I met Captain Davis's wife, a nice, bright, merry little Irish woman, who seemed to have friends everywhere, and to know something of every one. Of course we spoke of the Colonel's marriage.

"I know something of some Percys in Surrey," said the little woman, "neighbours of some friends of mine; but Mr. Percy is a briefless barrister, who has never done any good either for himself or anybody else, and has a large family. I remember hearing of him when I was there, but I never saw him. I do not fancy he

was over respectable," continued she, confidentially; "but, of course, Colonel Carlton would be the last man to marry into a family of that sort; besides which, Mr. Percy's youngest daughter is scarcely twenty, so, of course, they can't be the people. Colonel Carlton would never make such a goose of himself at his time of life as to marry a girl," concluded she, disrespectfully.

"My dear," I said, oracularly; "no man is ever too old to make a goose of himself; though I must confess that I do not expect to find Mrs. Carlton much under forty."

"Well, whether she's twenty or forty, I've no doubt she will live quite long enough to repent her marriage," Mrs. Davis says, with a little laugh. "I do not think the saying about an old man's darling is likely to hold good in this case—do you?"

"Hardly," replied I, smiling; for, truth to tell, the idea of Colonel Carlton ever getting anything living, whether wife, child, or dog, seemed absurd. He certainly was, as the young officers used to say of him, 'as hard as nails!' "However, Mrs. Davis, let us hope for the best," I say, with a twinge of remorse, for it seemed unkind to settle the poor woman's fate off-hand as we have been doing; "perhaps, a good sensible middle-aged wife may humanise the Colonel a little."

"Ah! I wish he'd retire, and let your husband take command, for you'd be the dearest Colonel's wife in the world," observes the affectionate little soul, to whom I had once been able to render a slight service.

"Hush!" I say, for she is giving voice to some ambitious thoughts which have been worrying me all the morning; "Colonel Carlton is a good officer, and would be a loss to the regiment; and, Pussie, dear, (my pet name for my little friend) let us all welcome her cordially among us: remember it is a trying position for any woman to occupy just at first."

Pussie gives me an impetuous hug as we part in my garden, under the shade of a friendly Hawthorn. "I will be sure to be very good to her, if it's only to please you," is her parting salutation.

For a couple of months we heard no more of the Colonel and his bride, and had almost given up talking of them, when one morning my husband, coming in from parade, said to me, "Well, Mary, your curiosity will be gratified at last. The Carltons are back."

"Is his leave up already? dear me! I am sorry," said I, thinking of my schools. "However, it can't be helped. Have you seen her? What is she like? Where are they staying? and when do you think we had better call?"

"One question at a time, my dear. They are staying at the Royal, and I really think it would be only kind if you call at once. As she is quite a stranger, you might be of some use to her."

"We will call this afternoon," I decide promptly. "But have you seen her? Now do not be provoking, but tell me the truth."

"No, I've not seen her."

"Has any one?"

"Yes. Smith came down from town by the same train."

"And what is she like?"

"My dear child, I really did not ask."

And he really had not. A want of curiosity, for which I did not forgive him for at least ten minutes.

However, we agreed that we would call in the afternoon; and I was so impatient to start, that I was ready full half an hour before the time, and had to wait for my husband, who did not come in until my patience was nearly exhausted.

However, in due time, we arrived at the Royal. Mrs. Carlton was at home, the waiter said, but the Colonel had just gone out; would we walk upstairs. We followed him upstairs and into the room, and—I was struck speechless with surprise! There rose out of the depths of a luxurious armchair, a lovely child. A fairy-like creature, with bright auburn hair and large beseeching blue eyes, a tender, half-tremulous smile lurking round her lips, as though she were imploring you to love her, and my heart went out to her at once; and since the moment I first clasped her hand in mine that afternoon we have been firm friends.

Of course, on that occasion I did not learn much of her beyond her youth and extreme loveliness. She was gentle and quiet in manner; self-possessed beyond her years; and, in spite of her childlike appearance, seemed quite at home and at ease in her new position.

The impression she made on every one in the regiment was decidedly favourable; although, of course, the comments on Colonel Carlton's folly in marrying so young a girl were numerous. Nevertheless, the men were all vanquished by her beauty, and the women—in spite of it. She never interfered with anybody; my schools and poor women were left entirely in my hands as before; and, though she was invariably gentle and courteous to all who approached her, she never made a favourite, and consequently (as those know who have ever been one of a little world like ours) never an enemy. The only approach to an intimacy which she made was with myself. She would drop in occasionally for an hour's chat; and was invariably a pleasant companion, talking on all subjects with a more than average amount of intelligence; but the talk never dropped into a confidential strain. She never mentioned her husband, or alluded to her girlhood; nor did she manifest a hearty interest in the arrangements of her new home, as a young wife should. It pained me to see her so apparently indifferent to everything; but once, when I tried to draw her on to speak of her girl-

ish days, she answered with so much constraint, and the subject was evidently so distasteful to her, that I left it at once, and, indeed, she did not come near me for fully ten days afterwards. Colonel Carlton remained as unsocial as ever, never taking his wife anywhere unless absolutely obliged, and never by any chance asking any one inside his doors.

It was a dull life for her, poor young thing! and the Colonel but a dull companion; but if she found it so we never knew—the gentle, placid manner never varied. Whether the Colonel married her for love or for money we did not know either. His manner to her was kind, certainly; but he scarcely ever noticed her, left her a great deal alone, and, in fact, departed from his bachelor habits as little as he possibly could.

One thing about her pleased me much. Although she was so young, so much alone, and so lovely, she never gave any of the gossips of the regiment a chance of meddling with her name. All the admiration she excited, and it was much, she received with the same quiet indifference which she manifested about everything; and her would-be admirers were speedily made aware that their attentions bored her.

The Carltons had been married rather more than a year, during which time I had seen a good deal of Mrs. Carlton, and, though we were not exactly intimate, we were on very neighbourly terms, when one day George came in with the news that we were to have a new arrival in the regiment. Captain Smith had effected an exchange with a Captain Trenham, who did not wish to return to Bermuda, where his regiment was then quartered.

"A very nice fellow he is, they say," observed my husband. "And he must be well off, too; for he has given Smith a large sum for the exchange."

"It's dear at any money," I cannot help saying; for I had been in Bermuda with our regiment, and remember with a shudder its heat, oily calms, mosquitoes, and cockroaches.

"So it is," acquiesced my husband, with an expressive shrug; "but needs must, you know, when somebody drives. And I fancy Smith has rather outrun the constable."

A few days after this, the band had been playing on the parade, and one or two friends had come in with me, after it was over, to enjoy that favourite dissipation of our sex, "an afternoon tea," when George walked in, followed by a tall stranger, whom he introduced to me as Captain Trenham.

In the uncertain light of a waning autumnal afternoon I could not see him very distinctly; but the voice in which he answered my greeting was pleasant and manly, and seemed to belong naturally to his tall, athletic figure.

"Let me introduce you to your new Colonel's wife," I said, after shaking hands with him. "Captain Trenham—Mrs. Carlton."

Mabel inclined her head slightly, without speaking, and with even more than her usual coldness; but in so doing the light from the fire fell full on her beautiful face.

Captain Trenham started. "Is it possible that I see Miss Percy?" he said, in a low, eager voice.

Mabel Carlton did not reply, so I answered for her. "Miss Percy once—now Mrs. Carlton. I had no idea you were old acquaintance."

"I can scarcely aspire to the honour of being called an acquaintance of Mrs. Carlton," said Captain Trenham, with a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone.

"No, oh no!" said Mrs. Carlton, hastily. "We knew each other slightly years ago—yes, years ago," she repeated dreamily.

"Very slightly," echoed Captain Trenham, emphatically; and, crossing the room, began talking "shop" to my husband.

I looked from one to the other. What could it mean, I wondered! But Mabel had relapsed into her usual placidity, and was talking quietly with Mrs. Bruce (the other major's wife, and mother of ten children); and Captain Trenham seemed completely to have forgotten her existence. Still I felt as if a little drama had been played before my eyes, to which I had not the key; and I went and sat down by Mabel, in a little flutter of protecting fondness, for which I was at a loss to account. As I laid my hand gently on hers, she turned and looked at me, and I saw that she was very pale.

"Are you not well?" I whispered.

"Quite well," answered she steadily; "but I am tired, and would like to go home."

"So you shall, dear. George, will you see Mrs. Carlton to her gate?" (The Carltons had taken a pleasant house at the bottom of that shady lane which leads into our road.) "It is rather late for her to go alone."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly. Just one moment, Mrs. Carlton, while I get my hat."

Captain Trenham hesitated for half a second, and then stepping forward, said:

"If you will permit me, Major, I am going Mrs. Carlton's way, and shall be happy to see her home, if she will allow me."

Mabel raised her eyes, and looked at him steadfastly for a moment, and then, bowing her head, she laid her hand on his arm, and they two went out into the darkness together.

On going round the next morning to see whether Mrs. Carlton had recovered from the fatigue she had complained of, I was surprised to find her looking more animated, and brighter than I had ever seen her.

"You look like a rosebud this morning," I said, admiringly, as I kissed her. "I need not ask if you have got over your fatigue."

"Oh, I was only a wee bit tired," said she. "I was all right again after a rest."

"I hope Captain Trenham proved an agreeable escort. He seems nice, and George thinks he will be quite an acquisition," observed I. "It will be a novelty to have a rich man in the regiment. They say he has brought down three horses with him."

"Has he?" said she. "He was very, very poor at the time I knew him."

"When was that?" asked I.

"Oh, a long time ago. Mary," said she, abruptly changing the subject, "how is it you are always so happy and contented? I always quote you as the happiest woman I know."

"So I am, very happy indeed. But do not fall into the common error, dear, of thinking your own trouble worse than anybody else's. We all know best where our own shoes pinch; and I have had my troubles, like the rest of the world," said I, thinking of youthful struggles with poverty, and, alas! of an empty cradle, a wee voice hushed for ever, and toddling footsteps whose echo was always in my ears.

"But they are far back in the past now," said she, caressingly; "and your husband loves you so, and is so proud of you, that I should think you wanted nothing else. Was he your first love, Mary?"

"Indeed he was," answered I, a tear standing in my eyes at the recollection. "He was but a poor lieutenant when we married; and we had a hard struggle for it, until a rich uncle died and left him his fortune. We did not begin at the top of the tree, as you have done, little lady."

Mabel froze immediately, as she always did at the slightest allusion to her marriage, and began speaking of something else directly. I felt hurt at her manner; but melted at once when, on wishing me "Good-bye," she said, "I do love you, Mary. Do not—do not be vexed with me; you are the only friend I have," looking at me at the same time wistfully out of her star-like eyes.

We kissed each other tenderly, as we women do; and I promised myself that, if she ever needed a friend, I would be one in deed as well as in name.

At the garden-gate I met Colonel Carlton. We were passing each other with rather a formal greeting (for I confess that the Colonel was no great favourite of mine), when he turned back, as if moved by a sudden impulse.

"I am obliged to you for your kindness to my wife, Mrs. Maclean. She appreciates your friendship greatly, and I am much indebted to you," said the Colonel, in his rather pompous manner; and then, as if fearing to await my answer, he raised his hat hastily, and disappeared into the house.

Somehow after that my mind was set at rest as to whether Colonel Carlton cared for his young wife. I seemed to know that in his own way he loved her, and would make her happy if he only knew how. But, poor man! he who had been so long a bachelor how should he understand?

(To be continued in our next.)

DOMESTIC.

RAW TOMATOES.—Select fine ripens ones and put them on ice; when cold slice, use vinegar, pepper and salt to taste.

SALAD SAUCE.—Yolks of two hard-boiled eggs; a teaspoonful of sweet oil; tablespoonful of strong vinegar; a teaspoonful of mustard; salt and pepper to taste; a tablespoonful of white sugar—mix all together.

CORN BREAD.—Sour milk, a quart; two eggs; soda, two tea-spoonfuls; molasses, four tablespoonfuls; salt; meal.

Into the milk mix the meal and molasses to a thin batter, beat the eggs, dissolve the soda in water, add a little salt, stir all into thin batter, bake it in pans, in a hot oven.

POULET A L'ALLEMANDE.—Stew a chicken in some white stock till tender, divide it into joints as for fricassé. Arrange these in a dish, pile them well up in the centre, pour the following sauce over, and let it stand till quite cold and firm; then garnish with aspic jelly, cocks combs, and a few sprigs of chervil.

LOIN OF MUTTON TO EAT LIKE VENISON.—Bone a large and fat loin of mutton, take off the fat, and put the bones and mutton into a stew pan with an onion, a sprig of thyme and parsley, and a little whole pepper and salt; add a pint of port wine, cover the pan close, and set it over a very slow fire to stew. Then skim off the fat from the gravy, and serve it very hot with a sweet sauce in a tureen.

MEAT JELLY.—Cut some dressed meat (beef or mutton) into slices smaller than for hash; season them with salt and pepper. Dissolve a 6d. packet of gelatine in one pint of good clear stock; arrange the slices of meat in a mould with slices of hard-boiled eggs, fill up the mould with the stock, and put it into the oven for half an hour. Let it stand till quite cold, turn it out, and garnish with watercress.

ROMAN PUDDING.—Butter a basin and line it with boiled macaroni, round like a beehive; have ready veal, ham, tongue, chicken, or cold game, all cut very finely; 1oz. of Parmesan cheese, and a little nutmeg, pepper, salt, lemon peel, and cayenne, two eggs, and a cupful of cream; mix all together, and fill your basin; boil for half an hour. When cold turn it out and glaze it. N.B. It may be eaten hot; then serve it with good rich gravy.

SAUCE A L'ALLEMANDE.—Put one pint of clear white stock into a stewpan with a few slices of mushrooms, previously tossed in lemon juice; reduce to three-quarters of a pint, remove from the fire and stir into it the yolks of four or five eggs and half pint of cream (or milk thickened with potato flour), add some grated nutmeg, pepper, and salt, and a little lemon juice. Stir it over the fire for a few minutes, strain, and it is ready for use.

SAUCE MAYONNAISE.—Carefully strain the yolks of four eggs into a basin; place it in a cool place, or, if necessary, on ice; add a teaspoonful of salt, mix well; then proceed to pour in, a few drops at a time, some salad oil, without ceasing to stir the mixture. When one spoonful of oil is well incorporated with the yolks of eggs, put in, in the same manner, a teaspoonful of tarragon vinegar; keep on adding oil and vinegar in these proportions until you get a sauce the consistency of very thick cream; then add white pepper to taste, and more salt if necessary.