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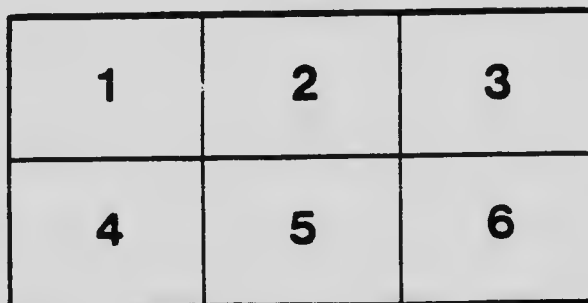
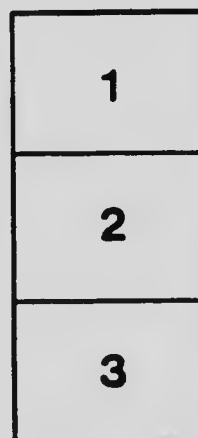
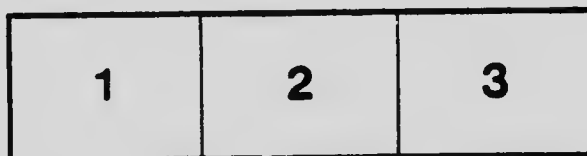
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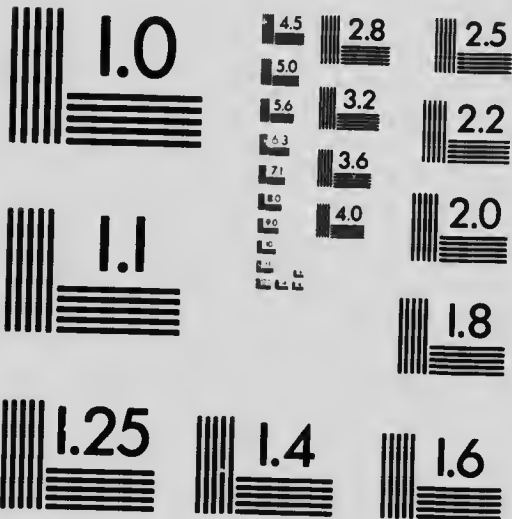
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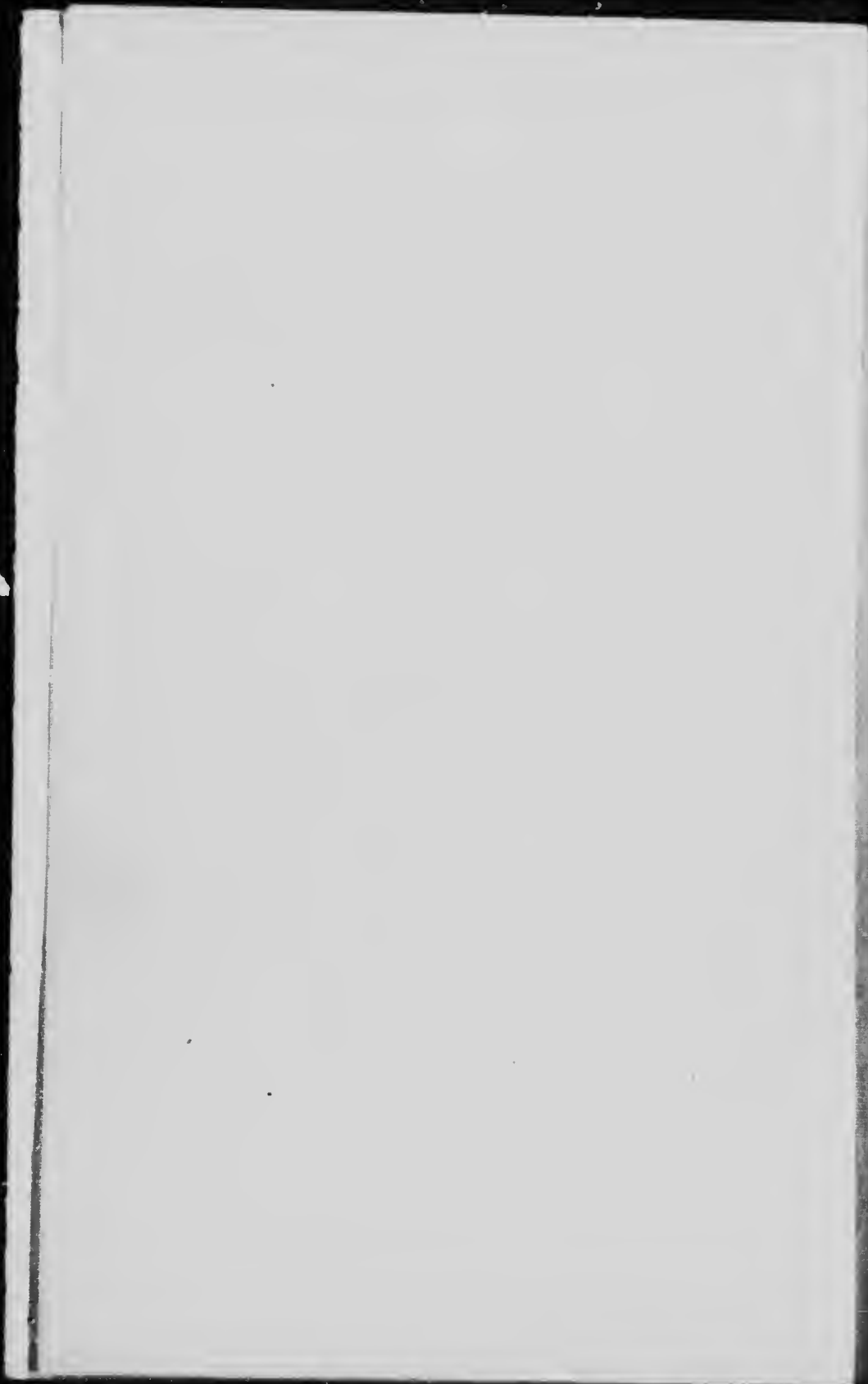
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# Love & Company

(LIMITED)

By J. Try-Davies and  
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Montreal  
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## BOOK I.

### SPECIAL PARTNERS.

**A** YOUNG man and a girl strayed into a palm-shadowed nook in the conservatory of a New York house. It was at the end of the season. Tired of dancing, they had slipped from the cotillion for a talk. Their faces were bright with the spirit of the dance, but, as the girl settled herself comfortably among the cushions and the man took an easy attitude near her, it was evident that they were not lovers.



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He was a stranger visiting America and delightedly interested by the American girl, his companion, who, in her turn, found much to study in the man and his manners.

They had been talking about books and authors in America, and the mention of Emerson and his essays had brought about some pretty play of fence in exposing their own opinions on the subjects of Love and Friendship.

“It’s all of no use, Mr. Horton,” said the girl; “I shall never know what men really think and feel when they love, for I am sure there is always something back of what men write about men. I don’t believe any lover ever told the whole truth to his mistress.”

The man ejaculated “God forbid! But pardon me if I say that if women practise no such concealment it is not

because of superior virtue, but because there is no need. Their natural vagaries cast a baffling veil before them, which, while it prevents others from seeing through, often hinders them from seeing out and makes them walk in the ways of crookedness."

"You must have suffered much to have become so wise," said the girl, slowly fanning herself and regarding her companion with slightly contracted eyebrows.

"Yes," he replied, "'long ago I fought' and not without bloodshed. But, Miss Morris, knowing what we know, why not exchange confidences and make ourselves the only wholly wise man and woman in the world?"

A faint smile hovered about the girl's mouth as she objected, "But you see, we don't love each other."

"But we might make believe, like

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the children," quickly replied the man whose wits were working rapidly under the stimulus of interest. "I have an idea. We are both going to Fair Haven next month—let us, when we meet there, each do our utmost to win the other's love. Every night we will write in a journal a faithful record of the events and impressions of the day. At the end of a fortnight, we will exchange journals and part, binding ourselves upon honour never to see each other again."

The girl hesitated for a few moments, and, hesitating, was lost; for curiosity, her rightful inheritance, urged her with gentle but steady pushes to the brink of the unknown. Her color had risen when she slid forth her hand and said, "I will."

He took the hand and, meeting her eyes, said gravely, "I pledge you my

honour," and, when she had made response, "I pledge you *my* honour," their hands parted and they both felt suddenly shy and constrained.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*July 10th, Newport.*—In a few days I shall begin what promises to be a very curious adventure. I think it only fair to set down my impressions after the conclusion of my rash compact, suggested, it is true, by myself, but from which Miss Morris' frank acceptance forbids me to withdraw. Twenty times I have been tempted to cry off, partly for my own sake, but chiefly, I honestly believe, because I fear harm for her. It is true that knowledge is good, but it must be accompanied by wisdom, and I doubt much whether my journal will be good for her. Our confidences must

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necessarily be most intimate. I cannot forget the sudden sense of constraint of which I was conscious immediately after we had pledged ourselves to the experiment.

But Miss Morris has made no sign, and if she does not shrink from the adventure, I cannot, nor, indeed, do I wish to do so.

Of one thing I am certain, she has been in my thoughts very much these last weeks, and is already become something to me. Whether enemy, friend, or possible mistress of my heart time will tell.

I shall feel very ill at ease until the action begins, when I hope that the ardour of the strife may quicken me into recklessness.

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 12th, Saratoga.*—I wonder if ever before a girl was party to such

an extraordinary and reckless compact as this of ours! Was it my good or my evil genius who was in the ascendant when I gave my hand into his,—this chosen confidant of my maiden dreams,—and pledged myself to keep the faith? Time, doubtless, will tell. I am beginning my journal now, because I cannot help it. It is a relief to put into written words some of the strange thoughts that come to me as I think over and try to foresee the consequences of our rash enterprise. What are my motives in trying this wild experiment? I must confess to a natural curiosity to know something of what is, to most women, a sealed book—the inner workings of a man's mind. The experience will give me wisdom, and that this wisdom of mine may some day be of use to other women

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is, I think, my chief motive in attempting what might seem to many an unmaidenly task.

I know life as perhaps few girls of my age do ; I have read widely, and heard and seen most things that a girl may hear and see. I feel very sure of myself, and my ability to withstand any humiliating passion. Whether it is that I am cold or that Dame Nature has reserved me for some future feat I do not know. Certain it is that passion, as such, I have never experienced. Am I on the eve of being taught? I fancy not. I am not sentimental, and I do not now look forward to anything more than (as did Mademoiselle de Maupin in her rash venture) a taste of the Tree of Knowledge. Stay—is not the mention of her name a bad omen for me? Come what may, I have

made my promise and I shall abide by it. Mr. Horton is a man whom I can thoroughly trust. I like him, and his ready tact in that uncomfortable moment in the conservatory, when the realization of what we were doing came home to us, assures me that we shall be able to pass successfully any awkward places in our short journey together.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*17th July, Fair Haven.*—The duel is begun. I try to stifle conscience with the reflection that I am offering in my own person a subject for scientific research, and that my experiences, however painful they may prove to myself, may at least be interesting and valuable to my antagonist and associate.

We are, by a happy chance, staying at the same house. The party is



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neither so large as to make frequent distractions probable, nor so small as to narrow the field for advance and retreat.

I am feeling and looking my best. Miss Morris came about noon, and we exchanged greetings without any difficulty. Her colour was slightly higher for a moment, and in her eyes was a look in which I fancied I saw defiance alternating with gentle interest.

When a man loves deeply, he usually loses his nerve and plays a poor game, now too bold, now too timid. I am not in love at all, and find it easy to be natural and agreeable. I am waiting for an opening in my adversary's fence and she has apparently chosen the same tactics. She is looking very bonny and happy, and I may say that I should feel remorse for my promise did I not know what danger-

ous weapons for attack and defence she wields.

Her manner to me has been charming, but so easy as to suggest indifference. As we said good-night, her hand lingered for a second in mine, but whose doing it was I do not know.

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*17th July, Fair Haven.*—I am with my friends, the Fairfaxes, ready to enjoy my fortnight's visit. I arrived just before luncheon, and, as I sat down at the table, what was my surprise to see Mr. Horton opposite me. I hope I did not display any special feeling of interest; I clasped my hands spasmodically beneath the table, but I'm sure it wasn't noticed. It seems that Mrs. Fairfax came on the same boat with him, and knowing him well

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thought he would be an addition to her party. I shall not forgive him in a hurry for the start he gave me, though I suppose I am unreasonable. I wonder what his idea is in bringing the action to such close quarters; he is at all events entirely responsible for this move.

I did not come down-stairs again until tea-time, and then I devoted myself to my host. I was perfectly unconcerned and at my ease. I am glad I can assume such a calm exterior even when my mind is in a tumult. We women learn one lesson thoroughly, and well we may, since our instruction begins almost at the cradle—the art of successfully concealing our feelings. During the evening I made use of the opportunity to notice Mr. Horton particularly. He is a handsome man, there is no

doubt about that. There is something else about him, too, that is very attractive; I wonder if it is his thorough knowledge of the world that constitutes the charm of his manner? (Of course I am speaking of his manner to others, and of the way in which he would be generally regarded.) Though I have always found him interesting, and this compact of ours should establish a sense of good-fellowship, an invisible barrier seems to have risen up between us.

By chance, or more likely by design, he was standing by the staircase as we said good-night. I offered him my hand to see what he would do with it. He did not press it, but for all that something seemed to happen for a moment, and our hands did not part as lightly as I expected. I really do not know whose fault it was.

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Probably we were each trying to appear very indifferent, and thus brought about what we were both anxious to avoid.

Well, I am very tired, and the change of air has made me sleepy, and not even the dream of conquest of many Mr. Hortons could keep me awake to-night. Neither am I troubled by fears for myself.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*18th July, Fair Haven.*—Before our tournament has well begun a third person has tumbled into the lists. A man named Van Sittart turned up this morning. There has evidently been something between him and Miss Morris, and I think he is still in love with her. She did not betray herself, but I saw that she felt a sense of ownership. In himself the man seems

neither good nor bad, but he is not the sort of man for whom I should suppose Miss Morris would care. He is, however, a nuisance. If he comes here much he will waste a lot of our valuable time. Besides, if he be a real lover, he will make my part more difficult. "All the world loves a lover," even if the man himself be insignificant, and a real lover should be vastly more interesting to a woman than a make-believe.

If she is at all interested in him, she will never complete her journal. I have fished for information but can learn nothing, save that he has been "devoted" to her. But "devoted" does not always mean "devotion" in American. I do not believe that he is a confederate, for I am sure that Miss Morris would not betray our secret to

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any one. Yet his appearance has given her an immense advantage. I dare say she is grinning over her journal now as she writes. Look out for yourself, my lady. I mean to discover some way to carry the war into your own country.

An odd thing happened at dinner. Miss Morris, who sat opposite to me, put her feet on mine and left them there until the ladies rose to go. I had kept very still, but, as she passed me on her way out of the room, she attempted some sort of an apology or explanation. Is she only a fast sort of girl after all? And does she think to overcome me by charms of sense? It would be a most ignoble and commonplace ending to our very original and interesting adventure. But if that is what she means, shall I lower myself to her level? *I cannot in honour*

*back out.* If I repulse her advances, she will certainly hate me. If I yield to them, the whole affair sinks to an episode with a sensual woman. It would be very, very tempting. She is so beautiful and well bred that I don't believe I could resist. That there are such girls I know, but I did not for one moment imagine that she was one of them. I am very angry. What right had she to suppose that, if she played Circe, I would be willing to—bah! it hardly bears thinking about. And yet it was very good to feel that close contact. The memory of it makes me glow yet, and somehow my anger seems scarcely as genuine as it might be. I should like amazingly to know whether the act was intentional—it would make a difference in my feelings.

She may have mistaken my feet for



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a part of the furniture. It is barely possible, but I will give her the benefit of the doubt for the present. The next day or two will tell. Meanwhile I am the uneasy prey to uncertainty, and I despise both Miss Morris and myself. I must brace up to-morrow and try and get on kissing terms with some one else to take the edge off. I feel that at present the pull is all her way. Good God! Is it possible that she can be in love with me already?

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*18th July, Fair Haven.*—The morning passed pleasantly but uneventfully, and I began to think that we should never really begin. But at luncheon Mr. Van Sittart came in. I am very much annoyed. Last winter he asked me to be his wife and he does not see that my "no" was a final answer.

I do not mean to give him any encouragement, but I shall use him as my first weapon. Mr. Horton evidently suspects something, for he looks curiously at us both.

No one knows that Mr. Van Sittart proposed to me, and so the former can gain no information.

I think that I have scored the first point, and I feel somewhat elated and much more daring. Of course it is a very old stratagem, but I believe it is always successful in creating interest or jealousy of a kind. Mr. Horton will suspect my plan, but he is, I think, too clever to retaliate in the same way. I am sure I should not care if he did.

Mr. Van Sittart was appointed to take me into dinner and I was pleased to see that Mr. Horton sat opposite. Of course I was very gracious to my

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quondam lover, but Mr. Horton affected to notice nothing. A rather embarrassing situation unnerved me somewhat. I was seated near the centre of the large table, and in accordance with a habit I learned at home I rested my feet, as I supposed, on its turned legs. When the signal to rise was given I was leaning over to pick up my handkerchief, when, to my horror, my footstool began to move, and the awful consciousness was borne in upon me that I had been using Mr. Horton's feet for a support all through dinner. I struggled to make some apology as I passed him; he bowed with apparent gravity, but I saw his eyes for a moment and they were very unpleasantly bright, and he was evidently suppressing a grin. I think I hate him this evening. How dared he? To think of his enjoying

my unconsciousness all dinner-time ! Of course he knows I *was* unconscious. The bare possibility of his imagining the contrary makes my cheeks burn though I am here all alone. I hate him, but I will keep to my agreement, and if I make him love me and he breaks his heart I don't care ; he deserves it !

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*19th July.*—I awoke this morning to find myself much more self-possessed. The little gust of passion has passed by and left me wondering and ashamed of what I wrote last night. I would destroy it if I were not bound by my promise.

What a brute she will think me when she reads it. But perhaps even as I wrote she was penning a similar confession of the weakness of woman's nature.

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She gave no sign to-day, however, and I was carefully ordinary in my manner.

We played tennis and all hands went swimming, as usual, but I fancied that she shrank from me a little as I put her wrapper over her when she came out of the water. I think she felt braver after luncheon, for we passed a couple of hours together on the veranda, and I hope that I contrived, in the course of our talk, to assure her of my respect. Even if she is bad, she will wish to be respected. Do not all women exact an assurance of *that* when they abandon themselves, and do they not generally get the lying answer they desire? A man must love a woman utterly with soul and body, and *for* her soul and body, or ever he can forget that she has broken caste. This is, of course,

the result of long-established conventions. I suppose that most women know this, but do not want to think about it.

Van Sittart has disappeared. I am glad of it. He was in my way, I am sure. It is scarcely time for jealousy yet, but he was an annoyance. I can get forward better in my adventure without him, and, at the pace we are going, the fortnight is likely to prove too long. There seems to be a probability of a row before its end.

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 19th.*—I did not enjoy my swim to-day, I can scarcely tell why. Some things that are clearly felt entirely baffle description. I had an uncomfortable feeling that Mr. Horton was watching me, and my bathing-dress seemed an insufficient protection.

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What is the matter with me? I am not a prude, nor, I think, absurdly sensitive in such matters; why should this idea have occurred to me now?

We talked a while after luncheon and I tried to feel the same pleasure in his conversation that I did before. I tried to be very bright and interesting, for is it not the avowed object of my life at present to make this man in love with me? Once I glanced up quickly and caught him looking at me in such a strange way that I felt a little shiver thrill through me and my face grow hot. What did that look mean? I have been trying to imagine it again here to myself, as I lie back in my chair and think. It was not a sneer, certainly not a caress, and yet, strangely enough, it occurred to me that, intensified in one way or the other, it might be either a look of dis-

gust or of absolute love. Bah! how foolish I am! It may have been thoughts of an entirely different character that brought forth that expression of countenance. I will go to bed and sleep without dreams.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*20th July.*—When Miss Morris appeared this morning, she looked hollow-eyed and out of sorts. I supposed that she had a "migraine," and prepared myself to do some quiet petting, which art I flatter myself that I understand. It seemed a good chance, but for some reason or other she avoided me, and my scheme of footstool, wrap, and reading aloud did not come off. I managed, however, to express without obtruding my sympathy. Is she fretting over the feet affair, or is she tired of our compact,



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or is she simply ill? I wish she had let me be good to her, for I really like her very much. Her pallor became her very well and gave a poetic cast to her face. I wonder if it was only indigestion after all. The best thing I could imagine was to let her alone, so I went off to the Casino and had a merry luncheon with the Crosbys, who had a Baltimore girl with them. They took me for a drive. The Baltimore girl was very nice and promised to be a valuable find. We got on very well indeed, and for two hours I quite forgot Miss Morris. This was just what I needed. I have no intention of letting myself become too much interested in the last-named lady. "One nail drives out the other," as the French proverb has it. I got home just in time for dinner. Mrs. Fairfax had heard where I had lunched and gently

twitted me on the subject of the Baltimore girl. I caught a sharp glance of Miss Morris' eyes in my direction, and fancy that she is not pleased. But it may be only indigestion.

It was a wet evening, so we played a mild game of poker. I lost phenomenally, and did not fail to be reminded by Mrs. Fairfax of the ancient saw about the happy lover and the unlucky gamester. Miss Morris looked really ill as she said good-night. I felt in high animal spirits.

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 20th.*—It was strange that I should end my journal as I did last night. I did dream, and such a dream! It has followed me all day, and even now I shudder as I write of it. I thought that I was lying on a snow-bank, and oh! so cold. How I

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came there I do not know, but it seemed that I had lain there for hours. I was not numbed, but felt every sensation acutely. Suddenly I was conscious of a grateful warmth stealing over me; it began at my feet and gradually crept over my body. The sensation was more than pleasant—it was a delicious, thrilling happiness, like nothing I had ever before experienced, and I shut my eyes and longed for it to continue. Then quickly the sensation became more intense, the warmth circled itself round my body faster and warmer, round my limbs, my waist, my throat. I put my hands out gropingly and touched it—it was a mighty creature, a snake that was coiled about me, and as it raised its horrid head and looked into my eyes I saw the features change into those of Mr. Horton; there, too, was that half-

mocking glance that had troubled me in the afternoon.

I struggled vainly for a moment ; then again the deadly coldness came over me, and I woke to find myself curled up and shivering. It was only a nightmare, but it was so vivid that I could not dispel it from my mind by an effort of the will.

I avoided Mr. Horton all day ; I could not overcome the aversion I felt for what reminded me so strongly of my dream.

I did not speak to him alone, and kept my eyes turned away from him when I was obliged to meet him before others. It was childish, foolish perhaps, but I could not help it. I wonder what he thinks. Will he be angry? Perhaps he may look upon it as a new stratagem. Happy thought! this avoidance of him may be my best

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move after all. If he cares ever so little for me he will want to understand what I mean by this treatment of him. I will wait and see.

It is a warm evening, and as I write I am thoroughly comfortable. I have taken off my dress, and my arms look very white against the dark wood of the writing-table. I have always been a little vain of my arms, they are so round, and soft, and pretty. There is the loveliest curve just at the shoulder, so smooth and beautiful. I wonder if Mr. Horton would think it pretty if he could see it? I am glad the horrid dream is fading away from me and that I can now think naturally of him. I am shivering again at the bare recollection. I must put it quite away from me, or the dream may come back again.

KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*21st July.*—The night once again brought me counsel, and on this calm, bright Sunday morning the charm of the Baltimore girl was much less, while, on the other hand, I felt persuaded that I had been ungenerous to Miss Morris.

I therefore decided that she was good and that I wanted to go to church with her.

I thought that she would probably go to the early service at nine o'clock, and so stole quietly down-stairs in time to waylay her. I had guessed right, for she presently appeared, looking quite herself but with a certain grave determination in her face. She seemed to be somewhat surprised when I expressed my intention of going to church, but quietly assented

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when I asked leave to accompany her. The walk was very pleasant. We found seats in a pew near the door, and, as Miss Morris slipped to her knees, I was very glad that I had come. I was conscious, too, of a wave of spiritual purification, which swept away the gross and ignoble thoughts which had been haunting me for the last two days. Miss Morris' low but clear responses to the penitential prayers were accompanied by my own silent but earnest supplications. I felt for a moment that heavenly things were nearer to me than they had been for a long time, and that my dear companion—she was dear to me at the time—was a good angel who might lead me by the hand out of the world in which I had been living to that higher sphere where it might be possible for me to lead the Life. The

hymns were simple and the music good and unpretentious; both were in harmony with my train of thought and feeling. My little old Prayer Book, given me by my mother when I first went to a public school, assisted my mood, and, as I glanced at the faded inscription inside the cover, I felt that Religion was possible and that Women were good. Somehow Religion and Women seemed to belong to each other, both incomprehensible and both the highest good or the worst evil according as a man shall use them or as his light may be.

As we bent our heads to the benediction, I felt that we were sharers in something holy, which was more ours than our fellow-worshippers'.

We talked very little as we walked home, but I am sure that Miss Morris had divined my mood, for her old



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frankness had returned, and, as she gently thanked me on our parting in the hall, our eyes looked into each other's, grave, but joyful with a hope of better things.

My mood lasted all day in spite of the distraction of tennis, and in the evening, when careless voices were singing hymns to the accompaniment of the piano in the drawing-room, I stole away to the dark veranda where I found Miss Morris. She talked about church music, and from that we soon passed to the subject of Religion. Hers seemed to be wonderfully *direct* and childlike, and I found some difficulty in concealing my own chaos of belief. I think, however, that she understood that my doubts were honest and that my yearning was for better things. At any rate, as she bade me "good-night" the friendly pres-

sure of her hand assured me of her renewed confidence. But if she only knew half of my past blackguardism, and could guess how little my present frame of mind is likely to hinder me from future yielding to temptations of the grosser sort, she would spurn me as a vile hypocrite. I am not that, I think, but only a man like most others, with whom the Angels of Darkness and of Light alternately prevail. I believe that I would say a prayer to-night if it did not seem an impertinence.

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*Sunday, July 21st.*—This has been a delightful day to me—all peace, no disturbing emotions, no uncomfortable *contretemps*. I was very much surprised to have Mr. Horton's company at church this morning; I had gath-

ered from some of his conversation in the past that he regarded church-going in the light of a practice to be confined to sentimental women, and I was pleased to see that I was mistaken. I tried to keep my thoughts entirely fixed on the service, but there were moments when they flew to the man who knelt beside me. I wondered whether he would be the better or the worse for having known me, and determined to take the first opportunity to compare beliefs and see how much or how little he is in sympathy with me.

I had my talk with Mr. Horton in the evening. I fear it was not a sense of religious duty that prompted him this morning when he came to church with me. I wonder if it is too much thinking or too little that has given him such strange ideas on the subject

of religion. I should be sorry to resign my Christ, the Man-God, for the Philosopher of Nazareth, a little above Plato and something less than Divine. If Mr. Horton's state of feeling is Agnosticism, I think there is a great lack of satisfaction in the Agnostic creed, or lack of creed. I am strangely anxious to understand him perfectly.

*July 22.*—What a glorious day this has been! Warm and ripe and rosy with the midsummer fulness and joy. It was a day for new-n . . . hay and poetry, Mr. Horton said; so he took a book of poems from the library, a rug, and a box of sweets, and invited me to come and sit on the lawn and read to him. I agreed, and we took up our station with our backs against a haycock with the bonbons between us, and gave ourselves up to the *dolce far niente* for which the day seemed to be

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made. The only energetic things to be seen or heard were the irrepressible crickets, who chirped incessantly in mad chorus, as if life in the grass were one long carousal, while the wind and the coolness slept.

I read aloud for some time while Mr. Horton smoked his cigar; there were some charming verses in the little book, and they were in harmony with the quietness and sweetness of the afternoon. I didn't allow him to be selfish, however, and when the cigar was flung away I passed over the volume to him and devoted myself to the sweets. As he read I had a good chance to look at him critically, and decide as to the good and bad points in his appearance and voice.

He certainly reads beautifully; his tone is low and caressingly soft, and did I not know to the contrary I

should fancy he was himself a poet, so well does he interpret, by voice and accent, the thoughts of another. He was a fine specimen of manly beauty as he lay stretched out beside me—a man always looks his best in flannels. I had an almost irresistible desire to run my fingers through that mass of gold-brown hair, it was so curly and looked so soft.

He looked up suddenly and saw that I was not listening to the poem, and indignantly shut up the book. Of course I insisted on his opening it again, and promised to listen with all my ears.

“And with all your heart?” he said.

“With all my heart,” said I, treating it as a jest.

This is what he read:

“Once only, Love, may love’s sweet song be  
sung;

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But once, Love, at our feet love's flower is  
flung ;

Once, Love, once only, Love, can we be  
young ;

Say, shall we love, dear Love, or shall we  
hate ?

“ Once only, Love, will burn the blood-red  
fire,

But once awakeneth the wild desire ;

Love pleadeth long, but what if love should  
tire :

Now, shall we love, dear Love, or shall we  
wait ?

“ The day is short, the evening cometh fast ;

The time of choosing, Love, will soon be  
past ;

The outer darkness falleth, Love, at last ;

Love, let us love ere it be late--too late !”

Was the magic in the words or in  
the reader ? Truly I know not, but  
they had a strange effect upon me.  
As he read in low impassioned tones,  
his voice more tender and seductive at  
each succeeding line, I felt something

slipping away from me, some power over my own soul that had never before been tested, and I was afraid. For a moment the balance wavered. His eyes were on me, searching me through and through ; then the spell was broken, and I said brusquely :

“ You have mistaken your calling, Mr. Horton ; you should have gone on the stage.”

He was disappointed in me, I felt, and disgusted at my levity. We read no more poetry, and soon after five-o'clock tea and the others took possession of our nook and we had no more time alone.

After I came upstairs this evening I ran down to the library again and looked for the little volume. I possessed myself of it and crept stealthily upstairs. I wanted to read that poem over to myself, and see what there was in it to move me so strangely.



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Marion Morris, you must be careful. These new and inexplicable sensations are dangerous, and must not be indulged for a moment.

Heaven forbid that I should be learning to love this man !

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*22nd July.*—There happened to be no plans made for to-day, and so, as the weather was lovely and my yesterday's mood had survived the night, I beguiled Miss Morris to a *tête-à-tête* under pretence of reading a book of new American verses which I had picked up from the library table.

I had intended to make the daintily got-up little volume a pretext for monopolizing her society, but when my turn came to read aloud I happened upon some lines which were so strong and sympathetic that I found

myself reading them with a good deal of emotion. They sounded like an appeal. I was conscious that Miss Morris was under the spell, but she pulled herself together and made an unfeeling remark about the dramatic quality of my reading. Her voice did not ring true and so I was more annoyed by her lack of candour than by her apparent coldness.

I suppose I sulked a little this evening, for I went off to the Casino, where I met the Crosbys and the girl from Baltimore. The girl did not seem to me to be as pleasant as when I last saw her. Certainly she did not attract me greatly. I believe that Miss Morris has definitely triumphed over her. I am rather uneasy about this. The Baltimore antidote is losing, or, rather, has lost its power. The best plan will be to see how I

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stand with Miss Morris, and to-morrow I shall try to get her away for a drive. It will be pleasant, and may give me a chance to test my strength. If I find myself too much under the spell of her charm, I shall make a retreating fight of it for the few days that remain to us. It would be quite too foolish to let that dangerous joke, our compact, make me forsworn or forlorn. For I shall stick to my part of the agreement. And I have the conviction that she is equally resolved.

## NARRATIVE.

**T**HE young man and the girl were driving quietly along one of the deep fir-bound roads in the neighbourhood of Fair Haven. They laughed as they talked, but their voices stilled as mad pounding of hoofs and jerking of wheels, with shouts of fear and warning, bore down upon them through the afternoon quiet of the woods.

Round a turn in the road in front hurled a great three-seated buck-board. The near wheels spun a moment in the air, but settled down again as the terrified horses, with flapping reins, took a straighter course.

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The young man sprang from the dogcart to his horse's head, and yelled to the girl, "Jump out! Up the bank!"

She obeyed, but as she leaped to the ground her skirt caught in the step and she fell heavily in the road. The man uttered a desperate oath, and, darting back to her, seized her in his arms, and with a mighty wrench tore free her skirt. Rushing up the friendly bank, he had just time to deposit her in safety among the ferns at the top before his feet slipped on the sandy slope and he fell struggling back into the road, in time to feel the stinging gravel shot from the horses' feet as they whirled by him, a horror of gleaming shoes. The buckboard just missed the dog-cart.

The young man instinctively looked to his horse, and, finding him steady,

turned to the girl, who was already busy with her hat-pins and veil.

“I’m all right,” she said cheerfully, and they set to work to brush away, as well as they might, the dusty traces of their scramble.

They climbed back into the dog-cart very composedly and resumed their way, making light of the adventure. But the man asked leave to smoke, and seemed to peer ahead at the blind corners of the road, and the girl’s left hand sought the seat-rail from time to time.

They were passing through a straight but shady part of the road when the girl quietly turned up her veil, and, with her face to the young man, lifted her mouth, as she said, “I am very grateful.” He promptly cast away his cigarette, and bending down, kissed her lips with a beating heart and a swimming head.

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The rest of the drive was passed in silence, but as they entered the private avenue of their host, the girl said, "I think we had better not say anything. It would only make people nervous about driving."

To this the young man heartily assented, and dropping his companion at the front door, he drove quietly round to the stables.

But he had a mighty drink when he got indoors.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*23rd July.*—I did take Miss Morris for a drive, and the result was much beyond my intention. I have held her in my arms and kissed her, and I believe that she kissed me. We met a runaway team in a hollow road. I pulled up and told her to jump out, but in doing so she fell, and I had to

lift her up and carry her out of the way. It might have been a very ugly affair and I was horribly frightened, but Miss Morris behaved very well. Our horse and trap were untouched, so we got in again and drove home. I was feeling rather shaky, and supposing that she was equally unnerved, I tried to make light of the incident, when she suddenly turned to me and with some simple words of thanks lifted her face to mine, offering her lips. I kissed her in great wonder, and as I did so I remembered what I had quite forgotten, that I had held her close in my arms for a few moments. I was so moved that I could not say anything, and somehow our common silence was eloquent. I know that I found myself leaning over her, while she drooped toward me until her shoulder just touched my arm. When



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we got near home she suggested that we should say nothing about our escape lest the others should feel nervous about driving. I assented heartily, and a moment after I knew that the possession of a secret between us two marked another step on the way toward the dangerous but fascinating bourne whither we were travelling.

Now, in the quiet of my own chamber, I am trying to think it over.

I believe I did behave well when we met that runaway. That is, that I was able to do the right thing and did it. I am thankful for it; but, after all, I could not have done less and preserved my self-respect. I set down my thoughts about it thus precisely because I have a fear that the reward was too great for the service rendered. Here again I am beset with ugly doubts. Damn that feet

business? I had ceased to think about it, but now the recollection of it seems to make the innocence of the kiss doubtful. I find myself arguing in the same unsatisfactory, dreary round.

But what Miss Morris felt that she owed me a debt for saving her life, as I really did, and that while the debt was unpaid I had an advantage over her in our contest? Now that she has paid up in full she can, with a clear conscience, pursue her intention of making me love her. Or, mad thought! does she really love me, and was the offered kiss the sign of her defeat and self-abandonment? I cannot think clearly about it, which is a bad sign. I can at least see that I might very easily be in love with her and just as easily hate her. I had the kiss—which is much—and I will sleep

upon it. God give her gentle dreams to-night.

MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 23rd.*—For some reason or other I feel that I do not want to write in my journal to-night. It may be that I am tired, for I have been sitting up for some time mending a large rent in my dress, and sewing is not my forte. I did not care to give it to Thérèse; she mends very well, but I did not wish to make any explanations with regard to it. Besides, as I stitched away I seemed to be better able to think over the events of the day.

Fortunately I met no one on my way from the carriage, or the state of my costume might have excited comment. I can scarcely remember the way it all happened, what might have

been a serious accident, but I know that he held me in his arms, and—yes, I must write it—that I was happy. For just one minute I could feel his heart beating against mine, and his breath came fast and warm over my face. We did not say much after we got back into the cart, but the silence spoke for us. I looked up at him, and he seemed so splendidly strong and handsome, and he had rescued me so bravely and without fuss or disturbance, almost involuntarily I held up my face to be kissed. It was partly, perhaps, an idea of reward for his goodness, partly because the thought came to me on the spur of the moment, and it was not a time for conventionalities; and—I wanted to do it.

Was it the common danger that seemed to bring us for a moment close together? Something seemed

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to lift the barrier that has been rising between us ever since our coming to Fair Haven, and has made us constrained and awkward in each other's presence.

I am sure he understood my impulsive action. I wonder if he has any idea that that is the first kiss I ever gave a man of my own free will?

How easily he carried me in those great strong arms. What was the feeling I had while he held me for those few moments so close to him, that warm rush of something so like happiness? Am I tasting of the Tree of Knowledge even now?

*July 24th.*—To-day passed uneventfully till evening. Mr. Horton's manner was perfect, and I did not feel the slightest embarrassment, though the events of yesterday crowded my mind to the exclusion of all else.

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We all danced in the evening. The room is not large, and we soon found it too warm for comfort, and were glad to adjourn to the piazza. I had been dancing with some of the men who usually drop in about eight o'clock from some of the other cottages, so when Mr. Horton made his way toward me I acceded to his proposal to "sit out" on the piazza.

How alone we seemed, there in the shadow of the gable. The piazza was full of laughing men and girls who passed and repassed us continually, but we were virtually alone, inasmuch as the noise entirely drowned our conversation, and the light from the electric lamp behind us did not fall on our faces. Mr. Horton seemed very quiet, and I had the conversation to myself. I started a discussion as to which of the English poets should obtain the

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laureateship left vacant by the death of Tennyson. I argued for William Morris, he for Swinburne. He asked me if I remembered Swinburne's "Garden of Proserpine," and quoted:

“From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving  
Whatever gods may be  
That no life lives forever,  
That dead men rise up never,  
That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.”

I hope Mr. Horton will not read any more poetry to me. The subtle spell that was on me the last time he read crept over me again, as the syllables fell caressingly from his lips. He was very good to look at, and I could not help thinking what a wonderful lover he would make could a woman be strong enough in herself to rouse in him a real passion.

He repeated the last two lines :

“That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.”

I was silent, and Mr. Horton changed his tone, and went on: “You see we men are so easily deceived; it is difficult to be sure.” Then gently and quite softly he said: “It is almost too great a happiness to believe that one has found the pearl of great price.”

I felt his eyes upon me, and for one instant swiftly came the thought, “He loves me.” Then the tide rolled back, the thought of that compact of ours showed me the truth. It was a fine piece of acting. He was trying to make me love him, as we agreed. I had not the heart to answer him brusquely, but I shivered a little and suggested returning to the dancing-room. As soon as possible I escaped



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and came up-stairs. My mind is in a tumult. How earnestly he spoke of "the pearl of great price." We have only six days left of my visit here and of our partnership. How is it going to end? Ah me!

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*24th July.*—This has been a quiet day. Miss Morris has been her natural, ladylike self. I was conscious, however, that there was a secret between us, and so I think was she. Several times our eyes met, expressing frank sympathy. We seemed, too, to have an attraction toward each other, for I found myself unconsciously drifting to her side more than once, and she either came a little way to meet me or silently made me welcome.

There was a little dance here this evening and we sat out most of the

time. We were let alone in what was perhaps rather a marked way. I suppose people think that there either is or is going to be something between us. Mrs. Fairfax wore a look of delighted curiosity as I said good-night, and I fancied that the warm pressure of her hand was at once an invitation to confidence and an encouragement. If she only knew!

It has just occurred to me that in a very few days Miss Morris and I must part, never to see each other again. The thought has given me a sort of sick faintness at my heart for a moment. Am I in love with her? Or should I be in love with her were it not for the restraint of our promise? That promise makes her as inaccessible to me as a princess of the blood, and so I will not let my heart go out to her. But if our compact did not

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exist? I feel that it is too dangerous to contemplate such a condition. I admire and respect her in spite of all my suspicions, and were we free from our pledge I believe I should love her. Do I not even now love her? Oh no, God help me! And she? What does she think and feel? I pray that she at least may escape the misery in store for me. Dare I open my heart for her to-night, with the resolve to close it again in the morning? I must and will enjoy that happiness for a few hours. I love you, Marion!

## NARRATIVE.

**T**HE gayety of Mrs. Fairfax's drawing-room was hushed into quiet in expectancy of a new sensation. Mr. Lansing, a dabbler in hypnotism, had suggested some experiments, and the offer had been accepted by acclamation.

Kenneth Horton submitted himself with a very good grace to the art of the hypnotist, and proved to be an excellent subject.

“It is always strong-willed people who make the best mediums,” declared the professor. “I believe that Mr. Horton could be made to do much more under different influences. Are

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you willing to be put to sleep again?" he asked eagerly.

"Certainly! anything you like," laughed Horton.

"Lie down upon the hearth-rug then, and make your mind a blank."

The young man obeyed, and for about five minutes the company watched while Mr. Lansing held up a bunch of keys before the victim's eyes.

"He is off. See, I can pinch him and he feels no pain. Will one of you ladies please come here? Miss Morris, will you be good enough to manage this for me? Place your hand on his forehead and keep it there firmly. Now tell him to answer any questions you may put to him. We will go to the other end of the room so that there may be no interference."

The girl, after a slight hesitation, summoned her courage and obeyed.

Putting her strong white hand firmly on the head of the subject, she said, in a low voice:

“Answer me.”

“Ask him—let me see—ask him in what year this house was built and by whom?” prompted the professor.

Mechanically the girl complied, but all her mind was busy with another question which had flashed across her thoughts. She waited breathlessly for the reply.

It came in answer to the true desire of her heart.

“Yes, I love you, Marion, with all my heart and with all my strength. I cannot help it.”

The girl listened with bent ear and wide eyes as the murmured confession fluttered from the half-closed lips. By a desperate effort of will she steadied herself as she informed the expectant

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audience that "Mr. Howard Hart was the architect, and it was built in the year 1883."

The company clamoured for more.

"Ask him what changes will take place among us during the coming year."

The professor was about to exclaim against the absurdity of the question when the girl put it, and the murmured reply came: "There will be no change, dear. I could not if I would. It is for better or worse with me this time. Let me kiss you once again, but with all my heart and soul. I think that if you lay in my arms I could never let you go." How the girl would have rendered this answer was never known. She turned deathly white, and as the room began to sway beneath her, she mustered her strength to command, "Wake!" and

then slid in a gently rustling heap to the rug by the side of the astonished Horton.

“I wonder what on earth made that girl wake him up,” was the question that disturbed Mr. Lansing’s rest that night.

### KENNETH HORTON’S JOURNAL.

*25th July.*—I do not like playing with mesmerism or hypnotism, but I could not politely refuse when Mrs. Fairfax asked me to be the subject to-night. The idea of the Lansing man juggling with my brain was not good, but apparently he made me do nothing ridiculous, and I submitted myself a second time to his experiments. When I came to I found Miss Morris in a faint, lying on the floor beside me. I should laugh over the comic absurdity of the situation, for the faint



was soon over, were it not that I suspect something uncanny. The other people know no more than I of the cause of the catastrophe. Miss Morris was taken up to her room and did not reappear.

But I felt and still feel very uneasy. Of course they won't tell me if it was anything personal. Mrs. Fairfax looks mysteries, curiosity, and reproaches at me. What a fool I have been!

### MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 25th.*—I feel a little nervous and good-for-nothing, but I must try and write a few words in my journal before I go to bed. I despise myself for my absurd weakness. I did not think I was the sort of young woman to faint at the critical moment, like the die-away heroine of some highly

coloured romance. What must they all have thought of me? What must *he* have thought? The whole evening was a mistake. I wonder why they chose us to try the experiment upon. I fail to see the object of turning a power that should only be exercised for the relief of pain into an amusement for a roomful of giddy people.

I write on and try to think quietly and becomingly of all that has taken place, and under and through all there runs the singing of a bird, a wild, shy thing, that almost is afraid of its own note, but ever and anon breaks forth into bursts of uncontrollable melody. He loves me. I can think of nothing further to-night. I will not look back at the past, I will not question the future. I will think of just this one thing, and be happy to-night, though I may know that the dream must van-

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ish with the morning light. He loves me—and I shut my eyes and think of what that kiss would have been—the thing that he asked for unknowingly, and will never have.

The sky-lark is poised now, and his voice thrills the air through and through, and hushes thought.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*26th July.*—Miss Morris apparently breakfasted in her room this morning, but when I met her on the back piazza about eleven o'clock she seemed quite herself. I was prepared with some discreet words of sympathy, but she evidently did not want them, for after apologizing for her break-down she took up a book and her attitude expressed very plainly a desire to be let alone. I was dressed for riding and had ordered a horse, but lingered

awhile in hope of seeing her. The other people were off somewhere or other. I picked myself up, and covering my retreat with some kindly words, went round to the stables. I had not ridden far when I found that I had left my cigarette case behind me on the piazza. So having nowhere in particular to go, I returned, and tying up my horse, walked slowly round to the back of the house. Miss Morris was still there. She had not heard me, for I had walked on the lawn, and she evidently thought herself alone. I saw something glitter in her hands. She cast a hasty glance about her, and bending her head raised the object to her lips and apparently kissed it. Then flushing rosy red she let it fall on the table, and with clenched hands disappeared swiftly into the house. The something that had glittered was

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my cigarette case. I waited until I thought myself safe, and then quietly regained it and slipped away. I kissed that silver thing on both sides, and in the course of my ride smoked all its contents. I am not now quite sure where I went. I met people and saluted them as in a dream, and so soon as I got a chance I had a hard gallop for a mile. It settled me wonderfully.

I did not meet Miss Morris again until dinner-time, when I found some difficulty in keeping my eyes quiet. I dared not come near her for the rest of the evening, and, oddly enough, she seemed to have a like feeling. Instead of the magnetic attraction of two days ago, we seem to act like positive and negative poles. And now—what have we done! I love her and must not tell her, and will never

see her after she has learnt my secret. She cannot know it now, for I have not betrayed myself. And I—I know that she loves me, and she does not imagine that I know it.

It is both ridiculous and horrible. But for our rash promise I might claim her and take her to my heart. And yet, but for that promise, we should never have learnt to know and love each other. If I broke through it all, we could never be perfectly happy together, for the shadow of a broken faith would be upon us all our lives, and there could not be the perfect trust marriage demands.

Rightly are we punished. We tried to unveil the mysteries of Love, and Love has avenged himself. Forgive me, dear.

MARION MORRIS' JOURNAL.

*July 26th.*—Well, I have tasted of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil verily, and the fruit has been bitter. How sensibly constituted are those quiet, judicious women who entertain proposals of marriage from eager suitors, calmly deliberate on the expediency of their step, gracefully accept, marry, and rule their husbands' homes with grace and serene happiness. A woman who seeks to pry into the mysteries of soul-government or to search to the foundations of the human heart and learn its secrets, has only herself to blame if, in the attempt, her own soul's wings are beroughed and crumpled.

Far better had we never talked of things deeper than the casual questions of the hour, had never let our interest in each other go farther than

mere ordinary acquaintanceship; a thousand times better had our hands never met in that fatal pledge of which we were afraid even as we made it.

Am I true in this, true to myself, to him who alone is to read the foregoing pages, to that Hand of Destiny which found us out and worked our undoing? No, honestly, no! What I have been writing is, perhaps, what I *ought* to feel; what a well-regulated, evenly balanced womanhood perhaps would feel; but it is with me a sham, a vile pretence! And the truth—the truth is this. The past days—our days—have been painful, at times almost intolerable—I have been happy in them. The present is a dull ache of persistent self-tormentings and infinite regrets; I accept it and complain not. The future contains nothing to which to look forward, no slightest hope of happiness to come, only the



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bitter knowledge of an eternal separation. I would not have it otherwise. I glory in the misery of the past, the self-reproachings and wretchedness of the present, the—yes, even the years that will come and bring us no pleasure, no joy—for you love me, Kenneth. I felt it days ago, but only when your own lips last evening told me so unwittingly, so unrestrainedly, was I wholly and entirely satisfied.

A vast ocean rolls between us, a mighty stretch of waters that our own wilful word has placed there, and it may never be bridged. This is the end, for ever and ever, O Man that has come between me and the sunlight. You have not guessed, you will never know till you read these pages, with miles of distance between us, that to the yearning, unsatisfied calling of your heart an echo sounds forever. Good-by.

## NARRATIVE.

**T**HAT night only the inmates of the house were present at Mrs. Fairfax's dinner-table.

Their easy chat was interrupted by the arrival of a cable message addressed to Mr. Horton.

The young man asked leave to open it, and as he read it his face flushed slightly and his eyes grew very bright. Turning to Mrs. Fairfax he handed her the yellow paper and said :

“ I fear that I must go by the early boat to-morrow evening. You see I have no choice.”

Mrs. Fairfax read aloud :

“ Route received. Leave cancelled. Rejoin at once.

“ JOHN MAINWARING, Adjutant.”

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A little chorus of regrets and questions, in which Miss Morris managed to take part, covered the girl's emotion.

Her eyes and those of the young man met once and swiftly said: "The time is come."

As dinner ended and the ladies were leaving the room, Horton managed to say to Miss Morris without being overheard:

"I will give it to you this evening. Are you ready?"

A whispered "Yes" and a slight nod was the reply.

As the men settled themselves again at the table amidst clouds of tobacco smoke, Horton, in answer to inquiries, explained that this was his first chance of active service, and gave information about his regiment and the probable plan of the campaign com-

posedly enough. But he was thinking, too, of that other battle which he had both lost and won, and wondered whether he might be fated to win honors in the coming fight with men, but not live to enjoy them.

The chances of love and war no man may foretell. Horton was young and high-spirited, so that when some hours later he managed to meet Miss Morris alone on the piazza, and they silently exchanged two sealed packets, he gathered the girl into his arms, and for a second time found her warm lips, which came to meet his in a kiss that he was to remember all his life.

“Good-by, dear, if God pleases.”

## BOOK II.

### TIME'S ACHIEVEMENT.

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### NARRATIVE.

**T**EN years afterward Major Kenneth Horton came home on long leave from India. He had borne his part with the famous regiment to which he belonged, and had won credit and even distinction.

Those years had set their mark upon him. The young soldier was now a veteran. The bronzed face, slightly wrinkled at the corners of the eyes, the firmly set mouth, the quiet but authoritative voice, were signs that in the school of danger and hard-

ship he had learned both to obey and command.

He had met an old friend and companion-in-arms on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer, and they had agreed to break their journey at Brindisi and have a ramble in Italy, which country neither of them had yet visited.

It was springtime, and after a trip to Rome and Naples, which was all too short, they had travelled northward, and, lingering in delight among the Italian lakes, arrived at Stresa on a lovely evening.

The enchantment of the scene kept the two friends by the margin of the lake until the deepening shadows warned them that the dinner hour was at hand. Regretfully they turned their steps to their hotel, and presently entered the large, brilliantly lit dining-

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room to find the long table nearly filled by that better class of tourists whose means permit them to make holiday when they choose.

The *maître d'hôtel* assigned them to seats at the lower end of the room. They made a hasty inspection of the people about them, and then busied themselves with their dinner. The seats at the bottom of the table had remained unoccupied. Presently there arose a slight bustle of footsteps and rustle of gowns, and a girl's voice said :

“ We're late again and everything will be cold, and I am so hungry.”

A woman's pleasant voice answered: “ It's all your fault, Gwen. You can't sentimentalize on the lake and expect dinner to wait for you.”

The major started and looked queer. When the two ladies and the gen-

tleman who was with them had taken the vacant seats and settled themselves, the Major cautiously stole a look. The ladies were prepared to endure his respectful glance with composure, but one of them, the elder, as she met his eye, turned white, and made a little gasping sound. Her eyes, wide opened, expressed astonishment, shame, and irresolution. As she nervously swallowed some water, the color returned to her face and the courage to her heart, for she fixed her eyes upon the Major until he once more looked her way, and then bowed to him with the discreet smile of one who recognizes an old friend after years of an unknown absence. Her companions, a good-looking English man and woman, were busy with their soup, and had not noticed anything save the bow.



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“Who is your friend, Marion?” asked the former.

“Mr. Horton—I knew him at home and at Newport when I was a girl. He used to be in the —th.”

“Oh, yes,” said the man. “I’ve heard of him. Distinguished himself in Burmah. Major now, I think.”

“Looks very nice,” said the girl. “Is he, Marion?”

“He used to be before he went to the wars,” she said, a smile hovering about the corners of her mouth, which presently drooped again as if some powerful influence had checked mirth.

The Major’s companion asked who the lady was, but being an old campaigner and discreet, contented himself with brief answers.

The Major finished his dinner with composure, but he had watched for the lady’s left hand and had seen that

it bore a wedding-ring. He rose, and, bowing slightly to the table, left the room in search of information. The *portier* told him that the party were Sir John Sorby, Lady Sorby, and Miss Sorby, that they had arrived that day and taken rooms for a fortnight.

KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, May 15th.*—I have met Marion Morris again. The small world of Europe has brought it about. We were safe enough while I was in India. She married an Englishman after all, which I feel to be a compliment. She is as beautiful as ever, though more matronly. I suppose she has children.

Do I care much? I am not sure about it. I have thought very little about her for the last five years. Hard work and, in the holidays, other

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women, made it easy to forget. They say that women never do. I wonder why she recognized me at table. Perhaps she thought it safer. My God! how stupid I am. Of course, she wants to get back her journal or to know if it is destroyed. I left it safe in London marked: "To be burnt unopened," in case of accident. I wonder what she has done with mine. What young fools we were! And yet I do not regret it. It helped me, though, for it made me a little reckless, and I got toughened in active service the more quickly.

Her husband seems to be a decent sort of a fellow. The name is that of a good old Derbyshire family. He cannot be much older than his wife. I do not blame her.

I am wondering all sorts of things as I write. But I shall probably know more to-morrow.

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I have ever found that writing in my journal is a sedative. I am determined, however, in one thing, and that is that I will not go in for a warmed-up flirtation. The past was too good. Nor will I run risk of any serious love affair.

### MARION SORBY'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, May 15th.*—It is many years since I last put upon paper the record of my thoughts, and the years which have passed, though uneventful and prosaic enough, have yet changed to a great extent the current of my imaginings and the impulse of my life.

I have felt little desire, since the disastrous experiment of my curious and impetuous girlhood, to put into written words the facts or emotions of my daily life; but the unexpected meeting to-day with the man who

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shared in my folly and was a partner of my unhappiness, has given me once more the desire to put my feelings upon paper. Thoughts crowd in upon me as, forgetting the intervening years, I send my mind back to Fair Haven, and those days which were too terrible to be joyous, too exquisite to be altogether pain.

Of my feelings on the day on which I saw him, to all intents and purposes, for the last time, and reluctantly, yet in accordance with our solemn promise, put into his hands the open record of a woman's soul, I have no distinct remembrance. And yet it seems to me that in spite of the sense of shame that this man should know me—Marion—in all the abandonment of my own self-knowledge, there came to me a quietness that was almost peace in the thought that, though forever sepa-

rated, we, man and woman, had looked into the hidden recesses of each other's souls, had seen what those who desire happiness, not knowledge, would never wish to see, and that, though at a bitter cost to our individual selves, our compact had been kept.

Has he kept my journal? That is one thought that cannot fail to trouble me. Not that I fear its being ever seen by other eyes; he would, I know, be careful to guard against any such possibility. But will the sight of me inspire him with a desire to look at it again, as now the idea comes to me to take his from the hiding-place where it has lain for these ten long years, and re-read what I know would be better left unread? What I hope is that in the first excitement of the hour in which he read my miserable



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confession, in justice to me and in an effort to obliterate what had been done, he consigned it to the flames. In the years that have passed forgetfulness has come. The strongest feelings of which a man is capable—so I have learned from my great teacher, the World—will not stand the test of Time. He has learned to think of me—if, indeed, in the whirl and excitement of Indian life he has not entirely forgotten the experiences of other days—as a part of the past, the dead past. The lapse of time has deadened remembrance and I do not fear it. But should he have kept the visible witness to our rash compact—the thought that, even as I write, he may be re-reading that journal in the light of to-day's maturer judgment, with a sneer on his handsome face possibly, and a lazy interest in some

of the more touching parts—the thought leaves my face burning and my hands hot and trembling.

I need not distress myself, however. It is extremely improbable that Mr. Horton has carried the journal about with him for ten years. Men have not the same attachment to relics of bygone days that we women have; sentiment plays but a small part in their lives, and it is likely that the written testimony to our foolhardiness has long ago been reduced to ashes.

I have never regretted that step which I took when I married Sir John Sorby nine years ago. He was some forty years my senior, kind, considerate, and affectionate. Of such love as other women know in their married lives, the union of twin souls, I no longer dreamed.

I had given my love where it might

never bring forth fruit in joy, and with my own hand had signed the death-warrant of my happiness. I felt that I could do no better with my life than marry and care for the good man who had honoured me with the offer of his hand. My few years of married life were tranquil and content, and when, three years ago, I was left a widow, I felt that there was no unfulfilled duty with which I could reproach myself.

My step-son the present Sir John Sorby, who succeeded to the title on the death of my husband, proposed the distraction of this little trip to the Continent, and his sister, who is my companion on such occasions, persuaded me that it was my duty to give her a taste of the delights of travel. We have no definite purpose as to our movements as yet. Probably Gwen will plan our next move when the

humor seizes her to continue our journey ; meanwhile we are thoroughly enjoying the charming scenery and delightful air of the Lago Maggiore.

Here I pushed away my writing and dived to the bottom of my box for the locked case containing the few valuables which I carry with me ; his journal was there. I half pulled it out of its resting-place, but wavered in my purpose, and put it back. I will not look at it. Let it lie there, at all events for the present, as it has lain for the last ten years. It could do no good for me to read it again. I know that the pages are warped and blistered in many places where my tears fell on it that day when I read it first ; it could do no good and would only disturb me uselessly to rake over the ashes of a bygone fever and a bygone pain.

I am Marion Morris no longer.

## NARRATIVE.

**T**HE next morning as Major Horton stepped through the hall of the hotel into the air and sunlight he saw for the first time the Lago Maggiore, with Isola Bella, Isola Pescatori, and Isola Madre floating on its bosom, bathed in golden light and looking more like a scene in an opera than a real land and water scape. All was quiet, but from the lake came a splash of oars, and some foolish, happy boatman was singing a barcarolle.

Two ladies shared the prospect from a garden seat, and although the Major saw only their backs he recognized Lady Sorby and Miss Sorby.

A pedler had opened shop outside the gate, and had strung on the railings a number of old prints and modern water-colour drawings.

The Major passed the ladies unperceived, and was presently deep in negotiations from which he emerged triumphant with a very clever drawing of a girl violin-player. The artist had signed it with his initials only, and the pedler did not know his name. It was probably part of the wreckage from some poor artist's studio.

Armed with his purchase the Major re-entered the garden. As he met Lady Sorby's eyes he was greeted with a pleasant bow and smile, and as he drew near a small hand slid out to meet him.

The commonplace and customary words were spoken with ease on both sides, and Lady Sorby, turning to her companion, said :

“Gwen, Mr. Horton—I beg your pardon, Major Horton, is it not?”

The Major bowed assent, and the next few minutes passed in a rapid account of the events which had brought about the meeting. Lady Sorby was soon in possession of the principal facts of the past ten years of Major Horton's life in India and Burmah. Of her own history during that time he learned little, and Miss Sorby, divining his reluctance to ask questions in her presence, very discreetly withdrew.

Lady Sorby told him that she had lived in the country in England since her marriage, and her bright looks and happy manner gave assurance that she had found her lot in pleasant places.

Presently Sir John Sorby joined them and was introduced. He seemed really glad, and was quite as cordial as was becoming.

The conversation touched lightly but sympathetically upon the beauty of the scenery, and the water-colour of the girl playing the violin elicited some very intelligent criticism of modern Italian art and artists.

Then Sir John asked some questions about India and the Burmese war, in which he knew that Major Horton had taken part, and beguiled him into an account of some of the sharp fighting he had seen.

Lady Sorby listened with a woman's shuddering interest in the tale of war, and once, for a moment her hands tightened upon themselves, and her eyes betrayed more than common feeling.

When the little group rose to enter the hotel for second breakfast, she said:

"Now, Jack, we have a complete party, and you must arrange some-



thing for this afternoon, if Major Horton has no other plans and is not afraid of being bored;" and turning to the Major she added, quietly:

"I think you will like Gwen."

That afternoon the little party were rowed across to Isola Bella, and, the visit to the villa being duly paid, they were free to wander in the gardens.

Lady Sorby, pleading fatigue, placed herself on a seat on the terrace, and from the shelter of her sunshade cautiously eyed Major Horton, who had seated himself by her side. Sir John and Miss Sorby strolled away. The Major, having obtained permission to smoke, awaited events with outward calm. The sunshade was held so that he could see only the lady's chin, but when she drew two or three quick breaths he knew that she had made up her mind to speak. He

did not help her. At last she said:  
"We once did a very foolish thing.  
It had best be undone."

"Quite so," said the Major quietly.  
"I wrote to London for it this morning."

"You kept it then?"

"Yes, of course; I could not bear to destroy it, so I left it safe, with instructions to have it burned in case of accident to me. And I have not been home since. And mine?"

The lady was prepared for the sudden twist, and said:

"I think I can manage to have it here nearly as soon as the other one."

Her face was still hidden by the sunshade, but her neck betrayed a rising wave of colour.

That evening as the ladies said good-night, Lady Sorby lingered behind for a moment, whispered "Thank you," and put out her hand.

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Major Horton took it and kept it a little too long, for the lady made her fingers limp and withdrew them, as if they had touched something unpleasant. Her cold "Good-night" expressed vexation and disappointment.

The Major looked mortified and slightly ashamed.

### KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, May 16th.*—I slept later than usual this morning, and when, after my Italian *chota hasri*, I strolled into the garden of the hotel, I found the ladies installed in a seat overlooking the lake.

I had made up my mind to face the situation with Lady Sorby, and had expected her to be waiting for me.

I felt more composed than on the previous evening, and had the day been rainy or the surroundings com-

monplace I think I should have got through the interview without other feeling than was due to a woman I had loved, but who was now the wife of another man, and of the nature of whose present sentiments towards myself I was ignorant.

But as I gazed upon the fairy-like scene of the lake with its enchanted islands, I fell under the spell of its voluptuous charm.

I had come out armed with good intentions and steeled to virtue, but the sensuous prospect before me mastered me, and my good resolves melted like wax in the light and warmth of the lovely Italian morning.

I indulged in visions of a villa with Marion, and endless contented loiterings in boats, and I knew then why all runaway couples are supposed to hide their triumph and their shame amid the Italian lakes.

A man outside the gate had some water-colours for sale, and to distract my thoughts I had a fierce bargaining encounter with him. I was all right again when I re-entered the garden and approached Lady Sorby.

For the moment I forgot everything save that I was glad to see her, and our greetings were exchanged with the easy cordiality of old friends. But I missed the little, half-motherly, half-sisterly air of a young married woman toward an old love.

She was very little changed in looks but had grown more stately. Her English was that of England, but retained here and there an American pronunciation which was not unpleasant, and which, indeed, had the charm of a slightly foreign accent.

When I told her that I intended to stay in Stresa for a week, she seemed

relieved from some care, which I guessed to be the recovery of her journal.

Sir John came up just then, and was introduced.

As we went in to second breakfast, Lady Sorby proposed an excursion to Isola Bella in the afternoon, and, in a sort of aside to me, hinted that I should find Miss Sorby charming.

It was plain enough what she meant. The first difficulty of meeting was over, the past was to be forgotten and the evidence destroyed, and she was going to bestow me, if possible, upon Miss Sorby. It would no doubt be pleasant for her to do a little matchmaking in behalf of an old love.

I know that I ought to have fled from the ignominious situation, but I did not, and I almost quarrelled with my travelling companion, McMurdo,

who, being in haste to taste the delights of London in the season, left Stresa to-day. I telegraphed to my family solicitor in London to send me the sealed packet marked "To be destroyed in case of my death."

So that this afternoon when she alluded to "our past folly," I was able to inform her that I had already taken the first steps to recover the evidence. I did not find out what she had done with my journal, but it is not destroyed.

I am not sure whether I care greatly about it. She has too much of her old charm, and the possibilities of the "might have been" are too bewildering to make it safe for me to dwell upon either. She is a very delightful woman and her husband seems a good sort, though hardly her equal in some respects. He seems a trifle too cool

with her. I wonder—Oh, damn it!—I won't think about it.

MARION SORBY'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, May 16th.*—We met Major Horton in the garden this morning, and I introduced him to the others. I was relieved to find the meeting easy and natural, and pleased at the utter absence of self-consciousness or embarrassment in his manner. The years that have been so tranquil and uneventful with me have evidently been full of activity for him. He told us of some of his Indian experiences, and I thought as I listened that he seemed very brave and manly, and that the years had improved him. His manner has a quiet assurance that I think it lacked in the old days; but I suppose that is a natural outcome of added age and experience. He went with



us to the islands this afternoon, and when I had the chance I referred to our journals. I was anxious, I confess, to find out if he had destroyed mine. He told me that he had left it behind him in safe keeping in England and had already sent for it. I suppose while the feeling he had for me was fresh, he did not wish to destroy the only link that bound us. Of course he has since felt very differently about it, or, more probably, he has not thought of it at all. It will be a relief to have the thing in my own hands.

I gather that Major Horton has not married. Perhaps, however, he is engaged; nothing could be less unlikely. Indeed, as I come to think over it, there was something in his manner toward Gwen which would give one the idea of the assured position and

self-satisfied carelessness of the engaged man. I wonder that it did not occur to me before. Perhaps he may speak about her if we see much of him. I suppose he is very much in love with her, and men always like to pour out their enthusiasm over the perfections of the adored one to some sympathetic feminine ears. I wonder what she is like. Small, and fair, and doll-like, I expect, with sweet appealing eyes. Big men are always taken with that kind of girl. I think I shall let Gwen do the sympathetic-listener part. I am afraid I should be bored; I am getting too old for that sort of thing.

Heigho-ho! I had better go to bed and stop maundering on in this absurd way. What possible difference does it make to me if Major Horton marries a Hottentot or a New Zealander? I

have not the slightest interest in his affairs.

KENNETH HORTON'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, 17th May.*—Is it possible that after all these years my life is to be upset by the woman I loved long ago? She was always a mystery, even when her journal seemed most truthful.

I know more about women now than I did then, and she behaves to me exactly as would a girl to a lover to whom she was not indifferent, but of whose regard for herself she had no certain assurance.

She takes matters very coolly with Sir John, and I have seen no evidence of love for him. He is very polite and kind to her, but is rather too free in his remarks about women. At least, he made up to some pretty Am-

erican girls this morning under Lady Sorby's nose and came and laughed about it afterward. She did not seem to care.

Can it be that they have each taken their freedom back into their own hands?

And she?—Marion, I will not believe it of you. I remember so well how I misdoubted you more than once in the old days, and how I repented it.

I will believe in you now ; and even if the old love has faded to that after-glow which is friendship, I confess that in my eyes you represent all that is loveliest and best in woman.

In most cases when a man meets an old love whom he has not seen for years, he thanks the gods for his escape. I am not very thankful after all.

And I mean to run away when I have given her her journal. It should be here to-morrow.

We have been together a good deal to-day, but my pleasure in her company was set off by so many petty annoyances that I have retired to my room early.

### MARION SORBY'S JOURNAL.

*Stresa, 17th May, 1.30 A.M.*—I don't seem to be able to rest, so I have risen and put on a dressing-gown and shall try to induce sleep by writing in my journal.

I am ashamed to confess the thoughts that have come to me as I have lain awake pondering on the events of the past few days. Without volition on my part I have dreamed dreams of what might have been, dreams in which the only man I have

ever really cared for plays an all-important part.

Have I no pride? Ten years ago there was a barrier between us certainly, but it was of our own making, and because we built it together, though we must be forever on different sides of it, there was still the knowledge that it was *ours*—not *mine* alone, nor *his*, but *ours*.

Now, however, what remains of the crumbled ruins is about to be destroyed. We shall exchange our journals, burn, and forget them. There will be no longer even the semblance of an understanding to draw us together; only a wide arid plain of distance and coldness. For it is evident to me that the memory of old days does not now move him. If I desired it to do so, I would wish for some sign of dislike or aversion rather than this show of

quiet friendliness on his part. With him, without doubt, all thought of the possibility of a deeper feeling is entirely absent.

That to me he should seem more worthy to be loved than in the old days, more manly, more all that a woman desires, is surely no matter for surprise.

After our exchange of journals he will leave Stresa, or we shall, and we may never meet again. Our paths lie apart, and the wider the divergence the better, probably, for us both.

And yet the thought that it might have been otherwise is very sweet.

## NARRATIVE.

**O**N the following afternoon a boat took the little party to Isola Madre.

Lady Sorby was calmly gracious, but avoided Major Horton's eyes. Miss Sorby was rallying Sir John about his attentions to the fair Americans, and that gentleman replied to her attack with a grin that made the Major long to kick him.

Major Horton was very uncomfortable. He was in a bad temper, and when every now and again the pressure of his arm against the pocket of his shooting-coat made a little crackling sound his humor was not



improved by that reminder of the ordeal before him. For his pocket contained Marion Morris' journal.

The perfunctory tour of the island having been made, Major Horton and Lady Sorby dropped behind, and seated themselves on a stone seat embowered in a myrtle hedge. On a pedestal in front of them stood a statue of a young god, whose grave face, and lips finger-sealed, expressed silence.

"Here it is," said the Major abruptly, as he handed Lady Sorby a packet.

The lady said nothing, but her hand shook a little as she gave him a bundle of manuscript tied with a faded blue ribbon.

"Oh, I did not mean *that*," she exclaimed; and, recovering the roll for a moment, she nervously plucked away the ribbon, which she crushed in her hand

The Major took no notice, but said in a set voice :

“Your journal was sealed, and no one but myself has ever seen it.” He paused, and the silence forced Lady Sorby to reply to his unspoken question.

“No, he never saw it, and when—when he died——”

“Who died?” broke in the Major sternly.

“My husband.”

“Your what?” the Major almost shouted.

“My husband. He was much older than I, and he died five years ago, and—and——”

Her face flushed crimson as she vainly tried to steady her voice, which broke into a sob—

“Oh! Kenneth! O—oh!”

When the Major released her from

his arms he silently took both the journals and, tearing them into fragments, made a little heap in front of the god of Silence, and set light to it.

The two sat hand in hand and watched it burn, while the god of Silence looked on gravely with lip-poised finger.

THE END.

