A HIGHWAYMAN'S JULIET

The house in question was what Peter the jobber (who corrects my proof sheets) calls one of the stationary sort—its front facing a street and "the back looking over a lovely garden." It had three floors and, if I remember, "and a half beneath sunk sheltered out, its white slats plain to see in the starlight. At the end of the garden a door, painted dark green, led into a narrow lane between high walls, where, if you pressed a hidden spring, the door flew open and let you out into a cab. The entrance to this lane was cut in two by a wooden post about the height of your hat, and just beyond was the high road, therefore was well-lit for me with two dog carts.

We had picked the usual time—the dinner hour. It had just turned dark and the streets clear, two streets away, was dinning the quarter after eight when Peter and I let ourselves by the green door. I spoke of and felt along the wall for the gardener's ladder that we knew was hanging there. A simpler job there never was. The bedroom window on the first floor stood right open to the night air, and inside was a faint, candle-light flickering just as a curious maid will leave them after her mistress has gone down to dinner. To be sure, there was a chance of her coming back to get them out, but we could hear her coming in the servants' hall as we lifted the ladder and rested it against the sill.

"She's good for half an hour yet," Peter whispered, holding the ladder while I began to climb; "but if I hear her coming I'll give the signal to be cautious."

I went up softly, pushed my head gently above the level of the sill and looked in.

It was a roomy place, with a great high tester bed, lying with curtains, angling out from the wall on my right. The curtains were of chintz, a dark background, with flaming red poppies sprawling over it, and the farther curtain hid the dressing table and the open night-light of the bowl case that I confidently hoped to stand upon it also. A bright Brussels carpet covered the floor, and the wall paper, I remember—though, for the life of me, I can not tell why—was a pale gray ground, worked up in lines of waxed silk, with sprigs of gilt honeysuckle upon it.

I looked around and listened for half-minute. The house was still as death my hope—was a sound in the room of it. I was about to whisper to Peter to hold the ladder free I lifted a leg over the sill, then the other, dropp my feet carefully upon the thick carpet and went quickly around the bed to the dressing table.

But at the corner, and as soon as ever I saw around the chintz curtain, my knees gave way, and I put out a hand to rest the bedpost.

Before the dressing table, and in front of the big glass to which she could see my white face, was an old lady seated.

She wore a blaze of jewels and a low gown, out of which rose the scraggiest neck and shoulders I have ever beheld on. Her hair was white with black dyed in streaks, and a diamond star fastened the low candles the powder showed on her cheek bones like flour on a miller's coat. Chin on hand, she was gazing steadily into the mirror before her, and, as I say, frightened I had time to note that a glass of sherry and a plate of rice and curry stood at her elbow among the rouge pots and powder puffs.

While I stood stock still and pretty well scared out of my wits, she rose, still staring at my image in the glass, folded her hands modestly over her bosom, and spoke in a deep, tragical voice:

"The prince!"

Then, facing sharply around, she held out her hands to me.

"You have come—at last!"

There was not much to say to this so—but I took it. So I confessed it. Even with my candle against her I could see her eyes sparkling like a dog's, and no honest good reasons this world could eternally show.

"To the ladder set against the window!"

"Some one seems to know, ma'am," said I, "who is"—

"Ah, Samuel! Your cheeks are ruddy as your pulses are red."

"Then I'm glad my color's come back, for, to tell the truth, you did give me a turn just at first. You were looking out for some one, I'm afraid."

"My prince!" She stretched out her arms again, and being pretty well at my wits' end, I let her embrace me. "It has been so long," she said, "oh, the weary while! And then! Oh treat me. Where have you been all this tedious time?"

I was not going to answer that, you may be sure. By this I had recovered myself sufficiently to guess what was near the truth—that I was a stand-in want of the family below, and that the game was to my hands if I played with decent care. So I met her question with another.

"Look here," I said, "I'm running a considerable risk in leaving those protectors of your's. Hadn't we better elope at once?"

"I am ready."

"And the jewels? You won't leave them to your enemies, I suppose."

She flung round to the dressing table, lifted her jewel case and put it into my hands.

"I am ready," she repeated; "let us be quick and stealthy as death."

She followed me to the window and, looking out, drew back.

"What a terrible, black depths!"

"It's as easy," said I, "as pie. You could do it on your head—look here." I climbed out feet and helped her, resting her feet on the rungs. We went down a few steps, speaking all the way at the sight of Peter below, who was looking with his mouth open and his lips too weak to meet the curses and wonderment that rose up from the depths of him. When I reached rest and landed him the jewel case he took it like a man in a trance.

We put the ladder back in its place and stole over the turf together. Before the garden door Peter could stand no more of it.

"I'm a fiend in my proper," whispered he, pulling up, "and I'm going to die. It will relieve my feelings. If you don't explain here and now. Who is pig's meat, in this?"

"Last song—the Original Sleeping Beauty. He's going with her, and you've got her jewels."

"Parlez vu, Jem," he says, in his sentimentally way, "if I don't quite see. Are you asking her off to wait her or marry her? For how to get rid of her else"—

The poor old creature had halted, too, those few chest of us, and waited while we whispered, with the moonlight, that shaded down into the lane, whistling her hare neck and flashing on her jewels.

"This moment," I said, and stepped forward to her; "you had better take off those ornaments here, my dear, and give them to my servant to take care of. There's a carriage waiting for us at the end of the lane, and which he has ordered them under the seat as our chaise in and drive off"——

"To the end of the world—to the very rim of it, my hero."

Jem pulled the gems from her ears, her neck bones and handed them to Peter, who received them with a bow. Next she searched in her pocket and drew out a key. Peter sidled and the same, and, having carefully stowed the diamonds in his pocket, he sidled back but the key, snorted his hat and walked off toward the dogcart.

"My devoted lady," I began, as soon as we were alone between the high walls, "of the devotion of a wife"——

Her hand went up and stopped me. "There is but a little time left for me in which to be happy. Year after year I have stayed off the offensive; day by day I have watched the foe. I saw my sisters married and my sisters' daughters, and still I waited. Each left a man to have her and bred her, but none had such a man as I would have chosen. They were none like you, my prince."

"No, I dare say not."

"But her key in heart is not so cold. Take my hand—it is firm and strong; touch my lips—they are burning"——

A low whistle sounded at the top of the lane. As I took her hands I pushed her back, and listening run for my life. I suppose that at least I occupied forty before her servant came, and then the sound of her feet pattering after me.

His mast have run like a demon, for I was less than ten yards ahead when Peter caught my arms and pulled me up into the lane to let the dogcart. And before George could set the horse going her hand clutched at the flap on which my feet rested. It seized its grasp and she never got near enough again. But for a full minute I lapsed into that horrible fuss following to and working with silent rage; and for half a mile at least I heard the patter of her feet in the darkness behind. Indeed, I can hear it now.—Q. in Argonaut.

Sensing Flowers for Funerals.

"What an idea! How pale florists are bad enough, but they have not yet stooped so low as to hire out theories for funerals." This spoke a Fifth avenue dealer in fancy nosegays the other day.

"But you have drawn to undertakers sometimes?"

"Yes, and to the churches on special occasions, but funerals! Excuse me, for a moral, why, it is simply preposterous!"

"It is said to be done every day in this city."

"Yes, there are dealers in artificial flowers who do that business, but not florists."

I visited the largest artificial flower and foliage concern in the city.

"A great many poor people," said a member of the firm, "order paper flowers and trees for funerals for the family. We charge 10 per cent. for their use, and in many instances the flowers might better have been purchased out and out. Their cut foliage bouquets, composed of begonias, coleus, geraniums and ivy—they come semi-wilted to your recovery to fire them. But people of small means like the immediate sending, and the long rush not taken into account. For church funerals we sell large quantities of ferns, asparagus, roses, lilies and calla lilies, hyacinths, etc. Natural flowers are sometimes represented on the same floral piece, and it is impossible to tell which is which."—New York Herald.

A Remarkable Black Walnut.

Ohio is a remarkable state for nuts. A new kind of black walnut has been discovered out there which is evidently destined to be highly prized in the future. It is a cross between the shell of the shell is not developed, nor the tissue in that side, the result being a paper shell and filled with a single meat somewhat the shape of a pecan, though larger. The improved edibility to an unusually thick meat is that they are divided in the middle by a wall of shell so constructed that it is almost impossible to get the kernel out whole. This fresh variety has only to be cracked to yield the meat nearly whole. It is to be cultivated, and may be expected to appear on the market by the time that the present generation of babies is grown up.—Washington Star.

Ruined Their Business.

Simple—If this is such a wonderful specific of yours, why are all the doctors opposed to it?

Quack—Because when a man takes it he stops well too long.—New York Epoch.

Arnold T. Jahn, who recently died in Chicago, was the son of Frederick Ludwig Jahn, the founder of the now famous Turn Vereins and is by the one of the greatest of German patriots.

The government proposes to build another timber dock to the navy yard at Brooklyn, the accommodations of the other two docks being insufficient. It is to be about 600 feet in length.

Four years ago a strange birthday present was received by charles Kettlesorger, of San Francisco. It was a collie, and the other day he was buried in it.

The Rabbit and the Kittens.

J. R. Chapman has a cat that found a young rabbit a few days ago and carried it home, placing it with her kittens, and now the rabbit is just like one of the family and seems to be as happy as any of them. The mother cat nurses it just the same as her kittens.—Raymond (Ill.) Independent.

After the Vacation.

"You look all broken up."

"Naturally; just been dividing myself among forty girls at a seaside hotel."—Harper's Bazar.

A Solid Train of Beans.

A solid train load of beans, twelve carloads in all, left Sidney, Neb., recently, consigned to Chicago by the Farmers' Alliance of Nebraska county. The train ran through to its destination as a special train.

Southern cotton raisers express the opinion that smart cattle will be a large factor in the labor problem.

How a Man Acts in a Woman's Company.

"My uncle is usually opposite a popular down town restaurant, the upper floor of which is reserved for ladies or gentlemen accompanied by ladies," said a young acquaintance of mine sitting the other day at the Lawyers' club.

"The view from my window, however, allowed me to see only one person seated at any of the tables below, and I noticed him particularly, for he puzzled me to have lots of fun, and at the same time often was a first rate chance to study my fellow man in the presence of a girl or when he thinks enough to battle her out to himself.

"As a forelight I got so I could tell in a moment whether any man of whom I could catch a glimpse as a table had as his vis-a-vis mother or a wife.

"How did I do it? Oh, it was easily enough learned. If there were a woman on the other side of the table things were very much changed. You follow by my view I could observe a man's actions differently from the one with his sister along. He seemed to be on his ease, he seemed to be himself, to himself, and every now and then he would suspend operations to the eating line to cast a loving look at the girl opposite.

"In fact, under such conditions, I found that the whole manner and pose of man went out of his lecture at once, absolutely unnatural and self conscious and their efforts to please, from my point of view, invariably became most amusing."—New York Herald.

Doctrine of Malthus and the Food Supply.

The doctrine of Malthus regarding the future food supply of the world and the consequent limitation of a portion of the race has been greatly misrepresented, but even the most favorable interpretation is a gloomy one. Briefly stated, the theory is that population increases in a geometrical ratio and food only in an arithmetical ratio, and hence the time must come when there will not be food enough. Perhaps the simplest and most correct reply to this theory is that the assumption that the race increases and will continue to increase in a geometrical ratio is not borne out by observed facts. The theory that the food supply increases in only arithmetical ratio, and must ultimately reach its limit, is undoubtedly true in the main. But while there is a limit to the possible production of food, it transcends all the ideas that ever occurred to Malthus or to the people of his time.

It has always been asserted that the capacity of the soil to produce plants is determined by what is popularly called its fertility—that is to say, the amount of production possible under ordinary conditions of culture. The science of today, however, shows this assumption to be incorrect, and the promise of agriculture is already beginning to add the knowledge to the same effect. And remarkable as is the story told in master gardening, in the cultivating of the flower and in irrigation, it is only the first chapter of a tale the ultimate end of which is the wholly unknown. Close of the "Arabian Nights."—Professor Atwater's Lectures.

Tossing Widow.

Of late years there has been much talk of tossing, if not of sensibility, as if men and animals have been tried, but with indifferent success. There is no doubt, however, but that chemistry does greatly aid in the tossing process. In the old days of tossing, the potash, called lye, was dissolved and mixed ready, were placed in the tan vats, and there allowed to remain saturated and undisturbed for from nine to twelve months, and became even much longer, until the tannin in the liquor was entirely extracted. Then the hides, not scorched from into leather. But after a time it was discovered that by putting the hides into a revolving wheel or drum, which had first been partially filled with the liquors, the time necessary to convert them into leather was greatly shortened.—New York Advertiser.

Advice to Young Authors.

Get original—write your own work, my friend. If your novice is written entirely choose a new, bright, popular topic and treat it freely. Don't affect the dull and stupid easy style. Use few words. Make your sentences brief. In writing your story don't attempt to make a "big" book; make your complete complete. Tell the reader something he doesn't know and is trying to find out. If you have to throw tar away from all plots and take an incident that a reader will recognize at once as being true. Make your dialogue natural and bright. Let your characters move around and have a long. Stop when your story is told; a lively story at 5,000 words, full of life and snap, ties to it more prospects of success than a dreary tale of 5,000 words. If you feel positively to be your first effort, send to the best publisher you know. Don't fail at black verse when you can succeed as popular poetry.—E. W. Bok in Ladies' Home Journal.

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