

# THE EVENING NEWS

Wednesday, March 15, 1871.

## MAGGIE'S SECRET

[CONCLUDED.]  
The experience of the last few hours had already reduced her to a state of most desolation. Nothing he could say would much astonish her now, so to this remarkable question she only answered, Do it!

"Do you? why yes, Maggie. Don't you remember Jack Carleton?"

"Are you—yes, Carleton?" came from the lips of the girl, starting to their master's voice.

"Yes, indeed!" he replied. "Am I so much altered?" Perfect astonishment and silence. "And you owe me a kiss," Jack continued; "you remember that, don't you, Maggie? I'm going to have it now."

Quick as thought an impromptu kiss was taken in the dark, while the rest were burning their fingers, and then shrilled out in a most unbecoming way that people do in these days.

Well, by degrees Miss Barton became more reconciled to the existing state of things; so by the time the blue flame waxed dim, and the raisins were all gone, it seemed the most natural thing in the world for Mr. Carleton to place her hand upon his arm and march off to the quiet corridor for a tête-à-tête, leaving them to the general glare flying up and down the room, while the person kissed the Fiddler's Wife."

What can't be cured must be endured.

Here was this young gentleman, a stranger for years—taking the most complete possession of her, and all the time his likeness was in her *Lara* as that of her future husband; so, of course, when after about two golden hours, spent in each other's society, he requested the hand of her hand, what could she say but "yes"?—for was it not her fate as told by the stars by a wonderful astrologer? Of course she said yes.

Then, in a perfectly cool and collected manner, acquired on the continent, Mr. Carleton took Miss Barton in to supper, and joined in the festivity just as if nothing had happened out of the common. He was quite satisfied for his part. Maggie Barton was the prettiest girl in the room, an orphan with three hundred pounds a year in her own right, and the ward of Mrs. Frances, the husband of the Squire's second daughter. She—

Maggie Barton was the sweetest of girls, a pretty dancer could sing songs of the "Barney O'Hearn" school in a ringing soprano voice, and play all the waltzes of the season. She was a good skater, could sit square in her saddle, handle a gun, or hit the bull's eye three times out of four at an archery meeting.

In fact, I believe, with all her prettiness, she was hardly fit for a girl.

Carleton had no choice for a wife, but he waited to form an opinion;

but he acted upon impulse, and, strange to say, he never had occasion to repent,

for Maggie was the sweetest and tenderest of wives. But the secret was her secret forever. At least Jack never told her about his friend Sigmar Morgan, nor did she ever tell any one how she consulted the astrologer.

## THE SONGSTRESS WITH THE GOLDEN GIRDLE

A True Episode in the Career of Nilsson

### CHAPTER I.

### HOW THE GIRL WAS WON.

A Swedish autumn in the eleventh century. There were no merry harvest songs that year in the province of Smoland; a sadness and silence reigned upon the country, and on the Day of Rest the very bells were still. For the men of Smoland were gone to meet an enemy upon their eastern border; and one as lonely as the old, old men sat in the rare bleak sunshine of that chilly climate, and shook their ancient heads over the dangers which their brave sons had gone to meet, and taught their tiny grandchildren to mimic in their games the actions which might be demanded of them in fatal earnest how many years hence!

But the work was not undone. The sombre corse was not permitted to draw its departure from the land, nor to strip the late autumn. There were still strong arms in Smoland; strong with a force of will which supplied the lack in nerve and sinew.

Now that their fathers, husbands, lovers, were away, shedding their dear blood to preserve their homes from risk and insult, the women of Smoland rose up as one to do the toll which their protectors had been forced to leave behind.

A girl, a fair one with a frank face, stood resting at the setting of the sun, her left hand holding the sickle placed upon her hip, her right hand large, strong, and shapely—gazing her eyes from the mellow green as she looked across the river to some low, blue hills. On a sudden, her gaze became more intense, she bent eagerly forward with parted lips; a figure with rustling robes came running down the slopes, after appearing one moment in the distance, a black speck against the mallow. As it drew near, the watcher saw that a shapeless rag waved over his shoulder, and when still nearer observed this rag was red; a dangerous signal. A strange cry drew forth for the other women, who were hastening to leave their bold, chattering, and laughing with the ease of their lighter natures.

"What is it, Blinda?"

"Danger!" said Blinda, sternly.

She ran towards the messenger, and the others followed, more or less swiftly, as they could. The foremost who in time to see the meeting.

"What is it, sister? Tell the worst at once," from Blinda.

Drawing her breath in sobs, her whole body panting with exhaustion, the woman cried:

"They are on us—the Danes are on us again! We are to be sold to them to be sold to them. They will take all we have; they will, they will make us as swift as the ravens fly, and all themselves our conquerors."

"The cowards!" muttered Blinda. "Would they make war on a flock of lambs?"

"They laugh and say, let the women defend themselves!"

And they shall," said Blinda, in a deep, hoarse voice. "When may the Danes be here?"

"In two days at the farthest."

"We will be ready."

"But we cannot recall our men."

"We will be ready."

In two days' time the renowned Tumlinger stood with his Danish host on the top of that low ridge. The procession was slow and gay; there were light muskets, and broadswords, and broadswords over every shoulder; it was a scene more than a war. In the pride of victory, Tumlinger gazed on the banner before him, and the village folk among their trees. He turned to his companions.

"This will be a pleasant spot to quarter," he said. "And we shall keep our captives come summer, only too willing to be taken by the gallant Danes."

He laughed, pointed to a line of figures ascending the hillside, with a festive dress, which were a group of seven women, and Blinda at their head, stately as a queen, bearing on her arm a bundle of corn, in sign of peace and plenty. Tumlinger hastened toward them, with an instant admiration in his eye; and his men followed, laughing and jesting with one another. Deeply bowing, with eyes cast down, as in great humility, to hide the gleam within them, Blinda, downy and staid before the Danish general.

"Welcome, fair lady," said Blinda. "We are much pleased to have you here. But the danger is great, and the country is already threatened, and we must be prepared."

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