

A DREAM AND THE REALITY.

BY STANLEY HUNTER.

"And have you never felt the power,
The insinuating Drummer said,
That comes to all in some sweet hour,
And brings the thoughts were dead?
Have you not heard a melody,
A half-forgotten withered strain,
That once was fraught with harmony,
But now comes like a sob of pain?"

The fair one's soft lash swept her cheek,
She sighed, but offered not to speak.

"And so with me since first we met,"
The Drummer murmured soft and low,
"The bright faded from long ago.
Come back to me from long ago.
It may be from some boyish dream,
That in the fairy harp inshrined
The notes that like a moon ray gleam,
When your fair hands the chords unbind!"

A hot tear burned the fair one's cheek,
She sobbed, but never sought to speak.

"Come tell me, 'tis what simple art,
The Drummer whispered in her ear,
"Your music in my heart
And bring the old perfume so near?
What wifery do you possess
That brings a presence close to me,
And taches me to love and bleed,
A doom I feel, but cannot see?"

The fair one never deigned to speak,
While her husband thumped the Drummer's
cheek.
—Drake's *Traveler's Magazine*.

THAT HANDKERCHIEF.

BY SHELBURNE HICKORY.

Not long since, while traveling in a Western State, I happened to find myself in the beautiful little town of Humber, with a few leisure hours on hand.

"As the day was fine, I strolled out to see what was to be seen. As I was leisurely advancing down one of the shady streets, whom should I meet but my old friend and class-mate, Jake Raymond.

"Well, well, well, old boy, how goes it?" he exclaimed, as he shook hands with me.

"You?" I answered. "Of all men on the footstool! What in creation are you up to, away off here?"

"Here is where I hold forth, and you must go down home with me."

I went, and at dinner was introduced to Mrs. Raymond. She was not what would be called handsome woman, but there was a wholesome look in her face, and her big brown eyes and white teeth, added to the bright color of her cheeks and the satiny smoothness of her dark hair, fairly entitled her, in the opinion of some, to a certain degree of beauty.

Jake was not wealthy, but he had a comfortable home, and the neatness of the house and yard, together with the trimness of his wife's attire, added not a little to his enjoyment of this world's goods.

Mrs. R. welcomed me cordially to their home, and I enjoyed more than I can express, the well-cooked meal, prepared by her own skill, and their genial society.

The sprightly conversation of my friend's help-meet, and her infectious smile, completely won my regard; and I smothered a little sigh as I reflected on my own condition—that of a bache- lor.

"Where did you get her, Jake?" I asked, as we lit our cigars and walked down town.

He smiled in a dreamy kind of way, as he thumped the ashes from the end of his cigar.

"It is a long story," he said. "I will tell it to you when we get to the office."

I was much pleased, for, beside being interested in the woman, I used to like very much to listen to Jake's stories.

Arriving at the office, we made ourselves comfortable, after which Jake began:

When I was a boy in the office of Shears & Clipper, in the town of Covell, in a State further east than this, I belonged to an orchestra and to a brass band. I tumbled the festive guitar in the former, and thereby hangs a tale. You shall see how my membership in the latter also served its turn. So much for myself.

I had a friend, John Simons, who was also a music-man, and it was he who guided my unaccustomed hand to finger the guitar.

I enjoyed his society more than that of any of my other friends, but he was a restless fellow, that was not satisfied in any place long, so he packed his "grip" and left, much to my regret. A few months passed, when lo! John turned up again. He had not been doing anything; only wandering to suit his own gypsy taste, and had even sold the guitar that he so loved, to get money to come back on. This being the case, he went a short distance into the country and went to work for a farmer—for he was proud as Lucifer, and would not stay around town in his shabby clothes. His idea was to stay in the country until he got himself a little "fixed" in regard to his wardrobe and his finances, and then go back to town and take his old situation, which was open to him if he chose to accept it.

Now it happened that the farmer for whom he worked had a young neighbor lately married, and he took a violent fancy to John. The young farmer was very proud of his wife and baby, and was not at all averse to company. John was a shy fellow in the presence of ladies, and was slow to accept the frequent and pressing invitations which Mr. Newman (for that was his name) gave him to "come over." But when he learned that Mrs. Newman's niece from a neighboring State was there, with a guitar, he mustered up courage and went, for his fingers ached to caress once more the vibrating strings of a guitar. He found Miss May Warner, the niece before mentioned, a most agreeable young lady; but I don't believe he could have told what she looked like, for I'm sure he did not once look at her face, except to snatch a hasty glance when he was sure she would not see him. He observed narrowly, however, a neatly-slipped foot which peeped from beneath her dress; and you are aware, probably from experience, that a pretty foot is almost as essential to a lady's appearance as a pretty face. But better than her society he found that of her guitar. With that instrument in his arms he seemed to feel quite at ease, and played accompaniments to his own singing the whole evening.

This was a musical treat to the family to which they were not accustomed, for Miss Warner's performance on any musical instrument was very amateurish, to say the least. That being the case, he was warmly invited to repeat his visit.

This he did several times; but, just as he was established on a footing of tolerable intimacy, Miss Warner left her sun and went to Covell on a visit to some other friends. While there she joined some sort of a class that was organized for the purpose of studying certain branches of learning, and soon three of her cousins joined the same class and stopped at the same house she did. They dressed considerably alike, and appeared to be about of the same age; and, as they attended the meetings of their class in the forenoon and afternoon, they nearly always passed our office window four times a day; for our office was on the direct route between the residence of Mrs. Winsans, the stopping-place of the girls, and the school-house. There were others passing, but you may imagine that a group of four lively young girls, all of them tolerably good-looking, was not long in attracting the attention of the bachelor portion of our establishment, nor were we long in finding out that this was the "Winsans crowd," as they were called all summer. Then the question of forming their acquaintance came up, and here I "had the heels" of the other boys, metaphorically speaking. I knew what I would do. I would call up the members of the orchestra, and we would go and serenade them. Just what useful purpose this was to serve, I could not exactly tell; but we went all the same. I sang a song or two that I had learned of John, accompanying myself on the guitar. Then we played several instrumental pieces and were preparing to go, when a blind of an upper window was thrown open, and a white hand and arm were thrust out waving some small object, which suddenly came fluttering to the ground like a white dove. I went back and got it. As soon as possible I gratified my own curiosity and that of the other boys by striking a match and looking at the white object, which proved to be a handkerchief, with the name "May Warner" neatly stenciled in one corner.

"Which one is that?" asked the boys of one another.

"It is the little one with the black hair and eyes," said one.

"No," said Alfonso, with such a peculiar intonation that we concluded he must have been making private inquiries, and that he knew quite as well what the "something or other" was as he did the identity of Mollie.

"It must be, old fellow, that you are slightly interested in that quarter. Eh? Come now, my dear Alfonso."

This he disclaimed, but with such a guilty blush that instantly we told him he had "given himself away."

Let me explain that by this time we had lit the lamps, to say nothing of our cigars, which were always left in the office for our convenience. Some one suggested that it must be the slender blonde; this time no one had the hardihood to deny it, and Jim was constituted a committee of one to find out just "who was who," and report to us the next meeting. In the meantime that handkerchief reposed in my breast pocket. It gave me an odd, pleasant feeling that I can't explain, to have that feminine article in my undisputed possession. She must have seen me, I thought, and liked my looks; so she took that way to let me know it. The next evening Jim was ready with his report. We found out afterward that the shy rascal knew all about it from his brother, who was the accepted lover of one of the girls. But he pretended that he had obtained his information at infinite pains, and had been obliged to go through unheard of difficulties to find out that which was embodied in his report. Very deliberately he proceeded to read from a manuscript:

"Friends and fellow-citizens: You will readily conceive that upon this momentous and never-to-be—" "Stop!" we shouted as one man.

"Plain facts and no foolishness, for it will be the worse for you, my man."

He knew well that we would give him a worse trick than that, so he "came down" at once.

"Well, then, the little blonde is Mollie Bell. The blonde is Gussie Ray. The one with the gray eyes and chestnut curls is Sade, otherwise, Sallie Sarah Thompson, and the remaining one is, as you must know by this time, Miss May Warner. They are all cousins, and related, in some mysterious way, to Mrs. Winsans. Further than this I am unable to say."

"Well done, my dear sir," I responded, for I had a sneaking notion all along as to "what was switch" as the school-boy says, and it had turned out as I had hoped.

Then commenced the merciless railing of the boys. A thousand questions as to the reason of my taking the serenaders there; why the handkerchief was thrown down; and all the time they were exchanging winks and laughing in the most provoking manner.

To hear them make remarks to one another, for me to hear, became utterly insupportable; and I was just getting desperate, when I learned of a party that was soon to be at the house of Mrs. Winsans. Here was another chance for a serenade. This time I was determined it should be of some avail, for I would go soon enough to be invited in, and then it should be a very odd thing if I were not introduced to Miss Warner. This all happened just as I had planned, but I only had a few moments of conversation with her. I was determined to have some sort of an explanation about that handkerchief, and my only chance was to snatch a hasty glance when he was sure she would not see him. He observed narrowly, however, a neatly-slipped foot which peeped from beneath her dress; and you are aware, probably from experience, that a pretty foot is almost as essential to a lady's appearance as a pretty face. But better than her society he found that of her guitar.

With that instrument in his arms he seemed to feel quite at ease, and played accompaniments to his own singing the whole evening.

This was a musical treat to the family to which they were not accustomed, for Miss Warner's performance on any musical instrument was very amateurish, to say the least. That being the case, he was warmly invited to repeat his visit.

little romance dashed to the ground, and the fair structure of my "Castle in Spain," had melted into thin air. I begged to be allowed to keep the handkerchief, though, for I was really interested in the girl by this time. She would not do it, but her womanly heart was touched by my evident disgust with myself, and she gave me her hand saying she was sorry. There was no gleam of amusement in the brown eyes that looked into mine with an honest straightforwardness which was very captivating just at that moment. If there had been, I should have reacted with scorn any overture of friendship that she might make. As it was, it soothed my wounded vanity to see that "splendid creature," as I mentally called her, glossing over my misadventure, and I requested her company for a drive the next evening. She accepted the invitation with a smile that gave a glimpse of her white teeth, and my heart beat a little faster than usual, as I pressed her hand and said "good night." I was a little absent-minded, and I don't think I could, myself, tell what thoughts so occupied my mind. She was the subject of them, but everything else was a kind of haze. I didn't question myself as to whether I was falling in love or not. Nothing even as tangible as that was in my mind. The next evening I was actually seated by her side in a buggy. It was one of those topped concerns with a narrow seat, and I blessed the maker thereof, for as we sat there her shoulder touched mine, and the wind whistled the long feather, on her hat, in the side of my face. I fear I was very near gone, for the bliss I felt can't be described; it must be experienced to be appreciated.

She had taken off her gloves, and, when I went to assist her to alight, I noticed how delightfully soft and white her hand was, and I could scarcely refrain from pressing it to my lips. Then for the first time I thought what unutterable happiness it would be to press her to my breast; to feel her arms round my neck, to lay my lips on hers, and to feel their fervent presence returned.

Was it too sudden? I think not.

How many times did Romeo see Juliet before a passion was conceived, which was stronger than life?

To go on with my story, I asked her to go to camp-meeting in my buggy the next Sunday. I shall bless that grand old Methodist institution to my dying day, for I believe that it was on that day she first thought of becoming my wife.

When we started to the camp-meeting the wind blew warm, balmy and moist from the southwest. It seemed to be taken in rain; but said I, who ever heard of its raining at camp-meeting.

Miss Warner bravely declared she thought a "good ducking" was not such a fearful catastrophe.

It was September, and the leaves had commenced to turn; and as we drove through shady lanes the wind twisted them off and threw them spitefully in our faces. Emerging into open prairie, the breeze rushed at us, "swishing" the dry, standing grass in a manner which augured ill for a pleasant day. But I thought little of the wind, or anything else, except that I had my soul's desire in the companionship of her who was with me. When we had arrived to within a few rods of the camp-meeting grounds, lo! a few preliminary drops of rain came hurling through the air, and warned us to put up the side curtains and water-proof lap-robe, and prepare for the worst—which was not so bad after all; for we drove under a friendly oak not far from the rude pulpit, and stayed in the buggy. Then the rain descended "the nigh way." All the sluices were opened, and a new and very choice assortment of water-spouts were turned onto the assembled multitude. The windows of the heavens were thrown wide open, and the water-pitchers were held there upside down, but we were dry and comfortable, and observed with interest all that went on around us.

We saw a sorry-looking dog walking leisurely along, with the water pouring in streams from his drooping tail and ears; he passed near us, looking at us with so sad an expression that I spoke to him, thinking to cheer him, whereupon he gave one solemn bark, leaving us, as he passed on, convulsed with laughter.

The spectacle of a very fat lady with a quilt around her, hustling along to a barn which stood near, seemed unaccountably funny.

But the climax was reached when a smiling man came along, unmindful of the rain, and holding an immense piece of bread and cheese in each hand, biting first from one and then from the other. Neither of us yelled at him, but I must confess I had a strong desire to know something more of him.

Then the conversation turned from the ridiculous vein to the serious, and we wondered as to the history of this, that and the other person—what he was thinking—what he proposed doing; and we made for them quite interesting histories. Then we wandered into the realms of the abstract, and I remember well the earnest glow of her cheek as she gave her views of this or that subject, and the luminous flash of her eyes as she turned them upon me. She wore a thin, black lace veil that day, and her bright eyes and cheeks lost nothing by their partial obscurity. At about this time another couple of our acquaintances drove up, breaking up our exalted frame of mind.

By this time I thought it must be pretty near the dinner hour, so I shouted to her:

"Oh, Mac, climb out and go over to that restaurant, or whatever it is, and bring us something to eat. Get enough for all four of us, and I'll foot the bill."

"No, thanks," was his answer. "We have our dinner with us."

I knew very well he hadn't, but it wasn't polite to say so, and so I began preparations for "climbing out," my self, but of this Miss Warner would not hear. She was not hungry, she said; she even went so far as to lay her hand on my sleeve; and as I felt the light weight, I immediately made a prisoner in my own hand. This did not seem to suit her; she at once made the discovery that she was in great need

of her handkerchief. On drawing this out I saw it was the same I had had for a number of days in my possession.

"Won't you give it to me now?" I asked, in a voice at once humble, entreating, and full of love. She understood me, for the blood leaped into her cheeks, and her eyes shot a quiet sidelong glance into mine. She put it quickly away, however, and I thought of John with a jealous pang that sent all the blood back to my heart, making it beat painfully hard, slow, and uneven. I said no more, however, for I knew our friends would be sure to observe us, if we continued so. I did not feel quite so contented as I had before, and was making a pretense of being desperately hungry, to find an excuse for changing our embarrassing situation; when, at this opportune moment, a friend of ours, who lived near, came and invited us to his house. As his invitation was warmly seconded by his wife, and extended also to our friends, we all four accepted, and soon found ourselves comfortably housed.

Evening came on, and in the gloaming my heart went out so strongly to my girl friend, who had seemed to be half afraid of me ever since the little episode just mentioned, that I went and spoke quietly and indifferently of subjects of no particular interest to reassure her.

But I knew the thought of the handkerchief was uppermost in her mind, as it was in mine. I swallowed whatever of resentment I might feel, and continued to "do the agreeable;" but, finally, finding ourselves alone, I said in a low, firm way:

"May," (it was the first time I had ever called her so), "if you don't want me to have the handkerchief, say so, and I will never bother you about it again. I can give up the idea of having it, or your affection, either; but oh, don't call me to do it unless you despise me."

Her hands were fluttering here and there, nervously, and she said, "I don't despise you, Mr. Raymond, but—" here a pause ensued, and we heard some one approaching; but there was that in her timid and frightened manner that emboldened me to lay violent hands on the little piece of cambria the next time I saw it, and she dared not resist for fear of what I should say. Strangely, as she seemed to lose courage I seemed to gain it, and I felt myself master of the situation.

I regarded her almost as betrothed to me, although I had not asked the all-important question yet. I would do so on the home drive, I told myself.

"But 'Man proposes; God disposes,' and what should happen but that May should be sent for? I see you stare, but Mrs. Newman, her aunt, had been taken violently ill, and in her delirium she called all the time for her niece. Of course she had to go, and I went back to Covell alone, after seeing her go away with her uncle.

It seems to me that the feelings with which I watched her leave must have been prophetic of what was to follow. Utter loneliness, mingled with unutterable love, filled my heart, and a wild desire to go and snatch her in my arms before everybody, and claim her as my very own, seized me. Crushing back all such foolishness, I resolved to see her in a few days, at farthest, and then all would be right; yet I had an inner consciousness that all would not be right, and so it proved; for the remarkable aunt took a terrible dislike to me, and would not let me go on her premises. She lingered along, however (and I shall always believe she feigned much of that sickness to keep May with her), and my friend John went constantly to their house.

Then the "Green-eyed monster," commenced to tear me. Another fellow, too, went there, but I had this consolation—John would be as jealous as I was myself. Things went on this way for weeks.

I wrote to May, but got no reply, and then I stigmatized her as a vile flirt. I told myself I hated her. Anybody that would blush and tremble as she had in my presence, and let a fellow take the memento that she knew to be the dearest to his heart, was not worthy the love of any honest man. I despised her. Of course I did. How I longed for an opportunity to tell her just how I regarded her. Yet I treasured that little square of muslin as I never before had treasured anything.

Why is it, that when a man is jealous he is the most unreasonable animal on the face of the earth? I thought she was trifling with John's heart just as she had trifled with mine. He was not to blame any more than I had been. Yet, when I met him at rare intervals, such was the unreasoning anger I felt against him that I could hardly force myself to treat him with common courtesy, let alone the old-time cordiality that subsisted between us. He felt the change; as I could not help knowing he would; but he also knew the reason for it, and there was such an overstrained friendliness in his bearing toward me, and a suppressed, though very apparent, exultation in his whole manner, that I only restrained myself from an open rupture of his friendship by an almost superhuman effort.

I saw her only once during the rest of the fall and winter. It was in a crowd, and I could not for a moment dream of saying anything out of the common-place to her. Strange as it seemed, even to myself, I could have kissed the remotest hem of her garment. I worshiped her; I actually did, as she stood before me, clad in the imperial robe of her womanly dignity, and I knew that, had we two been properly alone, I should not have dared—no, for my life I should not have—to accuse her to her face, of flirting with any one.

But when John came up a moment later I cursed her in my heart for the warmth with which