

## THE SWEET O' THE YEAR.

(A Song for Any Season.)

Once I heard a piper playing  
Notes that blisful arders fanned;  
All the world was roun a-saying  
Up and down the fields I went.  
"Tell me," said I, "piper merry,  
Why you blow such tuneful cheer!  
Pip and near, by ford and ferry,  
Is it now 'the sweet o' the year'?"  
Gracious answer was my guerdon,  
And his diry bore this burden:  
"Crimson cherry, holly berry, rod-of-gold, or  
jouquil spear!  
Love-time! love-time! Then's 'the sweet o' the year'!"

When the meads were ripe for mowing  
Under the ancient stars  
Stood a songster, hard, sowing  
Night with music's capture-bars.  
"Singer," cried I, "buddy, mate,  
Bounteous harvest draweth near,  
But has joy from sorrow parted—  
It is now 'the sweet o' the year'!"  
Still his voice rang, upward soaring  
With its rhythmic outpouring:  
"Crimson cherry, holly berry, rod-of-gold, or  
jouquil spear!  
Love-time! love-time! Then's 'the sweet o' the year'!"

When the linden leaves were yellow,  
In the orchard wailed a strain  
Where a little bird with mellow  
Apples piled the evening wain.  
Earely I hailed him, this—  
"Aye!" on answering "aye" to hear:  
Why such jocund rhymes art linking!  
It is now 'the sweet o' the year'!"  
Straight into a chorus broke he:  
And in mounting measure spoke he:  
"Crimson cherry, holly berry, rod-of-gold, or  
jouquil spear!  
Love-time! love-time! Then's 'the sweet o' the year'!"

When the hills were silver-sided,  
And the skies were stely cold,  
Chorus of orchard footsteps guided  
To a forest gray and bold.  
There a lusty-voiced woodman  
Swung his ax, and caroled clear—  
"Ho!" I called, "my gay, my good man,  
It is now 'the sweet o' the year'!"  
Came his rapturous replying,  
Rising, falling, swelling, dying:  
"Crimson cherry, holly berry, rod-of-gold, or  
jouquil spear!  
Love-time! love-time! Then's 'the sweet o' the year'!"

—Clinton Scollard, in Chautauquan.

## THE OLD MILL MYSTERY

By Arthur W. Marchmont, B. A.

Author of "Miser Hoadley's Secret," "Madeline Power," "By Whose Hand," "Isa," &c., &c.

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CHAPTER XVII—CONTINUED.  
But over all her thoughts there brooded, like a dark cloud of gloom, the fear that there might be some other and more terrible reason for his having gone away. She herself had urged him to go and see Mr. Coode at the mill and she asked herself with fear and trembling whether he had gone there; and if so what had passed between the two? Despite her utmost efforts she could not keep away that cold feeling at the heart which seemed to chill her blood, at the recollection of the wild words she had heard him utter about Mr. Coode and those who had wronged him about the money.

Then she thought of the book she held in her hand—a large album. Chancing to open it she turned the leaf where were the photographs of Tom and herself. All the circumstances of the time when it had been taken flashed into her memory. She closed the book with a sigh deeper than ever, and fastening the clasp carried the album to the shelf on which it always rested.

As she put it back she noticed that some of the other books were out of place, and she tried to push them into line. There seemed to be something behind which prevented them from going into their proper places. She took down two or three to see what was the cause of their sticking out, and then saw a paper parcel lying between them.

"This is not like you, Tom," she whispered to herself, under her breath, as she took it out, and made room for the books on the shelf.

It was something very heavy, about eighteen inches in length, and was wrapped in strong writing paper. It had evidently been wrapped up hurriedly; and when she looked closely at the paper she saw that it was some of that which Tom had been in the habit of using for his accounts for the sick fund—large foolscap sheets of thick white paper.

She felt it curiously all along, and it seemed to be square with a large knob at one end. It could not be anything very important, she thought, or Tom would never have left it where he had. Thinking this, she unfolded the paper.

Suddenly she uttered a cry. It was a short square bar of steel, with a fragment of a broken cog-wheel at one end. The broken end was stained with blood, and clinging to it were a number of gray hairs, and there was blood on the inner paper.

Mary stood gazing at the fearsome object almost like one spellbound. The air round her went dark and thick. She could scarcely breathe, and grew giddy. She thought she was going to faint. Then a sound of some one moving in the passage behind her recalled her from her fright, and she sought instinctively to cover up the dreadful thing she had found.

But she was too late. Before she could hide it, or even hide the marks of the blood, Reuben Gorringe entered the room.

"I forgot to say, just now, Mary," he began, then, changing his tone suddenly, he cried: "My God! Mary, what's that? What have you there?" and he hurried forward and took it from her scarce resisting hand, and scrutinized it minutely.

Then he lifted his eyes from the gruesome sight, and looked at the girl; and each read the thoughts which it had stirred in the other.

### CHAPTER XVIII

WHAT SAVANNAH HAD TO SAY.

"What can this mean?" said Gorringe, in a low, strained tone, as if speaking in pain and fear.

He had paled a little, and trembled; and his finger shook as he pointed it at the blood-stained end of the bar.

It was a fearsome, ghastly weapon, all suggestive of horrible cruelty and violence.

Mary made no answer. She was too overcome to be able to speak for the moment. She leaned heavily on the table, and, moving slowly, sank upon a chair that stood by it, and bent her face upon her hand.

Reuben Gorringe was there and came out to her.

The man was filled with pity at the sight of her terrible, silent agony; but he knew the girl better than to show his feelings. He sought to rouse her to action.

"Tom must be brought back," he said. "This must be faced."

There was a ring of determination in his voice, and a suggestion that Tom had only to come back in order to clear away the mists, for which the girl was thankful.

She looked up for a moment and showed her gratitude in the glance.

"Do you know where he is?" he asked.

The girl shook her head.

"That's bad. Any delay is full of danger. The inquest is this afternoon, you know."

"Ah!"

The exclamation seemed to be wrung from her, despite her will. Then she looked again at Gorringe, this time with an almost imploring expression, while her eyes traveled again to the terrible evidence of the murder which he held in his hand.

The girl thought it would be well for her to know where he put the fateful little parcel she had brought, and, making an effort to fight with a sort of half-hysterical dread that affected her, went with him.

"I am nervous," she said, glancing up at him, and laying her hand on his arm as she spoke.

"There is nothing to be nervous about," he answered, smiling.

"I am nervous while you hold that," she said, pointing to the bar he was carrying in his hand. "Put it away."

He smiled as he might have done when humorizing the whim of a child.

"I will keep it here," he said, putting it in a drawer, which he locked.

"You are very good," she said. "You will keep the promise you made?"

"Certainly. That will never be moved till such time as we agree that it shall be produced."

"Now will you tell me all that is said about the—the scene of last night?"

"You can see everything from here, if you can bear to look," answered Gorringe.

Before he had finished the telling, some one came to speak to him, and Mary went away.

She thought over everything she had heard, and tried to look at it all as it affected her lover, but she could not see that there was any evidence of any kind against him, beyond the fact that he had quarreled with the mill-owner—except only that which she had destroyed in reference to the steel bar.

She had guessed right. She knew the handwriting well enough. The letter was from her lover.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

PUT AN END TO THE STRIKE.  
How the Master of Balliol Dealt with University Washerwomen

A sympathetic biographer, and one who is evidently acquainted with his subject, contributes to *Cornhill* some rare "Memories of the Master of Balliol." The master was a keen judge of human nature, and in the anecdotes comprised in this paper there are evidences of his keen insight into character.

But this thought led her to consider that she had had no time since she had made the discovery to think about the real significance of that piece of evidence. Did it mean that Tom had gone in hot temper to the mill; that he had seen Mr. Coode and quarreled with him; and perhaps in anger had struck the blow which had killed him, and then, hastening home, had put the weapon in the place where she had found it, and fled away in the night?

"If so, why should he have put it in such a place?"

It was something to be solved afterwards. Why had he fled from the village? That was the first question to be answered. And there was only one person who could answer it to her—Tom himself.

There was another who could say something—Savannah Morbyn. She could say whether Tom had gone with her. And the dilemma which the answer to that question suggested to the distracted girl made her more wretched than ever.

If Tom had gone with Savannah, then he was false to her. If he had not gone with her, then what could be the reason of his flight?

But she was utterly miserable and broken, and for two days, during which no news came except the bad news that vague suspicion was beginning to point to her lover's direction—she was comfortless and disconsolate.

Then a spark of light flashed. Savannah came home on the Monday evening. Mary went to her at once.

"Where have you been, Savannah?" she asked; and something in her manner revealed by some instinct to the other what feelings prompted the visit and the question.

She turned her handsome face and flashed her large eyes, bright with a menacing gleam, upon the other. Then she laughed, as if rejoicing at the girl's misery.

"What is that to you? Can't I go where I please?"

"Of course you can."

"Then, why do you come bothering me with your questions?" Then she burst suddenly into a loud laugh.

"You are a fool, Mary; a great fool. You had better give him up."

"What do you mean?" cried Mary, angrily.

"Oh! what do I mean, I wonder, and whom do I mean? Bah, you are a fool! But you are too good for him—too good; ay, and too goody. You know whom I mean."

"Savannah!" exclaimed Mary, in her wonderment at the other's manner.

"Savannah!" she replied, mocking Mary's tone. "Savannah. Well, what is it you want to know from Savannah?" Then her manner changed suddenly to her usual softness. "You are making yourself miserable, fretting. What is it? Tell me frankly, like yourself, and I will tell you all you want to know."

"I want to know whether you have seen Tom Roylance while you have been away," said Mary, after a moment's pause.

"Where should I see Tom—your Tom?" said the other girl, laughing again, mockingly, but softly.

"I didn't ask where; but whether you have seen him at all?" said Mary, looking steadily at her.

by giving the bar thus changed into Reuben Gorringe's own hands for him to keep; and she saw at once the sooner this was done the better. She had taken a very short time to do what she had planned, and she wrapped up the bar at once and carried it to the mill, hoping to find the manager there.

Reuben Gorringe was there and came out to her.

The man was filled with pity at the sight of her terrible, silent agony; but he knew the girl better than to show his feelings. He sought to rouse her to action.

"Tom must be brought back," he said. "This must be faced."

There was a ring of determination in his voice, and a suggestion that Tom had only to come back in order to clear away the mists, for which the girl was thankful.

"I can look into the office," she asked, unable to think of anything else likely to draw away his attention from the parcel.

She was successful.

"For what purpose?" he said, quickly, stopping in the act of unwrapping the paper and merely glancing at the writing and figures—Mary had taken care to substitute for the original wrapper a paper which was covered with Tom's figures.

"I want to get a clear understanding of all the dreadful facts," she answered. "Will you tell them to me?"

"You can come into the inner office and the other; and because I don't choose to answer everything directly, you turn on me and call me that. I've not seen your lover; I don't want your lover; I wish I'd never seen him, or you, or anyone in the place. I hate you all. Go away," she said, with an angry gesture. "Go away: for if you stop here I may be tempted to do you a mischief. Go away, you spy!"

Then, as if excited, she stopped and said, "I am nervous while you hold that." She said, pointing to the bar he was carrying in his hand. "Put it away."

Surprised, hurt and somewhat afraid, Mary left the room. As she walked homewards, the thoughts which gradually separated themselves from the too tangled maze of wonderment which Savannah's extraordinary conduct had caused, were first intense relief and pleasure that Tom was love-loyal to her; and, secondly, profound perplexity as to the reason for his sudden and mysterious flight.

If only she could know where he had gone. That was her chief concern now.

He must be in some place, she thought, where the news of what had happened at the mill on Friday had reached him.

He must have gone away out of fear of what was threatened at the mill. But if so, why had he not written her to go to him? At home a great surprise awaited her. On the table lay a letter for her; and she felt it was from her lover. She grasped it with almost hungry eagerness, and read the address with brightened eyes and flushed cheek.

She had guessed right. She knew the handwriting well enough. The letter was from her lover.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"I heard you," replied Savannah, returning the look, but dropping her eyes before Mary's gaze, as she answered, laughing lightly again, "and I didn't say whether I'd seen him at all, but asked where I should see him. So we are quits—see?"

"Do you mean you won't tell me?"

"Do you mean you think I've been away with your lover?"

Mary flushed crimson at this.

"And suppose I say I have; what then?" said Savannah, quickly.

"Then I should ask you where he is?"

Mary, her voice quivering partly with passion, partly with pain and the effort it cost her to restrain herself under the other's sneers.

"What sweet humidity! what touching gentleness!" After that it would be cruelty to keep you in suspense. No, I haven't seen Tom, and don't want to see him; and I don't know where he is, and don't care. Does that satisfy you?"

"When did you last see him?"

"When you were at his cottage. Have you any more questions to ask?"

"What is the matter with you?" asked Mary, going to her. "You are so strange."

"Strange! What do you mean? How dare you say that?" she cried, fiercely.

"You come here to spy and pry upon me, badgering me with question upon question about every this, that, and the other; and because I don't choose to answer everything directly, you turn on me and call me that. I've not seen your lover; I don't want your lover; I wish I'd never seen him, or you, or anyone in the place. I hate you all. Go away," she said, with an angry gesture. "Go away: for if you stop here I may be tempted to do you a mischief. Go away, you spy!"

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