

THE FAR BLUE HILLS.
Lift my eyes, and ye are ever there,
And crown'd with the gold of morn or evening
rare,
O far blue hills.
Around you break the lights of heaven all,
There rolls away the Titan's splendid ball,
And there the circling suns of midnight fall,
O far blue hills.
Wild bursts the hurricane across the land,
Loud roars the cloud and smites with blazing
brand,
They pass, and silence comes, and there we
stand,
O far blue hills.
Your spirit fills the wide horizon round,
And lays on all things here its peace profound,
Till I forget that I am of the ground,
O far blue hills—
Forget the earth to which I loved to cling,
And soar away as on an eagle's wing,
To be with you a calm and steadfast thing,
O far blue hills:
While small the cave that seemed so great be-
fore,
Faint as the breeze that fans your ledges o'er;
Yea, 'tis the passing shadow, and no more,
O far blue hills.
—Critic.

THE OLD MILL MYSTERY

By Arthur W. Marchmont, B. A.

Author of "Hiser Headley's Secret," "Madeline Power," "By Whose Hand," "Isa," etc., etc.

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CHAPTER XX—CONTINUED.

"Better tell you plainly. They say you were seen getting into the mill that night at about ten o'clock; and that a handkerchief of yours—one I gave you, Tom—was picked up inside the mill, close by the place."

"Who found it?"

"I believe Reuben Gorrage did."

"Curse him; he's a traitor, I believe!" cried Tom, fiercely.

"Nay, Tom; he's a friend. Directly the affair at the mill had happened he came round to say that he wanted you at the mill, and that you were not to think anything more of what had happened in the afternoon between Mr. Coode and you. He's a friend."

"Does he know you've come to see me?" asked the man, suspiciously.

"He doesn't know it; but he guessed I should come, and he advised me to tell you to come back to Walkden Bridge and face matters out, but that if not he would do whatever he could to help you to wait until the explanation could be given."

"Explanation," cried Tom, "what explanation? What does he say against me?"

"He does not say anything against you, dear; all he means is that there are matters which will need explanation." She was anxious to let him know what she knew, and yet shunned the task of speaking out plainly.

"It may be necessary that you should—should say why you came away; and—and what you were doing during the whole of that evening, and how the handkerchief can have come to be inside the mill close by that window."

"What do you mean by this, Mary?" he asked, "have you come here just to try and question me as to my doings on that night?"

"I have not come to ask any questions for my own sake," answered the girl.

"Well, if you have come for mine you make a great mistake. I don't care a straw what people say. I have already told you that I don't wish to speak of the matter."

"It is not what ordinary people think, dear; but what the—she stopped, and changed the form of what she was saying. "It is no time for beating about the bush. I have been half afraid to speak out. But I had better. I am afraid they do suspect you, Tom, and there are one or two reasons why. Some of these are known to those who are making inquiries—the police—others only to ourselves. In the first place there is the knowledge that you had words with Mr. Coode that day, and that he told you to leave Walkden Bridge."

"That's why I left," said her companion, eagerly.

"Yes, I know, my dear, but they know you did not leave until nearly midnight; or at least they think it, and they think that you were about the mill and got into the place through the window in Watercourse-lane; then that you dropped a handkerchief close by—and if they think that, they ask why you went there? Then, for some reason, I know not what, the papers which Mr. Coode had, and which he regarded as the proof of what he charged you with having done, were taken away from the office when he was killed."

"What?" explained the man, in a tone of profound astonishment and alarm. "And was nothing else taken?"

"No, not that I have heard."

"I can't explain that—I don't know what it can mean. There must be some mistake." He spoke hurriedly and in manifest agitation; and his cheeks had paled. "Is there anything else?" he asked, in a low troubled tone.

The girl, seeing his distress, had not the courage to say anything about the finding of the weapon—knowing that she had destroyed all the danger of that.

"No, I don't think there's anything more," she answered. "But you see now why we thought there should be an explanation."

The man sat a long time without saying a word in reply. His elbow was resting on the arm of the seat and his hand, with the fingers clenched tightly, was held against his face, as he pressed his knuckles hard against his teeth. When he spoke it was in a tone of evident trouble and fear.

"I am not safe for an hour, Mary. I spoke irritably just now; I am sorry. Forgive me, my lass; I shan't have another chance. It only means I shall hasten my going by a day or so. You don't think me capable of doing such a thing as this, do you?" he said, turning to her.

"Nay, Tom, I would never believe it, unless you yourself told me you had done it. I trust you, lad, and love you too well to think like that of you."

"You are better to me than I've deserved, lass," he answered. "But I'll try and make up for it all in time to come."

"But you'll come back to the Bridge and face it out, won't you?" she said. "There's no good coming in running away, lad."

"Nay, I'll not go back till things are plainer. I can't understand what it means; and maybe after a bit the truth'll come out. But I can't see how the thing's to be put right now."

"If you go away, there will be many who will look at that as an admission that you can't explain things," urged Mary, in a low voice.

"What shall I care what they think when I'm away? I shall go."

"Where will you go, Tom?" she asked, her heart filling at the thought of the long separation.

"I don't know. I shall get off to Liverpool to-day; and whatever vessel's going, I shall sail at the earliest possible moment."

"May I go to Liverpool with you?" she asked.

"Better not, lass, better not. You shall know where I am settling as soon as I know myself. You can wait, that while—can't you, my dear?"

"Yes, Tom," she said, simply, slipping her hand into his. "You may trust that I'll be as true as the light. But it'll be a sad time for me, I reckon; and she laid her head on his shoulder and clung to him. "I shall be woeful without my lad," she said, smiling up to him through her tears.

"Don't cry, Mary. We shall be happier away out of it all in a new home, with a new start. I shall send for you soon. Will you keep yourself ready to come to me?"

"Aye, Tom. I shall be waiting always and eagerly for that signal; and it'll be a glad day that when it comes. I love you with all my heart and soul," and then, although they sat together in the broad light of day, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him, and drew him to her and made him kiss her in return.

"That's our good-by, lad," she said. "We'd best go now, lest I break down."

"God bless you, my lass, while we're apart," he said.

They walked back together into the great city, back to the station, scarcely speaking, for the hearts of both were full; and they looked out the girl's train. It was to start soon, and Tom said he would wait and see her away.

"Have you any money, Tom?" she asked.

"Enough for my passage," he answered. "I can work when I get there, wherever I may go."

"I brought with me what I had in the house. Take it," and she gave him a small shabby purse. "It's as much yours as mine," she said, with a trustful, loving smile.

"I'll send it back to you, lass, every penny; and before long," he said. "And more with it, to pay your passage and bring you to me."

She smiled and pressed his hand which she was holding firmly in hers. "And now, good-by. Don't come to the train with me. I shall be better alone," she said.

"Good-by, my lass."

The words seemed to sink in the throat of each of them, and they stood looking steadily into each other's eyes, with their hands tightly held.

"I must go," said Mary, feeling the tears were coming again; while her lips quivered as she spoke.

At that moment a hand was laid on the man's shoulder.

"Tom Roynance, I want you! I have to arrest you for the murder of Mr. Coode in Walkden Bridge on Friday night."

"You might have said it so that the lass couldn't have heard," he said, pointing to Mary's blanched face and bloodless lips.

As he spoke she swayed slightly, and would have fallen to the ground had not a bystander caught her by the arm and helped her to one of the seats.

CHAPTER XXI.
MARY SUSPECTS GORRAGE.

"What does it all mean, Mary, lass?" The question, asked in a thin, querulous, trembling voice, greeted Mary the moment she entered Tom's cottage, and old Roynance peered at her from his invalid's bed with such a look of pain and fear on his thin, pinched, pale face that the girl was moved almost to tears.

The news that Tom Roynance had been arrested for the murder of Mr. Coode was known quickly in the mill, and when the hands left work it was the one subject of universal gossip. Rumors had reached the old invalid, and he had waited with fretful and waxing impatience for the coming of either Savannah or Mary, that he might learn what the truth really was.

"What does what mean, father?" was Mary's answer.

"This I hear about Tom, lass, of course. What else? What does it mean? What has happened? Where is he?"

"There's been some strange blunderings somewhere," said Mary, "and by some sort of stupid mistake the police have got mixed up in it."

"Come here."

There was a tone of harsh imperiousness in the thin, quavering voice, like an echo of perished strength of will.

He seized the girl by the dress with both hands and, turning her face to the light, he looked at her earnestly and sharply.

"Is't anything really wrong with 'im? Tell truth, lass."

"No, father, nothing," answered Mary, understanding him, and speaking in strong, clear tones, while she returned his look steadily and fixedly. "Our lad couldn't do what these fools say. I know it. I've seen him to-day."

"What have the fools taken him for, then?"

"Because they've been blundering, that's all."

"Shut the door, lass. See that there's no one about," said the old man mysteriously, loosing his hold and pushing the girl toward the door. "I've something to say to you."

To satisfy him Mary went out, looked

into the parlor, and locking the front door went back to him somewhat puzzled.

He took hold again of her dress and drew her close to him.

"I've been fearing this," he said, in a voice in which eagerness and terror were struggling. "He was mad against Coode; and that night—here his voice went to a whisper—"he was awful wild in his manner. Do you think he may have quarreled with you and have given him a crack in his rage? Do you feel sure yourself, lass, that nothing happened between them?"

"Yes, I am sure, father—quite sure," answered Mary, in a tone so confident that it comforted and reassured the old man.

"You're a good lass, Mary—a good lass," he said. "I've been wronging the lad—and such a lad as he has always been, too. Poor lad! Poor Tom! I suppose they have taken him up, haven't they?"

"Yes," answered Mary, glad that she had not had the task of breaking the news. "They charge him, but they've got to make good their words, and that's a very different thing. Then, you haven't told anyone about his coming here late on Friday night?"

"No, lass, not a soul. I was too skeered to say a word about it. For he was awful wild and strange-like," he said.

"By the way, did you see whether he brought anything in with him when he came?" asked Mary, the thought of her discovery in the parlor returning to her.

"I don't know that he had. I rather think he hadn't, but I can't rightly say. Have you seen Savannah? The lass hasn't been in for a week or more and I miss her sorely."

"She's been away; went Friday, and only came back yesterday. I saw her last night."

"I wish she'd come in for a bit. Tell her, if you see her, it's lonesome lying here by oneself, now, without the lad's home coming to look forward to," said the old man, with a sigh.

"I'll come back myself as soon as I can," said Mary, touched by the words. "But I must go home for awhile."

Close by her cottage she met Gibeon Pawle.

Since the time of the explosion he had remained in the village, but had avoided Mary. Now, contrary to his custom, he crossed the street and came up to her.

"This'll trouble you, Mary, I've heard the news," he said, without any other greeting. "I'm sorry."

"What news do you mean, Gibeon?" she asked, as if in ignorance of his meaning.

"About Tom," replied the other. "I should like to help you if you'll let me."

"I want no help of yours. I have not yet forgotten what I heard that night," replied Mary, looking meaningfully at him.

"You mean you'll have no dealings with me, because I had a hand in it at plant?"

"I don't trust you, Gibeon; and I want no help from them I can't trust."

"Well, you can do as you like, with your beastly pride," he answered, somewhat angrily. "And if you hadn't saved my life you might go to the deuce. But I'm not so bad as you seem inclined to think, and I might be able to do you a good turn over this job."

"I don't want your help, I tell you," repeated the girl. "I don't want anybody's help. And you couldn't help me if I did."

"You don't know that, Mary," said the man.

"I know that I wouldn't have your help, even if I did want it," and with that she walked on.

At the cottage she found a note from Reuben Gorrage.

"This is terrible news. I had better see you at once. Either come to me at the mill or let me know of your return that I may come to you."

Mary went up at once to the mill, and not finding the manager there left word that she had been seeking him. She had been at home some little time, and had made a meal—the first she had had that day—before Gorrage came.

He took the hand she held, and kept it a long time, as if in friendly sympathy, while he looked pityingly into her face.

"You are suffering cruelly," he said. "This is terrible news."

"It is disgraceful that such blunders should be made," answered Mary, her face lighting momentarily with indignation.

"If it is a blunder, yes. Were you followed from here?"

The girl winced at the cruel suggestion that it was owing to her that Tom had been arrested.

"Can that have been the cause of his being taken?" she asked.

"I should think not. There must have been some other clew. He must have been recognized," he said; but there was not enough conviction in his words to soothe the girl.

"Oh, Tom, Tom! What have I done?" she wailed, and bent her face on her arms on the table. Suddenly she raised her head and looked searchingly at her companion. "Why did you not warn me when you were here last night?"

"I did not think there was more than the merest shadow of suspicion in the minds of the police," was the ready answer. "Do you think I could have such a thought and not tell you? If you do I had better go. If there is no trust between us we can do nothing to save Tom from the trouble."

"Forgive me," cried Mary, anxious not to offend one whose help and friendship meant so much to her lover. "I do trust you," and she put out her hand as if to detain him.

"It is more valuable now to ask you what was the result of the interview. What was Tom's decision? Had he meant to come back and face all, or to wait until the truth could be made clear?"

At that instant as he asked the question the suspicion of Gorrage which had prompted her question a minute before flashed into the girl's mind and

warned her to be cautious in all that she told him, and not to say anything which might be used against Tom.

"I had better tell you all that I know," she answered, evading the question and wishing to gain time to think how she had best frame what she wanted to say. "He went away because of what you and Mr. Coode had said to him in the afternoon, threatening him with prosecution in the money matter; and he was not willing to come back until he knew that that was over."

"But you told him what I had said, didn't you, and that at the earliest moment possible I went to his cottage to assure him that all that affair was over and done for?"

"Yes, I told him what you had said; but he felt angry and bitter that such a threat should ever have been used."

"I see. He wanted something more than a mere promise of that kind to bring him back, I suppose. But now that affairs have taken this disastrous turn it is most important to learn what he told you as to his movements on Friday night. What did he tell you of those?"

"I—I did not press him; I scarcely asked him," said Mary, hesitating and stumbling over the words; "but he told me enough to convince me that he was never near the mill that night."

Reuben Gorrage listened to the confused statement in silence, and then bent his eyes on the girl's face and knitted his brows, as he answered:

"You are doing what you, no doubt, think right, Mary, in trying to screen Tom; and if you don't want to speak, I don't want to try and persuade you to do so against your will. But don't try to hoodwink me. Either you don't or you won't understand how serious matters are. Tom has got not only to convince you, but to prove to a court that his tale is the truth. My own view is this: We had better instruct some good sharp lawyer who is skilled in these cases, and leave him to say what is the best line to be taken. But of course Tom will have to deal with him candidly, and I thought if you had told me what he says I might have been able to think out a suggestion or two. For I make no secret to you, my child, that I look on the case as desperately grave and serious."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Old Experience.

It is a grave little woman who brings home your washing every week. She wears her hair in a childish pigtail, to be sure, and her skirts do not hang much below her knees, but her face is that of quite an elderly person. You often wonder what age she is and also what age she considers herself. One morning you find out. She looks a little graver than usual, and comes without your laundry. She delivers herself of this explanation without any pauses:

"Please, ma'am, mamma didn't send your wash 'cause baby's been took with the measles, and she don't know but what you're afraid of the measles. The baby ain't ever in the room where she washes and the board of health it has sent around a list of things to put in the water you boils your clothes in so's you can't catch no disease but still mamma didn't know whether you'd want 'em or not."

She pauses for a reply. When you have given your orders about your ill-fated clothing you ask the little woman if she has ever had the measles.

"Oh, yes'm, when I was a child I had 'em," she answers.

"How old are you now, Gretchen?"

"Ten," replies Gretchen—N. Y. World.

His Sonnet.

It is said that for a long time after a certain poet began to write verses he nursed his genius in secret, not daring to let his productions meet the public eye. At last, however, he composed a sonnet to the moon, with which he was so delighted that he sent it to a popular journal, and in imagination saw himself well on his way up the ladder that leads to fame. For some weeks he searched the columns of the paper for his sonnet in vain, it did not appear. At last, when reduced almost to despair, he one day in glancing over "Notice to Correspondents," was electrified by the following paragraph:

"We have received from some one an effort at poetry, entitled: 'Sonnet to the Moon.' The first two lines run thus:

"Thou bright and silver medal, which the night wears on her vesture, buttoned with the stars!"

"From the figure of this couplet and the sequel, it is evident that our author is a tailor, whose goose will never wait him to the summit of Parnassus."

YOUTH'S COMPANION.

A Long Peninsula.

Lower California, which somebody periodically threatens to purchase and bring under the territorial dominion of the United States, is the longest of North American peninsulas. It is of about the same area as Florida. Its greatest length is about eight hundred miles and its greatest width about one hundred and forty-five miles. The whole peninsula is subtropical in climate and productions, and its extreme southern end is just within the torrid zone. The coast line on gulf and ocean is about seventeen hundred miles in length. The population is sparse, and the means of communication are so undeveloped that it is one of the most remote regions in the civilized world. The gulf ports are almost unknown to people of this country.

His Reason.

Willie—Papa, I think I like history twice as much as I do arithmetic.

Papa—Why do you think so?

Willie—Because I don't have to figure out the answers—Harper's Young People.

Irate But Polite.

An exchange credits a witty amenity to a person who had just taken away an umbrella from the pedestrian in front of him. "Permit me," he said, "to return your umbrella. I found it in my eye."

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