

OUR SAINTS.

This set alone from legend and old story,
"Tis not alone from the legends with time,
That holy saints, crowned with celestial glory,
Smile down upon us from their bright abodes.

"What?" exclaimed Mary, excitedly.
"Do you dare to deny it?"

"Deny it—deny what?" returned Savannah, hotly and angrily. "I have told you the truth. I am no liar like—like a man. I say I never saw Tom Roylance on Friday night; and I will swear to that on my oath."

She spoke so solemnly and earnestly that Mary turned cold with despair as she thought of all that the words meant to her lover.

Some days passed during which Mary made many fruitless inquiries with this object. On the Sunday evening, when she was walking slowly through the village street, thinking over the problem, she met Gibeon Prawle.

He came again and spoke to her.

"You're looking ill, Mary," he said, and his voice had a ring of sympathy.

"It's not more than I feel," she said. She heard so few sympathetic voices now that his greeting was almost welcome.

"You're worrying," he continued. "I'm sorry. Are things looking any blacker?"

"Why should they look black at all?" said Mary, guardedly.

"Why, indeed?" he echoed. "I know no reason. I know nothing but what people say—about that, at any rate."

"What do they say?" asked the girl.

"Chief thing as I've heard is that Tom was seen getting into the mill that night; but I don't believe it. Stands to reason that if anybody had been near enough to see him getting in such a way they'd have raised some kind of row at the time. Beside, what would Tom want to get creeping in that way when he'd every right to go in by the mill gates?" Gibeon had evidently not heard of Tom's dismissal, thought Mary. "That's never been Tom's way, neither. I don't like him, and that's straight; but I'll never deny that when he means a thing he owns up to it straight and square, and devil take the consequences."

"What else do they say, Gibeon?"

"Oh! some say he was seen to leave the mill; that he was noticed rushing through the village to his cottage; that he was doing all sorts of ridiculous things on the way—you know how people's tongues run at such a time, but there's naught but wind in it all; for I've questioned everybody about the place whose name has been mentioned as having seen anything, and can't find a soul that saw him anywhere or any time the whole blessed evening, except the man who blessed him. But why awkward, because I did not see Tom on that night? I don't understand you."

"Because if you deny you were with him, you will have to account for your time on that night."

"Bah! Mary," said Savannah, with a contemptuous wave of her hand. "You are silly—and blind as well as silly. Tom has given me no handkerchief for me to lose in the mill. He has been fooling you; and having heard what I suppose is part of the case against him, he tries to shield himself behind me. His gift of handkerchief is just as real as his story about being with me—and that is no more than nonsense. Give up, and have done with him, lass—have done with him."

"Silence, Savannah!" cried Mary, exasperated and indignantly. "I wonder you are not ashamed to try and malion a man who can't defend himself. You are not content to say what you know to be untrue, but you must dare to add to your falseness by cowardly insinuation. For shame!"

Savannah laughed loudly at this, and affected to be vastly amused; but she grew angry with sudden change.

"What do you mean? You dare to come here to me, presuming on your poor face and sickly weakness, and beard me and tell me I am false. Look nearer home, my girl. Go and ask that fine jaiblif lover of yours for an account of all his silly maundurings and doddering foolery with me. Get him to tell you the truth, instead of the lies he has been spinning out to cover his worse deeds, and then it'll be time to come and talk to me about falsehood."

Mary felt somewhat relieved at this news, despite her previous distrust of him.

"Did anyone see Savannah about that night?" she asked.

"What?" cried the man in a tone that startled the girl. "What makes you ask that?"

"Only curiosity—curiosity as to what she was doing that night."

"No, I don't think anyone saw her. Oh, I think I see your meaning," he exclaimed, as if an idea had occurred suddenly to him. "You think Savannah and Tom were together. Is that it?"

"Yes, I thought so, perhaps," said Mary, rather feebly.

"Might," echoed the man. "Might! You have had a week to look for this. Have you found a single shred or scrap of evidence that will make that proof?"

"I have his denial. That is enough for me," she answered, confidently.

tain that suspicion of him, as his manner to her, and especially his ready and strong assertion of Tom's innocence, had softened her dislike and lessened her distrust of him. But the problem remained: Why should he take such an interest in the matter? There had never been love lost between him and Tom Roylance. Was it that he wished to turn away from himself all thought of suspicion by showing a great zeal in getting Tom acquitted?

Two days passed without a sign of him. So far as she could tell he was not even in the village; and thus the trust and the hopes which, despite her first judgment, she had placed upon him and his help, waned as the day came round for the adjourned hearing of the charge against Tom.

On the eve of the day Reuben Gorringe came to her at the cottage, and Mary's heart sank within her, knowing that he had come for an answer to his question.

"To-morrow is the hearing, Mary," he said, after he had been in the cottage a few minutes, "and I have been asked to give my evidence."

"Well?" she said, interrogatively.

"What am I to say?" he asked again.

"What do you wish to say?"

"Nay, lass, that rests with you, not with me."

"I do not see how it rests with me," said Mary.

"It cannot be necessary for me to go all over the same ground as last time I was here. I told you then how it was. I have not bothered you since; for I knew how you might be puzzled and worried, and I didn't want to hurry you. But the time has come how when we must decide."

"But I cannot decide yet," said Mary. "I cannot make up my mind. I cannot see that one who is innocent can run any risk of being punished for what he did not do. The law is just."

"Aye, my lass, that's it. The law is just," said Gorringe in a deep, strong voice.

"Then it will not find him guilty of what he did not do," she added. "Oh! dear, I do not know what to say. If he can prove his innocence, you do not want this promise. Why not wait and see?" she pleaded.

"How can we wait and see? Either he did or did not do this. The evidence which I have all points to the fact that he did. If that evidence is kept back, what proof have I of his innocence, supposing the law finds him innocent? None; none. That is the point. Could I trust you to a man whom I feared might be a—might have done what he is said to have done? Could I love you if I did such a thing?"

"But something might yet happen to let him prove his innocence, despite what you think such strong evidence against him."

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IN DICTIONARY TERMS.

A Bostonian Story of an Adventure with a Hackee.

Being easily exasperated, and an amanuensis fond of inescatting fish and boggling, with an ineluctable desire for the amelioration of care, I took a punt and descended the river in a smoky gale. The water being smooth, I felt I could venture with incolumity, as I was familiar with the obnoxious river.

He asked the question in a half wistful, half shamefaced manner.

"What is there to trust?" said the girl, indifferently.

"Only curiosity—curiosity as to what she was doing that night."

"No, I don't think anyone saw her. Oh, I think I see your meaning," he exclaimed, as if an idea had occurred suddenly to him. "You think Savannah and Tom were together. Is that it?"

"Yes, I thought so, perhaps," said Mary, rather feebly.

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