

## BUT, HE CAN'T TALK.

I am an old horse from a livery stable: I could tell a lot of things, if I were able! Now, in the soft September night, John Henry found supreme delight in driving me to Thompson's farm, and back again with but one arm. Although John Henry, when alone, was wont to drive with more than one.

How, when the moon was yellow light Put golden edges on the night, That gay and giddy Hiram Brown Went driving just outside the town. To where a bridge, beyond a knoll, Could not be crossed, unless a toll. Were paid to him: though there was none When Hiram drove across alone.

How, when the sweet June roses bloomed, And all the darkness was perfumed, That sentimental Fairfax White Would hire me every other night, And through the lanes go driving slow, The meanwhile murmuring soft and low; To whom I never could exactly see— But Fairfax didn't talk to me.

In winter time, across the snow, With jingling bells I've had to go: And, though I'd pull the sleigh with ease, We'd go so slow I'd nearly freeze. And yet in any kind of storm That Henry Black kept nice and warm; Except one night—he was alone— Just why to me was never known;

I know he ran me out of breath, And Henry nearly froze to death.

Oh! I'm an old horse from a livery stable; I could tell a lot of things, if I were able.

—Will J. Lampton, in *Puck*.

## THE OLD MILL MYSTERY

By Arthur W. Marchmont, B. A.

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

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CHAPTER XXV—CONTINUED.

"You want to anger me, Savannah," said Mary, at length; "and if it were for myself that I am pleading you would have succeeded. But in this cause I have no feeling but determination that the truth shall come out. I want to win you to speak the truth for no reasons but love of the truth. Why will you persist in keeping silent?"

"Oh, don't sit mauling and driveling there. Go away. It's a pity you're not both going to be hanged instead of only one of you. If you want a reason why I don't mean to go up and tell what you call the truth, and I call lies, I'll give you one. I hope Tom will be hanged. When it's over he'll be a great deal happier out of the world than in it, especially with you," and she laughed again.

"That's the reason of a mad woman," said Mary, firmly and deliberately. In moment all the assumed calmness of the other vanished. She tossed the work from her to the ground and, with a fierce wrath blazing from her eyes and flaming in her cheeks, rose and faced the other.

"Take care! Take care! You may go too far," she cried, stretching out her hand and threatening Mary. "There is a limit to my patience, and if you go too far I won't answer for myself."

Mary returned her fierce, burning, threatening glances with steady, unflinching gaze, watching every movement of the other made.

"You will not frighten me," she said, quietly. "I tell you again that if the reason you give for your strange and guilty silence is what you really think, you are a mad woman. The proper place for anyone who takes pleasure in the death of a fellow-creature is the place from which Lucy Bowell escaped—a lunatic asylum."

In an instant the other receded as if under the force of a violent blow. Then she recovered herself and, glaring vengefully at Mary, with a storm of passion disfiguring her handsome face:

"You she-devil, what do you mean?"

The words came from between her clenched teeth, and, rushing suddenly and swiftly upon Mary, she seized her by the throat, as though to strangle her, shaking her violently in the fierce frenzy of furious wrath that possessed her.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

AT BAY.

The struggle between the two girls was short and sharp. Mary was like a child in Savannah's grasp, and having been caught unawares had not even power to call out. After a single effort she ceased to resist, and concentrated all her power to prevent herself from yielding to fear and from losing her presence of mind.

Savannah's flood of passion ebbed almost as suddenly as it had risen. Her hands relaxed their hold, and, letting the other slip from her grasp, she hid her face and burst into a storm of tears.

Mary felt instinctively that was just the critical moment, in which the greatest tact was necessary if she was to hope to accomplish the object of her visit; and she waited in silence for Savannah to speak.

Impulsively the latter dashed the tears from her eyes, and turned to Mary.

"Why do you come here to try me like this? Why do you say such things to provoke me and drive me out of all self-restraint? Go away. If you are hurt I am sorry; but anyone would fare up at being called such things. You brought it on yourself. Go away."

"Will you not say what you know about Tom, Savannah?" asked Mary. "I am sorry, very sorry I angered you. But if you will but speak what you know, we can forget all this."

Savannah cast a quick, furtive, suspicious look at Mary, which the latter affected not to see.

"I cannot, I cannot!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands and weeping again. "You do not know—you cannot know. I cannot."

"You cannot! Why not? Who's to prevent you? It is only the truth that I want you to tell," said Mary, astonished at her answer.

"I have told the truth. Tom was not with me. I never saw him that night. I did not. I did not. I did not." She repeated the words rapidly, and shook her head like a child the while.

"Yes, you did," returned Mary, calmly. "And what is more, it will be

proved that you were together; and if you persist in swearing what is not true you will be put in prison yourself."

"Have you not had warning enough?" Savannah said, angrily. "Do you want me to do you a real mischief? Go, before I do it. I won't be forced to speak by you or anyone. Go away," and she pushed back the chair on which she sat as if making ready for a fresh attack.

Mary's heart sank then.

"I have tried to be your friend, Savannah, and you won't let me," she said, resolutely. "It is not my fault if you drive me to other steps. The story you can tell is necessary to prove Tom's innocence, and tell it you shall, if it has to be dragged from you. I know your secret, and, if you will not speak without my using it, then I warn you I shall use it. I will give you till tomorrow night to make your decision."

"Mad!" cried Mary, looking at him very suspiciously. "I did not say she was mad. Do you think she is?"

"You said so—eh? Oh, well, I thought you did," answered Gorringe, with confusion, which did not escape his companion's notice. "Well, it's the same thing if she has some disreputable secret."

"I did not say even that it was disreputable," answered Mary. "But you seem to have thought she was mad. Did you?"

"How on earth should I know? I know nothing about her and her secret. But I say I should not accept her evidence in Tom's favor against the other evidence."

"It's not for you to say what evidence may be given," answered Mary, warmly. "You are not the judge. What I have now found out will make Tom's innocence clear no matter what other evidence may be given."

"Do you mean that you do not mind the evidence I have to give?"

"I mean that we shall prove that Tom was not in the mill—was not anywhere near it when the deed was done," answered Mary.

"You set me at defiance, then?"

"Set you at defiance? What can you mean? How strange you are. You said before that nothing would please you more than that Tom's innocence should be proved and that I should be happy with him."

"I am not altogether well," he said, "I'm worried, too, a bit. You are quite wrong about Savannah. I know that she is quite respectable and is to be trusted," continued Gorringe, doggedly.

"And I am sure she is not," returned Mary, with as much emphasis. "Now, wherever can Mr. Charnley be? He must have gone. I cannot stay. Whatever it wants to say must wait till the morning."

She got up from her chair and walked towards the door.

"Don't go, Mary," said Gorringe, standing in front of the door. "Don't go. It isn't often I get the chance of having you to myself. Stay awhile."

Mary followed in about a quarter of an hour, but Mr. Charnley was not in the office.

"He has had to go out," said Gorringe, "and will not be back for an hour or two. He was sorry, but said it must keep until he came back, and with that Mary went back to her looms.

She waited anxiously, expecting a summons to the office, but none came; and when the day's work ended Mr. Charnley had not returned.

"I am surprised," said Gorringe. "He was so positive and said he must tell you to-night, as it was important. I should think he will be sure to find some way of telling you. He may call at your cottage."

"But I shall free him. Let me go, please."

"I cannot let you go like this," he said, his voice trembling.

"What do you mean?" she cried, a shadow of fear for the first time crossing her thoughts.

She was alone with him in a great building, in a room shut away in the very heart of the mill, where not even a sound could possibly reach the outside.

"I mean that I cannot let you go from me without an answer to the questions I have been asking you for some days. If I consent not to give the evidence will you promise not to see Tom again?"

"No, certainly not—a thousand times no! If you will give the evidence you must give it; though be sure it is evidence, and not such rubbish as you made up at Tom's cottage."

"But Tom is not free yet, lass. He has to think about getting away from this charge before he thinks of a promised wife."

"But I shall free him. Let me go, please."

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"What do you mean?" she cried, a shadow of fear for the first time crossing her thoughts.

The girl was in a flutter of excitement, and went at once. When they reached the mill Gorringe closed and locked the yard gates behind them, and did the same with the large heavy doors which led in to the factory itself. Then he led the way through the now gloomy and deserted building to the office.

"Where is Mr. Charnley?" asked Mary, stopping on the threshold when she saw the office was empty and the gas turned down.

"He must have gone out for a moment. Never mind, he'll be here directly," said Gorringe, leading the way in. "Sit down."

"Was he here when you left to come to me?" she asked.

"Certainly he was. Don't worry yourself," and having turned up the gas he took a position between the girl and the door, leaning against the wall.

"Is there any fresh news, Mary?" he asked in an indifferent tone as he could assume. "You know that I am bound to speak at the next hearing. I cannot put it off any longer. Have I found out anything?"

"I have found out everything," answered Mary.

"How do you mean everything?" asked Gorringe, sharply.

"I know who murdered Mr. Coode—or at any rate I know who broke into the mill on the night of his murder," answered the girl.

"Who was that?"

"Gibson Prawle. It was he who was in the mill that night."

"What!" exclaimed Gorringe, excitedly.

"No, I can't be; you're mistaken," he added after a moment, in a quieter manner.

"No, I am not mistaken. He knows that I know it."

"But it's impossible. It must be impossible," said Gorringe.

"Why impossible for Gibson if possible for Tom? How can that be?"

"Oh! I mean all the other things prove that it was Tom. They all point to one conclusion."

He spoke with deep earnestness and concentrated passion, made more impressive by his calm manner. She stepped back a couple of paces and then faced him, her features white and full of determination.

"Do you mean that you have lured me here with a lie in order to try and force me to be your wife?"

"The deuce you have!" said Gorringe, hastily. "You've not been idle." Then with a slight laugh, as of annoyance or admiration: "What have you found out about her?"

"The secret of her life," said Mary. "Do you know anything of her past life?" she asked. "I will not tell you all I know, because I do not wish to betray her if she tells the truth. But she is not what she pretends to be."

The man stared long and earnestly at the girl before he replied:

"You are wrong. The man who has caused all this trouble is Tom Roylance."

"Well, we shall see. I say that I have the evidence that will clear him even from suspicion."

"Evidence!" cried Gorringe, "what evidence have you? If, as you say, Savannah Morbyn is mad, how will she be believed?"

"Mad!" cried Mary, looking at him very suspiciously. "I did not say she was mad. Do you think she is?"

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