

BUT, HE CAN'T TALK.

I am an old horse from a lively stable; I could tell a lot of things, if I were able to. 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 so 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 lively stable; I could tell a lot of things, if I were able.

THE OLD MILL MYSTERY

By Arthur W. Marchmont, B. A.

Author of "Miss Handley's Secret," "Madeline Power," "By Whose Hand," "Isa," etc., etc.

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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 case 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 maudling 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 a 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 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 Howell escaped—a lunatic asylum."

In an instant the other reeled as if under the force of a violent blow. Then she recovered herself and, glaring venomously 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 stare 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."

Savannah sprang to her feet. "Go!" she cried. "You dare to threaten me? If you want to leave this room alive go at once, or I'll twist my fingers round your throat again, and not to release them."

"I am going," answered Mary, quite steadily. "But remember what I have said. I shall keep my word, and with that she left."

Mary hurried home, and when she reached there she began to feel the effects of the interview.

"Gibson was right," she said to herself. "Savannah is mad, and probably she is Lucy Howell. But how is that to help us, supposing she will not speak?"

Then it flashed upon her that this confirmation of Gibson Prawl's story was also a proof that he had been making inquiries; and that she had wronged him in supposing he had been merely wasting the time in order that Tom might get convicted.

This brought about a fresh revulsion of feeling. If Gibson was really anxious to get Tom acquitted, it seemed perfectly clear that he himself could not be the murderer, since, as he himself had said, he would have been a fool to interfere and run the risk of drawing attention and suspicion to himself.

Next day she caught sight of Savannah walking in the direction of the mill. She was not at her looms, however, and when Reuben Gorrings came to speak to her during the afternoon Mary asked him whether he had seen Savannah.

"I have not," said Gorrings. "She sent word this morning that she could not come to work to-day. She is not very regular now. What I want to say is that Mr. Charnley wants to see you in the office now. There is something fresh about Mr. Cooke's death. I think it is good news."

Mr. Charnley was the new proprietor—Mr. Cooke's nephew and heir.

"I shall have finished this out in a few minutes," she said, pointing to one of her looms, "and will come then."

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

"He has had to go out," said Gorrings, "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 Gorrings. "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 no message came until it was growing dark, and then Reuben Gorrings came himself with a letter from the mill owner asking Mary to go to the mill at once, as the writer had good and important news to tell.

The girl was in a flutter of excitement, and went at once. When they reached the mill Gorrings 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 Gorrings, 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 as indifferent a 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 you found out anything?"

"I have found out everything," answered Mary.

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

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

"Who was that?"

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

"What!" exclaimed Gorrings, excitedly. "No, it 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 Gorrings.

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

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

"Then they are all wrong, as I said they were the first."

"How are you going to prove that Tom wasn't in the mill, then?"

"By Savannah's evidence," answered Mary, confidently. "I have found out a means of making her speak the truth."

"The dance you have!" said Gorrings, 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 Gorrings, "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?"

"You said so—eh? Oh, well, I thought you did," answered Gorrings, 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 a wit," 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 Gorrings, 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 is he wants to say must wait till the morning."

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

"Don't go, Mary," said Gorrings, standing in front of the door. "Don't go. It isn't often I get the chance of leaving you to myself. Stay awhile here." He spoke with gentle persuasion.

"This is no time for yielding to feelings of friendship," replied Mary. "There is work to be done—serious and important work."

"But Mr. Charnley will be disappointed. Stay a little longer. It is such a pleasure for me to have you alone, all to myself; to look at you, to feel you are close by me, to know you trust me."

"I cannot let you talk to me like that again, Mr. Gorrings. I am Tom Roylance's promised wife."

"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."

"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 until 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."

"Made up at Tom's cottage! I don't understand you."

"I mean when you mistook red paint for blood, and a broken piece of iron with which he was making an experiment for a dangerous weapon."

Without a word he turned to the safe, and took out the packet she had brought to him before. When he saw what she had done he held it out in front of him, looking from it to the girl and back again.

"I see what you have done," he said, in a hard, firm tone. "This is your work to cheat me. You will repent it," he said, deliberately.

"You have cheated yourself," she answered. "But I have given you my answer. I will go."

He was silent for a lengthy pause as if in thought. Then he looked up and spoke:

"You have mistrusted me and tried to trick me. You have succeeded in that; but you have made my task easier than I thought to find it. Mary, I also have cheated you. It was I who wrote the note in Mr. Charnley's name to get you here alone in the mill with me. I also have succeeded. I have brought you here to tell you that you must be my wife. You are in my power here; and if you will not be mine, then the consequences will be on your own head."

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?"

"I have brought you here to tell you of my love, Mary," he said.

"Love!" she cried, with ineffable scorn. "Love! Why, you are the basest coward and villain I have ever known."

And she stood before the man, drawn to her full height, and she looked him dauntlessly and resolutely in the face. He gazed at her for a moment with passionate admiration and love in his eyes, and then rushed forward to take her in his arms.

For a moment she was panic-stricken, but the next her eyes fell on the deadly iron bar which lay on the table. She snatched it up and held it aloft threateningly.

"Stand back!" she cried.

And Reuben Gorrings quailed before the dangerous light which flashed from her eyes, and for a moment hesitated. Then he darted forward, and with a quick movement wrested the bar from the girl's hand and tossed it to the other end of the room.

Then he turned and faced her, and stretched out his hands to take her to his heart.

But she drew back as dauntlessly as ever.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A CANINE CASABIANCA.

How Spot Showed the Stuff of Which It Was Made.

"Spot" was a Brooklyn dog, without noted ancestors or pedigree; but he had something better—a worthy character. He might pass as a kind of Casabianca among dogs.

Each morning before going to business in New York his master conducted family worship, to which "Spot" was admitted, though ordered to take his seat on a chair and remain quiet until his master should tell him to come down. The dog learned to obey, and would not desert his place no matter who called, or what inducement was offered, until his master allowed him to move away.

One morning the master was suddenly summoned away, and "Spot" was forgotten. All that day the poor fellow kept his place; now sitting, again standing, then, for a change, lying down, but never leaving the chair. His mistress tried to convince him that it would be all right; and the children tried to persuade him that his master had forgotten to permit him to leave his place; "Spot" remained where he had been ordered to stay.

When the owner returned at night, and was told of the dog, he hurried to the room to see what "Spot" would do. The dog was on the chair waiting for his master, whose steps he recognized, but he did not offer to jump to the floor. Wagging his tail as though he would wag it off, the dog waited for the command that should set him free. When it was given, there was a streak of dog between the chair and the feet of the master. Then, at his owner's feet, "Spot" gazed up into the face of the man with a look that said plainly: "I obeyed, master, but it has been a hard day. Please do not let it happen again."—St. Nicholas.

HINTS FOR GIRLS.

A Talk on Manners and Customs Observed at the Dinner Table.

To be a pleasing guest it is necessary to do more than talk, and particularly necessary to abstain from anything out of the ordinary. A lady came to lunch the other day who is remarkable for a very tidy and well appointed table. After the meal she took her napkin by the four corners and shook the crumbs over her plate, then folded it carefully and laid it down as if it might serve another turn. The contents of the napkin did not fall however entirely on the plate, some of them reaching my teaspoon on the opposite side of the table. There is no necessity for a guest to fold the napkin after using. It should be left loosely on the table.

I think the most awkward course at a dinner table is the soup, and many young ladies cannot be tempted to taste this appetizer for this very fact. To sit erect, yet not to spill the savory drink, to take it from the further side of the plate with the further side of the spoon, to sip delicately from the side without noise, is an art worth attempting by our young lady novices. Leaving the table leisurely and not in a huddled crowd is another difficult attainment. I once heard a remark made by a lady on leaving the table that would have brought about confusion but for the tact of the hostess. The speaker called loudly: "You may be proud of your dinner, Mrs. Recherche; it was awfully nice." The hostess smiling, gravely said distinctly: "Thanks," then led the way out with the guest, engaging her in deep conversation in order to draw attention from the uncalled-for remark, and at the same time not to disconcert the guest.—Christian at Work.

Longest Sleep on Record.

The longest continuous cataleptic sleep known to medical science was reported from Germany in the spring of 1892; the patient—a Silesian miner—having remained absolutely unconscious for a period of four and a half (4½) months. The doctors in attendance could not report anything in the way of symptoms which would suggest that there was something out of the ordinary in the man's slumbers, excepting a complete rigidity of the limbs. One peculiarity which was much commented upon was that the hair grew naturally during the whole of the extended nap, but his beard remained perfectly stationary and lifeless.

Veal.

Coleridge, the poet, while a student at Cambridge university, affected a peculiar style of conversation. At the dinners in the hall where the students dined, the veal served up was large and coarse. Speaking of it, Coleridge said: "We have veal, sir, tottering on the edge of beef."—Youth's Companion.

Those Useful Presents.

"Do you believe it is really more blessed to give than to receive?" "Why, yes, you don't have to store the stuff you give away."—Detroit Tribune.

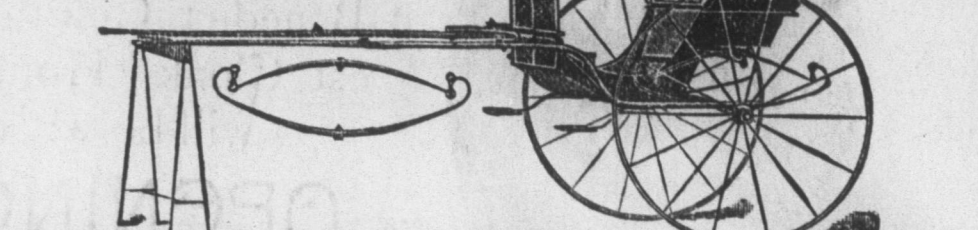
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