

# PALLADIUM SHORT STORY PAGE

## OUR NEW POPULAR SONG

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I.  
Ebenezer Brown came to New York town,  
With two dollars that he thought he'd like to bet;  
Rode down to the track, afterward walked back,  
For the horse he bet upon is kind of running yet.  
Just before the race, Brown, he poked his face  
In the pecky paddock just as if he owned the place;  
Saw a little tout lead a horse called "Mabel" out,  
Now he's out his two, and you should hear him shout:

Chorus:  
"When you go down to New York town,  
And ride down to Sheephead Bay,  
Give my regards to Mabel,  
The horse in the second stable—around the corner—  
I'd like to bet she's eating there yet,  
She ran like a hen with a chill, still—  
Give my regards to Mabel, and tell her  
I was stung for my two dollar bill."



A PARODY ON  
"Give My Regards  
to Mabel."

By William F. Kirk

II.  
Back to New York town, Ebenezer Brown  
Came to visit when five years or more had fled;  
Took a horse car ride, suddenly he spied  
Mabel helping haul the car, the poor old quadruped!  
Mabel was so slow, as in the long ago,  
Brown he thought about the day she didn't even show.  
Ebenezer laughed real hard, to the driver gave his card,  
Said, "Just do a favor to an old time pard."

Chorus:  
"Here is a tip, buy a nice whip,  
One that is good and strong;  
Give my regards to Mabel,  
The horse in the second stable—you're driving her—

Try It Over on  
the Piano!



## THE ADVENTURESS

By J. J. Bell.

"HALIBUT, my dear fellow, you are worried."

"I am, Bliss."

"There is something on your mind."

"There is," Mr. Halibut dropped back in his easy chair and eyed his cigar dismally.

Mr. James Bliss leaned forward and gazed anxiously at his old friend and guest. They had just dined, and the host had been puzzled at the other's dullness. Both were men of over fifty, and their friendship dated from boyhood. They were bachelors.

"If I can be of any assistance at all, Halibut, please say so," said Bliss gently. "Forgive my mentioning it, but for some time I have suspected that all was not well with you. Is—is it the case that you got badly hit by the Cosmopolitan Copper collapse?"

"A thousand thanks, Bliss; but it isn't money. I will tell you the truth—there is no one else I could trust, and I am sorry I did tell you before." He paused and sighed.

"I am at your service always," said his friend.

"I believe you, Bliss, I believe you. Well—to come to the point—I am—er—entangled."

"Entangled?"

"In other words, I am engaged to be married."

"Heaven bless us! And you never told me! That was hardly friendly, Halibut. Come, who was it now? But why—"

"I am engaged to Mrs. Ida Cornish, the—the adventures."

Mr. Halibut—having made this announcement, sucked savagely at his dead cigar.

"My dear fellow!" his friend exclaimed. "What is this you are telling me? I do not understand. I do not know Mrs. Ida Cornish, not even by name; but you tell me you are engaged to marry her, and then, before I can get out a word of congratulation, you describe her as an advent—"

"Congratulations, Bliss, would be out of place," said Halibut. "It is your consideration I require, and—your assistance, if possible."

"My dear friend, you shall have anything I can give you. But I am still very much in the dark."

"The whole affair is simply explained. Three months ago, coming over on the Caronia, I met Mrs. Ida Cornish. To put it briefly, she attracted me, for she is very beautiful, while I don't think she can be over five-and-thirty. She had been widowed ten years before I met her. Her manner, I am ready to admit, is excessively charming. We met frequently—very frequently—on board.

"On the journey from Liverpool to town I was able to be of some service to her, and obtained her address. She put up at the Talbot, a quiet hotel in Suffolk street. She seemed to have no friends in town. I called upon her at the hotel. Finally I asked her to marry me. She agreed at once. It did not occur to me till afterwards that she had never mentioned her people. When I hinted at the subject she evaded it. I felt it my duty to myself to make—er—some private inquiries."

"That," said Mr. Bliss, looking very unhappy, "must have been most repugnant to you."

"It was," said Mr. Halibut grimly; "yet not so repugnant as the result of the inquiries."

"Dear, dear!" murmured the host sympathetically. "Is it so very bad, my poor friend?"

"Bliss," said the other suddenly, "have you ever had any experience with women?"

"Never," replied Mr. Bliss. But he reddened, and a flush spread over his shaven countenance, extending to his bald head. "Not since I was very young, anyhow," he added. "I made rather a fool of myself when I was about eighteen—"

"Oh, that's nothing," his friend interrupted. "You have had no experience with the mature article. In fact, I believe you have avoided ladies' society for many years."

"That is perhaps the truth."

"Then you don't know what it is to be deceived. The first result of my inquiries showed that I was not, after all, her only suitor. She was in the habit of receiving visits from a man who was not a gentleman. Secondly, she had child, a boy, hidden somewhere. Thirdly, she had no money, and was gradually pawning her jewelry."

"Poor thing!" muttered Mr. Bliss.

"She had been in the habit of coming over from Canada every year for nine years and putting up at the Talbot. But that is enough. What do you think of it all, Bliss?"

"It is truly dreadful! And what explanation did she give you?"

"None; I asked for none—they would have been futile. Besides, as you can see, it would have been awkward to have admitted that I had had her watched."

"Yes, still you know, Halibut, she might be able to give satisfactory explanations for peculiar actions. You might give her a chance without actually letting her know that she had been—

ahem—watched. If I were you—"

"My good fellow," Halibut broke in impatiently. "I don't want explanations. I have done with her. I have been an infatuated idiot, but thank God, that is over."

"You—don't mean that you aren't going to marry the lady?" stammered Bliss.

"That's exactly what I do mean."

"Oh!" murmured Bliss helplessly.

A silence fell between them.

Halibut spoke first. "I am not asking your pity," he said, with he had been up all night. He went slowly to the office, and ten-

dered his card and inquiry.

"Mrs. Cornish will see you in the small upper drawing room, sir," said the clerk five minutes later, and Mr. Bliss followed a boy up stairs, his mind in a turmoil.

He entered the drawing room, which was empty. It was November, but the beads stood on his brow.

"Mr. Bliss?" said a womanly voice behind him, and he turned with a start.

"Mrs. Cornish?" he murmured, bowing.

"Yes, madam. I bring a message from my friend, Mr. Willam Halibut. Will you take a seat, madam?" Over here, perhaps," he said, indicating a couple of chairs in a recess.

Mrs. Cornish accepted the seat which he placed for her.

"Will you not be seated?" she said. She looked up at Bliss, and he dropped his eyes, but not before hers had thrilled him.

In a flash he understood how his friend had become infatuated.

The woman was very beautiful.

"Thank you, madam," he returned, seating himself. His tongue failed him.

"You have a message, I think you said, from Mr. Halibut?" she said quietly.

"Yes, madam," stammered Bliss. The business was a thousand times worse than he had imagined it in the long, sleepless night.

"I have been expecting a message from Mr. Halibut," she said gravely. "You're Mr. Halibut's lawyer?"

"No, no. God forbid, madam!" he exclaimed. "I am his oldest friend, and I am charged with a message which—which—"

"Which is not quite pleasant for me to receive, nor for you to deliver." She spoke calmly.

Her visitor started.

"You are right, madam," he said, controlling himself.

"Madam, it pains me deeply," he began.

"I am sure it does, but pray make an effort to proceed. Perhaps to begin with, you can tell me why Mr. Halibut is not here himself. When last he honored me with his presence he was good enough to appoint this hour for calling upon me." Her voice was cool and level.

Mr. Bliss forced himself to speak.

"Mrs. Cornish—madam—Mr. Halibut is not here because he is prostrated by a—frightful discovery."

"Several discoveries, surely?"

"A discovery concerning himself—his family, madam. While in the midst of preparing for the—the coming change in his affairs—he discovered a—frightful, in—proceeding."

"Dear me! And he gave it to his oldest friend?"

"Madam, for God's sake, do not jest," cried Bliss. "Mr. Halibut discovered that there was insanity in his family, and confined to the male side. His father escaped, but—"

"Do you know, Mr. Bliss?" interrupted the lady, sweetly, "that for nearly a week I have strongly suspected this?"

"Madam," he gasped.

"And so," she continued, "your friend, Mr. Halibut is—not so fortunate as his father was."

"Madam! William Halibut is as sane as I am. But—"

"A marriage has been arranged, but will not take place on account of the insanity of the gentleman," reflectively murmured Mrs. Cornish. "Yes; I think that announcement, with names of course, would do as well as any for the Morning Post. What do you think, Mr. Bliss? Is that what Mr. Halibut would like?"

Mr. Bliss fairly shuddered. What an adventuresome woman was, after all. And yet his middleaged heart beat with admiration for something—more than her audacity. He was wondering what to say next, when she spoke, her voice a little higher and a little keener than previously.

"Is that all your message from your friend?"

"Not all, madam. He, of course, realizes that you—"

"Want money?"

Mr. Bliss went dumb.

"How much does he offer, sir?"

"He—he would rather you made—a suggestion, madam."

"But he gave you a limit," she said sharply. "How much?"

A sickness came over the man's soul. At that moment he hated Halibut.

"How much?" she repeated. "Quick, sir!"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Cornish, with a steely little laugh. "How highly he rates himself, to be sure!"

Her visitor writhed on his chair. He could make nothing of this woman. But how brave—how very brave she was!

"Is that all the message, sir?"

"I do not know, madam, I do not know," he said helplessly, losing his head.

"I fear you are but an indifferent messenger," she remarked, not unkindly, "though you are doubtless a good friend. But I will not give you a message for Mr. Halibut."

"Would you not consider the matter till to-morrow?" he said eagerly.

"I considered it yesterday," she returned, and he fell back in his chair. "My message is short. Kindly say to Mr. Halibut that I am perfectly satisfied that his money should perish with him, as I desire neither."

Into the pallid countenance of Mr. Bliss the blood flew. He rose weakly and stood before her.

"Madam—Mrs. Cornish—forgive me!" he said hoarsely.

She did not appear to hear him. She seemed to be wholly intent upon her fingers, which were twisting together in her lap.

"It is a silly world," she murmured. "It is the stupidity that makes it so cruel. After all," she went on, raising her voice a trifle, "I think I may add to the message I have just given you, sir."

"Madam," he broke in, "I am feeling like a whipped cur. Say you forgive me."

She gave him a brief glance.

"Have I said anything to justify myself?" she asked.

"It was not necessary. As long as I live I shall regret this day."

"Suppose I were proved to be wicked?"

"I should regret it all the more. But that is impossible. Mrs. Cornish, let me speak. I understand two things now. One is that you are alone, and in some great difficulty; the other is that I would give all that I have to be able to help you."

"Ah! You are kind, Mr. Bliss, but you do not know much about women."

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"I have known a few—good women. Let me help you."

"Sh, hush, I beg of you! How can you tell that I am trust-

worthy? Listen, please, while I add to my message to Mr. Halibut. I will tell you what I am."

"I will listen; but I know what you are already. One moment, please."

There was a writing table close by, and he pencilled some words on a sheet of paper, placed it in an envelope, and proffered it to her.

"This," said he unsteadily, "is what I think of you now and always. Tell me your story if you will, and afterward open this."

She took the envelope unwillingly, curiously. "What strange words you have, Mr. Bliss."

"They are strange to myself, Mrs. Cornish."

She glanced at him wondering. The whole man seemed to have changed since the beginning of the interview; he seemed to have grown stronger, straighter and even younger.

"My story will go into a few words," she began. "My marriage was a runaway one, and my husband's parents have never forgiven me, nor will they ever do so. My husband was of importance: I was a nobody, with one relative