

Bellefonte, Pa., May 7, 1897.

HOW SHE ACCEPTED HIM.

"I longed to kiss you," he softly said, "as we passed the turnpike, dear."  
"Oh, that was the place," and she tossed her head.  
"Where my saddle was out of gear."  
"How much I loved you I longed to tell. When we stopped at the inn, you know."  
"Oh, that was the place," and her glances fell.  
"Where my front wheel wobbled so."  
"And then, when we reached the clover farms, Under the old oak tree, I wanted to clasp you, sweet, in my arms, And ask you to marry me."  
And the maid, with her rapt gaze turned away, Blushed deep at his words of fire.  
"To think," she said, "that I rode that day Ten miles on a punctured tire!"  
"And so with pleasure and real delight I note what your words reveal; For I've longed some time," and she clasped him tight, "To ride on a brand-new wheel."  
—Tom Mason, in *Life*.

ROBERT THE DEVIL.

Of course the general's will was at the bottom of the affair, but the Eve behind these fig leaves was his second wife. They could not call her a stepmother, for the general's children were all older than she was. The general was well along in years when she married him, but that was her affair.

There hangs his portrait, painted by Copley. Look at it.

You do not believe he was 60 when it was painted?

But they say he was.

He was more handsome and fascinating at 60 than his sons were at 30. The second wife was rich—very rich. She brought the greatest quantity of gold and silver plate into the family, all marked with an Arabic cipher, to which she added the Chevalier cross—a terrapin—and the motto, "Not to the swift."

No one knew certainly who her people were. She said they were Spanish, and her own appearance supported her assertion.

There is her portrait, painted at the time of her marriage. Look at it. The general went to Paris, a long journey in those days, to buy those diamonds she wears, and the corbelle.

Sometimes, even when there was no one to dine at home but the family, Mistress Chevalier would sail into the drawing room, that peacock's tail of green embroidered velvet spread behind her, her beautiful black hair turned back—like that—in a tour, her arms as naked as Venus, her point lace falling from her milk white shoulders, and flashing from hair and ears and fingers and flaring in a fire circle about her delicate neck, the diamonds—magnificent stones, worth scores of negroes.

Lord! how the daughters would stare at their plates and how the sons would snore at each other as the general would meet her midway the room, lead her to her seat at the table and kiss the dimple on her shoulder before he left her.

They say she loved him passionately—that often, when she thought they were alone and he would pass her chair, she would turn her head upon her lazy cushions and hold out a beautiful hand.

And he?

Would kneel beside her and kiss her pomegranate lips and lovely throat until you would have sworn him 25, and maybe not married at all.

They say, too, it was a pretty sight to see her with her little son. A maid going to help her dress one morning heard so much laughter and such baby shrieks that she first peeped in at the door.

And, behold, the mistress on her hands and knees, and baby, just from his bath, on her neck!

She was crawling over the velvet carpet in her linen shift, looking over her shoulder at the little shouting rascal, who tugged at her hair with one hand while he beat her with the branch of a jasmine in the other. The black "dia" sat and shook, like a fusillade of berry jam, while the young mistress crawled about, crushing the yellow flowers under her soft hands and knees.

The door of the inner room sprang open, and in walked the general, his dressing gown with the Persian border wrapped around him.

There was shrieking then, I warrant you.

Those years were the general's holiday time. He had earned it, for his first wife was a Guelph, and everybody in Carolina knows what that means.

She never got down on her knees except to pray in her life, and she never prayed for anything except money.

She put on morning the second year of her marriage and never took it off again. They say she slept in her crape veil.

Her children were all born black in the face and crying, and they cried the greater part of their childhood.

The boys got ashamed of it after awhile, for their English blood was strong, but the girls never did, and ought to have lived in a lane of droughts. Their tears would have fertilized a desert.

As it was, there was rain a-plenty and to spare, and the general kept out of their way, gave them umbrellas and handkerchiefs for birthday gifts, and rejoiced greatly when they cried over him at their weddings for the last time, as he thought. But some of them drowned their husbands in tears and came home again damper than ever, and no one but the second wife could have stood them.

She laughed, ordered more fires, brighter lights, opened the windows, and filled the house with flowers and gay company.

She called the eldest Niobe to her face and spoke of them collectively as the weeping willows, for they were tall and liked to be thought willowy.

They cried so much over their little half brother that the boy fairly detected them and ran away from the sight of them.

He grew up strong like his father and beautiful like his mother a veritable enfant de l'amour, but when he was 10 and the general was 70 the fine, handsome old gentleman died suddenly.

The mistress was but 30, just the age of the youngest stepdaughter, and she sat in the drawing room when the will was read with such a look on her face that nobody but a Guelph would have dared to cry. The boy sat by her, the very print and copy of his father, with his little aquiline nose, his bright blue eyes, and his father's own trick of holding up his chin and stiffening his spine when he desired to see clearly.

Now, the general had been good to his children. He had given generously to his

sons and had helped them in business. He always gave marriage portions to his daughters.

They all came to hear the reading of his will—the women shrouded in crape, with red eyes and noses. The mistress sat in the gown the general had loved her the most in, and everybody stared at it and at her beautiful grief stricken face.

The will stated that she should hold the old Chevalier place for her son. If she survived him, it should be hers absolutely, to leave as she pleased.

There should be no division of property until the last son was of age. Then came bequest to relatives and servants, and that was all.

The stepchildren were furiously angry. One would have thought them on the verge of starvation. "Wait 11 years!" they cried. "Wait until that precious brat is of age? And his mother, with everything in her hands and responsible to no one? It is not to be endured!"

And so on, worse and worse.

The mistress looked from one to another. "I will not tell you to leave my house," she said in a voice both sweet and frozen, "or remind you of the home you have always had here. You now have homes of your own and must live in them, as I shall live in mine. As long as you are in my house you must conduct yourself as your father's children should. Your quarrels and cruel speeches insult his memory."

They took flight like so many blackbirds, but the mistress was so good natured they flew back at intervals, and every now and then the boy was permitted to visit them. He went with pockets full