

ME AND MARY.

There's a lot of joy in livin', an' a lot of fun in life. When a feller has a sweetheart an' is thinkin' o' a wife. An' that kinder now reminds me that I lived on honey comb. When Mary did the milkin' an' I drove the cattle home.

I was kinder shy an' bashful, an' what folks would say was "green." An' the work in the milks put down Mary "lovesome." I'd been thinkin' of the city—been much inclined to roam. But I would not, if I left her, who would drive the cattle home?

But there was't so much in farmin', or in drivin' cows to milk; It kept me down to eaten jeans an' Mary fur from silk. An' so, though I was up to go—for leavin' of the loan. As I said before, I wondered, who would drive the cattle home?

You see, they kinder knowed me—been a drivin' of em so? An' Mary had to milk 'em at a certain time— you know? Would they come up in the twilight, would they know the time o' stars? An' when the milk was coaxed 'em, an' let down for 'em the bars?

I remember, it was springtime—'bout the settin' o' the sun. An' I drove the cows to Mary, an' the milkin' had begun. An' I said: "I'm sorry, Mary, that the two of us must part." An' I kept a-whistlin', careless, like 'twould break nobody's heart.

But she looked across the meadows, with her blue an' beamin' eyes. Which was like a dream o' heaven, an' I just took in all the glory. An' then—an' then—I can't tell how—I couldn't think or see— "Do you like the city livin', or the cattle, more than me?"

Wasn't no milk in that ere farmhouse that evenin'—no drop. The cows got in the corral an' I just eat up half the crop. But the milk that I was feedin' from was sweet with honey-comb. From the post, sweet lips o' Mary, as I kissed her goin' home.

I lost sight of the city life, whatever it might be. (The scene in the country was enough, an' more, for me.) An' I've made my mind up certain, an' I ain't inclined to roam. While Mary does the milkin' an' I drive the cattle home! —Frank L. Stanton.

"QUEEN ELEANOR."

"Is there very much more of this climbing, Mr. Elverton? I don't really think I can keep on much longer." And Lena Wolmer leaned up against a rock, and panted for breath, as she looked at her companion, a handsome young man of five or six and twenty, whose sunburnt features took on a deeper flush beneath his broad-brimmed felt hat while he answered penitently:

"Miss Wolmer, I'm awfully sorry; but I thought we should have been on the top an hour ago. I really did, I assure you; and I am beginning to be afraid I have altogether miscalculated the distance somehow."

"Are you quite sure this dreadful mountain has a top?" asked Miss Wolmer. "For my part, I have very considerable doubts on the subject. Or perhaps"—she went on, with a laugh—"the trouble is that Mr. Elverton does not know how to find it? Come, Mr. Elverton, confess you have lost the way. Your easy manner does not deceive me in the least, and I have been quite convinced for some time that you were off the track; so you may as well make an open disclosure of your errors. What is the good of going on, up, up, and up, and never apparently getting any nearer the end of our journey?"

The young planter looked somewhat abashed as he replied: "I have observed that as a general rule, if one continues to go up a hill, one comes to the top some time or other. This mountain, however, I am bound to admit, seems fated to prove the opposite. In fact, as you very neatly put it, either Hantana has no top at all or else—" He paused, and met the merry sparkle in Miss Wolmer's eyes with a like twinkle in his own.

"Yes, Mr. Elverton?"

"Well, or else I don't know how to get there. Now the whole story is out, Miss Lena, and it only remains for you to crush me with your scorn."

"Then you have lost the road? Oh, this is truly delicious!" cried Lena, clapping her hands. "What will Harry say, when he hears? You remember how he scoffed last night when you proposed the expedition? 'Nonsense! Take a lady through that jungle. It can't be done; the thing is perfectly preposterous, and not to be thought of.' He will never let us hear the end of this morning's work, I am afraid, Mr. Elverton."

"Me, you mean. He can't throw any contempt on your shoulders, Miss Lena. It is all my fault you have not seen the sun rise from the top of Hantana; and I shall never cease to be humiliated when I think of it. However, don't let us dwell on our ignoble failure any longer. Suppose we throw the thing up now, and go no farther? I can see you are fatigued; and you have done enough, anyway, already for the honor and glory of your sex; for I am quite sure no woman—no English woman, at least—was ever so far up the steep sides of Hantana. Besides, the sun is growing hot, and it will soon be almost dangerous for you to be out in it. Even as it is, we shall have a scorching going back to our horses, unless I am much mistaken."

"Well," assented Miss Wolmer, "I should not have liked to make the proposal myself, for I always hate to be the first to give in; but since you have owned to your sins so honestly, I don't mind confessing on my side that I've had quite enough of Ceylon mountaineering to last me for the rest of my life. Creepers and tree-fern are lovely to look at; but when it comes to struggling up hill through the jungle, I think I prefer the less picturesque vegetation of my native land. I must really have a rest before we begin the descent, Mr. Elverton."

"Are you so very tired, then?" asked Tom Elverton, looking at her anxiously. "I shall never forgive myself, Miss Lena, if you are the worse for this mad exploit. I cannot forget it was I who proposed it. See—here is a stone that looks pretty comfortable. Do you think you could manage to get a little rest on it, while I go along this ridge a bit, and see if I can't find you an orange or two? I think I can make out some native huts down in your hollow, and there are always a few of the land, too; there must be an man's garden. I'll have a look at the oranges or plantains in the Singalee

easier way down, you know, for I have evidently got off the track, somehow, coming up."

"Very well," replied Lena. "Go, by all means, Mr. Elverton; and may every success attend you. I shall be glad if we can get back without passing through that scarlet lantana again; for, though it is so beautiful, I shall not soon forget how it can scratch one's face and hands. But don't be vexed with yourself for bringing me here. I wanted to come just as much as you wanted to take me, and though I am just a little tired now, the whole trip has been delightful so far. I don't believe, moreover, the sunrise could have possibly been any grander from the top than from the point we saw it. The view of those waves of mist rolling off these great peaks was magnificent, and well worth all our toil; so do not think for a moment I regret our expedition, Mr. Elverton, though in a certain sense it has been a failure."

"It is like you to say so," responded Tom, gratefully. "All the same, I feel I have disgraced myself. I was so cock-sure I could find the way. I wouldn't even bring a coolie with us. If I had, we should never have got into this mess. But," continued the young planter, in a lower tone, as he arranged Lena's shawl on the rock, and poked about with his stick to make sure no hidden snake or venomous spider would share her resting-place, "you must remember what a temptation it was to me to have you all to myself for a few hours."

Lena Wolmer's cheeks flushed, but she made no reply; and Tom, after lingering for a moment or two, as if expecting her to answer, went off, as he said, to explore.

The young lady watched him disappear round the end of the next rock, and then turned to feast her eyes on the prospect before her. Away below lay Kandy, the lovely little mountain capital of Ceylon, its white houses and red-tiled roofs already shining in the morning's sunbeams; and between her and them the waters of the lake gleamed through the sage-palms and cocoanut trees; while, far away to the left, she could catch a sparkle here and there of the broad Mahawelliganga flowing silently to its ocean home, past the dark-green coffee estates and the lighter-tinted paddy-fields. Nearer, the sun shone on miles of tea plantations, with here and there the picturesque bungalow of a planter, or a row of native huts, which Lena had already learned to call "Gins." Amongst them all, she easily recognized the clump of trees in the midst of which stood her brother's bungalow, and her own present home.

Lena was a fresh arrival in Ceylon. A good many years younger than her only brother, the clever, long-headed proprietor of Duemalla estate, she had spent her orphan girlhood at a London boarding school, and hardly ever remembered that she and her brother, except when his annual letter, containing the draft to pay her fees, brought him to her mind. But there were just those two left out of their family; he, the eldest, and she, the youngest; and when her school days were done, there seemed nothing else for her to do but to go out and join him in his far-off home. Harry Wolmer was not greatly delighted. He had a poor opinion of women generally, and looked forward to his sister's arrival as a disagreeable event that could not be prevented. However, when she came he was very kind to her, and endured with wonderful patience the invasion of his old bachelor privacy by all the young fellows round about, who came like bees to a sugar-bowl, as soon as the district learned that Wolmer's sister had appeared.

The proprietor of Duemalla had really something to endure; his front veranda was besieged by ardent youths, who came uninvited to breakfast, tiffin and dinner, and hung over the new mistress of the bungalow, listening to her conversation as if she were inspired, accompanying her songs on their violins, or bringing her the skins of all sorts of wild animals which they had shot, and snipe, which they implored her to have cooked for her dinner; while the back veranda was equally crowded with their horse-keepers, snoring comfortably in shady corners, or chewing the social betelnut in the intervals of discussing their master's character. However, Mr. Wolmer bore it all with great good nature, and only inquired now and then of Lena when the wedding was to be, and which of all her adorners was the man of her choice.

Lena on her part enjoyed her position immensely. It was a new thing to her to be so courted and admired; and, though she was sorry for the unfortunate whom she was constantly rejecting, her head was perhaps just a trifle turned by all the admiration she received. One very wealthy Scotchman paid her special attention, and she had determined to marry him. When he asked her, she would accept him, though she liked Tom Elverton best. But Tom was only a poor S. D., or "little master," as the Tamils say. In other words, he was simply Mr. Wolmer's assistant, and had not a penny beyond his salary. And Lena, who had been poor all her life, did not feel inclined to go on in poverty, when luxury and riches were within her reach. So Tom had been rejected, like the other ten or eleven adorners who had offered themselves to Miss Wolmer; but he still came about the bungalow, though he had no hope in his heart. He could not bear to stay away, somehow; and yesterday, when Lena had expressed a wish to see the top rise from Hantana, he had been lifted up into the seventh heaven of joy when she accepted his offer of himself as a guide.

To tell the truth, Lena was specially sorry for Tom; and though she was quite resolved not to marry him, she could not resist making him as happy as she was able, in the meantime. Her eyes got dewy now, as she thought of him and his tender care of her all the way up. "Poor Tom!" she mused. "I wonder why the nicest people are always the ones that have no money? Now, if I had money, or he had, been rich, we might have been happy together. But then it is not to be thought of, Lena, my dear. A girl with ten pounds a year to her fortune can't marry a man with nothing a year for his, that's certain; and Harry says the same; so there's nothing for it but Mr. Alexander MacAlpine, though Mrs. Alexander MacAlpine

sounds dreadful compared with—"

But Lena did not finish her thoughts. The long rest after exertion, combined with the heat, was beginning to make her drowsy. The rustle of the leaves of a palm-tree near, as they flapped backwards and forwards in the breeze sounded in her ears like the distant wash of the ocean, and she fancied herself back on board ship, lying in her berth, and listening to the lapping of the water against the side of the vessel. Then she was at school, and the governess was speaking to her, and telling her to wake up. "Yes, Miss Martin," she tried to say, and struggled to lift her heavy eyelids, while Miss Martin seemed to stare at her with a strangely stony look.

At last, with a great effort, she opened her eyes. There facing her, and just rearing its head to strike, sat a large snake. His beautiful glossy skin shone in the bright sun, and his eyes were fixed on her. Lena uttered a sound—voice and tongue alike failed her; and helpless, almost paralyzed with terror, she sat looking at the horrible creature, not daring even to breathe, lest he should make the fatal spring. Afterwards, she remembered thinking—such strange beings are we—how very exactly the two shades of brown matched in the markings of his skin.

A moment passed thus; then suddenly there was a shout, and Tom Elverton crashing through the jungle, caught the snake by the throat and strangled it. Quiet as lightning it was done. Tom Elverton had not spent hours watching the native snake charmers for nothing; but, in spite of his dexterity, the snake was swifter even than he, and, twisting itself round in his hand, it bit him on the wrist ere it died.

"Oh, thank God!" cried Lena, beginning to tremble, now that the danger was over. "But it has bitten you, Mr. Elverton. Oh, what shall we do?"

"Never mind that," said Tom, looking at the creature now lying on the ground. "I don't believe it was a dangerous snake, at all. Anyway, you're not hurt, and that's the great thing. I dropped my stick coming back, else I could easily have knocked him over with that; but I might have struck you as well; so perhaps it was a good thing I hadn't it, after all."

Tom spoke lightly, but his face was visibly paling as he spoke. The pain was making him faint, and he leaned against the rock.

"Mr. Elverton," said Lena, timidly, "let me bind up your hand for you."

He held it out without a word, and Lena looked at the mark of the bite. "Are you quite sure it was not a poisonous snake?" she asked, falteringly.

"Well, perhaps not quite sure," he responded; "but I think not, Miss Lena."

She grew suddenly very red. "Do you remember the story about Queen Eleanor, Mr. Elverton?"

"Queen Eleanor?" he answered, wondering, looking into her tearful eyes. "I am afraid I am rather hazy in my history. 'Oh,' he abruptly broke off, you mean about the poisoned dagger?" And his face flushed as deeply as her own. "No, Miss Lena, that would never do, thank you. A man might allow his wife to risk her life for him, perhaps; but this is different. I am not Mr. MacAlpine, remember," he concluded, rather bitterly. "But if you will tie a handkerchief round my wrist, I shall be grateful to you for that; and then we must go down to our horses as fast as we can. I've found the road now, you'll be glad to hear."

"Tom," said Lena, in a very low voice, "if you will let me be your Queen Eleanor now, I'll—I'll be your wife afterwards."

There is no need to record Mr. Elverton's reply. But there is a lady now in the assistant's bungalow at Duemalla, and the appu who used to cheat his master in the most systematic and barefaced manner has fallen upon evil days, for he has to reckon with a stern mistress for every pound of sugar and measure of rice he brings from the bazaar. Consequently, Tom finds, to his great surprise, that he hardly spends any more money as a married man than he did as a bachelor; and his stores last out ever so much longer, now that "Queen Eleanor," as he calls his wife, keeps the godown keys.

In the centre of their cheerful drawing room, mounted on a handsome brass stand, there is a splendid stuffed specimen of the snake tribe, which Tom occasionally shows his visitors. "That fellow was the best friend ever I had," he says, "for through his help I got my wife."

Mr. MacAlpine is still unmarried; but it is supposed in the district that he was lately "indentured home" for a young lady to come out; and Mrs. Tom Elverton is particularly anxious to know what she will be like. "Though, Tom, my dear," she says, "I shall never be too glad I learned sense in time, thanks to the snake."—Brown Paterson.

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Oats " "	.45
Rye " "	.65
Wheat flour per bbl.	3.00
Hay per ton	14.00 to 16.00
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Turnips " "	.25
Onions " "	1.00
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Tallow per lb.	.04
Shoulder " "	.11
Side meat " "	.10
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Dried cherries, pitted	.16
Raspberries	.16
Cow Hides per lb.	.02
Steer " "	.03
Calf Skin	.40 to .50
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