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THAT THERE BROWN.

The people who occupy the flat immediately beneath ours are great diners out; and as their dog is of a sociable disposition he commonly borrows under the doormat and howls until the return of his proprietors. But the howls now heard by myself and my wife were distinctly human, and proceeded from our culinary department at the passage end. Something must have happened to Loosha! We sprang from the dinner table, and made one bound to the kitchen door. With instinctive delicacy we listened a moment before bursting in. The outcries never ceased, though at times they sounded strangely muffled. Had a burglar dropped in for a late afternoon visit? Was he garroting the too faithful creature who had refused to reveal the whereabouts of the plate basket? I grasped the soup ladle—which I had unconsciously retained—with nervous determination. We rushed in quietly.

There was no burglar. Only Loosha behind the scullery door, with her head wrapped up in a towel, was giving vent to bursts of emotion which might well have aroused the envy of the poodle down stairs. With compassion, slightly tempered with severity, we questioned the girl. She took some time to coax out of the chrysalis or pupa condition, but finally emerged from the folds of the towel and explained. Mother—who should have known better, having but a brief twelvemonth since interred her Second—was now receiving the addresses of a potential Third, himself a widower with nine incumbrances. In justice to the aspirant, we may mention that he was fairly well to do, being a retired joiner by the name of Mr. Brown. In Loosha's bitterest moments she deprived him of the prefix, calling him simply, and for short, "That There Brown."

The fell news had only just been brought by Loosha's little stepsister Emmeline, though Loosha had had a premonitory warning in the way of creeps down her back whenever she had encountered the designing Mr. Brown for some time past. It had been a-dorning in her mind, she said, by degrees as there was something up, and this very afternoon he had upped and spoke, most barefaced, on the identical doorstep. Says he, "Mrs. Hemmans, I will not deceive you, that it was just through you dropping in in a friendly way to 'elp at the laying out of her as is gone (and her only buried eleven months) that my attention was in a manner of speaking drawed to you; and in a homely way, putting the thing plainly for your thinking over quiet by yourself, I will say you have three and me similarly nine, and both being uncumbijed, why not make one extra large table out of your medium and my full sized?" Which table, Loosha parenthetically observed, would ultimately prove her deathbed.

We tried to soothe the aggrieved handmaid by every means in our power. Being within three days of Christmas day, and having proposed to entertain the representative members of our respective families—between whom, all the year round, great enmity exists—at a social dinner, the prospect before us was overshadowed by Loosha's grief. If matters came to a crisis she would as like as not take to her bed and remain there for two days. At the end of her period of sackcloth and ashes she would we knew by previous experience, reappear as fresh as paint and quite reconciled to the dispositions of fate. But in the meanwhile what would become of us? I tried to argue. I reminded Loosha that her mother was still young, active and industrious; and that one could not, while deploring the act of Mr. Brown, revile him for his choice of a successor to the departed; that that successor might be called, even now, a pretty woman; and that men would be men, no matter how foolish it was. I would have continued in this strain, but that Loosha became hysterical.

"She ain't young!" she screamed; "with me twenty-three, how could she? And she ain't pretty; or if she is she ought to be ashamed of herself! And both my father an Emmeline and Elfred's father would say so if they were here! And if she does it—which at her time of life is a disgrace—I shall drown myself!"

Then she went into hysterics and drummed the floor with her heels and the back of a chair with her head in quite an alarming manner; and I was ordered out of the kitchen that she might be unfastened and the inevitable remediats applied. It took a whole gill of Tarragon vinegar and the best part of the tail feathers of our Christmas turkey to bring her to anything like composure.

That was three days before Christmas. We have got over the dinner and the meeting of the clans without any casualties other than those we were bound to expect. And Loosha is preternaturally bright, sharp, tight and brisk. As she goes about her work she sings. "Cone Buy My Colored Errin" is a favorite vocal exercise with her. But it has been superseded by "Take Back the Art." And, from the piquantly expressive meaning Loosha infuses into the opening lines, it is plain that she applies them to Mr. Brown, whose addresses have been discouraged, and whose matrimonial plans have been circumvented, thanks to the prompt action taken by Loosha in the matter. It may be mentioned that our landmaid's baptismal appellation was originally derived from a popular novel, called "Loosha of Lam Her More," and read by mother at an important crisis. Mother is quite a literary person, having worked for several authors, one of whom was a poetical genius attached to a well known firm of soapmakers.

Loosha's mother, like many small, meek looking people, possesses a considerable amount of determination. If she really entertained a weakness for Mr. Brown, that weakness was not to be put down with the strong arm. Loosha realized that, she tells us, as she stood on the kitchen floor and met those black beady eyes, so like her own. True, she opened no parallels, but dashed upon her subject in a way peculiarly distinctive. Emmeline and Elfred, seated on two chairs against the wall, paused in their consumption of bread and treacle on hearing themselves alluded as poor lambs and joined their lamentations to Sister Loosha's. The tumult raged high, though Mrs. Hommans preserved a calm, even, stony demeanor. And in the middle of it all That There Brown knocked at the door.

No quick change artist ever effected a more wondrous transformation than did Loosha in that minute. Mrs. Hemmans had glided away to put her cap straight and smooth her clerk parling. In the interval between her disappearance and her return, Loosha and Mr. Brown had become quite friendly. Mr. Brown's manner was quite fatherly, and his features shone with smiles and gin and water. He had been screwing up his courage to—to that fortifying beverage. Loosha, as she sent the astonished Emmeline out for a quartern of the best and provided the visitor with a reliable chair, made up her mind that the doom of That There Brown, matrimonially speaking, was sealed. Mother, without knowing why, felt uncomfortable when the widowed joiner proposed taking the entire family (it was Loosha's day out) to the World's fair, and Loosha warmly responded to the overture.

They took Emmeline and Elfred and the Islington bus, and That There Brown and Loosha occupied a garden chair seat together outside, mother and the children being stowed in the interior of the vehicle. Brown was fatherly when they started; Portland Road found him affectionate. By the time they were launched amid the giddy delights of the fair, he was beginning to think!—Deluded wretch! What matters it what he thought! It was deliberately done of Loosha, the betraying of That There Brown. He wandered with the mother and daughter, each on an arm, through a fairy land of mingled fog and gaslight. They visited the birds, the beasts and reptiles; and Loosha appealed to him for information as to their names, species and general habitat, and greeted every remark of his with admiring "Lors!" She never seemed to notice when he mixed up the Bactrian camel with the water buffalo.

She went upon the circular switchback with him, mother being too timid to venture, and became nervous in the middle of the airy journey, clinging to the arm of the ravished widower with feminine squeaks of terror. How enthralled she was by his performance on the try-your-strength machine, though the marker on the dial indicated nothing much in the way of a record. The more fascinating Loosha became the warmer and more perspiring became That There Brown. He nudged her frequently. All the sensation of his corporeal frame seemed to have taken up its abode in the elbow to which she hung.

Was it then that the miserable man uttered the words which sealed his fate? It may have been. All we know for certain is that those words once uttered, Loosha's manner became distant and off hand. That There Brown put it down to maiden coyness, and renewed the siege with redoubled rashness. It was when the Flying Demons were about to take their marvelous leap through space, and the popular attention was uniformly diverted to the ceiling, that Mrs. Hemmans—who was not without a consciousness that for a suitor trembling on the brink of acceptance Mr. Brown's conduct was, to say the least of it, inadequate—felt a tug at her shawl.

It came from the infant Emmeline, whose watchful eye, unchildlike in its keen appreciation of the situation, had detected the joiner's arm in the act of inclosing the figure of Loosha under the shadow of her bead fringed mantle. After that the widow was taken faintish, and had to be revived with peppermint drops ere the company returned to Brompton. Mr. Brown was not invited in to tea, though he lingered long upon the doorstep. And when he had gone Loosha uncorked the vials of her contempt, and told her parent that she had been nursing a adder in her bosom, but, thank God, it was unmasked at last!

Next morning a procession of four started for the cemetery. Emmeline and Elfred walked in front, hand in hand and bearing votive garlands. In the presence of the headstone on which the virtues of her second were recorded, Mrs. Hemmans renewed her vows of faithful widowhood. On the way back the party encountered That There Brown.

"Mother just 'ung her 'ed," said Loosha afterward, "and walked by him without taking no more notice than if he was dirt. But he spreads 'iself out over the path and sezes, 'Don't you reckonize your friends, Mrs. Hemmans, mum, at this time o' day, after all as has been said between us?' And then I pushes in, an he looks up and met my eye. I give 'im a cold stare, and you might see 'im shrink, as if 'e knowed what was comin. 'Begging your pardon,' I says, 'but did you mean me or my mother?' 'Your mother,' says That There Brown, 'as I think and 'ope will make a good wife to me and mather to my nine children.' 'Which you was of a different opinion yesterday,' I sharps back on 'im, 'when you set me to marry you at the World's fair. Per'aps you'd like to 'ave us both, as the Salt Lake City Morgans ain't too particular in that way, and you may belong to the English branch of the dinonagation.' 'You've been and raised a nornick's nest about my yeers, you cat!' says That There Brown, with a scowl. 'Maria,' and he looked imploring like at mother, 'the 'uman 'art is impulsive, especial when led away by gin and water. Overlook the accident and you won't have no reason to complain.' 'I could never 'ave no reliance on you, Mr. Brown,' says mother, with her eyes cast down and speakin as if she'd got pins in her mouth, 'after what has took place.' 'So make your mind up to it,' I says, 'as neither me nor my mother ain't going to be no wife to you nor your nine children, neither.' And he took and hooked it, did That There Brown."—St. James' Gazette.

Married with Her Arms All Dough.

A very romantic marriage has taken place in Montgomery county, N. C. A young man obtained the license, secured the preacher, took him immediately to the presence of his intended. He found her in the kitchen making up dough. The young fellow did not give her time to clean her hands and arms, but had the preacher to tie the knot at once. The preacher made quick work of it and sent them on their way rejoicing.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Came Near Being Buried Alive.

After a young woman in Morgan county, Ala., had been pronounced dead last week by four physicians, and was dressed in her burial garments, she suddenly, during the night before the funeral, opened her eyes and sat up in bed, to the intense fright of the watchers and the joy of her parents. A few hours later she got up and is now in her usual health.

To Explore the Amazon.

A company has been formed in Rio Janeiro, with a capital of $5,000,000, to explore and develop the natural resources of the Amazon. Colonies are to be established and means provided for reaching a market for a region heretofore practically unexplored.—New York Times.

A skating match which occurred recently at North Plain, Conn., between young men, the prize contested for was the hand of a young woman in marriage.

A German inventor is reported to have devised an ingenious camera for taking photographs of the internal organs of human beings and beasts.

Kansas produced nearly 80,000,000 bushels of wheat last year, and the acreage this year promises to exceed that of 1891 by fully 25 per cent.

LOVE'S QUEST.

I sought Love in each highway far and wide—
At every door stood long with outstretched hands,
Praying for Love's sweet alms; yet my demands
Were met with only hate and naught beside.

At last, footsore and weary, I turned home,
To find there in thy gentle, tear filled eyes
Sweet love, long sought for—and no more I roam.

—Mary Kent Davey.

MAID SYBIL'S LOVER.

It was a sweet summer's afternoon, toward the middle of the Fifteenth century, and the inhabitants of the little village of Friars Holt were all assembled upon the green, watching the attempts of some of the younger men to send their arrows straight to the center of the butts which stood at one end of the chosen place of recreation.

"Another shaft missed the clout," laughed an old man, as the arrow stuck quivering in the turf, falling three yards short of the butt. "The king will never complain that lads of Wainwood make havoc among his deer if he hears of such shooting as this."

"Hold your prate, Gaffer Jenkyn," said the young man who had discharged the last shot, pettishly unstringing his bow; "it was a cross wind which marred my shooting, unless, indeed, it was the wizard's ward," he added, crossing himself devoutly as he cast a glance of scorn and abhorrence at a young maiden standing some little distance apart from the group of rustics—a fair haired girl of middle height, with a pair of laughing gray eyes.

Her age could scarcely have exceeded eighteen years, and the merry expression of her face as she smiled at the woebegone look of the disconfited bowman had no more wizard's glamour about it than is always to be found in the rippling laughter of a pretty girl.

"Yes, there she be, sure enough," muttered Gaffer Jenkyn, with a glance of malevolent hatred at the young girl. "What business has she down here among us? Even if she can't cast spells herself she can tell all about us to that old warlock who lives in the ruined tower in Cairnstone Chase."

By this time general attention was drawn to the beautiful intruder, and threats and execrations were leveled at her head.

At first the girl appeared unconscious of her danger, but all at once a stone thrown by a lad grazed her arm, and as she perceived the threatening attitude of the crowd a look of intense terror passed across her face and she turned to fly.

"Do not let the witch escape," cried an old crone. "I lost two sweet grandchildren last autumn. They said it was the falling sickness, but I know better. It was through the devilments of the old wizard and his ward."

A menacing circle soon formed around the poor girl, whose entreaties for mercy were received with shouts of derision, and she would have been seriously maltreated had not a figure burst through the ranks of her assailants and loudly asked the meaning of their cowardly conduct.

The man who interposed in the girl's behalf was attired in the picturesque dress of a forester, though he wore no badge or cognizance to show that he was the retainer of any noble house, and the cloth of which his Lincoln green doublet was composed was of a finer character than that in which servitors were attired.

"Hallo, my masters," cried he, stepping between the maiden and her assailants; "what wit is this? By the bones of Jonathan the Archer, call yo yourselves Englishmen to behave in such a manner?"

A confused chorus of explanation rose from the little crowd, but the smith, who had first suggested violent measures, strode to the front.

"This is no business of thine, Hob of the Butts," growled he. "Get ye to your own business of stealing the king's deer and leave honest men to look after their own affairs.

"We will have no witches or warlocks among us, and this wench, who lives up at Cairnstone Chase with old Michael Rexthorpe, shall not come down here casting her spell over us and ours."

As he spoke he laid a rough, sinewy hand upon the shoulder of the shrinking girl, but in a moment staggered back under the effects of a heavy blow dealt him by the man called Hob of the Butts, who, placing the girl's arm in his, drew her through the crowd, not one of which ventured to manifest any opposition.

Neither spoke a word until they had left Friars Holt some little distance behind them, and then the girl said timidly:

"I thank you, fair sir, for your kindness in rescuing me from that dreadful man. I thought I should have died with terror when he laid his hand on me."

The forester laughed merrily. "Matt Clink and I understand each other, pretty one," said he. "But tell me, who are you? Why did they call you a witch and want to throw you into the pond?"

Tears started to the girl's eyes. "I am called Sybil Tressider," answered she, "and I am no witch, though I live up in Cairnstone Chase with that fearful man, Michael Rexthorpe.

"My father, Reginald Tressider, who believed that he could find the philosopher's stone, was the owner of the house in the Chase and Michael Rexthorpe was his trusted familiar and acolyte, but my poor father died and the fearsome man Michael has taken everything. He says I am his ward, and though I am not absolutely a prisoner, yet he has forbidden me to go beyond certain limits."

Hob of the Butts stroked his chin thoughtfully. "A sad tale," said he. "But what doth he up in the lonely tower, from whence as I have passed that way at night I have seen strangely colored vapors issue and clouds of bright sparks float away like evil demons on their errand of ill."

"He searches for two things—the secret of eternal youth and the waters of oblivion," replied Sybil Tressider.

Hob of Butts looked puzzled. "I know not what you mean by the last," said he.

"It is the draft which brings forgetfulness," answered the maiden.

"Then Matt Clink often finds that when he quaffs the nut brown ale," returned the forester, with his merry laugh.

"I cannot ask thee to," replied Sybil, "but from the bottom of my heart I thank thee. I have not met a friend since I can recollect."

She turned from him with a sigh and made her way slowly toward the time worn tower, which stood like some giant sentinel watching over the bleak waste.

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In a very few days Hob of the Butts again found himself in the vicinity of the tower, and with a willness which those who were acquainted with his frank and open nature would never have given him credit for, he carried on his shoulders a fat doe, which he humbly offered to Michael Rexthorpe as a tribute from one who, though ignorant, was a devoted admirer of learning.

The cunning old man fathomed the handsome forester's motive in a moment, but he was not one to cast away gifts, even though he felt in his heart that Hob of the Butts had a magnet in Sybil Tressider. He received him graciously and accepted the present.

Sybil and the forester had now many opportunities of meeting, and a strong feeling of affection sprang up between them—not unnoticed by the keen eyes of Michael.

There were times when he felt inclined to rend his snow white beard with disappointment.

And now began a new life for Hob of the Butts. His former sylvan haunts and gay companions knew him not, for he became Michael Rexthorpe's drudge, a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water, and yet he felt that this unaccustomed toil was amply repaid by the opportunity of breathing his love in Sybil's ear and hearing her shy answer in response.

One day Michael's countenance was full of triumph. "I have found them!" cried he. "I have found them. I am not quite certain of eternal youth, for that will be a gradual process; but of the waters of oblivion I have no doubt. I have, however, hit upon a sure means of testing the latter and will do so on that jolter headed archer and see if it will make him forget Sybil."

He hastened away to the keeping room of the tower with the silver goblets, each containing a small quantity of some liquid, pure and colorless as crystal.

"I will quaff youth," said he, "while the archer shall drain the cup of oblivion to the dregs."

Meanwhile the lovers were engaged in earnest conversation beneath a pink May tree, which grew on the south side of the tower.

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