

"No, your honor; I only ask for the reading of this." And he passed a paper to the justice.

There was a slight buzz of astonishment in the room when the justice opened the paper and read aloud, "Deposition of Charles Winthrop," which was followed by intense stillness, as he gave the contents of the document.

The instrument was quite brief. It set forth that on a specified day, therein named, the deponent, of his own free will gave to Henry Peabody a gold hunting-case watch, with chain and seal attached thereto, as a token of his high regard for said Peabody's character, and a testimonial of his personal esteem and friendship; all which was duly signed and sworn to in presence of his attorney, Mr. Jameson.

After the reading, Henry remarked: "I presume, your honor, that is a sufficient refutation of the charge brought against me?"

"If there is no question about the authenticity of this deposition," said the justice, carefully scrutinizing the signatures and seal.

"I see that Mr. Jameson, before whom the deposition was taken, is present. He will testify to its genuineness."

"O!—ah! Mr. Jameson is present? I was not aware of it. Certainly certainly, everything is correct and satisfactory." And declaring the case dismissed, he passed to Henry his watch, with many civilities of speech.

As Henry, with a slight flush of triumph on his brow, left the court room, Edward Perham sneaked out of a side entrance, woefully crestfallen, and looking very much like a whipped cur.

On arriving at his hotel, Peabody found a note from Mr. Winthrop, inviting him to dine with him. At present, it stated, he received but few friends, and those only whose intimacy permitted him to dispense with all formality.

Henry was very desirous to see Mr. Winthrop, to thank him for his good offices in his behalf, and gladly, therefore accepted the invitation. On reaching his residence he was ushered into the library, where, wrapped in his dressing-gown, and resting on a lounge, he found the owner of the mansion.

"Excuse my not rising," he said, as Henry advanced and took his extended hand; "the doctor and the nurse still tyrannize over me."

Henry entirely failed to recognize in the fine-looking courteous gentleman before him the rather repulsive looking individual he had taken from the wreck.

"I see by your looks that you do not recognize me," he continued, in a hearty genial voice, "nor do I wonder, for I was a terrible battered and vagabondish looking object when I last parted with you. But take a seat, take a seat. I hear that you have been waylaid and robbed—robbed, and accused of robbery; rather hard on you, eh? You must tell me all about it after dinner, which I am expecting my niece to announce every moment."

At that moment Clara entered the library, unobserved by Henry, whose back was towards her.

"Ah, here she is!" added the old gentleman. "Mr. Peabody, my niece, Miss Clara Weston."

As Henry arose to salute the lady a flash of glad surprise lighted up his face as he beheld before him his long-ago fellow-passenger in the cars. A rich blush mantled the cheeks of the young lady as Henry took and fervently pressed her proffered hand, while he expressed his joy at again meeting with her.

"Aha! I had forgotten that you had met before, and that an introduction was scarcely necessary," said the old gentleman, with a good-humored smile. "But come, Clara, Mr. Peabody will hardly thank you if you permit the warmth of your welcome to cool his dinner."

The dinner proved eminently a social meal. Mr. Winthrop was in the best of spirits, and possessed a fund of small talk, which banished all restraint. In the course of conversation allusion was made to the accusation brought against Henry, when the latter embraced the opportunity to thank his host for the favor he had done him.

"Do not speak of it as a favor, my young friend," said Mr. Winthrop. "When I received your note this morning I hardly knew what to make of it. However, I at once sent for my lawyer, who took my deposition. Pray inform me, for I am at a loss to imagine, who preferred this charge against you?"

"It was Edward Perham."

"Edward Perham?" was the mutual exclamation of uncle and niece.

"I am astounded! How dared he to do such a thing?" indignantly continued Mr. Winthrop. "Why did not the fellow first consult me? Had he done so, all this mortification might have been spared you."

Henry assured his host that he did not regret the affair, seeing that it had been the means of introducing him to Mr. Winthrop, and of renewing a former brief acquaintance with Miss Weston.

"My greatest solicitude growing out of this affair," he added, "was the apprehension that Miss Weston might share in the suspicions of Mr. Perham."

"What, Clara share in them?" exclaimed the old gentleman.

claimed the old gentleman. "Why, she combated them from the first. It is not every man, let me tell you, my young friend, who has the good fortune to be defended by such an advocate."

"Why, uncle, do you mean to force me from the table?" said Clara, her face mantled with blushes at the old gentleman's betrayal of the interest she had manifested in behalf of Henry.

"Permit me to thank you most heartily, Miss Weston," said Henry, bending a grateful and admiring glance on the blushing girl, "for your advocacy of an almost entire stranger; and you, sir, for removing doubts that have caused me not a little pain."

"If you had known Clara as well as I know her," said the old gentleman, "you would never have admitted your doubts." And then, seeing how embarrassing the subject was to his niece, he adroitly gave a turn to the conversation.

After Henry and his host had adjourned to the library, which had been cosily furnished for the purpose, and was the favorite retreat of Mr. Winthrop in these his invalid days, a long conversation ensued between them of quite a confidential character. Prompted by the undisguised interest manifested by his entertainer in the subject, Henry was led to speak briefly of his past life, and more fully of his plans for the future, and to solicit his advice in regard to the latter.

"I will cheerfully counsel you to the best of my judgment," said Mr. Winthrop, "but previous to offering my advice, I wish to mention a project I have in my mind, after giving it a little more consideration."

At that moment Miss Weston entered the library.

"You have come in good time, my child," said Mr. Winthrop. "I wish you to entertain Mr. Peabody while I take my afternoon nap, and be sure and beguile him to remain to tea and spend the evening with us. Do not fail now!"

The young couple took the hint, and retired to the music-room; and you may be sure that it did not require a great effort on the part of the young lady to accomplish the task imposed upon her. Indeed, so successful was she in her beguilement, that Henry was not a little astonished when it was announced that the evening meal was in readiness.

"I mentioned something of a project I had in my mind," said Mr. Winthrop, as he and Henry sat together again in the early evening. "Why should you go West at all? I am growing old, and have for some time thought of retiring from business because I could not find a partner to suit me, and more seriously since this mishap of mine. Now this is the project to which I alluded: that you become my partner—you the active, and I the 'sleeping' partner—although I will endeavor to keep one eye open. What say you to that?"

"But I have not the capital, such as your extensive business would require," said Henry.

"Leave that matter to me, my dear boy," said the old gentleman; "you have all the capital I want, the best you could bring, energy and integrity. I would like to stipulate one thing, however, that when the arrangement is fully completed, you make your home with me, for I find myself lonely in this great house."

"But there is your niece, Miss Weston, she might not—"

"O, if you and Clara cannot arrange to live in the same house without quarrelling," said the old gentleman, with a quizzical smile, interrupting Henry, "the sooner you pack up for the West the better! I think I hear Clara in the next room, and my advice to you is, to set that matter at rest without delay."

Henry acted on the suggestion at once. We do not know in what manner he executed his mission; this much we do know: that shortly after, Peabody was announced as the partner of Mr. Winthrop, which in a few months was followed by a brilliant wedding at that gentleman's mansion, and that not long had he reason to complain of the "loneliness" of his house.

A Grave Joke.

A certain marble dealer, residing not a hundred miles from this village, says the *Montpelier Journal*, recently received an invoice of gravestones, upon some of which were inscribed touching sentiments of sympathy and eulogy ready made for the fortunate person whose tomb they were intended to designate. Among them was one with an index finger pointing heavenward, and under it the motto, "No graves there." One evening the dealer received an order for a gravestone, for a gentleman named Graves, the style and decoration of which were left pretty much to his own judgment, the price only being fixed. As he had to leave the city the next morning he hurriedly selected the one bearing the above motto. The indignation of the surviving relatives of Mr. Graves, for whose cemetery lot this stone was intended, when it was received, can be better imagined than described.

The potato-rot is said to be caused by the rottator-y motion of the earth.

Sausages are said to be a specific for ague and fever, on account of the canine in them.

A Ridiculous Mistake.

HOW did you know that she was a widow?

Don't you give me credit for any common sense or discrimination at all?

How do you know that a rose is red?

How do you know lobster salad from sardines?

I knew she was a widow from the very moment I took the corner seat in the car, opposite to her little black bonnet with its fluttering breath of crape veil, and the Astrakan muff that held her two tiny, black-gloved hands.

How I envied that muff.

Don't tell me of your Venuses, your Madonnas, and your Marys, Queen of Scots, they couldn't have held a candle to the delicious little widow.

I never did believe in grand beauties!

A woman has no business over-awing and impressing you against your will.

And she was one of your dimpled, daisy-faced creatures, with soft, brown eyes, long-lashed and limpid, and a red mouth, which looked as if it was just made to be kissed.

And then there was a tangle of golden spirals of hair hanging over her forehead, and braids upon braids pinned under her bonnet, until a hairdresser would have gone frantic at the sight.

Just as I was taking an inventory of these things, in that sort of unobtrusive way that I flatter myself belongs to a man of the world, she dropped her muff, and, of course, it rolled under the car seat.

Wasn't I down on my knees at once after it? I rather think so.

"Thank you, sir," said the delicious little widow.

"Not at all," I replied. "Can I do any thing more for you?"

"No, thank you—unless you could tell what time we get into Glendale."

"Glendale," I cried. "Why I am going to Glendale."

Of course we were friends at once, and the daisy-faced enchantress made room beside her, "lest," as she said, "some horrid, disagreeable creature should crowd in and bore her to death," and I stepped right out of the musty, ill-ventilated world of the railway carriage into an atmosphere of Eden.

When a bachelor of forty falls in love at first sight—oh, what a fall is there my countrymen. No half-measures, I tell you.

Before we had been speeding through the wintery landscape an hour, I had already built up several blocks of *chateaux d'Espagne*, in my mind.

I saw my bachelor rooms brightened with her presence.

I fancied myself walking to church with her hand on my arm.

I heard her dulcet voice saying, "My dear Thomas, what would you like for supper, to-night?" I beheld myself a respectable member of society—the head of a family.

What would Bob Carter say now—I meant then?

Bob, who was always rallying me on my state of hopeless old-bachelorhood, who supposed, forsooth, because he happened to be a trifle younger and better-looking than myself, that I had no chances whatever.

I'd show Bob!

"What did we talk about?"

The weather, of course, the scenery, the prospects—all the available topics, one after another; and the more we talked, the deeper grew my admiration.

She was sensible and so original, and so everything else that she ought to be!

I discovered that she preferred a town life to the seclusion of the country residence—so said I. Who would stagnate when he could feel the world's pulse as they throbbed?

She loved the opera—so did I. She thought this woman's suffrage all ridiculous—with a bewitching little lisp on the last syllable—I agreed with her.

She thought a woman's true sphere was home; my feeling urged up too strongly for utterance, and I merely bowed my assent.

Here was a delicious unanimity of soul—a mute concord of sympathy.

What would Bob Carter say when he saw this beautiful little robin lured into my cage. How I would lord it over him. How I would invite him to "happen in any time." How I would—figuratively, of course—hold up Mrs. Thomas Smith over his envying eyes. I uttered an audible chuckle as I thought of these things, which I had some difficulty in changing into a cough.

"You've got a cold," said the widow, sympathetically. "Do, please, have one of my troches; they are soothing to the throat."

I took the troche, but I didn't swallow it. I would as soon have eaten a priceless pearl. I put it in my left hand breast pocket, as near my heart as practicable.

Her first gift!

"A bachelor like me is used to such things," I said, in an off-hand manner.

"A bachelor!" echoed my traveling companion. "Bless me, then you are not married?"

"Undoubtedly, no."

"It's never too late to mend," hazarded the widow, roguishly.

"That is my sole consolation," I answered, gallantly.

"There is nothing like married life," sighed the widow, with a momentary eclipse of the limpid, brown orbs, beneath the whitest of drooping lids. "But what's the use of my talking about it to you? you can't understand."

"One can imagine," I replied, modestly.

"You must find a wife as soon as possible," said the widow, looking intently at the hem of her handkerchief. "You're only living half a life, now. Ah! you can not think how much happier you would be with some gentle, clinging being at your side—some congenial soul to mirror your own."

Instinctively I laid my hand on my heart.

"Do not fancy that I shall lose an instant in the search," I said. "I have already pictured to myself the pleasures of a new existence."

"Have you?" The brown eyes shot an arch, challenging sparkle. "Tell me all about her."

"Do you really wish to know?"

"Of course I do."

I congratulated myself mentally on the fine progress I was making, considering the small practice in love-making that I had had. Bob Carter himself, with all his ready tongue and good-looking face, could not have carried on a flirtation more neatly.

"Is she fair or dark?" questioned the widow, with the prettiest of interest.

"Neither—about your complexion."

"Oh!" laughed my interlocutor, with a charming pink suffusion over her dimples.

"Is she young?"

"Yes, about your age."

"Pretty?"

"More than pretty—beautiful."

The widow arched her perfectly-penciled eyebrows. "What a devoted husband you will make? and when are you to be married?"

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Carter Mrs. Alvera's brother?" asked the widow, presently.

"Yes," I answered, with a little grimace. "A self-conceited, disagreeable puppy."

"Do you think so?" asked the widow, doubtfully.

"Of course, as everybody else. So will you, when you meet him."

"Shall I?"

"A man who thinks because he's got a handsome face and a smooth tongue, that nobody else has any business in creation."

"Dear, dear!" twittered my companion; "that's very bad, indeed."

"Of course, he will pay a good deal of attention to you, if you are to be his sister's guest," I pursued; "but it won't do to encourage him."

"No!"

"By no means. He's a professional flirt."

"Is it possible?" hissed the widow.

And I mentally shook hands with myself for having thus deftly put a spoke in Bob's wheel.

First impressions are everything, and I certainly had been beforehand with the pretty widow. Neither had I any compunctions of conscience, for hadn't Bob been playing practical jokes of all styles and complexions on me, ever since we had entered the bar side by side?

"Stupid Tom," had been his pet name for me, always; but this wasn't so very "stupid" a game, after all.

While I was thus metaphorically hugging myself, the conductor bawled out, "Glendale," and I sprang up to assist my lovely companion out of the car, cheerfully burdening myself with bags, baskets, parasols, and bulky wraps.

As we stepped upon the platform, I nearly tumbled into the arms of—Bob Carter.

"Hallo, Tom!" was his inelegant greeting. "You don't grow any lighter as you grow older."

I was about to retort bitterly, when a sudden change came over his face, as he beheld the little widow behind me.

"Gertie!" he exclaimed clasping both her hands in his.

"Yes, Robert," she answered, with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks. "That gentleman has got my parcels; he has been very kind to me."

"Oh, has he, though? well, we won't trouble him any further. I am much obliged to you, Tom, and we'll send you cards to the wedding."

"To what wedding?" I gasped.

"Didn't you tell him, Gertie? Why to our wedding, the tenth of next month, to be sure. Au revoir! Tom, be careful of yourself for my sake."

And that was the last I ever saw of my daisy-faced widow. For if you think I was mean-spirited enough to go to that wedding, you are mistaken in my character.

That was a good, though a rather severe, pun which was made by a student in one of our theological seminaries (and he was not one of the brightest of the class either), when he asked, "Why is Professor —, the greatest revivalist of the age?" and on all "giving it up," said, "Because at the close of every sermon there is a great awakening."

The mystery of the milk in the cocoa-nut has been eclipsed by that of the hair on the outside.

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