

## Select Tale.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR OVERCOAT.

SPREAD. Sir, your glove.  
VAL. Not unlike my gloves are on.  
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

"That's a very pretty overcoat, James has just laid upon the sofa, Harry," said Mrs. Gordon to her son, looking at a sleek, plump, wadded paletot, which the servant had just brought in from the tailor; "but you must excuse the question, and not think me a very stingy or curious specimen of womankind.—What can you do with so many overcoats? Why, this must be the third!"

"The fifth, my dear-mother," replied Harry Gordon, looking over the top of his newspaper, with his bright black eyes, which his mother, like many others of her sex, never looked at without admiring; "the fifth; and I shouldn't wonder that, before the winter is over, I shall have to say, with Banquo, and 'yet an eighth appears.'"

"I'll see no more," interrupted Mrs. Gordon, laughing.

"You won't see them any more, my dear mother—meaning the overcoat—for I assure you, they vanish like the witches' visions; and where the deuce they go to, I can't tell you—all I can say is, that men, when they come away from balls, can't see quite as clearly as when they go there; for somebody always takes mine, and leaves me nothing—not even an old one."

"Proving that some people must, when they leave these balls, not only have an obscured vision, but actually see double, and taking themselves for two men, put on two paletots! Well, Harry, my son, it is at least a consolation to find that you are always in a most exemplary state of sobriety; your overcoats bear witness to your devotion to the Maine Law—for if the man who takes two paletots, is—whatever men call it—slightly exhilarated, I believe is the polite term—the man who gets no overcoat at all, can have got no wine. So, my sober son, let me diligently prepare for you another cup of this beverage, which cheers, but not inebriates."

And Mrs. Gordon began to pour out the tea; for the new overcoat had arrived as she and her son were sitting at breakfast, one cold morning in January.

They were a happy pair, this mother and son; there were few so called 'loving couples' that could match them. To have opened any of the splendid dining-room doors, where on that morning everybody was at breakfast, in this grand street leading into Fifth Avenue—a street short, pompous, and plethoric, from having swallowed up the ground of twelve houses, and digested it into six—one would not have found a more inviting breakfast-table, before which to draw a well-stuffed chair, and sit down, on this cold, freezing, raining, sleeting, slippery, sloppy, January morning.

The fire, an unctuous, blazing Liverpool coal-fire, flamed in the grate, and a small round table, with its snow white cloth, bright silver tea-trappings, and its chaste gilded cups and saucers, was drawn cozily up to it—the solemn square dining-table remaining immovable in its usual place, in the centre of the soft, bright carpet.

Seated opposite each other, in low, broad, lazy arm-chairs, that looked intended as a transition from the repose of the night to the toils of the day, were Mr. Harry Gordon and his mother.

Mrs. Gordon had been left a widow, with an easy jointure and a little boy, at an early age. For the sake of the jointure, Mrs. Gordon had found many suitors; but for the sake of the boy, she had refused them all; and his affection, his devotion, had well rewarded her, if, indeed, she lost anything by not having a husband—a doubt which we do not presume to solve.

As for Mr. Harry Gordon, he was what a boy, well endowed by nature with intellect and heart, would ever be, if mothers would condescend to develop the one and direct the other.

He was generous, conscientious, high-spirited, contented with himself, the world, things in general, and his own in particular; fond of society, which returned the compliment, and made an idol of him; glorying in his home, which, since he could hie the word, had been made the bright oasis of his life—and adoring his mother, whom he thought sent into the world as a type of every virtue and excellence—his tender, his refined, his beautiful (Harry actually thought her beautiful, though she was forty) mother, whose image and sweet memory had, in the multifarious temptations of a young man's existence, so often stood between him and harm. How could he be guilty of any action he could not tell his pure, noble mother, as was his custom every morning, as they lounged over their breakfast-table? This hour, or rather these hours, were exclusively his mother's—the hours in which she laughed with him at the fun and frolics of his evening's exploits—related for her amusement; or counseled him, as he told her his hopes and fears, the dilemmas and perplexities of his business life; for, though Harry was a great man in

the ball-room up-town, he was a man of no small importance down-town, too—where he had taken his father's place in one of the largest commercial houses.

Harry was no idler, no lazy fop—no languid 'Young American.' He did not disdain anything, not even the dusty old counting-house, where his father and his father before him, had made so much money; and he spent it nobly and judiciously for the good of all.

But Harry's mother, sure of his steadiness and high principle, of his industry and energy in his career, as a citizen and a merchant, strove in every way to make his young days bright and happy, by forwarding his amusements when the hours of toil were over.

She herself had given up, from sheer indifference, her position in the 'world'; but her connections enabled her to launch Harry into our best society. Then, when he had his friends to entertain, there was no need of bar-rooms or club-rooms, or restaurants; Mrs. Gordon was delighted to open her house—her Harry's home—to his friends. To remain with hospitable grace receiving them, and adding a charm to all, by her wit and cheerfulness—or merely to see that all was right for Harry and his guests, if, with his arm round her, and a little tap on her cheek, Harry looked admiringly at her, would say—

"Mother mind, dinner for six, to-morrow—iced champagne, if you please, madam—anything else you like—but your fair self—your ladyship's presence will be dispensed with on this occasion."

Then Harry's mother would laugh, and shake her finger at him, and cheerfully set about the necessary preparations. But she was nowise offended or alarmed at the prohibition regarding herself, for she knew that youth has its frolics; she actually imagined that young men living in the world, might have things to talk about, and ways of talking about them, which could nowise interest her, a woman. But she did not, for that, imagine that the orgies of ancient Rome were to be enacted under her roof; she knew that Harry respected it and her too much for that. In fact, Mrs. Gordon was a model woman; knew her own duties and her own position, and fulfilled both; still Harry was so happy, that (this was the great charge against him from the girls in upper-tendom,) he did not appear to think in the least that he wanted a wife. Yet there were many who could have reminded him that he was five-and-twenty—that he was rich, prosperous, and had a fine house, all ready furnished, and that all he wanted was a wife. But he was very obtuse on this point—the idea could not be got into his brain.

Still, Harry went everywhere; and on the morning we have made his acquaintance, he had just finished a most spirited description of a grand Fifth Avenue *fete*, at which the flowers alone had cost fifteen hundred dollars, and at which Mr. Harry Gordon had danced innumerable schottisches, redowas, and polkas—won no end of hearts, and lost—his overcoat.

"But you dear, stupid Harry!" continued Mrs. Gordon, after her son had given her a description of the various mishaps and mysterious disappearances attending his overcoats; "did it never occur to you to put your name into your paletots?"

"Heavens, mother! what an idea! Have one's name written on one's coat collar, so that if you hang your coat over your seat at the theatre, or throw it down in a public room, everybody may say, ever afterward, 'there goes John Smith!'"

"Oh, I beg pardon," said Mrs. Gordon; "well, let us resort to a half measure, then, and suppose we carelessly drop one of your own cards into the pocket—so," said Mrs. Gordon, and walking across the room, she put her advice in practice, and deposited in it a smooth piece of pasteboard, on which was engraved—

"HARRY GORDON,  
No. —, — Street."

That evening, he again betook himself to one of the aristocratic *camelia fetes*, with which the merchant princes about this time celebrate the advent of a new year. What were his exploits there, we are not about to set down, for they concern us not—nor did they him; for, as he danced along the broad pavements, so shining and crackling under his feet, all he thought of was that he really had secured his new overcoat this time—and that it was mighty comfortable, too, for the sharp-cutting wind blew in his face. But he merely put back his hair from his eyes, and threw up his head with a sort of bold defiance, as if to enter into contest with this same *Aeolus*—(the proper type of envy, nagging, irritating, restless, and inevitable as it is)—for nothing could put Harry out of temper.

So, as we have said, he went dashing along, his hands in the pockets of his new paletot, one of them playing with the card his dear mother had herself put into it.

"Dear, kind mother," thought Harry, "deuced cold I should have been without her, though, after that hot room and the sharp two hours' cotillon. Graceful girl, that Emily Sykes, but she hasn't such beautiful eyes as Ellen Drewe. Ellen Drewe's eyes are so bright, so sparkling. Talking of sparkling, by the by,

that was famous champagne old Groves gave us; how queer he looks, though, in his fine rooms, so timidly bold, ready if he's snubbed, to apologize for being there. Ah! ah! clever fellow, though, in a business way. By the bye, wonder if the Asia's in—her news may make the difference of a few thousands to us—everything mighty dull in Europe, they say."

"That Prima Donna waltz is pretty—it has a dying fall." By Jove! it is cold, though! that gust, just as I turned the corner, quite set my teeth on edge. Lucky the famous overcoat is padded and stuffed like a mattress, or mother's darling might have caught a consumption. Well, here I am—but who's come, and what's the matter?" continued Harry, as, within a few steps of his home, he perceived that there was a carriage at the door, and a gentleman standing on the steps, evidently waiting for him.

He hastened on; but scarcely did he set his foot on the first step, before the gentleman he had seen on the top of them, rushed down, putting one hand on his arm to secure him, whilst with the other he held a piece of pasteboard towards him, exclaiming in a loud, angry tone—

"Are you Mr. Harry Gordon?"

"I am, sir," said Harry, drawing away from his grasp, much astonished and somewhat offended at the peremptory manner in which he was addressed, though his interrogator was a stout old gentleman, and in a state of considerable excitement.

"Then, sir, you've got my overcoat, and my overcoat's got the key of my house in the pocket; one of your precious New York boarding-houses, where the Irish servants are as grand and sleepy as their masters, and won't stir, sir. I wish we had them at the South for a little training, that's all! Why, we rang, and rang, and rang, and waited, and shouted—bless you, sir, we might as well have shouted to the towers of Trinity Church. So I found your card, and in despair I came here after my key—and you've stayed at that stupid ball so late, dancing away in those confounded hot rooms, whilst I've been dancing here, sir, on your cold stoop, waiting for my paletot and my key."

With these words, the gentleman began violently to take off his coat. Harry, perfectly astounded at the fatality which appeared to attend his overcoats, had listened with resigned humiliation to the reproachful harangue, and with a sort of dogged desperation, began to abstract himself from the garment he had so praised and so pressed to his bosom, and which, after all, was not his own.

"Here, sir, here," said the old gentleman, holding out Harry's overcoat; "here's your coat, (devilish tight it was—I only wonder I didn't split it in the back,) and there's your card, back again in the pocket. Now give me mine, and let me get my key."

Harry held forth the offending paletot, which had so deserted its master, and the old gentleman, before he took it from him, began eagerly to feel in the pockets.

"By Heaven, sir, you've lost the key!"

"Lost the key, sir! there was no key in it when I put it on, I assure you."

"No key?"

"No, sir—only a card," replied Harry, holding out the card with which he had fumbled on his way home.

"A card!" shouted the strange gentleman, in a perfect tone of horror; "a card! I put no card there!" and running up to the neighboring gas-light, he exclaimed, "I understand it all—that ain't my paletot! I got yours, but oh, you didn't get mine! Sure enough," continued he, shaking the fatal coat, which hung still on Harry's arm; "sure enough, that isn't mine." Then turning round to the carriage, he exclaimed,

"Susy, Susy dear, what shall I do? He's come and he hasn't got the coat. I had his, but he's got somebody else's."

"Who's papa?" replied a feminine voice, at which voice Mr. Harry Gordon turned toward the carriage also, and beheld by the light of the gas-light, which fell full upon it, a sweet little face, with heaps of light, crisp auburn ringlets, (kept in curl by the frost) clustering round it—the oval outline of the face, and the regular features, being defined by a delicate pink and white satin hood, which was tied closely under the chin.

At the sight of this face, Mr. Harry Gordon, doffing his hat, advanced to the carriage.

"The lady is right, sir," said he, looking at the lady, but speaking to the gentleman; "who's paletot have you got? Let us read the card."

The old gentleman mechanically held it out, and Harry's young and quick-sighted eyes red, by the uncertain light, some very twisted and elaborate characters, which together formed the name of—

"MR. J. SMITH."

"Where?" said the old gentleman.

"Where?" exclaimed the voice from beneath the little pink and white satin hood; "where, pa, dear, is 'nt Mr. J. Smith every where! Oh, pa, we are martyrs to the Smiths!" and the little hood laughed such a buoyant, silvery, catching laugh, that Harry couldn't help laughing too.

"It's mighty fine to laugh," said the old gentleman, standing petrified, his eyes immovably fixed on the gorgon name; "but what's to be done?"

"Allow me to assist you, sir, I perceive you are a stranger in New York—I trust you will permit me to show you that we have some hospitality at the North. For the honor of the North I hope you will condescend to accept my proposition. My mother, sir, resides with me in this house; you, if I understand right, have no family awaiting you at home; you had better allow my mother, Mrs. Gordon, the pleasure of receiving this young lady for the night—whilst I, sir, can offer you a room. We have always one or two for our friends."

"Well, sir," said the old gentleman, taking Harry's hand and giving it a hearty shake; "that's a kind offer—I didn't think you cautious, old northerners were capable of such a thing. My name's Mansfield, sir—Mansfield, of Alabama. Groves knows all about me—and this is my daughter, Susa, come up to see the lions."

"Harry bowed, and the hood gave a gentle inclination forward, which brought some of the shining curls over its eyes; but the tiniest little hand, protruding with just the white, round, small wrist, from the broad, white sleeve of the burnous, quickly thrust them back."

"And so, Mr. Gordon, I think—"

"Papa," quickly interrupted Susa, "you couldn't think of such a thing—waking Mrs. Gordon at this time of night. Indeed, sir," added she, turning her eyes full on Harry, (by which he, who never lost an opportunity, discovered that they were large, earnest, deep blue eyes—just the eyes he admired—very like his mother's he thought.) "We could not think of troubling Mrs. Gordon—though we are, of course, very grateful to you. I think we must try our boarding-house again, papa; unless—and she turned somewhat archly toward Harry, with her little silvery laugh—"unless," continued she, "Mr. Gordon can tell us where Mr. J. Smith lives."

Harry laughed, and thought "How wonderfully deep blue eyes can change their expression! I wouldn't give a fig for a woman that always looks the same, even though she were as beautiful as the Greek slave!"

"I know a Mr. Smith," interposed the driver, "and he ain't far from here."

"Let's go," said Mr. Mansfield, resolutely, opening the carriage door.

"Allow me to go with you," said Gordon, "I really couldn't feel content if I knew you were wandering about in search of Mr. J. Smith. You know it's all my fault, and I know New York ways better than you do, and may perhaps get at Mr. J. Smith sooner than you will."

"Come along, and thank you."

Harry jumped in, the driver closed the door, and off they started in search of Mr. J. Smith.

Harry sat opposite to the corner whence proceeded the little silvery laugh. All he could see was a sort of vapory cloud of gauze, and the tip of a little white satin shoe, on the dark carpet of the carriage, as they passed the gas-lights. By these same friendly lamps he perceived, also, the outline of a beautiful and graceful form, enveloped closely in a white satin burnous, with a heavy pink and white fringe. The deep blue eyes and the waving hair, which danced and played to the jolting of the carriage, and the yielding form nestled in the corner made a pretty picture.

Scarcely were they on their way, before Miss Mansfield addressed him.

"This is a most delightful adventure! though I hope you won't take cold, papa—that would spoil it."

"Put on Mr. J. Smith's paletot," said Harry, laughing.

"By Jove, I will!" replied Mr. Mansfield; "I hope it isn't as tight as yours."

"You were at the Grove's, then?" said Harry.

"To be sure I was; but you didn't see me, I've no doubt."

Harry, thinking how stupid he had been to have seen any one else replied—

"I went late and I danced a good deal—and—"

"And you didn't see me; it's no use, Mr. Gordon, trying to compose a civil speech. I am nobody, you know; so we will date our acquaintance from this present wonderful adventure—a pilgrimage in search of Mr. John Smith and a paletot."

"And a key," put in the father.

And so they journeyed on through the quiet, silent streets—all talking and laughing as merrily as though they had been old friends—for Harry's temper was bright and joyous, and Miss Mansfield's seemed to be even and cheerful as his own. Not one word of discontent or reproach to her father—her spirit appeared unwearied, whatever her frame might be; and though she might be anybody at a New York ball, she certainly was calculated to be a personage of the greatest importance, with all who knew her and came within the influence of her bright intellect, her refined manner, her sweet temper and affectionate disposition—not forgetting the radiant deep blue eyes, and the sunny hair.

"Here's Mr. Smith's," said the coachman, last.

"Let me go out," said Harry, leaping to the ground; "I'll make 'em hear, I'll warrant."

He rang, and rang; and then, when he imagined his tocsin had sounded the alarm and aroused the drowsy sleepers, Harry tapped at the basement window.

"What do you want?" said a gruff voice half opening the window, and admitting a view a sulky, fat, black face. "What do you want, sir?"

"Mr. Smith," boldly replied Harry.

"Which Mr. Smith?"

"Mr. John Smith," ventured Harry.

"That ain't here," said the black head, with drawing itself.

"James Smith!" shouted Mr. Mansfield from the carriage.

"Jeremiah!" suggested the silvery voice with a laugh.

"Josiah!" again said Harry, but the black head exclaimed, in a state of extreme irritation—

"That ain't it! Get along with you all—you're a-making fun on me!" and closing the window with a bang, Harry and the coachman remained looking in blank consternation, from one to the other.

"I ain't a-going any further," said the coachman; "my nags is tired and so be I, and I ain a-going any further."

"Yes, up to my house, wont you?" said Mr. Mansfield.

"No I wont—that's West Twenty-Third street—miles and miles off."

"But you'll go to mine, that's close by," said Harry, insinuating a corpulent silver piece into the coachman's hands, as he got into the carriage.

"There is no help for it my dear sir, it is three o'clock, you cannot keep Miss Mansfield any longer in this cool air, after dancing all night."

"Tired, Susy, are you darling?" said Mr. Mansfield, turning toward his daughter, "I'm sure I am."

"Then," said Susy, gracefully addressing Harry, "let us really consider this night as one taken entirely out of our common every-day life; let us suppose we are some centuries older; let us suppose these tall houses forest trees, myself a benighted damsel, with an exiled father, (you, dear papa,) and imagine that we encounter a gallant knight-errant—yourself, Mr. Gordon—and so accept the hospitality of your castle. What part we are to assign to Mrs. Gordon, is the only thing that puzzles me."

"Oh, she will play the good fairy and set all right—she never does anything but good things," said Harry.

And now they arrived; and Harry, opening his door with the tiny pass-key his mother had made to fit his waistcoat pocket, (he never forgot or changed his waistcoat, as he did his overcoats,) introduced, with all possible deference, his new-found friends into the breakfast-room.

Leaving them there, he proceeded to his mother's room. In five minutes explained all, in another five, Mrs. Gordon was down stairs, and in ten minutes more, Mr. Mansfield and Susy were each in a comfortable bed-room; where, going to sleep on their

CONTINUED ON SEVENTH PAGE.

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