

A WOMAN TO A MAN.

From The Westminster Gazette.  
When you grieve, and let it show,  
And may tell me nothing more,  
You have told me, o'er and o'er,  
All a woman needs to know.  
When I show you that I care  
(Meet your eyes and touch your hand),  
I have made you understand  
All a woman may, or dare.  
So, the ears of Friendship heard!  
So, 'twas seen of Friendship's eyes!  
You are sad, I sympathize,  
All without a single word.

ONLY A SKIRMISH.

"Ready? I was not going to wait much longer."

"Sorry! I shall be later than you will. I have half a mile to go after I have dropped you, and I know the Vennekers expect me to be punctual."

The porter at Blessingham Chambers had a hansom at the door, and they got into it quickly and drove off—two men who had lived together for ten years and knew each other well enough to do without conversation on trivial topics. After a minute or two, however, one of them became unusually talkative. "Saw an old flame of yours to-day, Dick."

"So did I!"  
"The deuce you did! The Vennekers used to know her, didn't they? I don't suppose they can raise a dinner party in the slack season without asking all their friends. You'll meet her there to-night."

"I shall."  
"Dick Templar," said his friend, "you're a secretive devil! Two years ago you worried me with all your lamentations over the girl till I got sick of her name. Each time you proposed to her you told me what you said and what she said when she refused you; and now she comes to London as the wife of the other fellow, and you slip off to tea with her, instead of coming to the club to play whist—you know that is where you were, so don't deny it!—and you say not a blessed word about it. Not even to me. May I ask what is the difference between your feelings for Miss Rose Casterton and your feelings for Mrs.—Mrs. Rose?"

"O'Brien; husband's a captain in an Irish regiment. He'd need to be with such a name!" grunted Dick Templar. "In Africa."

"Phew! Poor devil! And you told me nothing about it! What makes the difference?—for you are different."

"Don't be a goat!" answered Dick. "I am not different. There was nothing to tell, that's all. I've called on her twice, and she remembers that she liked me, rather, and—she is glad to see some one she knows and can talk to—she quite forgets how I loved her. She will never understand how I love her still—I don't mind telling you all this, old chap—all she talks about and thinks about is her husband. 'It's what 'Pat' says and what 'Pat' does and what 'Pat' thinks about everything, and she looks at his photograph all the time if you can't get her with her back to it. She's safe enough; and so am I, for that matter. I feel just the same—only different, you know."

"Time heals."  
"Time makes the wound fester. I love her more than ever. I hate meeting her, but I'm so fond of her I can't even hate her husband when she talks about him; I believe I'd bring him back to her if I could, just to make her happier."

"Poor old Dick! What a good chap you are! Here's my dinner waiting for me and a brougham in front of the door, so I'm not late."

He got out, and Dick Templar opened the little trapdoor in the roof and shouted to the cabman to drive fast.

The Vennekers live somewhere north of the Marylebone Road, in a quiet terrace of big houses. There was no carriage at their door. A hansom was the only vehicle in the Terrace, driving slowly off, with the man in the dickey examining the fare that had just been paid as if he were dissatisfied with the quality as well as the quantity of the coins. Dick wondered if Mrs. O'Brien had driven alone in the cab in front of him all the way from Elbury-st., paid his fare and jumped out.

A small boy had strayed up with a bundle of evening papers, but trade was slack, and he dashed forward, apparently with the forlorn hope that something might be gained by helping an able-bodied gentleman late for dinner to alight from a hansom cab. Dick Templar pushed him on one side, ran up the steps and rang the bell.

The footman who should have opened the door must have been carrying in the soup, for no one came for fully a minute. Dick tapped his foot impatiently on the white doorstep and scowled at the small boy half hidden behind an orange contents bill.

"Killed and Wounded at Battersberg, Official List," was the most prominent item of news promised by the bill.

Dick tried in vain to remember what it was that had happened some days before at Battersberg—whether the Boers had captured a convoy or saved their own guns and decamped, and, as no one came to the door, he held out a penny to the small boy and rang again.

The "Official List" was plain enough in the Stop-Press telegrams; Dick had found it before the footman opened the door.

"Yes, sir?" said the man aloud, to attract the attention of the gentleman. Dick was keeping a dinner party of fully twenty people waiting in the drawing room while he read the newspaper.

"Officer killed: Captain G. C. O'Brien, Dublin Fusiliers." That was what he had read; one or two other names followed, but he did not see them. Mechanically he folded the paper and thrust it deep into the pocket of the overcoat which the footman was taking from him as rapidly as he could.

"You are late, and I have had no one to bring me downstairs!" said a voice that brought Dick to himself with a start. They had resolved to go in to dinner without him, and he had been standing in the hall staring at them in a dazed way, almost without acknowledging his host's nod, as they all filed by, until Mrs. O'Brien came past alone. She slipped her arm into his, and he went in, vaguely wondering what it was he had to do, with the widow of a man forty-eight hours dead prattling beside him about the heat and the flowers, twitting him with trivialities as to what might have made him so late, and rallying him on his dulness.

"I suppose it is being married to a soldier," she said, "that makes me accustomed to punctuality. Pat is never late for anything."

It was the first time she had mentioned her husband by name that evening, and he caught at the idea like a drowning man at a lifebelt.

"Why are all Irishmen christened Patrick?" he asked, going at the point in a roundabout way instinctively.

"But they aren't!" she exclaimed. "My husband's name is George. He was christened George Carruthers, only Pat suits him so much better. You will say so when you see him."

Dick could see him in his mind's eye, with a couple of soldiers heaping dry sand over him in a shallow grave, and a firing party returning to camp after their last duty. He even wondered vaguely whether they marched back with arms reversed, and what arms reversed might precisely mean. He had read of soldiers' funerals in newspapers.

"You really ought to see him," she went on, and, having once got upon the topic, talked of the husband whom she had married six months before for the rest of dinner time, telling her hostess an anecdote of him across the man who sat between them. Her doing so gave Dick an opportunity to think, and possible solutions of the question what was to happen chased one another through his head. She might not see the news till the morning, reading it all by herself in her lodgings; he had called on her there, and she had told him how lonely and forlorn she felt without "Pat." The Vennekers were almost the only people she knew in London, and they were only friends whom she had known, as girls know married people in London, for a year or two before her engagement. Again, she might read the news in an evening paper, as he had done; it would be better in the morning than with the loneliness of night to follow the blow—all alone at night in those dingy lodgings. Or some one might have seen the telegram and might blurt out the name he had read at any moment during dinner; then there would be a scene, in which he, Dick Templar, would be a helpless spectator. Some day she might remember how cheerfully she had spent the evening, laughing and chatting when her husband lay dead, and even find out that he knew all the time. Could he tell her quietly afterward? He could, of course, drive home with her; probably she would expect him to do so. Should he tell Mrs. Venneker and ask her to break the news?

Some people, he knew, thought that bad news came more gently dribbled out, perhaps with an accompaniment of phrases importing religious consolation. He thought of how he might best put it, and shivered. His train of thought was interrupted by Mrs. O'Brien speaking to him, eating a late strawberry by tiny mouthfuls as she did so. He hoped his face would show nothing for the present.

"Do you think me horribly frivolous and heartless, dining out and enjoying myself? Do you think I ought to be glum, like—like you?" she asked with a sudden grave look in her eyes. "If I once gave way to all I feel at times I should go mad. The worst battles were fought before he got out there, and I feel—I know—that he must come through all right now. You think the show is practically over, don't you? Every one says so."

She laid her hand on his, or it touched his, perhaps unintentionally, and her face was for a moment so drawn and earnest that he felt no doubt of the reality of her feeling, looking into her eyes and seeing for an instant below the surface. Then the surface closed over again and rippled, and, before he could answer, Mrs. Venneker had signalled and the ladies were filing out of the room.

There was no doubt of the feeling—no doubt of the weight of the blow that was going to fall. Still, the touch of her hand on his had set his pulses throbbing, and he felt that there was a future to think of as well as a present.

Speaking of the matter afterward, Mr. Venneker told his wife that he noticed at the time that Dick Templar punished the port in silence, and that, finding he could not draw him into the conversation of the other men, he let him alone. The latter part of this was true, for Dick hardly answered coherently when he was spoken to. With regard to the port, he drank three sips, and left the rest standing in his glass when he rose with the others to join the ladies. By that time he had made up his mind that it was of no use to say anything to Mr. Venneker. When they got upstairs, Mrs. O'Brien was singing. It was an Irish song, something with "Pat, me darlin'" at intervals, and the usual "acushlas" and "asthores." It had not been in her repertory in the old days, and he heard her say that her husband had taught it to her, when she had finished, and been warmly congratulated on her performance. But, as she was in the back drawing room, by the piano, with several ladies around her, he did not go near her.

"What a row those chaps make! You can hear them three streets off!" said another man to him, and they stepped together onto the balcony outside the drawing room window. Dick assented, and suggested shutting the window; it was the front drawing room, that faced the roadway, and some one else was sitting down to the piano, but still she might hear.

"Horrible boo-hoo! Boo-hoo slorter pay-per!" they came along, working opposite sides of the street, and bellowing antiphonally, two ruffians with bundles of evening newspapers and voices like foghorns. A servant brought a paper from one of them three doors off, while the other bellowed; he had enough definite news in his bill to be quite articulate as to the slaughter.

"By George, we'll have one!" said Mr. Venneker, in the room behind them. Dick tried to

stop him, but was too late. He had run downstairs to buy one himself, instead of ringing the bell and sending out.

Mrs. O'Brien was coming forward from the back drawing room, standing in a clear space. What must happen flashed through Dick's brain; he saw Mrs. Venneker too much surrounded for him to get near and warn her and get her to help. Mr. Venneker was on the stairs; he would see it first, stop, and try to hide the newspaper; then she would snatch it from him, and then—he could see her with his mind's eye at full length in her wedding dress on the parquet floor. He moved forward to be near her as Mr. Venneker came into the room with the newspaper in his hand and stood glancing through it for the latest news. Dick clenched his teeth, looked, and remained silent. Mr. Venneker was looking at one spot in the paper. He was a red faced man, and could not be expected to change color. It was coming.

"There's no news," said a clear, tranquil voice. It was Mrs. O'Brien, looking over her shoulder at her host as she moved toward his wife, holding out her hand, to say good night. "I came here straight from the War Office. A cousin of my husband is killed, that is all—Gerald O'Brien."

"I wondered whether he was a relation," said Mr. Venneker, his voice shaking.

Dick was digging his nails into the palms of his hands and his teeth into his lips in the effort to hold himself together.

"My husband is Captain George O'Brien, in the Irish Rifles," said Mrs. O'Brien in explanation to a lady near her. "Stupid people used to mix Gerald up with him because of the initials. The cousins' names were Gerald Costigan, I think, and, of course, the regiments are quite different. The Rifles weren't in that show at all—it was only a skirmish; and Pat didn't like Gerald much, I know." At all events, Gerald Costigan O'Brien's fate did not affect his cousin's wife. There was less of indifference in her tone as she exclaimed, catching sight of Dick's face, "Mr. Templar, is anything the matter? Are you ill?"

But Dick could stand it no longer. He is a shy, sensitive man—too much so to give the true explanation to any one, much less to every one; and a man who goes into hysterics, and is helped from a crowded drawing room, alternately laughing and crying, on his host's shoulder, must explain to a good many if he wants to re-establish his reputation. Dick never tried, and the theory of the port at dessert is accepted now even by Mrs. O'Brien.—(Sketch.)

COAL IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN SPITZBERGEN AND ELSEWHERE.

From The London Standard.

To obtain fuel from the Arctic regions seems almost a paradox, but our Berlin correspondent informs us this morning that good seams of coal have been found on the western side of Spitzbergen, and are to be worked on the most approved business principles. That carboniferous rocks existed in the island has been known for some time, but during the last summer experts were dispatched from Norway to ascertain whether the mineral was sufficiently abundant and accessible to be worth working. Their reports are most favorable. Good furnace coal has been found in Green Harbor, on the south side of the entrance of Ice Fjord, which pierces so deeply into the western flank of the principal island that the latter is almost cut up into three parts by the meeting of inlets from opposite coasts.

At another place in the same fjord three of the seams are from six to nine feet thick, and as they are above sea level must crop out at the surface. The larger and Eastern part of Spitzbergen is more or less a plateau, and the strata are horizontal, ranging from the period anterior to the carboniferous to that in which our chalk was deposited. The Western part is mountainous, and consists of older crystalline rocks, but uplifted parts of these sedimentary strata here and there rest upon them, as is the case where these seams have been discovered. In such circumstances, the fields are likely to be limited in extent, and the seams may be tilted at high angles, or broken up by faults. Still, as the coal can be worked by adits its accessibility and the consequent economy in labor will be a compensation. These discoveries make it highly probable that larger, and perhaps richer, fields exist in the eastern part of the island, which, however, will be less easily reached.

The effect, direct or indirect, of the Gulf Stream opens the west coast of Spitzbergen in summer, but the other is more difficult of approach. It is stated that even in the sheltered Ice Fjord the coal cannot be shipped directly from the land, and the piers must be removed before winter, during parts of which work will have to be suspended. But when the coal has been followed for some little distance from the surface, there will be nothing to prevent the miners from going on even in December. The ground, no doubt, is permanently frozen for a considerable depth, but the temperature will rise steadily as the distance from the surface increases, and will be uniform. After a while the mine will be more comfortable than any house. As it is, the party will winter in the island from the first, and the longer they can work the more healthy they will be. But Spitzbergen may not be the only Arctic island in which coal occurs, though perhaps it is the most favorable for commercial purposes. The fuel may be found in Franz Josef Land; beds full of fossil plants occur near Eira Harbor—of later date, indeed, but in rocks which elsewhere occasionally produce coal. From Nova Zembla Colonel Feilden brought back specimens of limestones which experts assigned to an age very near that of our English coal beds, and other localities could readily be named. But these masses of fossil vegetable matter indicate curious changes in the climate. Nowadays nothing bigger than the stunted Polar willow grows in Spitzbergen. Even in the extreme north of Norway the hardy birch is dwarfed. Yet these ancient plants formerly almost rivalled forest trees, and the change was late in coming. A temperate climate existed as far north as the seventieth parallel, and in Greenland beds of brown coal were formed even in the Tertiary era. At that time the plane, the magnolia and the vine flourished in the latitude of Disco Bay.



A HINT.

YOUNG WOMAN (to her shy admirer)—TELL ME, MR. GEORGE, DO KISSES REALLY EXIST ONLY IN NOVELS?—(Mcgregor's Edition.)