THE LADY OF LYNN

By SIR WALTER BESANT

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"But I cannot deceive the captain."

"There is no deception. He has agreed to the match; he knows that you have agreed. There is one consideration, Molly, which makes a private marriage necessary. I could not consent to a public wedding or to a wedding feast, because my rank forbids. It would be impossible for me to invite any person of my own position to such a feast, and it would be impossible for me to sit down with those persons—worthy, no doubt and honest—whom the captain would certainly wish to invite."

This was certainly reasonable and certainly true. Rank must be respected, and a noble earl cannot sit down to feast with merchants, skippers, mates, parsons and the like.

"Then it shall be as your lordship pleases."

"Be at the church at 6," he said. "I will provide everything and see that everything is ready for you. Do not be recognized as you pass along the street. You can wear a domino with the pink silk cloak which you wore the other night at the assembly. Then I shall recognize you. No one else, Molly, need be considered. Are you sure that you understand?"

"Yes," she sighed; "I understand."

"Then, Molly"— He bowed low, and without offering to kiss her this wonderful lover left his mistress and was carried home in his chair.

CHAPTER XII.

THE "SOCIETY" AGAIN.

THE "society" continued to meet, but irregularly, during this period of excitement when everybody was busy making money out of the company or joining in the amusements or looking on. The coffee house attracted some of the members, the tavern others, the gardens or the long room others. It must be confessed that the irregularities of attendance and the absences and the many new topics of discourse caused the evenings to be much more animated than of old, when there would be long periods of silence, broken only by some reference to the arrival or departure of a ship, the decease of a townsman or the change in the weather.

This evening the meeting consisted at first of the vicar and the master of the school only.

"We are the faithful remnant," said the vicar, taking his chair. "The mayor, no doubt, is at the coffee house, the aldermen at the tavern and the doctor in the long room. The captain, I take it, is at the elbow of his noble friend."

The master of the school hung up his hat and took his usual place. Then he put his hand into his pocket.

"I have this day received"—

At the same moment the vicar put his hand into his pocket and began in the same words:

"I have this day received"—

Both stopped. "I interrupt you, Mr. Pentecrosse," said the vicar.

"Nay, sir; after you."

"Let us not stand on ceremony, Mr. Pentecrosse. What have you received?"

"I have received a letter from London."

"Mine is from Cambridge. You were about to speak of your letter?"

"It concerns Sam Semple, once my pupil, now secretary to the Lord Fylingdale, who has his quarters overhead."

"What does your correspondent tell you about Sam? That he is the equal of Mr. Pope and the superior of Mr. Addison, or that his verses are echoes, sound without sense, trash and pretense? Cost me a guinea."

"The letter is a reply I addressed to my cousin, Zackary Pentecrosse, a bookseller in Little Britain. I asked him to tell me if he could learn something of the present position and reputation of Sam Semple, who gives himself, I understand, great airs at the coffee house as a wit of the first standing and an authority in matters of taste. With your permission, I will proceed to read aloud the portion which concerns our poet. Here is the passage:

"'You ask me to tell you what I know of the poet Sam Semple. I do not know, it is true, all the wits and poets, but I know some, and they know all those who frequent Dolly's and the Chapter House and the other coffee houses frequented by the poets. None of them at first knew or had heard of the name. At last one was found who had seen a volume bearing this name and published by subscription. "Sir," he said, "'tis the veriest trash. A schoolboy should be turned for writing such bad verses." "But," I asked him, "he is said to be received and welcomed by the wits." "They must be," he replied, "the wits of Wapping or the poets of Turnagain lane. The man is not known anywhere." So with this I had to be contented for a time. Then I came across one who knew this would be poet. "I was once myself," he said, "at my last guinea when I met Mr. Samuel Semple. He was in rags, and he was well nigh starving. I gave him a sixpenny dinner in a cellar, where I myself was dining at the time. He told me that he had spent the money subscribed for his book instead of paying the printer; that he was dunned and threatened for the debt; that if he was arrested he must go to the Fleet or to one of the Comptors; that he must then go to the common side and would then starve—in a word, that he was on his last legs. These things he told me with tears, for indeed cold and hunger—he had no lodging—had brought him low. After he had eaten his dinner and borrowed a shilling he went away, and I saw him no more for six months, when I met him in Covent Garden. He was now dressed in broadcloth, fat and in good ease. At first he refused to recognize his former companion in misery, but I persisted. He then told me that he had been so fortunate as to be of service to my Lord Fylingdale, into whose household he had entered. He therefore defied his creditors and stood at bed and board at the house of his noble patron. Now, sir, it is very well known that any service rendered to this nobleman must be of a base and dishonorable nature. Such is the character of this most profligate of lords. A professed rake and a most notorious gambler, he is no longer admitted into the society of those of his own rank. He frequents halls where the play is high, but the players are doubtful. He is said to entertain decoys, one of whom is an old ruined gamester named Sir Harry Malyns and another a half pay captain, a bully and a sharper, who calls himself a colonel. He is to be seen at the house of the Lady Anastasia, the most notorious woman in London, who every night keeps the bank at hazard for the profit of this noble lord and his confederates. It is in the service of such a man that Mr. Semple has found a refuge. What he fulfills in the way of duty I know not." I give you, cousin, the words of my informant. I have since inquired of others, and I find confirmation everywhere of the notorious character of Lord Fylingdale and his companions. Nor can I understand what services a poet can render to a man of such a reputation, living such a life.'

"Do you follow, sir," my father asked, laying down the letter, "or shall I read it again?"

"Nay, the words are plain. But, Mr. Pentecrosse, they are serious words. They concern very deeply a certain lady whom we love. Lord Fylingdale has been with us for a month. He bears a character, here at least, of the highest kind. It is reported, I know not with what truth, that he is actually to marry the captain's ward, Molly. There is, however, no doubt that Molly's fortune has grown so large as to make her a match for any one, however highly placed."

"I fear that it is true."

"Then, what foundation has this gentleman for so scandalous a report?"

"Indeed, I do not know. My cousin, the bookseller, expressly says that he has no knowledge of Sam Semple."

"Mr. Pentecrosse, I am uneasy. I hear that the gentlemen of the company are circulating ugly rumors about one Colonel Lanyon, who has been playing high and has won large sums—larger than any of the company can afford to lose. They have resolved to demand and await explanations. There are whispers also which concern Lord Fylingdale as well. These things make one disgusted. Then I also have received a letter. It is in reply to one of my own addressed to an old friend at Cambridge. My questions referred to the great scholar and eminent divine who takes Greek for Hebrew.

"'You ask me if I know anything about one Benjamin Purden, clerk in holy orders. There can hardly be two persons of that name, both in holy orders. The man whom I know by repute is a person of somewhat slight stature, his head bigger than befits his height; he hath a loud and hectoring voice; he assumes, to suit his own purposes, the possession of learning and piety. Of theological learning he has none, so far as I know. Of Greek art, combined with modern manners, he is said to be a master. Inglese Italianato Diavolo Incarnato is the proverb. He was formerly tutor on the grand tour to the young Lord Fylingdale, whom he led into the ways of corruption and profligacy which have made that nobleman notorious. He is also the reputed author of certain ribald verses that pass from hand to hand among the baser sort of our university scholars. I have made inquiries about him with these results. It is said that where Lord Fylingdale is found this worthy ecclesiastic is not far off. There was last year a scandal at Bath in which his name was mentioned freely. There was also—but this is enough for one letter.'"

The vicar read parts of this letter twice over so as to lend the words greater force. "The man says publicly that he was tutor to Lord Fylingdale on the grand tour. I have myself heard him. On one occasion he proclaimed with loud voice the private virtues of his patron. Sir, I very much fear that we have discovered a nest of villains. Pray God we be not too late."

"Amen," said my father. "But what can we do?"

"Aye, what can we do? To denounce Lord Fylingdale on this evidence would be impossible. To allow this marriage to take place without warning the captain would be a most wicked thing."

"Let me send Jack," said my father. "The boy is only a simple sailor, but he loves the girl. He will now be aboard his ship."

It is not far from the Crown to the quay, nor from the quay to any of the ships in port. I was sitting in the cabin, melancholy enough, about 8 o'clock or so, just before the sunset gun was fired from the redoubt, when I heard a shout, "Lady of Lynn, ahoy!" You may be sure that I obeyed the summons with alacrity.

No one else had yet arrived at the Crown. The vicar laid both letters before me. Then, as when one strikes a spark in the tinder and the match ignites, flaming up, and the darkness vanishes, so did the scheme of villainy unfold itself; not all at once—one does not at one glance comprehend a conspiracy so vile—but part, I say, I did understand.

"Sir," I gasped, "this is more opportune than you suspect. Tomorrow morning at 6 at St. Nicholas' church they are to be married secretly. Oh, a gambler, a rake, one who has wasted his patrimony, to marry Molly—our Molly! Sir, you will interfere. You will do something. It is the villain, Sam; he was always a liar, a cur, a villain!"

"Steady, boy, steady," said my father. "It helps not to call names."

"It is partly revenge. He dared to make love to Molly three years ago. The captain cudgeled him handsomely, and I was there to see. It is revenge in part. He hath brought down this noble lord to marry an heiress, knowing the misery he is preparing for her. Oh, Sam, if I had been there!"

"Steady, boy," said my father again. "Who spread abroad the many virtues of this noble villain? Sam Semple—in his service, a most base and dishonorable service. Mr. Purden, the man who writes ribald verses"— I thought of the Lady Anastasia, but refrained. She at least had nothing to do with this marriage. So far, however, there was much explained.

"What shall we do?"

"We must prevent the marriage of tomorrow. The captain knows nothing of it. Lord Fylingdale persuaded Molly. He cannot marry her publicly, because he cannot join a wedding feast with people so much below him. Molly shall not keep that engagement if I have to lock the door and keep the key."

"Better than that, Jack," said the vicar. "Take these two letters. Show them to Molly and ask her to wait while the captain makes inquiries. If Lord Fylingdale is an honorable man, he will court inquiry. If not, then we are well rid of a noble knave."

I took the letters and ran across the empty market place. On my way I saw the captain. He was walking toward the Crown, with hanging head.

Let us first deal with the captain. He entered the room, hung up his hat on the usual peg and put his stick in its accustomed corner. Then he took his seat and looked round.

"I am glad," he said, "that there is none present except you two. My friends, I am heavy at heart."

"So are we," said the vicar. "But go on, captain."

"You have heard, perhaps, a rumor of what has been arranged?"

"There are rumors of many kinds. The place is full of rumors. It is rumored that a certain Colonel Lanyon is a sharper. It is also rumored that Sam Semple is a villain. It is further rumored that the Rev. Benjamin Purden is a disgrace to the cloth, and there is yet another rumor. What is your rumor, captain?"

"Lord Fylingdale proposes to marry Molly, and I have accepted, and she has accepted, but it was to be a profound secret."

"It is so profound a secret that the company at the gardens this evening are talking about nothing else."

The captain groaned. "I have received a letter," he said. "I do not believe it, but the contents are disquieting. There is no signature. Read it."

The vicar read it: "Captain Crowle—Sir, you are a very simple old man. You are so ignorant of London and of the fashionable world that you do not even know that Lord Fylingdale, to whom you are about to give your ward, is the most notorious gambler, rake and profligate in the whole of that quarter where the people of fashion and of quality carry on their profligate lives. In the interests of innocence and virture make some inquiry into the truth of this statement before laying your lovely ward in the arms of the villain who has come to Lynn with no other object than to secure her fortune."

"It is an anonymous letter," said the vicar, "but there is something to be said in support of it. From what source did you derive your belief in the virtues of this young nobleman?"

"From Sam Semple."

"Who is in the service of his lordship. I know not what he does for him, but if he is turned out of that service he will infallibly be clapped into a debtor's prison."

"There is also that grave and reverend divine"—

"The man Purden. He is notorious for writing ribald verses and for leading a life that is a disgrace to his profession."

"There is also the Lady Anastasia."

"I know nothing about her ladyship except that she keeps the bank, as they call it, every evening and that the gaming table allures many to their destruction."

"My friends," said the captain, "what am I to do?"

"You must make inquiry. You must tell Lord Fylingdale that things have been brought to you; that you cannot believe them if, as is possible, you do not, but that you must make inquiries before trusting your ward to his protection. You are her guardian, captain."

"I am more than her guardian. I love her better than if she was my own child."

"We know you do, captain. Therefore write a letter to him. Tell him these things. Say that you must have time to make these inquiries. I will help you with the letter. And tell him as well that you must have time to draw up settlements. If he is honest, he will consent to this investigation into his private character. If he wants Molly and not her money bag, he will at once agree to the settlement of her fortune upon herself."

"I am an old fool, I suppose," said the captain. "I have believed everything and everybody. Yet I cannot—no, my friends, I cannot think that this man, so proud, so brave, who risked his life for Molly, is what this letter says."

"Other letters say the same thing. Now, captain, let us write."

The letter which was dictated by the vicar was duly written, signed and sealed. Then it was sent up stairs to his lordship's private room.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RESPITE.

I WAS as one who carries a respite for a man already in the cart and on his way to Tyburn, or I was as one who himself receives a respite on the way to Tyburn, for if the charges in those letters were true there could be no doubt as to the result of an inquiry. Nor could there be any doubt that Lord Fylingdale in such a case would refuse an inquiry. I ran, therefore, as if everything depended on my speed, and I arrived breathless.

Molly was alone, walking about the garden restlessly. The sun was now

set, but the glow of the sky lingered, and her face was flushed in the western light. "Jack," she cried, "I thought we had parted this afternoon! What has happened? You have been running. What is it?"

"A good deal has happened, Molly. For one thing, you will not be married tomorrow morning."

"Why not? Is my lord ill?"

"Not that I know of, but you will not be married tomorrow morning."

"You talk in riddles, Jack."

"Would you like to put off the wedding, Molly?"

"Alas, if I could put it off altogether! I am downhearted over it, Jack. It weighs me down like lead. But there is no escape."

"I think I have in my pocket a means of escape—a respite at least—unless there are worse liars in the world than those we have at Lynn."

"Liars at Lynn, Jack? Who are they? Oh, Jack, what has happened?"

I sat down on a garden bench. "Molly," I said, "you hold the private character of Lord Fylingdale in the highest esteem, do you not?"

"There is no better man living. This makes me ashamed of being so loath to marry him."

"Well, but, Molly, consider. Who has bestowed this fine character upon his lordship?"

"Everybody who knows him—Sam Semple for one. He is never weary of singing the praises of his patron."

"He is a grateful soul and, on his own account, a pillar of religion. I will show you presently what an ornament he is to religion. Who else?"

"The Rev. Benjamin Purden, once his tutor. Surely he ought to know."

"Surely. Nobody ought to know better. I will show you presently how admirable a witness to character this reverend divine must be esteemed."

"There is Sir Harry Malyns, who assured us that his lordship is thought to be too virtuous for the world of fashion."

"He is himself, like the parson, a fine judge of character. Is that all?"

"No. The Lady Anastasia herself spoke to me of his nobility."

"She has also spoken to me—of other things. See here, Molly." I lugged out the two letters. "What I have here contain the characters of all these excellent persons—the latest scandals about them, their reputations and their practices."

"But, Jack, what scandals? What reputations?"

"You shall see, Molly. Oh, the allegations may be false, one and all. For what I know Sam may have the wings of an archangel, and Mr. Purden may be already overripe for the new Jerusalem. But you shall read."

I offered her the letters. "No," she said. "Read them yourself."

"The first, then, is from my father's first cousin, Zackary Pentecrosse, a bookseller in Little Britain, which is a part of London. He is, I believe, a respectable, God fearing man. You will observe that he does not vouch for the truth of his information."

I then read at length the letter which you have already heard.

"What do you think, Molly?"

"I don't know what to think. Is the world so wicked?"

"Here is another letter, concerning the Rev. Benjamin Purden. Observe that this is another and an independent witness." So I read the second letter, which you have also heard.

"What do you think of this worthy gentleman, Molly?"

"Oh, Jack, I am overwhelmed! Tell me more, what it means"—

"It means, my dear, that a ruined gamester thought to find an heiress who would know nothing of his tarnished reputation. She must be rich. All he wanted was her money. She must not have her money tied up; it must be all in his own hands, to do with it what he chose—that is to say, to dissipate and waste it in riot and raking and gambling"—

"Lord Fylingdale? Jack, think of his face, think of his manners. Are they such as you would expect in a rake?"

"There are perhaps different kinds of rakes. Tom Rising would spend the night drinking and bawling songs. Another kind would practice wickedness as eagerly, but with more politeness. What do I know of such men? Certain I am that Lord Fylingdale would not scour the streets and play the Mohawk, but that he has found other vices more pleasant and more, apparently, polite is quite possible."

"I don't understand, Jack. All the gentlemen like Mr. Rising drink and sing. Do all gentlemen who do not drink practice other vices?"

"Well, Molly, you have seen the vicar taste a glass of wine. He will roll it in the glass; he will hold it to the light, admiring the color; he will inhale the fragrance; he will drink it slowly, little by little, sipping the contents, and he will not take more than a single glass or two at the most. In the same time Tom Rising would have gulped down a whole bottle. One man wants to gratify many senses; the other seeks only to get drunk as quickly as he can. So, I take it, with the forbidden pleasures of the world. One man may cultivate his taste; the other may be satisfied with the coarse and plentiful debauchery. This is not, however, talk for honest folk like you and me."

"Go on with your story, Jack. Never mind the different ways of wickedness."

"Well, he heard of an heiress. She belonged to a town remote from fashion—a town of simple merchants and sailors. She was very rich; much richer than he at first believed"—

"Who told him about this heiress?"

"A creature called Sam Semple, whom the captain once cudgeled. Why, Molly, it was revenge. In return for the cudgeling he would place you and your fortune in the hands of a man who would bring misery upon you and ruin on your fortune. Heavens, how the thing works out! And it happened just in the nick of time that a spring was found in the town—a spring whose medicinal properties— Ha!" I jumped to my feet. "Molly, who found that spring? Sam Semple. Who wrote to the doctor about it? Sam Semple. Who spread abroad a report that the physicians of London were sending their patients to Lynn? Sam Semple. How many patients have come to us from London? None, save and except only the party of those who came secretly in his lordship's train to sing his praises and to work his wicked will. Why, Molly"— I burst into a laugh, for now I understood, as one sometimes does understand, suddenly and without proof other than the rapid conclusion, the full meaning of the whole. "Molly, I say, there has never been any medicinal spring here at all. The doctor's well is but common spring water. There are no cures. The whole business is a plan, a bite, an invention of Sam Semple!"

"Jack, have a care. How can that be when the doctor has a long list of cures?"

"I know it, but I do know that Sam Semple invented the spa in order to bring this invasion of sharpers and gamblers and heiress hunters. Oh, what a liar he is! What revenge!

What cunning! What signal service has this servant of the devil rendered to his master!"

Truly I was carried out of myself by this discovery, which explained everything.

"So," I went on, "they came here all the way from London, their lying excuse that they were ordered here by their physicians, and we, poor, simple folk, fell into the snare. All the countryside fell into the snare, and we have been fooled into drinking common water and calling it what you please, and we have built gardens and engaged musicians and created a spa, and, oh, heavens, what a liar he is! What a liar! This comes, I suppose, of being a poet."

Then Molly laid her head upon my arm. "Jack," she said very seriously, "do you really believe this story? Only consider what it means to me." Molly was more concerned about Lord Fylingdale than about Sam Semple.

"I believe every word of it, Molly. I believe that they have all joined in the conspiracy, more or less; that they have all got promises and that tomorrow morning, if you do not refuse to meet this man in St. Nicholas' church, you will bring upon yourself nothing but misery and ruin."

"I have promised to meet him. I must at least send him a message, if only to say that I shall not come."

"I should like to send him nothing, but you are right. It is best to be courteous. Well, you may send him a letter. I will myself take it to the Crown."

"But afterward, Jack? What shall we do afterward? If he is innocent, he will take offense. If not"—

"If you were engaged to marry a young merchant, Molly, or to a skipper and you heard rumors of bankruptcy, drink or evil courses, what would you do?"

"I would tell him that I had heard such and such about him, and I should ask for explanations."

"Then do exactly the same with Lord Fylingdale. He is accused of certain things. The captain must make inquiry. He is bound to inquire. Why, the vicar himself says that he would, if necessary, in order to ascertain the truth, travel all the way to London, there to learn the foundations, if any, for these charges, and afterward into Gloucestershire, where his country mansion stands, to learn on the spot what the tenants and the people of the country know of him."

"But suppose he refuses explanations. He is too proud to be called to account."

"Then send him packing. Lord or no lord, proud or humble, if he furnishes explanations, if these things are untrue, then—why, then you will consider what to do. But, Molly, I do not believe that any explanations will be forthcoming and that your noble lover will carry it off to the end with the same lofty pride and cold mien."

"Let us go into the parlor, Jack. There are the captain's writing materials. Help me to say what is proper. Oh, is it possible? Can I believe it? Are these things true? That proud man, raised above his fellows by his virtues and his rank and his principles! Jack, he risked his life for me."

"Ask no more questions, Molly. We must have explanations. Let us write the letter."

It was Molly's first letter—the only letter, perhaps, that she will ever write in all her life. Certainly she had never written one before, nor has she ever written one since. Like most housewives, her writing is only wanted for household accounts, recipes for puddings and pies and the labeling of her bottles and jars. I have the letter before me at this moment. It is written in a large, sprawling hand, and the spelling is not such as would satisfy my father.

Naturally she looked to me for advice. I had written many letters to my owners and to foreign merchants about cargoes, and the like, and was therefore able to advise the composition of a letter which should be justly expressed and to the point:

"Honored Lord—This is from me at the present moment in my guardian's parlor"—writing parlor when I as mate of the ship should have written port or harbor. "It is to inform you that intelligence has been brought by letters from London and Cambridge. Touching the matters referred to in these letters, I have to report for your satisfaction that they call your lordship in round terms a gamester and a ruined rake and your companions at the spaviz, Sam Semple, the parson, the rickety old beau and the colonel—simple rogues, common cheats and sharpers. Shall not, therefore, meet your lordship at the church tomorrow morning as instructed. Awaiting your lordship's explanations and commands, your most obedient, humble servant,

"MOLLY."

This letter I folded, sealed, addressed and dropped into my pocket. Then I bade Molly good night, entreated her to be thankful for her escape and so left her with a light heart. Verily it seemed as if the sadness of the last two months had been wholly and suddenly lifted, and on my way back to the Crown I passed the Lady Anastasia's lodging just as her chair was brought to the house. I opened the door for her and stood hat in hand.

"Why, it is Jack!" she cried. "It is the sailor Jack, the constant lover. Have you anything more to tell me?"

"Only that Molly will not keep that appointment of tomorrow evening"—

"Oh, that interesting appointment in St. Nicholas' church. May a body ask why the ceremony has been postponed?"

"Things have been disclosed at the last moment, fortunately in time."

"What things, and by whom?"

"By letter. It is stated as a fact well known that Lord Fylingdale is nothing better than a ruined rake and a notorious gamester."

"Indeed! The excellent Lord Fylingdale! Impossible! Quite impossible! The illustrious example of so many virtues! The explanations will be, I am sure, complete and satisfactory. Ruined; a rake; a notorious gamester! What next will the world say? Does his lordship know of this discovery? Not yet? You said it was a discovery, did you not? Well, my friend, I am much obliged to you for telling me. You are quite sure Molly will not be there? Very good of you to tell me. For my own part I start for London quite early—at 5 o'clock. Goodby, Jack!"

Then I went into the Crown, where I learned that the captain had been reading another letter containing accusations as bad as those in the other two.

So we fell to talking over the business, and it was resolved that the captain should demand explanations by letter, that he should refuse to receive the villain Sam Semple or his lordship and that the vicar should, if necessary, proceed to London and there learn what he could concerning the past history and the present reputation of the noble suitor. Meantime I said no more about the intended marriage at St. Nicholas' church and the abandonment of the plan. As things turned out, it would have been far better had I told the captain and had we both planted ourselves as sentinels at the door, so as to be quite sure that Molly did not go forth at 6 in the morning.

That evening, after leaving me, Lady Anastasia sent a note to Lord Fylingdale. "I am leaving Lynn early tomorrow morning. I expect to be in London in two days. Shall write to Molly."

CHAPTER XIV.

A WEDDING.

I HAD rowed myself aboard that evening in a strange condition of exultation, for I had no doubt—no doubt at all—that the charges were true and that a conspiracy of the most deadly kind was not only discovered, but also checked, and I could not but admire the craft and subtlety with which the favorite of the muses had devised a plan by which it was made possible for the conspirators to come all together without the least suspicion to the town of Lynn.

Nobody could stand against him, nor could any one in Lord Fylingdale's rank visit the town in its ordinary condition without receiving an invitation to Houghton if Sir Robert was there unless, indeed, there were reasons why he should not be visited or received. What Sam had not expected was without doubt the wonderful success of his deception, the eagerness with which the country round accepted his inventions, the readiness with which they drank these innocent waters, the miraculous cures effected and the transformation of the venerable old port and trading town into a haunt and resort of fashion and the pursuit of pleasure.

Thinking of all these things and in blissful anticipation of the discomfiture of all the conspirators, there was an important thing that I quite forgot—namely, to send Molly's letter to her suitor in his room at the Crown. I carried the letter in my pocket. I undressed and lay down in my bunk. I slept with a light heart, dreaming only of things pleasant until the morning, when the earliest stroke of the hammer from the yard and the quay woke me up. It was then 5:30. I sat up. I rubbed my eyes. I then suddenly remembered that the letter was in my pocket still.

It was, I say, 5:30. The engagement was for 6 o'clock. I might have to run yet to stop Lord Fylingdale.

It does not take long to dress. You may imagine that I did not spend time in powdering my hair. In a quarter of an hour I was over the side of the ship and in my dingey.

By the clock in the Common Stath it was five minutes to 6 when I landed and made her fast. I climbed the stairs and ran as fast as my legs could carry me to the Crown inn. As I reached the door the clock struck 6. Was Lord Fylingdale in his room? I was too late. He had left the house only five minutes before and had been carried in his chair across the market place.

I followed. It was already five minutes past the hour. I should find him in the church chafing at the delay. I should give him the letter and retire.

The market place was filled with the market people and with the townspeople who came to buy. I pushed across, stepping over a basket and jostled by a woman with poultry and vegetables. It was seven or eight minutes after 6 when I arrived at the church. The doors of the south porch were open. Within I heard the sound of voices or at least of one voice. I looked in.

Heavens! What had happened? Not only was I late with my letter, but—but could I believe my eyes? Molly herself stood before the altar. Facing her was Lord Fylingdale, who held her hand. Within the rails stood the Rev. Benjamin Purden, beside him the clerk to make the responses, and the minister, when I arrived, was actually saying the words which the bridegroom repeats after the minister, completing in effect the marriage ceremony.

"I, Ludovic, take thee, Mary, to my wedded wife," and so on, according to the form prescribed, and again the words beginning:

"With this ring I thee wed"—

I stood and listened, lost in wonder.

Then came the prayer prescribed, after which the clergyman joined their hands together, saying:

"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A boy is like a fountain pen. You can't tell from what he costs whether he will make his mark or not.—Detroit Journal.

"I had long suffered from indigestion," writes G. A. LeDeis, Cedar City, Mo. "Like others I tried many preparations but never found anything that did me good until I took Kodol Dyspepsia Cure. One bottle cured me. A friend who had suffered similarly I put on the use of Kodol Dyspepsia Cure. He is gaining fast and will soon be able to work. Before he used Kodol Dyspepsia Cure indigestion had made him a total wreck. Smith Bros.

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Mothers everywhere praise One Minute Cough Cure for the sufferings it has relieved and the lives of their little ones it has saved. Strikes at the root of the trouble and draws out the inflammation. The children's favorite cough cure. Smith Bros.

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The New York World has got the cost of printing down to a minimum. Its latest offer of its monthly newspaper-magazine is interesting if from no other cause than it shows the acme of "how much for how little." The Monthly World is a 32 page magazine with colored cover. Its pages are about the size of the pages of the Ladies Home Journal, and it is copiously illustrated in half-tone. The illustrations are the results of the best artistic skill, aided by all the latest printing-press appliances, making a magazine unrivalled in the quality of its contents and its appearances. Each issue contains stories of romance, love, adventure, travel; stories of fiction and fact; stories of things quaint and curious, gathered together from all over the world; the results of scientific research, and editorial reviews. It numbers among its contributors the leading literary men and women of the day. A feature each month is a full-page portrait of the most famed man or woman of the moment in the public eye. In collecting and preparing for publication the literary matter and art subjects for the Monthly World no expense is spared. The New York World will send six numbers of this newspaper-magazine on receipt of fifteen cents in stamps. Address The World, Pulitzer Building, New York.

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A Cut in the Rates

—TO—

BUFFALO

VIA THE

Illinois Central.

As the closing day, October 31st, of the wonderful Pan-American exposition draws near, railroad rates have been reduced so much that Illinois Central is enabled to offer excursion tickets to Buffalo at rates considerable less than half fare.

Tickets will be on sale each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday during the remainder of October, and will be limited to leave Buffalo returning, not later than midnight of the sixth day, including date of sale. These six day tickets will not be accepted in sleeping cars.

Tickets bearing limits of fifteen and twenty days will be on sale every day until October 31 at corresponding higher rates.

For a circular giving rates to Buffalo from principal Illinois Central stations and a beautifully illustrated booklet descriptive of the "Rainbow City," address

J. F. MERRY,
f2-3-w Asst. Gen. Pass. Agt., Dubuque, Ia.

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The large and increasing circulation of The Iowa Homestead in this county is a matter for congratulation to the publishers and to good farming, for, of all the papers of its class in the country, it is easily the best and most helpful. Its Special Farmers' Institute editions, issued with the regular edition the first week in each month, have been for years the admiration of all practical farmers. Written wholly by farmers, they are full of actual experience, and smell of the soil. We have been fortunate enough this season to secure terms for The Homestead and its Special Farmers' Institute Editions, together with The Poultry Farmer and The Farmers' Mutual Insurance Journal, four of the most valuable farm publications in the country, that enable us to offer the four in connection with our own paper for $1.90 for the entire five, one year. This is emphatically a good thing, and no farmer in this county should fail to take advantage of this offer. For a large line of thoroughly practical farm reading nothing has ever been offered before that equals it. A county paper, a farm paper, a poultry paper, a farm insurance paper and the Special Farmers' Institute, all for $1.90 Come in and order them.

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(Mr. Bryan's Paper.)

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