

# THE PLYMOUTH BANNER.

"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER, LONG MAY IT WAVE, O'er THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE."

A Family Newspaper, Devoted to Education, Morals, Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Politics, Markets, General Intelligence, Foreign and Domestic News.

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**THE RED RIBAND.**  
BY H. J. WELLS, M. D.  
(CONTINUED)  
V.  
While the marriage contract was being signed at Mary's residence, Conrad arrived at the mansion of the Baron von Linden. Of him, as the arrival of the count, he expected to learn the latter's fate.  
Though a servant he announced himself to the baron.  
'You may come in,' was the reply.  
With a beating heart, Conrad opened the high folding doors of a pavilion, which was shaded by lofty chestnuts, and entered a cool and airy apartment. But he had scarcely thrown a glance into it, when he gave a shriek of joy; young Count Rudolph sat with the baron upon a sofa. Conrad's entrance seemed to have interrupted a confidential conversation between the two men.  
'Conrad, Conrad!' exclaimed the count, 'what a pleasure to see you! You are the preserver of my life.'  
'Baron,' said Conrad, 'I am not now under the necessity of requesting an audience of you—my errand concerns the count, about whose fate I was in ignorance.'  
'Say, children and speak what is necessary—business calls me to my secretary, who has been waiting for me all day in vain—stay and ease your hearts.'  
With these words the old man left the apartment, after he had pleasantly given his hand to the young count.  
'Oh, dear count,' exclaimed Conrad, 'I cannot express my joy in words—may I trust my eyes? You—your rival's son?—and none of you wounded?—'  
'Who knows whether I would have been alive?' replied the count, smilingly, 'if the baron had appeared at the ruins a few minutes later.'  
'The baron?' cried Conrad, with surprise.  
'No other. The bandits, whom I unfortunately could not recognize, are dangerous villains. After they had robbed me, they tried to kill me too. I defended myself with all my might, but the robbers threw me upon the ground, and would certainly have accomplished their object, had not the baron, with drawn sword, stepped between us as my deliverer.'  
'Long live the baron!' cried Conrad.  
'And now imagine my surprise,' continued the count, 'as he smilingly gave me his hand, and said in a pleasant tone of voice, "young blaster! why have you concealed your love from me? Emma, who loves you with all her heart, had more confidence in me. Instead of fighting here, please accompany me to the castle, and pacify the bride, who is in great trouble on your account."  
'Thank God! Long live the baron!'  
'I was about falling at his feet, but he stretched out his arms, and pressed me to his bosom. Now, dear Conrad, I am the happiest of all men!'  
'I believe it!' replied the young man. 'But I—while you were in the castle of your beautiful bride, I tarried at the crossways, as we had agreed, amid rain, thunder and lightning. I waited all night. When morning came, I ran through the ruins and the forest in despair—I inquired at your castle, but could nowhere find a trace of you. At last I concluded to ask your apartment about the result of the duel, and thank God, it turned out better than we either had reason to expect. But now I must hasten to pacify my poor Mary, who was very angry with me last evening, because I would give her no satisfactory answer about my conversation with the mysterious stranger in the forest. I suppose I can now, dear count, addled Conrad with a smile, 'under the seal of silence, confide the secret to my bride, to clear myself from all possible suspicion?'  
'Oh no, dear Conrad,' exclaimed the count, 'good-humoredly, 'not you; it be-

comes me to appease your sweet-heart, and to beg her pardon for the trouble I have caused her.'

'What?'  
'Mary, my beautiful foster-sister, must expect a visit from me. I will publicly return to her the bridegroom, whom I so mysteriously enticed from her for a short time.'

'Then I have no objection, dear count, for you will soon soften her anger. When may she expect you?'

'Expect me? We go together. I expect my carriage every moment—you ride at my side to the door of your bride.'

'No, dear count—'

'I suffer no contradiction—my purpose remains unalterable.'

Conrad would have made further objections, but the count took him in his embrace, and in the true sense smothered every word in his mouth.

Dinner was past with the baron. But a table was spread for Conrad, in one of the side rooms. The young man had eaten nothing since the previous evening, and it may well be imagined that the invitation was not unwelcome.

Strengthened at body and heart, he had just finished when the carriage arrived. The count was still in the castle, bidding adieu to his bride and the baron.

'Conrad,' exclaimed the coachman, who had participated in the campaign against the count, 'it is well that I meet you here.'

'Why so?'

'Your sister was at the castle just as I was driving away. She was seeking you because you said you would go to see the count. I told her that I was about to go and bring him, and that he was at the mansion of the baron, when she replied, "then my brother is there too." She then gave me this letter for you.'

Conrad recognized Mary's handwriting at first view. A dark presentiment arose in his breast, as his quivering hand broke the seal of the letter. Once more he drew breath, and then said, 'there was only one remedy to save you, and God gave me strength to apply it; it is the greatest, the last sacrifice of my love for you! For this I request a sacrifice in return—lose, after you have read my letter, this sword, and become a monk again.'

The poor young man could scarcely trust his senses; the contents of the letter were to him as mysterious as they were terrible. With his face unearthly pale, he once more read it. As if struck by lightning, he stood and stared at the momentous paper.

In this state he was found by the count, who pleasantly came down the steps, and hastened toward the carriage.

'Well, Conrad,' he exclaimed, 'after he had entered the carriage, "come sit by my side."  
'Mechanically he complied with the invitation.  
'What do you hold in your hand?' asked the count, astonished at Conrad's appearance.  
Conrad handed him the letter without speaking a word.  
'Singular,' said the count, 'after he had read the letter, and compassionately looked into the gloomy eye of his preserver, "Are you fully satisfied that Mary wrote these lines?"  
'Yes.'  
'She has resorted to some stratagem to punish you for remaining away so long.'  
'The mysteriousness and earnestness of the letter scarcely admit of such an interpretation. And I remember, too, the singular behavior of my bride, when I saw her at the arbor this morning; and when, on hearing of the attack upon your person, I immediately withdrew.'  
'Then the people knew of it?'  
'Rosa, who returned from my aunt, is said to have seen the conflict.'  
'There is a misunderstanding at the bottom, which we will soon bring to daylight. Peter, cried the count to the coachman, "drive at full gallop. In half an hour we must be at the village.—Stop at Mary's farm, and not at the castle.'  
'Peter gave his whip to the fiery horses. The two young men did not speak a word—each one was left to his own meditations. A half an hour had scarcely elapsed—though it appeared to Conrad like an eternity, when the carriage reached the first houses of the village. A few minutes more, and the foaming horses stopped before Mary's house. The count addressed an encouraging word to Conrad and then they entered.  
'Heavens!' cried Mary, who sat pale and weeping in her chair, and did not seem to have noticed the arrival of the carriage; 'unfortunate man! What do you want here? Did you not receive my letter?'  
'Dear count,' stammered Conrad, 'you see that it is terrible truth!'  
'Mary,' said the count, seriously 'what means this?'  
'Fly this neighborhood!' cried the girl, with a heaving breast, 'away, away, ere destruction reaches you!'  
'Are you mad?' cried the count. 'Explain your singular conduct.'

It was not till now that Mary recognized the count; she looked at him a moment with starting eyes; then she sank weeping into the chair, and covered her face with her apron.

Conrad stood in the middle of the room, and as if he had really committed a crime, held his trembling hand before his eyes, from which rolled a stream of tears. The count had walked up to Mary, and tried to get her to speak.

'Conrad,' she at length exclaimed, and pointed toward the door, 'fly, fly, before the magistrate returns.'

'My God!' said the count, 'why should Conrad fear the magistrate?'

'Why? Shall I repeat the terrible narrative?'

Suddenly the young man lifted up his head; pride strengthened his nerves, and dissipated for a moment the pangs of his love. 'Mary,' he firmly said, 'you desire that I leave your house, that the magistrate may not find me here, my honor as a soldier demands that I yield not a step until I get an explanation. What have you against me?'

'Conrad, will you still deceive me?' exclaimed Mary, vehemently.

'Mary, I demand, by your honor and by mine, that you, in the presence of the count, explain with what you charge me.'

'Where were you last night?' she asked as she turned away her eyes, and with an anxious and beating heart awaited a reply.

'I was with the friend of the count, the upper forester of G—'

'And on business for me,' continued the count, 'which I could entrust only to my friend, and the preserver of my life.'

Mary lifted up her head and looked at the two men, as if the words of the count had bereft her of her reason; the gloomy eye seemed to be ready to start from its socket, and the bosom heaved vehemently.

'Listen,' said the count, affectionately, 'banish your trouble and your jealousy, for Conrad loves you with all the power of his heart. He committed a mistake. I will bear the blame; for I am the man that sought him last evening, to request a favor that kept him all night from the village. I expected his wise to observe profound silence even toward you. I assure you, on my word of honor, that he was engaged in my self.'

With a piercing shriek, poor Mary fell senseless to the floor. Conrad hastened to the spot, and with both arms embraced her, as if he would impart new vitality into her system.

'My God!' exclaimed the count, 'what has occurred here? Has jealousy robbed the poor girl of her reason?'

At this moment the door was opened, and the town magistrate, followed by his nephew Eberhard, entered the room. A solemn pause of surprise and terror reigned for a moment in the apartment. Mary still lay lifeless in Conrad's arms.

'What do I see?' at length exclaimed Valentine. 'This man still here? And you, count, he added with a bow, "do you not know—"  
'Villain!' cried Eberhard, 'you still venture to enter this house! Be gone, ere justice stretches out her hand for you!'  
Conrad was scarcely conscious of himself.

'Ho Scoundrel!' he cried, 'it is you that has set his foot in this house during my short absence! Now I can explain to myself—'  
'Away!' commanded Eberhard, 'Mary is my wife!'  
'Your wife?'

'The marriage contract is signed and lawfully recorded—away, I am master of this house!'  
Softly, as if all his strength was failing him, Conrad laid the senseless maiden down by the chair, and supported himself by clinging to the table.

'Count,' whispered the town magistrate, 'here is the marriage contract. You know the civil marriage—'  
The count pushed the paper away with his hand. Then he walked up to Mary, who now began to show signs of returning life. It could distinctly be seen that the firmness of her mind strove to overcome the weakness of the body.

'Mary,' he said earnestly, 'it appears that you have become the victim of a vile conspiracy—but in the name of that God who punishes dishonesty, I request you to explain this terrible confusion!'  
Mary's eyes sought poor Conrad, who stood at the table, a statue of sorrow and despair. She arose, not without great emotion, and walked to him with trembling steps.

'Conrad,' she whispered, 'what I have done, was done out of love for you—you know how I love you! And never, never shall I forget you—yet shun this place. You have seen me happy in my love for you—my wretchedness in my despair you shall not see—for I am the wife of the Forester Eberhard!'  
'Conrad,' said the count, resolutely, 'you have lost your bride, but gained a friend, who will with everything at his command, provide for your welfare.—'

And if you love your friend, follow him; on his arm you shall leave the place of your misfortune; to his castle you shall go; and on it you can look as your home until I shall have succeeded in unmasking this mean conspiracy! Follow me!'  
With these words he stepped to Conrad, and with deep emotion held the unhappy man to his breast. Then he took his arm for the purpose of leaving the room.

'Conrad, Conrad!' cried Mary, despairingly, as she stretched her hands after him.

The young man cast back another glance and then silently followed the count.

The next minute the rattling of the carriage was heard that conveyed the two friends to the castle.

'Mr. Valentine,' said Mary with a firm voice, as she collected all her energy, 'according to law, I am the wife of your nephew.'

'No man can say anything against it,' replied the magistrate, 'you have given your word to my Eberhard, and the law has confirmed it.'

'The law,' continued Mary, 'but not the church.'

'This matters not; if the law has been complied with, then it is all right; according to our enlightened ideas.'

'But not according to mine. Therefore hear my desire.'

'I desire,' said Mary with dignity, 'that you look upon me as unmarried, until the priest has consecrated the legal marriage. So long will I remain in the entire possession of my rights and property.'

'And when shall the priest finish the business?' inquired Eberhard.

'When I am ready for it—perhaps next Sunday.'

'Mary,' said the hunter, gallantly, 'this postponement is, it is true, a misfortune to my heart, but I assent.'

'You understand, that till then solitude is desirable to me—'

'This means, in other words,' said the magistrate, angrily, 'that we shall take leave. Well we shall go. To-day, it is Monday—five days remain to prepare—'  
'Make no preparations, Mr. Valentine.'

'But you will certainly remove to the house of my nephew, which is charmingly situated at the edge of the forest.'

'I shall do what becomes my duty as a wife.'

Mary saluted the men, and went into her bed-chamber, the door of which opened into her room.

Uncle and nephew left the house, and on the way imparted to one another their apprehensions as to Mary's intentions.

'The contract is legally concluded,' said the magistrate; 'if your wife does not comply with the obligations agreed upon, then the law will compel her to it.'

Night again found Eberhard and Graff together in the tavern, where they emptied one bottle after another, for the complete success of their plans.

VI.  
Whilst Mary wept in solitude in her chamber separated from all the world, Conrad occupied a room in the castle of the count. Rosa, who attended to her brother's rural affairs during his absence, visited him every day, and reported what was said in the village about the occurrence.

'Oh, my God!' he exclaimed, 'had Mary deceived me in the most shameful manner in the world, I could comfort myself, and treat her with the contempt she would deserve in that case. But as it is, she has become a sacrifice to her love for me, and I have lost a faithful heart.'

The count, who was deeply affected by Conrad's misfortune, in vain exerted himself to persuade him to apply for a legal investigation, and to have the marriage contract annulled; he always expressed himself decidedly against it, as he was not inclined to involve Mary in an investigation. But he confidently expected that Mary herself would take some steps to regain her liberty, and with this hope, which every day grew stronger, he lived at the castle inactive like a hermit. But when he heard of Rosa, that next Sunday the marriage ceremony was to be performed at church, the last ray of hope departed; he informed the count that he would emigrate to America.

Although the count suspected a premeditated case of villainy, from the circumstance that Conrad's hat was found in the ruins, he yet abstained from a legal investigation, in compliance with Conrad's urgent request, especially since every trace of the perpetrator was wanting. Yet he had secretly given notice of the attack upon his person to the judiciary, and applied for a strict watch on the neighborhood.

The same Sunday on which Valentine expected the marriage ceremony between his nephew and Mary to be performed, was also determined by the baron for the union of his ward, Emma, with the young count; and preparations to this end were eagerly prosecuted. This gave the count repeated opportunities to visit the mansion of the baron, and leave his friend

Conrad to himself, who intended to quit the country next day. He feared the count's attempts to persuade him to stay, and had, therefore, taken a firm resolution to set out on his journey secretly.

Thursday was approaching its close, and night lay upon the earth, when Conrad left the castle and slowly walked toward the village. He intended to bid farewell to his sister. Careless about the way he was taking, he suddenly stood still to see where he was—he stood at Mary's garden-gate, close to which was situated the arbor, where in the preceding spring, when about proceeding to the war, he bade farewell to her. He involuntarily approached the hedge, and looked thoughtfully through the foliage, which was now and then gently moved by the evening breeze.

Suddenly he thought he heard footsteps—he redoubled his attention—he had not deceived himself—the footsteps came nearer, and at length softly cracked upon the sand in the arbor.

'Oh, my God!' thought Conrad, 'if it were Mary!'  
It required some exertion, as this thought arose, to conceal his emotion. Breathless, he stood still, and stared into the dark arbor, from which he was separated only by the foliage of the hedge. He was still unresolved whether he would go or remain, when a loud weeping struck upon his ear. He recognized Mary's voice. Tears came to the eyes of the young man, and the self-collection he had just acquired, was again dispersed.

'My strength is failing, Conrad heard Mary say to herself, "I cannot become the forerunner of my husband's ruin; he is doing nothing for me—he gives me over to sorrow and despair. Oh, my God! Mary, Mary!" cried Conrad, involuntarily.

'Heavens!' exclaimed the voice in the arbor, 'who calls my name?'

'Mary, only one word before I part from you.'

'Conrad, you come to me, to the girl whom you should despise, for she thought you capable of committing a crime?'

As if urged on by some invisible power, the young man threw open the garden-gate, and rushed into the arbor, where Mary lay weeping upon the ground.

'Conrad,' she exclaimed, as he entered, 'I am a miserable, unhappy being! Can you forgive me? will you hate me?'

'No, no, I pity you, and still love you with all the strength of my heart.'

Gently he lifted the trembling girl from the ground, and imprinted a warm kiss upon her glowing forehead.

'Mary, your fate grieves me more than my own, for you have to forget the friend of your youth, and the love which you fondly anticipated would make you happy in life, will now cause you the bitterest sorrow.'

'Conrad, Conrad!'

'See,' continued Conrad, as he wound his arm about her neck, 'I am happier than you, for my heart is free, it can remain true to you and love you. I am bound by no other tie. I can die with your name upon my lips—therefore weep not for me—I am less to be pitied than you!'

Mary clung with trembling arms to Conrad, and spasmodically embraced him for a few minutes.

'Now collect yourself,' said Conrad, 'I depart, that I may not render the fulfillment of your duties the more difficult.'

'Oh, my God! let me die; life makes me miserable!'

'Come, Mary, to your house, before we are discovered by the eye of a spy. I accompany you to the threshold, then farewell!'

Slowly the two walked through the starlit garden. Arrived at the door of the house, Conrad silently pressed the last kiss upon Mary's lips, disengaged himself from her arms, and rushed away, he looked not where, into the darkness of night.

He had strayed through bushes and fields for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when he suddenly reached the banks of a large pond—that which drove Philip's mill. With a gloomy smile he stood still, and looked upon the tranquil water. The evening was calm, and all nature quiet; not a sound struck upon the ear, save the distant and monotonous rattling of the mill, whose lighted window glittered like a star.

'No,' he at length whispered to himself, 'I will not here destroy my life; Mary shall not reproach herself with my death: she is already unhappy enough. War rages everywhere—let it take me as its sacrifice.'

He quickly turned his back, and hastened toward a wood, whose outlines appeared in the distance. Conrad soon found himself at a living hedge, which surrounded a pleasant-looking hunter's house. From one window on the ground floor, which was half covered by the leaves and branches of the hedge, flickered a light.

'Heavens!' whispered Conrad, with surprise, 'is not this the house of the forester Eberhard, the husband of my unfortunate Mary? Was it accident that brought me here, or was I guided by the hand of destiny? Ha,' he exclaimed, and

threateningly shook his clenched fist toward the window, 'you are the Evil One, that has made two beings unhappy, you caused Mary to weep, and me to stray through the world in despair! God of Heaven! hast thou brought me hither, that I should break Mary's fetters. Oh! then give me one sign, and make me the instrument of thy Providence!'

A loud knock at the door of the house, which was on the opposite side, answered the wild interrogation of the young man. He stood still and listened.

'Who knocks?' inquired Eberhard's voice within.

'I, Graff,' was replied at the door.

'Whoever it is, I do not open the door at this hour of night.'

'Eberhard, open the door.'

'Come to-morrow again.'

'Open, I must speak to you for your own interest.'

They were silent. Soon Conrad heard the door open, and the sound of footsteps in the house. Urged on by the presentiment that some decisive secret of great importance to himself would be discovered, he softly bent the branches and leaves apart, and thrust his head through a breach in the hedge, so that he was enabled, through the window, to look over the entire room. He had scarcely assumed this position, when he saw Eberhard and Graff come in through the door. Eberhard wore a plain coat, and Graff was armed with gun and cutlass.

Conrad now distinctly heard the following conversation.

'Well,' said Graff, as he entered, 'you have become so haughty in your happiness that you let a friend and colleague wait before the door, as if he were your lackey. I had reason to expect that, when I come, every door should be thrown open.'

'What do you want? What brings you to me?' asked the other, with vexation.

'Our security, and still more, a good job.'

'A good job? What does that mean?'

'I suppose you are aware that young Count Rudolph is engaged to marry Emma von Linden, and that the bride brings a considerable fortune to the bridegroom.'

'Well,' said Eberhard, inquiringly.

'Well, my colleague, I was informed, this afternoon, that the count will tonight leave the castle of the Baron von Linden, and carry twenty thousand dollars in gold with him. This little sum is to beat the way of the bride to the house of her husband, who intends to catch a few bills of exchange with it before he will get married, so that he may not be caught.'

'What do I care about this?' said Eberhard, indifferently.

'Toward midnight he will return home by himself—his road leads along the stone quarries—'

'Heavens!' cried the forester, 'perhaps you again think—'

'Ah! you understand me at last?' exclaimed Graff, with a hoarse chuckle.

'Would it not be a great pity if, this nice sum should be buried with him in the stone quarries? The job is of double utility: we get rid of a dangerous man, who cannot forget the trick at the abbey, and we will get rich at once. It is true, you are provided for already, for you will marry a neat girl, with just as neat a farm—but I dare not think of getting married, and must study out some other means for gaining a fortune—and behold, my sagacity has succeeded. You are my friend, Eberhard, you shall get the third part of this job; for more you do not need in order to pass for a wealthy man.'

(CONCLUSION NEXT WEEK.)

Nobody but a Printer.—Such was the sneering, contemptible remark of a person residing not a thousand miles from the door of our sanctum, referring to the profession we follow in pride. 'Nobody but a Printer, in sooth! It makes our blood run rampant through our veins to hear such expressions fall from the lips of those nursed on republican soil. Nobody but a Printer anyhow.'

Who was Benjamin Franklin?

'Nobody but a printer!'

Who was William Caxton, one of the fathers of literature?

'Nobody but a printer!'

Who was the Earl of Stanhope?

'Nobody but a printer!'

Who was Samuel Woodworth, the poet?

'Nobody but a printer!'

Who was Gov. Bigler, of Pennsylvania?

'Nobody but a printer!'

Who was George P. Morris, Jas. Harper, Horace Greeley, Robt. F. Jones, and Senators Dix, Cameron and F. Giles?

'Nobody but printers, an' how!'

One thing is evident, every person that chooses can't be a printer: brains are necessary.—Ex.

GREAT CHANGE.—Thirty-five years ago, there were thirty distilleries in Fayette county, Ohio, and no church; now, there are thirty churches and no distillery.