

# THE TENSAS GAZETTE

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## Historic Crimes and Mysteries

By Walt Mason

THE BELLE OF BUTTERMERE.

couraged both the suitor and maid. After a while the stately Mr. Hope heard that there was good fishing over at Buttermere, so he went there from Keswick, and put up at the little inn. And there he fell in love with Mary; and there Mary, who had rejected many suitors, fell in love with him. Some of the printed stories say that Mary did not love him, and became his bride through the insistence of her parents, but this is not true. She was fascinated by the handsome and distinguished stranger, and was more than willing to be his wife. So their love affair progressed quietly at the inn, and every now and then Hope went over to Keswick and professed overwhelming affection for the Irish heiress, so that Colonel Moore was much encouraged.

One day Moore received a letter from Hope, inclosing a draft for \$150, drawn on Mr. Crump of Liverpool, which he asked him to cash. Hope was called to Scotland on business, and found himself short of cash. Moore was pleased to receive such a letter, as it showed that Hope looked upon him as something closer than a friend; so he sent Hope the money, and added \$50, so he'd be sure to have plenty of change. Colonel Moore was serene and contented all that day; the next day he was stamping around and frothing at the mouth, vowing all kinds of foreign and domestic vengeance. For the most astonishing tidings had come to Keswick. Hope had married Mary of Buttermere! It is easy to understand the colonel's wrath. The suitor of his ward had borrowed money from him to marry another girl!

Colonel Moore disguised himself as Nemesis, and set forth to do what he should have done in the beginning—to investigate the bridegroom's antecedents. He soon had reason to suspect that Hope was not a brother to an earl, nor a member of parliament—nor even entitled to the name of Hope. Such questions could be settled in a few hours now, but in those days there were no telegraphs, and investigation was slow work. However, Moore made such progress that he felt justified in denouncing Hope as an impostor. Hope was away on his honeymoon, when he heard that he was being traduced in this way, and, filled with virtuous indignation, he returned to Keswick to face his accusers. The first man he was requested to face was a jurist who knew the Hope family well, and this jurist, upon seeing the bridegroom, said: "I never saw this man before."

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In the year 1792 a wandering poet blew into the celebrated lake district of England, and put up at a humble hostelry. When he called for a flagon of brown October ale, it was brought to him by Mary Robinson, the daughter of the host; and Mary was a beautiful creature of fifteen years. Her form was slender and graceful, her hair brown, waving and abundant, and her complexion perfect. The poet was so enchanted that he forgot to drink his ale. He just sat there and questioned her, and marked her gleaming white teeth, and her shining brown eyes, and made up his mind that there was nothing to compare with her in England.

When he returned to the demitison grind in London, he wrote a piece for the Gentleman's Magazine, describing his great find. At that time shepherdesses and rustic maids were popular with poets, and with the myriads who tried to be poets, and the magazine article stirred up great interest in Mary of Buttermere. Most of the bards headed for the lakes the next summer, when they took their vacations, and returned enthusiastic. Mary lived up to the specifications in every way. For eight years this sort of thing went on, and Mary became the Mecca of countless pilgrims. Poets and artists were so common at Buttermere, and at Keswick, a neighbor-

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Hope was given into the custody of a constable, pending further investigations. He and the constable went down to the shore of a lake, and Hope got into a boat and rowed away, the constable looking on. Hope kept on rowing, and was seen at Keswick no more. He still had the sympathy and confidence of the entire community, including his beautiful bride, until she-

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ing town, that the housewife couldn't throw out a pan of dishwasher without drenching a few of them.

It is greatly to the credit of Mary that in the midst of all this adulation and worship, she remained the modest, simple girl she had been when obscure. At the age of twenty-three she was unspoiled, although the most celebrated beauty in the kingdom. It was then that a gorgeous and glittering individual arrived at Keswick. He was of middle age, of fine presence and handsome person, and his manners were overpowering, in their old-school majesty. He gave out that he was Alexander Augustus Hope, brother to the earl of Hopetoun, and now a member of parliament from Lanlithgowshire.

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