

THE PRIME OF LIFE.

Bless the glad sun's warmth and light!
Away, my love, we'll wander,
Where the larch shines green and bright
Against the dim wood yonder.

The young shoots sprout so fast to-day,
The old oak leaves are falling,
And the cuckoo calls far away
To hear the cuckoo calling.

Light there among the high elm trees
The thrush sings and he settles;
And see, below, anemones
Put forth their blushing petals.

Does not the poet tell how spring
Affects a young man's fancy?
And so my heart turns, while I sing,
To love and you, my Nancy.

Each step new charms does nature add,
New beauties still discover,
To make this old world young and glad
For us, young, happy lovers.

It is the joy the lark feels there
Turning his song to madness,
Thank God that we are young, who share
And feel the young year's gladness."

And let our years be sad or gay,
And let the few or plenty,
Sweetheart, we'll forget to-day
We have been wed for twenty!

—Marshall Steele, in Black and White.

A CLEW BY WIRE

Or, An Interrupted Current.

BY HOWARD M. YOST.

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CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

The sound of the voice was intermittent. There would be a few words, then a pause, and so on. I could make sense of the few disjointed sentences. It lasted but a few minutes. Indeed, so brief was the conversation, if that is what it was, there was no time to make an investigation.

After a long period of anxious listening I settled down again for sleep. And when at last slumber came, it was troubled. Vague, shadowy dreams flitted across my consciousness, and through them all was a sort of premonition of future events, which seemed to have a bearing upon the robbery.

The next morning I was awakened by the sun shining in my face. Hardly had I got my eyes open and my senses aroused to my new surroundings, when a loud and long-continued thumping at the front door caused me to spring out of bed. Hastily donning a few garments, I went to the door and opened it.

Mrs. Snyder was standing there, and an unmistakable look of relief came over her face when she saw me.

"Ach my! you sleep so sound I va's almost somesing de matter!" she said. "Breakfast is retty long time alretty."

"All right. I'll be right over and eat."

While I was dressing the recollection of the strange voice of the last night came to me. Now, in the broad glare of the forenoon, when all mystery takes flight and the hallucinations of the darkness become trivial, I wondered if my imagination had played me a trick. It seemed as though I had heard the voice in a dream, so unreal did the circumstance appear now.

I was standing by the huge chimney, when again, breaking in upon my thoughts, came the sound of that mysterious small voice.

As on the night before, there were no completed sentences; only a word between pauses of various duration. The sounds were plainer, however; not louder, but more distinct.

Here was a mystery indeed, one which did not choose only the shades of night for its manifestations, but came in the daytime, as though possessed of such subtle and unaccountable qualities that it might defy research.

After the voice had ceased, and I continued my toilet, the sound of talking, coming from the walk outside, reached me.

I glanced out of the window, and saw Sarah and Mrs. Snyder again in most earnest conversation.

Somewhat surprised to see my old nurse so early in the day, I called to her.

"Hello, Sarah! What's the trouble? What brought you here at this time?"

"Ach, Nel, I am glad to see you!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't sleep all night."

"Now, that was too bad," I said. "What kept you awake?"

"I was thinkin' of you all alone in dis old house, and so much strangeness about it," the good soul replied, with her honest old face upturned to me.

"That was very foolish. Nothing is going to happen to me," I said, lightly, although I was not so sure of it now.

When I went outside the two women were still talking, and there was an earnest expression on each face.

"What are you two superstitious old girls doing now?" I asked. "Hatching up more mysterious tales?"

Mrs. Snyder gravely shook her head, as though seriously condemning levity on supernatural subjects. Sarah rested her hand on my arm, and gazed up into my face. There was deep concern in every line of her countenance.

"Nel, you come viz me," she said, leading the way. I followed around the corner of the house, and she stopped before a window, the shutters of which were closed.

"Look!" she exclaimed, pointing toward the shutters. "Mrs. Snyder says that was not dere yesterday."

Like those of most Pennsylvania farmhouses, the downstairs windows were provided with solid board shutters.

In the center of this particular pair was a small round hole, from the edges of which a few chips running with the grain of the wood were broken.

"Well, what of it?" I asked, hoping that I could avoid giving an explanation, for I was a trifle ashamed of myself for firing at my own reflection.

"Somebody shot through de shutter and try to kill you, maybe. It's a bullet hole, ain't it? Oh, Nel, didn't you hear it?" Mrs. Snyder heard it from her house, and she look out her window and saw a man runnin' away down de road.

You can't stay here, Nel. You go home wiz me."

I could not forbear (a smile at Sarah's fears, but, remembering they were the consequence of the deep affection she felt for me, I checked the frivolous reply which my tongue was about to utter.

"Why, bless your dear old loving heart, Sarah," I said, taking hold of her arm, "come, I'll explain that, and when you know about it you'll laugh at me."

The women went along into my room. "You see that window? You remember the shutters were always kept closed. Well, I had forgotten all about it last night, and after I was undressed I saw my figure, clad in my white night robe, reflected from the glass. You women must have made me somewhat nervous by your talk while making up my bed. Anyhow, I was a trifle frightened at my own shadow, and fired a bullet at it. So, you see, no one tried to kill me at all. It was only my own foolishness, of which I am heartily ashamed. Now let me get some breakfast, and then we'll go all over the house to satisfy you there can be nothing in it which could do me harm."

I said nothing about the voices I had heard, nor of the noise like the slamming of a door. There was no use in adding to the inexplicable feeling of alarm which my old nurse felt.

As for the man Mrs. Snyder had seen after the shot fleeing down the road, that was easily explained.

If my house had the reputation of being haunted, it was most likely a passer-by would have wings to his heels on hearing the report of a pistol about the place.

After breakfast we went through the house.

I noticed that all the windows were closed. Therefore it was no sudden gust of air that caused the slamming of a door. But nothing was discovered which would give one reason to suppose there was anything unusual about the place.

We finally came to the attic, and I looked out of one of the small windows, first brushing away the curtain of cobwebs.

From this height I could see over the orchards. On the brow of Sunset Hill, about half a mile distant, was a large house, evidently quite new.

It was a splendid structure for the country, and I fancied a wealthy resident of the city had discovered the beauties of Nelsonville and built him a summer residence here.

"Whose place is that over on Sunset Hill?" I asked.

"Some rich man's from de city," Sarah answered.

"Do you know his name?" I continued, moved by curiosity.

"Well, I did know. Ach, what is it now? I forget eferysing soon," Sarah replied.

Here Mrs. Snyder chimed in: "His name is Morley."

"What?" I exclaimed in amazement. "Morley? Sylvester Morley?"

"I don't know his first name," the old widow answered.

"Has he a daughter? Is she here?"

"Yes, and she so fine and proud. Ach, and so pretty! Yes, she is here. Dey live here now in de summer," continued the old lady, glad for the opportunity of imparting news. "I see dem almost efery day. Dey drive by. And him, de man, ach, what a fine shentleman! So tall and straight, such a fine pear, and he looks so proud, too!"

The garrulous old widow's description satisfied me. My heart beat rapidly. I had come into this secluded place with no thought further from my mind than that I should find Miss Morley here.

Was there a design of fate in this? And was she still my true love? Perhaps I should see her; but I remembered my determination and my promise to her father, and how far I still was from removing the condition imposed on the renewal of our friendship, and I hoped, our love.

This afterthought filled me with an impatience to commence some kind of investigation on my own hook.

I had had a short interview with Mr. Perry, the president of the bank, just before my departure for Europe. It had been most unsatisfactory to me, for Mr. Perry was able to hold out no hope of immediate relief. He was just as earnest, however, in advising me to still keep on my course of apparent indifference and do nothing in the way of a search myself.

Since that interview six months had elapsed, and I had heard nothing from him. I now resolved to take the affair in my own hands. For to go on living, with Florence Morley so near to me, and still refrain from indulging in her sweet society, would simply be torture.

"Come, Nel," Sarah finally said, breaking in upon my thoughts. "We haf not seen all yed."

CHAPTER VI.

When we were again standing in the main hall on the first floor, Sarah's last remark came to me.

"We have been over the whole house. Have we not? What more is there to see?" I asked.

"Ach, Nel! haf you forgot de place you always wanted to go to and ve couldn't led you, because it vas damp and dark?"

"That's so. You mean the cellar."

"Yes, yes, to be sure. You vas lost vonst, and ve couldn't fint you for a long time. Ven ve did, you vas aschleep in de cellar."

"Well, come along. Let us have a look at it," I said, eagerly. The noise like a slamming of a door had seemed to come from below. Perhaps I should discover the cause down there.

On opening the door leading down from the dining-room, a musty odor assailed my nostrils.

It is peculiar how the sense of smell brings back to one old associations and memories. I recollected that musty odor perfectly, and it brought back the days of boyhood more vividly than anything else had done.

We descended the stairway, and found the cellar bare and empty. I peered into every dark nook and corner, but there was nothing which could have caused the noise.

"Nothing to be seen here, Sarah," I said. "Maybe we can find something of interest in the old storeroom."

My grandfather, in his latter days, had kept the village store and post office.

The house was built on the side of a small hill, so that it was three stories high on the street side and two in the rear.

The cellar was divided into two apartments by a thick wall of stone. One apartment was used for the house supplies. The other section was in turn divided in two, the front facing on the street serving as the store and post office, the rear, a deep, cavernous, underground room, having been used for the storage of barrels of vinegar, molasses, tobacco and dried fruit.

We descended the open stairway leading down to the storeroom from the main hall. The door was at the bottom, and at first I thought it was locked. Upon closer examination, I discovered that it had only become tightly jammed by a slight settling of the surrounding timbers. A few vigorous kicks soon caused it to open, and we stepped down into the room.

The shutters to the windows were closed, but there was above the door leading to the street a small transom. Through the dust and moisture-begrimed glass a few rays of light penetrated, producing a twilight gloom in the apartment, but not so deep that we were unable to see.

One of the old counters still remained, and scattered over the floor were a few empty boxes and barrels. I thought of the white-haired old man whose form had been so familiarly associated with the room, and I glanced over to the corner with a fancy that he was here still, seated behind the desk.

"Why, there's de door gone?" Sarah cried out, in tones of excitement.

"What door, Sarah?"

"Nel, you know, you remember. Der used to be a door to de store cellar, and now dere ain't any."

Sarah was right. There had been a doorway, through which I had stolen many times for the purpose of filling my pockets with raisins and dried fruit. There was none now. The wall of solid masonry confronted us.

It really seemed a matter of very little importance, but Sarah kept up excited exclamations about it, until I finally stopped her.

"Why, Sarah, I don't see anything very strange in the walling up of a cellar doorway. No doubt Mr. Sonntag, my lawyer, had it done. I remember the place was dark, damp and unhealthy. He thought it best to have it closed up, perhaps. There was another door from that cellar leading outside, was there not?"

"Yes, right under your bedroom window," Sarah answered.

"Well, that can be easily broken down if you want to get in the place. But what would be the use of all that trouble? I don't want to use the cellar."

But then I remembered the noise which had seemed to come from beneath my bedroom, and the cause of which I was unable to discover throughout the rest of the house.

"We might take a look at the other door," I finally said, reflectively.

We ascended the stairway and went around the house. Thick vines, reaching to my bedroom window, completely hid the outside cellar door.

I parted the vines, and found again the solid foundation wall. This doorway had also been walled up.

Sarah was so greatly impressed by this new discovery that her excited exclamations broke out anew, and she again began to plead with me to leave the place.

Again I sought to quiet her fears by laughing at her, although it did seem a trifle strange that my agent should have walled up the doorways. I was satisfied he had had it done, and I wondered what his reasons could have been. Perhaps, after all, Mrs. Snyder was right in affirming that there were mysteries about the old house. Perhaps this walled-up cellar was the seat of supernatural demonstrations, and my agent had sealed it up for that reason.

"I do not intend to lose any sleep over it," I said, lightly. "Sonntag must have had good reasons for doing this, and I can easily find out what they were by driving over and seeing him. I want to have a talk with him, anyhow."

Here the rumble of wheels reached my ear. As I glanced down the roadway and saw the approaching turnout, why did my heart beat faster and a dimness cloud my sight?

Mrs. Snyder had also glanced in that direction. "Vell, now look, Mr. Nel," she began, excitedly. "You can see yourself how dey look. Dey is coming. Dat is de Morleys."

My heart had given me the information before the widow's tongue.

There were two persons in the light road-wagon which was being whirled toward us at a rapid rate by the spirited horses. I could not be mistaken in the graceful poise of the head and the general outlines of beauty about the

young lady, nor in the grave dignity of the man.

The carriage swept along. When nearly opposite us, the young woman evidently caught sight of the group standing back from the roadway, for she leaned forward and sent a glance past her father toward us. I saw, even though my sight was dimmed by emotion, her face turn pale and her eyes expand. She gave no other sign of recognition, however, and the carriage swept by.

And this was all. After a year of separation, a year of longing and homesickness, I was greeted with a stare by the girl who had declared she would always trust and believe in me.

I watched the wagon until a bend in the road hid it from view, and then still looked toward the spot where it had disappeared.

A touch on my arm recalled my thoughts, and I glanced around into the solicitous face of my old nurse.

"I guess de young woman is putty," said Mrs. Snyder. "Ach, and you dink so, too, Mr. Nel."

"Yes, she is beautiful, very beautiful," I murmured, more to myself than for answer to the widow's clumsy attempt at pleasantry.

Sarah's watchful old eyes and the promptings of her affection for me discerned something more in the fixed gaze I had sent after the wagon than a suddenly awakened admiration.

"What is id, Nel? Do you know her?" the good soul asked, anxiously.

"I'll tell you some time," I answered. Yes, yes; beautiful indeed was Florence, lovelier than ever, and good and true—well, I did not seem to feel so sure of her faith. She had passed me by without extending a salutation. I could not blame her for not recognizing me, after the resolve I had made, but it cut me to the heart, nevertheless.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TEARS WERE FORBIDDEN.

A Note to Quit Meant That the Typewriter Was to Go.

She was a dainty little thing, and the old gentleman seemed to be prepossessed in her favor right from the start, but there was evidently something that made him pause.

"Look here," he said, in his blunt fashion. "I like you and your references are all right. You run the typewriter as if you knew all there is to know about it, and you don't look like a girl who would be sick every third day and want to get away an hour or two early all the rest of the time, but before I engage you I want to have a clear understanding with you on one subject."

"Yes, sir," she replied, looking at him inquiringly.

"Of course," he explained. "I expect you will be perfectly satisfactory, but if you are not there must be no doubt about my right to discharge you."

"Certainly not."

"If I want you to go I'll just have one of the clerks put a note on your desk or leave it with the cashier for you, and you're to take that as final."

"Naturally," she said, looking at him in some surprise.

"You're not to enter any protest or file any objections," he persisted, "and most of all, you're not to weep."

"Why, I suppose I can ask you why?"

"You can't ask me a thing," he broke in. "If you get a note asking you to quit you're just to put on your things and walk out without a whimper of any kind. Is that understood?"

"It is," she replied.

"Have I your promise to live up to that agreement?"

"You have. But it is such an extraordinary request that I—I—"

"Young woman," said the old gentleman, impressively. "I've been in business here for 50 years, and up to the time women got a good foothold in the business world I was in the habit of engaging and discharging clerks as seemed to me best from the standpoint of my business. In an unguarded moment, however, I was induced to hire a young woman to run a typewriter for me, and after I found that she wasn't satisfactory to me it took me over eight weeks to discharge her. I left a note on her desk and she promptly came in and wept on mine. I turned the job over to various subordinates, but each time she came into my private office to do her weeping, and inside of a week she had the whole force wrought up to a point where business was being neglected, and she was still drawing salary just the same. Women in business may be all right, but when it comes to getting her out of business somebody else can have the job. However, if you'll make a solemn promise to go without a single weep if you don't suit, I'll try you."—Chicago Post.

A Stickler for Realism.

Some amateurs in a provincial town gave a theatrical performance. Just before the curtain went up the star actor took the manager aside and said to him:

"Now, look here; I don't propose to drink water instead of wine in the drinking scene in the second act. I want wine—genuine wine. The unities must be preserved. We want to make this play as realistic as possible."

"Oh, you want champagne at 15 shillings a bottle, do you?"

"Yes. Everything must be realistic."

"All right," replied the manager. "In the second act you shall have real wine, and when you take poison in the last act you shall have some real poison. I'll see that you don't complain of the plot not being realistic enough. How does prussic acid strike you?"—London Answers.

When Phlebotomy Was in Favor.

In former days, when medical men believed in phlebotomy for nearly all hurts and diseases, King Louis Philippe of France carried a lancet in his pocket, and occasionally bled himself. On one occasion, when a man was run over by the royal coach, the king bled the unconscious victim with his own hands. Such treatment now would probably lead to a suit for damages.—Chicago Chronicle.

OPENING AN ACCOUNT.

Woman in a Bank for the First Time Makes Trouble.

"A woman opening a bank account for the first time is a peculiar creature," said one of the clerks in a national bank. "One came in a few days ago and glanced around suspiciously. Then she ambled up to the window and said:

"If you please, I want to deposit some money."

"Yes'm; just go to the next window."

"She stepped over in a careful way, as if she was breaking some rule or other, and, almost in a whisper, said:

"Is this where they deposit money?"

"Yes, ma'am. Do you wish to open an account?"

"Oh, no," she said. "I don't want to have anything charged. I just want to deposit my money. Is this bank really safe?"

"She was assured that it was."

"This bank is as firm as Gibraltar, madam. You have come to the right place. We will have to have your autograph. Just write your name right there."

"Oh, I can't write without a stub pen. Haven't you got a stub pen and some nice violet ink?"

"She was fitted out, and in the most careful way imaginable she wrote out her full name. Then she was provided with a deposit book, which she looked at in an inquiring way. She produced her money, hung on to it for a minute, and then handed it in, all rolled up and tied with a thread. The receiving teller counted it in a rapid way and threw it in with the other receipts."

"Now," she said, "this ain't a good bank. You've just gone and thrown my money in with all the rest, and you can never pick it out again. Take your old book and give me my money. And scratch my name off that big autograph album. Mother said you couldn't tell anything about a bank."

"She was given her little roll, the autograph was scratched off and the deposit book destroyed. She flounced out in a decisive way, as much as to say: "They can't cheat me, if I am a woman."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

MISTAKE IN DELIVERY.

Customer Lost Because of the Merchant's Versatility.

Queer things happen in suburban towns, where the residents have a way of utilizing means at hand utterly regardless of the consequences. Mrs. Stimpson, a notable housewife who lives in one of these terrestrial paradises, recently replenished her stock of household furniture at the only department store in the place and ordered the purchases sent home that afternoon when she would be there to receive them.

She was in a particularly happy frame of mind as she sat at her front window watching for their arrival, remarking with satisfaction the vacant places the new furniture would adorn, when an undertaker's wagon drove up and stopped in front of her door and a solemn looking driver in rusty black descended from the front seat and rang her bell.

She did not lose a moment in raising the window and calling to him in a frightened voice:

"Go away! You've stopped at the wrong house! There isn't any body here!"

"I don't want a body, ma'am, I've got some things I was told to leave here," called the man.

"Tell you I won't have them! You ought to be ashamed to stop here! What do you suppose the neighbors will think?"

"Well, ma'am," said the man, as he climbed on his wagon again, "if you don't want your new furniture, all right, but I've got it inside."

"And I wouldn't take it as a gift," said the distressed woman, "the idea of bringing my goods in an undertaker's wagon."

"We had another vehicle in the barn and you said you wanted it right off," responded the man as he drove away.

But the man of many callings who had utilized the last conveyance in his establishment lost the sale of the furniture and the good will of a customer who did not appreciate such mortuary enterprise.—Chicago Times-Herald.

Another Hind.

The following story proves what hardly needs proving, that a man may handle books without being a scholar. It wasn't in the book stall of a department store; it was in a real bookstore; a bookstore, moreover, where you would expect to find salesmen who know books. A friend of mine went in the other day and asked for Pope's "Iliad."

The salesman went away to look for it. Presently he returned with a book in his hand. "We haven't Pope's 'Iliad,'" he said, "but we have an 'Iliad.' It's by Homer, though."—Washington Post.

WOMEN DO NOT TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH.

Modest Women Evade Certain Questions When Asked by a Male Physician, but Write Freely to Mrs. Pinkham.

An eminent physician says that "Women are not truthful, they will lie to their physicians." This statement should be qualified; women do tell the truth, but not the whole truth, but this is only in regard to those painful and troublesome disorders peculiar to their sex.

There can be no more terrible ordeal to a delicate, sensitive, refined woman than to be obliged to answer certain questions when those questions are asked, even by her family physician. This is especially the case with unmarried women.

This is the reason why thousands and thousands of women are now corresponding with Mrs. Pinkham. To this good woman they can and do give every symptom, so that she really knows more about the true condition of her patients through her correspondence than the physician who personally questions them. Perfect confidence and candor are at once established between Mrs. Pinkham and her patients.

Years ago women had no such recourse. Nowadays a modest woman asks help of a woman who understands women. If you suffer from any form of trouble peculiar to women, write at once to Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass., and she will advise you free of charge.

And the fact that this great boon which is extended freely to women by Mrs. Pinkham, is appreciated, the thousands of letters which are received by her prove. Many such grateful letters as the following are constantly pouring in:

"I was a sufferer from female weakness for about a year and a half. I have tried doctors and patent medicines, but nothing helped me. I underwent the horrors of local treatment, but received no benefit. My ailment was pronounced ulceration of the womb. I suffered from intense pains in the womb and ovaries, and the backache was dreadful. I had leucorrhoea in its worst form. Finally I grew so weak I had to keep my bed. The pains were so hard as to almost cause spasms. When I could endure the pain no longer I was given morphine. My memory grew short, and I gave up all hope of ever getting well. Thus I dragged along. At last I wrote to Mrs. Pinkham for advice. Her answer came promptly. I read carefully her letter, and concluded to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. After taking two bottles I felt much better; but after using six bottles I was cured. My friends think my cure almost miraculous. Her noble work is surely a blessing to broken-down women."—GRACE B. STANBURY, Pratt, Kansas.