

THE MINSTREL'S LOT.

My lady, when they cavaliers
About thy footed hand,
And walk thy words with eager care,
Thou dost not understand
That look on me, my faithful love,
That seek thee with their song,
Hark! let its charm, the strings are mute
Amid the halcyon throng.

Thou dost not see thy slave to wear,
And one thy hand to press,
Thou dost believe them when they swear
Eternal faithfulness.
Thou dost not see thy slave to prove,
Thou dost not see thy slave to love,
And yet to me, whose life is love,
Thou dost not see thy slave to love.

Thou dost not see thy slave to love,
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REVENGE VS. DUTY.

By the Author of "A Lucky Escape," etc.

Chapter I.
A glorious morning in early summer,
The may in full bloom, the wild roses be-
ginning to form their buds, the gorse and
broom in their prime, and above, in the
clear blue heavens, a lark trilling out
his melodious notes.

Under a hedge by the roadside lay a
man little in keeping with the beauty of
his surroundings—unkempt, unwashed,
haggard, and grim; and yet by his side
nestled a large lurcher dog, bound to his
master by some mysterious tie.

Both were sleeping; the lark's sweet
carol failed to rouse them; but another
sound, an approaching footstep, startled
the dog, and the man soon afterward
raised himself to a sitting posture and
listened. There was a sharp joyous bark,
and then, forcing his way through the
hedge, came a beautiful little black and
tan King Charles spaniel, bounding joy-
ously in the delight of his heart, because
he had caught at least a dozen sparrows
to take a hasty flight.

"Yah," growled the tramp, "you're a
gentleman's dog! Pincher, at him, and
give it him! There's a good dog. Gam
now!"

Pincher obediently and sprang
upon the small dog as once. There was
a deep growl, followed by a sharp cry of
anguish. The next moment a young man
rushed impetuously along the field-path,
and, clearing the stile with a bound, came
to the rescue.

It was all over in a moment—the big
dog bated off, and his victim crouching
safe but terrified at his preserver's feet.

"Why didn't you separate them?" the
new comer cried, turning angrily to the
man, who had now risen to his feet.

"I separate 'em? Why should I save
your dog? I set mine on."

"You cowardly brute, you deserve a
sound thrashing! You should have had
it if your dog had done any harm."

"Who'd a' given it me, I'd like to
know!"—and the brawny ruffian looked
contemptuously at the slight, upright,
well-built figure.

"I would."

"You would? I'd like to see you!
Where'd I be all the time?"

"On your back most of the time, I im-
agine. I'd do it now if it were worth
while to sell my fingers with you. But
the insolence of a fellow like you is not
worth resenting. Call your dog off now,
or it will be the worse for you."

The lurcher had recovered from his
thrashing, and was now crawling up
stealthily. His master, far from calling
him off, encouraged him with a low his-
sing sound and the cry:

"At him—go it, Pincher!"

It was a dangerous moment; both
brutes seemed to require watching, but
a glance made it evident that the human
was waiting for the canine one.

In a few moments attack and defeat
were over. A well directed kick on the
muzzle sent the lurcher off, howling with
pain, and then, as the tramp rushed up
with a yell of rage to avenge the fate of
his dog, a scientifically administered
blow laid him upon his back. He rose to
his feet slowly, and stood wiping his
bruised face and glaring savagely at his
assailant.

"I hope you have had enough," said
Norman Beauchamp quietly; "I don't
want to hurt you."

The man uttered an imprecation.

"As sure as there's a Heaven above us,
I'll be even with you for this!" he said.

"I am afraid you won't get much help
in that way," said Norman.

Rage and hate were expressed in the
man's face.

"I'll be even with you yet!" he gasped
hoarsely. "My name's Jim Harvey!
Don't you forget it!"

"Thanks. I shall do my best to forget
the name and its owner."

"I'll remember your 'n' anyhow."

"You don't know it."

"I do; you're the young Squire as is
going to be married to-morrow. I'd a'
liked to ha' given you a black eye for the
occasion."

"Thanks, again. Now, I should have
been sorry to give you a black eye. Your
appearance tells against you enough as it
is."

"My appearance won't matter much
where I'm going; but I'd like to spoil
yours. Are you man enough to fight a
round fairly wi' me? You took me by
surprise last time."

"I would rather not fight you, because
I know you have no chance against me.
I'm a skilled athlete, if you know what
that is, and your strength would be of no
use to you in the contest."

"It's the trainin' that does it, then, is
it?" said the man.
"To a great extent, yes."
"I'd be more'n a match for you if I'd
been trained."

"I doubt it," said Beauchamp lightly.
"At least in present circumstances you
are hardly in a condition to stand up to
me. Drink and a life like yours are not
the best preparation for a boxing match;
and, besides, blood tells," he added medi-
trively.

"Wa' d'ye say?"

"I said blood tells, if that interests
you."

"You mean you're a toff and I'm a
blackguard, and therefore you could
lick me. We'll see, one of these days;
I'll be even with you yet. Blood tells;
I'll remember that,"—and Jim Harvey
laughed derisively. "Blood tells," he re-
peated. "I'll remind you of it when
I'm equal with you!"

"I shall not live long enough to see that
day," said Norman Beauchamp. "If you
can the day when you will be evened
upon me, that may come, certainly. You
can shoot me from behind a hedge, or
clobber after me and knock me down with
a stick some dark night; but that would
not make you even with me, still less
equal. When you've done it, you'll
know that you've sunk still lower than
you are. As it is, you set your dog upon
mine, and I protected it. You then set
the brute upon me, and I defended my-
self. You attacked me, and I knocked
you down. The wrong is all on your
side. If I hurt your feelings as well
as your face, you're yourself to blame.
There's half a crown to plaster your nose
with. Good morning!"

Beauchamp strode carelessly on, pre-
ceded by the spaniel. The tramp stood
and watched him for some moments,
and then, picking up the half crown,
touched off in the direction of the vil-
lage. People turned to look at him.
His bruises on his face attracted their
attention. The children eyed him with
curiosity and shrank from him. Twice he
attempted to speak to passers-by, but
they hurried on. He stood still and med-
itated. Information he wanted and
must have; so, approaching the nearest
cottage door, he knocked and asked if
Mrs. Harvey lived there.

"If you mean Mrs. Harvey, the dress-
maker, she lives in the first of the small
whitewashed cottages on the right after
you have passed the church."

"Thank you," he said, civilly enough,
and turned away.

As he approached the house to which
he had been directed, an evil look came
into his sultry face, and then some-
thing struck him suddenly, and he
stood still.

"That won't do," he muttered; "I must
try soft sander"—and, endeavoring to
assume a gentler expression, he advanced
to the cottage window and looked in.

"Nance," he said—"Nance, I've found
you at last, lass!"

"Good heaven, it's Jim!"

The door was instantly opened, and a
young woman, in a neat, well-fitting
print gown, stood in the doorway.

"Come in at once," she said. "I sup-
pose you mean to disgrace me. What an
object you are! How on earth could I
have married you? And yet I thought
you a handsome chap once!"

"I'm not much to look at now," he re-
turned, moodily.

"No—you're not," the woman replied,
with quiet deliberation, closing the door
behind her and retreating to the inner
side of the small round table.

The man dropped into a chair and
looked up at her, the light falling upon
his bruised face.

"Oh, heaven," she cried, in terror,
"have you been fighting again? Have
you hurt or killed any one?"

"I'm starving and too weak to fight,"
he replied. "I stumbled and fell in get-
ting over a stile."

At this moment a low whine from
Pincher, who was crouching under his
master's chair, attracted Mrs. Harvey's
glance.

"You're lying, Jim! Look at the dog—
he's been fighting too!"

"Yes—he's been in the war; he flew
at a gentleman's dog and the gentleman
licked him. It's gospel truth, Nance."

Nance did not reply, but continued to
look at him with an expression of intense
disgust and aversion.

"It's a nice welcome home after four
years!" he whined.

"This is not your home."

"It's a-going to be," he replied gently,
controlling his rising wrath.

"No, it is not. I knew that some day
you'd turn up, and I am ready for you."

She turned quietly away and went to
a cupboard in the corner, the door of
which she opened wide. He fixed his
eyes keenly upon her. She pushed aside
two jam-jars and took down a third, also
carefully tied down and labeled. Re-
moving the cover, she emptied into a
pie-dish the bran it contained, and pro-
duced a small purse from the bottom.

"Take it—purse and all," she said.
"It's all I've got. There's £10 there; it
has taken me all this time to save it.
Now go!"

He threw the purse upon the table with
well-affecting indifference.

"Put it by again, lass," he said; "I
don't want your money. I thought per-
haps you'd forget and forgive, and let me
try to start again."

His head sank upon his dirty hand;
and the woman looked at him with in-
tense aversion, but still with hesitation
and irresolution.

"I thought perhaps for the kid's sake
you'd give me another chance," he whined.

"You left us to starve, and he's dead!"
she said briefly.

"Not of starvation!" the man cried,
with the first trace of real feeling. "Not
of starvation, Nance?"

"No—of croup. If it had been of star-
vation—"

"What?" he said, as she paused.

The gleam in her eyes was her only
answer.

"Will you try to save me, Nance, or
am I to go to the dogs altogether?"

"I'll give you a chance," she said. "Go
into the back kitchen and wash yourself,
and take what you want of that money
and get yourself clothes. My lodgers
have gone. You can have that room as
long as you keep clean and sober, and I'll

give you food free of charge until you
get work."
"Then I'm to be a lodger, not a hus-
band?" he asked.
"Yes," she answered curtly.
"Well, it's more than I've a right to
expect," he said meekly, and rose to go
to the kitchen.
"Are you hungry?" she inquired.
"Yes," he answered.
"I'll give you food as soon as you are
clean;" then she put by her work and
commenced to lay the table.

Chapter II.
The next day all Gladmore was on feet.
The heiress of Gladmore Hall was to wed
the young heir of Beauchamp Manor,
and every one turned out to do them
honor. "Our Miss Grace," as the vil-
lagers called sweet Grace Gladmore, was
to remain with them always, not to be
transplanted to blossom in and brighten
a stranger's home. They congratulated
one another gaily.

The wedding was unanimously pro-
nounced a very pretty one. Sweet Grace
Gladmore looked as fair as the white
blossoms on her breast and her hair soft
brown hair, and the bridesmaids looked
very pretty in their white, soft, clinging
draperies, with gleaming touches of but-
tercup-yellow here and there.

As the wedding march pealed forth,
and the bridal party came down the sun-
lit path of the pretty village churchyard
to the gate, Norman Beauchamp glanced
instinctively round him.

Was Jim Harvey there? No, thank
heaven; there was no sign of him. Every
face was familiar but one. There was a
tall, dark, good-looking man, well-dressed
and clean-shaven, a respectable mechanic
evidently, but certainly not Jim Harvey!
Perhaps this man was employed on the
railway, or was passing through the
town? It did not matter; he was not Jim
Harvey, that was certain; for there was
no dog, and Mrs. Harvey stood by herself
much nearer the porch. Not that Mrs.
Harvey could possibly be supposed to be
in any way connected with such a low
as Jim Harvey! The thought passed
like a flash through Norman Beauchamp's
mind, and were banished at once as he
banded his sweet wife into the carriage
and drove away with her.

And meanwhile, Jim Harvey, trans-
formed into the semblance of a respectable
industrious by means of three pounds taken
from his wife's little hoard, sauntered
slowly home and entered the cottage,
over which Pincher was mounting guard.

His wife came in soon afterward and
found him quietly engaged in preparing
the dinner.

"I've got work, Nance," he said.

"Work? Already? What without a
character?"

There was a savage gleam in Jim's
eyes for an instant, but he controlled it at
once.

"Work like mine is character enough,"
he replied.

"Then it is not as gamekeeper."

"Gamekeeper again? No, thank you!
It is the wood-carving this time. I
showed them how I could handle the
tools, and, when they asked for reference,
said I'd just come from Australia, where
I'd been living up country on a sheep-
run, and hadn't worked this way before
except for pleasure."

"Australia!" Mrs. Harvey repeated, as
Jim paused; and she raised her eye-
brows slightly, as if to say, "I don't be-
lieve you, but won't take the trouble to
contradict you."

"I told them to keep my first week's
wages in hand as security for my good
conduct; that satisfied them. I go on
Monday."

Mrs. Harvey asked no more—not even
the name of the people her husband was
to work for.

"Have you work to do to-day?" he in-
quired, as, after the meal, he helped her
to tidy up the house in a manner that
was quite new to her, and that reminded
her more of the little attentions of their
courtship days than of any period of her
married life.

"Only a child's frock to finish. I can
get it done in two hours. Why do you
ask?"

"Let us have a walk then this evening;
it's so long since we've had a walk to-
gether," he said.

Soon it was village gossip that Mrs.
Harvey's husband had come back from
Australia, and had got work in the big
town ten miles off. He came home only
on Saturday nights, and was off again
early on Monday mornings. At first
his wife looked bright and happy, but
as the months passed on, at times her
face was sad and anxious; and, when
at last her baby was born, she was so
weak and frail that her life was de-
spaired of. Her child, a boy, was a fine
healthy fellow, but the mother seemed
likely to drift away. Harvey left his
work and devoted himself to wife and
child with an assiduity of which those
who had known him would hardly have
thought him capable; and, when his
child was two days old, the Harveys
and their affairs were forgotten in the
great news from the Manor. A young
heir was born, and "our Miss Grace," as
the people still sometimes called Mrs.
Beauchamp, was as well as heart could
wish, and the boy was a beauty.

Before the child was a month old, the
Harveys were gone, to the utter aston-
ishment of the villagers; and, still more
surprising, old nurse Green, who had
been sent for to the Manor House in a
hurry, because the nurse from London
had not arrived, had left her one room
over the little general dealer's shop and
taken Mrs. Harvey's cottage, having ap-
parently purchased her furniture as it
stood.

"They must have paid you handsome,"
said the village gossip.

"I did my work well, and I don't com-
plain of my pay," replied Nurse Green,
with an air of importance that was in-
tended to impress her hearers that such
services as hers could not possibly be
overpaid.

Years passed. Grace Beauchamp was
still the idol of the people, as Grace Glad-
more had been, and she smiled to hear
them dating from the day "when Master
Norman went into knickerbockers," or "the
time he had the measles." He was a
fine handsome boy, bold and cheerful as
his father, though gentle and kind

as his mother. But not in the least
the father of his person.
The villagers would have loved to be
able to say he was the image of his
father; but he was not, and this troubled
them, until one brilliant diplomatic dis-
covered that he must certainly "favor the
major." The major was Grace Beau-
champ's uncle, who had gone to India
and served through the whole of the
Mutiny, covering himself with glory, and
dying out there.

Whether the resemblance existed or not,
young Norman Beauchamp was a very
fine young fellow. At Eton he did well,
and then he had a run of a few months
on the Continent with a tutor before going
to Oxford. The tutor expressed him-
self highly satisfied with his young charge;
and Grace Beauchamp, still young look-
ing and still beautiful in her husband's
eyes, often said how much came they
had to thank heaven that their only child
was such a source of pride and comfort
to them.

Old Colonel Gladmore at the Hall doted
upon his grandson. The child's pony had
been his gift, and the youth's spirited
thoroughbred was also a birthday pre-
sent from the same kind hand.

And now Norman's twentieth birthday
was approaching. The summer term was
over, and the young man was coming
home.

Mrs. Beauchamp's sweet face was radi-
ant with happy expectation, and her
husband fully shared her joy.

She had just finished arranging the
roses in her beautiful, old-fashioned china
bowls when Colonel Gladmore arrived on
horseback, and she hastened to meet him.

"Oh, papa, I knew you would come!"
"I'm alone," he said; "I could not per-
suade Eileen to come with me. She de-
clared that Aunt Grace would not want
strangers bothering round her when her
son was coming home. I said, 'My dear,
you are one of the family, and young
ladies don't bother round.'"

"What did she say?" asked Grace.

"Oh, she laughed as usual, and said, in
spite of her cousinship, she was still a
stranger, and as to bothering round, she
was afraid American girls did it!"

"I am sorry she did not come," said
Beauchamp. "Grace and I are both get-
ting very fond of her, and I do not think
we have ever given her cause to feel like
a stranger."

"I think the fact is she was shy about
the younger."

"About Norman?" cried Grace in sur-
prise. "That would never have occurred
to me."

"You see she is barely eighteen, al-
though in some things she is so self-pos-
sessed and womanly that we are apt to
forget what a mere girl she is. Is any
one going to meet Norman?"

"Ford has taken his horse. If the
train is punctual, we may expect him
any minute now. Listen!"

All were silent for a moment, and the
beat of the hoofs of a horse at full gallop
was distinctly heard on the high road,
and then almost immediately afterward
along the avenue.

A groom had come hurrying round
from the stables, and was ready to receive
the reins which were hastily tossed to
him, and the next moment Norman stood
among his relatives. He caught his
mother in his arms and kissed her, and
still holding her in his embrace, extended
his hand to his father and grandfather.

"I think," he said, looking down with
a smile, "you are just the sweetest, pret-
tiest, little mother any fellow ever had.
I am always so glad to get back again to
you all, especially to you."

"I know no mother ever had a dearer
son," the mother replied, looking up with
eyes full of happy tears.

"Where is that pretty little Yankee
cousin of mine that I've heard so much of?
I am quite curious to see her."

"That is a pleasure to come. Your
grandfather could not persuade her to
come over with him this morning."

"Why not?"

"She thought you would prefer having
your mother to yourself without the pres-
ence of strangers."

"So I do; she's right there. But as to
strangers—in the first place, I don't mean
to treat Eileen as a stranger; in the second
place, if the Queen or the Great Mogul
was here they wouldn't trouble me—I
should simply ignore them and just hug
and kiss my dear little mother as if there
were not another person in the wide
world."

"I believe you would, Norman!" cried
Beauchamp.

"Quite right too, my boy!" said the
Colonel delightedly. "He's a chip of the
old block, every inch of him!" the old
man added with complacent pride, but
not specifying which block—for he had
fallen in with the general notion that
Norman "favored the Major," as the ser-
vants expressed it; and he often said to
himself, "The boy is a Gladmore to the
backbone!"

At the luncheon table Norman glanced
round the room lovingly.

"By Jove," he said, "it is good to be
at home! There's no place like it; and there
are no roses like your roses, mother, and
no one arranges flowers as you do. I'd
rather be Beauchamp of Beauchamp
Manor than the Prince of Wales! How
are the puppies?" he added immediately,
and the young Wildrake colt and my
pet Jersey heifer?"

"All well; all thriving."

"That's right. What do you want me
to do after luncheon, mother, dear?"

"My dear boy, what do you want to do
yourself?"

"Had you thought of anything?"

"No—I have thought of nothing but
that you were coming back."

His eyes thanked her and he went on—
"While I run round the stables with
father, will you get ready and let me
drive you over to Gladmore to bring
Eileen back to dinner?"

"You are in a great hurry to see her—
Ah, you needn't smile about it—I am!
Is she really so very athletic?"

"What a word to apply to a lady!"

"Is it? I did not mean to offend; but
when one hears of a girl who rides and
drives, yows and swims and shoots, and
does all well, one feels inclined to ask if
she can box and wrestle also, and almost
expects to be told that she can hit a man
that you'd think you'd been struck by
the foot of a mule."

(To be continued.)

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