

## A PLUCKY WOMAN.

The electric doorbell of No. 27 Flat street, Kitt's mansions, sounded its warning note. And David Stainer, turning from his writing table, kicked aside the waste paper basket with petulance ill becoming a corresponding member of five continental institutes.

Here the opening of the study door brought Mr. Stainer to his feet, at once relieved and dismayed. In place of the youth he had expected to see there stood in his doorway a young woman, bright-eyed, delicate featured and—as even the untrained masculine eye could not fail to perceive—remarkably well dressed.

"Your man told me to walk right in," said a clear, rather high-pitched voice. "But I beg your pardon—I came to see Mr. Stainer. I'd like to apply for that secretaryship, please—the one advertised in Knowledge."

"For a brother, perhaps?" Stainer suggested.

"No, for myself."

"But so much of the work here is unworthy of your powers! Typewriting lecture notes and drudgery of that kind. And I write a shocking hand!" catching weakly at straws after the manner of drowning men.

"I'm a tolerable typist," was the serene rejoinder. "I can bring my own machine, if you like."

After this, what could Stainer do but bow to the decree of fate, and offer to show Miss Rayner the laboratory?

Miss Rayner descended from her inspection with a satisfied air, which caused Mrs. Van Huynh—she sat awaiting her in the carriage at the door of St. Kitt's mansions—to observe sarcastically. "I presume you didn't find your impecunious genius already suited with a typewriter?"

"Well, no. Men with first-class science degrees don't hurry to hire themselves out for the wages of a second-class butler, even in this country."

"And are you sure Mr. Stainer can't afford to hire?"

"Quite sure, Prof. Hiram Taylor knows all Mr. Stainer's circumstances. He has very little money of his own, and he gave up practice as a surgeon five years ago."

"In order to devote his whole life to his precious theory?"

"And the theory? Is he perfectly lovely, too?"

He's big and kind and handsome. Now don't laugh, Lucilla! You know I'd do just the same if he were under-sized and peevish and cross-eyed."

"I believe you, my dear. Still, I'm glad Mr. Stainer's not cross-eyed; it makes things pleasant."

"They'd be pleasant enough—but for the other man."

"What man?"

"Mr. Hensley—who shares the laboratory with Mr. Stainer, and hates him, I think. He looks like a malignant rabbit."

"When do you begin work?"

"Next Monday. You needn't pity me. I'm going to have a beautiful time."

From this time forth Stainer's courtesy became less forbidding. He began to talk to Louise not of his work only, but of the hopes connected with it, and when these flagged and grew faint he turned to his young assistant for sympathy.

"Perhaps," he said, on one of these occasions, "I had better have stuck to the hospital, after all. A surgeon has at least his uses in the world."

"And when the Stainer rays have made of surgery an absolutely exact science, those uses will be multiplied a hundredfold!" Louise retorted.

"We've almost got there, Mr. Stainer—we have, indeed. If you weren't weary this evening you'd see the winning post right in front, as I do."

"You're a good comrade," he said huskily. "Thanks"—and went hastily into his study.

Yes, she was an excellent comrade, but she chose to doubt Hensley's straightness. The next time she hinted her doubts Stainer frowned, and wished she "would dismiss all such uncomfortable notions from her mind."

Nevertheless, from that day forth Stainer abandoned his careless habit of leaving notebooks "all over the place," and self-registering instruments at work in his absence. He even consented to keep his more important papers in a cabinet with a lock.

Louise's satisfaction in these concessions was the greater that she perceived them to displease Robert Hensley. He grew every day more like the malignant rabbit to which she had once unkindly compared him; and even Stainer was struck by his persistent blackness of temper. At length this savage humor found vent in words.

About to leave the laboratory one day, Hensley stopped to inquire:

"Coming, too, Stainer?"

"Not just yet, thanks."

"Of course not"—with a sneer. "I beg your pardon: I forgot the safe and burglar's terror business had yet to be gone through. You seem to have thieves on the brain of late, Stainer."

"I'm of opinion," Louise remarked, "that our friend isn't well fitted for the part in which he's cast himself. He lacks self-control."

The man turned again to his work table with quickened pulses. He had just spread the mathematical formula of his theory, plainly set down in Louise Rayner's clear, bold hand, upon the table, and connected the delicate instruments which were to register its final proof, when the door behind him was violently thrown open, and Hensley's voice called:

"Stainer! Stainer! O, lucky, there

you are! Come with me, quick! Come, I say!"

Hensley, who was bareheaded, appeared to have been running at the top of his speed; leaning against the door jamb, he spoke in short, quick gasps. "Fellow stabbed in Putlowa street—close to the Three Queens. They're afraid he'll bleed to death. The nearest surgeon's out—no other within half a mile. You know something of surgery, or did once."

The speaker paused. And Louise Rayner, behind him, paused also, holding her breath for Stainer's reply.

"There are some glass rubbers in that press"—Hensley dashed to the press in question—"they'll serve for bandages at a pinch. Where's my hat? Thanks! Come along!"

As Stainer swung round, Louise slipped deftly into the shadowy corner on the right of the door, and encased herself. Unconscious of her presence, the two men dashed by her. A moment later she heard Hensley cry in the corridor:

"Second turn to the right, then the first to the left. You're faster than I am—go ahead!"

"I'm delighted he went. I should have hated him if he hadn't gone. But it's hard to-night, of all nights!"

Suddenly her eyes grew bright. "I've helped him so often, why shouldn't I keep record till he comes back?"

She made a movement forward—and had barely time to shrink back into her hiding place as Hensley stepped in.

Having glanced cautiously about him, he closed the door very softly, and tiptoed across the floor to the work table.

His hand was outstretched toward the precious sheet, when another hand, small and white, darting over his shoulder, snatched it away. With a smothered oath Hensley turned to the assistant.

"What does this mean?" he stammered.

"It means," Louise Rayner answered with a smile, "that I don't allow strangers to examine my employer's memoranda in his absence, so you had better—"

Here Miss Rayner came suddenly to a deep stop. She was naturally courageous; but in view of the fury making livid Hensley's countenance, common prudence forbade her continuing her remarks.

"I've had enough of this!" he exclaimed. "Give me that paper—instantly—or it will be the worse for you!"

Louise put her hands behind her. "Shan't!" she responded with child-like brevity.

"Give it to me!" he repeated, twisting the girl's left wrist unmercifully. Louise set her teeth. Slight though she was, she had considerable nervous force, and Hensley was not a powerful man.

"Think!" she panted, half sobbing, for the pain in her arm was nearly intolerable. "What use can it be to you now? I shall tell if I am alive. And to kill me wouldn't mend matters."

"What use?" He mocked her hoarsely. "Well, perhaps, as you say—of none. Good! It shall be of none—to him or any other man. Here goes!"

He raised his arm. One instant's hesitation, and the instruments which represented years of toil and self-denial would have been a heap of ruins.

The banging of a door—the heavy entrance door of the flat—stayed Hensley's menacing advance. Dashed pale, he drew back as Charles, the laboratory man, looked into the room.

"Beg pardon, miss—beg pardon, sir—but Mr. Stainer told me to be here between 7 and 8. I might be wanted."

"Quite right, Charles, you are wanted, as it happens. Mr. Stainer wishes a cab called; he feels ill, and is anxious to get home. Go downstairs with him, please. He may, down stairs, like your arm."

She turned to look straight into Hensley's eyes. "You had better go at once, hadn't you?" she said significantly.

Hensley, his madness spent, followed Charles like a whipped cur, and Louise fell to examining her wrist.

Twenty minutes passed, and then Stainer reappeared.

"You!" he cried, as he caught sight of the slender figure seated at the table. "How's this? You went home."

"I started; but seeing Mr. Hensley around outside I concluded to come back."

"You suspected some trick?"

"With good reason. However, you can afford to laugh at his tricks now, the experiment's been perfectly successful. I've taken notes at every stage, and—just see here."

With a pale smile of triumph she held out her sheet of paper, covered now with mysterious symbols, and dropped back, limp and colorless.

"Something has happened. What's the matter?"

Louise made a heroic effort to sit upright.

"I've hurt my arm a little, that's all. He tried to get the formula, but he failed. Here it is, now the worse—oh, yes! a corner torn off. I see. I'll write it out fresh to-morrow morning. The rays will be Stainer rays—always."

"Hang the rays!" Stainer responded uncivilly. "Great heavens! to think you should have been hurt, actually hurt!" He stopped and kissed the little hand that wrought so bravely in his defence. "I can't thank you," he murmured. "If I only dared believe that it wasn't altogether for the rays you did this thing!"

"And this," Mrs. Van Huynh remarked ironically next day, "is the end of a purely scientific enthusiasm! I'm disappointed in you, Louise. I did think you loved research."—Home Chat.

## DESERT SCREECH-OWL.

Some of the Characteristics of This Peculiar Bird.

In Arizona the owl lives mostly in holes in the ground and in holes in the giant cactus. It would be contrary to their predatory nature to dig their own holes or yet to build nests of sticks while there were other available nesting places. So every spring-time there is a lot of trouble among the desert chipmunks and ground squirrels until the burrowing owls have chosen their holes and settled down for the season. Similarly the Gila woodpeckers and gilded flickers have no assurance that their holes in the saguaros are their own until after the screech owls and pigmy owls have been established in comfort. Possession is all the law there is in the Arizona cactus and desert, and in case of a dispute, the owls eat little chipmunks and flickers, anyway.

All day in the cool depths of his hole the screech owl hides from the heat and glare. As the sun sinks he comes out and fills silently toward the river bottom, where the mice and kangaroo rats are already beginning to play on the sand patches and to bustle through the willows and arrowweed thickets. The quail and smaller birds are hid away in the bushes, and around the old logs and stumps great yellow scorpions and beetles are picking their way. At the slightest movement of a blade of grass the screech owl swoops to the ground, and when he is not ranging the flats for mammals, he is searching bunches of mistletoe and dense mesquite trees for the birds which lie hidden here.

He does not scorn the scorpion and beetles, nor yet grasshoppers and smaller bugs. At the same time he will tackle rabbit or twitch a pocket gopher from his hole by the head. He swallows his prey whole, and, after digestion has taken place, throws up the bones and fur in the shape of pellets. It is by looking for pellets beneath woodpeckers' holes in cottonwoods and saguaros that naturalists are able to locate the homes of these owls.—Country Life in America.

Gen. Kuropatkin's Fearlessness.

Gen. Kuropatkin's hold over men is due to his reputation for absolute fearlessness. Five years ago he received the information that the great powder magazine at St. Petersburg and that at Toulon, France, were to be blown up within twenty-four hours.

The general was in bed when he heard the news, but he at once got up and started for St. Petersburg without losing a moment. He summoned all the staff of the magazine and went on a round of inspection. He found everything in order, and as a proof of his satisfaction ordered every one in the magazine to take three days' holiday and to leave at once. He then collected a new garrison and a new staff and set a ring of sentries all round the magazine. The consequence was that nothing happened to St. Petersburg magazine, but that at Toulon was blown up the next day.

The Cathedral of Alexander Nevskoi St. Petersburg, is said to have the finest choir in the world. It is composed of about thirty of the best voices in the Russian monasteries. Whenever a novice with an exceptionally good voice is entered he is sent to the monastery of Alexander Nevskoi, where he is trained as carefully as an opera singer, and remains there doing nothing except assisting at the music at mass in the morning, and vespers in the afternoon until he becomes aged, when he is retired on a pension.

Russia's "Minstrel Boy."

The minstrel boy to the war has gone, or is going. It is announced by the Novosti that a number of venerable Kobzars are proceeding to Manchuria to encourage the young soldiers to fight—a Kobzar being a species of Russian bard, who chants rousing songs to the accompaniment of a kind of harp. Doubtless the Kobzars will not follow the example of the minstrel Taillefer, who rode into action in front of the whole Norman army at the battle of Hastings, "tossing his sword in the air and catching it again, while he chanted the song of Roland," and was the first to fall. The tendency of modern armies is to economize their musicians.—London Outlook.

Russia's "Two-Headed Eagle."

Russia's imperial two-headed eagle was first assumed by Ivan Basilovitch, when in 1472 he married Sophia, daughter of Thomas Palaeologus, and niece of Constantine XIV., the last emperor of Byzantium. The two heads symbolize the eastern or Byzantine empire and the western or Roman empire.

What Makes the Japs Short.

Some observers say that in all probability the next generation, or the next but one, of the Japanese will be as tall as the average European. It is the custom of sitting upon the ankles, instead of upon a chair, that explains the shortness of the Japanese leg. The arteries are kinked by the cramped position, and so the growing bones are not properly nourished. The Japanese spine is just of a length with that of the average European or American; indeed, all persons differ in height rather by reason of leg than of back. The length of the spinal column is singularly constant among various individuals and races.

Dolls are displayed in the cottage windows of Serbia. They are intended as a sign to wayfarers that a marriageable daughter dwells in the house.

## TWO OLD MEN.

How a Clergyman Aged 60, Was Taken for 100.

Edmund J. James, the president of the Northwestern University, was traveling some months ago, with a clergyman. The clergyman, a man of about sixty, looks older than he really is; a fact of which he hates to be reminded.

At a small rural station an aged and bent farmer, panting violently, boarded the train.

"I have had to run," he said, "nearly half a mile to catch these cars. Then, addressing himself to Prof. James's companion, he went on:

"It's a bad job, sir, when old folks like you and me has to run."

The clergyman, frowning, asked the farmer how old he was.

"I'm eighty-six," was the reply.

"Oh," said the clergyman, "there is twenty years' difference between you and me."

"Goodness, sir," exclaimed the old man, "you don't mean to tell me you're 106?"—Boston Post.

No Trade.

Two Rockland men were negotiating to swap horses the other day when suddenly the younger man paused, scratched his head as if to recall something, and said, quizzically:

"Didn't I go to your place once when I was a boy to buy a horse, and didn't you try to induce me to buy one whose knees were so badly sprung that each foreleg almost made a right angle?"

"Believe you did," replied the other.

"Yes, I now recall it distinctly," said the younger man. "You told me that the knee springing was caused by feeding the horse from too high a manger, didn't you—and that if I took the horse home and fed him from the floor that the knees would spring back?"

"Believe I did," answered the other. "Then I guess I won't swap horses with you, Glang."—Lewiston Journal.

Not the Same.

A fat woman moved down the aisle of the sleeping car just as the porter gave the "first call for breakfast in the dining car," and poked with her umbrella at upper berth 10.

"Kitty!" she shouted. "Where are you? Is that you up there?"

There was no response.

The fat woman beat a tattoo on the brass curtain rod and shouted again, "Kitty, Kitty! Why don't you answer me? Kitty, breakfast is ready! Kitty, I say, Kitty! are you there?"

A large red face, with long, flowing whiskers on the lower half appeared at the opening between the curtains of upper 10, and a deep husky voice, said:

"My name is George."

The fat woman fled.—Baltimore Sun.

"Buffalo Bill's" Story.

Col. William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) has always a story to tell, and he told this one yesterday at an Irishman whom he employed on his ranch in Wyoming: "Pat has been only a few months in this country, and, of course, is as green as Kentucky grass to our ways. Strolling through the streets of Wyoming City one day recently with a fellow workman on the ranch, he noticed in the window of a store a sign with the words, 'Shoes blackened inside.' Pat stared at the notice and exclaimed: 'That the devil do people want with the inside of their boots blackened.'"

Out of the Ordinary.

"The pies my mother used to make," began the young husband, "were—"

"That will do, sir," interrupted the fair bride, who had manufactured a pie all by herself. "Comparisons are odious."

"Were mud pies," calmly continued the young man. "Our folks always boarded, and they were the only kind she ever tried to make."

Will He Do This Later?



She—When we have the wireless telegraphy, what will those poor birds do who stand out there on the wire?"

He—They'll do as I do now, dear."

She—How is that?

He—Hang on your words, dear."

A Bad Combination.

"I'm a lightning calculator," said the applicant for the bookkeeping position.

"Then you'll not do here," replied the proprietor of the powder works, "you'd blow up the institution."—Detroit Free Press.

## THE REWARD.

Homeward through the dark and gloom of a November evening, through the dark night air and gathering fog, along a narrow street, and over slippery crossings, across the great bridge with the yawning darkness on either side, and down the mean streets of southern London, wearily but steadily Mary MacAllister bent her way.

Three years of hard work as a typist in a city office, three years of lonely struggle with fortune, had robbed Mary's cheek of the bloom it boasted when she was nineteen, but still she strode on her way, morning and evening, backward and forward, to and from the city, where her work lay, a brave, earnest-minded, steady-eyed woman, a typical figure of London's women workers.

Sometimes for a moment her mind would stray from the dark, close confines of the gloomy fields and hedgerows which from boyhood she had looked upon as hers in time to come. Now and again as she ate her solitary meal in her poor little room in the shabby house in a third-rate street just beyond "the Elephant," the memory of the plenty in the old days brought a shadow for a moment, and then the memory of Dick—her Dick—would chase the little cloud away. If Dick could be brave and go away to Africa to win a fortune for her, she would be brave, too. Dick had faced the crash, which four years ago had ruined alike his father and hers, quietly and uncomplainingly. She had refused his offer to release her from her engagement to him, and with mutual protestations of love and fidelity they had parted—he to seek wealth across the seas, she to earn her living as best she could in the great world of London.

Mary's letter from Dick was carefully folded, in her little workbox. They told of progress, slow but sure, until—until—eighteen months before, when the black cloud of war lowered, and ruin had for the second time in his young life stopped at Dick Herick's door.

With the first clash of arms his employment ceased, the land he had invested his savings in was seized by the Boers, while he himself was commandeered and imprisoned as the result of his refusing to fight against his own countrymen. Since then—since she had lived at her present address—no news had come to lighten her sorrow, to relieve her anxiety.

On her doorstep she met her landlady, Mrs. Bird, who had been peeping round the corner. Mrs. Bird was well meaning, but rather intrusive, and sometimes more than aggressive.

"You are late this evening," Mrs. Bird asserted, tartly.

"Yes—I am, rather," nervously responded Mary. "I was a little behind at the office, and I've walked."

"Walked, a night like this! Then you'd no business. S'pose you caught cold and got laid up?"

"The buses were full, and I—I couldn't afford a cab, you know," Mary answered, smiling gently.

"No, in course, though you might do that a night like this if you didn't go saddle yourself with that foreign addler man upstairs."

Mrs. Bird closed the door with an angry little bang as she followed Mary into the passage.

"Oh, hush, please, Mrs. Bird; think how ill the poor fellow has been."

"Ill—course he has, and you, with all you can do to keep yourself, must go and look after him. Nonsense, that's what I call it! What do we pay rates for, and keep up that there palace round the corner for, if it ain't for such as him?"

"But, you don't understand, Mrs. Bird; he is not a common man; he is an artist and a gentleman. He would kill him to be sent to such a place—I know—I feel it—just as it would kill me to be sent there. Our artist fogs have brought him to death's door, and as he has laid himself out there—delicious, ravishing—his tongue has told me the tale of his sunny home away yonder in Italy, of the poverty which drove him here to earn his bread, of his music, which is like life to him. And now—now he is better, he is patient still for a little longer. I will give him all the attention I can, and save you as much as possible. The money that is owing you I will pay, gladly, willingly, a little at a time. See, here is some that I have earned working late. Take it, and let me have my own way, won't you? Ah, you will! Thank you, Mrs. Bird. As I tend him and help him, poor fellow, so I pray that a woman's hand may help the man I love should he need it."

She turned slowly and mounted the stairs.

"You are better—ah, I'm so glad. Now, lie still, or I shall be angry?"

"Angry, you, cara mia! Ah, but no—how can an angel be angry?"

Mary smiled. "Your illness has not made you forget your compliments," she said lightly.

Mary MacAllister had stolen into the sick man's room, after taking off her hat and jacket, and had found him up and dressed and sitting in front of the fire.

The firelight shone on his handsome face, so drawn and pale, on his hands, so thin and white. Mrs. Bird had during the day given off some of "her views," and Carlo Terrilli knew for the first time what Mary MacAllister had done for him in the hour of his extremity.

"Compliments! What words of mine can be called compliments, after what you have done for me?"

Mary started. "You know?"

"Yes, she good Signora Bird has told me."

"Then she ought not to have done so. It is nothing—nothing, I repeat."

Two years later Mary Herick had ed down into the face of her son, born. With the money which had poured in on her like a golden stream from Carlo Terrilli's work he had band had fought and won his cause, and was now on his way to becoming a South African millionaire. With opulence around her, a carriage adorned, and a husband who worshipped at her side, there was yet a vacant sadness in her look as she gazed at her little one. Her husband caught her glance, and laid his hand gently on her shoulder.

"You have something to tell me, haven't you?"

"Yes, a little, dear," she murmured.

"What could I tell you, dear?"

"Let our little one be named Carlo."

"Your name was Carlo, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but I don't want my son to be named after me."

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