

### EVA'S STEPMOTHER

"I shall never forget you," said Eva Chaloner, with her dark, fresh face bathed in tears and her black eyes swimming amid a mist of them. "You shall always remain, though hundreds of miles separate us, Kate, the dearest friend that I have ever possessed."

Eva spoke thus on the day of graduating from boarding school. She and Kate Broome were bidding each other a long farewell. Kate's protestations were not so warm as Eva's, for hers was the calmer as also the stronger nature of the two.

When Eva returned to the spacious country home in which her earliest childhood days had been passed, she had a feeling of intense loneliness. She missed boarding school and she missed the dear face of Kate Broome, her idol and idea.

Eva's mother had died in her childhood, she had been the only offspring of Mrs. Chaloner's youthful union. Eva loved her father, and perhaps if he had been at home during the present period she would have felt far less lonely.

At first Eva and Kate corresponded with great regularity and frequency. In one of her letters Eva confidentially wrote:

"It makes me sad to have papa away for so long a time. But now and then, Kate, another wreath of thought enters my head. It is a thought that fills me with actual horror. I have a dread lest papa may marry again. You can't imagine how I detest the idea of a stepmother. I shiver, now, as I write the word."

Mrs. Russell Ogden, a distant relative of ours, is now in Washington, and she writes me quite often. The other day she had a sentence in her letter which set my heart beating. It referred to papa, suggesting that of course the chances of his marrying again were decidedly strong.

"Now, Kate, as I know you are going to Washington before very long, I want you to promise me that you will keep a sharp eye on papa during your visit there. Tell me, if he is devoted to anybody, and, in that case, just how devoted. You will no doubt move in the same social circles. Do not forget my injunctions, now, there is a dear, good girl."

Kate Broome did go to Washington, not long afterward, and there she met, for the first time, the father of her dear friend. Mr. Chaloner was very much courted in society, and deservedly so, he was brilliant, talented and handsome.

Kate said nothing whatever about her friendship with his daughter on her first meeting with Mr. Chaloner. Her somehow had a curiosity to observe this famed politician, as one whom he believed a perfect stranger both to him and his.

Kate was never what is termed a good letter-writer, and she now neglected Eva shamefully. She found that she could not go to balls and receptions and at the same time correspond at all faithfully with Eva, and she now wrote her friend an occasional scribbled sort of note, saying so.

Meanwhile Eva became literary nurtured, and almost wholly ceased writing to her friend.

But one day Mrs. Russell Ogden sent her from Washington a communication that burst upon her like an actual bomb-shell. Her father was reported to be engaged.

Mrs. Ogden could not give the name of the lady as absolutely certain. She had heard it but then her memory for names was so peculiar.

Eva's relative then went on to say that she had met Mr. Chaloner and his new fiancée together on Pennsylvania avenue that very day. At the end of the letter came a postscript which ran thus:

"I have remembered the lady's name. It is Brush. But of course your father will write you immediately."

Eva was in a perfectly wild state. The next mail brought a note from her father, telling her of his engagement to Mrs. Browne, and promising that he would very soon write her more fully.

The note was in her father's proverbial handwriting, which was so illegible as a riddle, that only those most familiar with its dark ways could make it out.

Eva was by no means sure whether the title was "Mrs." or "Miss" Browne, though the "Browne" part seemed indisputable.

Eva now wrote her father a passionately reproachful letter. She blamed him for being a heartless, cruel parent. His wife spoke with bitter rebuke of her dead mother's memory.

It was the sort of letter she had no possible right to send. And it was followed by three weeks of dead silence on the part of her father.

At the end of these three weeks, the unhappy girl was in an almost desperate condition. She longed to ask her father's forgiveness, and yet pride restrained her.

At last, one morning, a telegram came to Eva which ran briefly thus:

"I was married a week ago in London. My wife and I will arrive at the seaside this afternoon or evening."  
—THEODORE CHALONER.

Poor Eva passed the rest of the day in the most miserable suspense. At about 6 o'clock that evening she heard a carriage stop before the front entrance. After that, with beating heart and failing limbs, she slowly descended into the lower main hall.

Here her father met her. He kissed her as if nothing had happened, making no reference whatever to her upbraiding letter.

"My wife has gone into the sitting room," he said, and quietly drew Eva toward that apartment.

A lady came forward to meet Eva, though as lamps had not yet been brought and the chamber was filled with the deepening dusk, the lady's face did not dawn upon Theodore Chaloner's daughter until she was quite close to her. And then a great surprised exclamation burst from her lips.

"Why, Kate Broome," she cried, and an instant later she had kissed her dearly beloved friend on either cheek.

"Not Kate Broome any longer," was the soft, tranquil answer. "I am Kate Chaloner now. Perhaps you can't realize it all at once, Eva, and perhaps you won't like it when you do, but I've come to live here as your stepmother."

Eva stared at the speaker in mute amazement for certainly ten seconds, and then with a sudden outburst of tears, she threw both arms around Kate's neck.

"Oh, it seems like a dream," she sobbed. "It's too good to be true." After a few moments, her elderly creature who would be a tyrant to me, no, no, I shall wake up soon it can't be."

"Yes; but it certainly is," said Kate, with her rare, brilliant smile. "You see, Eva, I only found out that the most sudden way that your father cared for me. He wrote you immediately after our engagement a short note, if you remember, saying that he would explain hereafter."

"And calling you 'Mrs. Browne,'" exclaimed Eva, who was still in tears. "That was the fault of his bad handwriting, he meant to write 'Miss Broome'."

"And I suppose now," continued Eva, "that Papa's reason for not afterward writing and telling me everything was—"

"Your bitter, unjust, unfeeling note, Eva," said a grave voice in the doorway, which Mr. Chaloner's stately form was just then darkening.

"I understand," murmured Eva, penitently. "But you forgive me, papa, don't you? I acted hastily, impulsively, and I had such a horror of a stepmother, you know. Kate is a very different affair. She will be a comfort—a downright delight. We shall have glorious times together. And I shan't be jealous a bit, papa, of her love for you. But I hope that both of you can spare me a little love."

"We promise to spare you a great deal," said Mr. Chaloner, kissing Eva. And Kate with another kiss for her new stepdaughter, softly repeated his words.

#### HERMIT FOR THIRTEEN YEARS.

James Mason in Complete Seclusion at Great Cannell, England.

For over thirteen years James Mason has lived in complete seclusion at Great Cannell, in Essex. Gossips of the neighborhood declare that his retirement from human society is in fulfillment of a vow he made after being jilted in a love affair. He vowed that he would never look upon the face of a woman again, and in time his vow came to include the face of man as well. Mason is now forty-seven years of age, and only three men, including his brother, have during his thirteen years' seclusion caught a glimpse of him.

The other day, however, a newspaper representative tried to break through the hermit's veil of isolation. The enclosure covers more than an acre of ground, is surrounded by a very high and thick hedge, and along the bottom barbed wire is stretched, so that it is almost impossible for any one to effect an entrance. On the outer side of the main fence is a ditch ten feet deep and twelve feet wide, the earth being banked up so as to form a barricade twenty feet high, and on the top of this another thick hedge is planted. The work must have taken one man twelve months to complete, and was done twelve years ago by the hermit all in the night time.—London Chronicle.

#### SELECTIONS.

Too often the rice of liberty is prohibitory.

Nature turns the wine of intellect into vinegar.

Truth is certainly stranger than fiction to many people.

Now you can get a square meal in the form of a round table.

Some families keep boarders and some others are kept by them.

Perhaps the plot of a play is allowed to thicken so it can't leak out.

Many a man reaches his charitable limit when he dispenses free advice.

You may have observed that it is only the fools who disagree with you.

A man often boasts of ancestors who would probably be ashamed to recognize him.

The present gets away from a lot of people who are sitting on park benches worrying about the future.

Hot Meal Without a Fire.

Readers of the war news will have noticed one or two references to the fact that tinned meats for the Russian troops are prepared by a process which enables the contents of each tin to be served hot without a fire. This boon is secured by having the ordinary tins filled with food "jacketed" in patent tins. The patent tin contains water, together with a chemical mixture, by means of which the water can be raised to boiling point in ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour. All that is necessary to do when it is desired to heat the food is to puncture the top of the patent tin, the chemical mixture being thereby forced into the water which soon begins to boil.—London Truth.

Too Much Wit.

An English student tells that when he was attending school at Leipzig the feeling regarding the Boer war ran high. The Germans eagerly exulting over any news of British defeat. One of the university professors was the most rabid pro-Boer. One day he posted a notice announcing that there would be a meeting of the professors to protest against the action of England in South Africa and that the meeting would be held in the zoological gardens. An English student was bold enough to write under the notice, "and a very good place, too," but he had to leave the university on account of his wit.

A Coronation Custom.

"A Pseudo chief in very olden days," says a writer on the Kafirs of South Africa, "on accession to the throne would kill one of his brothers and wash in his blood to strengthen his belief and then would keep his medicine in the skull of the dead brother—a practice which raised the power of the medicine to the 'nth,' as mathematicians would say. If a warrior of conspicuous bravery is killed in war his body is made into a medicine and administered to the young men to make them brave—a practice which may well have been the basis of cannibalism."

Lord Roseberry's Two Pleasures.

Lord Roseberry once said to me: "There are two supreme pleasures in a man's life. One is ideal, the other real. The ideal joy is when a man receives the seals of office at the hands of his Sovereign; the real pleasure comes when he carries them back."—London Magazine.

Days of Rain and Snow.

Daniel Briggs of Mechanic Falls, Me., furnishes the following facts which are taken from his daily journal: From May 1, 1836, to May 1, 1904, 56 years, it has rained 5,752 days, and in the same length of time it has snowed 2,663 days.

Making Carbon Paper.

The process of making carbon paper and typewriter ribbons has never been patented, and is known to scarcely two dozen people in the world. It is a trade secret which has been handed down from father to son for about a century.

#### NO MONEY IN CIRCULATION.

Inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha Have No Jails or Schools as Well.

Folk who hold that money is the root of all evil may find support for that belief in the case of Tristan da Cunha. For, though geographically white folk inhabit this speck of an island in the South Atlantic, there is no money in circulation among them, and, significantly enough, there also is no wronging of any description. Wrote a recent visitor to the island: "Money would be useless, for there is nothing to buy." And he continued: "Living in honesty, sobriety, and harmony, free apparently from all crime, vice, dissension, or double dealing, the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha seem unconsciously to have carried out the purpose entertained by the original settler in 1811, Jonathan Lambert, by keeping themselves 'beyond the reach of chicanery and ordinary misfortune.' They have no written laws. All being law-abiding, they need none, each doing what seemeth right in his own eyes. They have no jail. Crime among them being unknown, such an institution would be a superfluity. They have no form of government and pay no taxes. They enjoy perfect independence and freedom which never degenerates into license. The community is absolutely moral."—Los Angeles Times.

Americans Should Spank

The crown prince of the throne of Belgrade, a lad of seventeen, fell in love with an actress. The king sent for his son, laid him across his knee, and spanked him, curing him of his folly. If royalty can spank, why should it not become a fashion? The son of an American citizen who disgraces his parents should be spanked, and while the American citizen has his knee in position, let a few pats be given to the daughter who loves the wrong man; who goes to the depot to flirt with strangers, and who loafs the streets instead of helping mother at home.—Atchison Globe.

Spats Worn by Highland Soldiers.

Where did spats come from? Highland soldiers wore them first.

Because of the bravery of Highlanders at Lucknow and elsewhere in India during the Indian mutiny the people of England looked about for some way to show their admiration. Scrudery of the Highlands dress disclosed that spats were the most suitable for adoption, so they were adopted and have been commonly worn ever since.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Early History of Coffee.

The use of coffee beans was first known to the Abyssinians, but the employment of coffee as a beverage was first recorded in the fifteenth century.

Two varieties of "gophus" were known. One was a preparation from the shells of the seeds, which was known as "gophyrus," and one from the seeds proper, which was known as "bounayt."—Bulletin of Pharmaceutical Science.

Shoes for a Giant.

A Calumet, Mich., shoemaker has just finished a pair of shoes for Louis Mollenen, known as the Quincy Hill Giant. Mollenen is nineteen years old, stands seven feet eight inches in height, and tips the scales at 300 pounds. The shoes are sixteen and one-quarter inches in length, six inches in width and weigh five pounds each. Mollenen will use them while at work in the Quincy mines where he is employed.

#### A SCHOOL MISTRESS'S ADVENTURE.

In the winter of 1874-75 I was teaching a country school in Ohio, not far from the village of Medina. I was a girl only seventeen years old, and weighing less than a hundred pounds, and those who knew me would have laughed at the idea of my having any presence of mind in the face of danger.

It was a walk of a mile to the farmhouse where I was boarding, and in stormy weather I was conveyed to and fro in a sleigh. It was clearly understood that should it come on to snow and bluster during the day the farmer was to come for me at the close of school. In ordinary weather the walk was one to be enjoyed. Just after noon on the 13th day of January, it began to snow and blow in the most furious manner, while the temperature fell twenty degrees inside of two hours.

We had a snug brick school house, a large pile of dry wood, and no one knew how cold it was, until school was dismissed for the day. Then there were many complaints from the scholars, but all finally got away and I was left alone to wait for the farmer's sleigh, which I had every reason to believe would soon be at the door.

It was almost dark at four o'clock, and I got my things on and sat down by the stove and waited three-quarters of an hour before beginning to wonder why Farmer Watkins did not drive up. We had a couple of lamps, and I lit one and began to work on an intricate mathematical problem. Time slipped fast away and when I got up it was half past five. I then felt that some accident had happened my friends and they would not come for me, and I decided to look it home.

I had not left the school house a hundred feet behind when I realized that I must return to it. The wind was blowing at the rate of fifty miles an hour and directly in my face. While the air was full of snow that one could not see six feet away, that night the thermometer registered 17 degrees below zero, and much live stock froze to death.

It was a bit lonesome when I returned to the schoolhouse and let myself in and felt the little structure trembling under the rising gale, but I relighted the lamps, brought in a lot of wood from the store room, and found enough of my noonday meal left in the basket to take the edge of my hunger off. I had no idea of being obliged to pass the night there, but confidently expected to be called for at any moment.

It had come to eight o'clock and I was getting very nervous, when the outside door opened and I heard a step in the hall. I jumped up to close the stove door and turn up the lights, but before I had accomplished the latter object the door opened and I walked a total stranger. He was covered with snow and his face was drawn down until most of his face was hidden. He did not seem to even glance at me, but advanced to the stove, shook off the snow, pulled off cap and overcoat, and then held his hands to the warmth.

I was what you might justly term dumbfounded. There was no fear of him, but his unexpected advent and the cool manner in which he acted quite took my breath away for a couple of minutes. However, I finally found voice to inquire:

"Did Uncle Bill send you for me?"

He looked me in the eyes for a few seconds, then walked through to the outer door, locked it, came back to one inner door and locked that, and as he slipped the key into his pocket, he said:

"This is going to be a bitter cold night."

A faintness came over me as he spoke, and I had to sit down. We were on the opposite sides of the stove, and I saw that he was a man of about thirty years, medium height, slight build, and respectable appearance. There was nothing about him of the tramp or tough, and his voice was pleasant one. I was certain I had never seen him before, and I also felt from the first that there was something wrong in his coming the way he did. A belated or storm-bound traveler would have been full of remarks and questions, and he would not have locked the doors on us.

I looked him over like one in a dream. I felt a great loneliness and a great fear, yet I could not help but watch him. He did not return my gaze. Now and then his eyes met mine, but for the most part he was looking carelessly around the room or at the stovepipe. By and by he came to me that he was an innkeeper, and for half a minute I shut my eyes and had the hardest kind of a fight to keep from fainting away. When I opened them I was regarding me with a cunning leer, and directly he said:

"You think you will run away from school, but I shall have my eye on you all the time. School will now begin."

He went to my desk and rang his hand bell in a vigorous manner, picked up a ruler and a book, and then said to me:

"Class in orthography come forward."

While, as I told you, I was terribly frightened, I had the presence of

mind to deal with him. I began to recite, when he said:

"His command a second time forward to a recitation book, began giving out words for me to spell. This lesson was not over when he again looked at me and was soothed."

After the first few words he began to pronounce backward. When he gave out the word 'adversus' he pronounced it 'coral'. When he gave the right pronunciation and began to spell it in a proper way he interrupted me with:

"Stop! This word has been used on too last for the last fifty years and must stop or be thrown off its axis. We must go backward when we can."

In pursuance of his theory he pronounced the word 'fall' as 'fiall', and I learned him by spelling words that way. After about half an hour he laid the book down, complained me on my mistakes and during a recess of five minutes he walked in and down the floor, with his head down and his arms behind him, like one in deep thought. Thus far he had betrayed no temper nor sign of violence and I began to breathe easier. I even calculated that it might be possible to trick him.

His presently called me up to recite in geography, and here his inanity was still more apparent. When he asked me what an island was, and received the answer as given in the lesson, he struck the desk with his ruler and exclaimed:

"It is not so. We have been taught an island is a hill 100 feet high, and these apocryphs knew it all the time."

It was 11 o'clock at night when he ceased asking questions in geography. Then I asked permission to go home and get my slate pencil. He acceded to it, but as I reached the locked door he called:

"No, you can't go. You are one of the children who spit on the floor, to-day, and I shall keep you here."

From 11 to 12 I sat in a chair near the stove, while he paced up and down the room and muttered and mumbled in a strange way to himself. Whenever the fire got low I replenished it, but got objections from him, and did not seem aware of the warm rays of the side.

Just after midnight he began his work examples on the blackboard, an hour, and once or twice he became very much excited. At one time he said:

"Theory I must not forget. I have two make four, but that is not what I mean. This was a mistake in the world book. After a few minutes' recitation in grammar, he began reading, and at 1 o'clock he began to tell me tales and to sing to me. His recitation being: 'A boy and a girl were married. The boy had a dog and the girl had a cat. They were married in the year 1800.'"

Then, without even pausing, he began to read from a book which he had been carrying with him, and which he opened out into the stove, and began to read. I sat and watched him while he read, and when he had finished he said:

"I have read to you the best part of my 'brave' schoolmaster who was in the year 1800. He was a very old man, and a very good one. He had a dog and a cat, and he was married in the year 1800. He was a very good man, and he was a very good one.""

Not until you have seen him you can understand how I felt. He was a very old man, and a very good one. He had a dog and a cat, and he was married in the year 1800. He was a very good man, and he was a very good one."

On my way home I saw a dog and a cat, and I was married in the year 1800. He was a very good man, and he was a very good one."