By May Agnes Fleming.



peg or two, murter." "But you know, Mr. Harkins, it's been found out since he wasn't the one who stole the plate, at all. That man they arrested for murder, and are going to hang, confessed he did it. I'm sure you might have seen it in the papers, Mr. Harkins."

"I don't put no faith hin the papers, myself," said Mr. Harkins, in a severe tone; "they hain't to be believed, none of 'em. Hif they says one thing, you may be sure hit's just hexactly the tother. That there's my opinion."

"But, Mr. Harkins, look here." said Mr. Toosypegs, deeply impressed with this profound view of the newspaper press in general, "I dare say that's true enough, and it's real sensible of you to say so; but in this rase it must be true. Why, they're going to hang the man, Mr. Harkins, and he confessed he did that, along with ever so many other unlawful things. I wonder if hanging hurts Mr. Harkins?" said Mr. Toosypegs, involuntarily loosening his neck-cloth as he thought of it.

"Well, I don't know," returned Mr. Harkins, thoughtfully, "I never was anged myself, but I had a cousin who married a vidder." Here, Mr. Harkins, taking advantage of a moment's unguarded proximity, gave Mr. Toosypegs a facetious dig in the ribs, which caused that ill-used young gentleman to spring back with something like a howl.

"You don't know how sharp your elbow is, Mr. Harkins; and my ribs are real thin. I ain't used to such treatment, and it hurts," said Mr. Toosypegs ?"

"I have heerd it was honly their shins as was tender hin Hamerica," said Mr. Harkins. "When are you goin' back to Hamerica, Mr. Toosypegs ?"

Not before a year-perhaps two, said Mr. Toosypegs, brightening suddenly up. "And I tell you what, Mr. Harkins, America is a real nice place, and I'll be ever so glad to get back to it. There was the nicest people round were we lived that ever was." went on Mr. Toosypegs, getting enthusiastic. "There was Judge Lawless, up at Heath Hill; and old 'Admiral Havenful, at the White Squall, and lots of other folks. Where I lived was called Dismal Hollow, owing to its being encircled by huge black rocks on all sides, and a dark pine forest on the other."

"Pleasant place it must 'ave been," said Mr. Harkins, with a strong

"Well it wasn't so pleasant as you might think," seriously replied Mr. Toosypegs, on whom his companion's sarcasm was completely thrown away; "the sun never shone there, and as Dismal Creek, that run right before the house, got swelled up every time it rained, the house always made a point of getting flooded, and so we lived most of the time in the attic in the spring. There were runaway-niggers in the woods, too, who used to steal and do a good many other nasty things, so it wasn't safe to go out at night."

"Wot ever made you leave such nice place?" said Mr. Harkins, with a little suppressed chuckle.

"Why, Mr. Harkins, I may tell you as a friend, for I know you won't mention it again," said Mr. Toosypegs, lowering his voice to a deeplyconfidential and strictly private cad-

"My pa died when I was a little shaver about so-year-old, and ma and I were pretty poor, to be candid about it. Well, then, three years ago my ma died which was a serious infliction to me, Mr. Harkins, and was left plunged in deepest sorrow and poverty. The niggers worked 'the farm, and I was employing my time in cultivating a pair of whiskers to alleviate my grief when I received a letter from an uncle here in England, telling me to come right on, and, if he liked me he'd make me his heir when he died. That's what brought me here, Mr. Harkins; and I'm stopping with my uncle and his sister, who is an unmarried woman of forty-five or so."

"Hand the hold chap's 'live yet?" Inquired Mr. Harkins.

"Mr. Harkins, my uncle, I am hap-Py to say, still exists," answered Mr.

Toosypegs, gravely. "Humph! 'As he got much pew-

ter, Mr. Toosypegs ?" "Much what?" said the mild owner of the freckles. "You'll excuse me, I hope, Mr. Harkins, but I really don't understand."

"Green," muttered Mr. Harkins, contemptuously to himself. Then aloud: "'Ow much do you think he'll leave you ?"

"Well, about two thousand pounds or so," said Mr. Toosypegs, compla-

"Two-thousand poun' !" slowly articulated the astounded Mr. Harkins. "O my heye !-w'y, you'll be rich, Mr. Toosypegs! What will you do with all that there money?"

"Why, my aunt, Miss Priscilla Dorothea Toosypegs, and I are going home to Maryland (that's where I used to live, Mr. Harkins), and we're going to fit up the old place and live there. Aunt Priscilla never was in America, and wants to see it real

"Two - thousand - poun'," still more slowly repeated Mr. Harkins. "Well, things is 'stonishing. Just think hof me now, the honest and "ard-working father of ten children, hand you won't catch nobody going hand dying hand leaving me one single blessed brass farden, while here's a cove more'n 'alf a hass. I

a guinea or two, would

"Why, certainly, Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosypegs, briskly, drawing out his purse. "I'm real happy to be able to be of service to you. Here's two guineas, and don't put yourself out about paying it."

"Mr. Toosypegs, you're a brick !" said Mr. Harkins, grasping his hand with emotion. "I won't put myself hout in the least, since you're kind enough to request it; but hif you'll come and dine with me some day, I'll give you a dinner of b'iled pertaters and roast honions fit for a king. Will you come ?" urged Mr. Harkins. "Certainly I will, Mr. Harkins;

and it's real kind in you to ask me," said Mr. Toosypegs, politely. "I see you're in a hurry, so I'll bid you good-day, now. Most certainly I'll come, Mr. Harkins. I'm obliged to you."

CHAPTER IX.

And how fell the news of Reginald Germaine's innocence of the crime for which he was condemned, and his sad end, on the other personages, connected with our tale?

To his mother came the news in her far-off greenwood home; and as she heard he had perished forever in the stormy sea, Reason, already tottering in her half-crazed brain, entirely gave way and she fled, a shrieking maniac, through the dim,

To Earl De Courcy it came in his stately home, to fill his heart with deepest sorrow and remorse. Hauntingly before him arose the agonized. despairing face of the lonely woman, as on that last night, she had grov- to meet the full, falcon gaze, flasheled at his feet, shrieking for that mercy he had refused. Proud, stern man as he was, no words can express the deep pity, the heartfelt sorrow he felt, at the thought of that lonely. despairing, childless woman, a wanderer over the wide world.

To Lord Ernest Villiers it came. bringing deepest regret for the boldeyed, high-hearted youth, so unjustly condemned, so wrongly accused. He thought of him as he knew him first-proud, princely, handsome, and generous. And now! that young life, under the unjust sentence of the law, had passed away; that haughty head, noble even in its degradation, lay far under the deep sea, among the bleaching bones of those guilthardened men.

To one, in her father's castle halls. it came, bringing untold relief. He had cruelly wronged her; but he was dead now, and she freely forgave him for all she had suffered. While he lived, incurable sorrow must be hers: but he was gone, and Lappy days might dawn for her yet. She might love another now, without feeling it a crime to do so-one noble and generous, and worthy of her in every way. One deep breath of relief, one low sigh to the memory of his sad fate and then a look af calm, deep happiness stole over the beautiful face, such as it had not worn for years, and the beautiful head, with its wreath of raven ringlets, dropped on her arm, in a voiceless thanksgiving, in a joy too intense for he murmured, in tenderest whisper:

And this was Lady Maude Percy. In spite of her steady refusal of his suit, Lord Villiers had not despaired. He could not understand the cause of her strange melancholy and love?" persistent refusal of her hand, knowing, as he did, that she loved him, but, believing the obstacle to be merely an imaginary one, he hoped on, and waited for the time to come when this singular fancy of hers

would be gone. That time had come now. Calling, one morning, and finding her in the drawing room, he was greeted with a brilliant smile, with a quick flush of pleasure, and a manner so different from her customary one, that his

heart bounded with sudden hope "I am truly rejoiced to see Lady Maude recovering her spirits again, he said, his fine eyes lit up with

pleasure. "If Lord Villiers only knew how much cause I had for that 'nameless melancholy,' he would forgive me any pain it may ever have caused him, she said, while a shadow of the past

fell darkly over her bright young "And may I not know? Dearest Maude, when is this mystery to end? Am I never to be made happy by the

possession of this dear hand?" He took the little, white hand small and snowy as a lily-leaf, and it was no longer withdrawn, but nestled lovingly in his, as if there it found its rightful home.

"Maude, Maude," he cried, in a de-

lirium of joy, "is your dark dream, then, in reality over? O Maude, speak, and tell me! Am I to be made happy yet?" "If you can take me as I am, if

you can forgive and forget the past, I am yours, Ernest !" she said in a thrilling whisper.

In a moment she was in his arms, held to the true heart whose every throb was for her-her head upon the breast that was to pillow hers through life.

"Maude, Maude! My bride, my life, my peerless darling ! O Maude, this is too much happiness!" cried, in a sort of transport between the passionate kisses pressed on her this." warm, yielding lips.

Blushingly she rose from his embrace, and gently extricated herself from his arms.

"O Maude, my beautiful darling ! aglow with passionate love. She had sunk into a seat and be

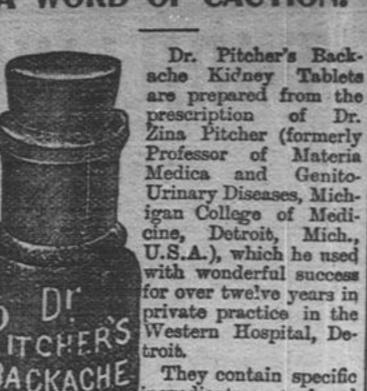
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she knew was bent upon her. "Speak again, Maude! Once more let me hear those precious words from your own sweet lips. Maude! Maude, sweetest and fairest, speak!" He wreathed his arms around her. while he seemed breathing out his very soul as he aspirated her name.

"But you have not heard all, my lord. This secret-do you not wish to hear it?" she faintly said, without lifting her dark, beautiful eyes. "Not unless it is your wish to tell it. I want to hear nothing but that

you are my own." "Yet, when you hear it, my lord, you may reject the hand I have offer-

"Never, never! Nothing under heaven could make me do that !" "You speak rashly, Lord Ernest. Wait until you have heard all. dare not accept the noble heart and hand you offer, without revealing the

one great error of my youth." "You commit error, my beautiful saint? You, who are as perfect in soul as in body. O Maude, I cannot believe it." "It is true, nevertheless, my lord.

But oh, how shall I tell you? How can I confess what I have beenwhat I am ?" drew her down until her white face

lay hidden in his breast, and then pressing his lips to the dark ripples of hair sweeping against his check, "Tell me now, Maude, and fear not; for nothing you can say will convince me you are not as pure and

unsullied as the angels themselves. What is this terrible secret, sweetest speak, every caress you give me,

makes my revelation the harder !" must be made, even though you ing after. Listen, my lord. You think me Lady Maude Percy ?" "Yes, dear love."

"That is not my name !" "What, Maude?"

"That is not my name. No; I am less boy, handsome as an angel, not mad, Lord Villiers, though you saw the living embodiment of my look as though you thought so. have been mad once! You and all till night we were together, and. the world are deceived. I am not what I seem."

mean? What then, are you?" "I was a wife! I have been a mother! I am a widow!"

"Maude !" "You recoil from me in horror ! I think of the consequences then. knew it would be so. I deserve it-I deserve it ! but O Lord Villiers, it | up my hopes of heaven for him! will kill me !" she cried, passionate- Three weeks longer he remained at ly wringing her hands.

"Maude, are you mad?"

"I am not-oh, I am not! if a grief-crazed brain, a blighted life, a broken heart be not madness."

are so young-not yet eighteen ! it cannot be true !" he cried, incoherently. "Would to God it were not! Yet ed; and for a long time I rememberfour years ago I was a wedded wife!" ed nothing more.

"Wife, mother, and widow at eighteen? Maude, Maude-how can I realize this ?" "Oh, I was crazed! I was mad! and I did love him so, then ! Not

as I love you, Lord Ernest, with a woman's strong, undying affection, but with the wild, passionate fervor of youth. I must have inherited my dead mother's Spanish blood; fcr no calm-pulsed English-girl ever felt love like that."

"O Lady Maude !-- Lady Maude ! could hardly have believe a messenger from Heaven had he told me

"God be merciful to human error A long life of sorrow and remorse must atone for that first rash fault." He was pacing up and down the long room with rapid, excited strides; May heaven forever bless you for his fine face flushed, and his bands this !" he fervently exclaimed, all tightly shut, as if to keep down the bitterness that rebelliously rose at this unlooked-for avowal. He had expected to hear some light, trivial fault, magnified by a morbid imagination; but not a clandestine marri-

> And therefore, pacing up and down -up and down, with brain heart in a tumult-Lord Ernest Villiers' pride for one moment overcame and mastered his love. For one brief moment only-for then his eyes fell on the drooping figure and despair-bowed young head, and the anguished attitude went to his heart, bringing back a full tide of pity, love and forgiveness. All was forgotten, but that she was the only one he ever did or could love; and lifting more. the sorrowful head and grief- "After that I met you. Lord Erbound form in his arms, once more he clasned her closer to the

throbbing under her own, and whis-

"My own life's darling still! Maude! if you must grieve, it shall be on my breast. If you have erred, so, too, have I-so have we all, often. I will forget all but that you have promised my arms should be your home forever!" "And you forgive and love

still? O Lord Ernest!" He kissed away her tears as wept aloud.

"One thing more, dearest. was my Maude's first love?" He felt a convulsive shiver through the delicate form he He felt her breast heave and throb as if the name was struggling leave it, and could not. "Tell me. Maude: for I must

"O Saints in Heaven! how can I! O Lord Ernest! this humiliation more than I can endure." "Speak, Lady Maude! for I must

She lifted her eyes to his, full of unspeakable anguish, and then dropped her head heavily again; for in that fixed, grave, noble face, full of love and pity as it was, there was no yielding now.

"Tell me, Maude, who was the husband of your childhood?" From the pale, quivering lip, in a

dying whisper, dropped the words:

"Reginald Germaine, the gipsy!" There was a moment's death-like silence. The handsome face of Lord Ernest Villiers seemed turned to marble, and still motionless, as if expiring, she lay in the arms that clasped her still in a close embrace. At last: "Heaven be merciful to the dead! ing with deepest tenderness, that Look up, my precious Maude; for nothing on earth shall ever come between us more!"

Calm and clear, on the troubled wave of her tempest-tossed soul, the low words fell: but only her deep, convulsive sobs were his answer. "Maude!-my own dear Maude!" he cried at last, alarmed by her passion of grief, "cease this wild weeping. Forget the troubled past, dear love, for there are many happy days in store for us yet."

But still she went on-wildly, vehemently, at first-until her strong passion of grief had passed away. He let her sob on in quiet now, with no attempt to check her grief, cept by his silent caresses.

She lifted her head and looked up at last, thanking him by a radiant look, and the soft thrilling clasp of her white arms. "I will not ask you to explain now,

sweet Maude," he softly whispered.

"Some other time, when you are more composed, you shall tell me "No-no; better-now-far better now; and then, while life lasts, neither you nor I, Ernest, will ever breathe one word of the dark, sorrowful story again. O Ernest!

all the fondest love of a lifetime suf-Encircling her with his arm, he fice to repay you for the forgiveness you have shown me to-day?" "I am more than repaid now, dear love. Speak of that no more.

now that the worst is over, will my Maude tell me all?" "I have not much to tell, Ernest; but you shall hear it. Nearly three years before you and I met, when a child of fourteen, I was on a visit to my Uncle Everly's. My cousin Hubert, home from college brought with "O my dear lord ! every word you him a fellow-student to spend the vacation, who was presented to me as Count Germaine. What Reginald she passionately cried. "And yet it Germaine was then, you who have seen him do not need to know. Handshould spurn me from you in loath- some, dashing, fascinating, he took every heart by storm, winning love by his gay, careless generosity, and respect by his talents and well known daring. I was a dreamy, romantic school-girl; and in this bold, reckmost glorious ideal. From morning Ernest, can you understand that wild dream? How I loved him then, words "What in heaven's name, do you are weak to express, how I loathed and despised him after no words can ever tell. Ernest, he persuaded me to elope with him one night; and were married. I never stopped only knew that I would have given Everly Hall; and then papa sent me

back to school and he went to Lon-"No one was in our secret, and we met frequently, unsuspected; though "But, Maude! Good heavens! You papa, thinking he was too presuming, had forbidden me to associate with him. One day we went out driving; the carriage was upset, I faint-

> "When reason returned, I was in little cottage, nursed by an old woman; while he hovered by my bedside night and day. Then I learned that I had given birth to a childdead and buried now. I could recollect myself as people recollect things in a confused dream-of hearing for a time the feeble cries of an infant, and seeing a baby face, with . the large, black, beautiful eyes of Reginald Germaine. I thought, at the time, a strange, unaccountable change had come over him; though I could not tell what. When I was well again, I learned. Standing before me; one morning, he calmly and quietly could not tell what. When I was well one morning, he calmly and quietly told me how he had deceived me that, instead of being a French count, he was the son of a strolling gipsy; but that, having repented of what he had done, he was willing to

"The very life seemed stricken cut of my heart as I listened. Then my pride-the aroused pride of my racearose; and, ch! words are weak to tell how I loathed myself and him That I, a Percy-the daughter of race that has mated with royalty a gipsy! I shrank in horror unspeakable, from the black, bottomless quagmire into which I had sunk. All M. A., District Superintendant Mason my love in that instant turned to & Risch Piano Co., Ltd., 32 King-st. bitterest scorn, and I passionately bade him leave me, and never dare to come near me again, or breathe a Rotary Standard, The New Williams, word of the past. He obeyed; from that day I never beheld

(Continued on Page 3)

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