

A BLUE GRASS PENELOPE.

BY BRET HARTE.

CHAPTER II, CONTINUED.

"Well, I don't know anyone who has a better right to know than Spence Tucker's wife," said another with a coarse laugh. The laugh was echoed by the others. Mrs. Tucker saw the pit into which she had deliberately walked, but did not flinch.

"Is there any one to serve here?" she asked, turning her clear eyes full upon the bystanders.

"You'd better ask the sheriff. He was the last one to serve here. He served an attachment," replied the inevitable humorist of all Californian assemblages.

"Is he here?" asked Mrs. Tucker, disregarding the renewed laughter which followed this subtle witicism.

The loungers at the door mads way for one of their party, who was half dragged, half pushed into the shop. "Here he is," said half a dozen eager voices, in the fond belief that his presence might impart additional humor to the situation. He cast a deprecating glance at Mrs. Tucker and said: "It's so, madam! This yer place is attached, but if there's anything you're wanting, why, I reckon, boys"—he turned half appealingly to the crowd—"we could oblige a lady."

There was a vague sound of angry opposition and remonstrance from the back door of the shop, but the majority, partly overcome by Mrs. Tucker's beauty, assented. "Only," continued the coffer expensively, "ez these yer goods are in the hands of the creditors, they ought to be represented by an equivalent in money. If you're expecting they should be charged—"

"But I wish to pay for them," interrupted Mrs. Tucker with a slight flush of indignation. "I have the money."

"Oh, I bet you have!" screamed a voice, as, overturning all opposition, the malevolent at the back door, in the shape of an infuriated woman, forced her way into the shop. "I'll bet you have the money. Look at her, boys. Look at the wife of a thief with the stolen money in diamonds in her ears and rings on her fingers. She's got money if we've got none. She can pay for what she fancies, if we haven't a cent to redeem the beds that's stole from under us. Oh, yes, buy it all, Mrs. Spencer Tucker! Buy the whole shop, Mrs. Spencer Tucker! do you hear? And if you ain't satisfied then buy my clothes, my wedding ring, the only things your husband hasn't stole."

"I don't understand you," said Mrs. Tucker coldly, turning towards the door. But with a flying leap across the counter her relentless adversary stood between her and retreat.

"You don't understand! Perhaps you don't understand that your husband not only stole the hard labor of these men, but even the little money they brought here and trusted to his thieving hands. Perhaps you don't know that he stole my husband's hard earnings, mortgaged these very goods you want to buy, and he is to day a convicted thief, a forger, and a runaway coward. Perhaps, if you can't understand me you can read the newspaper. Look! The exultingly opened the paper the Sheriff had been reading aloud and pointed to the displayed head lines. "Look! there are the very words 'Forgery, Swindle, Embezzlement!' Do you see? And perhaps you can't understand this. Look! 'Shameful fight. Abandons his wife. Raps off with a Notorious—'"

"Easy old gal, easy now. D—n it! Will you dry up? I say. Stop!"

It was too late! The Sheriff had dashed the paper from the woman's hand, but not until Mrs. Tucker had read a single line, a line such as she had sometimes turned from with weary scorn in her careless perusal of the daily shameful chronicle of domestic infelicity. Then she had wondered if there could be any such men and women: and now! The crowd fell back before her; even the virago was silenced as she looked at her face. The humorist's face was as white, but not as immobile, as he gasped. "Christ—if I don't believe she knew nothin' of it!"

For a moment the full force of such a supposition, with all its poignancy, its dramatic intensity, and its pathos, possessed the crowd. In the momentary clairvoyance of enthusiasm they caught a glimpse of the truth, and by one of the strange reactions of human passion they only waited for a word of appeal or explanation from her lips to throw themselves at her feet. Had she simply told her story they would have believed her; had she cried, fainted, or gone into hysterics, they would have pitied her. She did neither. Perhaps she thought of neither—or indeed of anything that was then before her eyes. She walked erect to the door and turned on the threshold. "I mean what I say," she said calmly. "I don't understand you. But whatever just claim you have upon my hand will be paid by me—or by his lawyer, Captain Poindexter."

to make her conscious that Mrs. Tucker might be a power to be placated and feared. "You've shot off your mouth at her," he said, argumentatively "and whether you've hit the mark or not you've had your say. If you think it's worth a possible \$5,000 and interest to keep on, heave ahead. If you rather have the chance of getting the rest in cash, you'll let up on her." "You don't suppose," returned Mrs. Patterson contemptuously, "that she's got anything but what that man of hers—Poindexter—let's her have?" "The Sheriff says," returned Patterson surlily, "that she's notified him that she claims the rancho as a gift from her husband three years ago—and she's in possession now, and was so when the execution was out. It don't make no matter," he added, with gloomy philosophy, "whose got a full hand as long as we ain't got the cards to chip in. I wouldn't hev minded it," he continued meditatively, "if Spencer Tucker had dropped a hint to me afore he put out." "And I suppose," said Mrs. Patterson angrily, "you'd have put out too?" "I reckon," said Mrs. Patterson simply.

Twice or thrice during the evening he referred, more or less directly, to this lack of confidence shown by his late debtor and employer, and seemed to feel it more keenly than the loss of property. He confided his sentiments quite openly to the Sheriff in possession, over the whiskey and euchre with which these gentlemen avoided the difficulties of their delicate relations. He brooded over it as he handed the keys of the shop to the Sheriff when they parted for the night, and was still thinking of it when the house was closed, everybody gone to bed, and he was fetching a fresh jug of water from the well. The moon was at times obscured by flying clouds—the avant-couriers of the regular evening shower. He was stooping over the well, when he sprang suddenly to his feet again. Who's there?

"Hush!" said a voice, so low and faint it might have been a whisper of the wind in the palisades of the corral. But, indistinct as it was, it was the voice of the man he was thinking of as far away, and it sent a thrill of alternate awe and pleasure through his pulses.

He glanced quickly around. The moon was hidden by a passing cloud, and only the faint outlines of the house he had just quitted were visible. "Is that you, Spence?" he said, tremulously.

"Yes," replied the voice, and a figure dimly emerged from the corner of the corral. "Lay low, lay low—for God's sake," said Patterson, hurriedly throwing himself upon the apparition. "The Sheriff and his posse are in there."

"But I must speak to you a moment," said the figure.

"Wait," said Patterson, glancing toward the building. Its blank shuttered windows revealed no inner light—a profound silence encompassed it. "Come quick," he whispered. Letting his grasp slip down to the unresisting hand of the stranger, he half dragged, half led him, brushing against the wall, into the open door of the deserted barroom he had just quitted, locked the inner door, poured a glass of whiskey from a decanter, gave it to him, and then watched him drain it at a single draught. The moon came out, and, falling through the bare windows full upon the stranger's face, revealed the artist's but slightly dishevelled curls and moustache of the fugitive, Spencer Tucker.

Whatever may have been the real influence of this unfortunate man upon his fellows, it seemed to find expression in a singular unanimity of criticism. Patterson looked at him with a half-dismal, half-welcome smile. "Well, you are a half of a fellow, ain't you?"

Spencer Tucker passed his hand through his hair and lifted it from his forehead, with a gesture of once emotional and theatrical.

"I am a man with a price on me!" he said bitterly. "Give me up to the Sheriff, and you'll get five thousand dollars. Help me, and you'll get nothing. That's my d—d luck, and yours too, I suppose."

"I reckon you're right there," said Patterson gloomily. "But I thought you got clean away. Went off on a ship—"

"Went off in a boat to a ship," interrupted Tucker savagely; "went off to a ship, that had all my things on board—every thing. The cursed boat capsized in a squall just off the heads. The ship, d—n her, sailed away, the men thinking I was drowned, likely, and that they'd make a good thing of my goods—I reckon."

"But the girl, Inez, who was with you, didn't she make a row?"

"Quick save," returned Tucker, with a reckless laugh. "Well, I hung on like grim death to that boat's keel until one of these Chinese fishermen, in a dug out, hauled me in opposite Suncello. I chartered him and his dug out to bring me do rn here."

"Why here?" asked Patterson with a certain ostentatious caution, that ill-concealed pervasive satisfaction.

"You may well ask," returned Tucker, with equal ostentation of bitterness, as he s'g'itly waved his companion away. "But I reckoned that I could trust a white man that I'd been kind to, and wouldn't go back on me. No, no, let me go! Hand me over to the Sheriff!"

gloomy philosophy, "but I reckon its the rea on why Providence allows this kind of cattle to live among white men and others made in His image. Take a piece of pie won't you?" he continued, abandoning this abstract reflection and producing half a flat pumpkin pie from the bar. Spencer Tucker grasped the pie with one hand and his friend's fingers with the other, and for a few moments was silent from the hurried deglutition of viand and sentiment. "You're a white man, Patterson, anyway," he resumed. "I'll take your horse, and put it down in our account, at your own figure. As soon as this cursed thing is blown over, I'll be back and see you, though, you bet. I don't desert my friends, however tough things go with me."

"I see you don't," returned Patterson, with an unconscious and serious simplicity that had the effect of the most exquisite irony. "I was only just saying to the Sheriff that if there was anything I could have done for you, you wouldn't have cut away without letting me know." Tucker glanced uneasily at Patterson, who continued. "Ye ain't wanting anything else?"

Then observing that his former friend and patron was roughly but newly clothed, and betrayed no trace of his last escapade, he added, "I see you've got a fresh harness."

"That d—d Chinaman bought me thee at the landing; they're not much in style or fit," he continued, trying to get a moonlight view of himself in the mirror behind the bar, "but that don't matter here." He filled another glass of spirits, jauntily settled himself back in his chair, and added, "I don't suppose there are any girls around anyway."

"Capt your wife; she was down here this afternoon," said Patterson meditatively.

Mr. Tucker paused with the pie in his hand. "Ah, yes!" He essayed a reckless laugh, but that evident simulation failed before Patterson's melancholy. With an assumption of falling in with his friend's manner, rather than from any personal anxiety, he continued.

"Well?"

"That man Poindexter was down here with her. Put her in the hacienda to hold possession before the news came out."

"Impossible!" said Tucker, rising hastily. "It don't belong—that is—" he hesitated.

"Ye thinking the creditors 'll get it, mebby," returned Patterson, gazing at the floor. "Not as long as she's in it; no sir! Whether it's really hers, or she's only keeping house for Poindexter, she's a fixture, you bet. They're a team when they pull together, they are!"

The smile slowly faded from Tucker's face, that now looked quite rigid in the moonlight. He put down his glass and walked to the window as Patterson gloomily continued. "But that's nothing to you. You've got ahead of 'em both, and had your revenge by going off with the gal. That's what I said all along. When folks—specially women folks—wondered how you could leave a woman like your wife, and go off with a scalliwag like that gal, I allers said they'd find out there was a reason. And when your wife came flaunting down here with Poindexter before she'd quite got rid of you, I reckon they began to see the whole little game. No, sir! I knew it wasn't on account of the gal! Why, when you came here to night, and told me quite natural like and easy how she went off in the ship, and then calmly ate your pie and drank your whiskey after it, I knew you didn't care for her. There's my hand, Spence; you're a trump, even if you are a little looney, eh? Why, what's up?"

Shallow and selfish as Tucker was, Patterson's words seemed like a revelation that shocked him as profoundly as it might have shocked a nobler nature. The simple vanity and selfishness that made him unable to conceive any higher reason for his wife's loyalty than his own personal popularity and success, now that he no longer possessed that *ecceit*, made him equally capable of the lowest suspicions. He was a dishonest, ungrateful, broken in fortune and reputation—why should she not desert him? He had been unfaithful to her from wildness, from caprice, from the effect of those fascinating qualities; it seemed to him natural that she should be disloyal from more deliberate motives, and he hugged himself with that belief. Yet there was enough doubt, enough of haunting suspicion that he had lost or alienated a powerful affection to make him thoroughly miserable. He returned his friend's grasp convulsively and buried his face upon his shoulder. But he was not above feeling a certain exultation in the effect of his misery upon the dog-like, unreasoning affection of Patterson, nor could he entirely refrain from slightly posing his affliction before that sympathetic but melancholy man. Suddenly he raised his head, drew back, and thrust his hand into his bosom with a theatrical gesture.

"What's to keep me from killing Poindexter in his tracks?" he said wildly.

"Nothin' but his shooting first," returned Patterson, with dismal practicality. "He's mighty quick, like all them army men. It's about even, I reckon, that he don't get me first," he added in an ominous voice.

"No!" returned Tucker, grasping his hand again. "This is not your affair, Patterson; leave him to me when I come back."

"If he ever gets the drop on me, I reckon he won't wait, continued Patterson lugubriously. "He seems to object to my passivity criticism on your wife, as if she was a queen or an angel."

The blood came to Spencer's cheek, and he turned uneasily to the window. "It's dark enough now for a start," he said hurriedly, "and if I could get across the mountain without lying over at the summit, it would be a day gained."

Patterson arose without a word, filled a flask of spirit, handed it to his friend, and silently led the way through the slowly falling rain and the now settled darkness. The mustang was quickly secured and saddled; a heavy poncho afforded Tucker a disguise as well as a protection from the rain. With a few hurried disconnected words, and an abstracted air, he once more shook his friend's hand and issued cautiously from the corral. When out of earshot from the house, he put spurs to the mustang and dashed into a gallop.

light, he fancied he could distinguish its low walls over the mountain level. One of those impulses which had so often taken the place of resolution in his character, suddenly possessed him to diverge from his course and approach the house. Why, he could not have explained. It was not from any feeling of jealousy suspicion or contemplated revenge—that had passed with the presence of Patterson; it was not from any vague lingering sentiment for the woman he had wronged—he would have shrunk from meeting her at that moment. But it was full of these and more possibilities by which he might or might not be guided, and was at least a movement toward some vague end, and a distraction from certain thoughts he dared not entertain and could not entirely dismiss. Inconceivable and inexplicable to human reason, it might have been acceptable to the Divine omniscience for its predestined result.

He left the road at a point where the marsh encroached upon the meadow, familiar to him already as near the spot where he had debarked from the Chinaman's boat the day before. He remembered that the walls of the hacienda were distinctly visible from the *tules* where he had hidden all day, and he now knew that the figures he had observed near the building, which had deterred his first attempts at landing, must have been his wife and his friend. He knew that a long tongue of the slough filled by the rising tide followed the marsh, and lay between him and the hacienda. The sinking of his horse's hoofs in the spongy soil determined its proximity, and he made a detour to the right to avoid it. In doing so a light suddenly rose above the distant horizon ahead of him, trembling faintly, and then burned with a steady lustre. It was a light at the hacienda. Guiding his horse half abstractedly in this direction, his progress was presently checked by the splashing of the animal's hoofs in the water. But the turf was firm, and a salt drop that had splattered to his lips told him that it was only the encroaching of the tide in the meadow. With his eyes on the light, he again urged his horse forward. The rain lulled, the clouds began to break, the landscape allernately lightened and grew dark; the outlines of the crumbling hacienda walls that enshroued the light grew more visible. A strange and dreamy resemblance to the long blue brass plain before his wife's paternal house, as seen by him during his evening rides to courtship, pressed itself upon him. He remembered, too, that she used to put a light in the window to indicate her presence. Following this retrospect, the moon came boldly out, sparkled upon the overflow of silver at his feet, seemed to show the dark, opaque meadow beyond for a moment, and then disappeared. It was dark now, but the lesser earthly star still shone before him as a guide, and pushing towards it, he passed into the all-embracing shadow.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Social Kite.

Though not described by Audubon, the social kite deserves a word. You, in your affable way, start a topic, novel and interesting. Scarcely have you flushed your game ere your kite pounces on it, tears it from you, and proceeds to discuss it for the benefit of the company. You are good natured, and let him have his way. Presently Jones, on the other side of the table, smiling pleasantly, begins the recital of some interesting incident which happened down town in the morning. Jones is not a talkative man, and this is the one little morsel by which he hopes to shine at dinner. The kite lets him get as far as the second sentence, and swoops down as before. Having plucked each feather from this second prey (cumulatively, too, rending and tearing it), and not at all in the neat manner in which you or Jones would have done it), he releases into temporary silence, watching with eager eye for his next victim, ready with beak and claw for the first idea that flies. If, happy, you attempt to continue your story, there follows the most disagreeable duet, the kite usually getting the better of it by dogged pertinacity and ill-breeding, and leaving you somewhat nettled for so small a matter. The kite is by no means a rare bird. He is hardy, with a hide of phenomenal thickness. Though solitary as regards other kites, he dearly loves the society of man; for, left to himself, there is no one to interrupt or from whom to filch ideas. When by chance two kites meet a spirited contest ensues, the louder mouthed and more ill-bred (there are degrees in kites) carrying the day, and the rest of the company wishing them at Jericho. There is probably no more disagreeable social nuisance, in a small way, unless it be the man who allows you to finish, and then laboriously explains your remarks to the company. Both forms of ill-breeding are common enough. The latter arises from stupidity, and both proceed on the childish assumption that the speaker knows more than yourself of the matter which you are discussing, coupled, in many cases, with a sneaking desire to filch your ideas. Doubtless, like him who steals your purse, he often steals trash; but it is your trash, and you feel entitled to it—"a poor thing, but mine own"; and it is hard to view this social robber with equanimity.—*Boston Gazette.*

An Unknown Monster.

For the past seven or eight years different stories have been told concerning a dreadful monster that inhabited a body of water known as Crater Lake, situated about fifty-five miles west of North Liville. John Shallock, with others, has just seen the monster. Mr. Shallock says it looked to be as large as a man's body, and was swimming with about two or three feet out of water, and going at a rapid rate, as fast as a man could row a skiff, leaving a similar wave behind it. Its face, or head, looked white, and, although it was a long way off, they could plainly see that it was of an immense size. Several shots were fired at it, but it was so far off that they could not see where their bullets struck the water. Charles Moore says the bluff around the lake are from 1,500 to 3,000 feet above the water, and almost perpendicular.—*Klamath, Ore., Star.*

The Fashionable Color.

Bank cashier to tailor: "You may take my measure for a suit of clothes." "Exactly. What color do you prefer?" "What is the go this fall?" "Well, for bank cashiers, Canada gray seems to be the favorite."

THE STAGE-DRIVER'S STORY.

How General Scott's Life was Saved and How His Driver Twice Escaped Death.

The traveller of the present day, as he is hurried along by the lightning express, in its buffet cars and palace sleepers, seldom reverts in thought to the time when the stage coach and packet were the only means of communication between distant points. It is rare that one of the real old-time stage drivers is met with now; days, and when the writer recently ran across Fayette Haskell, of Lockport N. Y., he felt like a bibliographer over the discovery of some rare volume of "forgotten lore." Mr. Haskell, although one of the pioneers in stage driving (he formerly ran from Lewiston to Niagara Falls and Buffalo), is hale and hearty and bids fair to live for many years. The strange stories of his early adventures would fill a volume. At one time when going down a mountain near Lewiston, with no less a personage than General Scott as a passenger, the brakes gave way and the coach came on the heels of the wheel horses. The only remedy was to whip the leaders to a gallop. Gaining additional momentum with each revolution of the wheels the coach swayed and pitched down the mountain side into the streets of Lewiston. Straight ahead at the foot of the steep hill flowed the Niagara river, towards which the four horses dashed, apparently to certain death. Yet the firm hand never relaxed its hold nor the clear brain its conception of what must be done in the emergency. On dashed the horses until the narrow deck was reached on the river bank, when by a masterly exhibition of nerve and daring, the coach was turned in scarce its own length and the horses brought to a stand-still before the pale lookers-on could realize what had occurred. A purse was raised by General Scott and presented to Mr. Haskell with high compliments for his skill and bravery.

Notwithstanding all his strength and robust constitution the strain of continuous work and exposure proved too much for Mr. Haskell's constitution. The constant jolting of the coach and the necessarily cramped position in which he was obliged to sit, contributed to this end, and at times he was obliged to abandon driving altogether.

Speaking of this period he said: "I found it almost impossible to sleep at night; my appetite left me entirely and I had a tired feeling which I never knew before and could not account for."

"Did you give up driving entirely?" "No. I tried to keep up but it was only with the greatest effort. This state of things continued for nearly twenty years until last October when I went all to pieces."

"In what way?" "Oh, I doubled all up, could not walk without a cane and was incapable of any effort or exertion. I had a constant desire to urinate both day and night, and although I felt like passing a gallon every ten minutes only a few drops could escape and they thick with sediment. Finally it ceased to flow entirely and I thought death was very near."

"What did you do then?" "What I should have done long before; listen to my wife. Under her advice I began a new treatment."

"And with what result?" "Wonderful. It unstopped the closed passages, and what was still more wonderful regulated the flow. The sediment vanished; my appetite returned, and I am now well and good for twenty more years, wholly through the aid of Warner's Safe Cure that has done wonders for me as well as for many others."

Mr. Haskell's experience is repeated every day in the lives of thousands of American men and women. An unknown evil is undermining the existence of an innumerable number who do not realize the danger they are in until health has entirely departed and death perhaps stares them in the face. To neglect such important matters is like drifting in the current of Niagara above the Falls.

Speaking of matrimonial yokes, a New York woman has just run away with Mr. Egge.

Important. When you visit or leave New York City, save Baggage Express and Carriage Hire, and stop at the Grand Union Hotel, opposite Grand Central Depot. 600 elegant rooms fitted up at a cost of one million dollars, \$1 and upwards per day. European plan. Elevator. Restaurants supplied with the best. Horse cars, stages and elevated railroads to all depots. Families can live better for less money at the Grand Union Hotel than at any other first-class hotel in the city. "Called back"—The man that forgot to pay his check.

Catarrah—A New Treatment. Perhaps the most extraordinary success that has been achieved in modern science has been attained by the Dixon Treatment of catarrah. Out of 2,000 patients treated during the past six months, fully ninety per cent. have been cured of this stubborn malady. This is none the less startling when it is remembered that not five per cent. of the patients presenting themselves to the regular practitioners are benefited, while the patent medicines and other advertised cures never record a cure at all. Starting with the claim now generally believed by the most scientific men that the disease is due to the presence of living parasites in the tissues, Mr. Dixon at once adapted his cure to their extermination; this accomplished the catarrah is practically cured, and the permanency is unquestioned, as cures effected by him four years ago are cures still. No one else has ever attempted to cure catarrah in this manner, and no other treatment has ever cured catarrah. The application of the remedy is simple and can be done at home, and the present season of the year is the most favorable for a speedy and permanent cure, the majority of cases being cured at one treatment. Sufferers should correspond with Messrs. A. H. DIXON & SON, 305 King-street West, Toronto, Canada, and enclose stamp for their treatise on catarrah.—*Montreal Star.*

Mr. Winks—"Jane, have you fed the dog this morning?" Mrs. Winks—"No; he doesn't need anything."

"Why, I have not given him any meat since yesterday morning; have you?" "No, but one of Maria's fellows called last night."

Not another Pill shall go down my throat again, said a citizen, "when I can get such a prompt and pleasant cure for my Bilious attacks, such as Dr. Carson's Stomach Bitters. It renders the Blood Pure and Cool and makes a splendid Spring Medicine. Large bottles 50 cents."

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Patterson did not inform his wife of the lawyer's personal threat to himself. But he managed, after Poindexter had left,