

# The Sealed Locket

All this time I had determined to give her up in a few days, but alas! for the demon procrastination Day after day went by, and each day murmured, "To-morrow," for the sight of her sweet, smiling face, the face of Nellie's child, with Nellie's eyes, and Nellie's voice, and Nellie's name, was as dear to me as though she were indeed my own, and I could not bear to part with her.

At last I gathered courage to do my duty, and left the town where I had been staying, to go to Briarton with the child.

Before reaching there, however, I read in a newspaper that Dr. Tremont and his bride had left for California. Instantly my heart hardened toward him again, and my claim seemed paramount to that of the father with a step-mother, for had I not snatched her from the grasp of death itself? and before Heaven and in her dead mother's memory, which now seemed linked to me by this bond of common sympathy, I vowed to care for her as my own and to love and shield her ever.

May God forgive my sin—it has been great—but if greater than my love, then may I ill hope for its forgiveness!

After a year or two I went South. All the following years I spent entirely in the care and education of my sacred charge, and to her hand will I commit this confession, and her to her own rightful father when she becomes twenty-one if I be then alive.

To you, Nellie, the darling of my heart, I bequeath this sad confession. Deeply I may have wronged you through my selfish love, but thou hast been all the world to me since first I taught thy baby lips to lisp "papa," and God alone knows how many the dark sad hours thy smile for me has brightened.

Nellie Darril no longer when thou seest this, but Nellie Tremont, daughter of my dead love, mine and yet not mine, and Dr. Arthur Tremont, I pray both thee and God forgive me!

Child of my love, and of my heart, though not of my blood, in God's name I beg of you, forgive me! All I have I leave thee with my blessing.

As Carl read on toward the end, a vague horror possessed him, and, trembling with a sense of chill, he still read on, his voice hollow and death-like, his heart numb and cold. Then, as he finished, and the awful revelation was fully borne in upon her mind, Nellie's strength seemed to forsake her, and with a groan of pain her head sunk upon his breast, and she moaned brokenly,— "O God pity me! Pity us both! Carl, Carl, my love!—my brother? Oh, it cannot be."

How should he try to comfort her where no comfort was? Silently, as one stricken dumb with grief, he stood, and gently stroked the fair head, and pressed her to his heart in mute despair.

At length he spoke, and his voice was as that of an old man, heavy with pain, for his heart seemed to have died within his aching breast, "Nellie, my sister; but, O God, at what a cost. Come child, sweetheart no longer, let us go thankful that it is not worse; thankful that the message came not a day later."

Pale and trembling she took his arm and he led her from the garden, dead to all sense of everything but that gloom that had settled down upon her young life; realizing nothing save that Carl had gone from her; Carl was lost, and there was left nothing, Nothing—dark, dumb, despairing blank space. She saw nothing beyond the black chasm that had just opened and engulfed her, as tearless and dazed she followed him as one who walks in his sleep.

They crossed the lawn, passed through the gate, and down the street together, straight to his home. The doctor had not yet gone to his office when Carl and Nellie entered the house and both he and his wife were greatly shocked at sight of the pained and pallid faces of the young couple as they ascended the steps, and entered the room without speaking.

Carl crossed at once to his father, and handed him the paper, saying, "You need not question anything—father—read that, and you will know all," and without another word he quietly led Nellie to the sofa, and sat down, cold and white and silent. "Read it aloud, please father," he said, "it is for mother also." He had always so called her.

When the doctor finished reading he saw and realized all. "My poor children," he murmured, as he arose and approached the sofa. But his wife was before him. With one long, low cry of mingled joy and anguish she had sprung forward and clasped the young girl in her arms, while she sobbed brokenly, "My darling, My darling, my own, long lost, sweet child. Oh, God, be praised for this hour! Take her Carl my dear boy, and hold her aching heart close to thy own, and bid her fear not. All yet is well. God is kinder than any know, and a mother's love shall triumph still."

Puzzled and bewildered the Doctor stood silent, confounded by her strange words, and without speaking waited for her to explain. Quickly crossing to where he stood, while tears of love and joy glistened in her deep dark eyes, she sank on her knees before him and clasping his cold hand in hers, so burning, said faintly, in a voice that thrilled with deepest emotion:—

"Forgive me, O forgive me! O my husband! Through love for thee all these years have I deceived thee. 'Twas all for thought of thee I did it. Believe me, 'twas not to wrong thee, but to spare thee. Tell me you will forgive me, or my heart must break. Long have I been endured to pain, but thy anger I could not bear. Thy anger will kill me. Tell me, O my husband, tell me you forgive me!"

Then he stooped and raised her gently, and pressing her head down on his shoulder, with a pale face he said tenderly,—"Before you tell me even, I do forgive you. All these years have you been truest of true wives to me;

all you have is now my love and sympathy; speak, and, if need be, then you have my pardon."

And thus she spoke: "Many years ago Laura Desmond Grant, a girl of modest birth and position, the daughter of an English rector, met a youth, as noble as he was rich and handsome, the son and scion of a noble family, younger brother to the heir of an estate and title. His father was an Englishman of the English, austere, proud, rich and titled. At his death all, save the entailed estate, was divided among his children, it being stipulated that should any marry a person other than the son or daughter of a gentleman of title, then that one's share should be forfeited to the others.

Particularly unfortunate for his son Robert was the position of affairs, for he and Laura Grant had long been intimate friends, and when this barrier rose between them they grew fonder. She begged him to leave her rather than to lose his all, for poverty and work are kindred to crime for an Englishman of birth. He was deaf to her entreaty and his fidelity drew her closer. Then came their mistake. Had they been content to live apart all their lives, separated by this barrier, perhaps they might have loved and been comparatively happy as friends; but Robert would not hear of it, choosing rather to risk fate than to resign one claim on her he loved. Folks say that love is but a pastime with a man, but 'tis a wonderful thing in a strong man's true heart.

Then they decided to go to America; he three months first to British Columbia and the Rocky Mountains to hunt; she with fair excuses to visit friends in New York. Then, all the broad miles of a vast continent melted into nothing, and he came to claim his own, and secretly they were married, that his income might not be suspended. How happy their home was for two years I need not say, but Oh, it seemed as Heaven. Then came a time of great anticipation when together the young couple talked of the joy expected.

But, alas! at the noon hour the sun sank from the sky. Darkness for the young wife fell on all the earth, when her loving husband took the fever and died. Of course she was left homeless and almost destitute, save for the little they had saved from his income as he had received it. She had no friends to go to who would believe her story, and foolishly she had lost all proof of it. In this condition she turned from their doors a homeless, branded outcast of misfortune, not of sin. God pity the agony of those days. Nothing else possible for her, Laura Sanford, despised, disgraced and forsaken by everything but misery, flew from the sight of those who thus disowned her. Fate guided her aimless steps to Brairton, where she rented a cottage, and lived as Laura Desmond mistrusted and maligned by all. There she lived as best she could and nursed her little child who had come to brighten her life and share her love and poverty.

And in time it happened that one noble, great-souled man came to her to care for them in his hour of need, and he told her that he trusted her implicitly. Then the heavens seemed to clear once more; the sun shone again into her humble home. That night, as she knelt at her bedside, she promised before God that she would serve his interests, and care for his motherless children in spirit and in letter faithful to the promises she had given him, faithful to his trust in her, even with her very life if need be. She vowed that, with God's help she would never give him cause to regret his confidence in the despised widow. Time went on, and then there came a fire—a fearful and awful night of terror—then a long blank. Then they told her, the poor lone widow, that her only joy was gone; her little sunshine had left the house and gone to the churchyard. With pain unspeakable she tried to understand her loss, and almost came to hate God in her misery. Then the storm ceased and her wild struggling soul grew calm and she said, "Better mine than his; henceforward will I give my life's love to the children he has left in my care." Then she read a letter from him—a frank, kindly, humanly weak letter, in which he said how it would have broken his heart had it been his own little girl. Then she begged them to bring his little ones to her for her heart was full of love and they were all she had now to lavish it upon.

They brought the babies to her, and then she saw, O merciful God!—what none other knew—that her own delicate child still lived and that his was gone. Picture if you can the joy of that mother's heart at receiving her darling babe again from the grave as it were. But it was only for a moment. Then the words of that letter flashed before her, and she said, "Oh, how can I stab him to the heart as I have been, for God help me I know the pain of it. Let mine again be the sacrifice; he shall never know and it will save him this great pain, and what will mine be now compared to his." Thus she gave up her own child to him.

Time again brought the father back again to his little ones, and with a yearning love in her heart she saw him clasp them to his breast and call them his own, but she bade her heart be still, her tongue be silent. Then came the day when he talked of going back. He spoke of taking the children, and her heart stood still and her blood froze. She could stand no more, and she begged him not to take her babies from her, for she was, oh, so human! and her heart longed so for her own little loved ones.

And now came a dark hour indeed when the little one was mourned as dead and the heart of the father was wrung with grief.

But what of the mother's, who had lost her own, and still must bear in silence, daring not even to wail "my child,"

When he stood beneath the mellow light at evening and looked upon the wreath of flowers," her voice sank low in tenderest whisper, "for the little grave in the churchyard, his heart melted to tears at thought of her babe sleeping peacefully beneath the green

grass and bright flowers, and then of his—alas, where? the prey of the demons of the deep, the plaything of the waves, how could she tell him then of how every thought of it pierced her brain as a knife? And yet she longed to speak, to pour forth the burden of her heart. And she would have told him then but he bade her be silent and she obeyed, for now his pain and his wishes were far more to her than her own for she loved him more deeply than her own life and her whole soul was linked with his.

Then he sealed her lips with silence. It has been long in coming, but 'tis told at last, and now, dearest love, Laura Desmond Sanford that was, pleads for your forgiveness for your wife, Laura Desmond Tremont that is the mother of Nellie Darril." Great noble, manly tears coursed silently down the cheeks of Dr. Tremont, as his wife finished speaking, and he said, "Then Nellie is not my daughter after all is this true?"

"As God is my witness"—she murmured fervently, "it is true. She is the lawful daughter of Robert and Laura Sanford, grand-daughter of the late Sir Lionel Sanford, of Sanford Place, Nottinghamshire, England, and her mother humbly prays for your forgiveness for her deception; but, Oh, my husband, believe me—I beg of you believe me—it was all for love of you, and none may ever know the pain of that mother's heart when she thought you might take her child from her. Can you not forgive me?" and the sweet, sad, imploring eyes of a sorrowing angel gazed up in to his face through a mist of unshed tears.

"Nay, speak not of my forgiveness, dearest love," he whispered, "but rather help me to pray God that I may be able to understand the deep grace of thy soul and to love thee somewhat as thou dost deserve, for Oh! I am all unworthy of such love as thing; such godlike self-sacrifice, and suffering, self-imposed. I have caused you so much pain that my heart cries out to you for pardon."

"Ah, Arthur," she whispered low, "'tis sweet to a woman to suffer for him she loves."

Nellie and Carl were standing by the window, their faces turned reverently from a scene so sacred, and a strong sunbeam stole round and crept in at the window and nestled to sleep mid the soft curls that floated above her brow.

Then, after a few moments' silence in the room—a silence too sacred to be lightly broken—Laura Tremont glided softly to her daughter's side, and folding her loving mother's arms about her neck, she murmured low and fervently, "God bless you both, my children! 'Happy is the bride the sun shines on!'"

### The End.

### LEARNED WORKING BAKER.

A working baker has just convinced the savants of Paris that there is no royal road to learning. He has been awarded the diploma of the Ecole du Louvre for a successful thesis on the Book of Daniel. It fell to M. Ledrain, professor of the Ecole du Louvre, and M. Oport, member of the institute, to examine the thesis, and they and others had to confess that the baker's knowledge of Hebrew was profound and accurate. So brilliant, indeed, is the thesis that an effort will be made to interest the State in its publication. M. Galle, the name of this scholar in humble life, has ceased to make rolls; he has become a corrector for the Imperierie Nationale; and it is expected that he will save even the most learned from making blunders in their books.

### COW WITH FALSE HAIR.

A curious breach of warranty case is reported from the German village of Hechingen. A peasant named Melchingen, had sold to another, under the usual warranty, a milch cow, which the latter some time later found to be wearing a false tail, kept in its place by an ingenious arrangement of hair cording. The buyer brought an action for false description, and the vendor is condemned to fifteen days' imprisonment, and to a fine of £2 by a court which does not know how to appreciate a handy contrivance.

### UNGRATEFUL MAN.

My wife is the most ingenious woman who ever lived, said Kipper. I believe you, returned Nipper. But you don't know why you believe me, intimated Kipper. To tell you the truth, I don't replied Nipper, looking bored. Well, I'll tell you. We've been married 12 years, and lived in the same house all the time, and this morning she found a new place in which to hide my slippers.

### SUPERSTITION.

We must part, he exclaimed, pale with anger. I have discovered that you have been married 12 times before. She opened her great blue eyes wondering. Dear me! she faltered. Now, who would have picked you out to be superstitious? Well, I declare! After all, perhaps, it was better thus than to have him marry her and then leave her because he saw the new moon over his left shoulder or something.

### IF YOU CUT IT.

Tommy, said the teacher to one of the juvenile class, how many is the half of eight? On top or sideways? asked Tommy. What do you mean by on top or sideways? inquired the puzzled teacher. Why, replied the little fellow, half from the top of 8 is 0, and half of it sideways is 3!

### GOOD COMMON SENSE.

**Eat Before Going to Bed and Grow Fat.** Here is good advice to thin people who want to grow fat, says Pearson's Weekly. It seems contrary to all our early training, but is full of good common sense, and comes from a prominent physician. His suggestions are as follows:—

"If you are thin and want to put flesh upon your bones, eat before going to bed for the night. Physiology teaches us that there is wasting away of tissue while a person sleeps as well as when he is awake, and this being so, there should be continuous nourishment. Food taken at dinner or in the early evening is always digested at the time of retiring, and the activity of the process of assimilation continues until long after we are asleep.

"If the tissues are not nourished, they are pulled down by the wasting process, and as a result sleeplessness ensues. On a full stomach, however, or with some food to sustain the system, there is a building up of the tissue.

"Man is the only creature I know of who does not deem it proper to sleep on a good meal. The infant, in this respect, instinctively cries to be fed at night, showing that food is necessary during that time as well as through the day, and that left too long without it causes a discomfort, which it makes known by crying.

"There is no need for rest in the digestive organs, provided the quantity of food eaten is not above normal during the twenty-four hours. Too long intervals between meals are bad for the stomach, from the fact that the cessation and resumption of work of the digestive organs tends to enfeeble them.

"A moderate working of the organs through the twenty-four hours is much more beneficial. I would advise those suffering from insomnia to take something to eat before going to sleep always. A glass of milk and bread, or any digestible food will do.

### PARIS AN IMPREGNABLE CITY.

**A Successful Siege of the City Would Now be an Impossibility.**

The French have been taught wisdom by past experience, and as a result have planned, and a few years ago finished, a system of fortifications round Paris which are probably unequalled for the purposes for which they are intended by any similar fortifications in the world. A well-informed military writer, a member of the general staff of the German army, has given it as his opinion that a successful siege of Paris would be, under present conditions, are impossible undertakings.

The new fortifications that surround the French capital, says Pearson's, are some fifteen or twenty miles from the city, and are connected with Paris and with each other by a railway system which would enable the French commander to quickly mass at one point a very large body of men, while the general of the besieging army, if he wished to prevent the city from obtaining supplies and thus shut in the people and the army that was defending it, would have to occupy a line extending more than one hundred miles, and hence could not by any possibility collect a large number of his forces at any one point to resist with even a shadow of hope an attack of the enemy.

It required a German army of approximately 500,000 men to lay siege to Paris from September 19, 1870, to January 30, 1871; but the authority we refer to is of the opinion that to repeat the same operation a German besieging army would have to number more than 2,000,000 men, and the work of maintaining such a force and properly handling its parts would become something which few governments would care to undertake and few military commanders would be able to efficiently perform.

The French have spent upon these new fortifications an amount variously estimated at from \$30,000,000 to \$50,000,000, and hence can well afford to sell the land occupied by some of the now obsolete fortifications of a generation ago.

### FULL INFORMATION.

Now, remember, said a lady to her new butler, who had but a faint conception of a position for which he demanded the highest wages, remember, in announcing meals you are to say: Breakfast is ready, Luncheon is ready, Dinner is served.

All right, mum, replied the proud butler.

Not long after this lady ventured to experiment on a dinner to a few intimate friends. Fancy the expression on her countenance when, on appearing at the drawing room door to announce dinner, this liberal butler exclaimed in clarion tones: Breakfast is ready, luncheon is ready, dinner is served.

### HOW TO GET A HAT.

John, she said, softly, I have concluded to do without a new hat and send for mother with the money. It won't take much more to pay her expenses here.

My dear, he cried, excitedly, the idea of your wearing that old bonnet another day is too horrible for me to endure, and I'll never enter this house again till you get a new one.

# WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

**Neighborly Interest in His Doings—Matters of Moment and Girth Gathered from His Daily Record.**

There are 200 cases of smallpox in Nebraska City.

There were sixty-five murders and 436 suicides in New York last year.

A Pan-American exposition in Buffalo in 1901 is being boomed in that city.

An unknown woman gave real estate valued at \$20,000 to the Salvation Army in New York.

Chicago is to have a \$2,000,000 exhibition building for convention and exhibition purposes.

General Garcia, who died recently in Washington, was sentenced to death on nine different occasions.

Jonathan McGee, Ypsilanti's 110-year-old citizen, is to be married for the fourth time in a few days.

A New York policeman recovered Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt's opera glasses and received \$100 as a reward.

Ladies from New York presented the Pope with a parchment address, bearing many signatures, and a purse of \$10,000.

Jacob H. Schiff, of New York, has given \$150,000 to build a new young men's Hebrew association building in New York.

By the result of the late war with Spain the population of the United States has been increased by her colonies 12,577,843.

Col Roosevelt recently dictated a magazine article in three hours, and earned something over \$5.55 per minute for his work.

Niagara Falls, N. Y., residents are disappointed because the outsiders who come to view the winter scenery are so small in numbers.

Mrs. Sampson, wife of the Rear Admiral, has started an endless chain among her friends in the United States to help the Cuban reconcentrados.

Chicago packers will spend \$1,000,000\* in erecting intense cold storage plants in Cuba and Porto Rico for the reception and storing of fresh meat.

Dr. O'Reilly, chief surgeon of the army of occupation at Havana, will go to Jamaica to study the British methods of caring for troops in that climate.

Michael Buskey, of Manayunk, N. Y., was bathing a bruised leg with an inflammable lotion, while smoking a cigarette. A spark fell in the lotion and Buskey was badly burned.

A farmer who attended a local fair in Western New York State and was swindled out of \$96 by gamblers on the ground, has sued the fair association for the recovery of his money.

During the World's Fair there were over 7,000 saloons in Chicago. Since then they have been gradually declining and the number now is not much over 6,000. Over 200 have gone out of business during the last quarter.

Forty Dallas attorneys are fighting the state law for the collection of an occupation tax, on the ground that it is unconstitutional. County Judge Forcee has decided against them. An appeal has been taken to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Binger Hermann, Commissioner of the General Land Office, in a decision rendered on Tuesday, holds that Mission Island and a small island located just south-east thereof, in San Francisco Bay, are a part of the public domain.

The latest industry established in Chicago consists of holding up workmen after they have received their week's wages. One night last week four men engaged in the McCormick Reaper Works were held up and relieved of their two weeks' earnings.

The trial of the torpedo boat Faragut was a gratifying success so far at least as speed was concerned. It was one that no race horse, and but comparatively few passenger railway trains have equalled, being 30.6 knots an hour, or about 38 miles.

A gang of counterfeiters are at work in the Mississippi Valley. The counterfeit is of standard silver dollars, and all of which have so far been discovered bear date of 1890. It is believed that something like 200,000 of them have gained circulation.

Mr. Benjamin C. Miller, of Newark, has been paid \$10,000, the first policy issued by a Newark company. He is 96 years of age, and the payment was paid in accordance with a decision of the company to close up all insurance when a policy-holder reaches that age.

Some of the Rough Riders from the west, think that gold exists in Cuba, and have returned to the neighborhood of Santiago to test the extent of the deposit. If gold is found there in paying quantities the rush that would follow its announcement would fix the status of free Cuba.

A purse of \$1,000, subscribed by Baltimore shipping merchants, has been presented to Captain Robert Bartlett and the officers and crew of the British steamer Vedamore, in recognition of their heroic conduct in saving the lives of forty-five survivors of the lost steamer Londonian.