

LESTER'S BRAIN.

If a man desires solitude, let him go to the coast line of Suffolk, keeping well to the south of the great east coast watering places, where the common herd herds. At the edge of the sea there are vast, uncompromising plains of shingle. Behind these are marshes trailing off to heather clad moors. On each rising promontory there is a fishing village, and some of them have escaped the excursion train at the feet of some of them the sea sings on uninterupted by the intellectual song of the negro minstrel. Vulgar curiosity has not penetrated to some of these rural haunts, and here a man may perhaps lead his own eccentric life—be more or less resigned to existence in his own eccentric way, without being questioned over much.

To one of these hamlets Craven Lester went, keeping in mind the ex-sailor's counsel about the sea. He wandered on the uncompro-mising shingle. He sat on an old oak gate and gazed out over the marsh with a certain patient waiting in his eyes. One Sunday evening he went to church, and Miss Marcia Oatville, the rector's daughter, saw him without once looking in his direction. How she did this is not our business to enquire. It is only ours to note the fact and dumbly admire the ways of maidenhood.

The next day the old rector, Mr. Oatville called. He was a tall man, with a face like a benediction, who seemed to have lived his life in some bygone day and was patiently performing his daily duties in anticipation of an approaching holiday. He welcomed Lester to the parish with a kindly fervor that had no real sincerity in it, and forebore from asking questions.

He explained that he had seen him in church, and it was a pleasure to make the acquaintance of so cultivated a man in a rural district such as his, where education was a thing unknown, and he added, with a meaning smile, "undesirable." He glanced at the pile of books, at the open packet of sermon paper and the pen, but he said nothing and presently took his leave.

Miss Marcia Oatville was an enterprising young lady, and in less than a fortnight she knew all about Craven Lester. She knew, for instance, that the ink on the paper was laid upon him; that he was never quite happy without a pen and something to write upon. He found plenty to write about, but he had not yet found out what the British public wanted to read. Finally he told her of the incident in Myra's bar, which he vaguely described as a sort of club, and she said that she liked Sam Crozier.

She had a way of leaning forward with her elbow on her knee and her chin within her hand. She had rather wistful, deep blue eyes, with dark lashes, and when she listened to Craven Lester she looked in a dreamy way past him—over his head—through the walls. It was evident that she liked to hear of this world which he had left behind—this world so full of men—young men with hopes and aspirations and dreams and ambitions and no wives.

He could hardly tell her too much about that world and of the men who formed it. She got to have likes and dislikes. She liked Sam Crozier—in fact, in a small, subtle way she began to love him. She liked Tom Valliant. But she did not like the Irishman, and she hated the poet chiefly because he had a bushy beard.

"And," she said suddenly one day, "Have you begun to write the book?" They were sitting on a piece of driftwood—the mainmast of some dead and forgotten ship—on the beach. He turned and looked at her with his deep, reflective eyes.

"No—not yet. I—I have forgotten about it lately." Which meant she had made him forget. She understood that and rather liked it. She knew that he was clever. The same unfathomed depth behind his eyes which had caught the attention of the poet and of the remaining share-holders in "Craven Lester's Brain, Limited," had affected her. This man was not like others. He was certainly very different from the coarse young sporting squires of the neighborhood. Marcia Oatville had an immense respect for literature. She worshipped it from afar—reading everything that percolated through to the remote country rectory. There was a certain glory in the slightest connection with a book—even in the prevention of its progress.

"But," she said, with a grave smile, "you must start at once." She made a little movement as if to rise. "I think," she went on, "that you ought to go home at once and begin."

"I would rather not," he answered quietly. "I am soaking my brain with salt, as I was told to do by the shareholders."

After awhile she consented to stay, and they discussed the unwritten book. They met again the next day and discussed it further. The Craven Lester began to write, and what starvation had failed to do the girl did. What the cleverest editors in London failed to accomplish Marcia Oatville accomplished with those wistful blue eyes of hers.

She knew nothing of writing books, was happily ignorant of the trouble called style and could not have written a book were it to save her life. But she supplied that which was missing in Craven Lester. She brought about the upheaval so much desired by the bearded poet.

Marcia Oatville had that suppressed sense of the dramatic which belongs to a solitary life. She had also a vivid imagination handed down to her from bygone Hautevilles together with a dainty little aquiline nose and the dark blue eyes. She could not write a novel, but she could construct one

with the unerring instinct of an untrammelled imagination. She knew nothing of life and what she imagined it to be was a much finer, more poetic, grander thing than Craven Lester knew it to be. And it all came about at the poet had prophesied. Some one took Craven Lester's brain and worked it like a sewing machine. But none of these men in Myra's Bar had seemed to harbor the possibility that the some one would be a woman.

The plot was partly his and partly hers. She told him what he had to do with a gravely possessive little air, which made his heart leap in his breast, and he did it with a skill and power which astonished her, ignorant as she was of such matters.

He worked at it night and day, and in less than two months the manuscript was sent to the poet. The bushy headed one and Samuel Crozier discussed it together in an inner room behind the red curtains in Myra's Bar, where Syra, occupied in her craft, watched her glasses and took no notice of them. From these the manuscript went to the publisher, from the publisher to the printer with an urgent letter, and for 10 days the poet took a daily packet of proofs down to Craven Lester in his rural exile. The men in London knew that it was good.

Craven Lester sent the proofs back carefully corrected. Later on he wrote his name across the back of a very handsome check and started a serious banking account. But he never offered to go back to town. Myra's Bar looked for him in vain.

Then he suddenly became famous. Fame came to him in that strange way of hers from nowhere and was upon him at all ways at once. A solid fame it was, that came to stay.

In the meantime he lingered at the edge of the sea, and one day he told Marcia Oatville that he loved her. He was strangely grave, anxious, breathless. Of course she ought to have seen it coming. But somehow she did not. This was chiefly owing to that imagination of hers. She had imagined it differently. It was one thing to make a man write a wonderful book—such a book as only comes once or twice in a generation. It was another to marry the author and settle down into a humdrum literary life. She had imagined herself a second Inconnue to a new Prosper Merimee. But had the Inconnue married Merimee, where would have been the letters?

She did not think that she loved Craven Lester, and she told him so, but he persuaded her to think this and finally she began to think this was to be love. His great, deep eyes helped her in this decision—and a certain presence of the unexpected in him which was fascinating.

They were formally engaged, and the Rev. Mr. Oatville was vastly pleased. Everything was idyllic and sweet and happy for several months, and then a friend of Marcia's childhood came home on leave from India. He was a brilliant young staff officer in all the heyday of that early fame which is not fame at all. He possessed the Victoria cross and was immensely pleased with himself and the world.

The rest of Marcia Oatville's story is nauseatingly old. The man of action was a pleasant change after the absorbed man of thought. The breeze self-confidence of the child of fortune was exhilarating after a long spell of that thoughtfulness which is left behind by one single failure. Craven Lester could not stand up against this reverse of fortune. He was bewildered and saw Marcia Oatville's love slipping through his fingers without knowing how to stay it.

"Oh, he will be all right," the young soldier said, with his lips too close to Marcia's ear, one evening in the drawing room. "He will go on writing his stuffy old book and will be successful all that."

He had tried to read the great novel and had not come anywhere near to a comprehension of it.

"You are not suited to him a bit. You would not be happy—you know you would not," went on the young officer, who was profoundly convinced that the cream of humanity wears a red coat. "Besides what would become of me?" That was the question. What would become of him? Marcia did not know, so she gave in. Neither of them seemed to think of asking what would become of Craven Lester.

She wrote and told him. When he called, she would not see him. So Craven Lester packed up his things and went back to town. He returned to his old rooms, and the orders came in. A magazine editor would be glad to accept stories of 3,000 words and upwards. Somebody else wanted a novel. A third party would pay handsomely for a serial.

Craven Lester pulled himself together and bought some more sermon paper. He persuaded himself that it was all right. It was all a mistake about Marcia Oatville. He had never really cared for her. Poor soul! he came down to the argument that he certainly could not care for her now—after her contemptible lack of faithfulness.

He went to Myra's Bar in the evening. There he met the poet and Sam Crozier. He discussed them with various orders and decided which to accept. It was to be a novel. Another great novel, only greater. He said he had not quite decided what it should be. He did not seem to have any definite plot to offer for their approval.

But he said that he would just shut himself up in his rooms and begin grinding at it. He did not vouchsafe any details as to the method of working which had produced the great novel, and in Myra's Bar it was not etiquette to ask questions. No one knew anything of his life during the months that were past. They only saw with their eyes and heard with their ears that he was quite a

different man. But then nothing changes a man so quickly and so thoroughly as fame.

Craven Lester did shut himself up in his rooms. He laid out the sermon paper and affixed a new pen to his penholder, but before beginning to work he sat back in his chair and thoughtfully nibbled the end of the penholder.

In three weeks he came back to Myra's Bar.

"Well," some one cried, "how is the new book getting on?" He smiled in his slow, grave way—slower, perhaps, and graver: "Not begun yet," he replied.

"Not begun?" "Not yet."

This was 10 years ago. Since then Myra's Bar has been burned down and a new Myra's built up. * * * Syra—well, Syra has journeyed on, as it is written elsewhere. In the new Myra's Bar, in the inner room, you may see Craven Lester any evening at the hour when the failures congregate. If any of them ask about the new book, he will answer with a smile that has grown wistful: "Not begun yet."

Wilson Leonard, the doctor, says that it is a slow, creeping paralysis of the brain. But the poet, whose head is almost white now, has a theory of his own—National Observer.

My traveling companion happened to be a Boston drummer who was very much struck on himself. Just ahead of us sat a very pretty young lady. The car was crowded, and the young lady had without doubt been unable to procure a seat in the parlor car, so she occupied one with her maid, a mulatto.

My seatmate sought in various ways to attract the notice of the young lady. He talked shop to me for awhile, incidentally confiding the fact—or fiction—that his father was a very wealthy man whose eccentricity had caused him to place his son in a position for acquiring a thorough knowledge of every branch of the dry goods business. Next year he expected to be taken into the firm. He was thinking of getting married and settling down if he could meet his ideal. Then he went on to describe his ideal, and he outlined the young lady just ahead of us, winking craftily at me. "I was certain she heard every word, but I could not tell if she was offended."

At length my loquacious companion leaned close to me, lowering his voice to a guarded tone as he said: "I'll go you ten to five I get a kiss from her before we have gone another four miles."

I was disgusted with the fellow, but thinking he would surely receive a rebuff that would teach him a lesson I retorted: "Done."

One minute later the train plunged into the sudden and overwhelming darkness of a tunnel. The drummer nudged me with his elbow. "Now I have it," he chuckled. "I felt him partially see and lean forward in his seat, and I was simply paralyzed with the immensity of his ears. In another second to my ears came the unmistakable sound of osculation. I expected to hear a shriek and words of protest, but in this I was disappointed. Just before the train passed out of the tunnel the drummer sank back at my side. An instant later we dashed into daylight once more.

I glanced at the young lady. To my surprise, she had changed places with the mulatto, and she was smiling merrily, while the tan colored maid was laughing outright.

I looked at my companion and saw he was staring with horror at the grinning negroess. He gasped and tried to speak, but it was some moments before he could gurgle: "Good God, I kissed the wrong one. I have lost the bet."

He took an early opportunity to vanish from the car. I am still waiting for him to fork over the \$10.

General News and Notes. The hypocrite throws away his mask when he feels sure that he isn't watched.

As soon as a preacher begins to get proud of his head he begins to get mouldy in the heart.

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The heart is the largest thing in the world because it takes more than the world to fill it.

The world is full of people who want to be good, but they are in no hurry to commence.

ENGLISH SPAIN LINIMENT removes all hard, soft or calloused Lumps and Blisters from horses, Blood Spavin, Curbs, Splints, Ring Bone, Sweeney, Stiffles, Sprains, Sore and Swollen Throat, Coughs, etc. Save \$5.00 by use of one bottle. Warranted the most wonderful and Blended Cure ever known. Made by J. Pallen & Son.

When we get to heaven we will find we will all have something to do with building it.

One of the saddest sights on which angels have to look is the life of a lonely child.

FERRY WHARF PROPERTY. The lease for a term of twenty years of the Public Wharf property, known as the Ferry Wharf, Chatham, N. B., will be sold by public auction on Monday, 21st day of August, next at 7:30 o'clock p. m., on the premises.

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At the McEwan farm, opposite Chatham, two horses—on an Island Chief mare 3 years old, the other colt of the same mare, by young Dean, 3 years old. They are both excellent drivers and 6-15-93

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Notice to Lumbermen.

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