

THE LITTLE BLUE CAP.

I was paying a visit to my friends the Durands. They were a simple, honest couple who lived near the banks of the river in a tiny house, a mere bird's nest, almost hidden by the wisteria and Virginia creeper. Durand's hands bore the marks of honest toil, for he had been a locksmith in his youth, and had by industry and economy raised himself steadily until he became the proprietor of a large business, and secured a competency for his old age. His wife, a quiet, gentle creature, worshipped her husband, and both of them wore on their faces an expression of serenity, which betokened ease of conscience and a life of peace. Durand was passed sixty years of age and his wife must have been fifty, yet in spite of their wrinkles and gray hairs, these two treated each other with an affectionate deference which was a pleasure to behold. They were Philemon and Baucis resuscitated.

While we were engaged in conversation just before dinner, Durand rose and opened a drawer to take out some trifle which he wished to show to me. While he was turning over the contents of the drawer, it chanced that a little cap, such as might have been worn by a doll or an infant, fell to the floor. I picked it up, and noticed that it was made of coarse blue linen, with two bits of twine instead of ribbons. As I handed it to him, I said, gaily:

"Are you preparing a baby basket, Papa Durand?"

I had no sooner spoken than I regretted it, for I recollected that at that moment having heard that the only shadow on my friends' lives, was the fact of their union being a childless one. For a minute Durand made no reply, but looked at the little cap affectionately, then as he laid it carefully away again, he said in a tone of seriousness:

"That is a souvenir."

Then we all three sat down to dinner and talked of other matters, but as soon as the repast was finished, and the little maid of all work had put cigars and liquors upon the table, my friend said, suddenly:

"How much that baby cap reminds me of!"

It was evident that he wanted to explain to me his remark and I begged him to do so.

"It was a great many years ago," he said, after a slight pause, "for I was about twelve years old. I was working in a large factory and I had a companion of the same age as myself, whom, on account of his ugly features, we nicknamed Zizi Monkey-face."

He was a sly, mischievous, cunning urchin, very much given to fishing tarts from the pastry cook's counter, but a jolly little chap and full of pluck. He was so lazy that he would have been turned out of the factory had it not been for the indulgence of the overseer, who had been a friend of his father's, and who took an interest in the boy for the sake of his dead comrade.

Monkey-face was an orphan, and the only relative he had ever known was the woman who had brought him up, a cousin of his mother's. This woman was a fish peddler, a bawling, brutal creature, whose affection for her young charge was manifested only by blows. Perhaps if he had known a parent's love he would have been less perverse.

One afternoon, the lad took it into his head to run away from the factory, and go vagabonding about with a gang of young ruffians like himself. As they were coming slowly home after nightfall, they heard to their astonishment the cry of an infant.

The sound seemed to issue from a long, narrow, dirty alley which opened on the street, and at the other end of which hung a flickering lamp. After a short consultation, the street boys ventured softly into the passage, and one of them espied, behind the door, a bundle of rags which struggled and wailed. He seized hold of it, and the whole party ran into the street, triumphant, stopping under a lamp to examine their capture. It proved to be a baby girl a few weeks old, wrapped up in a series of dirty clothes, a poor little innocent whom a wretched, perhaps desperate mother, had abandoned to the charity of strangers.

A council was held to decide what should be done with the booty, and the young crows gave free play to their mischievous imaginations. One said to put the baby back where they found it; another said to hide it in a half empty prune box which stood at the grocer's door; a third proposed to climb up to a second story balcony and leave the youngster there and how astonished the people would be next day! But Zizi Monkey-face scouted all these ideas and declared that the baby must be given to the gypsies. There was a band of these people near by, who practiced jugglery and fortune telling, and instances of kidnapping were by no means rare.

Monkey-face's decision was hailed with enthusiasm, and he claimed the right to carry the treasure-trove in consideration of his having made the plan.

"Give us the kid," he said. The baby had, all this time, been screaming piteously, but it stopped suddenly when Monkey-face took hold of it, and while he walked along with an air of triumph, it fixed its great blue eyes upon his ugly face, and smiled, at the same time stretching its tiny hands out as if to caress him.

"She is laughing!" cried the boy in delight, "see how she looks at me!"

Then a new impulse seized him.

"I will keep her myself," he said, "I will keep her myself!"

His companions protested indignantly, but in vain, for as they well knew Zizi Monkey-face had at the end of each arm an argument so strong that it would be useless as well as unsafe to oppose his wishes.

When he reached home with his burden the fish peddler exclaimed furiously:

"Do you think I have not enough to do to fill your mouth, you lazy imp? Take that brat to the police—quick now!" Pit, pit! A box on each ear showed the girl that she was in earnest, and he fled from the house.

That night he did not return, and the next morning he was in the factory as soon as it opened, for the first time in his life.

"Mr. George," he said timidly to the overseer, "how much will you pay me if I work hard all day?"

"I have already told you, twenty cents," answered the man in surprise, and Monkey-face worked indefatigably until night. The overseer, amazed and delighted at the change, paid the boy for his work and even gave him twenty cents in advance, in order to encourage him.

That night Monkey-face was again absent from his home, and his cousin, the fish peddler, went to the factory the next evening, lay in wait for him, and dragged

him home in spite of his struggles, administering a thrashing on the way. But it was no use; as soon as the old woman turned her back to cook the soup for dinner, the boy slipped out of the house and did not return.

The factory overseer having been informed of the state of affairs, made up his mind to settle the matter at once, by finding out where Monkey-face spent his nights, and for this purpose watched the lad as he left the factory. Mr. George, in company with one of the workmen, followed the wanderer at a short distance, and observed him enter a bakery and buy a small loaf of bread; next he went to a dairy and came out carrying a bottle of milk, and then turned his steps towards a lonely deserted quarter near the river. Suddenly his followers saw him plunge into a muddy alley, the place having no lamps was as dark as an oven, but Monkey-face was dimly visible as he stopped before a broad fence. The next minute he scaled it with the agility of the animal that was his namesake, and was lost to sight.

The two men, determined to discover his hiding place, climbed over the wall and found themselves in a large vacant lot, surrounded with weeds and rubbish, but of Monkey-face there was not a sign!

At last they espied in the farthest corner, a low wooden shed which had evidently once served as a fowl house, and through the cracks of which a faint light was shining. They approached it noiselessly and peered through a crack. Great was their astonishment. In the middle of the wretched hut, in which a man would not have been able to stand upright, sat the young runaway, a candle end stuck in the ground beside him; he was gradually pouring milk into a feeding bottle, and, in a corner on a bed of dried leaves, a baby was sleeping soundly, wrapped up in an old blanket.

Zizi Monkey-face transformed into a nurse!

"What the deuce are you doing here?" asked the overseer, throwing open the door of the cabin suddenly, and the boy startled at first by the intrusion, soon recovered himself and answered slowly:

"Haven't I got a right to have a little sister?"

Then after a pause he added grandly, "I earn twenty cents a day. That is enough for us both, and we don't ask anyone for anything!"

The narrator paused, smiled softly and added:

"The next day the owner of the factory being informed of the matter, raised my pay to forty cents—just double."

"What?" I cried, "it was you?"

"Ah, I have betrayed myself," said Durand. "Yes, I was the young rascal who was in a fair way to come to the gallows, and thanks to the blue eyes of that little girl, I became a good workman, and afterwards set up for myself. Now you understand why I keep that little blue cap; she had it on when we found her."

"And what has become of her?" I asked eagerly.

The old man answered, "We have never parted," then smiling, looking at his wife and added, "Have we, my dear?"

She smiled in return, but her eyes were moist as she looked at him, and under her eyelids I saw a tear drop glistening.

MY FRIEND'S ENEMY.

"I am as certain of your innocence," I repeated warmly, "as of my own."

But he sat with a listless, hopeless look upon his face, and made no answer.

"The thing is," I continued, "to prove it."

"I care very little whether it is proved or not," he said wearily.

Then after a momentary pause, he added with sudden fierceness—

"As it is—I as if I loved her so—"

His voice trailed off into a hoarse, sobbing whisper, and, covering his face with his hands, he swayed himself to and fro in an agony of grief.

I had known John Steele for upwards of five years, and had grown to love and admire the man's earnest and gentle nature. When I first made his acquaintance, though I was not aware of it at the time, he was under the shadow of a terrible suspicion. He had been charged with the wilful murder of his wife in circumstances which seemed to leave very little doubt of his guilt; but the evidence against him had failed, and he had been set at liberty.

Finding, however, that many still believed—as, in such cases, many always will believe—that he was guilty, and that the lack of proof only showed a want of vigilance on the part of the police, he left his native town and came to London, where a few months later, I became acquainted with him.

He never alluded to his past, and though he had been too proud to adopt an alias, his name was so common that it never once occurred to me to identify him with the notorious "Steele Mystery" that had pervaded the newspapers a short time before.

Well, after he had been four years in London, he married again—married a girl to whom it was easy to see he was passionately devoted.

And now, one year after his marriage, his second wife had been murdered in precisely the same manner as his first.

I was a young solicitor, just commencing practice, and zealously undertook his defence, though even I was somewhat appalled when the story of his first wife's tragic and mysterious death was raked up against him; for I could adduce no evidence in his favour.

He told me he had left the city at six, and walked home to Clapham as usual, arriving there about seven. He might have gone by train and arrived earlier for all I could prove to the contrary; and, if he was guilty, he must have done so; for when the doctor was fetched at ten minutes past seven he found the woman had been shot dead some twenty minutes before.

Steele's own story was, that when he reached the house it was in darkness. Going into the parlor, which was on the ground floor, he stumbled over something, and, striking a match, saw it was the dead body of his wife.

He had kept no servant, being a man of limited means, so during his absence his wife was alone in the house. The criminal, whoever he was, must have known this, and, known too, at what hour Steele reached home of an evening. He had probably gone to the door, and entered immediately it was opened to him, taking his victim unawares, and forcing her helplessly before him into the parlor, where he had shot her, quitting the house but shortly before

fore Steele came in—perhaps, even having timed himself so that suspicion should fall upon the husband himself.

But what man or fiend could have done it, and what was his motive?

I was with my poor friend in his cell after he had been remanded, doing my utmost to arouse him to a sense of his danger.

"I know you loved her, Jack," I said, "and she would wish you to clear yourself. For her sake, you must help me. Think! Had you or she any enemy who—"

"No," he interrupted dully, "none."

"Is it possible," I urged quietly, "that the same hand has committed both these crimes—that you have some revengeful enemy who—"

"No," he cried, impatiently, "no."

Then, with a start, he added—

"At least, there was somebody—"

"Yes?"

"Yes," he rejoined, lapsing into his former lethargy; "but I told the police before, and they could not trace him. It went against me. They said I had concocted the story to divert suspicion from myself. They would say so again now; and, besides, he could have no reason for this."

"But who is this man?" I asked.

And, little by little, I got the whole story from him.

"We will say nothing to the police at present," I said at last, "but that man must be found. His name is—"

"Don Jose Emmanuel."

"A Spaniard?"

"Yes."

I wrote the name in my pocket-book, and went away, resolved to lose no time in commencing my search.

If Don Jose was the criminal, and still remained in London, he would certainly watch the newspapers closely; and, therefore, after rejecting many schemes, I resorted to an advertisement in all the London dailies:

WANTED immediately, clerk for coal-station at Monte Video. No special experience. Knowledge of Spanish essential. Spaniard with knowledge of English preferred. Address, etc.

I used the name of an acquaintance, who arranged also to let me utilize his office for this purpose.

My hope was that the man I was seeking would see the advertisement, and think it a safe and profitable opportunity of getting discreetly out of the country before any suspicion was a-foot concerning him.

Within the next two days I received scores of replies, and weeded out a dozen from Spanish applicants, none of which, however, was signed with the name I wanted; but then the man might have adopted an alias.

Steele could not identify Don Jose's handwriting, and, having only met him twice, had no recollection of his appearance, except that he had a scar on his left cheek.

Relying on this slender clue, I wrote to my twelve Spanish candidates, asking them to call upon me. One after the other, they came next morning at their appointed times, and went; and I was beginning to despair, when Carlos Corveda was shown into the room.

He was a tall, swarthy man, with a somewhat haughty bearing, and a keen, watchful look in his dark eyes. I put the customary questions as to references and former employment; then repeating a ruse I had adopted with all the others, as it afforded a better opportunity of scrutinizing their faces, I asked him to write down his name and address, as I had mislaid his letter.

Standing by him while he was writing, I scanned his left cheek narrowly, and could hardly conceal my excitement when I descried through his scanty whiskers a slight scar upon which no hair was growing.

I dismissed him as he came, cautiously followed him out. I kept him in sight until I was satisfied he was not going home, then hailed a hansom and drove to the address he had given.

On being told he was out, I asked permission to write a note for him, and the landlady obligingly showed me into his room, which opened on the hall.

While she stood there watching me I could not profit by my success; so I kept writing until she uneasily excused herself to go, to give an eye to some culinary operations, which I could smell were in progress downstairs.

The moment I was alone I tried the drawers of the table I was using, and found only one of them locked. A hasty search revealed nothing but unimportant papers bearing the name of Carlos Corveda, until from the back of one of them I drew out a revolver. A cursory glance showed me that four of its six chambers were still loaded. I had no time for speculation, but thrust it into my pocket, and hearing no sound of the landlady's approach, hastily crossed the room to a row of books on a small cupboard by the fireplace.

The fly-leaves of most of these gave me only the name of Carlos Corveda; but, at last, I found two bearing that of Jose Emmanuel, over dates just prior to the first of the two murders.

I stayed to investigate no further. When the landlady returned, I handed her a note asking him to call on me at two on the following afternoon.

I went at once to the detective who had charged of the case, and when he had heard my story and found the two bullets taken from the dead body fitted the two empty chambers of the revolver, he was inclined to think my theory worth investigation.

He met me next day, at the office I was using, leaving an assistant, seated like a clerk in the outer room.

"When he comes," I said, "I will be gossiping to you of this murder, and you can see if he betrays himself at all. It may lead to something that will help us."

Functually at two Don Carlos was shown into the room, and I was saying to the detective, in a chatty manner, as he entered—

"I am interested because I happen to know the prisoner personally, and I tell you he is perfectly innocent—I won't tell you a moment, señor. Will you sit down?"

"If he is innocent," returned the detective, "I should like to know who is guilty!"

"I'll tell you. The girl that Steele married five years ago had been pestered by a disappointed lover, who, when he heard of her approaching marriage, threatened her with all sorts of mad and horrible revenge. He even called upon Steele himself, and dared him to marry the girl. He was a passionate, vindictive man; but they treated his threats as jealous ravings, and even before they were married he vanished from the neighbourhood."

A year later she was mysteriously shot dead, and suspicion fell on the husband.

See, now! When he marries again, exactly the same thing is repeated. It is the rejected lover wreaking his insatiable vengeance upon his successful rival. Each time he has so contrived it that suspicion has fallen upon his rival; but he failed to bring him to the gallows before, and now he will fail again."

I ventured a side glance at my visitor. His face had gone grey and ghastly to the lips, and his hands were clenched nervously; but he was desperately striving to maintain his self-control.

"You seem positive," remarked the detective.

"I am, for I know who the scoundrel is, and where he is," I resumed. "He is a Spaniard. His name is Don Jose Emmanuel."

I could see the man start and move uneasily, and could suppress my excitement no longer.

"But," I added with sudden haste, "he goes by the name of Don Carlos Corveda, and that is the man!"

I pointed at the man, who sprang from the chair as if I had struck him.

He dashed at the door but it was locked; the officer outside had seen to that the moment he entered. He turned swiftly, and a long knife glittered in his hand; but before he could stir a step the detective had covered him with his own revolver.

He paused, and his drawn features relaxing into a shuddering grin, snarled—

"Fool! I have walked into the trap. Curse you! Twice I have brought him to shame, and near to the gallows, and now when my revenge is almost complete—"

He suddenly seemed to remember himself, and stopped short in what he was saying.

While he spoke, I noticed the door behind him had been gradually, noiselessly opening.

"I will sell my life dearly. Shoot if you will," he screamed wildly; better that than the other."

He whirled the knife above his head and made a movement to spring upon us; but at the same instant the door was wide open two strong arms had seized him, and his weapon was dashed from his hand.

There was a mad, brief struggle, a click of handcuffs, and my friend's enemy lay a prisoner at my feet.

His First Diary.

He was only a little boy, and this was his first diary. It had been given him as a birthday present, and was bound in a red cover with a highly-colored picture adorning the front. Strict injunctions were issued as to how he should use it, and where he should write. Then he was left to himself. He meant to begin well and early, so he very carefully wrote: "Got up at seven." Then, according to instructions, he took it to his governess for approval. The way her eyes dilated and her mouth opened made him feel rather uncomfortable, and he wondered whether anyone had been tampering with his literary productions.

"Got up!" she screamed, "got up! You wretched boy! Does the sun get up? No! it rises." Very neatly she scratched out the barbarous words and made him write "rose at seven."

This settled Master Tom; no more mistakes of that kind for him again! He spent the remainder of the day in semi-misery thinking over his disgrace, and longing for the time to wipe it out by careful obedience to his governess's instructions. So on retiring for the night he wrote, with the air of a man who knew his business well, "Set at eight."

Where Knowledge is Power.

Dr. A.—What do you always make such particular inquiries as to what your patients eat? Does that assist you in your diagnosis?

Dr. B.—Not that, but it enables me to ascertain their social position and arrange my fees accordingly.

Some Consolation to Him.

Irate Passenger (who has managed to board a bus that didn't stop):—Suppose I'd slipped and lost a leg, then what?

Conductor (kindly):—You wouldn't have to do any more jumping then. We always stops for a man with a crutch.

BORN.

Windsor, Sept. 15, to the wife of G. B. Dakin, a son.

Wolville, Sept. 19, to the wife of M. W. Pick, a son.

St. Marys, Sept. 18, to the wife of Thos. D. Parent, a son.

Windsor, Sept. 11, to the wife of John Mattheson, a son.

Truro, Sept. 18, to the wife of Rev. A. L. Geggie, a son.

Breton, Aug. 23, to the wife of Edward Wintre, a son.

Springhill, Sept. 8, to the wife of Philip Brine, a son.

Sussex, Sept. 16, to the wife of Albert Bonnell, a son.

Carleton, Sept. 25, to the wife of W. L. Harding, a son.

Springhill, Sept. 15, to the wife of H. A. McKnight, a son.

Sussex, Sept. 16, to the wife of Rupert Hunter, two sons.

Wolville, Sept. 21, to the wife of Frank A. Dixon, a son.

Lunenburg, Sept. 15, to the wife of Chas. Schnare, a son.

Moncton, Sept. 19, to the wife of Clarence Estano, a daughter.

Windsor, Sept. 13, to the wife of William Wilson, a daughter.

Windsor, Sept. 14, to the wife of David Cochran, a daughter.

Springhill, Sept. 9, to the wife of Rev. D. Wright, a daughter.

Halifax, Sept. 17, to the wife of D. McMullen, a daughter.

Shediac, Sept. 14, to the wife of Albert Dolron, a daughter.

Shediac, Sept. 15, to the wife of Solomon Lavoie, a daughter.

St. Andrews, Sept. 18, to the wife of G. H. Lamb, a daughter.

Amherst, Sept. 17, to the wife of Daniel Teed, a daughter.

Wolville, Sept. 15, to the wife of J. S. Dodd, a daughter.

Fox River, N. S. Sept. 13, to the wife of George A. Leitch, a daughter.

Beaver Brook, Sept. 17, to the wife of John Mansfield, a daughter.

Fredericton, Sept. 19, to the wife of W. C. Crockett, a daughter.

North Sydney, C. B. Sept. 20, to the wife of Capt. W. Brown, a son.

Westmorland Point, Sept. 12, to the wife of Walter T. Bulmer, a son.

North Sydney, C. B. Sept. 9, to the wife of L. W. Hoyt, a daughter.

New Glasgow, Sept. 17, to the wife of James C. McGeorg, a daughter.

Lorville, Sept. 17, to the wife of William Brown, a son and daughter.

Roseway, N. S. Sept. 12, to the wife of Walter S. Robbins, a daughter.

Dorchester, Sept. 7, to the wife of Hon. H. R. Emerson, a daughter.

Diligant River, N. S. Sept. 20, to the wife of J. N. McPherson, a daughter.

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MARRIED.

Halifax, Sept. 14, Thos. J. Armstrong to Ella M. Martin.

Halifax, Sept. 19, Andrew N. Bayne to Lila McDonald.

St. John, Sept. 23, by Rev. T. Casey, Edward Quigg to Alice Nolan.

Dartmouth, by Rev. T. C. Mellor, Ezekiel Wilcox to Minnie Roach.

Lower Wicketfield, by Rev. S. W. Shaw, Zeba Clark to Deliah Dickinson.

Carleton, Sept. 25, by Rev. G. A. Hartley, Albert Currie to Annie Duke.