

WAS SHE INNOCENT?

It is a year and a day ago, and an end has come to the story. At one time it seemed as if the cruel shadow would never lift. It had blotted out love, and hope, and joy; all except life—which was left, a worthless thing.

A year and a day ago, and I was standing with Eugene Conway in the fair old garden of Bridgela Towers, and the dusk had thickened as Eugene told me that his father raised no barrier, and that in a little while we should be man and wife.

"Just a minute, Mysie," he said, "I want to shut the side gate. The people are coming this way. Let them take the centre path."

When he was gone voices from behind came to my ear.

"What a fool you must be to send me this," said one, "I can't lend you money until our little job comes off, and then as we go shares, I shan't think you want it."

"Confound it! Did you get that letter? Then I was a fool and no mistake," was the answer, "I wrote down the latest arrangements."

At that stage the voice was too distant to follow. It seemed oddly familiar to me, but I should have thought no more of the circumstance first or last if it had not been for the blow which crushed my shy girlish happiness like a house of cards.

It was half an hour later. The great house was given up to gaiety. A costume ball was in progress. I stood on a stairway smiling at Eugene, who was in a ridiculous make-up as a gallant of Elizabeth's time. Something was wrong with his ruff, and he surreptitiously sought my assistance. A door opened at the end of a corridor and it seemed that we were caught.

But quite a group appeared, and as I recovered from a first moment of confusion, I saw that the policemen's uniforms were not intended for disguise. The two officers had a prisoner between them, and Colonel Conway was behind, looking stern and angry.

"I warned my wife to have a care of her jewels, for when the mummy was in full swing you couldn't say what dishonest person might take advantage of it."

He was speaking to Inspector Insole at the turn close to my elbow. I was watching the prisoner, a woman. Her face came on a level with my own and a keen agony went to my heart.

"Mother! what does this mean?" I cried. And then all I know is that we two faced each other, an end made of fictitious character on both sides. The men and gaping domestics were round us. Eugene stood a trifle back, with a face flooded with bewilderment; and his father crossed and said something to him in an undertone. I felt that it was an adverse judgment. I did not hear the words or wish to.

My mother had trodden the boards before she married Francis Mirrell, who was Colonel Conway's first cousin. It was no trouble to her to hide her identity, and to-night she was a swarthy southern woman, while I went as a peasant of Normandy.

"Mysie, I am innocent," she said. "Yes, yes, I am sure of it," I returned with rising indignation. "What shameful thing is this, Colonel Conway?"

Of Eugene I hardly thought in these minutes of strange crisis. It was sheer impulse from beginning to end.

The colonel grimly nodded to Inspector Insole. His own features had grown stony, and his keen gray eyes had the cold light which I had seen there before, and which made me think that Eugene would never win him to let our romance have its way.

Yet it was otherwise and I had been invited to Bridgela Towers as if there were no family feud and as if we were not reduced gentlemen.

The inspector knew how to be brief, and he had a kind heart and put harsh things gently.

"We heard a whisper that Mrs. Conway's jewels might be in danger during the festivities," he said; "acting on that we watched. There have been many robberies lately in this part. And one of my men suspected a guest whom nobody seemed to know. She was lost sight of and then found again. But when we found this lady it was unfortunately in suspicious circumstances. She was in Mrs. Conway's dressing room, and she seemed to be nervous, and unable to account for having a valuable necklace in her sleeve. It was not carefully hidden, and may have been placed there in a moment of fright at hearing the door tried."

Yet I could see that he did not believe the defence he was suggesting. "Taken in the act," was his own verdict.

"It is my mother; and she must be released."

"No," said a new speaker. "The gems are my property and I was within an arm's length of losing them. It cannot end here. Mrs. Mirrell has been taken into custody on good grounds and she must give such account of her business here today as she can in the proper place. I had no idea that it was Mrs. Mirrell."

"Nor I, Charlotte," said Colonel Conway moodily, supporting his wife.

My mother's pallor was increasing, and her hand went to her heart. New tremors shook me, for I knew there was a maid seated there. She and Mrs. Conway exchanged glances. Dislike which had lost its guard was confronted by a proud disdain. Afterwards I heard that Colonel Conway had been my father's rival, and though Mrs. Conway lured her lover back she had not forgotten the episode.

"Won't you tell them all how it happened, mother? Then they will believe—they must!"

I stamped my foot, and was beside myself with resentment, shame, and terror.

Still that strange, unbalanced, haggard look was on my mother's face. She did not answer me. I saw the second constable make a grimace to Inspector Insole. Their opinions coincided.

"Come away, Mysie. You are not quite yourself. And that is no wonder. But you can do no good here, and you shall hear all. I pledge my word to you for that. I am sure Mrs. Mirrell would wish it."

Eugene had a marvellous power of persuasion when he pleased to use it freely. Without it he would not have borne down material opposition to his suit. At the present moment I groaned and yielded.

We avoided the noise and frolic of the night. The dancers did not dream of the drama so near—the drama that was to be a tragedy to-morrow. We went into the library, and I know that I was a weak and wailing woman, and that Eugene joined tenderness to firmness in a way that proved

him every inch a man and worthy of loyal affection.

I took back my promise from him. I insisted that however dark the surroundings of the case there could be no real doubt of the complete innocence of the accused. In my bitter pain I demanded that Eugene should go my length. To this he demurred.

"I hope fervently it may be so," he said. "But the whole affair is exceedingly puzzling. Did you expect to see your mother here to-night?"

"No; but she may have had good reasons and honorable ones."

"That is possible of course. But it is very strange. Mrs. Mirrell is a widow living three miles away. She has never got on with my people, and never has entered the house before, so far as I am aware. I daresay there have been faults on our side. That I have long ago admitted, Mysie."

He had; but I made no reply.

"There was no expectation that Mrs. Mirrell would honour our ball with her presence. She was not very willing for you to come, I think you said?"

My lips were obstinately shut.

In spite of all this she does come and does not make herself known. Even you are in ignorance of the fact that she is here. And then the catastrophe happens. I cannot say that anything is quite certain, Mysie. There are such things as unaccountable, overwhelming impulses to singular behaviour. But I say again that I hope it will all be cleared up. There shall be no prosecution if it can help it. You must not take notice of mamma. She was upset."

"And my mother is in custody now! Do not call me Mysie I beg, Mr. Conway. As long as you believe what you do, there is nothing between us to give you the right."

He bowed. I had struck a spark from the rock.

"Pardon me, Miss Mirrell," he said, "I only put in some detail of the colonel's question: 'Can she be wholly innocent?' Is there a possibility of it? I shall be glad to think there is."

A night that will always linger in my memory as absolutely the most miserable I ever spent succeeded these stormy scenes. Greatly against my will I remained at Bridgela Towers.

With the early streaks of the spring dawn I heard carriages rumble over the gravel. The guests were leaving. What a farce the bright gathering, to which I had cast longing forward looks of pleasure, had been to me! I wore my finery still, and it sickened me.

The more so when a message came. I was wanted at the station-house at Dorchester. Eugene was on the box-seat of the fly. I noticed it, though not a word passed between us.

And thus the grey morning found me a traveller also. I tragedy was at my journey's end. My mother would never meet and confound her accusers. The blow had gone with shattering force against weak bulwarks. Disease leaped up and in an hour from the attack all was over. The doctor met me on the threshold, and I read evil news in his eyes. He began to speak and I broke in.

"Too late! Do not tell me so!"

Then I turned to Eugene Conway.

"This is Mrs. Conway's work," I said; "and as you are here I repeat that there was nothing—noting in the wicked charge. I know it. It could not be. And I will never call anyone my friend who will not say what I now say about it. Do you understand?"

"Yes," he answered slowly. "I think I understand. Good-bye, Miss Mirrell."

It was Eugene and Colonel Conway nevertheless who lifted the load of sad and painful business from my shoulders. My small inheritance was secured and I escaped to Devonshire. I heard later that Eugene went abroad.

It is a year and a day ago and an end has come to the story. This morning I met Eugene Conway on Brixham Beach. I was startled and ruffled, and angry with a sudden sense of a great wrong gratified. As if love survived!

"Mysie, my own girl," he said boldly, with an accent that robbed me of power to rebel. "Shall we begin again where we left off?"—I was not generous—not kind—when I repeated my father's question, "Can she be innocent?" Now I have ventured to bring the answer. There is no doubt remaining Mrs. Mirrell was innocent."

"You have found it out at last."

"Yes; on the other side of the Atlantic. A man saved my life in the Rockies. After that he fell ill with fever. I nursed him, but he died. He was a newcomer, too; and he knew me. He confessed. His name was Elliot Narraway, and he was your half-brother. You knew nothing, I believe, of your mother's first marriage. And this youth was a wild son always."

"Ah! That was he who came to the house sometimes, and whom I heard talking in the garden that evening. I remembered the voice."

And I interposed with the incident.

That corroborates Elliot Narraway's story. He meant to rob Bridgela Towers. It was a plot. And he actually had the jewels in his possession. But he had sent your mother a wrong letter, and given a clue to his intentions. To save him and prevent the crime she attempted a perilous stroke, and the consequences were terrible. She dared not divulge anything, but she sent Narraway in his moment of success and forced him to resign the spoil. She was the restorer and not the thief. Now am I forgiven, Mysie?"

He insisted; and I have said that Eugene had a wonderful way of persuasion.

His Collar Was Not Loaded.

At Beaver Falls, Pa., the other night, a Pole with an unpronounceable name had put on a new celluloid collar and was preparing to spend the evening in society, but before he finished making his toilet he was seized by a sudden attack of toothache, stooping close to an open grate with his mouth open, in order to heal the aching tooth, he remained for several minutes, but all at once there was a flash of fire, and instantly the celluloid collar was converted into a ring of fire around his neck. It was entirely consumed before he could realize what was the matter, burning the flesh on his neck almost to a crisp.

Her Fearful Threat.

She—If you attempt to kiss me, I'll call mamma.

He—And what will happen then?

She—Oh, nothing, for mamma isn't at home.

SHE WAS A FRENCH SPY.

The Queer Career of an Adventuress of Worldwide Notoriety.

The career of Mme. Millescamps, the woman recently convicted of espionage by the criminal court of Paris, would furnish abundant material for a sensational romance.

Her maiden name was Marie Foret. She worked at dressmaking and gave lessons in music. She was a well-educated and handsome young woman. In 1863 she married one Gennot, a rich and stupid man, who for many years remained completely under her control. Shortly after her marriage she determined to see the world, and turned her husband into a traveller. With him she went to Philadelphia and lived there for a couple of years. Then she came to New York and remained here for some time, engaged in business. Next she turned up in Buenos Ayres. It became too hot for her there, and she proceeded at once to Berlin, where she led a gay life and moved for a time in high society. From Berlin she went to live in London, and continued there her old style of life.

At last her husband got tired of her and thought it was high time for him to go to California or to South America, and keep himself beyond the reach of his fast and extravagant better half. This he did, and Mme. Gennot was good enough not to take the thing too much to heart. She reported that he was dead, and in 1880 returned to Paris, where she married M. Millescamps, a well-to-do business man. In a short time she brought him to the verge of bankruptcy. But somehow or other she managed to get well off again. Just where her funds came from remained a mystery. On coming down somewhat in funds again she started a store in the Rue de Bretagne, where she sold religious books, pictures and statuettes.

As she was remarkable for her piety, good Christians patronized her, and for three years the business flourished. In 1884 M. Millescamps died suddenly, and some of the pious widow's neighbors were left under the impression that she facilitated his departure for a better world. This suspicion, however, did not materialize. After the death of her husband No. 2 she carried on the business on her own account. In the evenings she received company. Her little salon was frequented by a cosmopolitan group. She was a linguist, a conversationalist, and an accomplished musician.

But, in addition to her religious establishment, she carried on in another quarter of the city a matrimonial bureau and also a table-turning table, at which she was always the leading spirit. In the art of teaching the tables how to dance and talk with their legs she had no equal in Paris. Wonderful stories are told of her interviews with the departed, and it is said that many prominent men, including Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith"), often consulted her.

After a time she abandoned the spirits and devoted herself to the more profitable business of espionage. According to a prominent man on the Paris police, women are at present in France the most numerous and the most active agents in this business. The police has its eye on many of them, but they are hard to catch. Mme. Millescamps's nature was too bold and intelligent to fit her for a long career in her new profession. She took large contracts and great risks, and was "pinned" at last. The evidence against her was conclusive, and she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Emerson Gave a Good Local.

While Ralph Waldo Emerson was on his way to California several years ago, he fell in with a man who was altogether so socially and chatty that an otherwise tedious journey was rendered as cheerful as possible.

This man's name was Sackett, and he told Mr. Emerson that he resided in San Francisco. Mr. Sackett indicated all the points of interest along the route, related a lot of amusing anecdotes, and best of all was an attentive listener.

The natural consequence was that Mr. Emerson came to the conclusion that Mr. Sackett was as charming a man as he had ever met, and it was with this positive conviction that he accepted Mr. Sackett's invitation to dine with him immediately upon their arrival in San Francisco.

The next morning Mr. Emerson was well-nigh paralyzed to find in the local papers this startling notice—

"Professor Ralph Waldo Emerson the eminent philosopher, scholar, and poet, is in our city as the guest of Mr. J. Sackett, the well-known proprietor of the Bash Street Well-Museum. Matinees every half-hour; admission only ten cents. The double-headed calf and the dog-faced boy this week."

Some years ago the mint authorities of a certain city noticed that a small amount of gold was missing every day after the closing operations.

They watched and set traps of every description, but no thief was detected, and after the loss had continued with regularity for some months, they set it down to an extra amount of unavoidable waste, and thought no more about it.

Two or three years afterwards, two brothers, who were working there, left and set up a public house together on money which they said had been left them by an uncle. As they had both good characters, it was not until one of them told a mint foreman on the understanding that no action should be taken, that anything was known of the following trick:—

Both the brothers used to grease their hands before working at the machines, and whenever they noticed some gold dust sticking to the grease, it was wiped off in their hair. Care was used that enough was not taken to show; though, when they washed their hair at home each night, the few grains meant several extra shillings, which ultimately enabled them to retire and live comfortably.

When There Was the Most Talk.

Tutor—When did Christopher Columbus discover America?

Pupil (readily)—In 1892, Sir.

Tutor (testily)—What stupidity! Don't you know it was in 1492.

Pupil—Excuse me sir. I thought you meant the last time he discovered America.

Why He Keeps Them.

Harduppy tells me he never destroys a receipted bill.

No; he's more likely to have them framed, and hung up in his parlor as curiosities.

BORN.

Midgie, Jan. 11, to the wife of George Beal, a son.

Halifax, Jan. 14, to the wife of W. Wheatley, a son.

Halifax, Jan. 7, to the wife of H. B. Pheneay, a son.

Halifax, Jan. 5, to the wife of William Grant, a son.

St. Croix, Jan. 1, to the wife of Harry H. Miller, a son.

Moncton, Jan. 19, to the wife of S. G. Nickerson, a son.

Port Elgin, Jan. 11, to the wife of C. E. Munro, a son.

Parashoro, Jan. 15, to the wife of Andrew Sears, two sons.

St. John, Jan. 13, to the wife of P. S. McNutt, a son.

Sackville, Jan. 18, to the wife of Rev. A. T. Tucker, a son.

Harbor Grace, Nfld., Jan. 5, to the wife of Dr. Lehr, a son.

Mount Pleasant, Jan. 14, to the wife of J. F. Daley, a son.

Avondale, Jan. 5, to the wife of Philip Crowell, a daughter.

Lunenburg, Jan. 13, to the wife of Ulysses Selig, a daughter.

Port Hood, Jan. 1, to the wife of D. F. McLean, a daughter.

Halifax, Jan. 17, to the wife of H. S. Blackadar, a daughter.

Parashoro, Jan. 6, to the wife of Charles Foley, a daughter.

Amherst, Jan. 10, to the wife of George Spears, a daughter.

North Sydney, Jan. 12, to the wife of Robert Jackson, a son.

Lunenburg, Jan. 12, to the wife of Percy Seaboyer, a daughter.

Blanford, N. S., Jan. 5, to the wife of Rev. E. Roy, a daughter.

Avondale, Dec. 30, to the wife of George Benedict, a daughter.

Cape Island, Jan. 16, to the wife of Clarence F. Covill, a son.

Plymouth, Jan. 6, to the wife of Capt. H. E. Warner, a daughter.

Central Chebogue, Jan. 1, to the wife of S. A. Cook, two sons.

Fredericton, Jan. 8, to the wife of Albert W. Elge, a daughter.

Norton Station, Jan. 1, to the wife of Dr. J. J. Lawson, a daughter.

Economy, N. S., Dec. 30, to the wife of Rev. Andrew Gray, a daughter.

Married.

Truro, Jan. 9, George H. Porter to Mamie Johnson.

Plymouth, Jan. 8, John Melanson to Ada Amero.

Burton, N. S., Jan. 5, A. W. Brooks to Ida Peters.

Pictou, Jan. 10, by Rev. A. L. Goggin, Lewis Bryson to M. Hunt.

Moncton, Jan. 1, by Rev. J. M. Robinson, Robert Sands to Jean Stewart.

St. John, Jan. 2, by Rev. T. Casey, P. Crowley to Sarah J. McCulloch.

Bridgewater, Jan. 9, by Rev. Geo. D. Harris, Robert Crouse to Emma Smith.

St. John, Jan. 15, by Rev. Father Casey, John Walsh to Katie Brophy.

Halifax, Jan. 4, by Rev. J. L. Dawson, Gabriel Pitcher to Lydia Hollett.

Westville, Jan. 10, by Rev. T. D. Stewart, Robert Purvis to Emma Moore.

Newcastle, Dec. 26, by Rev. S. L. Johnson, Frank Graham to Edith May.

Lunenburg, Jan. 14, by Rev. George A. Leck, David Backman to Martha Cook.

Halifax, Jan. 4, by Rev. Allan Simpson, M. D. Logan to Louise Stephens.

St. John, Jan. 17, by Rev. T. Casey, Peter F. Thorpe to Sarah Gallagher.

Clementsville, Jan. 3, by Rev. E. A. Allaby, Elmer Floyd to Dorcas Mayland.

Parashoro, Jan. 10, by Rev. W. H. Evans, Russell Hatfield to Elizabeth Pratt.

St. John, Jan. 4, by Rev. W. O. Raymond, Charles W. Earle to Jennie E. Gally.

Granville, Jan. 1, by Rev. Alfred Gale, W. Alfred Randall to M. Agnes Calneck.

Andover, Jan. 7, by Rev. H. G. Estabrooks, Joseph Graham to Sarah Kustumoun.

Clifton, Dec. 26, by Rev. D. McGillivray, George S. McCurdy to Jessie Sanderson.

Newcastle, Jan. 15, by Rev. W. Aitken, James P. Mitchell to Isabella McCurdy.

Halifax, Jan. 16, by Rev. Father Gillis, Charles J. Seaman to Clara Cunningham.

Nictaux, Jan. 11, by Rev. C. E. Pineo, Frank Woodbury to Bertha Stoddart.

Dalhousie, by Rev. H. B. Morris, Alexander Hamilton to Miriam LeBlond.

Springhill, Dec. 31, by Rev. D. Wright, Charles Corkum to Mabel L. Seamans.

Yarmouth, Jan. 17, by Rev. W. H. Langille, Charles N. Marling to Sarah I. Bryant.

Corn Hill, Dec. 23, by Rev. A. McNinch, Calvin Chambers to Jennie M. Brown.

Eelbrook, N. S., Jan. 9, by Rev. J. Crouzier, James Comeau to Elizabeth Comeau.

St. John, Jan. 18, by Rev. Dr. Wilson, William M. Comeau to Mary Irene Jones.

Yarmouth, Jan. 11, by Rev. C. F. Cooper, George E. Burrows to Ida L. Hamilton.

St. Andrews, Jan. 1, by Rev. Charles Comben, James Chase to Bessie McLean.

Waverly, N. S., Jan. 17, by Rev. A. B. Dickie, John J. Crosby to Lottie Temple.

Newcastle, Jan. 10, by Rev. W. Aitken, Albert McCullum to Elizabeth Stewart.

Summersville, N. S., Jan. 3, by Rev. G. A. Weathers, Louis Redden to Bessie Mosher.

Greenwood, Jan. 17, by Rev. J. L. Smith, Ormsby L. Lecky to Maude M. Goodwin.

New Cornwall, Jan. 8, by Rev. J. W. Crawford, Abner Ernst to Sarah A. Jodrey.

Dawsonville, Dec. 26, by Rev. George Miliar, William Pollock to Johanna Dixie.

Moncton, Jan. 12, by Rev. T. J. Diestadt, John M. McKinnon to Minnie Stevenson.

St. John, Dec. 26, by Rev. C. Macrae, Richard Hutchison to Katherine D. Benson.

Rockport, N. S., Dec. 27, by Rev. H. R. Baker, Daniel Lockhart to Edna M. Maxwell.

Neil's Harbor, C. B., Jan. 19, by Rev. M. McLeod, Kenneth Wilkie to Mary Jane Fraser.

St. Peters, C. B., Jan. 11, by Rev. A. B. McLeod, George Grant to Cassie B. Hearn.

Tyngs, P. E. I., Jan. 1, by Rev. B. H. Bentley, Freeman Boulter to Pamela A. Howatt.

Stone Ridge, N. B., Jan. 22, by Rev. S. Sykes, James W. Graham to Alma M. Crouse.

Newcastle, Dec. 20, by Rev. S. L. Johnson, Harvey W. Ferguson to Margaret Belle Corbett.

River Bourgeois, Jan. 3, by Rev. A. E. Mombourquette, Eugene Digo to Mary Fougere.

Green Point, N. B., Jan. 4, by Rev. Father Var, deMortals, L. E. Hutchison to Mary Roy.

Good Corner, N. B., Jan. 10, by Rev. Jos. A. Cahill, Albert Carroll to Mary E. Gibson.

Bradabane, P. E. I., Jan. 10, by Rev. M. Campbell, William J. Boates to Sarah M. Buchanan.

River Bourgeois, Jan. 8, by Rev. A. E. Mombourquette, Charles Patten to Ragnhild Dugast.

River's Cove, N. S., Jan. 11, by Rev. George A. Leck, Benjamin Cook to Adelaide Deight.