

A MODERN BLUEBEARD.

I didn't like his appearance from the first moment I set my eyes on him, though he was handsome. He was tall, had broad shoulders, heavy black hair and mustache and piercing dark eyes.

"Is this Rosebud Cottage?" he inquired, with an amused smile, as he glanced at the few sickly roses struggling for existence along the gravel path. The hot blood rushed to my face as I answered in affirmative.

"I saw in yesterday's Times that you had rooms to rent," he continued. "If they are not engaged I would like to have a look at them. Not very large," he remarked, critically, as his eyes roved around the bed-chamber. "Low ceiling, too; but the majority of country houses have that drawback."

"The sitting-room is larger," I hastened to assure him, as I threw open the door of that apartment.

"Well, yes, a little," admitted he, as he stepped inside of the room and partly closed the door after him. "Dingy windows, slate-colored paper, faded carpet and out-of-date furniture," I heard him mutter. "A prison-like place, truly! If I can't accomplish my purpose here I never can, that's certain. Shut up in a room like this for any length of time would be enough to drive one mad."

"What did the man mean? Could it be possible that he was crazy? I shuddered at the thought."

"What are your terms for these apartments, also boarding for myself and wife?"

"Twenty-five dollars a month."

"Very well; I shall take them. And here are five dollars to seal the bargain. You may expect us next Thursday. Allow me to bid you a very good morning."

"Now we ought to be able to pay a little on the principal of the mortgage," was my comment. All my life we had "hard scratching," as Aunt Angelina expressed it, to pay even the interest.

I had always felt that the mortgage and I were related, for we both had been thrust upon Aunt Angelina's delicate shoulders almost twelve years before. Uncle Hezekiah died about that time and left Angelina to attend to the mortgage and me.

I never heard Aunt Angelina complain but once, and that was when Judge Dunbar's daughters were home from college. Then she broke forth sharply: "If Hezekiah had minded me, I could have sent you away to school, instead of having you work yourself to a shadow to help with the mortgage."

"If I'm a shadow I'm a very substantial one," laughed I. "If it hadn't been for your kindness, I would have been sent to the poorhouse, when a little tot of three, I was left homeless."

"Tut, tut, child!" she rejoined, a suspicious moisture gathering around her eyes. "I love to have you here."

It was the ambition of my life to pay off that mortgage. In the summer I carried the produce from our garden to market, butter, eggs and milk to Mrs. Dunbar, and when autumn frosts brought down the nuts, gathered them for the village stores. During the dreary winter days, I helped Aunt Angelina sew. I hate sewing, but I never told Aunt Angelina so, for she, poor, dear old soul, was obliged to sew all the year around. When trudging to market I wove romances about the people I met, or who lived along the way, which, no doubt, would have astonished them.

One of my pet fancies was that the old maid and bachelor who dwelt near each other had lovers in their youth, but though some misunderstanding were doomed to live in single blessedness. I ventured to hint this to Aunt Angelina.

"Good land, child, what put such a queer thing as that in your head?" she ejaculated.

"John Leigh wanted to marry your mother when she was a girl, but she wouldn't have him. And as for Josephine Smith, her lover was killed in the Battle of the Wilderness."

Such day-dreams were, no doubt, silly, but they helped to make the work less irksome and the foreclosure of the mortgage farther away. When Aunt Angelina came home from the village, looking so tired and old, I told her what good luck had befallen us, and held up the five dollar bill.

"Good land!" she gasped. "I can scarcely believe it. For the past four years I have tried to rent those rooms, but they never suited. Did he say anything about the paper and furniture?"

"Yes, he mentioned them. And I'll tell you what I believe, Aunt Angelina," I continued, repeating the stranger's comments about the room; "I believe that he is a regular Bluebeard, and that he intends to shut up his wife in that room until she goes mad."

"Don't let such foolish ideas get into your head, child. No man in his senses would do such a thing as that. What is his name?"

"I didn't ask him."

"But what name did you put in the receipt?"

"Receipt! What receipt?"

"The receipt for the five dollars, of course?"

"I never thought of one," I confessed. "And he didn't mention it, either."

"What time on Thursday will they come?"

"Indeed, Aunt Angelina, I do not know."

"Good land, child! You will never make a business woman, that's certain. But, come now, it is time to get supper."

About dusk on Thursday we heard carriage wheels coming up the road, and, a moment later, they stopped at our door. Out sprang Bluebeard followed by the prettiest little woman that I had ever seen. Her hair was like pure gold and fell in soft rings on a forehead of snowy whiteness, beneath which were a pair of dark blue eyes, a straight nose and red lips, daintily curved.

"How beautiful!" fell involuntarily from my lips.

She smiled, a sweet, tired smile, which made her still more beautiful.

Except at meal times I saw very little of the Bluebeards. (They did not tell us their names, and we asked no questions.) Once a day Mr. Bluebeard went for a walk, but was never away more than an hour. Mrs. Bluebeard seldom went beyond the limits of our yard, but when she did so Bluebeard accompanied her, and watched her as a cat watches a mouse.

One morning, after Bluebeard had left the house, a man came hurrying up the path. He was stylish looking, not so handsome as Bluebeard, though considerably

younger. Before he had time to knock, Mrs. Bluebeard tripped down the stairway to meet him. She conducted him upstairs, where he remained until shortly before Bluebeard's return. After that he came daily during Bluebeard's absence.

At first I was greatly puzzled, but finally came to a conclusion that he seemed very reasonable. The stranger had once been Mrs. Bluebeard's lover, but Bluebeard had, by some underhanded work, separated them, thus securing the coveted prize. Upon discovering his treachery, they had become reconciled. And Bluebeard, learning this, decided to shut up his sweet little wife in our lonely upstairs chamber until her mind should give way. Mrs. Bluebeard, however, had found out his cruel purpose, and managed to let her former lover know her whereabouts.

Aunt Angelina shook her head when she heard my version of the matter, and said I ought not bother myself with what did not concern me.

This state of affairs continued for about two weeks when they were suddenly brought to a climax. Bluebeard, returning earlier than usual, saw a stranger disappear around the curve of the road.

I do not know what took place between Mr. Bluebeard and his wife—no doubt a regular scene. She did not leave her room again that day, saying she had a very severe headache.

That evening I concluded to inquire how she was, also to ask if she wished a cup of tea. Before I had time to knock, I heard Bluebeard say in high, angry tones: "Madam, I have discovered your faithlessness. You are a woman, therefore I cannot break my vengeance upon you; but, before the dawn of another day your over-life shall pay the penalty."

I waited to hear no more. With limbs that trembled so I could scarcely walk, I crept down the stairs and out of the house.

My duty was clear; I must warn the man whose life was in danger. But where was I to find him? I found the object of my journey lounging on the hotel porch. He looked at me in amazement as I breathlessly gasped my story.

"Bluebeard going to murder me!" he exclaimed. "I know no one by the name of Bluebeard."

"That is not his right name," I explained. He never told it to us, so I call him Bluebeard. You know his wife, for you have been to see her every day."

"Oh, Violet!" he ejaculated. "And he is going to kill me for going to see Violet. Well, I'll see if he will. Come, little girl, and we will pay your Bluebeard a call."

"Oh, sir, please do not go near him. I pleaded. "He will kill you if you do."

"Pshaw!" he laughingly returned. "I am not afraid of him."

From what followed I know he spoke truly.

"Hello, Mark!" he said coolly, throwing open the door as he spoke, and advancing into the room, followed by Aunt Angelina and I.

"Have you your revolver ready? Or perhaps, you intend using a knife or even poison?"

Bluebeard gave a gasp of surprise. "Have you taken leave of your senses?" he asked.

"No; but I thought you had when I was informed that you had planned to kill me before to-morrow morning."

"There must be a terrible mistake somewhere," said Bluebeard, looking puzzled. "Who told you such a strange story?"

For answer the man pointed to me. Then, at Bluebeard's request, I related what I had overheard that evening, also confessed my suspicions in regard to the late in time for his wife.

I had expected that he would either confess the truth or indignantly deny it. Instead of that he leaned back in his chair and laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks; not only that but his wife and the stranger laughed too.

When he grew calm enough to speak he said:

"I was reading my story to Violet. Those words you will find on this page," he said, selecting a sheet of paper from a large pile of manuscripts that lay on the table. "And," continued he, turning to me, "the words I dropped the day I came to look at these apartments would not have been mysterious to my wife. I was searching for such a place as this which I wished to portray in a certain scene of a story which I had in contemplation. I can put more life into my writing when I have the scene, which I wish to describe, before me."

"But, turning to the stranger, 'why did you avoid me?'"

"Well, the truth is my sister and I are writing a story together and we decided to keep it a secret from you for the present for fear your criticism might discourage us."

Mrs. Bluebeard his sister! Well, I never! The story of romance and tragedy which I had woven was like a gigantic soap bubble, which broke when touched by a simple explanation.

Aunt Angelina, who all this time had remained quiet, broke out sharply, though not unkindly.

"Good land, child, what a goose you have been! I told you not to meddle with what does not concern you. I sincerely hope that this will teach you to mind your own business."

And it did.

Trying to Atone.

A sea captain who lived in Washington during his stays on land had a great fancy for fowls of all sorts, and especially prized an old gobbler which had been long in his possession. From one cruise he brought home a mischievous young monkey, which made as much trouble as the proverbial "white elephant." One day, hearing a terrible commotion in the bannery, the captain entered and found Jocko with the gobbler under his arm, while he was deliberately pulling out the poor bird's last feather. The captain rescued the turkey and punished the monkey severely, who knew very well why he was chastised.

The next day, again hearing a commotion among the feathered tribe, the captain went to the scene of action, and there sat Jocko with the much-persecuted gobbler between his knees, while he was trying to put the feathers back. His intentions were good, but the turkey seemed unable to appreciate them.

"I hear your church fair proved a failure," it did. The church across the way started a bargain counter, and though the women were willing to let their husbands come to the affair, they took all the money to the other people."

A PAIR OF CYNICS.

"Tonight, Theatre. Lohengrin. First appearance of Miss Iolanthe Gray as 'Elsa.'"

As Doctor Roland hurried through the streets the large letters of the playbill caught his eye, and he stopped to read it. Doctor Roland was a hard-working, practical man.

"A good fellow," his friends said; "but a regular cynic, you know. No sentiment about Roland; and the doctor's keen eyes and somewhat sarcastic manner did not belie his reputation."

"A good thing I can't go," said the doctor to himself. "If I were to see her again—but here the doctor's meditation stopped; the it was too attractive; he pulled himself together mentally, and hurried on."

Certainly it was wise of Doctor Roland to keep his thoughts from straying in the direction of the beautiful and successful young prima donna—beautiful, but proud, cold, inaccessible, people said.

Presently the doctor turned into a side alley, and entered a house. The setting sun shone through a dusty window into a room almost destitute of furniture.

A hard-featured woman was trying to still the cries of an infant on her knee. In a bed with ragged coverings lay a wonderfully pretty child, with pathetic blue eyes. She had just awakened from a feverish dose, with a cry for someone—the doctor could not distinguish the name.

"Who does she want?" he said to the woman.

"She's been like that all day," the woman said. As soon as she gets to sleep she wakes and cries for the lady as used to come an' see'er. She's that fond of'er, she frets when she doesn't come—she hasn't been now two days; she brings Lizzy flowers an' talks to'er, but I s'pose she's tired of it—that's the way of 'grand folk.'"

She spoke harshly and wearily.

"If this child could see her now," said the doctor, "it might be the turning point; but if she has no get quiet sleep very soon there is no chance for her. Can't you send for this lady? Say the child is dying."

The woman produced a crumpled piece of paper.

"Couldn't you send someone for her?" he said.

"I've no one to send. I don't see as it'll make any difference."

The woman was callous and hopeless, and the doctor left the house with rather slow and absent steps. Then he undid the crumpled piece of paper, read it, hailed an omnibus, and in a few minutes was standing before a house in West Street.

There he looked at the paper again: the woman had not told the name of the baby—probably, he thought, a district visitor—to whom he had come on his self-imposed errand, and it was awkward; there was only the address: no name on the paper, it seemed. He turned it round. Ah! there on the other side, soiled and almost illegible, were two words: "Iolanthe Gray."

The blood rushed to the doctor's face. Should he proceed with his design? He was a man who could not bear to be foiled. He rang the bell.

"Miss Gray went to the theatre half-an-hour ago," said the servant.

The doctor looked at his watch. There might be just time enough before the performance began. He stood irresolute. It was absurd—she would be dressing. It would be no use, even if there was time—she would not come; she was cold, proud, hard. What was a sick child? It would be only making himself ridiculous to go to the theatre—before her, too.

He walked on a few paces; then, how strange!—that cynical doctor was driving at full speed in a cab towards the theatre, bound surely on a fool's errand.

Iolanthe Gray's magnificent statueque face, usually pale and marble-like in its beauty, had just a tinge of color in it. Her eyes shone with an unwonted excitement. Tonight was to be her triumph; if she succeeded to-night her ultimate success was secure.

She was already dressed for her part. In a few moments she expected to be called to the footlights. Her mother, with whom she was waiting in an ante-room of the theatre, gazed at her proudly.

A tall, dark-eyed, handsome man who stood near, and assumed a sort of familiarity with her mother and daughter, looked at her with open admiration. Iolanthe caught the look, and turned away her head with an air of indescribable hauteur. The dark gentleman muttered something inaudible, and turned away.

"A note for you, madam. A gentleman is waiting for an answer."

"I will see the gentleman," after a glance at the note; and Dr. Roland presently entered, hot, dusty, and rather nervous.

"I am exceedingly sorry," he began. "to intrude at such an inconvenient time. You saw in my note—"

"Tell me—is the child really so ill, dying?"

"I fear so, but I thought there might be a chance if she could sleep. As it is, she continually wakes and calls for—"

"for you?"

The doctor's manner was distinctly unprofessional to-night.

"I thought I would just tell you the fact," he said; "that is all."

Iolanthe was silent for a moment. She vaguely remembered that she had heard this young doctor described as a cynic.

"What do you expect me to do?" she said. "The house is waiting for me."

"I—oh, I suggest nothing. I thought there might be time—I see I am too late." She spoke to her mother, who seemed to protest. Then she said—

"It was kind of you, Doctor Roland, to tell me about this. If you will get a cab for me and mother you will be kinder still. I am going at once to the child."

deserts us in this disgraceful way," said he angrily.

"I am sorry to disappoint everyone," Iolanthe was saying, "but I am going."

The overture was ended, a burst of applause came from the house. Iolanthe's cheeks flashed and her eyes sparkled; then she turned away and in a few minutes was being whirled rapidly through the darkening streets.

Some days had passed. The fair-haired child lay with her hand in Iolanthe's.

The doctor stood by rather gloomily. He had just met the dark-eyed man in the street, evidently waiting to escort Iolanthe. "Our patient may be moved to-morrow, I hope, doctor," said Iolanthe. "She is going with us into the country."

The doctor started.

"Then you are leaving town, Miss Grey?"

"For the present."

The doctor stood by the window. He began to speak in his most cynical tone.

"As a student of human nature," he said, "I have been wondering about you, Miss Grey."

"Indeed?"

She rose from her position by the child and suddenly became cold and distant.

"I have been wondering why people have always told me that you were cold and proud—and hard."

Her manner changed a little.

"I too have wondered," she said, "why, when people spoke of you, they called you 'that cynical doctor.'"

"But how do you know I am not a cynic?"

"How do you know I am not proud and cold, and hard?"

The doctor's manner changed, he spoke vehemently.

"Mademoiselle Manon has scored a great success," he said. "She has taken your place. You threw away your success—you left it behind you—and you do not regret what you did."

"No," she said, "I do not."

"I knew that night at the theatre that you were neither cold nor hard."

"I thought that night at the theatre that perhaps after all, you were not a cynic."

"What is a cynic?" he said.

"A man who does not believe in goodness, truth, and beauty," she said reflectively.

"Miss Grey, a cynic means a man who is not in love—in love with you. I am not a cynic."

The child wondered why the two talked so long by the window, and why the doctor stopped down and kissed Iolanthe's hand, and why, when her friend said "good-by," and kissed her, there was such a soft new light in her eyes.

CASTING A BRONZE STATUE.

Few people realize the immense amount of labor and difficulty attending the production of a bronze statue of any size, even after the artist has done his work. To begin with, the plaster model has to be completely covered with small lumps of a special kind of sand, sometimes as many as 1,500 or 2,000 of these pieces being required. After these blocks of sand are dry they are carefully taken off the cast one at a time and as carefully put together again to form the mould. The latter is then filled with clay, and the same operation is again gone through, a facsimile of the plaster cast being thus obtained. Then comes the most delicate part of the whole work. The clay mould—or "core," as it is technically termed—has to have a quarter of an inch taken off its entire service, which, as may readily be imagined, is anything but easy, especially if the subject be at all ornate. The "core" is then again put on a mould—which has of course, to be reconstructed once more—being kept exactly in the centre by means of iron rods. The molten bronze is then poured in from the top, completely filling the space between the "core" and the mould. After it has cooled the latter is again removed and the clay interior extracted, when the statue, somewhat rough, it is true, and needing slight touching up, is revealed.

Proud Mother (to irritable old gentleman, whose beard her little boy is pulling out by the roots)—"Little darling! Its not often he takes so kindly to strangers!"

BORN.

Halifax, Feb. 6, to the wife of John Weaver, a son, Daniel, 25 months.

Dartmouth, Feb. 7, to the wife of George Foot, a son.

St. John, Feb. 4, to the wife of W. J. McNeill, a daughter.

Kentville, Feb. 4, to the wife of Simon Leopold, a daughter.

Sackville, Feb. 6, to the wife of R. P. Foster, a daughter.

Wolville, Feb. 6, to the wife of George Brown, a daughter.

Dartmouth, Feb. 8, to the wife of J. E. Stems, a daughter.

Kentville, Feb. 5, to the wife of Alexander Whynot, a daughter.

St. John, Feb. 5, to the wife of Stephen H. Shaw, a daughter.

St. John, Feb. 5, to the wife of W. V. McKinnery, a daughter.

New Lairs, Feb. 1, to the wife of Alexander F. McQuarrie, a son.

New Glasgow, Feb. 7, to the wife of Rev. Anderson Rogers, a son.

New Lairs, Jan. 31, to the wife of John R. McQuarrie, a son.

Victoria, C. B., Jan. 25, to the wife of T. D. Reigh, a son.

Forest Glen, N. S., Jan. 23, to the wife of Avar Pierce, a son.

Victoria, N. S., Jan. 24, to the wife of Ira D. Parker, a son.

Forest Glen, N. S., Feb. 3, to the wife of K. Burpee Stevens, a son.

New Glasgow, Feb. 6, to the wife of Thomas G. MacKay, a son.

Elmsdale, N. S., Feb. 1, to the wife of John Urquhart, a son.

Moncton, Feb. 5, to the wife of Michael Cunningham, a son.

Model Farm, N. B., Feb. 5, to the wife of C. B. Robertson, a son.

Halifax, Feb. 4, to the wife of Company Sergeant Majoy Bertherson, a son.

Graham's Siding, N. S., Jan. 27, to the wife of Woodbury Moore, a daughter.

Dartmouth, Feb. 5, by Rev. F. Underwood, Martin Beahan to Maggie Beckwith.

Fredericton, Feb. 6 by Rev. Mr. Waulley, William H. Seymour to Lucy E. Gilks.

Halifax, Feb. 7, by Rev. Mr. Handier, William Taylor to Bertha A. Farguhar.

Antigonish, Feb. 5, by Rev. Fr. Gillis, Alexander McDonald to Johanna Whalen.

St. John, Jan. 31, by Rev. J. A. Gordon, Abraham J. Estabrook to Alice Rankine.

Fredericton, Jan. 20, by Rev. Wm. C. Matthews, Cameron Dunfield to Dora Thorne.

Lunenburg, Jan. 31, by Rev. Henry Crawford, Stange Greaser to Maggie Romkey.

Eastport, Me., Jan. 24, by Rev. John Tilling, Ernest M. Scott to Ida M. Thompson.

West Dublin, Feb. 2, by Rev. Henry Crawford, Lamech Bushen to Margaret McQuade.

St. Andrews, Feb. 5, by Rev. James Fraser, Alexander Kennedy to Catherine McDonald.

Cape John, Jan. 31, by Rev. G. Lawson Gordon, Richard Robinson to Margaret Johnson.

Liverpool, N. S., Feb. 2, by Rev. A. W. M. Hailey, Frederick Thomas Moore to Catherine Tanner.

Low Sutherland d's River, N. S., Feb. 6, by Rev. Dr. McLeod, James D. Roberson to Jennie B. Fraser.

Amherst, Feb. 5, by Rev. Dr. Heartz, assisted by Rev. Mr. Ryan, L. N. Campbell to Lizzie Heartz.

Dartmouth, Feb. 6, by Rev. D. W. Johnson, assisted by Rev. John Robbins, Franklin Dexter to Elsie Young.

DIED.

Chatham, Feb. 3, John Brown, 88.

Bath, Feb. 4, Daniel Giberson, 78.

Back Bay, Feb. 3, Isaiah Dean, 29.

Halifax, Feb. 9, William Grant, 64.

Milton, Feb. 3, Isaac Hanon, 77.

Bocabee, Jan. 28, Samuel Turner, 73.

Letete, Jan. 26, Joseph Matthews, 38.