

## BOUGHT AND SOLD.

'Can it be possible?' The words were spoken in an undertone, with a quick gasp for breath, and then the lady stood very still, looking down on the disordered drawer and the letters that lay on the top.

Little bundles of muslin and dimity, alternating with knots of faded ribbon and old lace, were scattered all around, for their owner had been searching among them for an old embroidery pattern; and so she had come suddenly upon the packet of old letters she had stowed away there two years before.

The letters were written by Mrs. Fleming's old schoolmate, Amy Norris, and the soft girl's handwriting spoke to her heart a whisper faint and tender from the olden time.

Dear Amy! She had been married three years before and her station in life was far below that of Mrs. Fleming's; but the ladies eyes grew dim, as she unfasted the ribbon which, for two years, had held together those half-doz'n epistles.

Amy's sweet face seemed leaning up close to hers once more, and she saw the old brick house, with their sloping roofs, where they had lived in the days that would never come back again.

But as the jacket fell from the loosened ribbon, it disclosed two other letters, and these called forth the exclamation, and brought the sudden paleness to Mrs. Fleming's face.

She thought those letters were all turned to ashes long ago—that she had burned them on that terrible night when she buried away all the past. But now she saw how it was in her haste and anguish she had mistaken the letters, and burned two of Amy's instead.

There was no one of all Mrs. Fleming's admirers to see her as she stood by the open drawer, her little fingers moving caressingly over those two letters; and it seemed almost a pity, for hardly ever had she looked more beautiful.

There was so much untried grace in her attitude, so much mournful pathos in her young face; and yet it was not best the world should read the story that until that hour had been written and rolled up and laid away in her own heart.

She had not seen his writing for two years; and yet how natural it looked! The bold, graceful capitals, the free, running hand, all had a language for her!

She knew, too, by the post mark which letters there were, and when they were written—the first, so tender and loving before he learned that she was about to be married to another—the last, wild and reproachful, afterward!

How she had loved that man! How the past came back to tell her of it! The old red brick house—how it loomed up in the distant perspective, amid the cool summer nights, when she sat under the old porch, all grown over with sweet briar, and he sat here too!

But dearest and brightest and dearest of all stood up, in that world of old memories, the new home which they were to have.

It was to be a little white cottage, with green window-blinds and a small garden in front. How she had dreamed about it—and of the flower border running up to the steps!

What a happy loving wife she expected to be in that dear little cottage—home—going every morning through a round of delightful household duties, for Harry could only afford to keep one domestic.

And in the late afternoons, when the table was all laid, with its snowy cloth, when she would put on a white muslin dress (Harry liked white muslin), and a few rosebuds in her curls, and she would go out and wait for him at the garden gate.

How his handsome face would light up as he came round the corner and caught a glimpse of her, and a moment later his strong arm would be around her waist, and his low, deep, 'My darling Laura! would be the sweetest sound earth held for her. And, as that quiet domestic picture came up to confront her, the proud elegant Mrs. Fleming bowed her head on her hands and sobbed like a child.

Then she lifted her fingers on the letters with a nervous, timid glance around the room, for the lady's heart whispered that she had no right to read them; and it was better to lay them in the grate yonder, where the fire was leaping up to fold them in its long, red arms.

'Thee can't be any harm in reading them over,' she whispered, for her conscience needed a narcotic; 'It is so long ago, and we shall never meet again.'

So Mrs. Fleming opened the letters and read them. I cannot tell how they wrung her heart, particularly the last one, with its wild frantic reproaches, and the love and the suffering so apparent through all.

'I was not so much to blame as you thought me, Harry,' she murmured as she laid the letter in her lap. 'Our property was all melting away, and they told me that you had grown cold and worldly, and I thought I must, too. If the letter had only come the week before, I should not have been—what I am now.'

And then she looked around that elegant chamber, and thought what she was now—a wife, bought and sold and paid for, in gold and lands and earthly grandeur. How the thought burned and festered in her proud soul as she sat there!

A wife, loved by her husband as he loved his horses, his dogs, and his houses; loved, but only because her beauty and her grace were the crowning glory, the chiefest ornamen, of that magnificent home which was his, soul's delight.

The lady looked around her luxurious chamber that morning with a sinking heart. The marble wash stands the diamond mask curtains, the handsome carpets, looking like a world of Damascus roses, scattered over a bed of snow, were worthy the wife of a millionaire.

And yet the mistress of all this wealth,

sitting in her chamber, murmured to herself, 'I wish he had never found me in the old red brick house where I was so happy! I wish I stood this very morning in the kitchen of the little cottage we were to have, and that, in a plain cotton dress, I was preparing your dinner, my Harry!'

'Please, ma'am,' and the entrance of her maid was a harsh interruption to the lady's monologue; 'Mr. Fleming has just sent home this new drab and pink satin for the party next Tuesday night.'

Ah me! those old letters! If she had never read them! That party!—if she had never gone to it!

'You have not forgotten me, Laura! I read it in your blue eyes to-night.'

Harry Atwood's voice had lost none of its own depth, as he leaned down his handsome head to Mrs. Fleming's as they stood together in an alcove of the conservatory.

Most of the company had left, for it was late, and they felt quite secure from observation. Mr. Fleming was not a jealous husband, and he was quite content that others should admire his wife so that he possessed her.

It was understood that Mr. Atwood and Mrs. Fleming were old friends, so they had nothing to fear from a prolonged tete-

'You may come, Harry,' she said

That walk in the dim moonlight upon Mr. Fleming's beautiful grounds was followed by many another, for the first steps in the forbidden way are unusually pleasant ones.

Poor Mrs. Fleming! She must not be wrong; and then she loved Harry, although she tried to conceal this from him; but when he talked of the past, in those low, tender tones of his, her tears would come; she could not help it.

One evening—it must have been more than a week after their first meeting—Harry told Mrs. Fleming that his heart was unchanged; that the old love still lived there—a sweet but mourning memory.

'Oh Harry! don't do it! You forget; I am his wife!' murmured the young creature, as she bowed her pale face on her hands.

Then the lady drew his arm around her waist, just as he had done in the days that were gone, and said, 'You belonged to me first Laura! Our souls were married before you ever took that false oath at the altar!'

He whispered to her of a flight to other skies—of a home fairer than the one they had dreamed of in their youth—of a life

Mr. Fleming's grounds. The next day his wife was gone!

What an electrical thrill it sent through the fashionable world—for her beauty and her rank had made Mrs. Fleming its epicurean idol.

She knew little of the censure and scorn that were heaped on her head in the quiet of that Italian home to which she was borne by the man who loved her only too well.

Like the colors of the rainbow, various in hue are the imitators of

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HIS GRANDFATHER'S WATCH

a tete. They had suddenly, unexpectedly, met at the party, and the heart of either was not changed.

Harry Atwood had become a successful lawyer now, and the world honored him. He had forgiven Laura long ago, for he had heard she was more sinned against than sinning.

'Harry—Mr. Atwood, I mean—I am very glad to meet you and find you looking so well.'

The lady's voice was courteous and calm; but her fingers trembled as they played with the carved points of her ivory fan.

'Call me Harry, Laura, for the sake of old times,' said he, 'and he look up to me once, and say you have not forgotten them. Oh, Laura, I have thought how the bright star of this evening's festival once rose over my heart, and then went down forever. We cannot stay here much longer. Will you not grant me an interview to-morrow night—a private one—in your own house?'

'I cannot, Harry,' she replied; 'do not ask me. I am the wife of another now.'

'And what harm could there be in our walking together for half an hour in your garden?' said Harry. 'Your husband would not object to this, for I have watched the man narrowly tonight, and know him well. You could not refuse so simply a request to the veriest acquaintance. We have had many walks together, Laura, down by the old mill and past the meadow pond. Will you refuse me one now?'

He looked down on the fair face, and he saw that tears were on it, and he knew what the answer would be before it was given.

that should be one long poem of love. That time she fled from him with a wild shriek of fear and horror.

They did not meet again for many nights. It during that time she had only remembered the prayer of her childhood, 'Lead us not into temptation!' But she was so young; and then that affection was the one blossom her life had cherished in the midst of its sterile grandeur.

One night she was standing on the steps of her mansion, for she had just taken leave of some guests, when Harry Atwood suddenly sprang before her.

I do not know what was said by either party, but there were frantic gestures and wild appeals on one side, and a little later Mrs. Fleming was walking among her garden shadows with Harry Atwood.

This was repeated for several evenings, until one midnight a closed carriage rolled hastily away from the private entrance of

The world said Mrs. Fleming was happy there, but it was false. No woman can ever be happy who makes memory a remorse and love a crime.

But, dear me, how I used to smile when everybody made a parenthesis of pity in their arathems on Mrs. Fleming—'Her poor husband and parents! My heart aches for them.' And, sitting very quiet and listening, I thought, always, 'Well, the one bought and the others sold her; and to they have had their reward.'

### USEFUL DOG.

A Little Comedy in which a Dog Plays a Leading Part.

A Boston street scene is described by the Herald. The participants were a young woman, a horse, and a St. Bernard dog. The dog, as will be seen, had the leading part.

The young woman, with a handful of letters, approached a letter-box post, to which some one had, very improperly, hitched a horse. As the woman stepped forward, the horse put his ears down and snapped at her.

Speaking to him was of no avail, and for a minute the woman looked annoyed. Then she looked round, put a silver whistle to her lips, and blew a shrill blast. A moment later a big, shaggy, buff and white St. Bernard came lumbering along, with many demonstrations of good nature. She pointed to the horse.

'Hold him, Don,' she said.

The dog jumped at the horse, seized in his powerful jaws the nearest rein close by the bit, and by main strength held the animal's head down. The young lady stepped up to the post, deliberately looked over her letters, and slipped them into the box one by one, while the horse was striving with all his might to release himself. Then she stepped back and said, 'That'll do, Don!' and resumed her promenade.

The St. Bernard released the rein, cleverly dodged a blow from the horse's forelock, avoided a bite aimed at his back, gave a farewell bark at his discomfited antagonist, and lumbered on after his mistress.

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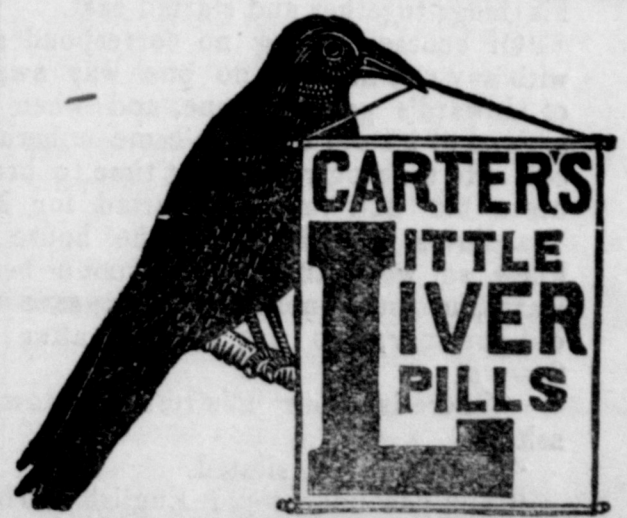
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### Outwitting the Laird.

The people of two Scotch villages, in going back and forth, had long been accustomed to cross the extensive grounds of Lord So-and-So, especially when the family was absent. The short cut saved a full mile, and naturally the villagers used it as often as possible, till at last they came to feel that they had a right of way. Even when the owner was at home some of the bolder spirits would 'run the blockade,' knowing all the while that it was lordship discovered them they would be bidden to 'go back the way they had come.' One day a farmer, wheeling his barrow along the forbidden path, caught sight of the lord some distance in advance. Instantly the farmer turned his barrow about and sat down upon it, as it resting. On came the laird, and presently he turned the corner. The farmer sat with his back toward the nobleman.

'Come, now,' said the angry laird, none of this trespassing. Wheel about and go back by the way you have come.'

The farmer wheeled about and went on—in the way he was going.



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