

Maud Percy's Secret

BY MAY AGNES FLEMING

Author of
"The Fatal Wedding"
"The Unseen Bridegroom,"
"A Terrible Secret."

(CONTINUED.)

"Aha! Mr. Garnet!" she cried exultingly; "little kittens can bite as well as snarl, you see. You caught a tartar that time—didn't you? You're a model gentleman; you're the saint that ought to be canonized on the spot; you're the refined scholar—ain't you? I'll leave you now, to discover the charms of solitude, while I go and tell papa the lesson I have taught you this morning. A little fasting and solitary imprisonment won't hurt your blood in the least. Bon jour, Seigneur Don Monsieur Moustache Whiskerando! May your guardian-angel watch over you till I come back, and keep you from bursting a blood-vessel in your rage."

In the dining room she found her father awaiting her.

"Where is Mr. Garnet?" he asked as she entered.

"Mr. Garnet will not be down to dinner," said Pet, inwardly determining to keep that gentleman as long imprisoned as she could.

The judge, without troubling himself to inquire further, took his seat, and proceeding to administer condign punishment to the good things spread before him, assisted by Pet, whose appetite was by no means impaired by the pleasant scene she had just passed through, and whose stony conscience was not in the least troubled with remorse for having locked a young gentleman up without dinner.

About two hours after, the judge started to leave the room, and Pet, guessing where he was going, called after him:

"Papa! Where are you going?"

"To the library, Miss Lawless," said the judge with dignity.

"Well, look here, there's a prisoner of war there."

"What, Miss Lawless?" said the judge, knitting his brows in perplexity.

"A prisoner I have taken—captivated—locked up! In other words, the pupil has turned teacher and locked her master up, as mothers do refractory children, to bring him to his senses."

"Miss Lawless," said the judge in his most stately manner: "I have no time to listen to your nonsense. If you have anything to say—say it. If not, hold your tongue, and learn to be respectful when you address your father."

"Well, I never!" ejaculated Pet. "No matter how seriously, sensibly, or solemnly I talk, people say I'm talking nonsense. But that's just my fate; everything awful and horrid is destined to happen to me; and if I say a word against it I'm told I'm prudent and ungrateful, and dear knows what. Now, I told you I locked my teacher up, and you tell me you have no time to listen to my nonsense. I guess Mr. Garnet finds it an unpleasant truth, anyway."

"Petronilla! What do you mean?" said her father, beginning to think there might be method in this madness.

"Why, that I've locked Mr. Garnet up in the library for not behaving himself," said Pet, promptly.

"Locked him up!"

"Yes, sir; and served him right, the old ghoul!"

"Locked your teacher up?"

"Yes, sir; teachers require locking up as well as pupils."

"Miss Lawless, it's not possible that you have been guilty of such an outrageous act!" said the judge, with an awful frown.

"Yes, it is possible," said Pet, "and he deserves twice as much for what he did. Oh, wouldn't I like to be a man for one blessed half hour, that I could horse-whip him within an inch of his life!"

"Good Heavens! what a visitation this mad girl is! What has Mr. Garnet done, you dreadful girl?"

"Dreadful girl!" burst out Pet, indignantly; "there's the way I'm abused for taking my own part. Your daughter's teacher has been making all sorts of love to me all the whole blessed morning!" and thereupon Pet commenced with a "full, true, and authentic" account of her morning interview in the library.

As the judge listened, the scowl on his brow looked blacker and blacker till his face was like the double-refined essence of a thunderbolt. But when Pet mentioned his threats and indignity, in refusing to free her, his rage burst all bounds, and his wrath was a sight to see.

"The villain! the scoundrel! the blackleg! the lowbred hound! to dare to talk to my daughter in such a way! I vow to heaven I have a good mind to break every bone in his body! To insult my daughter under her father's roof, and threaten her like this! Petronilla, where is the key? I'll kick the impudent puppy out of the house."

"The key's in the door," said Pet. "I expect he's in a sweet frame of mind by this time!"

Upstairs marched the judge and turning the key in the library door, he confronted Mr. Garnet.

"So, Mr. Garnet, you have done my daughter the honor to propose for her hand this morning, and when that digit was refused you, you caught her, and had the impudence to insult her in her father's house. Oh! you are a model teacher of youth, Mr. Garnet! You're an exemplary young man to be trusted with the education of a young female. Come, sir, out of my house, and if ever I catch sight of you again, I'll cane you while I'm able to stand. Off with you this instant!" And the judge, who was as strong as half-a-dozen broken-down rones like Garnet, caught him by the collar and unceremoniously dragged him down stairs. In vain the quondam teacher strove to free himself, and make his voice heard; not a word would the judge listen to; but upon reaching the hall door, landed him by a well-applied kick on the broad of his back, and then went in, slamming the door in his face.

Crest-fallen and mortified, Mr. Garnet picked himself up, and glancing hurriedly around beheld Petronilla standing laughingly watching him at the window. A very frown seemed to leap into his eyes then, and shaking his fist fiercely at her, he strode off, breathing words of vengeance, not "loud but deep."

CHAPTER XXV.

Admiral Havenful, it's kind of you to ask, but I ain't well at all; I'm very much obliged to you," said Mr. Toosyeggs, in a deeply dejected voice, as he walked into the parlor of the White Squall and took his seat without ever raising his eyes from the floor.

"Stand from under!" growled the admiral, in a tone like a bear with the bronchitis, as he gave his glazed hat a slap down on his head, and looked in a bewildered sort of way at the melancholy face of Mr. O. C. Toosyeggs.

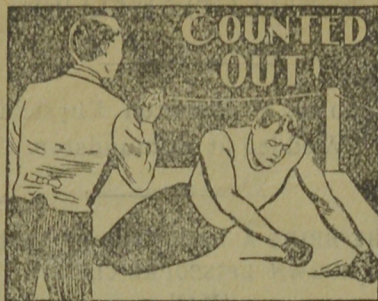
"Admiral Havenful, it's my intention to stand from under as much as possible," said Mr. Toosyeggs mournfully; "but, at the same time, I'm just as miserable as ever I can be, thank you. I don't see what I was born for at all, either. I dare say they meant well about it; but at the same time, I don't see what I was born for," said Mr. Toosyeggs, with increased mournfulness.

The admiral laid both hands on his knees, and leaning over, looked solemnly into Mr. Toosyeggs's face. Reading no expression whatever in that "Book of Beauty" but the mildest sort of despair, he drew himself up again, and grunted out an adjuration to "heave ahead."

"Admiral Havenful, would you oblige me by not saying that again?" said Mr. Toosyeggs. "You mean real well, I know; but it recalls unpleasant recollections that I wish buried in oblivion. Ugh!" said Mr. Toosyeggs, with a convulsive shudder.

"Now, Mr. Toosyeggs, I'm considerable out of my latitude, and if you'll just keep her round a point or so, I'll be able to see my way clearer, and discover in which corner the wind sits. What's the trouble, young man?"

"The trouble, Admiral Havenful, is such that no amount of words can ever express it. No, Admiral Havenful!" exclaimed the unhappy Mr. Toosyeggs, "all the words in all the dictionaries, not to mention the spelling-books, that ever was printed couldn't begin to tell you the way I feel. It worries me so, and preys on my mind at such a rate that my appetite ain't no circumstance to what it used to be. My Sunday swallows, Admiral Havenful, that used to just barely meet on me, goes clean



Few people can understand the feelings of the pugilist as he is being counted out. He hears the seconds ticked off. He struggles to rise, but struggles in vain. He has lost the fight.

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are twice, now. I don't expect to live long at this rate, but I guess it's pleasanter laying in the graveyard than living in this vale of tears," added Mr. Toosyeggs with a melancholy snuffle.

Once again the perplexed admiral glanced at Mr. Toosyeggs, but still nothing was to be read in those pallid, freckled features, but the mildest sort of anguish. The admiral was beginning to lose patience.

"Belay there! belay!" he roared, bringing his fist down with a tremendous thud on his unoffending knee. "Come to the point at once, Orlando Toosyeggs! What the dickens is the matter?"

"Admiral Havenful, don't swear!" exclaimed Mr. Toosyeggs, looking deeply scandalized. "I dare say you mean well; but profane swearing isn't so edifying as it might be. I've a little tract at home that tells about a boy that told another boy to 'go to blazes!' and three years after he fell out of a fourth-story window and broke two of his legs, and some of his arms. That shows the way profane swearing is punished. I'll bring you over the book some day, Admiral Havenful, if you like; it's a very interesting story to read about."

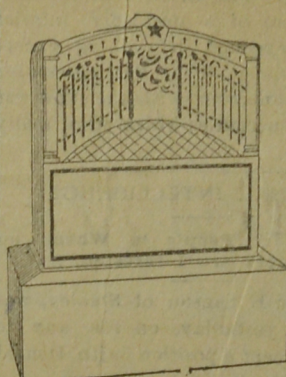
The admiral fell back with a groan. "I haven't read anything lately but the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah,'" said Mr. Toosyeggs, resuming his former objections; "it's very soothing to the feelings, though I can't lay it to heart so much as I would like to, on account of Aunt Priscilla scolding all the time. She means real well, I know, but it ain't so pleasant to listen to as some things I've heard. I laid awake all last night crying, but it don't seem to do me much good."

The admiral said nothing; he had evidently given up the point in despair.

"I wouldn't mention this to anybody but you, Admiral Havenful," said Mr. Toosyeggs, "because my feelings are so dreadfully lacerated that it's a great affliction for me to speak of it. I know you won't tell anybody that I've revealed it, because I would feel real bad about it if you did."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The first cannon was carried by soldiers, and one than held it in both hands while the other fired it.



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