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## MISS NIOBE;

OR, HOW I GOT A HUSBAND.

In one of the loveliest valleys of the west of England, stands a small town called Greystone, or corruption (according to the antiquaries of the place) of its original name of Gravestone. Near the market place, not far from the town hall, and at the corner of the street (the name of which we are not permitted to reveal) dwelt a Mr. Simon Raven, undertaker; to this profession Mr. Raven had formerly added those of auctioneer and appraiser; but whether the two latter branches brought him but small profits, or that his genius lay exclusively in the former, we know not; certain it is, that at the time of which we write, Mr. Raven was only an undertaker, but to that he enthusiastically devoted himself, mind and body.

Every morning his spouse, Mrs. Raven, might be seen, dressed in a black velvet cloak, leaving her home with the charitable intention of visiting the sick. In the art of closing the eyes of the dying and rendering them the last sad office, she had by long practice acquired a wonderful address. Her appearance in a house was almost a sure sign of approaching death, and some of her neighbors were uncharitable enough to say that she had been known to occupy her self with the funeral preparations even before the breath was out of the body.

All the happiness of this thrifty couple (a happiness partaking, however, of their moody temperament) was centered in an only daughter, Miss Niobe Raven, who also shared the gloomy labors of her parents. Her greatest delight was in reading. She delighted in the solemn pages of *Sherlock, Hervey*, and *Dr. Dodd*; sometimes, to give a little variety to her recreations, she tried the poets. It is unnecessary to add that Young's "Night Thoughts" and Blair's "Grave" were preferred to all others. In music, she had a great predilection for "The Dead March in Saul," and the bell tolling for a funeral had for her a silver sound. But to the cause of these melancholy tastes.

For many years past (we will not say how many) Miss Niobe had been of age, yet she still remained in the sorrowful state of single blessedness. For many years she had hoped to establish herself in matrimonial life with some swain of her native town, or the neighboring parishes, or, indeed, of any other—for the fact is, she was not particular as to where he came from, so that he did come. But alas! no one had presented himself, and this tender eypress found no prop to support her.

Several years had elapsed, as we have been credibly informed, since young Roots (the son of a market gardener at the end of the town), thinking that Mr. Raven had gathered a more profitable harvest from the church-yard than his father was ever likely to do from his garden, had intended to pay court to Miss Raven; but too discreet a lover, he had only proceeded as far as a few tender glances.

Strap, the barber, too, the most punctual as well as the most busy man in the town, had been known to spare a few minutes in his rounds to address a compliment to Miss Raven; but latterly he had been heard to declare that he never had the slightest intention of converting Miss Raven into Mrs. Strap.

Things were in this state when Miss Niobe arranged a plan to put an end to her state of desolation. She had tried in vain to gain a husband by assuming a gentleness of manner; and she was now determined to act with decision.

Exactly opposite to the house of Mr. Raven lived a Mr. Narcissus Nonpareil, draper. This Mr. Narcissus Nonpareil, unlike the measurers of cloth, had an aspiring mind. No tradesman in the town carried his head so high, nor had any better reason to do so, for his stature was only four feet four. He might be seen every morning standing at his shop door, rubbing alternately his hands and his chin, while inhaling the morning air; for tyrant custom, as in most small towns, confined him all day to his shop. Miss Niobe had seen "and marked him for her own." Mr. Nonpareil had retired to his parlour one evening after the cares of the day, when his shopman entered.

"Any thing wanting, Mr. Smith?"

"No, sir; Mr. Stoit's clerk has just left this letter, and has since gone over to Mr. Raven's."

Wondering what Stoit, the lawyer, could have to write to him about, Nonpareil opened the letter and read as follows.

"Sir—I am instructed by my client, Mr. Simon Raven, to inform you that if you any longer refuse to fulfil the engagement contracted by you with Miss Raven, that legal proceedings will be forthwith commenced against you."

"I am, sir, your obedient servant."

CAYMAN STOIT.

To Mr. Narcissus Nonpareil, &c.

It is not necessary to paint the surprise into which this singular epistle threw our friend, the draper; he read it over more than once; but that only plunged him deeper into conjectures as to its meaning.

"What engagements had he contracted with Miss Raven that Stoit should call upon him to fulfil? What proceedings were to be taken against him for the accomplishment of a contract that he had never heard of before? It must surely be some pleasantry between Mr. Raven and Mr. Stoit," thought he. But Mr. Raven was not a man given to joking, and Mr. Stoit was any thing but a pleasant man. "I have never," said Nonpareil, (rising in his chair with dignity,) "never by word or thought injured Miss Raven, in fact never thought about her."

Having said this, and being convinced of his own innocence, he took his hat, and went out. "I must see Stoit immediately," said he, "and learn the meaning of this letter." Saying which he proceeded to the lawyer's house.

"Good evening, Mr. Stoit," said Nonpareil, entering the office, in which he found the man of law busily occupied in writing; and presenting the letter he had received, asked the meaning of it. "If it be a joke, it is one that will not make you the richer, I suspect."

"A joke—you may call it a joke if you please, Mr. Nonpareil, though I am sorry to find you treat so serious an affair in this manner; but I would rather see your lawyer about it. We shall be better able to come to an understanding."

"Understanding—about what? I do not understand a syllable of all this. What do you mean?"

"Nothing more, Mr. Nonpareil, than this,—that we have the most conclusive evidence, the most efficient witnesses, that you have proceeded too far in your attentions towards Miss Raven to draw back now without subjecting yourself to very heavy damages."

Nonpareil on hearing this, threw himself into a chair in a state of great agitation.

"Damages—for what? You surely do not mean to force me to—"

"Young men ought to have more discretion, Mr. Nonpareil. The damages will be laid at five thousand pounds!"

"There was such a tone of sincerity in these words, that they failed not to make a great impression on the draper."

"Alas!" cried he. "What can I do?"

"You are not in a fit state at present to listen to me. Who is your lawyer?"

"Mr. Ferret—Mr. Ferret," who lives at the end of North street."

"Very well. I will see him," said Stoit, conducting Nonpareil to the door, who followed him like an automaton, a thousand times more confused and bewildered than when he entered. On his way home he thought that the best way to get at the truth would be to go to Raven's house. He arrived there, knocked, and asked in a loud voice for Mr. and Mrs. or Miss Raven.

"Walk in, sir, missus is in the parlour."

He entered, and found Mrs. and Miss Raven seated at work.

"Ah! sir," said Mrs. Raven, with a solem air, "we have waited to receive this visit for some time." Then (turning towards her daughter,) said, "Niobe, my dear, take courage; all will be well."

Miss Niobe, on hearing this, said in a languishing tone, "No;—no; this is indeed too much to bear."

"Leave the room, my dear; take the shroud with you, and finish it in the other room." Then turning to Nonpareil, Mrs. Raven continued—"You see the sensibility of this dear girl." As she retired, Narcissus could not forbear murmuring to himself, "Frightful creature! would the shroud were her own!"

"You see, sir, we are obliged to assist in the work," said Mrs. Raven, with a ghastly smile—"We have so many funerals to complete just now that we cannot find hands enough. You will excuse me if I continue my employment; but Mr. Raven will be here directly."

During the explanation our hero had heard the noise of hammers in full operation in the back premises. A shuddering came over him, and he turned dead pale. The entrance of Mr. Raven did not at all tend to allay this feeling of alarm, when he said, in a sepulchral voice, "So you're come at last, Mr. Nonpareil; but you seem ill!"

"Yes," faltered Narcissus, "I am ill—very ill," for he found the eye of Mr. Raven fixed on him, as if already measuring him for his coffin.

"You do look ill; and considering the shameful manner in which you have treated my poor Niobe—"

"What the devil do you mean by the way in which I have treated your Niobe? Do you mean to insinuate that I ever paid any attention to your daughter—that I ever pretended to like her? So far from thinking of her, if she had her weight in gold I would not have her."

"Oh! oh! you would not have her, eh?" replied Raven, with a frightful grin.

"No matter, we'll see if you do not marry her. We know how to make you."

"The devil take me if I do, though," muttered Nonpareil, as he buttoned up his coat with the air of a man prepared for any thing.

"Fie! fie! gentlemen," said Mrs. Raven, "Simon, my dear, moderate your passion."

"Once for all," said Nonpareil, "explain yourself, will you, Mr. Raven?"

"Well then, you must marry Niobe, or justice shall take its course. We have your own letters, of the most tender and passionate description; and that's explanation enough, I suppose."

Narcissus started back a few paces. "It's a vile conspiracy," said he; "but Ferret shall inquire into this affair for me."

"Did I not tell you he would deny them?" said Raven, turning toward his wife.

"He denies his own handwriting, does he? Well, the wickedness of the world! who would believe out of his sex?" sighed forth Mrs. Raven.

"We have nothing more to say to you," added Mr. Raven, moving towards the door. "We have your letters—we have your offer in black and white."

Narcissus retired more confused than when he entered the house. When he reached home he thought over the affair. "These Ravens say that they have several letters of mine to their daughter. I cannot understand it. No matter. They have sworn that I shall marry her; and I really believe them capable of anything, the cannibals! Marry their frightful daughter—a living spectre! Who's there?" said he, as the door opened, and a head appeared.

"Are you alone?" asked the proprietor of the head, for the body was not yet visible.

"Yes," replied Narcissus. "Come in, Captain Trigger."

A short stout man accordingly made his appearance, his neck enveloped in an enormous cravat, and his cheeks ornamented with a superb pair of whiskers. Such was the appearance of the formidable Captain Trigger, who having retired from the service for some years, had lately settled in the town of Greystone, retaining little from his military services except the title of Captain, and the before mentioned whiskers. This gentleman frequently honored our friend the draper with an evening call, to play a game of piquet, of which Narcissus was very fond, and at which the Captain was very skilful.

"Why, what ails you, man? You look ill," said the Captain, seating himself.

"Are you for a game to-night?"

"I am, seriously ill, Captain Trigger," replied Narcissus, putting his hand to his head.

"Take some of Dr. Gargle's pills, and you will be all right to-morrow."

"Can you keep a secret?" said Narcissus, drawing nearer to the Captain.

"As profoundly as the grave. But do not look so very melancholy, for heaven's sake, or you will give me the blue devil! Let's take a glass of grog. There's no thing better to dispel melancholy."

"As you like, Captain." And whilst the Captain was engaged in the agreeable occupation of mixing the grog, the draper recounted to him all the details of his unfortunate position. The Captain took a pinch of snuff, put the stopper into the bottle, looked hard at his friend, tasted his mixture, and said, "This is all very strange. You have never made love to this Miss Raven?"

"Never!"

"Have you never written any letters to her?"

"Never!"

"Have you ever written any love letters to any other person?"

"Never—ah!" exclaimed Nonpareil, jumping up suddenly. "I have it, I have it, my good friend. Yes, I have written several letters—love letters, to Penelope Pincroft, who—"

"And these letters are in the possession of these Ravens," said the Captain, interrupting him. "Where does this Penelope live? I will go directly to her, and find it all out."

"Alas! Captain, she has been dead these six months."

"But these letters were directed to her, and not to Miss Raven?"

"I sent them always by a trusty person, without any address, and never mentioned her name in them, for fear they should fall into old Pincroft's hands."

"This becomes serious," said Trigger. Then turning to Narcissus, he added, "This Raven (the old man, I mean), has feathered his nest well."

"Oh! no doubt of it. He is called rich, and I hear will give his daughter three thousand pounds."

"Well, why not marry her then?"

"How can you ask me such a question? I marry one of such a family of spectres! I should soon become a prey to my father-in-law."

"That is all prejudice. You cannot do better than marry the girl; for it will be impossible to prove that these letters were not intended for her. The damages may be considerable, and the affair will half ruin you."

"I would rather beg my bread than marry such a scarecrow."

A silence followed, when the captain said; "Listen to me, Nonpareil. You know that I have ruined myself with play and good living; now, three thousand pounds would be most acceptable to me—don't interrupt me," (seeing that Nonpareil was going to speak,) "I have a plan

in my head by which I can secure the money, and get you out of a scrape."

He then detailed his plan to our friend the draper, who appeared delighted with it. It is unnecessary, however, to let our readers into the secret before the proper time.

"You think it will do, then?" said the Captain, "and you will try it without hesitation?"

"Certainly."

"The two friends, after laughing heartily, separated for the night."

Nonpareil was up very early the following morning, and very carefully dressed. He took a last look in the glass, and being satisfied with his appearance, sallied forth. His expectations had not deceived him. During his walk he met Miss Niobe. She perceived his approach, and was on the point of turning back; but Narcissus detained her by the eloquence of his persuasive language.

"Am I then so odious, dear Miss Raven?" said he, as he overtook her. "I beg, I entreat you to listen to me, while I own the reason of my conduct yesterday evening."

"It certainly was much at variance with your present behaviour, sir. Pray explain yourself."

"I desire nothing more. You love me—may, do not deny it—you love me, dear Niobe, and this explains the fiction relative to certain letters—very excusable under such circumstances. Do not blush, but tell me—tell me the truth, I conjure you—how could your respectable parents think of putting the matter into Stoit's hands? This ruins my hopes completely."

"How so, Mr. Nonpareil?"

"Will not the world say I did not love you, and only consented to be led to the altar to save my pocket? 'Tis terrible to think of such a thing! I have loved you; let us defy the scandal of the world, and elope at once. This will prove our affection for each other."

"Elope! elope!" screamed Miss Niobe, at the same time drawing a little nearer to our hero, who saw that he had gained the day.

"I have no time to delay; my business cannot be long left without its master. What say you, my dear Niobe?" He pressed her hand—the pressure was returned. "You consent then," cried he, "to elope with me at six o'clock?"

"Oh! not here," said Niobe. "Let it be at the end of the town, at the lane near Thompson's Mill."

"Be it so. But here comes Dr. Gargle; do not let him see us together. Adieu." So saying, he was out of sight in a minute.

It was half-past five the next morning, when Nonpareil descended from a post chaise, which stopped at the lane near the mill. It was not without a feeling of great anxiety for the success of his scheme that he looked in the direction from which he expected Miss Niobe to appear. His fears were groundless. In a few minutes she approached with rapid steps. He took her hand, pressed it with apparent affection, and assisted her into the chaise, in which Capt. Trigger was already seated, and (instead of entering himself) closed the door, and gave the signal for instant departure.

When the sound of the wheels had entirely ceased, he turned his steps to the house of Mr. Raven. On arriving there, and telling the servant that he had some thing of consequence to communicate to Mr. and Mrs. Raven, he was admitted; though this worthy couple were in a sound sleep when the servant entered their bedroom, and surprised them by saying that Mr. Nonpareil waited for them in the parlour.

"What can he want?" said Raven, angry at being disturbed. "Mr. Nonpareil here at this time of the morning?"

"Yes, sir. He says he wants to see you and missus directly."

"Very well; say we'll be down soon."

Dressing themselves in haste, and wondering what would be the reason of this early visit, Raven and his better half descended to the parlour, where they found Nonpareil pacing up and down impatiently.

"You're a pretty couple, truly," cried he, when they entered, "to wish me to marry your daughter, who has eloped with—"

"Elope!" cried they both at once.

"Yes—with Captain Trigger."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the father.

"She does not know him."

"I tell you I saw them together in a post-chaise, and I overheard the direction given to the post-boy to drive to the Salisbury Arms, at—"

The mother ran up stairs to ascertain if Niobe was in her bed room. Not finding her there, or in the house, she begged Nonpareil to accompany Raven and herself in search of the fugitives. To this he readily consented, and Raven having procured a chaise, the trio departed for the Salisbury Arms, where in due time they arrived. A waiter (with a napkin under his arm) was at the door.

"Pray, did a lady and gentleman arrive here in a post chaise this morning?" said Raven.

"Yes, sir; they are in No. 4." And he pointed to the room in which Niobe and

the gallant Captain were at that moment.

On opening the door, Raven discovered Captain Trigger busily engaged in satisfying a ravenous appetite, while Miss Niobe was seated on a sofa. On seeing her father and mother she rose and would have thrown herself into the arms of the latter, but she perceived a coldness on the part of her mother towards her demonstration of affection.

"Give me back my child," said Raven, approaching Captain Trigger,—"give me back my child. She is engaged to be married to Mr. Nonpareil."

"No such thing," replied the Captain, continuing his breakfast with the greatest composure, "she is engaged to me. Mrs. Raven, will you do me the favour to take this chair by my side, and I will explain all this to you." Mrs. Raven seated herself in silent wonder. You see my young friend there," said the Captain, pointing to Nonpareil, who was seated on the sofa talking earnestly to Miss Raven, "that friend whom you threatened to sue for breach of promise of marriage—that friend ought to sue you for conspiracy against him; and it only rests whether you consent that Miss Raven becomes Mrs. Captain Trigger, or that you are indicted for a conspiracy. Do you remember poor Penelope Pincroft?"

At this question the countenances of both father and mother became very clouded.

"I have," continued the Captain, "proofs that the letters now in your possession were written by my friend Nonpareil to Miss Penelope Pincroft, now dead. Have I your consent that Miss Niobe becomes my wife, or not?"

"What does the Captain mean?" said Raven.

"Oh! my dear," replied his wife, "we must be allowed a little time to think over this affair."

During this time Narcissus had continued his conversation with Niobe.

"Why refuse the Captain?" said he. "He has long loved you—why not make him happy? He only requires a little money in order to become a Colonel."

Mr. Nonpareil tells you nothing but the truth, chimed in the Captain. "My unfortunate modesty has alone hindered me declaring my sentiments sooner."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Raven, in a softened tone, "will you not give me time to think over this matter?"

"Dear mamma, what can I say? A tender glance at the Captain decided the affair, much to the satisfaction of all parties—but to none more than our friend Narcissus Nonpareil."

## MR. TYLER.

The following letter from Mr. Tyler, written last fall, in reply to certain interrogatories addressed to him by Mr. Jeter and other friends of Mr. Van Buren living in Henrico county, Virginia, unfolds freely Mr. Tyler's opinions on the subjects on which an expression of his views was asked. We copy from the Petersburg Intelligencer. The interrogatories are not published, but their nature is sufficiently explained by the reply.

Now that Mr. Tyler is the acting President of the United States, it becomes important that the public should be informed of his opinions on the great political questions which have so long agitated the minds of the people of this country. We therefore spread the letter before our readers.

## JOHN TYLER'S LETTER.

Williamsburg, Oct. 16th; 1840.

Gentlemen—Your letter bearing date the 3rd of October, which seems to have been written with the full knowledge that I was absent from Virginia, was received by me within a few hours after my reaching home, from a protracted absence commencing before its date, and terminating with this day. If it has been published, as I am led to suppose it has been, from the statement in your letter of your intention to publish it, I have not up to this moment seen the newspaper which contains it. This will readily explain to you the reason that it has not earlier been answered.

Judging from the references which you have been pleased to make to a speech delivered by me before the Tippecanoe Club of Washington city, on my late journey to Ohio, I am led to suppose that I should not have been honored by your correspondence if in that address I had not ventured to predict with some degree of confidence, (a confidence which recent events have not been calculated to impair,) that William Henry Harrison was destined to supplant Martin Van Buren in the Presidential office. But to whatever cause I may have been indebted for the honor, I am thankful to you for the assurance which you give me, that you address me from no desire to break in upon my halcyon repose, or in any way to disquiet or annoy me."

I beg to assure you that you have done neither the one nor the other. My fear, however, is that I have been guilty of a similar offence towards you by my speech at Washington; for although I had remained at home during the whole year up to a late day in September, within a short distance of your own residence; and although, from your admitted intelligence, you must have weighed the "possible" contingency of my succession to the Presidency, for the reasons which you assign, earlier than the day on which your letter bears date,—yet you have not deemed it necessary to question me on any point whatever. Be that as it may, I doubt not that it will be a source of infinite gratification to you to be informed, and I give you the information on knowledge obtained by myself during my recent visit to Ohio, that General Harrison, who is now in his 68th year, enjoys a robust and vigorous constitution—that he has visited the most of the state in which he resides during the last three months, travelling by night and by day, delivering speeches to large assemblages of his fellow citizens—that his health is perfect, and that the prospect of a continuance of his life for four years to come, is as great as that which appertains to me or yourselves. I shall also be permitted to assure you, that you are mistaken in supposing that his political views are reluctantly given, or are confined "to his relations or partisans." On the contrary, many come to hear his addresses with opinions unfavorable to him, and go away his warm and decided supporters. He candidly and frankly gives utterance to his opinions; and in proof of this I take leave to refer you, with some emphasis, to his speeches at Columbus, Fort Meigs, Carthage and Dayton—You will find them in any Whig newspaper, although I do not remember to have seen them in any Administration print.

Before I proceed to answer your inquiry, I shall be pardoned for saying that I am so far uninformed of the name of the gentleman whom the Administration party in Virginia and the South propose to sustain for the Vice Presidency in opposition to myself—and for suggesting to you that in order to decide upon my claims to that distinction, which I readily admit are of no great weight, whether it would not have been more judicious to have proposed to sustain the same gentleman when you have to me—By a comparison of opinions between us, would you not have been better prepared to decide how to cast your suffrages on 2nd of November next? And I submit it to you in all fairness, whether when my opponents are running a blank ticket against me without any designated rival, it is altogether proper to put me in the witness stand and subject me to a rigid cross examination?

This can only be justified upon the ground that you are firmly of the opinion that Mr. Van Buren cannot die, although in his 62d year, for four years to come, and that General Harrison most inevitably do so. If there was an indemnity from death to all who had not obtained their 67th year, while a decree had been pronounced by the Creator that all who had attained that age should die before the lapse of four years, I could well imagine that your desire "to preserve our liberty and happiness" might lead you to propound interrogatories to me, and to take no concern as to the opinions and views of the person who was destined at some time or other to be placed on the ticket with Mr. Van Buren. But no such decree has gone forth—and the fact that a citizen has attained his 67th year, now excites apprehensions with you which were never displayed before. In 1832 Gen. Jackson, then in his 68th year was re-elected to the Presidency without any of the gloomy forebodings of his demise which are now said to exist as to General Harrison—and I am yet to learn that he was either more robust or active than General Harrison now is.

Hoping to be pardoned for the freedom of my suggestions, which the style and manner of your letter have given rise to, I will now proceed with as much brevity as I can to answer your numerous inquiries.

1. To your first inquiry I answer that it is not only the right but the duty of the people, or any portion of them, to make themselves acquainted with the opinions and sentiments of those who either represent them, or are candidates for their suffrages, "as to the character of the government, the powers it may constitutionally exert, and the measures and policy it ought to pursue." But I must with equal candor declare to you, that if any portion of the people, from no real purpose of obtaining information, but actuated by the sole desire of making political capital for his adversary, (they themselves resolved to vote against him no matter what responses he may give,) shall propound questions to a candidate for office, they are guilty of perverting the true object of inquiry, and that in such a case the candidate is at liberty to answer or not as to him may seem best. It is a game of trap which is designed by the interrogators, and it is for him to