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Popular Tales.

From the Olive Branch.
THE MUTE DOCTOR,
OR THE
MAN WITH MANY NAMES.
A TALE OF PASSION—BY M. L. S.
CHAPTER III.
THE CHEATED HUSBAND.

Some weeks had passed since the arrival of Dr. Boyd at the delightful residence of Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton. The slight feeling of newness and awkwardness which apparently oppressed him at first, had worn off and he was to all welcome companion. Each one sympathized with him and were ready to render all possible assistance in becoming established in the city, and while many little blunders which were attributable to his misfortune afforded them amusement, he regained a true position so quick and gracefully that he excited the admiration of all.

To the timid Maleen, he ever addressed himself with devotion and tenderness, yet so skillfully were his attentions managed, that in that free, social circle they passed unnoticed. The evenings he usually spent at the boarding house, and generally managed to sit beside Maleen, cut her pencils and arrange her patterns when drawing, select beads when she was working them, or arrange the colors for her embroidery. Occasionally, too, he would present her a beautiful flower to copy, which were all found some months afterwards neatly pressed between the leaves of a splendid album.

She had never been so entirely happy, and yet, when she questioned herself she could assign no particular reason. The idea of attributing it to the graceful attentions of the Doctor, never occurred to her and if it had, would have been quickly banished. She was apparently the same as when she came; it was only in the silent depths of her heart that his presence wrought any change, and a knowledge of it, though at present hidden from her, was revealed all too soon for her peace.

Mrs. Gastone was as usual occupied with a book, though the same one had so many evenings been open before her, that her husband playfully suggested that she "was committing it to memory." She threw it down, declaring that she had "just finished it," and devoted the remainder of the evening to social intercourse. Several times the slate of the stranger was passed to her, and once, a close observer might have detected a slight tremor of the lips and a shade of paleness deeper than usual. These symptoms of agitation passed unnoticed, and returning the slate she quietly withdrew to her own room.

The next day at dinner, Mr. Gastone observed that his wife suddenly grew pale, and catching her in his arms to prevent her from falling, sent immediately after her salts; she revived a little but still continuing very ill, he conveyed her to her own apartment and hastily administered every ordinary restorative. Fearing that her illness would prove serious, he went down and begged the doctor, who was just preparing to go out, to go up and ascertain if all was right. Laying aside his hat and cloak, he quickly followed Mr. G. After an apparently minute investigation, he wrote that there was "some serious internal disarrangement, which could be remedied by a medicine he had with him, but that it must be administered by an experienced hand, in quantities exactly varying with the changing symptoms, otherwise it would be attended with danger."

Mr. Gastone was puzzled by this unfortunate attack. He looked at his watch, and then at his wife who lay ill and suffering upon the sofa. He hastily wrote that "in five minutes he must meet a positive engagement, that Catherine had gone out with the children to remain two or three hours, and with many apologies begged the physician to remain and administer the medicine, as he dared not under such circumstances, commit her to the care of one of the servants." Dr. Boyd politely assented, and getting the necessary articles, gave her two drops from a tiny vial, meanwhile watching intensely the deathly features and feeble pulse of his patient.

Pressing his lips to the unoccupied hand of his wife, and commending her to the Doctor's kindest care, he left the room and soon after the house. As soon as the door closed upon Mr. Gastone, Dr. Boyd unfastened the loose dress in which the lady had been hastily robed, and drew forth a small muslin bag containing a powder. Then pouring out a glass of wine, he whispered, raising her in his arms.

"Bella, my own sweet Bella, take this."

She swallowed it, an languidly opening her eyes, threw herself into his arms.

"Has not our ruse succeeded finely?" he asked in a gay and confiding tone still holding her closely and kissing her forehead.

"Oh yes!" she replied, "but I was dreadfully ill while that substance remained upon my stomach."

"I know it, my love, and would gladly have suffered all for you. Are you better now?" he asked, in an affectionate voice.

"Yes, though still faint," she replied, "give me another glass of wine."

Having drunk it, they continued their conversation, during which it was stated by Mrs. Gastone that aware of the absolute engagement of her husband, during the afternoon, she had purposely sent away her woman, who would remain till nearly dark.

"You are indeed my angel," exclaimed the Doctor in a subdued tone. "A month is an eternity to wait, when one's love is so near, for an interview, a kiss and an embrace. But how do I succeed in playing the mute?"

"Quite to perfection," replied Bella, nestling in his arms as if it were her true resting place instead of guilty love which they only labored to conceal "but I have often trembled lest you should expose the deception when suddenly addressed."

"It is often a great effort, but I have practiced occasionally ever since we parted. But for the future, dearest Bella, will you not visit me in my office? You can go to the opposite street, and a narrow entry leads directly to my apartment; will you not meet me there?"

The lady hesitated. An uncontrolled passion had hitherto led her on, and whether or not she was conscious of the fact, it was impossible for her either to retrace her steps, or to cease to advance in the course she had chosen; in the presence of her lover particularly, she was a wake that her will, at other times powerful, was wholly subjected to his. Whenever his dark, penetrating eye rested upon her, a thrill ran through every vein, producing a sweet, languid submissiveness. At the moment of receiving this proposal it created a slight feeling of indecision and degradation, but impelled by the most engrossing passion, she consented.

"When?" he asked.

After a slight hesitation she replied, "When I present a rose from that beautiful bush to Maleen at breakfast, you may know that in the course of my morning's shopping I will look in upon you."

The lover turned and looking steadily into her deep, liquid eyes, now deeper and more liquid than ever, till an electric thrill ran from head to foot, asked in an earnest, decided tone, "Are we the same to each other that we were? Have we met on the same terms as those on which we parted?"

The same, whispered Bella, now wholly under his influence, and yielding without further resistance to her overwhelming passion. "I am yours in heart and soul, beyond the power of circumstances. For my husband I have a continually increasing aversion and cannot but exclaim at times 'release me, O, my God! from this insupportable burden.'"

"Is it not useless to bear longer this burden?—The world is wide, and in its southern climes the breezes are loaded with love. Would it not please you to inhale them?"

"Please me?" she repeated very slowly, fastening her eyes now swimming with excitement upon him. "You do not know how fervently I sigh for the warm, delicious air and the sweet orange bowers of my father's land. Lived we in that sunny clime, he who stood between me and my love, would soon sleep too quiet to awake. But," she added, somewhat disdainfully "only thought under this cold sky is, endure, endure."

"Bella, will you go with me to your own home?"

She lay in his arms a moment perfectly still like one in a dream, with her eyes closed. At length two great tears gathered under each eyelid, her bosom heaved with pent up emotions, and she murmured faintly and sadly, "My children, my sweet babes! can I leave them?"

He soothed the agitated woman, held her hands in his own, pressed his face to hers, and said in a low musical voice, "Forget all, my own Bella; remember only that I am yours; no earthly power save your own will, can hereafter separate us. But explain to me one thing. You commanded me, as one condition of your love, to win the heart of the little girl you call Maleen. Her eye now follows every change of my position, and the pure, quick blood mantles her cheek when I cast upon her a look of subdued tenderness. Yes, she already loves me, though unconsciously. Why, Bella, do you urge this upon me? It is a difficult task for me to deceive."

"I hate Maleen," she replied, with a sudden and violent change from burning love to intense hatred. "I know not exactly why, but from my soul I hate her. Fancy to yourself the abhorrence with which she would regard a love like ours. Think you I can quietly endure her cold, tranquil eyes upon me day by day, their mable-like purity reproaching me for the passion which is a part of my being? No, I cannot brook their silent language. My husband, too, often parades her domestic virtues as an example for me. Think of it, for me! Just Heaven! I will no longer receive such insults."

"How far do you wish me to carry this passion?"

"To the extreme point of possibility without involving yourself, but let it not enter your own heart—or beware!" and for an instant all the hatred and revenge of her passionate nature was centered in her eye. A moment more, and she clung to him fondly, exclaiming, "But you are true, I can trust you."

"But tell me, Bella, what you intend to be the result of this?"

"I intend nothing," she replied. "Will the

crushed and desolate heart ever regain its power and elasticity? Will the bruised flower again rear its head to the smiling sunbeam?"

"Oh, Bella! mean you this?" said her lover in a slightly reproachful voice, appearing for the first time to comprehend her.

"Do you shrink?" she asked in a firm tone "If so, we can yet part."

"Have I ever hesitated to obey your wishes?—The future will be as the past."

"It is well. I trust you," she replied, and indulging in a parting embrace he left her.

Half an hour afterwards, Mr. Gastone entered the room where his lady lay very quietly upon the sofa apparently in a sound sleep. The careless attitude, the regular breathing, the slightly parted lips—all conveyed the idea of a gentle repose. "She is recovering I see; well, I must confess I have a good deal of faith in the silent Doctor. I will patronize him," and stooping over, he kissed her tenderly. He could never exactly satisfy himself how it was, but as his lips came in contact with hers, he fancied a cold shudder ran through her frame. She opened her eyes slowly and feebly.

"When did the physician leave?" he inquired.

"An hour since," she replied. "He had engagements from which I fear he allowed his benevolence to detain him too long."

A short time after this, Dr. Boyd suddenly deserted his place at Mrs. Ellerton's table.—For three days he came not and many were the inquiries made for him. His office was closed and it was supposed that he had suddenly left town.

Upon the evening of the fourth day, Maleen sat in solitude in her own room. The dress of the usually fastidious girl was negligent; her ringlets were brushed back in a plain band and tears dimmed and saddened her eyes. She held in her hand a delicate note, the writing of which was evidently disguised. Its contents were these:

"My dear Maleen,"—"Suffer me, though nearly a stranger, to address you with all the familiarity of the affection I really feel for you. There is one near you—a being of higher, nobler order than the common mould, whose life is wasting under the pressure of ardent love for you. He has never before loved, and his soul's whole power is merged in this passion. He would kneel, beg, pray, do ought to gain the precious gem of your affection, but, alas! he is powerless to plead his cause, and for that, he fears lest you should spurn him from you.

Unable longer to endure these tortures, this cruel suspense, he fled, hoping to leave his wretchedness behind; but in vain! Your image ever attends him. The only means to induce his return will be a resolution on your part, to encourage him by a revelation of your love. I know this is much to ask of a timid and sensitive maiden and I urge it not. Your own heart can best decide how well it can bear his absence. If you wish to keep him a wanderer, let the future remain as the past, but if you would bid him live, wear to-morrow upon your usual walk, the white plume which sometimes adorns your bonnet, and he shall be recalled.—Remember there is to be no hesitation; decide now and forever.

A TRUE FRIEND.
Long did Maleen sit with her fair hands clasped over a face burning with blushes, which extended to her neck and arms, while she murmured with an air of insulted purity, "And the unknown writer of this had penetrated the secret which I fancied hidden in my bosom. If I knew his name, I could be more reconciled, but now—" and the little pearly drops gathered under the closed fingers. "I love him! I confess that love to him unasked! never! Sooner would I die." Then again perusing the note through her tears, she continued, "But this tells me that he may become a victim to this passion. Will peace rest in my bosom, if crushed hopes and a broken heart cry to me from an untimely grave? And I too! can I live without his presence? Three days have passed since his eye rested upon me, and I feel that they have marked as many years upon my heart and brow. A sudden resolution springs up within me. I will save him. I will reveal to him my love. I will bless his whole future life, and he, in return, shall become the light and joy of mine. I will even write to night and let my resolution fail. O, my mother! that thou wert by thy daughter's side to cheer and counsel her in this self-sacrificing but noble act. From the far East thou dost smile upon me."

Opening her writing desk, she immediately began tracing fair characters upon a gilt edged sheet. A heavenly light beaming from her countenance rendered her appearance spiritual. The next morning Maleen was very pale and her head drooped wearily beneath the snow-white plume.

CHAPTER IV.
FIRST MEETING BETWEEN DR. BOYD AND MRS. GASTONE.
That we ascertain the cause of Dr. Boyd's absence from his temporary residence, it will be necessary to retrace our steps to the period in which he first met Mrs. Gastone.

During the summer previous to the commencement of our story, that lady arrived one pleasant evening at Saratoga Springs. Her husband, who always preferred business to pleasure, immediately returned to Boston, and left

her to enjoy as long as she pleased, the fashionable watering place.

Few would have dreamed that this was a resort for the sick and weary, from the splendid dresses and gay equipages that constantly promenade the streets, and from the sounds of mirth and revelry which proceeded from the costly saloons. But beneath this gay exterior and amid the music and meriment were concealed many a pained body, as well as desolate and aching heart.

Mrs. Gastone mingled very little with the Saratoga world, for her proud and passionate nature demanded exclusive homage, and by it she was unfitted for a social every day life.—There had been for a long time in her mind a growing dislike to her husband. She was extraordinarily, knew nothing of the common labors of life, and had no idea of the use of money but to spend it freely. He was on the contrary an active business man, who, by his own talent and industry had raised himself to a giddy height among the merchant princes of Boston, and could never appreciate a life that was not crowded with important and decisive events. To have lived in the feelings after the manner of his wife, would have been to him only a sickly sighing over impossibilities. The longer they lived together the greater were the barriers which existed between them.

In her walks to the spring attended by a servant carrying her little Inu, she had often noticed a tall and graceful gentleman near.—Constant jostling with individuals in such a place is certainly expected, but there seemed something intentional in the measured pace of the stranger, just proportioned to her own, and in his always lounging at a short distance from her while remaining at the spring. He was neither rude nor intrusive, and she could not therefore feel insulted. She remembered to have seen him at one corner of the piazza, nearly enveloped in woodbine when she parted so carelessly from her husband, and that the same evening he had picked up her handkerchief in the saloon and presented it to her with the utmost deference.

Frequently of late, he had lingered near her till she retired for the night, his countenance wearing an expression of the most profound respect, mingled with the highest admiration and a slight touch of sadness. He was apparently spell bound by her beauty. Without being able in the least to account for it, she was conscious that the stranger was fast becoming a part of her destiny.

Determined to understand, and if possible, destroy the invisible and mysterious bond which connected them, she at length approached and addressed him with much coldness and hate.

"To what circumstance am I indebted for this untiring scrutiny?"

The stranger started as from a dream, but rising instantly replied with a winning and gracious smile,

"I am in search of a heart, Lady."

"And do you fancy," continued she, "that mine is so lightly won, that it may be unconsciously stolen from me?"

"I simply sought my own Lady. I know not where it is, but as the bee is attracted to the most fragrant flowers, wherewith to draw sweet nectar for its subsistence, so am I drawn to the most beautiful angel about me to catch from her heavenly eye fresh hope and courage. Reproach me not fairest lady, but my heart has strayed, and I seek it or—one in return."

The stranger leaned gently and gracefully forward till his face was nearly in contact with hers, and fixing upon her his full dark eyes, said in a low, earnest voice,

"Whatever, outward pledges may burden you, sweet lady, your heart is still free—still YOUR OWN."

Mrs. Gastone became very pale and trembled violently. He instantly brought an easy chair and entreated her in the kindest manner to rest herself, at the same time throwing himself upon the Indian matting at her feet.

"You are lovely," said she, her agitation somewhat subsiding, for though conscious that she ought not to remain, she had no power to move.

"I am but too happy to lie at your feet, and will never rise till you bid me hope for a smile now and then to cheer my weary life, Oh! I wish it were ended," he continued, as if in a mournful reverie, "life without those smiles were worse than death."

She drew her hand painfully across her brow and asked in a subdued tone,

"Seek you a heart which has been shackled by the forms and ceremonies of the world?"

"Never, I would have one whose bright fountain of love has never been sullied by the reflection of another's image, whose sympathies are yet fresh and undeveloped within it, and whose power and intensity of loving is such that it will subdue every obstacle between itself and the loved one."

A few tears gathered in her beautiful eyes in spite of her efforts to restrain them, and she replied gently waving her hand,

"Go seek such affection, and may you be blest."

The countenance and manner of the stranger became more and more enthusiastic and passionate. He seized her hand and pressing it to his lips whispered,

"At this shrine only, will I worship. Crush me or bid me live, as you will."

She attempted to release herself, but gently detaining her, he said somewhat faintly, but with an expression of earnest love,

"Nay lady, you leave me not till you have promised to meet me again—where and when?"

Mrs. Gastone was powerfully agitated, but through her tears she answered,

"In the garden—at 10 o'clock," and flew to her own room to blush for her weakness and weep for her fancied misery. She attempted to analyze her emotions. "What was the stranger to her? She did not love him; she would not go to meet him; what would her husband say to such a proceeding?" A cold shudder passed over her. She determined to write a note, begging to be released from her engagement.

But a voice within whispered that there could be no harm in once meeting him—it should be the last time, and he should not be permitted to address the language of love to her—simply as a friend would she hold any converse with him," and she threw down her pen.

It was a glorious evening. The moon was wandering on a distant journey, but the stars looked down in their everlasting purity upon as lovely a scene as imagination could picture of nature and art produce. The garden was immense, and its many shaded and serpentine walks intersected each other in every direction, while at convenient distances were placed lamps sufficient to throw over the whole a mellow twilight. It was at this hour becoming somewhat deserted for the ball room.

With a palpitating heart and nervous step Mrs. Gastone wandered into the most shady avenue, and looked about listlessly and undetermined.

"I will not stop," thought she, "how can I again look upon my husband—my babes—but he comes—I cannot fly—a power beyond my own holds me in its grasp," and she breathed with difficulty.

The stranger gracefully pressed his lips to her fingers, and leading her aside into a grove, seated her beside him on a raised turf bordered with flowers.

"Do not detain me long," she said in a hesitating voice, "I feel that I do wrong in coming here."

"Lady," he replied in a tone slightly sorrowful, "you are free as the birds that swim the air or the flowers that grow beside you. I detain you! I will even return with you this moment if you wish. But you do not wish it. Your heart is yet unattached, is panting for an object on which to lavish its untold wealth. Oh! drive not from you, one whom a like strong and earnest love has drawn towards you. How useless to send me away. I cannot go. For weeks I have lived only in your presence by day and in dreams of you at night; I cannot forget you. Do you not love?"

"I do in spite of myself," she replied.

In two hours she returned to the house pale and excited. Going as usual to her child, who slept with its nurse, she stopped to kiss its fair brow, but something withheld her, and she rushed from its pure presence to her own apartment.

From that time, the stranger—who called himself Mr. Walter Laville, and whose identity with the Dr. Boyd of the preceding chapters will soon be fully established—held frequent interviews with Mrs. Gastone, during which they revealed whatever they chose of their former lives. She neither concealed her aversion for her husband nor love for Mr. Laville. He declared that he was a southern gentleman, immensely rich, and that she was his first and only love.

At length there came a day for parting.—They had already lingered till the place seemed quite desolate. Much time had been devoted to forming plans for the future, for both were determined that the separation should be as short as possible. It was resolved that the elegant Walter Laville should assume the more vulgar cognomen of Dr. Ammi Boyd, become wholly deaf and dumb, and provide himself with an Apothecary's shop in Boston as an ostensible motive for his residence there. He also wished to procure money in this way, though this latter wish was a private one. Mrs. Gastone left Saratoga first, and her disappointment and anxiety were great as the weeks passed and her lover came not. They did not correspond through fear of detection.

Mr. Laville departed from the Springs in a very secret and unusual manner, and scarcely had he proceeded thirty miles ere he was overtaken, arrested and carried back to arrange a trifling bill "which," the officer said "had no doubt been forgotten." With many and gracious apologies for his carelessness, he stipulated that he should probably soon receive ample funds from his southern agent. Time passed, however, and they came not. At last he purchased a suit of coarse gray, and leaving in the hands of the broker a quantity of handsome ornaments, he paid his bills and departed with the avowed intention of going to chaotic his unfaithful agent, but in reality to pick up somewhere money and a dress suitable for his appearance before his lady love. By contrivances in which he was an adept he procured all the objects of his present desire and honored the "city of notious," with his presence about the first of January. From that time to the period of his sudden and much lamented ab-

sence from Mrs. Ellerton's we are already familiar.

One morning as he was opening the window shutters of his office, a man of gigantic dimensions passed him, turned to obtain a full view of his face and placing his broad and muscular hand heavily upon his shoulder said, "Hark! see friend, I have something to say to thee. Come in here." The Doctor gazed at him a moment vacantly, then going in wrote upon his slate, "I cannot understand you; if you have any business with me, write—I am deaf and dumb."

"Deaf and dumb! upon my word," screamed the tall man, "and how recently has this affliction seized you? Speak I tell you. Your tongue moved glibly enough when you swindled this cloth suit from Clarkson & Co. of Albany." The silent man still urgently presented his slate and pointed to his mouth and ears, shaking his head violently.

"I will make you hear now if you never heard before," exclaimed the stout officer, and with all the force of his stentorian lungs, he bawled in the Doctor's right ear, "I arrest you!"

The physician hesitated a moment as if trying in vain to gather from all this some definite idea, and then commenced taking down vials, pill-boxes and plasters exposing their contents in a most advantageous manner and pointed to the printed bills for directions and prices.

"Confound ye! but ye shall hear if ye never heard before, so help me Heaven." And taking in one long full breath, the giant roared out, changing rapidly from ear to ear, "I arrest you! I arrest you!" till the uproar was deafening.

Dr. Boyd began to lose his equanimity, but possessing a powerful control over himself he succeeded in preserving a tranquil countenance. Again shaking his head as if in doubt, he quietly removed the medicines to their places of deposit, and wrote upon the slate "Friend, is it advice you desire—I would thank you to write."

"Blood and thunder!" was the angry response, and the officer stepped to the door to bail a carriage then passing. Requesting it to stop a moment, he turned to secure his companion when behold he was missing! Every corner was searched but all in vain. He was nowhere to be met with. Closing the door and kindling a fire, the giant sat quietly down to await his return exclaiming, "A hard case this! but I'll catch him yet; he don't trip me so."

A week passed and he became weary of solitary confinement. Returning to the shop one morning, he was surprised to find that its contents had disappeared and the sign removed.—The officer disappeared also for a time, and Dr. Boyd again bestowed himself in his usual seat at Mrs. Ellerton's table, replying to all inquiries that the marriage of a dearly loved sister had most unexpectedly called him to New York where he arrived scarcely in time to witness the splendid and imposing ceremony.

CHAPTER V.
THE LETTERS.

Poor Maleen! with what earnestness, with what touching eloquence did she write the story of her early and pure love! With what noble sentiments expanding her bosom did she rise from her accomplished task, and kneeling before the full-length portrait of her mother, exclaim, "And thou, too, my mother! who hast ever been the guardian angel to preserve me from error, thou too dost approve and smile upon me in this fearful trial; yes, thou dost smile, I see it now, and when thou dost again embrace thy child, wilt say, 'Noble soul, thus to forego all selfish fears and pour a healing balm into a sorrowing and despairing soul.' Oh yes! the same enchanting smile which I have watched from infancy, again beams upon me," and with clasped hands and raised tearful eyes, Maleen gazed upon the picture, till gradually the eye kindled with love and admiration, and about the mouth of her mother played the wondrous smile.

A misty dimness spread itself around the enchanted girl, and a soft languor was diffused through her system. Nothing was distinct to her. The gilded frame disappeared from her sight—the canvass receded—and her mother living, joying and embracing her stood in its stead. "O, my mother! my mother!" exclaimed the child, and sank to the floor, exhausted with her own intense emotions.

When she returned to consciousness she was nearly morning and her lamp had expired. At breakfast which she scarcely tasted, Mrs. Gastone cast upon her one long, searching look saying mentally, "It works—I shall not long have to endure her presence." The malicious woman calculated accurately.

Nature had bestowed upon Maleen a spirit so pure, a heart so open and free, that it was nearly impossible for her to conceal her most private thoughts. To each, the clear transparency of her countenance and the quickly changing color were a sure index. For the first time in her life she had a secret to preserve. Like all ingenuous persons, it was a trouble to her and she became restless and unnatural.

At length came the day of Dr. Boyd's return. He was cordially welcomed by all, and bending over the delicate hand which Maleen presented him, he gracefully kissed it bestowing upon her a soft, loving, trusting look, as if already aware of her noble intentions. It sank deep into Maleen's heart and destroyed at once whatever hesitation yet remained as to the comple-