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AN EMBROIDERED STOCKING.

She was very pretty—but there came a time when I don't think I cared in the least for her beauty—her soul was so much more attractive than her body.—She was no humble wild-flower maiden, but a woman who had received a magnificent dower of blue blood. including talent and the highest attributes of character and all that culture could develop in a beautiful and intellectual woman was hers; all that wealth could bestow upon her she possessed. She had the good fortune to have no singularity of nature, but all was a symmetrical and harmonious whole.

I loved her, and I possessed the humbleness of true love. The more intimately I knew her, she made me conscious of things that were mean in myself. Out of this feeling grew jealously of other men.

A bitter jealousy. She was of too sunny and generous a temper to pick for flaws, nor could she know a man as often men knew him.

She could not understand that Dr. Cosgrove was irritable in private as he was suave and agreeable in public, and I would not tell her that Capt. Langdale seldom pays his debts. These were but two of her many admirers, but they were both handsomer and showier than myself In time, I was miserable on their account.

I cannot now, in cold blood, accuse her of coquetry, but Stephenie St. Jean was of French blood on her father's side. Besides speaking that language perfectly she had the French woman's secret of fascination. A trifle more in vivacity, when surrounded by gentlemen, made her utterly irresistible.

I saw and felt the charm, and could not content myself in the thought that in the quiet hours we passed together I knew myself dear to her. Many a winter evening had we sat together on the little velvet sofa before the drawing room fire, secure from intrusion, her beautiful head resting on my breast, content in her eyes, happiness in her smile. And yet swearing her to be the proudest and most delicate of women, I was madly jealous of the other men.

For months I would not see her alone. She was one of a large family, and she had a favorite cousin, Lily Lawton, who was her constant companion.

She was very young, and a bright, sweet little thing; but of late she had seemed drooping, as if out of health, and Stephenie had been unusually protective and kind.

For Stephenie's sake I often took Lily out to drive, though her exceeding simplicity often bored me.

I could not but wonder that Stephenie associated with her so constantly; but Lily worshipped her magnificent cousin, and the latter delighted in being kind to those weaker than herself. "Kitten," she called Lily, and there had been something especially kittenish in the girl's round, bright gray eyes, and playful graceful ways.

Her special charm was gone now. She was a pale, faded, spiritless little thing. Stephenie kept her constantly under her wing.

"Kitten must have green fields and pastures now," she said. "The May suns are getting strong, and I, too, long for a country trip. We are going to Branchville, and shall be absent a week. Mind you are a good boy till we come back."

I smiled, but on the wrong side of my face.

"A week?" I murmured.

"A week and one day," she laughed.

"I shall be gray-headed when you come back," I said, smiling at my own vexation.

She laughed more gaily than ever; then a shadow fell over her face.

"It is for Lily's sake," she whispered. "Look at her."

Lily lay in a hammock on the piazza, her hands lying listlessly in her lap, not a shade of color in her cheek.

The thought came to me that the child was bound for the land of shadows.

"She must have help soon," said Stephenie.

"Yes," I answered.

I saw them off in the morning train, Kitten with her cheek on Stephenie's shoulder. I carried the picture they made before my eyes all the week—my magnificent, generous brunette supporting the failing strength of that pale, fair-faced child. And I had never loved her better in my life than in this new phase.

A week and a day, Stephenie had said: therefore I had no expectation of seeing her, when, at the end of five days, I entered the drawing-room of her father's house to find an opera glass I had left there.

I had told the servant at the hall door what my errand was, and that I knew just where to look for the glass. But on the threshold of the apartment my steps were arrested by the sound of Stephenie's voice.

A rush of delight went over me. I was about to spring forward, when I discovered that Stephenie was seated in the alcove of an inner room beside a gentleman.

I stood irresolute. A curtain of blue silk fell across the upper part of the figures, but upon it their shadows lay as they sat against the sunny window beyond, and plainly outlined Stephenie's beautiful head and Capt Langdale's profile.

I did not mean to be a listener to their conversation, but as I demurred about about going forward I distinctly heard Stephenie say:

"I love you utterly, with all my heart. I am not ashamed to say this, because you will never see me again."

She continued talking, but her voice fell to a low monotone, and I realized my position, and stumbled backward out of the room and found myself in the street, going dizzily home. Like some hunted thing I rushed to my room and hid myself from all eyes.

I remember throwing myself upon a couch and then starting up and walking the room, looking at my pale face in the glass, taking up books and opening as if to read them, doing all sorts of unintentional things in a mechanical way, trying not to think of the revelation that had come to me, because it seemed that I should go mad if I did. But a haunting voice was crying in my ear, "Stephenie—lost Stephenie!"

"No, no, she is mine!" I cried, in despair. "I have loved her so long and so well, and she is my only darling! What could I do without her? Oh, God, what can I do?"

For the truth would not be gained, and must be faced. With mine own ears I heard her say to another man, "I love you," and what I may have murmured in moments of impatience, I knew in my soul that Stephenie St. Jean was no coquette.

Captain Langdale had been ordered to his regiment, and she had probably returned home to bid him farewell. A soldier's life is always in peril, and in the moment of parting Stephenie had confessed to him what I had never suspected.

Heaven knows that I had no reason, and I had good cause to think differently. She had never plighted her troth to me, but by word and look and sweet privileges she had accepted my love, and I had such utter faith in her truth that the possibility of her deceiving me had never occurred to my mind. The warmest and tenderest intimacy existed between us, and yet she had never given her promise to marry me.

Sick at heart, I realized it now, reviewing the past in the hateful light of my sudden discovery. I was a lawyer, and in the long hours of that utterly sleepless night I studied the case untiringly as if it had not been my own.

It was not a matter of mistaken identity. Leaving out the consideration that my heart would never in this world mistake Stephenie's voice, I distinctly saw the outline of her bust, and her dress revealed below the curtain was very familiar to me. It was cream colored silk trimmed with black lace. On her foot she wore a pretty black satin shoe, with a silver buckle, and the instep showed a cream-colored stocking, embroidered with silken buds and vines.

The dress and stocking, with its embroidery, were all of the same tint, and the whole costume revealed but two colors—cream and black. As she sat within the blue curtain the artistic effect was very beautiful

Ah, no! it was Stephenie, peerless among women, and in heartsick misery I at length gave up the lost cause.

The gray dawn was stealing in at my windows, its sweet breezes bathing my aching temples, when I sat down at my desk and penned my farewell letter:

"Stephenie—I cannot trust myself to see you again. I am weak as a child, and worn out with such suffering as I pray you may never know. Inadvertently, yesterday, I heard you confess your heart to Capt. Langdale. I heard you say that you loved him. Then you do not love me! God only knows how utterly I believed you did, and what fervent gratitude and happiness there was to me in that belief. Oh, my darling! how could you let me wreck my heart on the shoals of your mere careless liking? I was only a congenial friend, a pleasant companion. Your heart was his; and yet—farewell!"

This passionate, incoherent letter I directed to her, then called my valet.

"Pierre, pack some trunks. We will go down to Black Rocks for the summer."

The man stared.

"Pardon, Monsieur, it is very dull down there. No gunning, no fishing, and no young ladies!"

"And consequently no waiting maids for you to ogle!" I answered with a dreary attempt at ease and lightness of spirits

But the fellow still looked at me.

"Monsier looks very ill. I will bid the doctor call on you, and, if he consents we will go to that horrid place tomorrow."

"Nonsense! I shall be well enough after a bath and some breakfast. Don't be impertinent Pierre. We start on the 10 o'clock train."

Black Rocks was not frequently by fashionable society; this was my only reason for choosing it. The Neptune House, where I took up my abode, was a large rambling, old fashing inn, not the least in the world like a modern seaside hotel.

My valet, of course, arranged all the conveniences of my life; consequently I did not know the dark skinned old woman who one day presented herself at the door of my apartment, with a long covered basket upon her arm. My man was dusting a coat upon the back of the piazza.

"There is some one at the door, Pierre," I said to him as I sat at the window with a book which I was not reading

"It is the washerwoman. She is a very nice laundress, Monsieur."

"Yes," I said, indifferently. "Pay her."

He received the curiously covered basket, settled the bill and the woman departed.

Pierre prepared to arrange my linen by opening a bureau drawer. I turned a page of my book as he withdrew the white cloth from the basket, when my attention was again arrested by his exclamations:

"*Mon Dieu!* Lacae, ruffles."

"What is the matter, Pierre?"

"These are ladies' things. Here is a wrapper with fluted ruffles, white skirts, and—ha, ha!—embroidered stockings. Mees Betsey, Mees Betsey, come back."

He dropped the basket on the floor and rushed after the old woman. I glanced within and saw a mass of snowy lace and embroideries, beautiful as a bed of lilies. The clothing was too dainty and expensive to belong to any but a lady, and I wondered idly who the owner might be. In one corner was a pile of hosiery. The stockings were not all white—one pair was of cream color, with a silk embroidery of buds and vines, and while I was carelessly considering how and where such exquisite needlework was done, the thought flashed across me that I had seen that very pattern of silken rosebuds on Stephenie St. Jean's foot.

My hand trembled. I dropped my book as Pierre came rushing back with the panting woman.

"Yes, I have left the wrong basket—The other, outside, is yours, sir. Hope you'll excuse me. I'm getting old and forgetful."

"Stay!" I said, breathlessly. "Whom are the lady's things for?" "For the young lady down stairs, who came last week, sir—Miss St. Jean. I'll take them away directly."

Unheeding the wondering eyes of the two, I snatched up a handkerchief on which I saw a name marked. Yes, it was "Stephenie!"

I grew faint and turned away to hide my emotion. My hand shook as I snatched up my hat and rushed out of doors.

The sun was setting across the water. The waves danced blood-red in its light. The air had grown cool, and a pair of singing shore birds flew before me as I sought a favorite seat of mine, retired among the rocks.

I had not composed my mind when there was a rustle of silk, and a soft hand was laid on my arm

"Forrest!"

"Stephenie!"

"You know I am here, now, and so I have come to speak to you."

She sat down close beside me, facing me, her arm across my knee, her clear eyes steadily meeting mine; and, before she spoke a word, I took that fair hand tenderly, feeling that she was to be restored to me.

"Forrest, I have been here a week, wishing to see you, yet repelled by your determined seclusion. If the old woman called Aunt Betsey, who frequents this place, had not told me to-night that accident had revealed my presence to you, I should have lost my last remnant of courage, and returned home without speaking to you.

"What have you to say to me now, Stephenie?"

"You overheard me talking, as you supposed, to Capt. Langdale, Forrest I was reading a letter."

"A letter?"

"I have a startling story to tell. Listen. All the spring my cousin Lily's malady had seemed strange to me. I could not understand her loss of strength and color, until I learned by occupying the next apartment to her at Branchville, that she spent her nights in weeping. While I wondered that she should have a secret trouble from me, and perplexed myself how to gain her confidence, I entered her room one morning, and found it to be full of a strange sickening scent, while Lily lay senseless upon the bed. She had taken an opiate powerful enough to produce death, and upon the table lay two letters. One was addressed to me, the other to Capt. Langdale.

"As soon as I had procured assistance, and a physician's help to save her life, I read the letter the poor child had addressed to me. Poor Kitten! her heart was breaking, for she had set it upon one friend, and she believed that he loved me. I am speaking of Captain Langdale. He is handsome, gay and *debonaire*, and the poor girl believed him necessary to her existence. So she confessed to me, yet her heart seemed to hold no bitterness for her supposed rival.

"She had always loved me, she said, and I was more worthy of her hero. But she was so pitifully miserable, poor little thing! Well, I considered the matter carefully. I was only an hour's ride from Captain Langdale, and I resolved to see him. Lily was sleeping a restorative slumber, and I could go to the city and return in about three hours. I did so. When I reached the depot I sent a carriage for him to come to our house. He came and read the letter. Our soldier has a tender heart: he was affected to tears. He gave me the letter to read, bidding me to read it aloud. As I did so, you entered and heard the words which so misled you."

Her eyes were swimming as they met mine; but after an instant she went on:

"Captain Langdale showed deeper and more delicate feeling than I had supposed him capable of.

"'If little Lily thinks such a harum scarum fellow as I am worth dying for, I ought to make myself worthy the blessing of such love,' he said; and added: 'I will give myself to Kitten tomorrow, if she wants me, and I will be a better man than I ever have been, for her sake.'

"So," said Stephenie, brightening, "there is to be a marriage in early autumn. My Lily is quite happy in the prospect of sharing a soldier's life, and—and"—blushing radiantly, and flashing one beauteous look into my eyes—"there may be a double wedding, if you please, dear!"

I tell my wife my happiness was saved by such a fragile thing as an embroidered stocking—certainly for this world, and I believe for the next.

A little fellow, five or six years old, who had been wearing undershirts much too small for him, was one day, after having been washed, put into a garment as much too large as the other had been too small. Our six year old shrugged his shoulders, shook himself, walked around, and finally burst out with, "Ma, I do feel awful lonesome in this shirt!"

Plevna, the Place of Horrors.

A correspondent writes from Plevna: The first day of my residence in Plevna was spent in an inspection of the hospitals. Our party placed itself under the guidance of Dr. Ryan, a young English surgeon in the Turkish service, and set out for the chief building, in which the wounded were bestowed. When we reached the main hospital we encountered a scene of horror which went quite unspeakably beyond all our previous experiences I am authorized by the gentlemen I accompanied to say that it is quite beyond the power of language to exaggerate their opinion of the deplorable and hideous condition of the wounded. If I could present you with an adequate picture of this dreadful place, I should produce a record which would dwarf DeFoe's description of the plague. But to attempt such a picture would be to shock decency by every line. I venture to believe the horrors of this home of filth and agony unique and singular. The chambers were large and lofty, and there were reasonable facilities for ventilation, but the odors which filled every one of them were sickening past all words. Wounded men in every stage of disease and filth and pain littered the floors. The stagnant miseries had overflowed the corridors and on to the very stairs, and men with fractures forty days old, lay unattended and helpless, side by side with cases of raving fever and confluent smallpox. If the reader will pain himself by thinking into what foul abandonment of nastiness one wounded man might fall if left absolutely unattended for a week, and will then multiply that imagination by a thousand, he may begin to conceive the state of things which so horrified men accustomed to the sights of war and the ravages of disease.

A Reunion after Many Years.

The *State*, of Richmond, Va., has the following pathetic little story: Many years ago a young gentleman of this city, of good character and honorable connections, had the misfortune to fall out with his wife—a beautiful girl of only eighteen summers. He speedily arranged his business affairs, and without formality took an abrupt leave of his wife and sweet little babe. He traveled far and lingered long in many strange lands, without communicating intelligence of his whereabouts, and without knowing, or caring to know, the fate of his dear ones at home. In the meantime the little one had passed away, and the wife broken-hearted and disconsolate, kept the faith she had pledged at the altar. Many years had elapsed since her truant husband had left her, and in all that time it was her habit to visit the little grave of her dead infant, with the same deep mourning dress she had donned the day of its burial. Late in the dusk of the evening, or, later still, in the silver sheen of the rising moon, when no observant eye was there to molest her devotion, she might have have been seen bending in deepest grief over the grave of her precious little one.

A few evenings ago, it so chanced that fate brought her husband back to this city, who, immediately upon his arrival, sought out the little grave, where, by the dim twilight, he encountered a strange figure in black, in the attitude we have described above. A heavy veil hid the face, but his was open and clear and seemed unaltered. The discovery of either's identity was but a moment's time—a groan—a shriek—and husband and wife firmly clasped in loving embrace

We give no names. The affair is sacredly and profoundly confidential.

GENERAL INSENSIBILITY TO AN IMPORTANT TRUTH.—This, namely,—that the misery of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child; years after, a failure in trade; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily;—in all but the singularly fortunate, the intergral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are early counted and distinctly remembered. The happiness of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions—the little soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heart-felt compliment in the disguise of a playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.—*Coleridge.*