Old Dutch

quickly removes stains and spots from such things as oil-cloth table tops

HER HUMBLE LOVER

"Pray don't apologize, Delamere himself would be anything but offended by your curiosity. Is he so bad as he is painted? I suppose not. It all depends upon how black the village folk have painted his portrait; but, to be truthful, an artist would need a quantity of dark color on his palette."

"I understand," says Signa, thoughtfully, and admiring the delicate way in which the speaker has answered her. "Lord Delamere is—not just quite as bad as he is painted."

"Exactly," he says. "No one is, you know."

"And why does he not come home and live in this beautiful place?" she asks. "But I beg your pardon once more. Perhaps you never asked him?"

"Indeed, but I have," he says, thoughtfully. "I don't think he himself knew. Do you remember the legend of the man who could not rest in the same place for more than twenty-four hours? It is a Flemish legend—there are many good Flemish stories, by the way. The story goes that he could not live unless he took a strange draught of water drawn from a fresh town or village each day. I fancy Lord Delamere is like that man; he must have a draught from a strange spring each day."

"What an unhappy man he must be!" says Signa.

"Very," he assents, laconically.

"And where is he now?" asks Signa, thoughtlessly.

The stranger shruge his shoulders.

"I don't think any of his friends know. His last date was Cairo, I believe. He may be now—anywhere. Perhaps I could find out——"

"Oh, no, no," says Signa, earnestly; then she laughs. "Your rebuke was well deserved," she says, with a flush. "I have allowed myself to appear unwarrantably curious."

"No," he says, in his decided fashion, "by no means. The old place at the back of us interested you, and from it to the owner was an easy step. And now, may I ask a question?"

"You may if you like," says Signa, looking down at the handsome face with a smile in her gray eyes. "I think it is quite your turn now."

He laughs.

"Do not be afraid," he says, lightly; "I am only going to ask if you know whether I should find the Reverend Joseph Podswell, the rector of Northwell, at home—I mean in Northwell—and where the rectory is situated?"

"Yes," answers Signa, smiling with faint amusement; "he is at home, and the rectory is close to the entrance gates of the Grange here; you must have passed the gate—I mean the rectory one—if you crossed the park."

"Oh, I remember," he says. "I took it for a part of the Grange grounds."

"The rector is generally at nome at this time of day," says Signa. I know, you see, because I live at the rectory. Mr. Podswell is my uncle."

He looks at her with deepened interest.

"Indeed!" he says. "Then—then our young friend Archie is——"

"My cousin," explains Signa, simply, "or rather my half-cousin, I suppose, I am not certain; the rector and —my father were half brothers."

"I see," he says, gently, then he looks at her black dress and is silent for a moment.

"My name is Grenville," says Signa, why she knows not. "I am living at the rectory, because my father is dead," quietly, composedly, though her face grows paler and her lips quiver.

He inclines his head.

"I understand," he says, almost in a whisper, so low, so gravely sympathetic is the voice.

"Perhaps," she goes on, impelled by some subtle impulse, "perhaps you may have heard of—my father?"

He is silent for a moment, then he says:

"I once knew a man by that name. One of the noblest, one of the grandest men I ever saw. He was an artist, musician, poet, painted—the sweetest, highest type of humanity one can conceive. 'Jack' Grenville they called him; we were at Vienna together, my tutor and I; I was a lad fresh from school, when I met him, he a man of the world. I shall never forget the charm his presence and manner, his look and voice had for me. I was spellbound. But I shall say no more," he says, gently.

"Yes, go on!" says Signa, calmly, though the tears are running down her face, and her hands are clasped tightly. "Go on! I remember that time; he had left me in France. I was a little child then, and—and sick and ailing. Go on, please; if you knew how sweet it is for me to hear you speak of him as—as you do——" she stops and sweeps the tears away with an impatient gesture.

"I have pained you!" he says, with self-reproach.

"No, no," he says, earnestly, eagerly. "I am not crying for grief, but pleasure. I have never cried for grief since he—he went. I promised him that I would not. And you knew him? It was kind and good of you to speak as you did of him! Here—"and he knew she meant at the rectory—"they avoid all mention of his name as if" —with a laugh and a sob of scornful amazement—"almost as if they were ashamed of him."

He looks at her with gentle sympathy.

"Such people as these, if they are the ordinary type, could not understand such a man as your father," he says. "His place was in the world of the great. They learned to value and to love him there; and you are Jack Grenville's daughter? How small the world is!"

"Is it not?" she says, smiling, and secretly wiping her eyes. "My father always said that if his heart were large enough it would take all the world in and yet have room to spare."

"Yes, I can fancy him saying it; his heart was a vast one," he says. "I remember once being taken by my tutor to the old room in which your father was lodging. As we climbed the stairs—— Can you bear to hear me tell you this?"

"See," she says, turning her face to him with a smile in her eyes that is almost angelic in its serenity and peacefulness.

He inclined his head.

"As we reached the stairs we heard the sound of a violin, and my tutor stopped me. We sat down on the top of the stairs and waited and listened. I had never heard such heavenly music before. I have never heard anything like it since. We sat as if in a dream, and were only awakened when the door opened and your father appeared leading a blind old man carefully by the hand. The tears were streaming down the old man's face; our own were wet. It appeared that your father played for an hour each morning to the old man whose soul existed for music, but whose hands were too crippled by rheumatism to play for himself."

"Yes," says Signa, with the swell of a sacred pride in her voice, "that was my father; and he is dead now, you see, while such a useless creature as myself"—with outstretched hands, and eyes full of sorrow—"still cumbers the ground."

"He would not care to hear you speak thus," he says, not rebukingly, but with the tenderest sympathy.

They were both silent for a moment, then he says:

"Yes, the world is very small. "Though we have never met before, Miss Grenville, we are scarcely strangers."

"No," she says, simply, with quiet, modest dignity; "my fathers friends are mine while life lasts. Will you tell me your name? Perhaps I may remember it."

She asks with no idle curiosity, but with her whole heart and mind full of her lost one; and she is so absorbed in reflection that she does not notice his momentary hesitation.

"I am afraid you will not," he says. "I scarcely think your father heard it. It was my tutor whom he knew, and he merely suffered me to haunt his chambers in the goodness of his heart. My name is—Hector Warren."

Signa thinks for a moment, and murmurs the name softly.

"No; I am afraid I cannot remember it," she says, with a touch of regret. "My father knew so many—no man had more friends. Wherever we went, in every capital of Europe, we found a circle ready to welcome us. I say 'us'—I mean him."

Then she turns with that sweet, grave smile which renders the gray eyes so deep and soft, and holds out her hand.

"We must go now. I am almost afraid to look at my watch."

He rises and takes the hand in his and holds it for a moment, looking into her eyes with the grave, subtle earnestness peculiar to him.

"I will fetch Archie," he says, in a low, calm voice, and he goes down the beach, and hoisting the child on his shoulders, carries him up the cliff. Then he comes down and helps her to ascend.

As she reaches the top, his hand closes on hers with a gentle pressure.

"Good-bye," he says. "We shall meet again."

"Perhaps," says Signa, laughing. Then she stops short and looks down at him. "Shall I tell the rector that you will call?"

He thinks for a moment—scarcely a moment—and a strange look comes into his eyes.

"Do not, please," he says.

"Very well," says Signa. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye!" echoes Archie, leaning over and nodding with infinite condescension. "Are you going to wait there till the mermaids come?"

"Perhaps," he replies, with a smile. "Shall I catch one for you, Archie?"

"Yes, do!" replies the child; then he adds, with cinfinite generosity. But you can keep it yourself; I've got Signa, you know."

"Thanks," responds Hector Warren, gratefully; and Archie, with a last grave nod, bounds after Signa.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a strange meeting. Signa pondered over it on their way home through the park, while Archie ran by her side, chatting in his old-fashioned style.

Hector Warren! She searched her memory closely, going back to the happy times when she and her father had wandered over Europe, from court to court, for with the highest and noblest "Jack" Grenville had been welcome; but she could not remember the name. It was strange that she could not, for even in her early girlhood her father had been accustomed to talk to her about the people whom he had met; then, again, it was rather singular that, in the course of her wanderings, she had not met with this Hector Warren. As he had said, the world is very small, and she felt certain that Hector Warren had seen a great deal of it. He had all the appearance and manner of a man who had moved in society, and become familiar "with men and cities."

Signa thought that never in all her life had she seen so perfect a manner, so full of ease and grace, so natural and unconstrained, with an admirable mixture of grace, dignity, and respectful deference

Even as she recalled him on her way home, the voice, and the handsome face, and the quiet, self-contained manner haunted and possessed her. It was singular that such a man should be here in this out-of-the-way spot, more singular that he should have business with her uncle, the rector. But was it business? Perhaps he was a friend. Then she remembered that he had not inquired about the rector as a friend would, but rather as a stranger, and she concluded that it must be business. Thus her thoughts ran on half unconsciously, when she was brought to a little start and a blush by an exclamation of Archie's.

"Signa, why don't you answer me? That's the third time I've asked you, and you dont' take a bit of notice. I don't believe you're listening!"

"I am afraid I was not, Archie," she confessed, penitently.

"I asked you if you didn't think him a very nice gentlemean?"

"Yes, very," said Signa. "He was very kind to you, was he not?"

"Yes, awfully. It's a pity he's so poor, isn't it?"

Signa looked down at him with a smile.

"Poor! How do you know he is poor?"

"I knew by his clothes," said the child, with that odd shyness peculiar to him; "they were all worn, and his hat was old—I'm sure it had been wet through fifty times. Besides, he did not wear a ring or a watch-chain, like papa, you know. I'm sure he was poor. I wish I had offered my pocket-money. I've got it all in my pocket, Signa."

"I'm very glad you didn't," said Signa, laughingly. "Your eyes are very sharp, Archie, but don't trust them too much. At any rate, though Mr. Warren may be poor, he is a gentleman, and one doesn't offer gentlemen one's pocket-money. Do you understand?"

"I think I do," he replied, thoughtfully. "But I don't think he would have been very angry; he would only have laughed, and then I should have felt ashamed. Yes, I'm glad, too, that I didn't offer him my money."

Archie's chatter served to keep Signa's mind on the same tack, and when she went down for luncheon she found herself still thinking and wondering whether Hector Warren would pay his intended visit that afternoon. So absorbed was she that the rector had to ask her twice to pass the salt; and Mrs. Podswell regarded her with a stony stare of cold-blooded surprise when she passed the pepper instead.

"You seem—ahem!—a little absent this morning, my dear Signa," said the rector, with a feeble smile; and Mrs. Podswell snorted, complainingly.

"Absence of mind is another term for inattention to the wants of others."

"I beg your pardon," said Signa, coloring for a moment, but recovering herself almost instantly. "I was thinking——"

"Of what may we inquire?" demanded the rector, with a heavy sort of playfulness—"of your new bonnet, or what?"

"We will say it is the new bonnet," said Signa, quietly, and the rector, not being quick at repartee, smiled feebly and relapsed into silence.

While the cloth was being removed, and Signa was rising to take her departure for the schoolroom, the servant entered, and said that a gentleman wished to see the rector.

Signa's face flushed, but fortunately her back was turned to the sharp eyes of her aunt, who had betaken herself to her sofa.

"What name?" asked the rector, reluctantly—he did not like being disturbed immediately after his meals. "Always ask the name, Mary."

"It is somebody to sell steel pens or patent door-handles," moaned Mrs. Podswell. "Mary is s careless! Of course she has taken him into the drawing-room. One of these days some one will get in and steal something. It is just the way they do it—get admission to the house, and strip the drawing-room while the servant has gone to inquire."

"Mr. Hector Warren, sir," said Mary. "He says he's very sorry, but he hasn't a card."

The rector looked up from his cozy chair with a sigh.

"I don't know anybody of that name, do I, Mary, my dear?"

"No," said Mrs. Podswell, emphatically. "It's some one come for a subscription. Show him up here, Mary, and do be more careful for the future."

Signa turned to leave the room, but the rector stopped her. Taking up a quantity of papers he held them out to her with a conciliatory smile.

"If you have nothing more important to do, my dear Signa, will you look these parish papers over for me, and enter them in the book? It is on that table. You can do it here."

Signa had once or twice made herself useful with the parish accounts, and though she would have much preferred escaping, she took the papers and seated herself at the table.

She had scarcely done so, when the door opened, and Mary announced "Mr. Hector Warren."

Signa raised her eyes, and saw the tall figure standing in the doorway, but, though the dark eyes rested on his face for a minute, he made no sign of recognition, though Signa fancied that a faint, almost imperceptible smile shone in the dark eyes.

The rector looked up with a slight elevation of the eyebrows — which might be taken for an apology, for even his dull brain could not fail to recognize the fact that his visitor was a gentleman—and stood rubbing his hands behind his back.

"Mr.—er—Mr. Warren, I believe?" he said. "You wish to see me?"

The stranger inclined his head, and the rector, shuffling with marked embarrassment, nodded with a sickly smile.

"Yes, yes, certainly. Will you— perhaps we had better go to the library. Will you follow me, sir?"

The visitor half-raised his hand.

"Pray do not let me disturb you," he said, in his low, grave voice. "My business is by no means private. I am the bearer of a letter—I may almost say of introduction. Permit me to hand it to you," and he took an envelope from a pocket-book and handed it. As he did so, Signa saw that the envelope was emblazoned with a coat of arms in crimson and gold, and the rector saw it also, for his manner grew more embarrassed and apologetic.

"Pray sit down. That is a comfortable chair. Yes; a letter—ahem!—from —dear me, this is very extraordinary, my dear; yes, very extraordinary!"

"What is it?" demanded Mrs. Podswell, with ill concealed impatience and irritability. "Who is it from?"

"Well, really—dear me! From, my dear? It is from Lord—ahem—Lord Delamere!"

Signa looked up involuntarily. Hector Warren was leaning back in the chair with natural, easy self-possession, his eyes resting waitingly upon the rector; but as Signa glanced up he seemed to know it, and for a second's space his eyes turned and met hers. Signa bent over her papers again instantly.

"From Lord Delamere?" echoed Mrs. Podswell, rising with a sudden alacrity which one would scarcely have deemed her capable of. "Indeed!" and her light eyes glanced at the quiet figure in the chair curiously.

(To be continued.)

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RETIRED BURGLAR.

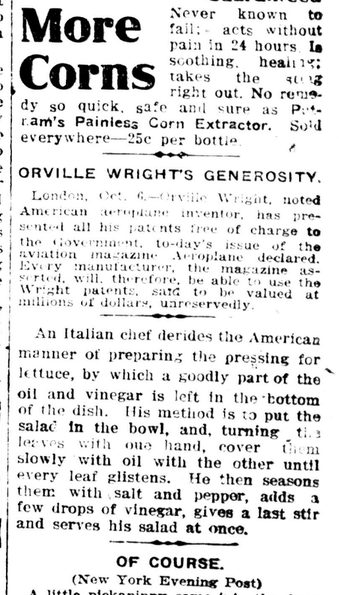
Crying Babies Gave Him Two Shocks in One Night.

"Of course in my business, same as in any other," said the retired burglar, "you learn by experience. One of the first things I learned in that way was to avoid houses where they had young children, infants.

"Grown folks may sleep right through thunderstorms, windstorms, things falling down in the house, 'most any sort of racket, but you never can tell what an infant will do. And those same grown up folks that will sleep right through anything else will wake up sharp at the smallest peep from an infant. They seem to be tuned that way. But I had to learn this by experience.

"One night when I was new in the business I went into what seemed to me a promising looking house in the suburban districts. Got in by the easy cellar window and padded upstairs to the second storey front room with no trouble at all and went straight to the bureau. I opened the top drawer gently, without a sound, and when I turned in my light the very first thing I saw was a diamond ring that I guess must have made my eyes sparkle as much as the ring did. It was a big stone. I should think two or three carats.

"It was a man's ring, and instead of slipping it straight into my pocket as I should have done I put it on my finger for just a moment to look at it.



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At that same instant I heard a baby begin to cry.

"I had seen two persons in a bed in this room, but I had not observed a crib over on the other side of the bed. But the instant that baby cried one of the figures in the bed raised up on its elbow with its back toward me and looked over into the crib at the child, and I didn't need to have anybody tell me that it was time for me to go, which I did, without those two persons in the bed knowing then that I had been there at all.

"When I got back into the street it was still within what you might call my business working hours. I hadn't been in that house ten minutes and I thought I still had plenty of time for another.

"In this second house I had just exactly the same experience as in the first, with one thing added that I will tell you about. In this house there was a crib wich I saw, and that ought to have been enough for me, but sometimes, you know, we have to have our experience rubbed in.

"I went to the bureau here just the same as in the first house and opened the top drawer and was pawing around in it with one hand and holding the lamp with the other when the baby here fairly screamed—nightmare, I suppose. Two persons in the bed jumped as if they'd been blown out of bed, one on the side toward the crib and the other on the side toward me, but I got out and got away.

"I hadn't much more than got settled down and started on the road for home when I began to feel as if something was wrong, as if I had missed something or lost something, and then it struck me all of a sudden that I had lost my diamond ring! I must have clenched my hand on it when that first baby cried, for I know I still had it on my finger when I reached into the bureau drawer in that second house, but there I must have left it. That second baby's sharp cry was really startling, and when it struck me I must have let go of myself for just an instant, let my hands open, and in that instant the ring slipped off my finger.

"Those two experiences, being scared out of two houses by infants and losing a valuable diamond ring all in one night, were enough to teach me the lesson, and from that on as long as I was in active business whenever I went through a town prospecting by day I always left out of my calculations all houses around which I saw a baby carriage."

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ORVILLE WRIGHT'S GENEROSITY.

London, Oct. 6.—Orville Wright, noted American aeroplane inventor, has presented all his patents free of charge to the Government, to-day's issue of the aviation magazine Aeroplane declared. Every manufacturer, the magazine asserted, will, therefore, be able to use the Wright patents, said to be valued at millions of dollars, unreservedly.

An Italian chef derides the American manner of preparing the pressing for lettuce, by which a goodly part of the oil and vinegar is left in the bottom of the dish. His method is to put the salad in the bowl, and, turning the leaves with one hand, cover them slowly with oil with the other until every leaf glistens. He then seasons them with salt and pepper, adds a few drops of vinegar, gives a last stir and serves his salad at once.

OF COURSE.

(New York Evening Post)

A little pickaninny came into the drug store in a small country town and asked for a cake of soap.

"Do you want it scented?" he was asked by the clerk.

"Naw, suh," he answered. "Ah'll take it wid me."

Tommy—Pop, what do you mean by wasted energy? Tommy's Pop—Well, a good illustration of wasted energy, my son, is a book agent trying to sell an encyclopedia to one of those fellows who know it all.

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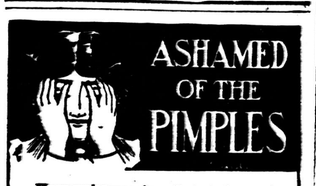

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