"Reign of Terror and Council of Blood" inaugurated by Alva; the sack of Zutphen; the siege of Haarlem; the siege of Leyden; the sack of Antwerp by the Spanish mutineers; the siege of Maestricht; the "French fury" at Antwerp; the assassination of William of Orange; the siege of Antwerp; the defeat of the Spanish Armada; the siege and battle of Nieuport; the siege of Ostend; the passion of Henry the Fourth for Margaret de Montmorency; the assassination of Henry; the escape of Grotius; and the trial and execution of Barneveld. To say that in respect to mere interest these excel any fictitious scenes in ordinary novels is to do but scant justice to the power displayed in their description. They absolutely absorb and inthrall the attention of the reader.

It is necessary to pause here, not for want of matter, but for want of space. Yet it would be unjust to Motley not to emphasize that element of attractiveness in his histories which is derived from his personal character. Those who knew him intimately read his works with the same delight that they listened to his conversation, when some great question of justice or freedom which had touched his heart, stimulated all the faculties and evoked all the acquirements of his fertile and richly stored intellect, and when he poured forth his eloquence in a torrent of speech every word of which was alive with a generous ardor for truth and right, and a noble disdain for every thing false, mean, base, and cruel. As the historian of liberty in its early struggles with political and ecclesiastical despotism, every quality of his large and opulent nature found frank expression in his books. The reader of his works is therefore not only enriched by the new facts and striking thoughts he communicates, but by the direct communication of the author's soul to his own. That soul was the soul of a singularly noble, sincere, honorable, and intrepid gentleman, who felt the mere imputation of a stain as a wound; and to the young men of the country intimacy with such a spirit through his writings can not but exert a healthy stimulus on all that is best both in their exertions and their aspirations.

MISS MAY.

IT was an afternoon in late February, and Tom Kingsley was lounging in the bay-window of the little sitting-room, his Latin and Greek books all around him, and, what was worse, a broad snow-covered hill in front of him, down which sled after sled was gliding with the most tantalizing rapidity. Tom was twenty, and devoted to learning, but he was not above a good coast when the chance presented itself. Occasionally he favored his sister, who was the only other occupant of the room, with very audible growlings against the restrictions of study hours.

The two were students in the academy whose mathematically square buildings rose almost opposite to the Kingsley house. They were nearly of an age; but the one was preparing to enter college; the education of the other was considered nearly completed. The two young people, with their father and mother, made up the whole family; but Mr. Kingsley, in the simple, unpretending way of the village, received into his house as a boarder one of the academic professors, and also occasional students when they happened to be friends of the children. It was this first-named individual who was exciting Tom's attention, in lack of any thing better to look at.

"May," he said, jerking his head over his shoulder with a quick, characteristic movement, "just come here and see Professor Rensel go by."

His sister dropped her work and came to the window. On the other side of the street stood a tall, ungainly man, with a scholarly stoop in his shoulders, a head of bushy hair much threaded with gray, a pair of mild, wise spectacles, and a general air of perplexed acquiescence in all mundane affairs whatever. In his hands he held a very tiny sled, looking at it at arm's-length, as if it was something of an explosive nature. One six-year-old little fellow was surveying his broken plaything with despairing eyes, while two other excited urchins danced up and down in front of the professor, endeavoring duly to set forth the nature of the accident that had happened to the runner. Two dogs wagged their tails hopefully in the background, and, to complete the procession, a disabled crow, the pet of one of the villagers, brought up the rear. It hopped gravely along, now on one foot, now on the other, setting its head on one side in oracular fashion, and looking ten times blacker and wickeder than ever against the whiteness of the snow.

After considering the situation a few minutes the professor started off again, dragging the sled by the rope, and his procession, crow and all, trotted along behind him.

"Now," said Tom, "he will go straight to the carpenter's shop to get that thing mended; and the carpenter, after impressing upon him the arduous nature of the job, will charge just ten times what it is worth, and he will pay it without a word."

"No doubt he will."

"And those little beggars will run off without even thanking him."

"But they are fond of him, Tom."

"I don't care. May, you can make that man believe any thing."

"I know it."

"Just fancy his going out with a telescope and watching the moon all night because

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we boys told him there were changes on its surface indicating some great interior convulsion! And when he couldn't find them, and came to us to point them out, we pretended to see them plainly enough, told him his eyes were getting weak, and he believed every word of it, and has taken to wearing spectacles from that day."

"Well, they are becoming, at any rate, and he *is* short-sighted," said his sister, laughing.

"But, May, the best joke of all you never heard of. Promise me you won't tell any body about it."

"Of course not, except Jem."

"Oh, Jem knows all about it already: he was in it. Seems to me you're very dutiful, though, all at once. Getting engaged has improved you."

"We'll pray that it may last," said his sister, demurely.

"Which?—the improvement, or the engagement? How many people have you been engaged to before this, May?"

"About half a dozen, I think."

"I think so too. Don't treat Jem in that way. He's a friend of mine; and, after all, it's rather mortifying, you know, to a fellow."

"It can't very well be mortifying in this case, because nobody is to know of the engagement."

"I should like to know if they don't! Why, May, it is known all over town. Jem told of it himself. You see, you are rather pretty for a girl; and then there's that bit of money grandmother left you. On the whole, Jem's rather proud of it, and no wonder."

"Let's have the joke now, Tom; never mind the compliments."

"Never complimented any body in my life. What are you talking about? But about that little affair: you remember when we were experimenting with that nitrogen iodide in the laboratory, May?"

"Yes."

"You remember how explosive it was—safe as long as you kept it wet, but going off like nitro-glycerine and dynamite put together when it got dry?"

"It didn't go off unless some one touched it, Tom."

"I rather guess it did. If a fellow merely breathed a yard away from it, off it went. But that's of no consequence, for in this case somebody was expected to touch it."

"And that somebody was the professor, of course?"

"Of course. We made a lot of it, and put some on the handle of his door, some in his slippers, and some among his books; the rest we scattered round promiscuously. And, as good luck would have it, there came up a heavy thunder-shower that very afternoon. The professor came hurrying in; accidentally Jem and I met him on the stairs. We asked him to explain a difficult Latin passage. 'Oh, come right in—come right in, boys,' he says, in that benevolent way of his, and laid his hand on the door-knob. Bang! He jumped back as if he had been shot. 'Bless me, what's the matter?' he exclaimed, rubbing his nose. We didn't say any thing, but acted as if 'twas the most every-day occurrence. Well, we went in, and he pulled off his boots and started to get his slippers on. Bang! bang! Oh, May, you never saw the like of that jump! I believe he actually struck the ceiling. When he went to draw down the window-curtain, bang! again. When he took down the Latin book—it was a big and heavy one—bang! bang! bang! And so on with every thing he touched in the room, till I began to think the poor man would lose his wits. But the best of it was he never even suspected the cause. You know his wisdom lies in Latin and Greek; he doesn't know any thing about the sciences, though I believe he regards them with more awe than all the rest of the curriculum put together. Well, Jem just told him the thunder-shower had done it, that it had charged the room with electricity, and that he himself was a first-rate prime conductor. Jem expatiated learnedly for half an hour or more on the freaks of electricity; talked, you know, as if it was a usual thing to see rooms behaving in that fashion. And, if you'll believe me, the professor actually took it all in; is writing a paper now—if Jem's any authority on the subject—on these extraordinary natural phenomena."

Tom was in ecstasies of laughter by this time, and his sister was not slow in joining him.

"I was only afraid father would hear the noise, and stop the fun," gasped he at last, when he was able to speak. "Luckily he didn't come in till it was all over. I suggested to the professor that it might frighten mother if he was to mention it at the table, and he has been as mum about it as possible ever since. May, we can make him believe any thing—any thing whatever. If I told him there were ghosts in the house, he'd put out his light and sit watching for one the very next night."

"Why don't you show him a ghost, then?" queried May. "You know we read how they did it at the spiritualistic *séances*. I'll help you, and—"

"May!" cried Tom, jumping to his feet and dancing the Fisher's Hornpipe, "you're a trump! Just wait till Jem comes, and we'll have it all fixed. The professor never locks his door."

The two pairs of brown eyes looked at each other, and the respective owners of them burst out laughing, with the delightful unanimity of sentiment that occurs

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whenever any specially delectable piece of mischief is on foot.

Jem in no way dissented from the programme when he presented himself at night, but, on the contrary, added some timely suggestions. Tom considered his friend the quickest-witted mortal in the world, and a handsome fellow besides, which last was true enough. The young people soon found out that to copy the spirits successfully required more time and practice than they had counted upon, their ghostly advisers having failed to provide any short road to perfection. They were very patient, however, as people will be when engaged in something with which they have no manner of business, and in about a week had all their arrangements completed. Jem was to personate the ghost, Tom and his sister the audience, Tom having reluctantly yielded the post of distinction to Jem in consideration of his abilities.

But when it came to the point, the would-be ghost had a new proposal to make. "Let's tell him to do something or other," he said—"something that he would never think of himself—so that we shall know by that afterward whether he believes in it all or not."

This being hailed with acclamation, Tom suggested that the professor should be commanded to wear a cocked hat for a month; May, that he should make a daily pilgrimage to the top of Meeting-house Hill for that length of time. But Jem rejected both of these proposals; they would be liable to bring about discovery, and were not solemn enough to be accredited to a ghost.

"No; it must be something that will affect his whole life," he said—"something of so much consequence that he would think it likely the spirits would be charged to deliver it. We'll tell him he must go as a missionary; or, no, better still, let's tell him to marry somebody—May, here, for instance: he was always fond of her, and she is right in the same house."

"But, unluckily, May is not fond of him, but of you," observed Tom, wickedly.

"Well, he doesn't know that. He will think it's his duty to ask her. And when she says no, he will wait for some new spiritual light. You don't mind, do you, May?"

May did mind very much at first, but the two boys, aided by her own sense of fun, at last persuaded her into it. Perhaps the thought that it was sure to be discovered, and that the professor could not possibly carry his credulity to that point, helped to quiet her conscience. At any rate, she not only yielded, but, after the fashion of womenkind, was the one to originate the boldest part of the scheme.

"If I let you do that, boys, you must let me do what I want to."

Of course they both asked, "What is it?"

May refused to tell them. "You'll know soon enough," she said, with the mischievous sparkles coming and going in her brown eyes. "Only, if I don't say any thing to spoil your fun, you must promise not to spoil mine."

They both gave this promise very readily, finding a new interest in their project now that something not laid down in the plan might possibly happen.

In about a week every thing was ready, and the night set for the ghostly visitation. The professor, after putting out his light, was just getting into bed, still absorbed in the true interpretation of a difficult aorist construction, when the door creaked gently, seemed to swing open of itself, and presently, to his astonished eyes, a tall white figure presented itself, with a faint blue light encircling it, and a general misty uncertainty of outline that might be attributed to the shifting of some thick vapor, but to an uninitiated person was highly suggestive of uncorporeal spirits.

"Bless me! bless me!" said Professor Rensel, staring at this vision. "Who are you, my friend?"

"I am a disembodied spirit," replied a sepulchral voice.

"Dear, dear! what a pity! Can't—can't any thing be done for you?"

"Nothing. I am sent to you."

"Well, my friend, I am here"—after a pause, in which he seemed to imagine that the embarrassed spirit required some encouragement. His face shone with a mild benevolence. "I am here," he repeated. "What can I do for you?"

The blue light was shaken for a moment, as if the spectral visitor was disturbed by this tantalizing calmness, and even disposed to back out of the situation. Then the sepulchral voice replied, "You are commanded to marry May Kingsley."

"How? What? My good friend, you are talking like a—ghost!" exclaimed the astonished professor. A slight flush rose to his benevolent face.

"You are commanded to do it," repeated the spirit, monotonously.

"Bless me! bless me! It isn't possible."

"With us, all things are possible."

"Indeed?" said the professor, inquiringly. "Indeed?" he repeated, with as much deliberation as if he were addressing his classes. "Well, well. Let us consider that settled, and—and pass on to something else," with a certain mild dignity, as if he objected to discussing the lady they had named even with a ghost. He was evidently disposed to be hospitable, but somewhat at a loss how to entertain his visitor.

"You are not," said the professor, glancing hesitatingly at the suggestive blue light, "from the celestial regions, I am afraid?"

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"No."

"Dear me! dear me! what a pity! It must be very unpleasant. Yet if you could —if you could be persuaded to give me a little information about the other place— The truth is, I have a young friend who is going that way, I very much fear, and—"

Here something not laid down in the programme happened: the ghost incontinently bolted, blue light and all. Outside there was a suspicious scuffling and hurrying of feet that may have been produced spiritually, but was very like scampering humanity.

The professor deliberately got up and closed the door, murmuring to himself: "Very singular—very singular indeed!"

The same embarrassed flush still lingered on his face, but he got into bed and went calmly to sleep, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Meanwhile the ghost and the audience were holding a hurried consultation down stairs. All three were considerably taken aback.

"He knew us," said Jem, disconsolately. "He must have known us the very first thing. His young friend! That was cool, at any rate. Which of us does he mean, Tom—you or me?"

"Perhaps he didn't know himself which it was," said Tom.

As neither of them could settle this point, they at last adjourned to bed, each, perhaps, with a little sense of discomfiture under all his merriment.

The next morning, after watching Tom out of the house, May sat down to some feminine work of her own, to ponder over their ill-fated schemes, when in walked Professor Rensel, who was supposed to be safe in his class-room. May was aghast at the sight of him.

"Now for it!" she thought. "It is too bad I should have to take the scolding alone."

For it could not but be that even so mild a man would be angry at such an escapade. True, he could not know of her share in it, but then it was nearly as bad to have Tom made the scape-goat.

Miss May was an audacious young lady, but conscience made a coward of her, and she dared not look up or ask him why he was not at school.

"Why don't he begin?" she mused, still keeping her eyes on her work, as the tall figure shuffled uneasily round the room.

Presently the professor stopped in front of her and cleared his throat. "My dear Miss May, do you think you could ever bring yourself to marry me?"

The work fell out of her hands, and May sat fairly dumb with astonishment. The professor picked it up again for her.

"I am much older than yourself, Miss May," he went on, "and a very awkward man in action and speech, as you see. Not such a one as a young lady would ever be likely to fancy. Only—only I felt it my duty to ask you."

Then at last May found her tongue. "One would not like to marry any body who asked her merely from a sense of duty," she said, gravely, bending still lower over her work.

The same flush tinged the professor's face that had been there the night before.

"When I said duty, Miss May," he answered her, half reproachfully, "I only expressed the motive that had led me to speak to you this morning. I said nothing of my own feelings. Surely you must know what they are and have long been. You must know that a man like myself, who has neither youth nor attractions of any kind, would, under ordinary circumstances, feel debarred from the right to ask what a younger and happier man might ask. Such a one as myself can only stand aside, glad to be your humble friend, and to wish you all happiness to the end of your life."

There was something so pathetic in the sight of the gentle, learned professor addressing such words to the thoughtless girl whom others treated only as a companion in mischief, but whom his love elevated to a pedestal above common womanhood, that May might well have been restrained by it. His gray hairs and simple kindliness of life might have turned aside the jokes his credulity brought upon him. She wavered visibly for a moment; then the old mischievous sparkle came back to the eyes that were so demurely dropped.

"Yet you have altered your resolution this morning?" she said, inquiringly.

"As I told you, Miss May, because I believed that it was right for me to do so."

"Well," said May, after a long pause, in which she was scarcely able to keep down the roguish quivering of her lips, "if it is your duty to marry me, it must be mine to marry you."

"Then you consent?"

"Yes."

The tall ungainly man stooped, with no grace except that which love gave him, and lifted her hand to his lips. He seemed no more astonished at her answer than he had been at the spiritual visitation of the night before.

When the boys came home that night they found the professor radiant, Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley beaming approval upon their daughter, and May herself submitting to it all with the most curious expression ever seen upon any dimpled face—a compound of laughter and doubt, of fun and fear.

Whether she was pricked by her conscience, or only frightened by the boldness of the game she was carrying on, they could

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not tell. As soon as was possible they got her alone by herself and fell upon her, metaphorically speaking, with an avalanche of questions.

"May, did he really ask you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"But he acts as if you had said yes."

"Well, so I did."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Tom, perfectly confounded.

"You know I told you, boys, that if I helped you in your fun, you must let me have mine."

"But, May! May! do you know he has already asked father's consent? How will you get out of it? What a storm there will be!"

"She means," interrupted Jem, who had been studying her face attentively, "to let it go on till it comes to the finale, and then say no instead of yes when the minister puts the question."

Tom's face was a picture of mingled consternation and admiration. He had held a very low opinion of the courage of girls up to this point, but here was one who was willing to go beyond him.

"Did you think of this last night when you wouldn't tell us what you were going to do?" he asked, humbly.

"Of course I did."

"Only think, Tom, he believed every word of it, after all!" put in Jem.

They congratulated each other upon having perpetrated a successful joke; but still their countenances wore a very uneasy expression.

"After all, May, it's a little too bad," said Tom, hesitatingly. "The professor is a good sort of man, though he is such a muff. We won't spoil your fun, of course, but just look at it before you go ahead. Have you thought what an awful row there'll be when it comes out?"

"It's too late to stop now," said his sister, faintly, as if she were a little alarmed herself at the prospect.

"Well, anyway, May can marry me, and so get out of the scrape," said Jem, taking her hand consolingly.

"She'd better marry you right after the other ceremony, then," answered Tom, ominously. "You'd better take her out of father's reach as fast as possible. He thinks every thing of the old professor."

"Well, why shouldn't we?" asked Jem, with confidence.

"It's just as well now as any time. May won't mind."

And indeed May did look so relieved at this proposal, after the fashion of a child who has unexpectedly grasped a torpedo, that Tom began to think it would be the best way out of the scrape, after all.

To be sure, the pair would have nothing to live on after they were married, except his sister's little legacy, which would not go far, and, besides, which could not be claimed for a year, till the young lady was of age. But Tom had a cheerful confidence in Jem's abilities, and as great a confidence in his sister.

They finally settled it among themselves that this was to be the *dénouement*, and afterward tried to look as if every thing was all right.

One of them at least failed ignominiously. Tom was attacked with fits of self-reproach every time he chanced to meet the professor's eye, and whenever the good unconscious man showed him any trifling kindness, would rush out of the house as if he were a convicted criminal. This went on for a few months, Tom growing more and more conscience-stricken, May more and more silent and timid, till at last the powers that be were moved to set the wedding day.

They all felt a kind of relief at this. The joke which had seemed so ludicrous at first had grown into a species of nightmare, which bestrode them all mercilessly. May submitted to the wedding preparations with a quietness very unlike her. She avoided solitary interviews with the professor; but as he had far too great a reverence for her to seek them, this conduct did not attract attention. There was much wondering and many comments among the gossips of the village over this singular and apparently unsuitable engagement; but Miss May had always had a reputation for doing unexpected things, so at last the wondering settled down into acquiescence.

By the morning of the wedding day both Jem and Tom were beginning to recognize the serious aspect of the drama to be enacted, and were not a little nervous on entering the church. In their trepidation they nearly forgot to provide themselves with white gloves, if there had not come a timely reminder from May. The service commenced—went on without interruption to the place where the decisive question was put. Jem and Tom listened in the utmost excitement to the professor's response; and then the question came to May, "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?"

Jem was just rising from his seat in anticipation of the impending scene, when her answer came, in a low, clear voice that could be heard distinctly in all parts of the church: "Yes."

The two boys were horror-struck. Was it possible she knew what she was doing? Was she overpowered by fright?

Whether she was or not, they certainly were; for, in spite of a frantic impulse to cry out and proclaim the mistake, the decorum of the place kept them still till the ceremony was over. Then they rushed to her side, heedless of order or conventionalities.

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"May! May!" whispered Tom, catching her hand in his excitement, "are you crazy? Do you know that you are married to him?"

The color in her face deepened as in a late sunset sky.

"Yes, I know it," she answered, quietly, laying her other hand upon her husband's arm; and then lifting her beautiful flushed face to her brother, "and I love him."

Perhaps two more discomfited young men never stole out of church than were Jem and Tom as they slipped away unnoticed among the crowd of people. The former, indeed, was savage, and declared that he would never forgive her.

But Tom, when he saw his sister's face leaning out of the carriage for the last time before they drove away, was moved to kiss her in a grim, uncompromising sort of way; and seeing the penitent tears gathering in her brown eyes, to mutter to himself: "It was our fault, after all. We acted as if we were sure she hadn't got any heart, and no wonder she was ashamed to show it."

As for Jem, he finally retracted his heroic resolves, and consented to a most amicable truce between himself and Mrs. Professor Rensel after her return; but the two young men were never quite sure whether the professor believed in that ghost or not.

YOUNG MRS. JARDINE.

CHAPTER IV.

"MARRY in haste, and repent at leisure," was a saying Roderick had often quoted to his mother when she urged him to that rash proceeding, and had instanced sagely the extreme imprudence of certain young fellows of his acquaintance, who, seeing a pretty face in a ball-room, had run after it, hunted it down—only too easily!—caught it, married it, and woke up to find it a mere pretty face, no more.

"An Elle-maid, mother," he had said, laughing, one day. "I don't want to marry an Elle-maid."

"What's that?"

"A young lady something like a tin jelly mould—only to be viewed on the outside. Now I would like a whole woman for my wife, including brains and a heart; and if I could get her, I would serve for her, like Jacob, for even seven years."

"Seven years? Nonsense! It was only seven weeks from the day I first met your dear father till the day he married me."

"Was it, mother?" Roderick had answered, briefly, and dropped the conversation.

Festina lente is a most true aphorism; and yet, like most aphorisms, it has its reverse side. Fate now and then throws into a few days—a few hours—the history and experience of years.

From that auspicious morning when he had discovered himself to his Swiss "cousins," as he persisted in calling them, there was scarcely a day in which Roderick did not see them—at their own home or elsewhere. For the dear little town opened its arms at once to the handsome and courteous young Englishman, the friend of M. Reynier, the new-found kinsman of Madame Jardine. He was invited every where—to pleasant family dinners, homely as elegant, and never later than one o'clock; to social evenings, beginning at six, and ending at half past nine, after which—felicity!—he often used the right of cousinship to walk with Madame Jardine and her daughter through the silent streets and by the placid lake-side, home.

It was a kind of society the very opposite pole of that at Richerden. Nobody was rich, and almost every body was more or less well educated. Consequently refinement and cultivation were every thing—wealth was nothing. Roderick sometimes thought with no small amusement how ignorant every body was of his own "well-off" condition, and how little it would have advantaged him here, at least with the families he liked best, such as M. Reynier's, who had been *savants* for generations, and Madame Jardine's, who said, calmly, "We are poor; we have always been poor; but we do not mind it. Our poverty has never lost us one real friend, nor made us a single enemy worth fearing."

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