

of Danvers Heights—to be accused of cutting paltry pages from a book—a volume of costume plates!

He was convincing in his anger and amazement. They apologized to him finally. The cutting had been so neatly done, they said, that they had only just discovered it. He and the young actress who sometimes sat next to him were the only persons who had drawn out the book in six months. They were sorry and grieved to have put him to such inconvenience, but—

"She's just come in," whispered the boy at the door. Hezekiah drew a long breath. Still dazed by the revelation of her profession, he did not grasp the uglier significance of the librarian's summons for her.

She came into the little room in another minute. She looked at her neighbor of the library table, and she blushed. Before that she had been quite pale. In the sudden clarification which shock and anger had given his senses, he saw her in a new light. Her trailing gown seemed pitiful and tawdry; her picture hat, her long gloves, all her little fragilities of attire, were poor and miserable. Of course she was an actress! How had he failed to see it so long? But when he essayed to turn contemptuously away, he found himself gripped by pity and a yearning to protect her.

The head librarian began his speech. Millicent's eyes were covered by her heavy, fringed lids. She was drawing her breath very slowly. Her tightly closed lips were pale. Her little hands were clenched. Was it possible her gloves had always been so worn and shabby? She listened to the accusation against herself without looking up. Seeing her so friendless, so hunted, so hurt, Winslow forgot all his past and all his future in the rushing desire to serve her.

"Gentlemen," he interrupted sharply. "I should not have let this thing go so far. I never supposed that this—this young lady—would be subjected to this. I can't let it go on. It was I who cut out the plates!"

The frail little figure in the pongee frock shuddered. There was a moment's silence, while Mr. Brown looked dubiously at his assistants. Then through the pale lips of the porcelain-pretty girl there came some words so low that they had to lean toward her to hear them.

"I don't know why he—this gentleman—says this. I cut the plates myself. I mounted them and framed them and sold them."

"She is overwrought," explained Winslow hotly and hoarsely. "She does not realize what she is saying. I and only I——"

"If you don't believe me," cried the girl miserably, "when I tell you I'm a thief, go to the places where I sold the things. He doesn't know them! I lost my engagement early in the spring. I have been sick, in the hospital. I didn't get another. And I had less and less money, and I got hungry. A library—it wasn't like a person. And he has nothing to do with it!"

Then at last she raised her eyes to his defiantly, honestly, and with a strange, stabbing look of homage and abasement.

"At any rate," he said heavily, to the men standing stricken silent about them, "I can reimburse the library for the loss, if it will not prosecute Miss Morrice."

Mr. Brown waved his hand in repudiation of the idea of prosecution. The room was somehow cleared swiftly of all but the two, and across its emptiness Miss Morrice looked at Hezekiah Winslow.

"Oh," she cried, "why are you good to me? I am not a bad girl—I never was before. But I was so tired—and why are you so good to me?"

There was a great tenderness and pity in Hezekiah's heart, and a great warmth, too. The bird with a broken wing, to be cherished, to be made whole again—this was suddenly dearer to him than the far-darting thing whose flights he had not dared hope to follow.

"Don't you know why I am so good to you, as you call it?" he said brokenly. "Don't you know? Then you must let me teach you! Ah, my dear, my dear, if you must cry, cry here—here in my arms!"

Katherine Hoffman.

A Romance of Old Books.

I.

YOUNG Trentham, pursuing Tom Paine pamphlets, lighted on Ellser's shop. It was a summer afternoon, and the cavernous basement looked cool, with the dark masses of books piled about. The proprietor smoked a pipe by the door while his daughter Katrina dusted some rarities in the corner case.

"Baine? We got him," said Ellser to Trentham, and immediately he could be heard wheezing over the pamphlets in the rear room.

Trentham caught Katrina's neighborly blue eyes. He mentally compared her

among the books to *Marguerite* transported to *Faust's* library, and he was so satisfied with himself for thinking of the comparison that he smiled at her cordially. Katrina giggled, and poked her yellow head into the cupboard, where she could blush as much as she pleased. She was a pretty little girl of twenty years—a child in the estimation of the venerable Trentham, who was twenty-five.

Trentham strolled in the next day, searching for a copy of Arbuthnot's "Lewis Baboon Turned Honest." The title visibly staggered Katrina. She was alone in the shop.

"I saw it yesterday on that shelf," said Trentham, and they hunted for the tract in company. When her father returned they were still hunting, but old Ellser found "Lewis Baboon" readily enough.

Now, it was part of Philip Trentham's nature to try to make all breathing creatures fond of him—men, women, dogs, horses. He could no more prevent this unconscious effort than he could help being tall and dark and sensitive and clever. His visits to the book-store were very frequent that summer. He explained to Mr. Ellser that it was a lonely season for him. Often he would appear with black care perched ostentatiously on his shoulder, and then he would puff at Ellser's villainous, oily tobacco and read speechlessly for hours behind the furthest-most counter. Possibly the following day he would be overflowing with good spirits, and nosing out funny German poetry for Katrina, which they would set at once to impromptu music.

After one of these occasions Katrina found a square blue envelope on the floor. It was addressed to Trentham in an unmistakably fashionable and feminine hand, and the monogram on the back was "A.G." Katrina was ashamed of her unladylike wonder about A. G.

Indeed, both of the Ellsers were exceptionally well-bred, and Trentham esteemed them highly. He put them in a story, and it was printed in the *Lamplight Monthly*. He did not, however, show the story to Katrina. For the purposes of fiction, he had been obliged to make her old enough to have a woman's heart, which was a manifest and laughable absurdity.

In the autumn Katrina met A. G. She knew, somehow, who the slender, bronze-haired lady was, even before she heard Trentham presenting her father to Miss Gordon.

"And here," continued Trentham, "is Katrina."

"How do you do?" said Miss Gordon warmly. "I have read about you, Katrina. What a dear old place! Phil, it is quite as characteristic as you wrote me."

She smiled at Ellser, who was bowing with prodigious and ancient ceremony. Katrina resented the smile vaguely. Miss Gordon's faintly-perfumed petticoats rustled along the bookcases.

"In this cupboard we keep our special treasures," said Trentham, pulling out a thin volume at random and declaiming from the title page. "For example: 'Daiphantus; or, the Passions of Love. Comical to Read, but Tragical to Act. Printed for William Cotton, London, 1604.' Eh, Agnes?"

"How attractive!" she murmured, somewhat mechanically.

"Ellser, you may send the 'Daiphantus' to Miss Gordon;" and Trentham wrote her address in Ellser's ledger.

"Now it's my turn to give presents," said she, peering at the shelf as if the transaction was a sort of game. "I choose the scarlet binding for you."

"Zimmerman on Solitude!" cried Trentham, with a queer chuckle. "Well, if there's anything in omens!"

Katrina decided that Miss Gordon did not care for books as Trentham and her father did.

II.

KATRINA's cheeks had become rather pallid with the winter; the indoor work was sunless and unfit for her. Ellser pinched her chin affectionately.

"The dead mother would not love to see you so white, *liebchen*," said he. "You go for a while to Aunt Ida by Long Island, yes?"

Katrina objected. She changed the subject by asking if Mr. Trentham was poor.

"I judge he is not rich," replied the bookseller.

"Miss Gordon is rich. Why are they not married?"

"I will ask her, will I?" he queried, grinning.

One rainy evening the young journalist called, and Katrina caught her breath at the glimpse of him. He was bending over a small valise which he was tugging into the shop, but she could see his face, and it was haggard and hopeless, like the face of one starving in sight of food.

"Hello!" said Trentham. "I've brought you a collection, Mr. Ellser."

"So? To sell it?"

"I want to give it to you, if you'll let

me. Just a notion of mine, and the books are mine, too. You see—well, I'm going to hide myself somewhere, and——" He broke off, leaning against a pyramid of tattered magazines.

"But you are sick!" protested the dealer.

Trentham snapped his fingers. "Non-sense! Never better in my life, honestly. Now, about my books."

"Why, it is a great kindness for you to give them. I take them only if I can send you the money they bring. Yes, that is the only way I take them, Mr. Trentham. For it must be you are in a money trouble."

The visitor's eyes met Katrina's for the first time, and he grasped her hand.

"I am not in the slightest money trouble," he insisted. "I have a fancy to leave my little library here, that's all."

Ellser was obstinate.

"Perhaps," began Katrina timidly, "if you give my father the name where you are going—my father will promise to keep it secret. Perhaps then he will take the books."

"Oh, well, there it is, if you promise." Trentham yielded impulsively, and scrawled an address on a corner of wrapping paper. Ellser carried the memorandum to a lamp, scanning it solemnly.

"Do not let him send me money for the books, Katrina," said Trentham to her. "I shall just have the nuisance of sending it back. Besides, I don't need money. I need—what I can't have."

"I wish I could help you to what you need," whispered the girl.

Trentham swallowed something in his throat. "God bless you!" he groaned. "Good-by, Mr. Ellser. I shall always remember you. Good-by!" and, shaking hands with both of them, he stumbled to the steps.

"Nova Scotia," Ellser spelled from the wrapping paper. "Poor fellow! We will sell the books for him, anyhow. He runs to Canada from a debt."

"No," sighed Katrina drearily; "I do not think so."

In the morning they made a catalogue of the contents of the valise. Katrina repeated the titles of the volumes while her father listed them. The list was to be reproduced on the copying press, and the copies mailed to their customers.

"Samuel Butler's 'Hudibras,'" read Katrina. "London, 1720."

"Earliest illustrated edition," grunted Ellser. "We make him twelve—fifteen dollars. Go on."

"Daiphantus; or, the Passions of

Love. Comical to Read, but Tragical'—oh!"

"What is it, then?"

The old German's memory was lax. Katrina did not jog it. Nor did she tell her father what it may mean when a lady returns a young man's presents.

The musty shop was particularly dark and gloomy that morning when Katrina sat down to address the envelopes for the book-circulars. She ruffled the pages of the ledger meditatively, and thought harder than she had ever thought in all her life before. Finally she addressed a single envelope, dropped it in the mail box, and concealed the rest of the circulars and stamps in her private drawer. Then she slipped a certain piece of wrapping paper between the leaves of the "Daiphantus." This much she would do and no more. Her lips trembled, for it was her first appeal to destiny.

Katrina wickedly misinformed her father that she had sent all of the advertisements, and because his patrons did not respond to them, Ellser grumbled for three days. But on the fourth day a slender, bronze-haired person alighted from a carriage in front of the basement, and Katrina fled like a frightened bird to the blackness of the rear room.

"Yes, it was Miss Gordon," said Mr. Ellser, when the girl returned. "The circular brought her. She asked for Trentham, but I revealed nothing, as I had promised."

"Did she buy books?"

"A few."

Who shall measure the fear in Katrina's heart as the blue eyes timorously searched the shelves? The "Daiphantus" was missing.

"You were right, father," said Katrina. "I shall go to Aunt Ida."

III.

So Katrina was not in the shop when Trentham arrived, some weeks later. Miss Gordon was with him, and they seemed to be extravagantly happy.

"Well, I was expecting to see you," asserted Mr. Ellser.

"It wasn't my fault," said Trentham. "But, you see, I received a letter which made it absolutely necessary for me to come back;" and he looked at Miss Gordon and laughed contentedly.

"We owe a great deal to you, Mr. Ellser," she added, blushing. "You saved us from being a perpetual, quarrelsome pair of fools, and we owe it all to you."

"To me?" echoed the store-keeper.

"That is, to one of your books," explained Trentham. "Agnes wouldn't have known where a fool had hidden himself, and wouldn't have rescued him from life-long idiocy, if she hadn't found—accidentally left in a book, you know—"

Miss Gordon implored silence with her forefinger.

"By the way, how's that pretty Katrina?" she asked.

"Oh, she is well," said Ellser. "I shall tell her that you are here again, Mr. Trentham, and she will be glad."

Edward Boltwood.

Cousin Louisa's Box.

I.

"If the box will only come in time!" exclaimed Laura. "Cousin Louisa wrote 'I am sending' three days ago, Ellen. Do you think it could have gone astray?"

"Oh, it is probably waiting in the hall till Cousin Louisa can remember to telephone for the expressman," said Ellen, laying the rug she had just been shaking. "We could wear our old muslins—"

"Oh, no!" Laura's answer was a wail of distress. "With two silk gowns coming! I wish I could see them!"

An outsider would not have known that Laura was blind until he discovered the lack of direction in the gentle blue eyes. She was very pretty, far prettier than her twin, though the two were curiously alike, having the same heavy auburn hair and delicate skins.

"Wasn't it sweet of Mrs. Warren to invite us?" Laura went on presently.

"Oh, I don't know. If she was going to ask her old neighbors at all, why not us?" Ellen was apt to ruffle up at her sister's gentle gratitude. "They always had us in the old days—and they're only a little richer."

"Well, but we are seven years older," Laura insisted, "and we're more than a little poorer, and I've become—well, I don't see how I can add much to the gaiety of a garden party!"

"That is absurd! Any one as pretty as you adds to anything," said Ellen impatiently.

"I am truly pretty still, Ellen?" The question had evidently been at Laura's lips for a long time, waiting for courage. "You don't say that to—comfort me?"

"Why, Laura, you are the prettiest woman I know! Your lovely red hair—and your eyes are so blue and nice: and you haven't any lines. I've got lots."

Laura drew a deep breath of relief.

"I am so glad! Giles said so, but then, of course, he felt sorry." Her twin winced, but she went on unconsciously: "I do hope Cousin Louisa has gone in for quiet things this year—we must be a credit to Giles. We'll keep our grandeur for a surprise. If the box would only come!"

Cousin Louisa's box was an institution that became yearly more exciting as her prosperity increased. Cotton linings had given place to silk, lace was no longer cut off, the coats were of a newer vintage, the blouses scarcely worn at all from the standpoint of the twins. The things fitted with almost no alterations; the only drawback was that with prosperity Cousin Louisa's taste showed a tendency to rashness. Big, splashing patterns sometimes brought dismay at the opening of the box, and last year a strawberry satin blouse had proved impossible in the same room with the two auburn heads.

The click of the gate made them both start, then a whistled call preceded heavy steps on the porch.

"Oh, it's only Giles," said Laura.

Ellen impulsively lifted her hands to the duster that bound her head, but dropped them again and went on rubbing up the furniture with frowning energy as Giles Warren pushed open the door. The seven years during which the old Warren place had stood closed seemed to have made little or no change in Giles. He was perhaps somewhat intensified—bulkier, handsomer, more emphatically masculine, his jokes a little worse, his kind heart even more thoughtful; but prosperity and experience had not modified the effect of simplicity and strength that Ellen called his "Newfoundland quality." Since he had come back, he had fallen into the old way of dropping in daily; only, instead of lumbering about after Ellen, he devoted himself to amusing Laura. At least, so it seemed to Ellen, and she abruptly effaced herself as often as possible.

Laura found her twin's temper somewhat uncertain these days, but bore with it very mildly and sweetly. People noticed that Laura's blindness had aged her twin more than it had herself. Perhaps Giles noticed it, too, for his greeting was a protest.

"Why do you wear that thing on your head, Ellen?"

"To keep the dust out," she answered, with a serenity that was really defiance.

"Well, for goodness' sake, take it off," commanded Giles, with the ease of old acquaintance. "What are you knitting,