SYMPATHY.

If we should be so quick of heart,
So keen of sight,
That we could feel each shadow's gloom,
Each blossom's blight,
The fairest of earth's blue-gold days
Would turn to night.

If we should grow so swift to feel
Each human pain
That for each aching human heart
Ours ached again,
Life were all weariness, and joy
Grown poor and vain.

Some sounds are lost in silence, though
We reverent hark;
Some sights are shut from anxious eyes
By pitying dark.
The limit of the soul's out-gift
Has finite mark.

—Grace Duffield Goodwin in Harper's Bazar.

Chronicles of Count Antonio

By Anthony Hope—Author of "A Prisoner of Zenda," Etc.

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CHAPTER III.

COUNT ANTONIO AND THE PRINCE OF MANTIVOGLIA.

I know of naught by which a man may better be judged than by his bearing in matters of love. What know I of love, say you?—I whose head is gray and shaven to boot! True, it is gray and it is shaven. But once it was brown and the tonsure came not there till I had lived 30 years and borne arms for 12. Then came death to one I loved and the tonsure to me. Therefore, O, ye proud young men and laughing girls, old Anselm knows of love, though his knowledge be only like the memory that a man has of a glorious red-gold sunset which his eyes saw a year ago; cold are the tints, gone the richness, sober and faint the picture. Yet it is something; he sees no more, but he has seen, and sometimes still I seem to see a face that I saw last in smiling death.

Now in the second year of Count Antonio's banishment, when the fierce anger of Duke Valentine was yet hot for the presumption shown by the count in the matter of Duke Paul's death, a messenger came privately to where the band lay hidden in the hills, bringing greeting to Antonio from the Prince of Mantivoglia, between whom and the duke there was great emnity. For in days gone by Ferinda had paid tribute to Mantivoglia, and this burden had been broken off only some 20 years, and the prince, learning that Antonio was at variance with Duke Valentine, perceived an opportunity and sent to Antonio, praying him very courteously to visit Mantivoglia and be his guest. Antonio, who knew the prince well, sent him thanks, and, having made dispositions for the safety of his company, and set Tommasino in charge of it, himself rode to Mantivoglia. Here he was received with great state, and the prince lodged him in his palace and prepared a banquet for him, and set him on the right hand of the princess, who was a very fair lady, learned, and of excellent wit.

This princess was very gracious to the count, and spared no effort to give him pleasure, and she asked him very many things concerning the Lady Lucia, saying at last: "Is she fairer than I, my lord?" And Antonio answered, with a laugh, "The morn is not fairer than the sun, nor the sun than the morn; yet they are different." And the princess laughed also, saying merrily: "Well parried, my lord!" And she rose and went with the prince and Antonio into the garden. Then the prince opened to Antonio what was in his mind, saying: "Take what command you will in my service, and come with me against Forniola; and when we have brought Valentine to his knees, I will take what was my father's, and should be mine, and you shall wring from him your pardon and the hand of your lady." And the princess also entreated him. But Antonio answered: "I cannot do it. If your highness rides to Forniola, it is likely enough that I also may ride thither; but I shall ride to put my sword at the service of the duke. For although he is not my friend, yet his enemies are mine." And from this they could not turn him. Then the prince praised him, saying: "I love you more for denying me, Antonio, and when I send word of my coming to Valentine I will tell him also of what you have done. And if we meet by the walls of Forniola, we will fight like men; and after that you shall come again to Mantivoglia," and he drank wine with Antonio and so bade him godspeed. And the princess, when her husband was gone, looked at the count and said: "Valentine will not give her to you. Why will not you take her?" But Antonio answered: "The price is too high."

"I would not have a man who thought any price too high," cried the princess.

"Then your highness would mate with a rogue?" asked Count Antonio, smiling.

"If he were one for my sake, only," said she, fixing her eyes on his face and sighing lightly, as ladies sigh when they would tell something and yet not too much nor in words that can be repeated. But Antonio kissed her hand and took leave of her, and with another sigh she watched him go.

But when the middle of the next month came the Prince of Mantivoglia gathered an army of 3000 men, of whom 1700 were mounted, and crossed the frontier, directing his march toward Forniola, by way of the base of Mount Agnino and the road to the village of Rilano. And the duke, hearing of his approach, mustered his guards to the number of 850 men, and armed besides hard upon 2000 of the townsmen and apprentices, taking an oath of them that they would serve him loyally; for he feared and distrusted them, and of the whole force 1100 had horses. And Count Antonio lay still in the mountains, and did not offer to come to the duke's aid.

"Will you not pray his leave to come and fight for him?" asked Tommasino.

"He will love to beat the prince without my aid, if he can," said Antonio. "Heaven forbid that I should seem to snatch at glory and make a chance for myself from his necessity."

So he abode two days where he was, and then came a shepherd, who said:

"My lord, the duke has marched out of the city, and lay last night at Rilano, and is today stretched across the road that leads from the spurs of Agnino to Rilano, his right wing resting on the river. There he waits the approach of the prince, and they say that at daybreak tomorrow the prince will attack."

Antonio collected all his men to the number of threescore and five. All the night they rode softly, husbanding their strength and sparing their horses, and an hour before the break of day they passed through the outskirts of Rilano and halted a mile beyond the village, seeing the fires of the duke's bivouacs stretched across the road in front of them, and beyond there were other fires, where the Prince of Mantivoglia lay encamped.

Then Count Antonio took counsel with Tommasino, and they led the band very secretly across the rear of the duke's camp till they came to the river. Now, there was a mill on the river, and by the mill a great covered barn, where the sacks of corn stood; and Antonio, having roused the miller, told him that he came to aid the duke, and not to fight against him, and posted his men in this great barn, so that they were behind the right wing of the duke's army, and were hidden from sight.

At 4 in the morning the battle was joined, Antonio standing with Tommasino and watching it from the mill. Now, Duke Valentine had placed his own guards on either wing, and the townsmen in the center, but the prince had posted the flower of his troops in the center; and he rode there himself, surrounded by many lords and gentlemen; and with great valor and impetuosity he flung himself against the townsmen, recking little of how he fared on either wing. This careless haste did not pass unnoticed by the duke, who was a cool man and wore a good head; and he said to Lorenzo, one of his lords who was with him, "If we win on right and left, it will not hurt us to lose in the middle."

For awhile, indeed, these stood bravely; but the prince's chivalry came at them in fierce pride and gallant scorn, and bore them down with the weight of armor and horses, the prince himself leading on a white charger, and with his own hand slaying Gluika, who was head of the city bands and a great champion among them. But when Antonio beheld the townsmen hard pressed and being ridden down by the Prince of Mantivoglia's knights, and saw that the duke would not aid them, he grew very hot and angry, and said to Tommasino: "These men have loved my house, Tommasino. It may be that I spoil his highness' plan, but are we to stand here while they perish?"

"A fig for his highness' plan!" said Tommasino, and Bena gave a cry of joy and leapt, unbidden, on his horse.

"Since you are up, Bena," said the count, "stay up and let the others mount. The duke's plan, if I read it aright, is crafttier than I love, and I do not choose to understand it."

Then, when the townsmen's line was giving way before the prince, and the apprentices, conceiving themselves to be shamefully deserted, were more of a mind to run away than to fight any more, suddenly Antonio rode forth from the mill. And he and his company came at full

gallop; but he himself was 10 yards ahead of Bena and Tommasino, for all that they raced after him. And he cried aloud: "To me, men at Forniola, to me, Antonio of Monte Velluto!" and they beheld him with utter astonishment and great joy. And his helmet was fallen from his head and his fair hair gleamed in the sun, and the light of battle played on his face. And the band followed him, and though they had, for the most part, no armor, yet such was the fury of their rush and such the mettle and strength of their horses that they made light of meeting the prince's knights in full tilt. And the townsmen cried "It is the count! To death after the count!" And Antonio raised the great sword that he carried, and rode at the marshal of the prince's palace, who was in the van of the fight; and he split helmet and head with a blow. Then he came to where the prince himself was, and the great sword was raised again, and the prince rode to meet him, saying, "If I do not die now, I shall not die today." But when Antonio saw the prince he brought his sword to his side and bowed, and turned aside and engaged the most skillful of the Mantivoglian knights. And he fought that day like a man mad, but he would not strike the Prince of Mantivoglia. And after awhile the prince ceased to seek him, and a flatterer said to the prince, "He is bold against us, but he fears you, my lord. But the prince said:

"Peace, fool. Go and fight." For he knew that not fear but friendship forbade Antonio to assail him. Yet by now the rout of the townsmen was stayed, and they were holding their own again in good heart and courage; while both on the right and on the left the duke pressed on and held the advantage. Then the Prince of Mantivoglia perceived that he was in a dangerous plight, for he was in peril of being worsted along his whole line, for his knights did no more than hold a doubtful balance against the townsmen and Antonio's company, while the duke and Lorenzo were victorious on either wing, and he knew that, if the duke got in the rear of him and lay between him and Mount Agnino, he would be sore put to it to find a means of retreat. Therefore, he left the center and rode to the left of his line and faced Duke Valentine himself. Yet slowly was he driven back, and he gave way sullenly, obstinately, and in good order, himself performing many gallant deeds and seeking to come to a conflict with the duke. But the duke, seeing that the day was likely to be his would not meet him and chose to expose his person to no more danger. "For," he said, "a soldier who is killed is a good soldier, but a chief who is killed, save for some great object, is a bad chief." And he bided his time and slowly pressed the prince back, seeking rather to win the battle than the praise of bravery. But when Count Antonio saw that all went well and that the enemy were in retreat, he halted his band, and at this they murmured, Bena daring to say: "My lord, we have had dinner, may we not have supper, also?" Antonio smiled at Bena, but would not listen.

"No," said he. "His highness has won the victory by his skill and cunning. I did but move to save my friends. It is enough. Shall I seek to rob him of his glory? For the ignorant folk, counting the arm more honorable than the head, will give me more glory than him, if I continue in the fight." And thus, not being willing to force his aid on a man who hated to receive it, he drew off his band; awhile he awaited, but when he saw that the prince was surely beaten and the duke held victory in his hand, he gave the word that they should return by the way they had come.

So Antonio's band turned and rode off from the field and they passed through Rilano. But they found the village desolate, for report had come from the field that the duke's line was broken and that in a short space the Prince of Mantivoglia would advance in triumph, and having sacked Rilano, would go against Forniola, where there were but a few old men and boys left to guard the walls against him. And one peasant whom they found hiding in the wood by the road said there was panic in the city and that many were escaping from it before the enemy should appear.

"It is moths since I saw Forniola," said Antonio, with a smile. "Let us ride there and reassure these timid folk. For my lord, the duke, has surely by now won the victory, and he will pursue the prince till he yields peace and abandons the tribute."

Now a great excitement arose in the band at these words, for although they had lost 10 men in the battle, and five more were disabled, yet were 40 stout and ready, and it was not likely that there was any force in Forniola that would oppose them.

Then Antonio bade Bena and Martolo ride on ahead, taking the best horses, and tell the people at Forniola that victory was with the duke and that his highness' servant Antonio, of Monte Velluto, was at hand to protect the city till his highness should return in triumph. And the two going ahead saw what amazed them, for a lady rode alone towards them on a palfrey; and though the merchants met her and spoke with her, yet she rode on. And when she came to the tree where Bena and Martolo were they sprang up and bared their heads, for she was the Lady Lucia, and her face was full of fear and eagerness as she said:

"No guard is kept today, even on helpless ladies. Is it true that my lord is near?"

"Yes, he is near," said Bena, kissing her hand. "See, there is the dust of his company on the road."

"Go, one of you, and say that I wait for him," she commanded; so Martolo rode on to carry the news further and Bena went to Antonio and said: "Heaven, my lord, sends fortune. The Lady Lucia has escaped from the city and awaits you under yonder tree."

Then Antonio rode alone to the tree where Lucia was; and because he had not seen her for many months, he leaped down from his horse and came running to her, and, kneeling, kissed her hand; but she, who stood now by her palfrey's side, flung her arms about his neck and fell with tears and laughter into his arms, saying: "Antonio, Antonio! Heaven is with us, Antonio."

"Yes," said he. "For his highness has won the day."

"Have we not won the day also?" said she, reaching up and laying her hands upon his shoulders.

"Heart of my heart," said he softly, as he looked in her eyes.

"The cage is opened, and, Antonio, the bird is free," she whispered, and her eyes danced and her cheek went red. "Lift me to my saddle, Antonio."

The count obeyed her, and himself mounted, and she said:

"We can reach the frontier in three hours, and there—there, Antonio, none fears the duke's wrath." And Antonio knew what she would say save that she would not speak it bluntly—that there they could find a priest to marry them. And his face was pale as he smiled at her. Then he laid his hand on her bride and turned her palfrey's head toward Forniola. Her eyes darted a swift question at him, and she cried low, "Thither, Antonio!"

Then he answered her, bending still his look on her.

"Alas, I am no learned man, nor a doctor skilled in matters of casuistry and nice distinctions. I can do but what the blood that is in me tells me a gentleman should do. Today, sweetheart—ah, will you not hide your face from me, sweetheart, that my words may not die in my mouth?—today our lord the duke fights against the enemies of our city, holding for us in hard battle the liberty that we have won, and bearing the banner of Forniola high to heaven in victory."

She listened with strained, frightened face, and the horses moved at a walk toward Forniola. And she laid her hand on his arms, saying again: "Antonio!"

"And I have fought with my lord today, and I would be at his side now except that I do his pleasure better by leaving him to triumph alone. But my hand has been with him today, and my heart is with him today. Tell me, sweetheart, if I rode forth to war and left you alone, would you do aught against me till I returned?"

And then for many minutes neither spoke; and Count Antonio kissed her lips and she his; and they promised with the eyes what they needed not to promise with the tongue. And the Lady Lucia went alone on her way to Forniola.

When Antonio had ridden two or three miles and came where he had left the band, he could see none of them. And a peasant came running to him in great fright and said: "My lord, your men are gone again to aid the duke, for the prince has done great deeds and turned the fight, and it is again very doubtful; and my Lord Tommasino bade me say that he knew your mind and was gone to fight for Forniola." Then Antonio set his horse to a gallop and passed through Rilano at a furious speed and rode on toward Agnino, and it was now afternoon; and presently he saw the armies, but they seemed to be still over against one another. And, riding on, he met Bena, who was coming to see him. And Bena said: "The prince and his knights have fought like devils, my lord, and the townsmen grew fearful again when you were gone; and we, coming back, have fought again; but now a truce has sounded, and the prince and the duke are meeting in conference between

THE PRINCESS OF MANTIVOGLIA AND ANTONIO IN THE GARDEN.

the armies. Yet they say that no peace will be made, for the prince, taking heart from his sudden success, though he is willing to abandon the tribute, asks something in return which the duke will not grant. Yet perhaps he has granted it by now, for his men are weary."

But Antonio, thinking nothing of his own safety, rode full into the ranks of the duke's guard, saying: "Where does my lord talk with the prince?" And they showed him where the place was, for the prince and duke sat alone under a tree between the two arrays. And the duke looked harsh and resolute, while the prince was very courteously entreating him.

"Indeed," said he, "so doubtful has the day been, my lord, that I might well refuse to abandon the tribute, and try again tomorrow the issue of the fight. But, since so many brave men have fallen on both sides, I am willing to abandon it, asking only of you such favor as would be conceded to a simple gentleman asking of his friend. And yet you will not grant it me, and thus bring peace between us and our peoples."

Duke Valentine frowned and bit his lip, and the prince rose from where he had been seated and lifted his hand to the sky and said: "So be it, my lord. On your head lies the blame. For tomorrow I will attack again, and as God lives, I will not rest till the neck of the city of Forniola is under my feet or my head rolls from my shoulders by your sword."

Then Duke Valentine paced up and down, pondering deeply, for he was a man that hated to yield aught, and beyond all else hated what the Prince of Mantivoglia asked of him. Yet he feared greatly to refuse, for the townsmen had no stomach for another fight, and had threatened to march home if he would not make peace with the prince. Therefore he turned to the prince and, frowning heavily, was about to say: "Since it must be so, so let it be," when suddenly Count Antonio rode up and leaped from his horse, crying: "Yield nothing, my lord, yield nothing. For if you will tell me what to do and suffer me to be your hand, we will drive the enemy over our borders with great loss."

Then the Prince of Mantivoglia fell to laughing, and he came to Antonio and put his arm about his neck, saying:

"Peace, peace! thou foolish man!"

And Antonio saluted him with all deference, but he answered:

"I must give good counsel to my lord, the duke." And he turned to the duke again, saying, "Yield nothing to the prince, my lord."

Duke Valentine's lips curved in his slow smile as he looked at Antonio. "Is that indeed your counsel? And will you swear, Antonio, to give me your aid against the prince so long as the war lasts, if I follow it?"

"Truly I swear it," cried Antonio. "Yet what need is there of an oath? Am I not your highness' servant, bound to obey without an oath?"

"Nay, but you do not tell him—" began the prince angrily.

"Well, I will tell him," said Duke Valentine. "This prince, Antonio, has consented to a peace, and to abandon all claim to tribute from our city on one condition—which is, that I, the duke, shall do at his demand what of my own free and sovereign will I would not do."

"His demand is not fitting nor warranted by his power," said Antonio; but in spite of his words the Prince of Mantivoglia passed his arm through his and laughed ruefully, whispering, "Peace, man, peace."

"And thus I, the duke, having bowed my will to his, shall return to Forniola not beaten indeed, yet half-beaten and cowed by the power of Mantivoglia."

"It shall not be, my lord," cried Count Antonio.

"Yet, my lord duke, you do not tell him what the condition is," said the prince.

"Why, it is nothing else than that I should pardon you and suffer you to wed the Lady Lucia," said Duke Valentine.

Then Count Antonio loosed himself from the arm of the prince and bent and kissed the prince's hand; but he said:

"Is this thing to come twice on a man in one day? For it is but an hour or more than I parted from the lady of whom you speak, and if her eyes could not move me what else shall move me?" And he told them briefly of his meeting with the Lady Lucia. And Duke Valentine was wroth with the shame that a generous act rouses in a heart that knows no generosity; and the prince was yet more wroth, and he said to Duke Valentine:

"Were there any honor in you, my lord, you would not heed my prayers to pardon him."

At this the duke's face grew very dark, and he cried angrily:

"Get back to your own line, my lord, or the truce shall not save you." And he turned to Antonio and said: "Three hours do I give you to get hence before I pursue."

Antonio bowed low to him and to the prince, and they three parted, the two princes in bitter wrath and set again on fighting to the end, the one because he was ashamed and yet obstinate, the other for scorn of a rancour that found no place in himself. But Count Antonio went back to his company and drew it some little way off from both armies.

Now the night fell dark again and foggy, even as the night before; and none in either army dared to move, and even the sentries could see no more than a few yards before them. But Antonio's men, being accustomed to ride in the dark, and to find their way through mists, both in plain and hill, could see more clearly; and Antonio divided them into two parties, himself leading one and giving the other into Tommasino's charge. And having very securely tethered their horses, they set forth, crawling on their bellies through the grass. And Antonio, with his party, made for the camp of the prince, while Tommasino and his party, directed their way toward the duke's bivouacs. And they saw the fires very dimly through the mist, and both parties passed the sentries unobserved, and made their way to the center of the camps. Then, on the stroke of midnight, a strange stir arose in both the camps. Nothing could be seen, by reason of the darkness and the mist; but suddenly cries arose, and men ran to and fro, and a cry went up from the duke's camp: "They are behind us! They are behind us! We are surrounded!" And in the prince's camp, also was great fear; for from behind them, toward where the spurs of Mount Agnino began, there came shouts of: "At them, at them, charge!" And the prince's officers, perceiving the cries to be from men of Forniola (and this they knew by reason of certain differences in the phrasing of words) conceived that the duke had got behind them, and was lying across their way of retreat. And the duke, hearing the shouts in his own camp, ran out from his tent, and he was met by hundreds of the townsmen, who cried: "My lord, we are surrounded!" For Antonio's men had gone to the townsmen and showed them how they might escape more fighting, and the townsmen were nothing loth; and they insisted with the duke that a body of men on horseback had passed behind them. So the duke sent out scouts, who could see nothing of the hosemen. But then the townsmen cried, some being in the secret, others not: "Then they have ridden past us and are making for Forniola. And they will do heaven knows what there. Lead us after them, my lord!" And the duke was very angry, but he was also greatly afraid, for he perceived that there was a stir also in the prince's camp, and heard shouts from there, but could not distinguished what was said. And while he considered what to do, the townsmen formed their ranks and sent him word that they were for Forniola; and when he threatened them with his guard they rejoined that one death was as good as another; and the duke gnawed his nails and went pale with rage. But Count Antonio's men, seeing how well the plan had sped, crept again out from the camp and returned to where they had tethered their horses and mounted, each taking a spare horse. And before they had been there long they heard trumpets sound in the duke's camp, and the camp was struck, and the duke and all his force began to retreat on Rilano, throwing out many scouts and moving very cautiously in the darkness and mist. And all night long they marched across the plain, covering the space of 18 miles, and just before the break of day they came to the city. But the Prince of Mantivoglia had been no less bewildered, for when he sent out men to see what the cries behind the camp meant, he found no man, but he still heard scattered cries among the rising ground, where the hills begin. And he in his turn saw a stir in the camp opposite to him. And, being an impetuous prince, as he had shown both in evil and in good that day, he snatched up his sword, swearing that he would find the truth of the matter, and bidding his officers await his return, and not be drawn from their position before he came again to them, and taking some of his younger knights and a few more, he passed out of his camp and paused for a moment, bidding those with him spread themselves out in a thin line, in order the better to reconnoiter and that, if some fell into an ambuscade, others might survive to carry the news back to the camp. And he, having given his order, himself stood resting on his sword. And in an instant before he could so much as lift the point of his sword from the ground, silent blurred shapes came from the mist and were in front and behind and round them, and they looked so strange that he raised his hand to cross himself, but then a scarf was thrown over his mouth and he was seized by eight strong hands and held so that he could not struggle, and neither could he cry out by reason of the scarf across his mouth. And they that held him began to run rapidly, and he was carried out of the camp without the knowledge of any of those who were with him and who, missing their leader, fell presently into great consternation. And when the prince was nowhere to be found they lost heart and began to fall back toward their own borders, skirting the base of Agnino, and their retreat grew quicker, and at last when morning came they were near the border, but the fog still wrapped all the plain in obscurity, and, robbed of their leader, they dared attempt nothing.

Now the Prince of Mantivoglia, whom his army sought thus in fear and bewilderment, was carried very quickly up to the high ground, where the rocks grew steep and close and the way led to the peak of Agnino. And as he was borne along, some one bound his hands and his feet, and still he was carried up till at last he found himself laid down gently on the ground. So he abode another hour, and then he heard a step behind him, and a man came, but whence he could not see, and the man stooped and loosed the scarf from his mouth and cut his bonds and he sat up, uttering a cry of wonder. For Count Antonio stood before him, his sword sheathed by his side. And he said to the Prince of Mantivoglia:

"Do to me what you will, my lord. If you will strike me as I stand, strike. Or, if you will do me the honor to cross swords, my sword is ready. Or, my lord, if you will depart in peace and in my great love and reverence, I will give thanks to heaven and to a noble prince."

"Antonio, what does this mean?" cried the prince, divided between anger and wonder.

Then Antonio told him all that he had done, how the duke was gone back with his army to Forniola, and how the prince's army had retreated toward the borders of Mantivoglia; for of all this his men had informed him, and he ended with saying:

"For since it seemed that I was to be the most unworthy cause of more fighting between two great princes, it came into my head that such a thing should not be. And I rejoice that now it will not, for the townsmen will not march out again this year at least, and your highness will scarce sit down before Forniola with the season now far gone."

"So I am balked?" cried the prince, and he rose to his feet. "And this trick is played me by a friend!"

"I am of Forniola," said Antonio, flushing red. "And while there was war I might in all honor have played another trick and carried you not hither, but to Forniola."

"I care not," said the prince, angrily. "It was a trick, and no fair fighting."

"Be it as you will, my lord," said Antonio. "A man's own conscience is his only judge. Will you draw your sword, my lord?"

But the prince was very angry, and he answered roughly:

"I will not fight with you, and I will not speak more with you. I will go."

"I will lead your highness to your horse," said Antonio.

Then he led him some hundreds of paces down the hill, and they came where a fine horse stood ready saddled.

"And where is your horse?" asked the prince suddenly.

"I have no horse, my lord," said Antonio. "My men and all my horses have ridden back to our hiding place in the hills. I am alone here, for I thought that your highness would kill me and I should need no horse."

"How, then, will you escape the scouting parties?"

"I fear I shall not escape them, my lord," said Antonio, smiling again.

"And if they take you?"

"Of a surety I shall be hanged," said Count Antonio.

The Prince of Mantivoglia gathered his brow into a heavy frown, but the corners of his lips twitched, and he did not look at Antonio. And thus they rested a few moments till suddenly the prince, unable to hold himself longer, burst in a great and merry peal of laughter, and he raised his fist and shook it at Antonio, crying:

"A scurvy trick, Antonio! By my faith, a scurvier trick by far than that other of yours. Art thou not ashamed, man? Ah, you cast down your eyes! You dare not look at me, Antonio."

"Indeed, I have nought to say for this last trick, my lord," said Antonio, laughing also.

"Indeed, I must carry this knave with me," cried the prince. "Faugh, the traitor. Get up behind me, traitor. Clasp me by the waist, knave! Closer, knave! Ah, Antonio, I know not in what mood heaven was when you were made. I would I had the heart to leave you to your hanging! For what a story will my princess make of this! I shall be the best derided man in all Mantivoglia."

But the Princess of Mantivoglia heard all that had passed with great mirth, and made many jests upon her husband and again, lest the prince should take her jesting in evil part, more upon Duke Valentine. But concerning Count Antonio and the Lady Lucia she did not jest. Yet one day chancing to be alone with Count Antonio—for he stayed many days at the court of Mantivoglia, and was treated with great honor—she said to him with a smile and half-raised eyelids:

"Had I been a man, my Lord Antonio, I would not have returned alone from the gates of Forniola. In truth, your lady needs patience for her virtue, Count Antonio!"

"I trust, then, that heaven sends it to her, madam," said Antonio.

She answered nothing for a moment; then she drew near to him and stood before him, regarding his face, and she sighed, "Heigho!" And again, "Heigho!" and dropped her eyes, and raised them again to his face, and at last she said:

"To some faithfulness is easy. I give no great praise to the Lady Lucia." And when she had said this she turned and left him, and was but little more in his company so long as he stayed at Mantivoglia. And she spoke no more of the Lady Lucia. But when he was mounting, after bidding her farewell, she gave him a white rose from her bosom, saying carelessly:

"Your color, my lord, and the best. Yet God made the other roses also."

"All that he made he loves, and in all there is good," said Antonio, and he bowed very low, and, having kissed her hand, took the rose; and he looked into her eyes and smiled, saying: "Heaven give peace where it has given wit and beauty," and so he rode away to join his company in the hills. And the Princess of Mantivoglia, having watched till he was out of sight, went into dinner and was merrier than ever she had shown herself before, so that they said: "She feared Antonio, and is glad that he is gone." Yet that night, while her husband slept, she wept.

(To be continued.)

TO HER.

Wouldst thou praise her as a rose,
Honeyed and fair?
Beware!
Beware!
Sweetest flower in garden close
Just buds, and goes.

Wouldst thou praise her as a star
In heaven's blue,
And sue
Morning and night? Too far
Such starlights are.

—Selwyn Image, in N. Y. Tribune.

A Fortune in a Kiss

By Otto Greenhood.

PART I—THE KISS.

It was during the alleged halcyon period when the bulls and bears of California street yet alternately enriched and impoverished the sanguine speculators in Comstock mining shares, that the hero of this romance in actual life (in which a sense of delicacy dictates the substitution of fictitious names for the real), at the age of 20 years, returned to his home in San Francisco, after a sojourn of 2½ years in Europe. His home was, at that time, in one of the elegant mansions on Nob Hill; and from his earliest boyhood his every wish was most generously catered to before he expressed it, figuratively speaking.

He had indeed been a pampered, gilded youth; his one year's career at Heidelberg university, and his subsequent 18 months' association with the flower of the aristocratic youth in France, Germany, Austria, Italy and London, with more than ample means to gratify his limitless desire, were not conducive to curb his extravagant spirit.

Among the retinue of servants in the household of young Mr. Hero's parents was Annie Green, a young chambermaid from the North of Ireland, with a ravishingly beautiful face, made radiant by a brilliant complexion that would have been the envy of an Olympian goddess. Her figure was suggestive of the form of Venus, and her voice was as enchanting as that of the siren of the sea, whose melodious tones, according to tradition, lured all to death who listened to them. Annie, though, was unconscious of the magnificent attributes with which bountiful nature had endowed her; and a more modest and diffident young woman than she cannot be pictured.

One morning, six months later, Annie, in conventional chambermaid fashion, was coming from an upper floor of the mansion, carrying a pail in her right hand, a towel carelessly tossed over her faultlessly shaped forearm, and the tapering fingers of her No. 5½ left hand encircled the handle of a broom—she practically was defenseless. Young Mr. Hero and she met face to face on the staircase, where a devilish impulse seized him to embrace and kiss the beautiful girl.

"Oh! how could you?" stammered the astonished domestic in a chiding tone, her face growing crimson with a blush of embarrassment.

Before the self-willed youth could make an apologetic reply, he heard a voice from upstairs:

"My son, I want to see you!"

It was young Mr. Hero's mother; and he began formulating an excuse that he was required down-town without delay. A subsequent and imperative command, however, at once ushered him into his mother's private sitting-room.

"Are you a gentleman?" asked Mrs. Hero, surveying her son with a glance full of reproach.

"You always said I was," replied the youth.

"I know," continued the lady; "but gentlemen do not make it a practice to kiss servants in the house."

"What! Do they kiss them outside of the house?" flippantly and interrogatively replied young Mr. Hero, essaying to divest his offense of its seriousness.

Mrs. Hero's indignation at her spoiled son's misconduct would not be mollified by his levity, and she then decreed to give poor innocent Annie her congé. At this unpleasant turn of affairs, young Mr. Hero gave evidence of his manliness and chivalrous nature, notwithstanding he was a spoiled boy. He pleaded strongly and eloquently for the retention of Annie in the household, on the truthful grounds that the pretty domestic had not given him the slightest encouragement for the commission of his indiscreet act, and that he solely was responsible for the theft of the kiss. But he pleaded to deaf ears; Annie's doom had been pronounced, and there was no appeal from aristocratic Mrs. Hero's judgment.

The youth was conscience-stricken over the outcome of his indulgence in stolen sweets; and on his way down town that morning he called at the residence of a friend, Mr. Bond Plutocrat, near his own home, where he related his matutinal adventure to Mr. Plutocrat's eldest daughter, who, by reason of her mother's death, was mistress of the menage. He knew that an additional servant in the Plutocrat household would not cut much of a figure in the domestic expense budget, so he begged Miss Plutocrat to take Annie into her service. Miss Plutocrat told young Mr. Hero that he was a very "naughty boy"—but not in a serious tone—and at last promised the luckless chambermaid a place, providing she pleased her. This pledge unburdened the youth's heavily laden heart, and he retraced his steps, finding, as he expected, that Annie had received her dismissal. She was in the servants' quarter, sitting on a little hair trunk that had come from Ireland with her the preceding year, and weeping as if her heart were broken. Young Mr. Hero took her small hands into his, expressing sincere contrition for his conduct which had brought about her unhappiness. And at the same time he apprised her of his interview with Miss Plutocrat. A bright smile at once illumined the girl's pretty face, and a few minutes later she and young Mr. Hero were en route for the Plutocrat mansion, like Paul and Virginia, hand in hand. Annie's face won Miss Plutocrat's favor; she was engaged on the spot, and from that time dated her phenomenal good luck and cloudless mundane happiness.

PART II—THE FORTUNE.

Years rolled by, and contact with the sterner side of practical life had long since effaced the foregoing episode from matured Mr. Hero's mind, and but for one circumstance, perhaps, it would not often have recurred to him as a subject for pleasurable reflection.

It was a week before Christmas, 1885, that Mr. Hero accompanied by two other gentlemen, was strolling along Kearney street, in San Francisco, after again having been absent from that city a long period, when he espied a magnificently appointed brougham, with a liveried coachman and footman, roll up to a large dry goods house on Post street, at the intersection of the above named thoroughfare. A richly attired and remarkably handsome lady stepped out, and for two seconds, perhaps, she smilingly stared at Mr. Hero, with an expression of astonishment; but she immediately dropped her eyes to the sidewalk and entered the store.

"Who is your handsome friend?" asked one of Mr. Hero's companions; but ere he could make answer, he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and wheeling about, he observed it to be that of a liveried lackey, who removing his hat, inquired, "Beg pardon! Are you Mr. Hero?" An affirmative reply being given, the servant said, "My lady wishes to see you." Mr. Hero's chivalric nature prompted him to obey the summons, and he repaired to the dry goods house, where the lady of the brougham greeted him with outstretched hands and an agreeable smile, remarking, "I suppose you do not remember me?"

"Your face is quite familiar," responded Mr. Hero, "but pardon my inability to call your name."

"Is it possible you do not remember Annie Green?"

"Heavens!" almost shouted Mr. Hero. "It is not possible that you are Annie Green?"

"No; not now. I am Mrs. Silver Croesus, thanks to your thoughless stolen kiss, of so many years ago. I am glad to hear you say that your time is at my disposal for an hour or two, for I have much to tell you."

A few minutes later, Mrs. Croesus and Mr. Hero were being wheeled away from the bustle of the busy mart, and during the drive he was regaled with a story almost characteristic of those encountered in the perusal of the "Arabian Nights."

"Shortly after I went to live with the Plutocrats," said Mrs. Croesus, introducing the history of her good fortune, "I met my present husband, in the Plutocrat's service as a coachman. Mr. Croesus is a liberally educated Englishman, whom temporary misfortune had placed in that menial position. He and I soon grew quite fond of each other, and a marriage engagement followed. My affianced was of a speculative turn of mind, and he gambled successfully in the shares of the mines controlled by Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien, the bonanza kings, till, one year after our betrothal, he had accumulated $50,000 from his investments. Both of us were yet quite young; he then sent me to Mills seminary to complete the education I had begun before reverses overtook my family at home; and Mr. Croesus quitted the Plutocrat's services. I remained at the seminary 3½ years, during which time Mr. Croesus' fortune reached the comfortable figure of $500,000, when we were married in Grace church by Bishop Kip. We have a beautiful residence on Van Ness avenue—and a darling boy, named after you, dear Mr. Hero. No, indeed, Mr. Croesus did not fare as badly as most outside stock speculators, for he now has almost a million invested in a manner forever secured against loss. By the way, dine with us next Friday evening, for my husband has often expressed an ardent wish to see you. Do come, will you?"

A promise was made, and Mr. Hero parted from his fair companion, musing over the strange mutation wrought in Mrs. Croesus' career by that thoughtless kiss given her some years before. The Croesus residence was one of the stateliest palaces on the avenue, furnished and fitted in a style that could have been suggested only by the most refined and cultivated taste—even to the selection of the library and paintings.

On that Friday evening Mr. Croesus greeted Mr. Hero with uncommon cordiality, expressing his delight at meeting him in unmeasured terms of enthusiasm—for a millionaire. At the table, the particularly honored guest met a party of well-bred ladies and gentlemen, without an apparent trace of the parvenu in their conversation or etiquette. And at the end of the repast, Mr. Croesus surprised Mr. Hero by relating the story of that memorable kiss, concluding:

"As Mr. Hero's good taste during the period of his comparative adolescence, was productive of much good fortune and great happiness for Mrs. Croesus and myself, I herewith command him to bestow another kiss upon my wife in the hope that it may perpetuate our earthly bliss."

In obedience to the agreeable command, Mr. Hero gently imprinted a resounding "buss" on her pretty lips, amidst the applause of the witnessing ladies and gentlemen. Thus terminates a true story of a stolen sweet that did not entail moral dyspepsia.

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