

# Hood River Glacier.

HOOD RIVER, OR., JULY 6, 1889.

## Her Rival's Valentine.

Night at last, clear and bright. It was dark until eight o'clock, when the moon rose and shone upon field, wood, and moor. In the camp all was bustle and excitement.

One of the men had an old fiddle, and could use it well enough in his way. He could play some score jigs and lively tunes, and at an early hour began.

The women danced with their children, and the men lay on the turf smoking. Heate, looking on with her bleared eyes, encouraged them now and then with a croak.

Bardolph went early to meet his bride, and walked up and down impatiently outside Gordonfells for two hours. Close upon midnight, Vida, wrapped from head to foot in a cloak, came forth.

"You are late," he said. "I have been here for hours. The night has crept along." "I could not get away before," she answered, "and it was foolish of you to come. Let us hasten away."

He would have taken her hand to lead her through the wood, but she kept them wrapped up, and silently they hurried on. The camp was reached, and a shout greeted them, ringing far away over the fields.

Vida threw back her cloak, and glanced at the band of gypsies in cold disdain.

"What has to be done," she said, "let it be done quickly."

"It will soon be over," whispered Bardolph, but she neither looked at nor answered him.

Two stieks, in the form of a cross, had to be stepped over, a blessing from Heate to be received, and then the main ceremony was done with. Vida would have gone then, but the gypsies cried out for a dance. "It is a custom that can't be put aside," said Bardolph.

"Come then!" said Vida, "let us dance." The owner of the fiddle struck up a merry jig, and Bardolph led Vida forward.

"It is easy," he said, "dance how you please, only keep time."

With a strange light in her eyes she began, and with infinite grace trod a measure with her gipsy husband. It was a wondrous picture to the rude men and women who looked on, and they stared at her as she glided to and fro, with her eyes fixed, not looking at them, or Bardolph, or anything near, but at things seemingly far away.

"I don't like it," said one of the women, turning aside.

"It is like a glance of death," said another.

And the men muttered to each other that they did not envy Bardolph his "luck."

Even the fiddler was affected, and presently ceased.

Then Vida asked if she could leave.

"I must go with you a little way," Bardolph whispered.

"Why?"

"They think we are leaving together. In another hour the whole camp will be on the road."

"Let us go, then, in Heaven's name!"

"Will you not say one word to them?" he pleaded.

"Not one," she answered. "Why should I marry you, not the whole tribe?"

With a proud disdainful gesture she turned aside and stood waiting there while he bade his friends adieu.

Not one wished him good fortune, and old Heate moaned and wrung her hands.

"You have made your choice, bonnie boy," she said, "but the night is very dark."

"Mother," he said, "there is a full moon."

"It will set soon, and never rise again upon us."

And so he left her wailing.

Silently he and Vida walked back through the wood until they came to the verge of the park.

There she paused and said:

"We part here."

"I suppose there is nothing else to be done," he said sullenly.

"Nothing else, unless you would ruin everything."

"Well, I will bear with it this time, and skulk about all night like a wild beast. You will be at the belfry by noon?"

"Earlier, if I can come," she said.

And ere he could realize her intention she had glided from him and was swiftly hurrying on.

"Ah well, my lady," he said with a savage frown, "by-and-by I will square matters with you."

For a while he kept near the spot, and waited until he had seen the light extinguished in her room. Then he stole quietly back to the neighborhood of the camp.

The gypsies were gone; the last warm ashes of the fire were smouldering, and in a few minutes would be cold.

Bardolph looked at these signs of the recent presence of his friends, and a sense of loneliness and desolation lay heavy on his heart.

"We have parted," he said, "not for a year, but for ever."

And with his head bent low he walked slowly from the dell.

### CHAPTER VIII. THE APPOINTMENT KEPT.

But for a superstitious dread, Bardolph Dimsey would have gone straight to the belfry and lay down there to wait, but he knew of the ghost-story attached to that sombre chamber, and dared not go.

During the darkness he wandered about the woods, and as soon as there was any light in the sky he hurried to the churchyard, and after a careful look round, opened the door, and ascended the dark winding flight of stairs.

Reaching the chamber, he found there was light enough coming through the narrow slits in the wall to dispel superstitious fears. He was tired and almost worn out. Sleep

was an absolute necessity for him, and lying down in the warmest corner, he curled himself up like a dog and slept.

But ere an hour elapsed he was awakened by the boom of the deepest sounding bell, and sitting up he saw the "Big Ben" of the chamber working to and fro on its wheel.

"What are they ringing for?" he asked, "it isn't Sunday."

And then it occurred to him that only one bell was going, and that there were gaps between each solemn note.

The dread truth flashed upon him—the bellringer was tolling for the dead.

"This is some prank of hers," he muttered; "she thinks to drive me away, but I'll stop till she comes."

He fiercely thrust his fingers into his ears, and then only partially smothered the solemn sound.

Boom! boom! It was horrible.

Then suddenly it stopped, and another bell in quicker time tolled out the age of the dead person, whoever it may have been.

Bardolph knew what it meant, and counted the notes.

Twenty-six in all.

"That's my age," he gasped; "the fiend seize her! I know it is some trick. I'll not go."

And though quaking in every limb he kept there until the sounds ceased.

Then he heard the church-door close, and peering cautiously through one of the openings saw the old bellringer walk slowly down the path, refreshing himself with a pinch of snuff as he went. The sight of the old man was reassuring.

"I've been a fool," muttered Bardolph; "it was mere chance that led him to toll for another to-day. But anyway, I don't want to hear that bell again."

He filled his pipe, lit it, and began to smoke. In a little while the church clock struck ten. In two hours more Vida ought to be there.

"The time will soon pass," he said, and leant back contentedly against the wall.

Vida was more than punctual. Barely had the clock struck the succeeding hour when the rustle of her dress was heard on the stairs. Bardolph got hurriedly upon his feet, and thrust his pipe into his pocket.

"She's not deceived me," he said, and his eyes lighted up with the fierce fire of passion.

She entered the belfry with a slow timid step, and he saw by her face that she had passed the vigils of the night sleeplessly and wearily. But she was calm and quiet.

"You are here early," she said.

"I came as soon as the sun rose," he answered.

"That was wise," she said. "But did I not hear a bell tolling?"

"Yes, confound it!" he growled, "and if you had heard the boom of it in this place it would have made you shiver as it did me."

"Very likely. Now you see that I am true to my trust," Vida said, "but I have yet another proposal to make. We cannot leave here together."

"We must do so," he said; "I will have no more partings."

"Do you court discovery?" she asked. "I have been obliged to plead a visit to friends in town and what not to get away"—this was a falsehood, she had pleaded nothing, nor named her journey; "and if I were seen with you, what would be said?"

"Who can say anything?" he asked.

"Mr. Moore, for instance. See there?"

She pointed through the narrow slit, and Bardolph turned round expecting to see her uncle without. The moment his back was to her she swiftly drew her hand from under her cloak.

The white tapered fingers clasped the jeweled hilt of the dagger, and with fierce nervous force she drove home the glittering blade.

A sharp cry rang from his lips, and staggering forward, he fell against the stone wall.

"A blow for every kiss you gave me," she hissed, and again the weapon was driven home.

Blind with pain and terror he fell, his hands fruitlessly seeking something to grasp on the wall. When on the floor he rolled over, and lay upon his back helpless and dying.

"You hag!" he hissed.

"You hound," she answered, "to think that ever I should be a wife to you! A blow for every kiss, I say!"

He raised his arms feebly to ward off the blow, but with unerring aim she thrust the dagger into his breast.

"The curse of a dying man cling to you," he said in a tone that was like the hiss of a serpent.

These were his last words. A dreadful pallor overspread his face; he made an effort to raise himself, fell back heavily, and lay still.

Vida stood beside him for a minute or so, waiting for some sign of life, and seeing none knelt down and scanned his face closely. Then she put her hand upon his heart, and found no beating there.

"Dead," she said softly.

Rising, she glanced round the chamber, and, as if appealing to an invisible spectator, said:

"He sought death, and he has found it. Am I to blame?"

Calm and resolute, she wiped the dagger on the lappet of the dead man's coat, and backed slowly to the door. She could not turn her back upon him. A fear that she knew was foolish, but not to be put aside, led her to keep her face to him to the last.

In the doorway she paused again, and waited to see if there was the least fluttering of life.

It was a needless precaution. The spirit of Bardolph Dimsey had been rudely severed from its tenement of clay, and he would sin on earth no more.

With marvellous composure she descended the dark staircase and entered the churchyard, where she paused for a time to read the tombstones that told so much of the virtues of men unrecognised while they lived.

Once she was induced to look up at the tower, half fearing to see the face of Bardolph at the casement. It was her only moment of real weakness through the whole dark business, and she shook it off as quickly

ly as it came.

An hour later she was at luncheon with her friends at Gordonfells.

There was an addition to the family circle, Ken'd had come home, and he and Vida were very great friends. He was amazed and troubled at the mysterious disappearance of Basil, but the sorrow was not so deep that it prevented him from chatting gaily with his old playmate.

And Vida had never been in better spirits in her life, and her laughter was like a peal of silver bells.

It was strange that she could be merry, but then, you see, she had rid herself of a great burden, and all went well with her.

Was not Basil dead and buried, the gypsies gone, and her tool, wicked, Bardolph Dimsey, lying still in a place that might not be visited for years to come?

And even suppose he were discovered, who would suspect her?

The flight of the gypsies would fasten the deed upon them, and who would believe any mad story they chose to tell?

Yes, all went well, and it was a good time to be merry. Therefore she laughed, and teased and flirted with Kenard, and they had a very pleasant time together.

On leaving him she went up to her room, and found Phoebe there doing some dusting and general arranging.

The girl looked pale and troubled, but she spoke quietly.

"If you please, miss," she said, "I've been to the village."

"Indeed!" said Vida; "well, you often go there. What then?"

"I came back by the churchyard, miss."

Vida turned quickly to her wardrobe, and opened it.

"Came home by the churchyard, did you?" she said; "that was very courageous of you seeing it is broad day."

"I'm not afraid of the graves, miss," said Phoebe quietly, "but I was going to say that I found your handkerchief there, miss, and I've laid it here."

"Thank you, Phoebe," said Vida sweetly; "I did not miss it. Have you finished your dusting?"

"Yes, miss."

"Then do not remain."

Phoebe left, and Vida with a frowning face went to the toilet-table and took up the handkerchief the girl had placed there.

"It is a good thing for me that you cannot speak," she said, apostrophising it; "a blessed thing you have no tongue."

Barely had the words escaped her, when she saw something that might have spoken to Phoebe, and told the bitter tale in part.

A spot of blood!

### CHAPTER IX. SLUMBERING ON A VOLCANO.

Ruth bore her sorrow patiently. She had settled within her own mind that Basil had been lured away from her, and in her heart she forgave him.

Some people would call this womanly forgiveness woman's weakness, but we prefer to give it the true name of woman's unselfish love.

She did not extend her forgiveness to her supposed rival, that would have been more than one could expect from mortal woman.

For her Ruth had nothing but good honest hate.

There were no signs of sickness in her, though her secret suffering was great. Any display of emotion or utterance of vain regret she felt would be unworthy of a Moore of Gordonfells.

She was certainly as like herself as her dearest friends could have wished her to be.

The brief repugnance she felt for Vida's society passed away.

She fought against it, because she was convinced it was unjust, and conquered it.

Ere long they were on the old footing of sisterly love and confidence, the confidence being, of course, mainly on Ruth's side.

But there was one person at Gordonfells who availed Vida as much as possible, and that Phoebe, the maid who was supposed to be attendant to both the cousins, and she gave most of her service to Ruth.

The repugnance was mutual.

Vida soon entertained a strong dislike for the girl, and declined her offered services.

If she had dared, she would have done her best to get her dismissed; but a dread of something held her back.

Phoebe might know a little and suspect more. If so, it was policy to conciliate—or remove her.

Ruth noticed this feeling between them, and mentioned it to Vida, who laughed, and declared she would rather be without a maid.

"Phoebe is devoted to you," she said, "and no woman can serve two mistresses."

Then Ruth tried Phoebe, and made no more headway there.

"If you please, miss," the girl said, "Miss Vida doesn't want me, and it's no use my offering to do anything."

The offer of a separate maid Vida refused, and then the matter dropped.

Meanwhile, a compensating feeling for Vida had arisen in another direction.

Kenard was becoming devoted to her.

He was a handsome high-spirited young fellow, not absolutely without guile, or he would have been a fool, but with an honest heart and a ready belief in others.

In Vida he now saw qualities and charms that had escaped his notice during his boyhood and youth.

They were cousins, had been brought up together, and much freedom of intercourse was allowed them.

They walked, rode, and drove alone, without exciting much comment on the part of their friends at Gordonfells.

"It would be something to be mistress here," Vida thought, "and it will be better than dragging on a life alone."

She did not love him, for her heart had been given to Basil Braudreth, and every day that hopeless love gathered strength, and kept her soul upon the rack.

Her life was very miserable.

The memory of the dead man lying in the belfry was alone sufficient to embitter it. No discovery was made, but every day she dreaded to hear the hubbub of it, and to

have to listen to the murder being discussed, and to see the police at their investigating work.

But nobody visited the belfry, and the body of the murdered gipsy lay wasting away undiscovered.

So having made up her mind to be Mrs. Moore, Vida gave Kenard encouragement, and a secret troth was plighted between them, and it came to pass in this way.

Months had passed, and it was a close sultry summer day, when Kenard and Vida were boating on the lake. He had been rowing, but having laid aside the oars, the boat drifted in among some rushes, which hid them from the view of all around.

"How careless of you, Kenard," said Vida with a smile.

"Let us rest here a little while," he answered; "I have something to say to you."

She knew what was coming, but kept her composure. Had she really been in love with him it would have been different. She would have shown some signs of trepidation, for love in a woman will find expression in spite of efforts to conceal.

"Vida," he said, bending his earnest eyes on hers, "you have guessed that you are more than cousin to me?"

"I have not of late dared to guess much concerning you," she answered in a low tone.

"But you must have seen my devotion," he said. "Vida, have I allowed love to grow in my heart only for it to wither again?"

"You forget, Kenard," she said after a pause, "that our voices will not alone suffice. Mr. Moore and my dear aunt may probably object to our loving each other. Indeed, I am sure they will."

"I do not think as you do," he rejoined; "and if they are against us, it will not change me."

"You will risk much, Kenard."

"And gain much, my darling. Oh, Vida, do not turn a deaf ear to me. I am no schoolboy asking a girl to love him, but a man pleading to a woman for something that is dearer than life itself."

"Kenard," said Vida softly, "I do not know that I ought to make confession of what lies in my heart, but—if I were more worthy—"

"More worthy, Vida? It is I who am unworthy."

"No, Kenard, you would make the sacrifice." And then the lie came to her lips. "I do love you, and it is because I have given my heart to you that I will not permit you to be sacrificed."

"Oh, Vida—"

"Hear me out, Kenard. I will accept your proffered love on one condition—"

"You have only to name it, Vida."

"It is that you do not speak of it at present. We can be friends, and if in time you find your heart unchanged, I will be your wife."

"Love is impatient and never waits," he answered.

"Love must be patient now."

"Vida," he said, drawing nearer to her, "let there be no halting measures with us; I must know my fate. It must be yea or nay with you."

"Of what would the yea avail with us if Mr. Moore said nay?"

"It would sever him and me, but not harm you, Vida."

"Kenard, I must say no. How could I face my loving guardian, my truest friend?"

"Is there no other way?" he asked. "Vida, I know you love me and I cannot rest with such an answer. Why should we not be united secretly?"

"No, Kenard, no."

"It is not so difficult. I have a friend living not twenty miles from here who would perform the ceremony at my bidding. We could ride out one morning, and come back man and wife. You must not say no."

But she held back. It was part of her programme to do so, and when he clasped her in his arms, and the last words of appeal fell from his lips, she whispered:

"To-morrow I will answer you."

"Why not now?" he urged.

"It is not long to wait," she replied, "and it must be to-morrow."

He still pleaded, but she was firm.

Had love not blinded him, he must have read her then, but he saw nothing before him but a pure-minded, loving, beautiful woman, restrained by maidenly modesty from yielding to him at once.

And in the answer "To-morrow," he read a promise, and was at length satisfied.

They lingered long among the rushes, and it was Vida who suggested that time had flown swiftly, and that the luncheon-hour had arrived.

"For my sake," she urged, "let us go."

Then he took the oars again and pulled to the shore.

Ere they reached Gordonfells the luncheon-gong was sounding.

"I told you," she said with an arch glance at him. "I fear if we are not more prudent any confession on our part will be superfluous."

At the hall-door they met Phoebe, who criticised, and said she was coming to see if they were in the grounds as luncheon was ready.

She took Vida's hat and light shawl, and with visible trepidation turned and went upstairs.

"What is the matter with that girl?" said Kenard; "she does not look well."

"Phoebe is a strange being," replied Vida, "and rather given to troubling herself about other people's affairs. She may have been watching us."

"In that case, you had better speak to Ruth."

"No; I think we will leave her alone—for the present."

Their lengthened absence excited no comment except a few words from Mr. Moore, who said he liked punctuality, and they sat down, keeping their secret well.

The afternoon they spent with Ruth, and at an early hour Vida went up to dress.

Phoebe was in her room, now a most unusual thing, and had something on the toilet-table.

Vida took a chair without speaking, and waited for her to go, but she moved slowly about, and made no offer to leave.

"Phoebe," said Vida sharply, "I want you to go."

"Very well, miss." Still she did not go, but stood like a resolute. Vida face flushed with a "Have you given up?" she asked.

"No, miss," lid Phoebe, facing "I'm as sensible as I usually am, but something to say and I don't know, I to say it."

She was trembling, but under her rough there lay courage to go on with what she had in hand. Vida sat at her with a growing boldness upon heart.

"It's Mr. Kenard wish to speak," said Phoebe. "He in love with yoss."

(Continued next week.)

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