

THE MYSTERY OF TREVARROCK, by Mrs. OLIPHANT (1892)

This novella by Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897), the renowned Scottish novelist, does not appear to have been published in book form, but was serialized in numerous local newspapers in Australia, North America and England, starting in 1892. This version is assembled from machine translated text of several versions because some are illegible in the source images at Trove, a digital archive of the National Library of Australia (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>).

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CHAPTER I. THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

A sultry noon in August. The hot atmosphere seemed to quiver against the distant, low, dark hills; the small brook ran languidly through the dry, parched meadow – reduced to a mere thread. Not a soul was to be seen in the one narrow street, which is the whole of the sleepy little Cornish village of Trevarrock. Yes, one old woman was hanging out a fisherman's red shirt to dry on the gray stone wall before her cottage. A tabby cat sat at the gate, purring luxuriously in the sun.

The stranger, who had just crossed the rough bridge, looked round him curiously. He was a tall, stalwart man: lean, loose limbed, with a powerful rather than handsome face, clean shaven, showing a firm, somewhat stern mouth, and having a pair of deep set, blue gray eyes, which seemed to take in everything at a glance. He might have been almost any age between thirty and forty, and his crisply curling black hair was streaked with silver at the temples.

"Is this a city of the dead?" he said, addressing the old woman, who looked at him with curiosity – strangers were very rarely seen in Trevarrock. "You seem to be all asleep down here," he continued, with a laugh, "or to be taking things very easily."

"You're not from hereabouts. I reckon," said the woman, smiling in return, "or you'd know that all the men are at the pilchard fishing, and the women and children be mostly all down to the bay, to see the boats come in. Look 'e yonder." She lifted her brown hand and pointed towards the sea, and Harold Carrington, following its direction, saw on the broad, blue waters that lay under the horizon's rim a cluster of boats drifting landward.

"This is only a fishing village, then? There is no inn where I could get a lodging?" He looked somewhat, dismayed down the tiny lane of houses.

"No, that there bain't. Old Ben Trebilco down yont" – designating a cottage, more dirty and dilapidated than its neighbours – "sells a drap of beer and sour cider, but he don't take in no lodgers," answered the old woman in her soft slow Cornish drawl.

"Is there no general shop, or post office here? Great heavens! What a place!" the stranger muttered, with ill-concealed impatience.

"Oh yes, I be the postmistress, and I keeps a morsel o' tea and sugar, and the like inside." – glass bottle of red and white striped sugar sticks, and two moldy oranges in the cottage window bore out old Judith Penale's words. "Well, then, I must trudge back to Penzance tonight, there's no help for it. And yet I should have been well content to stay here; it is just the sort of place that would have suited me. One could be perfectly hidden from the eyes of the world in such an out-of-the way spot."

A light step behind him made him suddenly look round. Judith, who was standing on the threshold of her door, dropped a curtsy, and her withered face lighted up. A tall, slight girl stood before them, a rush basket on her arm. The colour came into Mr. Carrington's face. He had seen many beautiful women in the course of his strange, eventful life, but none so beautiful as this one, who wore her shabby blue serge gown, with its patched elbows, and sun burned straw sailor hat as an empress might have worn her royal robes and crown. She was no village Dulcinea or rustic red cheeked Queen of the May. No bloom graced the rounded outline of her face, but a rich, creamy pallor, pure as the heart of a white rose, contrasted vividly with a pair of glorious brown eyes, and the thick, dark hair lying in great lusterless waves above a brow low as that of Clytie. The mouth was perhaps a trifle sad and cynical in expression for one so young, the lips somewhat thin and compressed, but Harold Carrington saw no flaw in her almost perfect loveliness.

Involuntarily he raised his soft, gray wideawake, opening the gate for this apparition of beauty to pass through. But Judith Penale stopped the girl, saying, as though struck by a brilliant idea.

"Why, dearie, maybe your'n the very one can help us."

She poured out Harold Carrington's difficulties, in spite of his gestures of disapproval, while the strange young lady gravely listened.

"It is quite true, what Judith says, that no lodging is to be had in the village. But if you like to wait here for a short time, I will go and, speak to my aunt Mrs. Trevelyian. Perhaps she may be able to think of some plan."

The girl raised her large, dark eyes and looked Harold full in the face as she spoke. They were strange eyes, deep, fluid and unfathomable, but there was no trace of shyness in their steady gaze. Her manner was calm and self-possessed, almost too much so for one so young, he thought.

"I am infinitely obliged to you, but I am more than ashamed to give such trouble," he said, bowing courteously.

"Can I not come with you, and so save you the return hither?" he added, apologetically.

"Oh, no, please wait here, if you don't I mind," she responded quickly.

"No letters for us. Judith? Well, then I will be off."

With light and springy steps she crossed the bridge and was soon lost to sight. Harold's eager questioning was anticipated by old Judith, who dearly loved gossip.

"That's Miss Olive St. Maur, as handsome a young leddy as ever stepped, to my thinking. Her aunt, Mrs. Trevelyian, lives yont," pointing to a small white house, lying close to a fir plantation in the distance.

"Miss Olive lives along o', she and Miss Madge, that's Mrs. Trevelyian's daughter. I've heer'd tell Miss Olive's pa got killed out to the Injies, and her ma, pore young thing, died of grief or summat, anyway. Miss Olive – she warn't but a chiel then – came home to live with her aunt, who took to her and did for her the same as her own, So she and Miss Madge are like sisters, and share and share alike, though, poor souls, there ain't much for anyone I'm afeard. But Mrs. Trevelyian's a good kind lady as ever was."

"Is she a widow?" Harold felt strangely interested in old Judith's garrulous chatter.

"Yes, chiel," using the quaint Cornish mode of address to man, woman or child. "She's been a widow this long while. Mr. Trevelyian, her husband, was Parson down at St. Osyth's. He was a poor, sickly sort o' chap, mostly awandering about with his book larning and the like. He died when Miss Madge was i' baby, afore Miss Olive came to 'en. Mrs. Trevelyian's father were a

kind o'gentleman farmer, and lived here at Trevarrock; but what wi' the land being poor, and his fooling away a lot o' money, thinking there was tin on it, he died wi'out a brass farden, except the cottage yont that he left to Mrs. Trevelylian. Miss Olive's ma being dead. So when Parson Trevelylian died she was glad enough to come in and live in it; for folks say she ain't got more than'll keep body and soul together. Lor' bless you, chiel! I've known them, root and branch, these years and years. They were among the head folks about here once, but now they'm decayed gentry. There be plenty such in Cornwall, ruined by the mines and the badness o' the land."

"Hush!" Harold lifted a warning finger, but as Olive St. Maur came up the narrow garden path, the ghost of a smile flickering in the corners of her mouth told him that she guessed the subject of Judith's conversation.

"My aunt, Mrs. Trevelylian, says that if you do not mind limited accommodation and very plain fare," with a rather painful blush, "she will be glad to take you in herself. We do not usually let lodgings, as Judith can tell you, but – but why, after all mince the truth? We are poor, and glad of the chance of earning money. Think what you will of my candor, now you have the facts, pure and simple."

There was a passionate recklessness about the last words which gave, Harold a sensation almost of pain. Old Judith had gone into her little shop to serve two bronzed urchins with yellow saffron cakes.

"Believe me or not, as you please, I honor you from my heart for your frankness," he replied earnestly. "I, too, am a poor man; and though I have never been glad of it before, I shall be now, if I it gives me a greater chance of becoming your friend."

The two were walking up the heather-covered hill, side by side. Harold Carrington felt a slight twinge of conscience as he spoke; but, after all, was he not poor, unspeakably, wretchedly so in life's best gifts? What was money to one alone in the world – popularity, even if fame – if there was no heart to beat in unison with his, no eye to brighten at his joys or shed a tear for his sorrows. Yes, he was poorer in these things than the miner who passed him and Olive just then on his way home from his work, and whose chubby children were scrambling up the hillside to meet him with shouts of welcome.

"Are you poor, too? I am glad of it, although you may think me selfish. I hate the rich, hate them because I envy them more than words can say. Why are life's fairest things so unequally divided?" she went on, with sudden anger.

"It is a bitter, cruel shame." Olive St. Maur's dark eyes flashed fire, and a red spot burnt on each of her pale cheeks.

"I dare say you think I am a strange girl to talk to you, whom I have barely known an hour, about such subjects. Well, I cannot help it. In the wilds of Cornwall one has not much chance of learning manners or acquiring the placid *sang-froid* of the upper ten thousand," she added, with a laugh which had no mirth in it.

Harold felt by turns attracted and repelled by his companion. A strange girl! Olive St. Maur had spoken truly. He had never seen anyone so beautiful; her ironical, rather bitter words, had a piquant fascination, though they saddened him.

"Strange? Not at all," was his ready rejoinder, made with the ease of a thorough man of the world, used to its light at fence as well as its more earnest conflicts.

"Why should I think it, Miss St. Maur? "

"How did you know my name?" She turned quickly, darting a searching glance at him, then added rather petulantly--"Ah! I see, I thought as much. Judith Penale has been entertaining

you with our family history. It does not matter, though. You know all about us. Now and there is no need of formal introduction or weary repetitions."

"Your words remind me that I do: have a duty to perform. You do not even know my name, though you have he so generously taken mine upon trust. Let me introduce myself, Harold Carrington, of London. That sounds I fear only a little less vague than Mr. Smith of the last named locality, it is nevertheless true. This," raising his gray sombrero, "as the Irishman said, covers myself and family. "In other words I am that much-to-be-pitied being-a lone, lorn old bachelor. So though I rarely go out of town, I have no fixed habitation there and change my quarters as I grow tired of them. Profession...."

He paused slightly and bit his mustache, as though finding himself face to face with some unlooked for dilemma. But unwittingly Olive helped him out of it.

"Oh, I guessed that directly I saw the letter case under your arm. I have seen a few of the same kind," she answered readily, laughing. "Nobody could have any motive for coming to Trevarrock but an artist. We are so far out of the beaten track and even of these, I think only three have ever found their way over from Penzance in all these years we have lived here." An artist! Yes, perhaps he might with some truth call himself that, Mr. Carrington reflected, relieved. But he was not thinking of the small portfolio of sketches under his arm, though they were certainly superior to the productions of most amateurs.

"Yes, I am an artist," he answered slowly, "if I dare lay claim to the title. But it was hardly to sketch I came to Trevarrock. A college chum passed through it years ago. He really was an artist, in a far truer sense of the word, and may have been one of the gallant three you mentioned, Miss Olive, though had he known how fair a presiding deity ruled over these wilds he would have required no courage to penetrate them." he added with a courtly smile.

Olive blushed and looked down. She had never been spoken to in this way before, and a thrill of pleasure passed through her. Then the revulsion came, spoiling all. "He has not yet seen Madge. When he does things will, perhaps, be different."

For the first time Olive nearly hated the thought of her cousin's delicate, wildrose face, with its large, innocent, hazel eyes and pretty dimples. Harold Carrington, little dreaming of the effect his idle words were destined to produce, continued:

"As I said, I did not come here to sketch. I had been feeling unwell —overdone in town — and one day, looking over my friend's portfolio, I came across a study of those low, blue hills with the wild sea dashing up to them and a few scattered cottages lying close down by the beach. Somehow it stayed in my memory and fascinated me strangely. So, me voila. But I own when I first tackled old Judith — before you so kindly came to my rescue — I heartily wished I had asked my chum a little more about the place."

"This is where my aunt lives," said Olive.

They had reached the cottage, which was built of grey stone, and was only a little larger than those in the village below. But it was covered with the glorious, crimson Virginia creeper, and its diamond latticed windows stood open to the pure breeze of heaven, showing glimpses of spotless, snow white curtains. The small garden was neatly tended, as though by loving hands, and old fashioned flowers bloomed in it, a blaze of colour-hollyhocks, white, red and golden, tall blue larkspurs and large, deep cupped lilies.

"The realization of a poet's dream," said Harold Carrington; "a veritable paradise. Miss Olive, I envy you for having such a home."

"You need not," she returned, with a sharpness in her voice that jarred upon him. "Wait until you see how small and pokey and poverty stricken it is." A tall, thin lady, dressed in black and wearing a widow's cap, came down the narrow path to meet them. She was refined looking and rather handsome in a somber, somewhat austere style, but her face wore an expression of sternness and her hair was white as snow.

"You are welcome, Mr. Carrington," put in Olive, quickly. "Ah! Mr. Carrington, we shall be glad to let you a room and to do our best for you if as I charged my niece to say, our accommodation is not too humble to suit your tastes."

Mrs. Trevelylian's tone was cold, but there was a straightforwardness and lack of affectation in her speech which at once told Harold Carrington he was in the presence of a lady. No mincing allusion to "better days," nor "merely to oblige," which a less superior woman would not have failed to make.

"It is very good of you to take me in. I feel sure I shall be comfortable here. The very look of the place is enough to tell me that and my tastes are plain ones. I will then, send over for my things to Penzance; they are at an inn there, where I put up for a few days." said Harold.

He saw that it would please Mrs. Trevelylian better if he took a purely business view of the situation.

"I will manage that for you. Dan Penale, old Judith's husband, has a horse and cart, and will be glad of the job. Now, perhaps, you would like to see your room?"

At that moment a slight girlish figure, clad in white, fluttered to the cottage door. "Mother, everything is ready," a clear, musical voice called out.

"That is my daughter Madge," said Mrs. Trevelylian, turning to go in.

"Madge this is Mr. Carrington, our, our new inmate."

And as Olive St. Maur looked anxiously at Harold she saw in his glance what made her smile bitterly. Her forebodings were realized. He had admired her own wonderful beauty, but from an artist's point of view only. Now he had seen Madge: and she knew, as truly as thought she could read his in most heart, that he would never have eyes for her dark southern loveliness again.

"It's so with all of them." she said to herself, feelings of envy and jealousy running through her. "Even that imbecile curate from St. Osyth's who thinks it his duty to call here once or twice a year, and Willie Jago, the doctor's assistant – the only two men we have ever exchanged any words with – deserted me as soon as they had seen her. Yet, if I had money for proper clothes and such things as rich girls have, I would back myself against her any day."

But Olive St. Maur did not realize one thing, that a pure and lovely nature will make even the plainest face attractive, and will prove a magnet more powerful in the long run than the most dazzling beauty.

CHAPTER II. A RED LETTER DAY.

A month flew quickly by. Harold Carrington had almost become one of the family at Hillcote, as Mrs. Trevelylian's pretty cottage was called. The widow liked him, for he was quiet, gentlemanly and unassuming, and gave little trouble. Nothing would have induced her to break in on the privacy of her home by taking a lodger – or, rather, boarder – but that she was, at the

time of Harold's appearance in Trevarrock, in sore need of money. She had but a hundred a year, and though, with rigid economy, she always put by a tiny sum each year, her small hoard had been lately quite consumed, and, worse, she was in debt.

Madge – her darling, the apple of her eye – had been severely ill with a lung attack the year before, and Mrs. Trevelyian's slender purse was drained. She had an overwhelming horror of debt, and day, and night had worn herself to a shadow, thinking how the doctor was to be paid, and the wine merchant's bill, for the generous port he had prescribed. And now, as a solution to the difficulty, Harold Carrington had come. It seemed almost like an answer to her prayer. He had insisted in the most delicate manner, in paying his month's board in advance, and had doubled the very moderate terms Mrs. Trevelyian had asked.

"Indeed you must let me," he said earnestly, in answer to her remonstrances. "Remember, I too can be proud. The change and rest in this lovely place are worth any money to me; and I am not content to enjoy them at less than their value."

But was there no other reason? Ah. Harold Carrington, beware! "Life is short; but art is long," says the proverb. Sketch book and colours had been laid aside. He spent most of his time strolling on the sands with the girls; helping Madge garden, or Olive attend to her numerous flock of poultry. An idyllic, halcyon existence. But was it the best, the most wholesome for him? His heart told him – no.

He, Harold Carrington, who had been courted, caressed by fortune, who might have chosen his wife from among the noblest and most beautiful women in England, was for the first time in his life – in love. Madge Trevelyian's soft, innocent loveliness, her flower like young face, with its timid, questioning expression and clear truthful eyes, had won upon him as the wiles of many a society Circe had utterly failed to do. And not this alone. Her gentle goodness and unselfishness, and, above all, perfect natural freshness, had for him a charm and fascination unspeakable.

With her cousin Olive it was different. True, he admired her still, but with growing intimacy he felt that the somber depths of her great dark eyes, black and soft as velvet, and the somewhat set lines of her chiseled lips, concealed things little dreamed of by those about her. She reminded him of some beautiful fierce wild animal – a panther or tigress – that had been from birth tamed, and might remain so, unless any occasion should arise to call forth its natural instincts.

"That girl has latent powers, of which she is herself ignorant; and intense capacity for love or hatred. I should be sorry to make an enemy of her," Harold thought one day, as he watched her unobserved.

Mrs. Trevelyian had spoken sharply to her about something. Olive did not reply, but turned hastily away, her face pale and lips set.

"What a splendid actress she would make, especially for tragic parts." Then an odd smile played round his mouth. "I mean an artist's model, a Jael or a Judith. I must ask her to sit to me."

But could he but have looked for a moment into Olive St. Maur's heart, bold man as he was, he would have hesitated before he told Mrs. Trevelyian, as he did the day following, that he had determined to stay for another month at Trevarrock.

CHAPTER III. SUSPICIONS.

Mrs. Trevelyan never dreamed that there might be danger for Madge or Olive in their constant companionship with Harold Carrington. In her eyes he was a grave, middle aged man, with a reserve and staidness of character that was a safeguard in itself. Besides, had he not said often that he was a confirmed old bachelor, and jested lightly about love and marriage as things beyond his ken? She saw in his kindness to both girls merely the proof of a good heart and generous nature: he knew that it was out of her power to give them many pleasures, and therefore he did his best to make up to them for the extra trouble his visit must needs give.

One day Harold planned a picnic expedition to the bay. He wished to see the spot from whence the sketch had been taken that had tempted him to come to Trevarrock. He had hired a small pony cart belonging to a fanner in the neighborhood, and had even persuaded Mrs. Trevelyan to accompany her daughter and niece.

"We can ride and drive," he had said, laughing. "At least I will walk, and you ladies can take care of the provision hamper."

"Very well; but we will take care also to keep in sight of you." Madge laughed from sheer joyousness as she took the reins.

"Oh, you won't have much difficulty in persuading the pony to do that, I will follow on. I just want to run into Judith's store and see if there are any letters for me." replied Harold. The small basket car moved slowly up the hilly street, with its gray, hoar'd cottages, their roofs overgrown with pink house leek and yellow stone crop. Madge in her pretty Holland gown and sailor's hat with red ribbons acting John. Mrs. Trevelyan had relaxed a little under the influence of so perfect a day, and lent back enjoying the unwonted luxury of a driver. Her face wore a smile, and the lines of care were fainter on her brow.

"Olive, I think you might have smartened yourself up a bit. It is a poor compliment to Mr Carrington to have come out in that old blue serge. Not but what Madge is smart enough for the pair of you, and I don't know but that you were wisest after all' she afterwards added "The dress you have on is quite good enough for climbing about the rocks."

Olive turned her head away, with a shrug of the shoulder, and a sullen look on her handsome face.

"Anything is good enough for me, I know that well", she muttered "Nobody cares how I look or I dress."

She felt a savage delight noticing the faded streaks where the keen sea air had taken the color out of her gown, and in knowing that her hat was old and shabby.

"A pauper living on charity is what I am, and Aunt Trevelyan does not scruple to make me feel it is well to be Madge: all the pretty garments and other good things of life fall to her share," she reflected moodily, not pausing to think how unreasonable she was.

Mrs. Trevelyan, though she had a sharp tongue, was incapable of the petty meanness of which Olive accused her, and when once her niece suggested going out in the world to earn her own living she had negatived the suggestion with such agitation and vehemence as had almost frightened the girl. And as for Madge's clean, fresh dress, had she not, as Olive well knew, risen that morning almost before it was light to iron and do it up with knots of scarlet ribbon with her own dainty fingers? Her cousin had heard her singing blithely as a lark at her work, and had smiled with contempt at the little it took to make Madge's simple heart happy.

Then a terrible light all at once broke in on her. How changed Madge was of late! She was always singing, laughing, or flitting about the house with so light and buoyant a step that she seemed the spirit of joy personified. The languor of her late illness had quite passed away, the rose bloom on her cheeks was brighter, deeper than ever, deepest, when she was engaged in lively chat or joking argument with Harold Carrington, who treated her like a willful attractive child.

She fancied his secret was known to none, but Olive had fathomed it and more. She'd read in Madge's face what the girl did not herself dream of – that her heart had passed into the keeping of the handsome stranger.

And so on this glorious day, sunshine all around, and a sky blue as molten turquoise overhead, when all were gay and happy, Olive alone wore a mask. Outwardly serene and smiling, the demon of jealousy was ever gnawing deeper and deeper into her soul.

Harold Carrington came up the hill in long swinging strides after the basket carriage. His white linen suit, with the ruby silk scarf tied carelessly under the open collar, set off his dark handsome face and big stalwart figure to perfection. He wore a solar topee, with a soft India muslin puggaree knotted loosely round it, and as he came toward the carriage he took off his hat and fanned his tanned face with it.

"The heat is quite tropical. It reminds me almost of the Brazils," he said smiling.

"Were you ever in America?" Olive queried, flashing a keen look at him. It suddenly struck her how little, after all, they knew of this man, who had become with only a month's acquaintance, oh so thoroughly one of themselves; that it now seemed odd to think of a time when he had not been with them. What they knew, they had only his bare word for. Olive had frequently noticed that he avoided speaking of himself or his past: life, and if any subject was mooted likely to bear on these, he would always insensibly direct it back into other channels. It was the case now, as she perceived.

"Oh, yes; America, as well as every other place of any note, and sick enough I'd got of them all. Miss Madge, I really believe that is a root of hart's tongue growing up there: I did not know you had it about here. It's a fine clump: let me dig it out for your rockery." His face slightly reddened, as he went to get the fern. Olive noticed this; also that he had evaded her question in his customary manner.

A creeping, strange suspicion, begotten of her own evil thoughts, kept coming into Olive's head. "What if there should be some guilty reason for Harold Carrington's unwillingness to speak of the past? And why was he content to stay in hiding, as it were in such a place as Trevarrock?" As Olive busily pieced things together, as she sat silently in the back seat of the pony cart. The more she thought over it, the more she felt convinced that Harold Carrington had a secret, and this secret, she vowed to herself, it should be her business to unravel, let the results be what they might. .

At last the party arrived at the bay, and the ladies alighted. Harold soon found a pleasant nook under the shadow of the gray rocks, where he spread a soft bearskin rug of his own for Mrs. Trevylian, who had brought her knitting. Olive also threw herself down beside her on it, with a volume of "Daniel Derond."

"I must go and find some place to put up the carriage. Perhaps some cottager has a shed, of which we can secure the use. Miss Madge, will you come with me, and explore?" he said.

Would she come? Yes, only too willingly, as she would have followed Harold Carrington to the world's end had he bidden her do so. Yet, though Harold loved her, he had no intention that she should guess his secret, at least then. There were many reasons why he did not wish to marry, why he deemed it almost impossible that he should do so. And Harold Carrington was an honorable man, who held old fashioned ideas.

No man, he told himself, had a right to speak of love to a girl unless he intended to ask her to be his wife. Yet for today at least he would be happy. Heaven knew that life had not as yet held much brightness for him.

He and Madge walked along over the shining, yellow sands almost in silence. One or two seagulls dipped and circled over and around the pale blue-gray waste of waters. The rugged crags, seaweed grown, loomed purple and red behind them. Here and there a ruined shanty standing near enough to the sea to be bespattered by spray on a stormy night gave token of human habitation, as did a long line of brown orange nets stretched drying on the shingle. One or two black old hulls of fishing boats lay high up beyond the sea line.

Harold paused suddenly. "Yes, this is the place from whence my friend, Norman, took his sketch. A weird, wild spot indeed," he said.

"You would say that if you knew all the legends of the place. It was here that in the old smuggling days, many a cargo was ran ashore, and many a dark deed done. Tradition says that there are caves out round the headland which run miles under the cliff. I have often longed to explore them, but dare not without a guide, and the people about here are so rough and wild, one is almost afraid of them." answered Madge.

"Well, we'll have a look at them, one of these days, eh? What do you say Miss Madge? You would not be afraid to venture with me?" "With you? Oh, no." Madge looked shyly up at Harold. Her eyes had a strange soft light in them. Her companion had unconsciously laid a tender emphasis on his last words, which had thrilled her to the very soul.

"I do not think I should be, afraid to go anywhere with you. Oh! Mr. Carrington, if you only knew how different our life has seemed since you came! How very much we shall miss you when you go away," she added sadly. Strange words for a girl, and terribly unconventional no doubt, but Madge was innocent as a child, and accustomed to speak all that was in her mind without fear or reserve.

This was her chief charm in Harold's eyes: "Shall you? Well, Madge, do not think hardly of me if I am selfish enough to be glad that you will miss me just a little." For the first time her name without its formal prefix slipped from his lips, and his voice trembled a little, but he soon recollected himself, that he was not vain enough to place undue value on Miss Madge's words.

"I am not gone yet, Madge," he said cheerily.

"Let us enjoy the present without dismal forecasts. See! Here looks a likely place for our object. Let us beard the lineal descendants of wreckers and smugglers in their lair."

They had come to a thatched cottage, weather beaten and discolored by the salt spray of many storms, yellow with the lichens of age, built, it seemed, in the very face of the cliff. A rough kind of shed stood by its side.

Madge recoiled, laying her hand on her companion's arm:

"Not there. Anywhere but there" she cried, her face paling, to his great surprise.

"Why on earth not? My dear Miss Madge, you don't suppose there are really any desperate characters now among these simple fisherfolk? The profits are too small and the dangers too great nowadays, I assure you."

"Do not knock," she persisted, looking quite scared. "Mad Dinah Retallack lives here. She is a dreadful old woman; everyone fears her. She has the evil eye, and is a witch. Oh, Mr. Carrington please come away."

Harold drew back a few steps; then as if oblivious of everything, even the terror in Madge's voice, he burst into a peal of laughter. Many will be inclined to laugh with him, but we would bid such remember that superstition dies hard in out of the way nooks, even in these days of railways and the penny post. The Cornish folk are especially tinged with it as anyone who has lived among the mining and coast folk knows. Madge Trevelyian was Cornish to the core, and had passed all her life among the simple people of Trevarrock.

"A real live witch in this nineteenth century? The very thing I have been longing to see all my days and turn back now I have at last got the chance? Never! Come along Miss Madge, she shall tell our fortunes, if true witch she be and no imposter." He raised his stick and knocked at the door.

CHAPTER IV. THE WITCH OF TREVARROCK BAY.

The old woman presented a strange, wild appearance Harold Carrington had to own, when he entered old Dinah's tumble down hut, that Madge's fears of her were somewhat justifiable. Its one room was browned and blackened by the smoke of ages, which found...

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...its way out by a hole in the roof above the open hearth, where a few bits of wood smoldered. There were no chairs or other furniture, but one or two battered, blue painted seamen's chests stood against the crumbling walls and did duty as seats, while another in the middle served as a table. If they could have spoken they would have told strange things.

Old Dinah Retallack knew of times when many a brave ship had been lured to its destruction by the false bale fires flickering among the jagged rocks. The booty had been rich, and the dead men, with their pale eyes staring heavenwards, told no tales. Legend said that she herself had gloried in setting light to the blazing beacons, and had been amongst the most eager for plunder. Until one awful night, when the wreckers decoyed a large brig to its doom; and in the darkness of the storm which lashed and whipped the coast a small fishing boat had also mistaken the warning and had driven straight on to the Devil's Teeth, as the ragged, saw like line of rocks north of the bay were called.

And when the morning dawned there lay upon the yellow sand, half buried with drift and tangled brown bladder weed, two corpses locked in each other's arms. One was old and gray. The face of the other was marble white, and damp golden rings clung to the cold brow. As Dinah Retallack, wandering along the shore, came up to them, she stopped to see, as was usual, if there was anything worth stripping from the bodies before they were hurled back, half naked, into the maw of the sea again to be battered and bruised past recognition on the cruel, jagged rocks.

One, the younger, had a pair of gold rings in his ears. At the bottom of a chest in Dinah's cottage she had a number of these, threaded on a bit of tarred sail twine. Here would be another pair to add. "Old Isaac Levi, a certain working goldsmith in a back street in Penzance bought such things by weight and asked no awkward questions. She had a "nice few bits and scraps" to take to him next time she went into town, she reflected, complacently. Those two rings, with white stones shining like glass, that were brought in after the last great storm, when the merchantman was lost. Eh, poor thing! She, maybe, was the captain's bride. How whisht and dowly a sight she was lying there, her black hair all drying in the sun – like the weeds – and he, well, he was a rare, fine man.

The gold watch was not so much beaten about by the rocks, only the salt water had got into the works. But she would not sell that. Isaac should see what could be done. It was to be her present to Benjamin; the son of his father's old age, their only child. How surprised and pleased he would be, for he knew nothing about it, and should not know whence it came.

Benjamin was strange in some ways, though a good lad. He did not like the wrecking, and called it blood money when any one took away and sold what belonged to them as had no use for the like. But the captain's gold watch! He could not stand against that, for he sorely wanted one, Dinah knew.

Well, it was no good wasting time. She knelt down by the bodies of the drowned men and turned the face of the younger, which lay against the wet, brown weed, to the light. Then happened that which was not forgotten in Trevarrock for many a long year, and everyone who saw it was destined to remember it till the grave closed over them. A terrible, an awful cry – a shriek so wild and fierce that those who heard it shuddered – went out from the kneeling woman. It echoed round the crags and far along the bay, bringing hurried foot steps to the spot. Dinah Retallack lay senseless on the sand beside the dead forms of her husband and son.

And since that day she had dwelt apart: an outcast, the brand of Cain upon her, shunned by her fellows for her morose, strange ways, and bitter, stranger words. How she lived, none knew. That she was somehow leagued with the powers of darkness, all believed. Wrecking had died out along the coast, though to this day the laws of flotsam and jetsam are loosely enough interpreted on the wild Cornish shores.

But Dinah Retallack still remained, an old woman of 80 – a lingering relic of the terrible old times. Her brown face was a mass of net like wrinkles, and two fierce black eyes blazed from under shaggy, white brows. Once she had been tall, but now she was bent almost double, and always walked with a crutch handled ash stick.

From Madge's childhood she had had a secret terror of Dinah. Strange tales were abroad respecting her. Did not Jemmy Polwhele, the smith, die of a fever after he had refused to give her a lift on the road to Penzance? Had not she cast the evil eye on Farmer Yeatman's cattle last year, after his cowherd had thrown a stone at her? And when Thomas Beale, the Baptist minister, more daring than the mild curate of St. Osyth's, had boarded her in her den, she had torn the good books he had offered her into shreds before his face and had driven him from her door with curses. So people said.

Perhaps Madge Trevelyian carried things to an extreme; but it was certain that no one in Trevarrock liked old Dinah, and many feared her. Even Mrs. Trevelyian, with all her plain, good sense, was not free from the prevailing feeling. That Dinah was a witch was of course nonsense, but that she had been a very wicked woman was certain.

With trepidation Madge had awaited the result of Harold's knock, and when old Dinah, after a long delay, slowly opened the door, she shrank back affrighted. The old woman presented

a strange, weird appearance. A soiled red and yellow bandana kerchief was tied over her floating, white elf locks, and she wore a fisherman's coarse blue jersey above her short linsey petticoat. A black cat sat on her shoulder and glared with fierce, round green eyes at Madge and Harold, then with a spring leaped down and disappeared into the darkness of the cottage. Dinah moved her toothless jaws from side to side, as if to speak, when a rolling, uncanny laugh made Madge shrink still farther back.

"You've no call to be afeared, pretty chicken. Come in, come in. Neither old Dinah Retallack nor her cat, Pixy, would harm Parson Trevelylian's daughter. I knowed the time when he was a good friend to the likes o' me. Parson would give his coat off his back to a poor man—though his wife's nobbut a proud madam. Poor and proud, nothing but trouble ever came o' that. Ay, she's had her troubles; some you don't know on, I reckon." The old woman had seated herself on the chest nearest the fire, and was rocking to and fro, mumbling to herself, apparently forgetting the presence of her visitor.

"What can she mean? Oh, don't let us stay here. She frightens me with her strange words," Madge whispered, shivering. Harold pressed her hand closer to his side, but did not move.

"Why, come, Mrs. Retallack, that is not a very cheerful greeting to travelers who want to ask a favor and are willing to pay well for it, too." He pulled a handful of loose silver out of his pocket and jingled it temptingly. The old woman's black eyes shot a covetous glance towards it, but she still crouched over the fire and did not speak.

"May we put up our pony and trap in your shed for a few hours? You shall have this," holding up half a crown, 'if you will consent."

"Ay, ye may use the shed. But gimme the money now, chiel; it's long since I had so much in my hand, and the feel o' it will warm me like. And who be you? I'm thinking a fine, well spoken gentleman. But there's trouble i' the air, ay, trouble." She shook her head and looked gloomily into the fire. The cat crept from its corner and began to rub itself against her chair. Harold drew nearer and seated himself opposite to the old woman. Madge remained standing in the doorway.

"Trouble! For whom? Do you mean for me, mother?" he said half earnestly, half jestingly. He had used the last word only in the general sense in which it is applied to the aged, but it had a strange effect on the witch of Trevarrock. Her dull eyes flashed and her lips quivered.

"Mother! No tongue ever called me that but one. Ah! had he lived he might now have been like you. He was only 19, but a proper man. Well, he's gone, and I'm alone—alone. I killed him! I! Do 'ee o-hear--that? But I've been judged, ay, that have I." Again she rocked herself, in unutterable woe and despair, over the dying embers.

"Come, cheer, up, Mrs. Retallack," he said, putting his hand on her shoulder. "You are too much alone and give way to gloomy fancies. I shall come and see you again someday and bring a few things to make you a little more comfortable, if I may", he added looking with pity round the bare, dilapidated hut.

"Ay, ye can come if ye've a mind and ben't afeared o'the Witch o' Trevarrock," she answered, a sardonic smile flitting over her gloomy brow. "They calls me that. Well, whether I be or baint, never mind. I knows a few things, and I'm sorry to say it, for you've spoken kind words to me this day. There's trouble in store for you, sir; ay, and for her." The last words were spoken in a whisper, as the ancient crone jerked her head in the direction of the door. Madge was standing outside, and did not know what they were saying.

"Well, I'm sorry to hear it," said Harold, still cheerfully, "But, for that matter, life is full of sorrow. Since, however, you have told me so much, can you not help me out of the especial trouble you mean, oh, mother?" He intended but to soothe and humor this poor, half crazy creature, but the next moment he drew back with a feeling that was almost awe.

The shrunken form became erect, her black eyes shone with almost supernatural luster as Dinah Retallack spoke these strange words: "The mouse may gnaw the net for the lion; the weak help the strong. Who knows the secrets of the air and the winds? Those who live alone hear and see curious things, and more, I was the seventh daughter of the seventh, as all Trevarrock knows, but some things they do not know. Yes, if you are in trouble come to Dinah Retallack; she may have ways and means, undreamed of to avert the storm. Go now, but remember the Witch of Trevarrock." Dinah's tone was almost like that of some ancient sybil, her gesture grand and commanding, as she motioned Harold to the door, showing that the interview was at an end.

Silent, impressed more than he cared to own to himself, he joined Madge, who seemed heartily glad to see him emerge from the cottage. Despite all his efforts to be gay, an odd, uncomfortable feeling remained with him.

Mrs. Trevelylian looked rather grave when Harold told her what had passed, which he did in a manner exonerating Madge from all responsibility or blame. "Dinah Retallack is a wicked woman. You do not know her past history – it seems hard, but I can never forget it." Mrs. Trevelylian related the story briefly. Harold gazed out seaward, a strange expression on his face.

"She sinned, but she has suffered. Is not that an atonement?" he said in a low, earnest tone of deep feeling. Mrs. Trevelylian and Madge were busy arranging a picnic tea under the shadow of the rocks. Only Olive heard the quietly uttered words, though she appeared to be deep in her book. A flash came into her dark eyes, unseen under her thick, black lashes. Another link in the chain! What could such words mean? They had escaped him unawares and bore additional proof that her suspicions were well grounded. Had he then sinned? And, if so, in what way? True, he might have a secret, but it did not follow that it was a disgraceful one.

Yet Olive's growing hatred and jealousy were so great that this idea brought almost disappointment with it. To unmask Harold before her aunt and Madge, to dash from the lips of the latter the cup of happiness, was now the only thing she longed for.

"Olive, how lazy you are! Here, mother, this is a comfortable place for you. Mr. Carrington, I shall put you opposite the chicken pasty-you must carve it. I made it, so I shall be awfully offended if you do not eat a large piece." Madge had regained her good spirits, and was busy and happy as a child as she waited on everyone, her merry tongue going all the time.

"Eat some? Rather! I'm as hungry as a hunter – besides, my life is insured," he whispered slyly. "No, no! Miss Madge, I'm only joking," as she made a raid on the pie, in pretended punishment for his insolence. "It looks sumptuous, delicious – the very prince of pasties!" As he spoke, he placed a liberal portion on his plate, having first helped the ladies.

"Now, you know; to carry out all traditions of well-regulated picnics, someone ought to have forgotten the salt. By-the-bye, where is it? If I dare ask, remembering Vatel," with a feigned glance of timidity at Madge.

"Vatel Whoever was he?" the girl asked, laughing. "Why at least, I am not sure if it as Vatel or some other famous cook, who committed suicide because his master put salt in his soup, thereby intimating that its flavoring was not perfection. I do not want to see Miss Madge rush away from us suddenly and jump off the cliff, you know."

Long, long, would the memory of that happy day its golden sunshine and pleasant fooling be engraven on their memories. Olive wavered for a moment in her judgment. Could this man,

who laughed and joked so gayly, with evidently no thought of anything but the present moment, really have a dark and guilty secret hidden in his breast?

"But all the same, where is the salt? I should like some too," said practical ° Mrs. Trevylian. The next minute, after searching the provision hamper, they all looked blankly at one another. Harold burst out laughing, and the others followed his example.

"Perhaps it is in the other hamper," suggested Madge. "Mamma packed that; so if it is not, she is the culprit." She drew the basket towards her.

"Indeed, I did no such thing! I was just wondering what was in it," said Mrs Trevylian. Harold cut the strings, and unwrapping layers of silver paper, drew out two enormous bunches of purple grapes, black and heavy with ripeness, and a basket of velvet skinned, rosy peaches. A box of French bon bons, chocolate dragees and creams, and a quaintly shaped, rush-covered flask of rare foreign liquor completed the contents of the hamper.

"Only a little dessert I ventured to bring as my contribution to our *al fresco* spread. Oh, please do not thank me. It is I who owe you all the gratitude for letting me come with you," said Harold, with his usual courtliness, selecting the best peach for Mrs. Trevylian as he spoke.

"Those things never came from Penzance." Olive said quietly, with a penetrating glance at Harold. "He must have paid three or four guineas at least for that hamper; and yet he pretends to be poor. I don't believe it," she reflected. "The secret then has nothing to do with money. That is so much information gained."

"Of course not." Harold answered the spoken part of her thoughts, by placing some grapes on her plate. "Would anything so prosaic be worthy of the day and occasion? No, I did not get the basket with its contents from Penzance, but invoked the aid of a friendly sprite who brought it from fairyland."

"In other words, you got it down from Fortnum and Mason's by parcel post," said Madge, reading the label, with a mischievous gleam in her eyes.

"What a shame to spoil my bit of romance! I thought you Cornish people were firm believers in fairies and witches; or should not have ventured to trade on your credulity." Harold and she had strayed down to the water's edge, and were out of hearing of the others.

"Mr. Carrington, tell me what did that horrid old woman say to, you when I had left the cottage? Was it anything bad? I wanted to ask you when I got the chance," said Madge, earnestly, unheeding his quizzical remark.

"Nothing, at least nothing of any consequence. Don't trouble your head about her. At any rate I do not feel much frightened." Madge looked relieved, and began with light heart to collect purple and red sea weeds and tinted shells from the wet sands, in memory of this day, the happiest of her life.

"The tide is coming in. It is time we thought of returning home," said Harold, as the green waves rushed up to their feet, leaving a wreath of foam behind them in receding. But while they could they lingered.

In a short time the party reluctantly left the bay, Harold having fetched the pony cart from Dinah Retallack's cottage. The door of the shed stood open and the pony was harnessed, evidently having been fed. But Dinah herself was nowhere to be seen, and though Harold knocked many times at the door of the hut, wishing to thank her for her care of the horse, she did not appear.

And so they took their homeward way over the gray moorland hills, the air blowing soft and cool and the stars beginning to glimmer silvery white against the saffron tinted sky. All seemed peace, and yet a storm cloud was gathering darkly in the far distance.

CHAPTER V. THE PLOT THICKENS.

When Harold Carrington went to his room the night following the excursion to Trevarrock Bay he suddenly remembered that Judith Penale had given him two letters, which he had thrust into his pocket in his haste to follow the pony cart, and which were still lying there unread. He had not hastened to open them, for he had recognized the handwriting on one envelope only too well, and the...

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...other in its flimsy blue envelope appeared to be a bill or circular, the postmark being Penzance, from whence he sometimes had things sent out to Trevarrock.

With a slight frown of weariness he tore open the thick, cream colored envelope of the first letter, regardless of the dainty lilac and silver monogram adorning the flap. The contents of this note were brief, and were written in a thick and dashing hand, obviously a woman's, in spite of its affected masculineness. They ran thus,

I am getting really angry with you, and shall be glad to know when this is to end. Surely you must have received my two last letters, telling you all is blown over, and that you need not fear to return? It is not fair to leave me alone to bear the brunt of everything, and I feel I cannot take inquiries much longer. What can you, of all in the world, find in such an out-of-the way corner of the earth to keep you away from London now, of all times in the year? Anyway I ask you to come back. The part I am playing now is, as you know, foreign to my whole nature, but with you to support me, things were bearable at least. Again I say, Harold return, or I will not answer for the consequences

Beatrice

He read the letter twice through, with an expression of irritation on his face. Then his stern mouth relaxed again and softened into a kind smile. "Poor Beatrice! A good creature, but I wish she would not be so tragic: it is hardly necessary in private life. Still, she is right; I ought to be getting back, and it is – as she says – hard on her. Next week, then, I must pack up my traps.

He sighed as the vision of Madge's gentle, childlike face rose before him; and he thought how the bright tears would gem her lashes at the news. He still held the letter he had just read between his fingers. Then starting from his reverie he tore it across, and crumpling it into a ball threw it into the empty grate.

He had almost forgotten the blue missive, which lay on the table at his elbow, but as he rose his eyes fell on it. He opened it carelessly and without interest. The only contents of the envelope were a half sheet of soiled paper, with a few words penciled on it, and a newspaper cutting. But as Harold Carrington read them, his face became blanched to ashen whiteness and cold drops of dew started to his

"At last – at last! It has come to this! I always feared, I always thought that one day it would be so. If he had only he trusted me. He knew I could not be hard on him and yet, even while I am talking, I am losing time.. Something must be done but what? .Ah! merciful Heaven what?

Utterly stunned and crushed, he stood looking in a dazed way at the piece of paper in his hand. He had been in daily dread of receiving the tidings it conveyed, had known that at any hour they might come upon him thus. The thought had been the hunting nightmare of his life, and in his proudest, happiest moments had often come to torment him. Yet the blow was none the less

hard to bear. Taking out his watch he saw that it was about a quarter to 11. The inhabitants of the cottage breakfasted at 8. He had, then, nine good hours before him in which to think and act. Fortunately for him his bedroom was on the first floor. To open the front door would be too great a risk, the back was old and clumsy and creaked with a jarring sound when the key turned. But his window was within easy reach of the ground, and could be opened and closed without any noise.

He began to take off his white linen suit, then paused irresolutely, ending by drawing on his coat again. He took from a hanging press a long, dark ulster and wrapped himself within its heavy folds. It covered him almost completely.

"Yes, that will serve my purpose best," he muttered. Then, his eye falling on a small box at the top of the press, he exclaimed under his breath, "The very thing! What a fool I was not to think of that before! It seems almost providential, and yet how enraged I was when I found that ass, Jean, had sent them by mistake! I little dreamed for what purpose I should one day use them."

He stood motionless an instant, a look of excessive pain on his face, and then, rousing himself, unlocked the box and took from it a wig and beard, most exquisitely made of the finest soft white hair, also some small pots of pigments rouge and grease paints. With unusual skill and dexterity he altered his face, and put on the false hair and beard, which fitted him admirably. No one would have recognized him, so extraordinary was the change in his appearance. He murmured a few words, imitating the toothless mumbling of a very old man, and stooping slightly, looked at himself in the glass. The whole thing was perfect, and a shabby felt hat, having the brim well bent down, completes the disguise.

Harold took up the letter and put it in his breast pocket, then, opening the window, he swung himself lightly out, closing it softly behind him. The little garden was flooded with vivid moonlight. He crossed it stealthily, keeping well in the shadow of the trees, and managed to reach the gate, which opened with a click that made him start nervously, but the cottage remained wrapped in darkness and slumber.

Not till he was well on the road to Penzance did he stop suddenly, with a stifled exclamation of anger. In his agitation he had forgotten one thing to lock his door from the inside, which would have been a prudent measure for many reasons, but it was too late now to go back.

Olive St: Maur had gone to bed on her return from Trevarrock Bay, pleading a headache. To bed, but not to sleep. She tossed about on her snow white pillow, her mind full of suspicious and restless fancies and found the night oppressively hot, in spite of the open window, through which the night fragrance of the jasmine told subtly. Her ears, preternaturally sharpened, caught every echo without: the distant roar of the sea against the low, red cliff; the sleepy chirp of a bird in its...

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...nest; the tinkle of a sheep bell in a far meadow.

Then, suddenly, an unwonted sound made her start up with a thrill of something very like terror, though her nerves were of iron. A step, slow and stealthy, in the garden on the gravel: the noise of the gate latch being softly raised. She jumped out of bed and ran to the window, raising the blind cautiously and peeping out at the side.

What she expected to see she could hardly have told, but what she did see almost stunned her with surprise and bewilderment. A tall figure, apparently muffled in a long, black cloak, had

just stolen out of the gate, and by the outline sharply defined against the moonlight Olive knew it to be Harold Carrington. The light was too uncertain to see the wig and beard; could she have done so she would have been still more mystified. Her brain whirled as she strained her sight to watch his movements. What could be his motive for thus leaving the house stealthily in the dead of night? With bare feet she stole quietly down stairs and listened at the door of Harold's room. All was silent. Had he been in it and asleep she could have heard his breathing, for the head of his bed was close to where she stood.

With a heart beating to suffocation she opened the door gently and looked in. A flood of white moon rays lit up the room and shone on the bed. One glance told her it had not been slept in. The chamber was empty. A candle and match box stood on the table. She struck a light and made a sharp inspection. There was nothing to repay her curiosity, for Harold had locked up and put away the jug and other things after using them.

"I must make haste upstairs again, for if I were to be caught it would be too dreadful," Olive muttered, moving away, her dusky cheek crimsoning. As she turned to go her eye fell on a crumpled ball of paper in the fender and she picked it up quickly, attracted by the writing she saw on it.

"Part of a letter and in a woman's hand!" she said to herself, and she deliberately unfolded it, but, looking round with a shiver, decided to return to her own room before reading it. There she straightened the bits of paper and soon mastered their contents.

"All has blown over." What could be the secret of such strange words? And "Beatrice." Who was she—a sister? No. Olive was certain of that, though she knew nothing of Harold's family history. A sweetheart? Hardly, there was something in the tone of the letter inconsistent with that theory. Only a man's wife would write to him in such a vein – familiar, half affectionate, yet censorious. The red blood rushed to her brow.

"How he has lied to us! But he shall be punished. I hold one strand of the clue in my hands now; it shall be hard if I do not track the thread to its end." Noting the address stamped on the paper, a fashionable street in Kensington, she carefully locked up the letter in her desk. Then putting on her dressing gown, she seated herself at the window and watched for Harold's return with the patience of a tigress crouching for a spring.

Hours passed. The morning dawned gray and cold, and the fresh chilly breeze made her shiver, but she did not relax her vigilance. At last it was rewarded. Harold Carrington pale, haggard, with the dragging steps of a man much fatigued came slowly in sight, and treading softly over the dewy grass, got in at his bedroom window, and closed it after him.

But at every step the mystery seemed to deepen. When he went out he had been enveloped in a thick dark ulster: now he wore only the white linen suit he had gone out in on the previous day, and (though Olive did not know this) wig and beard were gone, and all traces of his disguise removed from his face. He little thought, as he flung himself, half stupefied with weariness and sorrow, on his bed of the wakeful eyes that had spied upon his secret movements.

CHAPTER VI. FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.

For the next two days things went on much as usual at the cottage. To outward appearance Harold Carrington was the same as ever. He still joked with Madge, helped Mrs. Trevelyian garden and talked with Olive about the books he lent her, and no one dreamed of the strange, fierce nature possessed by this odd, self-contained girl. She knew now that she loved

Harold with a very passion of despair, loved yet hated him, because of a jealousy more cruel than death, which threatened to destroy all her peace of mind, all the good in her heart.

Every word, every look that Harold gave to Madge seared deeply into her brain. She was not half so bitter against Beatrice, the writer of the mysterious letter, even though she supposed her to be his wife. For she had not his love. That belonged to Madge alone. That Harold could never be anything to Olive, whether married or single, she knew well. If he had laid his heart at...

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...her feet, she would have counted the world well lost for his sake, and would have followed him to the end of the earth-despite Beatrice or any other woman. But he had slighted and passed her over for Madge. Let him then beware! Well might Mrs. Trevelyian tremble, and dissuade Olive St. Maur from seeking a living in the wide world. She alone knew how terrible an inheritance had come with the motherless girl at her birth, and for years she had watched over her with ceaseless care and anxiety.

Olive was the only one who observed Harold covertly and keenly. She remarked that his gaiety was forced and fitful; that he would fall into frown studies, and answer wide of the mark often. He looked pale and careworn, but put it down to the heat when Mrs. Trevelyian spoke of this, saying it "always knocked him up and made him feel lazy." And yet, when pleading tiredness and lassitude, he would make long excursions inland and seaward, pleading that he had neglected his work, and must make up for lost time. But when asked by Olive or Madge to show his sketches, he would always evade the question.

One day a sharp, double knock had come at the door during tea time – a somewhat unusual thing at the cottage. Harold, who had been discussing politics with Mrs. Trevelyian, started violently and turned red, then pale. It was merely old Ben Trebilco, who was a kind of carrier between Trevarrock and Penzance, and had brought a parcel of groceries, and Harold passed off his nervous start with a joke.

But Olive alone was not deceived, and that evening a still stranger thing happened. Ben had also brought, as was his custom, the weekly local paper – the only extravagance of the kind in which Mrs. Trevelyian indulged. Harold Carrington seldom glanced at it – as he got *The Standard* daily from London, and had been in the habit of lending it to the girls and Mrs. Trevelyian. This, by the way, he had not done of late, and though Olive had privately searched, she had found no trace of any of the past week's papers in his room.

This evening Harold took up *The Penzance Herald*, and, seated in the big cane rocking chair by the window, appeared engrossed in its pages. Madge had gone out to feed her buff cochins; her mother was daintily rinsing the delicate old china tea things and their worn silver in an oaken bowl in the kitchen, for Mrs. Trevelyian was too true a gentlewoman to keep a servant when she could not afford it.

"There is no disgrace in honest work, but there is in debt." she would often say to Madge, who thoroughly agreed with her mother, and helped her readily and cheerfully. But Olive loathed and hated the house hold drudgery, and was bitterly ashamed that Harold Carrington should see her dusting the parlor or laying the cloth for dinner. She little thought how he admired and respected her cousin for the very things she thought worthy of contempt.

By tacit consent Olive always did the lightest part of the housework. When Madge, as a child, would sometimes say this was unfair, her mother always silenced her.

"Your cousin Olive is not so strong as you are. And, dear, we must not let her think we would be hard upon her, because she has no other friends." She little dreamed that her mother had another, and a far stronger reason, for never crossing Olive, or rousing her strangely sullen, vindictive temper, when it could be avoided.

Madge knew that her cousin had odd gloomy fits of passion at times, and she was always frightened at her in these moods. Indeed, though Olive appeared to grow completely out of them as she grew older, the memory of a scene she had passed through never left Madge all the rest of her life. A white kitten had been given to the children by Judith Trebilco. At first it had attached itself to Olive, but after a time the capricious little creature transferred its affections to Madge, and would hardly leave her side.

One night Olive, missing it, had found it asleep by Madge on her bed. She said nothing, but with set teeth and flashing eyes, snatched the kitten from Madge's grasp and flung it with all her force out of the open window, in spite of her cousin's screams and entreaties. It was killed instantly, its head striking a sharp stone, and though Mrs. Trevylian had beaten Olive severely (for the first and only time) she had maintained a dogged and impenitent silence.

And even now, though they were the best of friends, or apparently so, there were times when Madge failed to understand Olive, times when her aunt would watch her anxiously, yet secretly, with the shadow of ever growing dread upon her. Harold Carrington sat reading *The Penzance Herald*, or appearing to do so, while Olive, half hidden by a high old fashioned screen, was mending house linen at a small wicker table, but watching him furtively.

Presently she saw his face grow deathly pale, and he leaned his head on his hand with a groan. He did not see Olive, and she made no sound. Crushing up the paper with nervous force, he left the room. When, a little later, Mrs. Trevylian inquired for it, it was not to be found. The next day Olive walked down to the village and asked Ben Trebilco to get her another copy of that week's *Herald*, telling Judith to keep it until called for. Meanwhile she continued to watch every night at the window, and three times had she seen Harold go from the house and re-enter it again in the same stealthy way.

On the day appointed she called at the post office for the paper, and going on to the gorse covered moorland she sat down in the shadow of a deserted quarry, to read it alone. Twice she ran her eye over the sheets without finding any clue to what she sought. At last she turned to the advertisements. These also she read nearly through before the following words riveted her attention, and made her breath come in short, quick gasps:

Five Hundred Pounds Reward.--Missing since the beginning of July last, a gentleman aged from thirty-five to forty, tall, with dark hair beginning to turn gray, dark mustache, bronzed complexion, gray eyes; small crimson mole or birth mark on right temple: scar, deep as of cut, on back of one hand. When last seen was dressed in brown tweed suit, & wideawake to match, black tie, with Indian gold scarf ring. Linen probably marked IIC. Any one giving information as to the present whereabouts of the above described will receive the reward named. Bolton & Baker, solicitors, Andrew's Court, St. Swithin's Inn, London.

So that was why Harold Carrington had destroyed *The Penzance Herald*. That he was the person named in the notice Olive had not the shadow of a doubt. The description corresponded exactly. True, Harold had no mustache, but under the circumstances that slight discrepancy was easily accounted for. The rest agreed to a hair, even to the small red mark on the temple and the scar, which she had often noticed.

Once Mrs. Trevylian had asked how this had been done: but he had parried the question with an embarrassed laugh. Olive tore the newspaper to fragments, but cut out the notice first

with her pen knife and put it away carefully in her purse. Then, with an odd, cruel smile playing round her mouth and a look of set resolution on her face, she made her way home.

She came in by a path leading through the back garden, for, always secretive, even when there was no reason, she did not choose her aunt and cousin to know that she had been down to the village. Voices arrested her steps as she passed by a tiny rustic arbor, where she and Madge frequently sat with their work in summer. Olive paused and listened. Some words had met her ear that held her motionless with set lips and glittering eyes full of wild scorn and envious rage. Madge was the speaker: her companion was Harold Carrington.

"Yes, I have noticed it, though I have said nothing. You are looking ill, unlike yourself, Mr. Carrington. I have thought sometimes that you have had bad news – are in trouble, perhaps. I do not want to pry into your affairs, but if we could help you in any way – mother is very clever: she might think of something, and..." Madge blushed shyly and paused.

"And you? What then. Speak, Madge. Were it as you say, you would at least be sorry for me?" Harold's deep, keen eyes seemed to read her very soul.

"Indeed I should, Mr. Carrington: you know that well." Madge's eyes were suspiciously moist; Harold's frame quivered with uncontrollable agitation. He took the girl's hand in his and pressed it to his lips.

She did not resist, but looked at him with great startled eyes, into which a new light had come. In that moment Madge Trevylian stepped over and left behind forever the narrow boundary where womanhood and childhood meet.

"Madge, my little Madge, I am in trouble indeed. Child, you have guessed my secret. But no one can help me: I must bear my burden all alone in silence. Yet it comforts me to know you are sorry for me, dear."

She had hidden her face in her hands and was leaning upon the little, round, rustic table, trembling and not daring to lift her face to his gaze, lest he should read the truth and discover what she sought to hide from him.

"Yes," he continued, gently, "It makes it easier to bear. Oh, Madge!" with a cry of utter desolation. "You do not know what my life has been. I have touched the summit of a man's ambition, have been envied, courted, and yet how often those lines from 'Richard III' have crossed my mind: 'Nobody loves me, and if I die no soul will pity me.'"

"How can you say that? You are cruel: you do not know" Madge's eyes flashed, but sobs choked her voice, and again she hid her face, over which a scarlet flush had spread. The moment's glance had shown Harold all.

"Madge – dear one, is it possible that you care for me? Oh, child! Do not condemn me to eternal darkness after showing me one glimpse of heaven!" He held out his arms to her and drew her golden head down on to his true heart that had never beaten a pulse faster for any woman but herself.

"Tell me that you love me," he whispered, pressing passionate kisses on her soft red lips.

"Let me hear you say it sweetheart." So low that he could hardly distinguish the words, her answer came; but Harold was satisfied with it.

"You will tell mother to-night? What will she say? I hope she will not be angry," Madge said a few minutes later.

He averted his face for a moment from her gravely questioning eyes, then looked as frankly into hers. "Madge," he said at length, "I have done what is very wrong. From the first moment I saw you I loved you darling so much, that what it cost me to resolve never to let you know this you cannot realize. But the shadow of a great sorrow hung over me then; a sorrow

which has grown darker and more threatening of late. I cannot tell you what it is: for it touches another as well as myself. I will ask no woman to bear my name till I can do so with safety and honor. Madge, will you trust me a little longer? Will you keep the secret of our love from the world for a time, and be faithful to me, as I shall be to you? I ought not to have spoken; but your sweet sympathy and tenderness overcame my resolution, and, Madge, I am but human. Will you promise what I ask dear??"

"I will!" she answered firmly. "But I cannot deceive my mother. Though it has made me so happy to know you love me, we must return to our old footing of friendship only until she can be told all. I am sure you will see that this is right, and will not be angry."

"Angry? No, indeed sweet one. I honor you for your decision more than I can tell. So let it be, then. But you will kiss me once more, dear, in pledge that you meant what you said just now:" he pleaded. Once more their lips met; once more he pressed Madge to his heart. Then they left the summer house, for Mrs. Trevelyian's voice was heard calling for her...

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...daughter, and Harold longed to be alone with his new born happiness.

With livid face and somber, hate laden eyes Olive St. Maur rose up from behind the large clump of Portugal laurel, where she had knelt concealed, her ear against a chink in the rustic woodwork of the arbor. Harold and Madge had spoken in low tones, and Olive had only caught disconnected fragments of what had passed. But she had heard more than enough to fully decide her what use to make of the information she had gleaned from The Herald.

CHAPTER VII. A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

A few days after the occurrences just related Mrs. Trevelyian had an accident – slipping off a step ladder while nailing up a piece of creeper. She twisted her ankle, and the injury, though not serious, was sufficient to confine her to her room for some time. Hence a singular change which had taken place in Olive was unremarked by anyone. Madge was busy attending to her mother, and Harold Carrington too engrossed by the secret trouble, which haunted him day and night, to take heed of her.

A strange gulf seemed also to have widened between the cousins. Formerly, though so unlike, they had at least lived on friendly terms. But now Olive seemed to avoid Madge and to speak to her as little as possible, or if at all, in a taciturn, strained manner which, when her cousin noticed it, pained her. Still she took no serious heed, attributing it to one of "Olive's odd moods," which would sooner or later pass over.

Meanwhile Olive St. Maur's face grew thin and pale, and her great black eyes burned with unnatural luster from the hollows which began to form under them. She slept little and ate less, her whole appearance being that of a person whose nerves were strung up to the highest pitch, or who was a prey to the most terrible suspense. The atmosphere of the cottage seemed unbearable to her, and she would walk for miles on to the moor land, only stopping when dead beat through fatigue. An awful struggle was going on in her mind. The deed she meditated was one of such black treachery that, unscrupulous as her nature was, it made her pause. She recalled the many kindnesses Harold had done her, the gentle consideration with which he always treated her, but the evil angel was stronger than the good one.

Jealousy and hatred strove for the mastery, and were successful. Little dreaming of the dire danger which threatened him – a danger worse than any he already knew – Harold Carrington was lulled into a sort of false security. He thought he saw a way out of his trouble – difficult, perhaps and perilous, but his was not a nature to shrink from the cost of what he undertook.

Madge's love seemed somehow to have brought counsel as well as comfort. No word had been spoken between them since that memorable day that might not have been heard by all the world. But it was enough to understand each other – to be together.

Harold had been forced to lay aside his determination to leave Trevarrock. In fact, there were now the weightiest reasons why he could not do so.

"Hush! Step softly. He may hear ye; and he's sleeping, the first time for many night."

The sky brooded darkly over Trevarrock bay. Only a distant sullen roar and a faint glimmer of white at the foot of the cliffs showed through. The angry sea tore and lashed them in its wrath. A red gleam of light flashed for a moment at the door of Dinah Retallack's hut, and the old woman peered out into the murky night anxiously.

A figure stood without – that of a man, who had given three taps at the window before Dinah lifted the latch. "Come in, come in! Him as you want to see ain't come, but he will, he will, sure's life. Man ha' patience and wait a bit." she mumbled, pointing to the locker close by the fire.

The newcomer, a short, burly man, with weather beaten face and strong black beard, dressed in seafaring clothes and with a sou'wester pulled well down over his ears, obeyed. "Might gi' me sumrat to sweeten the waiting, then. But where's he – I mean him as you'm" – he began in low, growling tones.

"Hush!" She pointed with her thumb backwards towards a door, which seemed set in the solid rock. Then diving into a chest, she produced a square stone bottle and a glass. She poured some of the liquor into the latter and gave it to the man, who smacked his lips approvingly.

"That never paid duty, I'll go bail," he said with a gruff chuckle. "Prime grog. You've had it a mort o' vears, I reckon: for devil a keg has been run ashore at Trevarrock since I was a boy. Sah! Those were times."

"A still tongue makes a wise head; and there's other and fairer ways o' making a bit o' money. Your father and my man were friends, John Sholto, and you are about the only one round here I can trust. You may have a prickly skin like the chestnut, but you'm an honest-hearted child. When I heard your boat was off Penzance, I walked every step o' the way to see you. I had a dream-but never mind. Whisht! Here he comes. Mow you can hear all."

A low tap at the door interrupted Dinah's speech. She rose and admitted Harold Carrington, cautioning him as she had done John Sholto not to wake the sleeper in the inner room. Then she crept away in the darkness of the hut, leaving the two men in low and earnest conversation together.

CHAPTER VIIL PLOTTING.

"You think it can be done, then? Remember, money is no object. Any sum you like to name shall be yours if you are successful." Harold Carrington's voice was strained and eager as he gazed into the face of his companion.

"Done! Ay. What man has undone man can do. But 'twill be a risk, that I wain't gainsay: still John Sholto's not the one to mind that. Let alone it's every one's duty to help a naybur out o' a bit o' trouble.' I'll stand by'ee, sir, and hang the money."

John Sholto's keen little dark eyes sparkled, but not with greed. There was a rough frankness in his face, as well as his speech, that told Harold he might be trusted.

Besides, he had the daring and love of adventure innate in all west countrymen. "Capt. Jack," as he was familiarly called along the coast, had made many a wild and dangerous journey, that had nothing to do with herring or pilchard fishing; and his smack, the Lively Fanny, was one of the best built and fastest to be found from the Land's End to the Lizard.

"Agreed, then," said Harold, in the same low tones, producing a leathern bag from the breast of his coat. "But I would rather pay you now; one never knows what may happen. In case of success, it will have been fairly earned; in case of failure, the same," turning paler and his hand trembling slightly. "for you will have done your best. There are five hundred pounds in this bag in gold and notes. If all goes well I will make it five hundred more."

Capt. Jack's eyes grew round and he gasped for breath. A thousand pounds! That were a prize worth winning, indeed. There was, as he had said, no "free trade" worth the naming carried on along the coast now. Still, here and there a skipper with daring enough occasionally made a small private venture of his own. But the profits on a few boxes of cigars, a bale of gaudy silk handkerchiefs or a keg of raw spirits, secured at infinite risk and trouble, seemed to sink into beggarly insignificance all at once. A thousand pounds! Why, he was a made man for life. Buxom Molly Trelusa, the widowed handful of the Blue Boar at Penzance, would easily be brought to reason then, and he would leave sea going, and settle down as "mine host." in his own snug parlor with hot rum and water, and tobacco galore. Though Capt. Jack still loved adventure he was not so young as he once had been, and the prospect of a peaceful harbour in which to lay to at the end of his life was attractive. All these thoughts flitted rapidly through his mind.

Then he struck his horny, tar ingrained fist on the table with a force that made the brittle glass ring together, and Pixy, the black cat, spring, with bristling coat, away from the fire.

"I'm your man-and there's my hand on't. What Jack Sholto says – he means. If the thing is to be done – it shall be done."

"Good then, but when? Every moment of delay means danger." responded Harold, pointing to the door in the wall, and holding up a waving finger.

"To-morrow night, if you like. The smack is just inside the bay, and the moon rises about midnight. I'll be here at that time, and leave the rest to..."

"Why not now – at one?' Harold's tones were full of anxiety. "Need we wait?"

"Must," growled Sholto in his glass "Or it would ha' suited me to be off before this, I can tell 'ee. The ebb's going out, and I could'nt handle her past the Devil's Teeth in such a black night. It was all I could do to get into the bay."

"Have you a man on board you can trust:" pursued Harold earnestly. "'Everything, after all, depends on that."

"Ay, two good picked ones, father and son. They've sailed wi' me this twelve year. We know a bit too much about each other; they cain't play me false, never fear." said Capt., Jack, with knowing smile.

"You can tell them they shall be well paid for their help," said Harold.

"From now till tomorrow. Farwell my friend." he turned to leave forward into the light holding up a hand lantern to guide him out, and at a few whispered words pressed six gold pieces into his hands.

"Shall make him, it will, if he likes," she whispered, pressing into Harold's face with her sunken eyes.

"No you need'nt have troubled" Harold's voice was cold and hard. "Only its now from our talks that all is set for the time 2 to-morrow night." The old woman nodded as she drew back into the cottage. When she was once more alone she crouched down before the hearth, her face buried in her hands, motionless and silent save for the few muttered, disconnected words which escaped her toothless, puckered mouth. "

"A life for a life; ay, that's what the book says. I shut my ears and wudna listen but them words has been written in fire. I've seen 'em dead and now I shan't see 'em no more now".

"A life for a life: ay, but if I save one shown then? Them drowned faces wi' their 'sting eyes, mebbe I won' t see those either, and my old bones will rest peaceful when I die. He spoke kind to me, the bonny chiel: his face was like my Ben's:" she rocked herself to and fro in the silent agony of despair, which the old cottage walls had been so often the dumb witnesses.

Suddenly Pixy gave a low hiss and a growl and leaped on to her shoulder. She looked up quickly. The cat's green, glaring eyes were fixed on the small window behind her. Her blood curdled in her veins. A pale face, framed with storm tossed elf locks of black hair, was pressed close against the dim, thick glass.

At least so Dinah Retallack fancied. But it vanished instantly, and the old woman, with a shudder, cowered closer to the fire. The apparition, for so she thought it was, boded no good, it was a bad omen as regarded the success of the morrow's enterprise. She shook her head and brooded darkly over what seemed one proof more that the curse of fate hung over her.

CHAPTER IX. RUN TO EARTH.

Madge Trevelyian in her neat dark blue linen gown, with its spotless collar and cuffs, a little bunch of ox-eyed....

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...daisies tucked into her trim waistbelt, was alone in the pleasant parlor, the breakfast tray already on the table, Neither Olive nor Harold Carrington had as yet appeared, and it was getting late.

She ran up to her cousin's room and tapped at the door, but received no reply, so she tried to open it. In vain, it was bolted inside, Madge felt uneasy and pushed harder. The fastening, which was not very strong, gave way, and the door flew open. She started back amazed at what she saw. Olive, pale as a ghost, stood in the middle of the floor. Her dress, which appeared soaked and heavy with water clung round her, her hair was disheveled and wet and her hat and jacket lay on the bed. She turned peevishly on Madge.

"What on earth did you come bursting into the room like that for? Why didn't you wait for me to open the door," she asked, crossly, twisting up her damp plaits and turning her face away towards the glass.

"I did knock; but what is the matter. Olive? Where can you have been to get so wet? One would think you had been out all night." Madge said. The latter words were spoken in careless

haste, but Olive turned on her cousin with such a strange expression in her eyes that she recoiled, frightened.

"What a mad idea!" she answered scornfully. "And, pray, what should I be out all night for? No; such things are, I suspect, more in your line, Miss Madge, sly and demure as you are. I have no lover with whom to hold secret meetings. No, I have simply been for a bathe before breakfast, that is all, and coming back I slipped on a bit of wet rock and fell into a pool of sea water. So much for your mare's nest, my innocent minded cousin," she added, a cold sneer on her lips.

Madge, though unsophisticated and gentle, was not without a certain simple dignity of her own. "I do not know what you mean by attacking me like this, Olive; but I see, of course, that you have guessed my secret" she flushed as she spoke. "I am at your mercy, for it is useless to try and make you understand that we did not mean to deceive anyone. But Harold must know now that I cannot be silent any longer."

Madge was pale and her lips were firmly set, as she turned to leave the room. Olive saw she had gone too far. She had not meant to betray herself thus, but rage had mastered her.

"Wait." she said hastily, seizing Madge's gown. "What a little fool you are! Of course, I was only joking. If you are wise you will say nothing to Harold Carrington. In time all that puzzles you now will be made clear. Some day you will thank me for it."

"Olive, what do you mean": Madge was thoroughly alarmed by her wild words and demeanor. "I – Oh, nothing!" Olive burst into a laugh – hollow, wretched, with no ring of mirth in it.

"Go away, and forget all I have said. I will keep your secret, never fear." And with this Madge was forced to be content.

On reflection she determined not to tell Harold anything of what had passed. It would only distress him needlessly; and had he not hinted to her only yesterday that he hoped soon all necessity for concealment would be past?

When all three met at the breakfast time there was no sign to show how full of electricity the air was, how strained the relations between the trio, save an unusual silence. But later Olive's words came back to Madge, fraught with a new and terrible meaning.

The night was still, though a faint ripple broke the dark even surface of the sea, and a flying scud of black ringed clouds chased each other over the steel blue sky, hiding from time to time the pale disc of the full moon. Silently, stealthily the Lively Fanny stole into the bay; her masts and rigging cutting with their sharp lines the moon's white face. There were steps on the sands, low voices and the grating of a boat's keel on the shingle. Then a soft whistle sounded three times, and in response, a red light flashed for a moment from the bow of the smack, vanishing as quickly.

It was Capt. Jack's signal to the anxious watchers on the shore. A boat was ready to put off to the smack. In it were three persons – a man and a boy – the two sailors of whom Jack Sholto had spoken to Harold Carrington in Dinah Retallack's hut – and another old man, with flowing white hair and beard, also dressed in a seaman's gear, blue jersey and oilskin hat. Harold Carrington arranged his long dark ulster, and Dinah herself stood on the beach – the latter screening a forlorn lantern from the wind with her robe. It was a strange, weird night, and the scream of a distant curlew seemed like a banshee wailing for the dead.

A few whispered words passed between Harold and the old seaman, who sat in the stern of the boat. "You will not forget your promise? If you keep it I shall not grudge anything I have

dared or sacrificed for you." Harold said in a subdued undertone that sounded husky and strained.

He held out his hand, and the other pressed it with trembling, nervous grasp. "Indeed I will not, so help me God, Harold old fellow. I swear if I get out of this all right I.. " He could not finish his speech.

"Hush!" Old Dinah touched him on the sleeve suddenly, pulling him back from the boat. Her face worked with agitation, and her hand was held up to her "Did ye hear yeow? We're in trouble as sure as there's a heaven above us!" she muttered, hoarsely. There was a measured tramp of foot falls on the sand – distant but clearly defined.

"Pull for your lives!" Harold whispered fiercely. The men obeyed, and Harold stepping almost waist high in the water that tossed and surged around him, helped to push the boat off. Not a moment too soon. "The tide..."

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...had risen, and ominous white lines showed themselves upon the dark water. A gust struck the boat, which made it pitch heavily, and sink into the trough of waves. Then it was seen plowing its way gallantly through the surf; the veil of darkness had next moment hidden it from sight.

Meanwhile the steps had come nearer – quite close. In spite of Dinah's entreaties, Harold had not moved, but stood gazing seaward. His pale face wore a strange expression of triumph, and a faint smile curved his lips as four men – two wearing the uniform of police officers and two in plain clothes – came into the circle of light shed by the lantern.

"I think I know what your business is," he said calmly, going up to one of the latter. "You are Inspector Venner of Penzance, and you have a warrant for the arrest of Hubert Carewe, late manager for the firm of Vanneck & Blackmore, diamond merchants, who was supposed to have gone abroad last July on business for that firm, and, failing to return at the appointed time, was proved to have absconded with a large sum of money he had in his charge. He had, however, in reality, never left England, and has been lying hidden at Trevarrock, hoping to make his escape. Well." he continued deliberately, with a strange inflection in his voice, "your search is ended, Mr. Venner: and you, Sergt. Clarke," turning to the other man in plain clothes, whom he recognized as a noted London detective, "need fear no resistance on my part. It would, I know be as foolish as useless. I am ready to accompany you."

The two men stared at each other aghast. Such utter coolness, such consummate audacity they had never met with in the course of their professional experience. Clarke recovered himself first. "You have put it correctly, sir," he said with a grim smile, "and I am bound to say I think you take a sensible view of the matter. I've got a trap waiting round the corner, if you will kindly step this way. No need for these, eh, Inspector?" As he spoke something bright glittered in the moonlight – a pair of steel hand cuffs.

"Certainly not. I have not the least wish to try and escape," said Harold, with the same strange smile. His captors little imagined with what double significance his last words were fraught. Old Dinah's hut was searched without result, the Witch of Trevarrock standing by, shaking her head and wringing her hands, though the police officers could get nothing out of her to further incriminate Harold.

Fearing that the worst might happen, though as yet he guessed nothing of the treacherous means by which his secret had been betrayed, Harold had entrusted Dinah with a letter to deliver

in such case to Madge Trevylian. It was merely a few lines imploring her to believe in him and trust him a little longer, however sorely appearances were against him.

As the men left the bay a light flashed again from the Lively Fanny. Harold's heart gave a leap of joy. The boat had reached the smack in safety.

Before starting on his journey to London Harold Carrington made a singular request to Sergt. Clarke. It was that Messrs. Vanneck & Blackmore, his supposed late employers, should be at once apprised of his capture by telegraph and asked to meet him on his arrival with the detectives at Scotland Yard.

"It's rather out of course, but perhaps I can manage it," said the detective stroking his beard reflectively. "He's a deep card, and no mistake. Wants to do the soft, and thinks they'll let him off if he disgorges the plunder. He can't have made away with much of it in that out of the way hole, Trevarrock," he thought.

"You will not regret having granted the request," said Harold. "Oh, it's no good trying a bribe, if you mean that," said Clarke, an honest enough specimen of his class.

"Look here, sir: I don't think I ought to talk to you like this, only I see that, though you've got into this scrape, you're a gentleman and not likely to take mean advantage of me. My advice to you is make terms and give back the – you know what. I've reason to know the parties most concerned won't be hard on you if you do, and very likely the whole thing may be hushed up. I've seen a deal o' life you'll pardon me, sir, eh?" The officer took an involuntary respectful tone in speaking to his prisoner, whom he secretly somewhat admired for his cool daring and pluck.

"Thanks, my good fellow. I do not think Messrs. Vanneck & Blackmore will be hard on me." Again the same strange smile crossed his pallid face, but they only thought it meant bravado.

They were in the express, in a first class compartment, whirling on their way to London. The two men whom the detective had brought with him accompanied them, but Harold's conversation was carried out in such low tones as to be inaudible to them. If Detective Clarke had been astonished by what had passed, he was doubly so when, a few hours later, after an interview with the chief of police and Messrs. Vanneck & Blackmore, Harold Carrington walked out of Scotland Yard a free man.

"A mistake, that is all. No blame to you. You are in every way exonerated. The charge has been withdrawn," was all the information, curtly given, that the detective received from the head of his department.

"I'll swear that he was the man. though." said Clarke, naturally nettled. "Wily..." he stopped abruptly. "He told me as much in the train. Confound his impudence! What can it mean?"

It was not every man who would have come so freely, but the detective in charge was valued and privileged. "What can it mean? Why, simply that he has been grilled. You may think that not being a very firm detective, but what ...

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.... can we do but let the fellow go? Though the likeness to the description baffled me as much as it did you, I own. But I advise you to let the matter drop. A still tongue makes a wise head."

A few days later the worthy detective received a fifty pound note by post. He never discovered the sender, but made a shrewd guess as to the source whence it came, and wisely resolved to bury the memory of his strange adventure at Trevarrock in oblivion.

On leaving Scotland Yard Harold Carrington jumped into a hansom, and directed the man to drive as fast as he could to Messrs. Bolton & Barkers', the solicitors whose names had appeared in the mysterious advertisement in *The Penzance Herald*.

The senior partner started when Harold was shown into his private room, but his visitor explained his errand in a few words. When he had done speaking he laid a long thin slip of paper on the table.

It was a check for five thousand pounds. He then drew another sheet of paper from an envelope and handed it to Mr. Bolton, asking him to receipt and sign it. It ran thus:

Received the sum of £5,000, in discharge of liabilities on the part of Mr. Hubert Carewe to the firm of Vanneck & Blackmore.

BOLTON & BARKER. Solicitors to the above.

Harold folded it up and put it in his pocket with a sigh of relief. The cloud that had hung over him for years rolled away as he did so.

"This conduct does you the highest honor. Believe me, I am proud to know you, Mr..." began the lawyer. "Carrington, please," interrupted Harold with a smile. "By the by, there is one thing more I have to request of you. An anonymous letter was sent here, after the appearance of your advertisement in the *Penzance paper*, so Mr. Vanneck told me. He has empowered me to ask you for it."

Harold's voice was stern, for a faint inkling of the truth had begun to dawn on his mind. "We inserted the notice in many local papers, especially those of seaport towns. It was worded carefully, for until all chance was past of Mr. Hubert Carewe's reappearance, we did not wish for more publicity than could be helped. An odd coincidence that you should know that the likeness should be so striking."

Mr. Bolton bent a keen glance on the old. The shrewd old lawyer had at once divined his secret. Harold saw this, but turned the subject with a distressed look.

"The letter?" He held out his hand for it. When he saw the writing, all the colour rushed in a dark red hush to his brow.

"Traitor!" he hissed between his strong white teeth, but so low that Mr Bolton did not hear him.

"Thanks," he said quietly, and then "Mr. Vanneck said I might have it. Good-bye." In a few moments he was again in the hansom and driving to Cromwell Road South Kensington, with all speed.

"I must see Beatrice and get her to go down to Trevarrock with me, if she will. My poor darling! I cannot bear to think of what she may be enduring. Well, it will not be for long; and deeply as Olive has injured once, I will spare her, for Madge's sake. My sweet little love! What will she think when she learns who Harold Carrington really is."

CHAPTER X THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

On the day following Harold Carrington's night journey to London with detective Clarke, Madge Trevylian rose early, as was her custom, to prepare breakfast. The fire had been already lighted in the little parlor by the young girl who came up from the village for a few hours each

morning to help with the rougher work. This girl let herself into the kitchen outside, generally before anyone was up, and cleaned the kitchen first.

Madge was always the first to come downstairs, Olive the last. Of hate Harold Carrington also had often pleaded indulgence for a tardy appearance at the breakfast table. This morning, Keturah, the "help" came to Madge, with perturbation in her face, saying she had found a pane of the kitchen window broken.

"I'm sure I never hit it. He warn't broke vesterm'ni when I was here, miss. That I do know," was all the girl could say tearfully.

"It cannot be helped, anyway," said Madge gently, "accidents will happen. Do not worry. I will go and look at it while you lay the cloth."

The pane was splintered in a peculiar manner. It looked almost as though a stone had been thrown, and Madge's eyes involuntarily sought the floor. Quicker than Keturah she spied the missile lying among the broken glass. It was a round pebble with a piece of paper wrapped round it, which she unfolded curiously.

A moment later Keturah heard a fall and a cry, and coming into the kitchen, found Madge lying on the floor white and insensible. Alarmed, she rushed up to Mrs. Trevylian, who flung on her dressing gown and came down at once, and while she tried to bring back consciousness to the stricken girl, and tremblingly clasped the icy, careless hands, a crumpled bit of paper fell out of them – the writing on it was familiar – and as she read it her face took an expression of utter bewilderment.

Helping Keturah to put Madge on the parlor sofa, she went to Harold Carrington's room and boldly opened the door. The chamber was empty; the bed had not been slept in, though an open portmanteau stood by the wall, and his clothes hung in the press.

Meanwhile, Olive had come downstairs. Mrs. Trevylian started back with added alarm, almost terrified at the sight of her wretched face and haggard eyes. A lost soul, wandering in depths of darkness, could not have looked more desperate, and yet there was an air of fierce defiance about her not good to see. Mrs. Trevylian shuddered as she looked at her, and said sternly:

"Come with me. I have something to say to both you and Madge." She shut the door after them both, and locked it. Madge sat up on the sofa, staring with wide, grief-dried eyes into vacancy.

"Mother-oh, mother, forgive me!" She threw herself on her knees by Mrs. Trevylian's side.

"Indeed, I will tell all. I know I have done wrong, but do not condemn me unheard." In broken accents, her head bowed on her mother's knees, as in childhood, Madge unfolded her story, concealing extenuating nothing.

"Olive, do you know anything of this wretched business? Were you, too, in the plot to hoodwink me?"

"I know all," answered Olive, in hard, dry tones. "You were both infatuated with Harold Carrington, but I saw through him from the first. Look at this." She produced the advertisement from *The Penzance Herald* from her purse, and handed to Mrs. Trevylian, who read it, and gave it, with a pitiful look, to Madge, who sprang to her feet, the colour all returning to her face.

"I do not believe it," she cried, scornfully and angrily. "What proofs have you that Harold Carrington is the man named here? Though all the world doubt him. I will believe in his faith, honour and honesty." Her whole frame quivered with excitement.

"Hush! Madge," said her mother, forcing her back into her seat, but not unkindly.

"I wish to put a few questions to your cousin. Why did you not tell me this before, Olive?" she asked, sternly.

"Simply because I knew you would not believe in it if I had no further proofs to offer. But I have. Wait till five this evening and you shall know all. Inspector Venner will be here from Penzance; I have made the appointment with him," she concluded, with a bitter triumph in her tones.

Mrs. Trevylian looked at her niece with a thrill of curious revulsion, chilling all the kindness of her heart. "I am at a loss to account for this conduct on your part," she said in a tone of stern disapproval, "and think you have forgotten yourself strangely in daring to act on your own responsibility in my house. Whatever Harold Carrington is, was, or may have done, nothing can excuse deceit or treachery."

She would not condescend to ask Olive to explain herself further, but awaited, like Madge, with terrible anxiety, the issue of events. Olive went up to her own room and locked herself in. She little dreamed how soon her weapons were to be turned upon herself.

Evening came, and with it Inspector Venner. Mrs. Trevylian received him with her usual austerity of manner, as she sat bolt upright in her oak armchair in the parlor. Madge and Olive were also in the room: the former pale and composed, the latter scornful, reckless and defiant.

"Your business is, I believe, with my niece:" said Mrs. Trevylian coldly, her eyes bent on her knitting. She was not the woman to wear her heart upon her sleeve or to crave sympathy from others, however cruelly tricked and deceived she might have been.

"I wish you to tell my aunt, Mrs. Trevylian, all you know concerning Mr. Harold Carrington," said Olive, harshly, and her white face looked ghastly and wan as she turned it towards the light.

"Is it not true that you arrested him last night in Trevarrock bay, as having absconded from London with a large sum of money? Yes, you need neither of you look at me like that"- turning to her aunt and cousin. "I may as well confess at once that I saw the advertisement and gave the information which led to the capture of, this accomplished swindler. Madge, you will thank, me one day for this."

"It's true enough, what the young lady says. And that reminds me" The inspector pulled a greasy leather pocket book out of his breast. "These here were left for you by Detective Clarke. You've fairly earned 'em, that's a fact. By George, ma'am!" he added, turning to Mrs. Trevylian, "the young lady 'ud be a credit to the profession." He spread out several bank notes on the table and pushed them towards Olive.

And then Mrs. Trevylian rose. She seemed inches taller, her eyes literally blazed with humiliated pride and anger; her voice was clear and rang out through the room in a way that made her hearers start and tremble. "Take the accursed things out of my sight! They are the price of blood! Oh, Olive, Olive! My sister's child, you who have been to me as my own all these years, is it possible you can have stooped to this? Great and merciful God! What have I done that such shame should come upon my gray hairs?"

"I never thought of the money – I do not want it," Olive said sullenly, sweeping the notes away with a weak gesture.

"The notes belong to Vanneck & Blackmore," a voice broke in, "to which gentlemen our friend here will no doubt have pleasure in returning them. You and Detective Clarke made a mistake for once, Inspector Venner."

A hoarse cry fell from Olive's lips as she found herself standing face to face with the man she had accused, and she trembled from head to foot.

"Mr. Carrington!" It was all Mrs. Trevelyian could say; while the flush came back to Madge's white cheeks and the joy to her eyes.

"Not Mr. Carrington, but Harold Carewe." interrupted another voice. They all turned towards the speaker, who had entered the room after Harold. A tall, handsome woman, burst in on rather too large and intrusive scale, but quiet and dignified looking in her rich mantle of slate colored velvet and white fur and big Rubens hat with its white plumes'.

"Harold Carewe? Yes. Our Harold Carewe; the great...

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...actor of the Eleusis theatre: the friend of Irving and Salvini, and second to neither in genius or fame," said Beatrice Dalmaine, heedless of Harold's deprecatory gesture.

"I will tell my story in my own way. One, at least, here will, I know be interested in it," she continued, with a smile at Madge, showing her fine white teeth. The girl warmed at once to the kindness and bonhomie of her tone.

"I must first introduce myself as a connection of Harold Carewe's by marriage (and the manageress of the Elensis theatre), a humble instrument perhaps in helping him a few rungs up the ladder of fame."

"My best and most generous of; friends, without whom I should never have gained the few poor laurels I possess," Harold put in, but Beatrice Dalmaine went on as though she heard not.

CHAPTER XI

Some time ago Harold Carewe while at Herne Manor, the seat of the late Earl of Penshurst, saved, at the risk of his own life, the only son of the widowed countess from drowning. It was a gallant rescue, and in effecting it Harold caught a chill which nearly caused his death. He recovered slowly, and partly for change and rest, and partly.."

"Need you tell that, Beatrice?" Harold's brow wore a dark flush, but Mrs. Dalmaine would not be silenced. "Partly to escape the almost too effusive gratitude of the mother, a beautiful young widow – oh, you needn't look like that dear," with a nod and smile at Madge: "There was nothing in the world in it, hut gossip is over busy with the affairs of the aristocracy and of those who lead public lives. Harold Carewe came to these wilds for a time, assuming, in order to escape notice, a feigned name. I am not surprised now at his having tarried so long, though I confess it puzzled me till I received this anonymous letter." She gave a penetrating glance at Olive, who tried to slink into the darkest corner of the room, and took the letter from her pocket.

"The writer has evidently got hold of a note of mine to Harold, and interpreted it in a way that would be only too ludicrous, were not the whole thing so mean and base. In my letter. I asked him to return saying the whole thing had blown over' By this I meant that the announcement of Lady Penshurst's approaching marriage with an elderly person (which I read in the society journals) would effectually silence gossiping tongues. I also begged him for business reasons to come back. I was playing a part in a revived piece, which never suited me, with inadequate support, and London was clamoring for the return of its popular favorite. I signed myself Beatrice – we have always been Beatrice and Harold to each other since I married Tom Dalmaine, his cousin. This seems to have given my mysterious correspondent cause to think I was Harold Carewe's wife. Well, anyhow, she failed to make me very jealous, but I knew there

was mischief brewing. When Harold Carewe came and told me about the strange events of the past week, I was not wholly unprepared. Now, Harold, speak if you like – I own it is fairly your turn."

"Mrs. Dalmaine has told you what is quite true, save for a little high colouring, so kindly meant," said Harold, with his old grave smile. "But there is a sadder part of my story which she did not know, and which I now make public for the first time. When a boy I was left alone in the world. I had a twin brother, Hubert, who was all in all to me. The likeness between us was so extraordinary that it was almost impossible to tell us apart. In fact, we prided ourselves upon it, so great was our love for each other, and to such an extent did we carry this feeling that my brother Hubert, having one day cut his hand badly, I, too, was foolish enough to cut mine, that he should not suffer alone.

"Here is the mark," holding out his hand. "I remember you asking me about it one day, and that I turned off the question, ashamed of my boyish freak. But to return to Hubert. We both had sufficient fortunes left us. My bent was always towards the stage, and an indulgent, or indifferent guardian, did not check it. For many years I worked hard and in obscurity, but at last my chance came, when the goddess Fortune led me to the Eleusis. But although I prospered, it was not so with poor Hubert: he spent fortune gratifying: a passion for wandering all over the world in search of adventure, returning finally broken down in health and purse.

"Then I discovered to my horror that he had acquired a taste for gambling. More than once this brought him into: terrible scrapes from which I extricated him with the greatest trouble. Finally, he went off to South Africa and to my relief and surprise wrote me word that he had obtained a situation in the firm of Vanneck & Blackmore. After a while he returned to London, where they have a branch establishment; and all seemed going well, though at times I doubted and was still anxious about him.

"He knew of my leaving for Cornwall, and had my address, writing to me from time to time in such sanguine, cheerful vein that my misgivings began to fade. But at last the blow fell. Again the old temptations assailed him, and while traveling he fell in with a company of adventurers and swindlers, who not only stripped him of every penny of his own, but also stole a valise he was carrying, which contained a large sum of money, the property of his employers. In a very agony of grief and despair, after trying in vain to track those who had robbed him, he made his way to Penzance, taking passage on board a coal brig as a common sailor.

"Afterwards he wrote, begging me to come to him, giving me a brief sketch of what had happened.

"A wild idea came to me, born of my visit to Dinah Retallack's cottage, in the solitary bay. I brought my brother Hubert there by night, disguising him as an old man and promising to pay the 'Witch of Trevarrock' well if she would help me to get him out of the country.

"I intended first to do this and then out of my own pocket make good their loss to Vanneck & Blackmore on condition of their relinquishing further proceedings. I was aware that to Hubert's employers the tale that he had been robbed would sound wildly improbable.

"How my plan prospered you already know. But I do not grudge the momentary pain and humiliation. Vanneck & Blackmore are paid, and Hubert is free. He handed Bolton & Barker's receipt" to Mrs. Trevelylian, adding, with a smile:

"And thus is solved the mystery of Harold Carrington. Forgive my long story."

A pale flush tinged Mrs. Trevelylian's withered face. "It is a story that does you nothing but honour," she said, "and goes far to make me pardon you for stealing the most precious thing I possess."

"Mother, oh, forgive us." The girl sprang forward at the softening words, and Harold Carewe also joined his entreaties to hers.

"It was all my fault, but I would make no woman my wife, until the unfortunate stigma hanging over my poor brother was cleared up. I should not have spoken of my love, you will say (and justly) till then; but are we not all human? With Madge, I entreat you to forgive us."

Mrs. Trevelyian drew her daughter towards her and held out her hand to Harold, who pressed it silently and warmly. "I, too, was young once," she said in trembling tones, "and I am glad to give my child to you. I know that you will make her happy."

He did not speak, but stooping over Madge, kissed her softly on the brow. During the latter part of the conversation Inspector Venner had quietly opened the French window, and discreetly stood star gazing on the lawn. Harold now stepped out and followed him, and a few words passed between them, ending in the transfer of a crisp bit of paper to the inspector's breast pocket.

"To make up for my having been the wrong man," he said, with a smile. "I am glad you were here tonight, to hear all cleared up." It was Madge who, finding that Olive had gone from the room, went in search of her, and at last found her, sitting alone in the dark summer house – pale, cold, her dress wet with the night dew.

"All is forgotten. No one will ever speak of it to you. Will you not come in, dear?" she said gently, putting her arm round the miserable girl's waist. The simple action, and words of kindness, broke down the icy barriers of hate and jealousy; and dry hard sobs shook Olive's frame.

"Oh, Madge, if I were only half as good as you are – but I will try indeed – but he?" she shivered and drew back.

"If you mean Harold, you need fear no reproaches from him. You do not know how kind, how generous he is. I know, dear Olive, that what you did was wrong, but I am sure, and so is he, that you are very sorry for it. No real harm has been done after all." There was an instant of silence, and then Madge went on, timidly.

"We are to be married next month. It seems soon, but Harold will have it so. Kiss me and wish me joy." The girls' lips met in the darkness and Olive's cheeks were wet. And thus by kindly, gentle means was the dark wild nature softened.

Olive St. Maur never forgot the bitter lesson she had received, and the strange, sullen moods that alarmed Mrs. Trevelyian, lest the girl should have inherited the terrible insanity, in which her father had destroyed himself, grew scarcer and scarcer. If Harold Carrington even guessed, that she had once loved him in her odd, passionate way, he kept the secret to himself.

And Olive? She never married, though she had many chances when a frequent guest at Madge and Harold's beautiful house in London, she mixed freely in brilliant society. Under Mrs. Dalmaine's teaching, she became one of the finest tragic actresses of modern times, and in the pursuit of her art she found her life's object.

Hubert Carewe redeemed his promise well and nobly to his brother, but never returned to England again. The cottage of the "Witch of Trevarrock" still stands, solitary and shunned, under the wild rocks of the bay. But old Dinah did not long enjoy the liberal pension that Harold Carewe settled on her. One morning the neighbors, having seen no smoke from her chimney for some days, broke in the hut door. The old woman lay stretched, stiff and cold, by the hearth, her face calm and still in the sleep of death. She looked years younger, and there was almost a smile on the pale mute lips. "Life for a life." Had she then atoned? Was the restless spirit at peace? One

of the neighbors bolder than the rest, tried to lift Pixy, the black cat, from where he crouched near his mistress' breast, but Pixy, too, was asleep, and would never walk again.

THE END.