

and sunny, she ventured to wheel her chair into the garden. "Alas!" she said, with ineffable sadness, looking upon the westering sun, "it is the sunset of life for me." "Say not so, dear lady," cried the now impetuous lover, "please God, there are many years of life and happiness before you." "It cannot be, sir," she answered simply, lowering her head. "I am a doomed woman." "If you had someone to love you and care for you," cried Leigh, "it would be a new lease of life." "I pray you," she answered, "not to speak in this way to me; I will not pretend to be ignorant of your chivalrous attention; but I cannot accept it." However, Leigh pressed on, and won at last a promise to think of the matter at leisure. He explained that he was no fortune-hunter, that he had eighty thousand pounds in his strong room at Spalding. "That is a great sum," answered the invalid, "it is more than all my pretty toys are worth. But I know your spirit," she went on, "it is a noble and chastened one. I could never suspect an unworthy motive in you, Mr. Leigh."

The lover went home in high spirits; he felt sure that she would yield. Ultimately she did so. "I cannot be a true wife to you, Gordon," she said, "we must be resigned to the will of Heaven that we did not meet thirty years ago. But I offer you what I can, and it may be that Heaven will in some way ratify these true vows exchanged on earth."

And thus the woman who had defied the greatest crooks in South Africa and London stepped blindly into the net of the wily scoundrel.

She was to live in Leigh's house, of course; it was far finer than her own, and he had made the necessary alterations for her convenience.

She sent over to his house only two trunks, for she needed few clothes, poor lady; but the little safe went with her on her chair to the church. She would not let it out of her sight, even with Leigh to take the responsibility for its safety. And indeed, the attendants at the wedding included a couple of private detectives paid by him to look out for the London contingent.

After the wedding they went to the house of the bridegroom. Leigh heaved a sign of relief as he pushed to the door of the strong room on the precious little safe. "Now everything is in good keeping, little wife!" he cried cheerfully, "I won't reveal the combination, even to you."

It has previously been remarked that Mr. Gordon Leigh had not neglected the study of Holy Scripture in the matter of putting trust in princes; but he should have gone further, and read attentively that passage which advises the wayfaring man not to lay up treasure upon the earth, where rust and moth do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

For the night had not passed without event. In the morning Mrs. Leigh expressed a desire to see her diamonds; she wished to choose a brilliant for her husband's hand. But on arriving at the strong room, the door was found wide open; the little safe had disappeared bodily; and so had Mr. Gordon Leigh's Eighty Thousand Pounds.

The police were, of course, notified; London was telegraphed; everything possible was done; but to the hour of this writing no clue has been found.

I wish I could end my story here. But I must add that Leigh's behavior was insufferably brutal. Marital recriminations became acute, though the bride's health hardly permitted her to raise her voice above a whisper. But she told the Scotland Yard people flatly that she had no evidence of the existence of the gold be-

yond her husband's word, that she believed the whole affair to be a plot between Leigh and one of his Illicit Diamond Buying Friends to rob her of her property. I doubt whether the Yard dissented very strongly from this view. But when the inspector had gone, Leigh said roughly; "get out of here, you ——" I shall not soil my pen with his epithet. The poor lady burst into tears. Half fainting, she was wheeled back to her own house by the indignant nurse.

The next day the vicar called to condole with her — and, incidentally, with himself.

"You shall not lose," she said, "by this affair. On my death I shall see to it that an equivalent sum reaches your fund. I have still some private fortune. As for me, after this loss, and what is more to me, this humiliation, I cannot remain in Spalding. I will rest my bones elsewhere. This blow has broken me."

The good vicar did his best to cheer her.

"No," she sighed, with yet a sweet and subtle smile that bore witness to her resignation to the will of heaven, "no. I feel myself fading imperceptibly away."

Here, in tragedy and pathos, ends the record of a true Englishwoman.

Virtue rewarded! I had just finished my diligent account when Fée came into the café. With her was our friend Sid Sloper, known to the world of racing as The Mite, in allusion to his stature, on the one hand, and his fondness for cheese, on the other. He shook hands with me; Fée embraced me before all the multitude. "Journeys end in lovers' meetings," she cried. "Now, Sid, you be off; don't dare miss the boat!" "He's riding at Monte Carlo," she explained, when he had gone. "But you, sir? Did I kiss you too soon? Have you been faithful to me?"

"I have, Cynara, in my fashion," I evaded.

"Well, I've been faithful in the old fashion, by the simple process of fidelity," she laughed. "And, I say, let's get married this very afternoon as ever is, and go off round the world!"

"We will not," I said. "I don't know what you've been doing, but I've been 'robbing Miss Horniman.' Ten is all I have in the world!"

"You shouldn't have robbed the poor old lady," she pouted. "Now, I did better. I was Miss Horniman!"

"Your rest-cure seems to have done you no good!"

"I'm serious, boykins dear. You know what the doctor said — milk — complete rest — massage — no love — no books. You see, Miss Horniman really happened to be my aunt, and she left me the house when she died, two years ago. So I made up like her, and had duplicate safes, one with a nice nest for the Mite, the other with trays and paste diamonds, and the one real one that Erphemia lent me to fool Mr. Gordon Leigh, of whose little idiosyncrasies I had wind. So all I had to do was to get Sid into the strong room; at night he just walked out, and let in two pals, and they took all the gold to a car, and O! to see London once again! They took a quarter; I've got ten thousand in notes sewn in my frock; and the rest is in your name in about twenty different banks. So come along right down to the Strand and marry me, dear! It's not tainted money!"

"The money's all right," I said, "though I must say it's playing it rather low down to spring all this Wooden-Horse — Ali Baba stuff on us in the twentieth century."

"You told me to read the classics!" she chirped. "Now for the Wedding March!"