

'Pomeroy had everything—wealth, home, friends, and you! You are the first woman I ever cared for, and I determined to have you by fair means or foul. Knowing Mrs. Pomeroy's narrow bigotry and your own pure, proud spirit, I conjectured it was only necessary to throw slight suspicion upon you to cause the breaking off of your engagement.'

He paused, drawing in his breath sharply, a spasm of pain crossing his face. Elizabeth bent over him in alarm.

'Please hush, Captain Yorke!' she entreated earnestly, a strange excitement stirring her pulses.

He lay for some moments with closed eyes, and when at length he resumed his story, the girl was compelled to listen attentively in order to catch the low, disjointed sentences.

'Believe me—I did not intend wronging you—I had—made no definite plan. When Mrs. Pomeroy called me into the room to look at her cross—I slipped it into your bag—with the intention—'

'You put it in my bag—you?'

Elizabeth started back, staring at him with wide, horrified eyes, scarcely believing her own ears.

'Don't!' he said weakly, putting out an appealing hand. 'I—I didn't mean—I was—called away—and—and—' His voice trailed off into silence.

Elizabeth never knew how long she sat there alone with the unconscious man—whether it was days or only hours until help arrived. She felt dazed and stunned and strangely humbled. All her bitter cynicism fell from her; and for the first time in her life she found herself envying her sister's simple, childish faith.

Janet knew, as soon as her eyes rested upon her, that something unusual had occurred during her absence; but no word of explanation passed between them. Their whole attention was given to the wounded man, until he was placed in the hospital and made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

Elizabeth paced the long corridor for an hour, waiting, in an agony of suspense, torn by a thousand emotions, for the doctor's verdict. Janet, who had gone to the hotel for her sister's wrap, returned just as the doctor came into the hall. He shook his head gravely.

'There is no hope. He has but a few hours to live,' he said, coming to the point at once in his abrupt way.

'Oh!' Elizabeth gasped, sitting down suddenly.

'He rallied for a few minutes, however,' the doctor continued, with a keen glance into her white, startled face—'long enough to make a confession, which I wrote down at his request. It completely exonerates Miss Elizabeth Morley of a grave charge.'

'What—what is it?' Janet cried, running to her sister. 'What does it mean, Elizabeth?'

'It means, dear, that your prayers have been answered,' Elizabeth returned in a low tone. 'The tangle has been straightened out.'

'Here is the document,' said the doctor, in a business-like tone. 'I was to give one copy to you and send another to Mrs. Pomeroy in Chicago. He insisted upon the statement being sent to that lady at once. It is already on its way.'

'Oh!' Elizabeth cried breathlessly, a strange expression crossing her face. 'Then can I see him, doctor? I—I want to thank him, and—'

'It is too late, my dear young lady. He is past all that now,' the doctor said kindly but definitely. 'He made atonement as far as lay in his power, and—we will leave him with his Maker,' he added gently, as he closed the door behind him.

Elizabeth was completely exonerated; but, through her wish to shield Captain Yorke's name, the true version of the affair was not made public.

Mrs. Pomeroy was truly sorry for the part she played, and insisted upon the wedding taking place as soon as possible. On the first anniversary of their marriage, she presented the emerald cross to Elizabeth.

'Keep it, dear, and let it serve as a warning to your future daughters,' she said, smiling rather wistfully. 'Should they by any chance inherit their great aunt's weakness, tell them the history of the emerald cross.'—*Ave Maria.*

As for wit and
Humor good,
Bet a bit and
Back Tom Hood!
And as Hood's great
Humor's pure,
So is Woods' Great
Peppermint Cure.

The Risks of Balloon Ascents

A cable message received the other day stated that Miss Viola Spencer, a parachutist, ascended at Ilkeston, England; but the parachute proved undetachable, and she was compelled to retain her perilous seat all night until the balloon dropped near Leicester. She nearly perished from cold.

Several similar misadventures have occurred since the beginning of the year. Early in June two young women made an ascent from Longton Park, Staffordshire, their object being to make a double descent. It appears that one of the parachutes became entangled in the cording of the balloon, which quickly ascended to a height of about two miles. The girl involved eventually made a daring flying leap to her companion, and both descended on the one parachute. One of them received serious injuries.

There can be no two opinions as to the very grave risks run by those who make ascents in balloons. A Japanese officer, during the siege of Port Arthur, volunteered to obtain information as to the enemy's strength by a balloon ascent. He was allowed to do this, but he misjudged the air currents, and instead of going over the besieged town drifted out to sea. Even then he might have been saved, but a storm came on, darkness fell, and the daring soldier vanished. Every effort was made to learn what became of him—for the officer was a relative of the Imperial family—but all in vain, and his ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Considering how much the balloonist has to rely upon the vagaries of the wind for guidance and speed, it is astonishing that aeronautics have been attended by so few tragedies and mysteries. In the ballooning department of the British Army fatal accidents have been very rare indeed, and one has to go back to 1881 to find such a tragic episode as that furnished by the story of the Thrasher, or that of the Japanese officer. Twenty-six years ago the War Office balloon Saladin was lost at sea, and to this day no one knows what actually happened to one of the occupants of the car—Mr. Walter Powell, M.P. The balloon ascended from Bath, carrying, in addition to Mr. Powell, Mr. Agg-Gardner and Captain—now Colonel—Templar, a veteran aeronaut who has had many exciting experiences in the air, and who made his first voyages in a balloon while still a schoolboy at Harrow. His two companions were also expert balloonists. The three formed a jolly party, and had arranged to dine with a friend living a few miles from the Devonshire coast. The balloon got into some nasty currents, however, and, as the sea was seen to be near, a very rapid descent was decided upon at Bridport, Dorset. At the first bump against the earth Colonel Templar called to the other two to jump. He and Mr. Agg-Gardner did so, the latter breaking his leg; but, for some reason that has never been explained, Mr. Powell neglected to follow. The balloon, relieved of the weight of two men, shot to an immense height, and was carried out across the Channel, and Mr. Powell thus vanished completely from the ken of men. Hundreds of newspapers have stated that no trace of it was ever seen again, but this is not so. Some years after the awful event a part of the car, with its lashings still complete, was found in a mountainous district of Spain, and afterwards identified in England.

It is not a little remarkable that, although scores of balloons have been driven out to sea, cases in which this misadventure has ended fatally are few. More than a century ago, when Major Money made an ascent from Norwich, he was compelled to descend in the sea, where he remained for seven hours until his plight was seen and he was rescued by the crew of a revenue cutter. Some years later, in 1812, Mr. James Sadler narrowly escaped drowning in an attempt to cross the Irish Channel; his balloon dropped into the water some miles off Liverpool, and he was on the point of succumbing when rescue came in the form of a fishing-boat.

The attempt of Mr. Wellman, the well-known aeronaut and explorer, to reach the North Pole with his airship America recalls the mysterious disappearance of Herr Andrée, the Swedish explorer, who, just ten years ago, vanished into North Pole spaces. It was Andrée's intention to cross the North Pole and descend on the opposite side, and on July 11, 1897, he ascended with his two companions, Strindberg and Frankel, from Danes Island, Spitzbergen. One carrier pigeon, apparently liberated forty-eight hours after the start, was shot, and two floating buoys with messages were ultimately found. Nothing more, however, has been heard of the explorers.