

# Condensed Novels

by Bret Harte

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# HANDSOME IS AS HANDSOME DOES.

BY CH--S R--DE.

## CHAPTER I.

The Dodds were dead. For twenty year they had slept under the green graves of Kittery churchyard. The townfolk still spoke of them kindly. The keeper of the alehouse, where David had smoked his pipe, regretted him regularly, and Mistress Kitty, Mrs. Dodd's maid, whose trim figure always looked well in her mistress's gowns, was inconsolable. The Hardins were in America. Raby was aristocratically gouty; Mrs. Raby, religious. Briefly, then, we have disposed of--

1. Mr. and Mrs. Dodd (dead).
2. Mr. and Mrs. Hardin (translated).
3. Raby, baron et femme. (Yet I don't know about the former; he came of a long-lived family, and the gout is an uncertain disease.)

We have active at the present writing (place aux dames)--

1. Lady Caroline Coventry, niece of Sir Frederick.
2. Faraday Huxley Little, son of Henry and Grace Little, deceased.

Sequitur to the above, A HERO AND HEROINE.

CHAPTER II.

On the death of his parents, Faraday Little was taken to Raby Hall. In accepting his guardianship, Mr. Raby struggled stoutly against two prejudices: Faraday was plain-looking and sceptical.

"Handsome is as handsome does, sweetheart," pleaded Jael, interceding for the orphan with arms that were still beautiful. "Dear knows, it is not his fault if he does not look like--his father," she added with a great gulp. Jael was a woman, and vindicated her womanhood by never entirely forgiving a former rival.

"It's not that alone, madam," screamed Raby, "but, d--m it, the little rascal's a scientist,--an atheist, a radical, a scoffer! Disbelieves in the Bible, ma'am; is full of this Darwinian stuff about natural selection and descent. Descent, forsooth! In my day, madam, gentlemen were

content to trace their ancestors back to gentlemen, and not to--monkeys!"

"Dear heart, the boy is clever," urged Jael.

"Clever!" roared Raby; "what does a gentleman want with cleverness?"

### CHAPTER III.

Young Little WAS clever. At seven he had constructed a telescope; at nine, a flying-machine. At ten he saved a valuable life.

Norwood Park was the adjacent estate,--a lordly domain dotted with red deer and black trunks, but scrupulously kept with gravelled roads as hard and blue as steel. There Little was strolling one summer morning,

meditating on a new top with concealed springs. At a little distance before him he saw the flutter of lace and ribbons. A young lady, a very young lady,--say of seven summers,-tricked out in the crying abominations of the present fashion,stood beside a low bush. Her nursery-maid was not present,possibly owing to the fact that John the footman was also absent.

Suddenly Little came towards her. "Excuse me, but do you know what those berries are?" He was pointing to the low bush filled with dark clusters of shining--suspiciously shining--fruit.

"Certainly; they are blueberries."

"Pardon me; you are mistaken. They belong to quite another family."

Miss Impudence drew herself up to her full height (exactly three feet nine and a half inches), and, curling an eight of an inch of scarlet lip, said, scornfully. "YOUR family, perhaps."

Faraday Little smiled in the superiority of boyhood over girlhood.

"I allude to the classification. That plant is the belladonna, or deadly nightshade. Its alkaloid is a narcotic poison."

Sauciness turned pale. "I--have--just--eaten--some!" And began to whimper. "O dear, what shall I do?" Then did it, i. e. wrung her small fingers and cried.

"Pardon me one moment." Little passed his arm around her neck, and with his thumb opened widely the patrician-

veined lids of her sweet blue eyes. "Thank Heaven, there is yet no dilation of the pupil; it is not too late!" He cast a rapid glance around. The nozzle and about three feet of garden hose lay near him.

"Open your mouth, quick!"

It was a pretty, kissable mouth. But young Little meant business. He put the nozzle down her pink throat as far as it would go.

"Now, don't move."

He wrapped his handkerchief around a hoopstick. Then he inserted both in the other end of the stiff hose. It fitted snugly. He shoved it in and then drew it back.

Nature abhors a vacuum. The young patrician was as

amenable to this law as the child of the lowest peasant.

She succumbed. It was all over in a minute. Then she burst into a small fury.

"You nasty, bad--UGLY boy."

Young Little winced, but smiled.

"Stimulants," he whispered to the frightened nursery-maid who approached; "good evening." He was gone.

#### CHAPTER IV.

The breach between young Little and Mr. Raby was slowly widening. Little found objectionable features in the Hall. "This black oak ceiling and wainscoating is not as healthful as plaster; besides, it absorbs the light. The

bedroom ceiling is too low; the Elizabethan architects knew nothing of ventilation. The color of that oak panelling which you admire is due to an excess of carbon and the exuvia from the pores of your skin--"

"Leave the house," bellowed Raby, "before the roof falls on your sacrilegious head!"

As Little left the house, Lady Caroline and a handsome boy of about Little's age entered. Lady Caroline recoiled, and then--blushed. Little glared; he instinctively felt the presence of a rival.

## CHAPTER V.

Little worked hard. He studied night and day. In five years he became a lecturer, then a professor.

He soared as high as the clouds, he dipped as low as the cellars of the London poor. He analyzed the London fog, and found it two parts smoke, one disease, one unmentionable abominations. He published a pamphlet, which was violently attacked. Then he knew he had done something.

But he had not forgotten Caroline. He was walking one day in the Zoological Gardens and he came upon a pretty picture,--flesh and blood too.

Lady Caroline feeding buns to the bears! An exquisite thrill passed through his veins. She turned her sweet face and their eyes met. They recollected their first meeting seven years before, but it was his turn to be shy and timid. Wonderful power of age and sex! She met him with perfect self-possession.

"Well meant, but indigestible I fear" (he alluded to the buns).

"A clever person like yourself can easily correct that" (she, the slyboots, was thinking of something else).

In a few months they were chatting gayly. Little eagerly descanted upon the different animals; she listened with delicious interest. An hour glided delightfully away.

After this sunshine, clouds.

To them suddenly entered Mr. Raby and a handsome young man. The gentlemen bowed stiffly and looked vicious,--as they felt. The lady of this quartette smiled amiably, as she did not feel.

"Looking at your ancestors, I suppose," said Mr. Raby,

pointing to the monkeys; "we will not disturb you. Come." And he led Caroline away.

Little was heart-sick. He dared not follow them. But an hour later he saw something which filled his heart with bliss unspeakable.

Lady Caroline, with a divine smile on her face, feeding the monkeys!

## CHAPTER VI.

Encouraged by love, Little worked hard upon his new flying-machine. His labors were lightened by talking of the beloved one with her French maid Therese, whom he had discreetly bribed. Mademoiselle Therese was venal, like all her class, but in this instance I fear she was not bribed by British gold. Strange as it may seem to the British

mind, it was British genius, British eloquence, British thought, that brought her to the feet of this young savaan.

"I believe," said Lady Caroline, one day, interrupting her maid in a glowing eulogium upon the skill of "M. Leetell,"--"I believe you are in love with this Professor." A quick flush crossed the olive cheek of Therese, which Lady Caroline afterward remembered.

The eventful day of trial came. The public were gathered, impatient and scornful as the pigheaded public are apt to be. In the open area a long cylindrical balloon, in shape like a Bologna sausage, swayed above the machine, from which, like some enormous bird caught in a net, it tried to free itself. A heavy rope held it fast to the ground.

Little was waiting for the ballast, when his eye caught

Lady Caroline's among the spectators. The glance was appealing. In a mont he was at her side.

"I should like so much to get into the machine," said the archhypocrite, demurely.

"Are you engaged to marry young Raby," said Little, bluntly.

"As you please," she said with a courtesy; "do I take this as a refusal?"

Little was a gentleman. He lifted her and her lapdog into the car.

"How nice! it won't go off?"

"No, the rope is strong, and the ballast is not yet in."