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From Graham's Magazine, for April.

THE OUTLAW LOVER.—BY J. H. DANA.

CHAPTER I.

Com. And left your fair side all ungarded, Lady?

Comus.

It was a summer afternoon, and the sunlight, glimmering through the branches of the old oak trees, fell with a rich glow upon the green sward beneath, lighting up the dark vista of the forest, and disclosing long avenues of stately trees, through which the deer trotted in the distance, presenting altogether a picture of woodland scenery such as the eye rarely beholds, when two females might have been seen sauntering idly along, listening to the gay echoes of their own voices as they conversed in those light-hearted tones, which only youth and innocence employ. The foremost of the two, by the stateliness of her mien, and the richness of her dress, appeared to be of higher rank than her companion; and as she turned occasionally to converse with her attendant, she disclosed one of the most beautiful countenances that poet ever dreamed of, or painter pictured. A noble contour; a snowy forehead; a finely chiselled mouth, and a pair of dark lustrous eyes that shone like a cloudless night into the gazer's soul, made up a face of surpassing loveliness. And as she conversed, each successive thought would flash up into her countenance, making it, as it were, the mirror of the pure soul beneath, and giving it an expression, such as the pen would find it impossible to describe.

'Ruth! Ruth!' said this fair vision, suddenly pausing, 'hear you nothing—surely that was the cry of dogs—can we have wandered so far from the lodge?'

The color faded from the attendant's cheek as her mistress ceased speaking, and the deep bay of approaching hounds floated down the avenues of the forest.

'Let us fly—fly, dear lady,' said the terrified girl, 'or the stag will be upon us.'

The words had scarcely left her mouth before a crashing was heard in a neighboring thicket, and before the females could move more than few steps from their position, a huge antlered stag, dripping with blood and foam, burst out of the copse, and made toward them. The attendant shrieked, and clasping her mistress' robe, stood unable to move. Had the maiden been equally paralysed, their destruction would have been unavoidable. But in that moment of peril, though the cheek of the lady Margaret became a trifle paler than usual, her presence of mind did not desert her. Seizing her attendant's arm energetically, she dragged her toward a huge oak behind them, whose giant trunk would afford a momentary barrier against the infuriated animal. Had the lady Margaret been alone and unencumbered, she would have succeeded in her endeavor, but her nearly senseless companion so retarded her progress that the stag had almost overtaken them while yet several paces from the tree. Another instant and their fate would be sealed. But at that crisis she heard a whizzing by her ear, and an arrow, sped by an unseen hand, pierced the heart of the stag, who leaping madly forward with a last effort, fell dead at her feet. At the same moment a light and active form, arrayed in a dress of Lincoln green, sprang out from a neighboring copse, and lifting his cap to the ladies, begged to enquire after their affright, in a tone so courtly for one of his apparent station, that Margaret involuntarily looked closer at the stranger.

He was apparently about twenty-five years of age, with an open and generous countenance, enlivened by one of those merry blue eyes which were characteristic in those days, of the pure Saxon blood of their possessor. A jaunty cap, with a long white feather dropping over it, was set upon the stranger's head; while a green coat, made somewhat after the fashion of a hunting frock of the present day, and crossed by a wide belt from which depended a bugle, set off his graceful form. Altogether the intruder was as gallant a looking forester as ever trod the greensward.

'The hounds are in full cry,' continued the stranger, without shrinking at the scrutiny of the lady, 'and will soon be upon us. Will you suffer me to be your protector from this scene?'

The lady Margaret bowed, and pointing to her attendant, who had now fainted, thanked their preserver for his offer, and signified her willingness to accept it. The youth made no answer, but seizing the prostrate maiden in his arms, he pointed to the copse from which he had emerged, and hastily followed Margaret into it. The branches, where they passed in their retreat, had scarcely ceased vibrating, when the hounds dashed into the space they had left, and in a moment after a gay train of hunters followed with horn and halloo.

Meantime the young stranger, bearing the form of Ruth in his arms, hastily traversed the forest, by paths that others could scarcely have detected, until he reached the margin of an open glade, at whose extremity stood a low-roofed lodge, such as was then used for the residence of a keeper of the forest. Here the stranger hesitated a moment, but finally perceiving that no one was in sight, he pressed across the glade, and only paused when he had deposited his now reviving burden on a cot in the lodge. The next moment he turned to depart.

'May—may we know to whom we are indebted for this timely aid?' faltered the lady Margaret, crimsoning as she spoke, with an agitation of manner unusual to the high-bred heiress.

The youth hesitated a moment, looked wistfully at the maiden, and seemed on the point of answering, when footsteps were heard approaching. Hastily bowing to Margaret, he ejaculated,

'We may meet again, farewell!' and vanished from the portal. His form disappeared in the forest as the keeper entered and saluted the lady Margaret and his daughter.

CHAPTER II.

Cel. Soft! comes he not here? *As you like it.*

The Earl of Mountfort's only daughter, the lady Margaret, was at once an heiress and a beauty.—Early deprived of a mother's care; buried in the seclusion of her father's various castles; and knowing nothing of the great world without, she had attained the age of eighteen, without suffering any diminution of that enthusiasm which is so beautiful in early youth, but which a few year's collision with mankind wears off.

From her earliest childhood Ruth Herewood, the forester's daughter, had been her bosom companion; for in that day, when young females of noble rank could rarely associate together, their handmaidens were often their sole confidants. Ruth, moreover, was a foster sister to the lady Margaret, and the tie, therefore, which bound them together, was one not lightly thought of, nor easily severed. It was no unusual thing for the young heiress, at least once a year to spend a fortnight or even more at the lodge of Mr. Herewood, who held the office of a keeper in one of the king's forests. At such times she was unattended, except by a few faithful servants. It was during one of these visits that her life had been preserved in the manner we have related. With these explanations let us return to our story.

A significant sign from her mistress put Ruth upon her guard, and as the stranger had disappeared before her father's entrance, Mr. Herewood remained in ignorance of the danger from which the females had escaped. The motives which prompted Margaret to this concealment we shall not attempt to divine. Perhaps it was only a passing whim; but if so it was changed into a settled resolution, when, on the following morning Ruth's father acquainted them with the fact that a stag had been found shot in the forest by the royal hunting party, and that so daring a breach of the forest laws would assuredly be punished with the utmost penalty that rigorous code afforded. Alarmed and perplexed, Margaret determined to conceal all knowledge of the stranger, lest, by her means, he might be detected; for she feared that her rescuer was one of those outlaws who were known to infest the forest, and that though he might find immunity for that particular offence, he could not escape being convicted of others as heinous.

Yet Margaret could not forget her preserver. In her waking or sleeping dreams his manly form was ever before her, looking as it did when he sprang from the copse to her rescue; and as often as the vision recurred to her memory, she owned to herself that she had never seen any one of such rare manly beauty.—She strolled oftener than ever into the forest, and Ruth noticed—for are not all women quick to notice such things?—that whenever her theme of conversation was their unknown preserver, her mistress listened to her with more than common interest.

Several days had now elapsed since their escape from the stag, when, one afternoon, Margaret and Ruth found themselves in that portion of the forest where their flight had occurred. As it was some distance from the lodge, they felt fatigued by their walk, and sitting down on a shady knoll, naturally fell into a conversation on the stranger who had so opportunely come to their aid. But a few minutes had thus passed when a light step was heard approaching, and as the females hastily rose, the stranger stood before them.

'Be not alarmed, fair lady,' said he, lifting his cap, and addressing Margaret, 'I said when we parted the other day that we might meet again. I redeem my word. But if my presence affrights you, I retire.'

The maiden blushed deeply at this address, so unlike that of one in the speaker's sphere of life. Her bosom was agitated, meanwhile, with contending emotions, which produced a momentary embarrassment and confusion in her countenance, only serving to heighten her beauty in the stranger's eyes. At length she spoke.

'But, sir stranger, do you not run a risk by this?—Believe me, I would not have you come to ill, but I know that danger besets your footsteps. Then,' she added, more earnestly than the next moment she thought maidenly, 'fly from the forest.'

The stranger smiled as he answered.

'You think that the outlaw's life is hazardous; but I have only to sound this,' and he lightly touched his bugle, 'and a score of stout arms are around me.'

There was something so fascinating in the stranger's manner that, despite her better judgment, Margaret felt chained to the spot. Nor did Ruth show any greater disposition to depart. Before five minutes had elapsed, Margaret found herself conversing with the gallant outlaw as freely as if she had known him for months. If, for a moment, she would think such conduct improper, the next reflection would be had he not saved her life? Besides was not Ruth at hand? Is it a wonder, therefore, that the grateful girl suffered the stranger to linger by her side for nearly an hour, or that after they had parted, she thought of him oftener than she would have been willing a week before to admit she could ever think of any one except her father? Is it a wonder that she often strolled into the forest with Ruth, and that she never returned without having seen the outlaw? In a word is it any wonder that she loved?

CHAPTER III.

Never met, or never parted,
They had ne'er been broken hearted.—*Burns.*

There is nothing in this care-worn world so sweet and innocent as a young girl's first love. Then—when the heart is fresh, when every thought is pure, when the poetry of life has not yet been crushed out of the soul, when as we are nearer to our childhood we are nearer to heaven—then it is that we love with an intensity such as we never love with again. And thus Margaret loved. She knew it not until it was impossible for her to drive away her passion. It had crept on her, slowly and surely, and oh! how sweetly, until it became a part of her being, and the day in which she did not see her lover, passed tediously and mournfully to her.

Yet though loving as few love, even in the fervor of a first passion, Margaret was still ignorant of her lover's name. Often would she be tortured by fears lest he might have already forfeited his life in the career of an outlaw, but as often would she quiet her alarm by reflecting how impossible that a mere freebooter should be so courteous and even refined. In all this there was a mystery which did but feed the love of her highly imaginative mind, and though, day after day, would she resolve to question her lover so closely respecting himself that he could not evade her inquiries, yet, day after day, would she be diverted from, and forget it.

Nearly three weeks had now elapsed, and the period limited for her stay at the lodge had passed, when a messenger arrived from her father, to conduct her to one of his castles in the vicinity of London.—Who can tell her feelings at receiving this summons?—a summons which would tear her from her lover, perhaps forever. But it opened to her more fully than ever the state of her heart, convinced her of her imprudence in suffering herself to love an unknown stranger, and determined her to learn that very day from her lover's lips his name and station in life. Ah! pitiable indeed were her feelings as she reflected on her folly. But a flood of tears afforded her partial relief, and calling for Ruth to accompany her she set forth into the forest.

What a glorious old place was that royal hunting ground. For miles before you stretched a succession of hills and dales, covered with venerable and gigantic trees, or spreading out into rich meadows; while herds of deer might be seen trotting far off through the vistas of the forest, and here and there a cottage peeping out from beneath the verdant foliage. In some places the dark overshadowing trees completely obscured the light of day, and in others, the sunbeams struggling between the leaves gilded the green sward beneath. Such was the scene through which Margaret took her way, until she reached the open glade, where, of late, she had met her lover. Scarcely had she emerged from the surrounding woods before he sprang to her side, and in a moment she was in his arms.

"We meet again, dearest," said he, kissing the fair cheek that blushed crimson at his caress.

"And I fear for the last time," said Margaret, "my father has sent for me, and to-morrow I leave this place. Oh! when," and she looked into his eyes with all a woman's tenderness, "shall we meet again?"

"Going!—and so soon!" muttered her lover abstractedly. "why dearest, why did you not tell me of this before?"

"It was but this morning that I heard of it.—Alas! that we should part so soon."

"But how know you sweet one, that we must part?" said her lover half smilingly. It recalled to Margaret's mind her determination to learn her lover's history.

"Why," said she, "are you not a mere," and her voice faltered, "a mere soldier of fortune, perhaps—," and again she faltered and looked down, "an outlaw? Can you follow me? Oh! would you could," and the unhappy maiden burst in tears.

"And why not, dear Margaret? Have not good men and true, at times, been driven to the greenwood for a tempary livelihood. Know you not how the good Earl of Huntingdon long kept wassail under the trees of old Sherwood with his 'merrie men?'"

"Oh! then say you are like him—say you are not an outlaw! Did you but know how my heart reproves me for all this—how I weep to think that my father will never forgive me—and how my only consolation is in your love—did you know all this, you would keep me in suspense no longer?"

Her lover was deeply moved by her passionate entreaties, and pressing her to his bosom, kissed the tears from her cheek, and soothed her agitation by those words of kind endearment which are so eloquent when coming from one we love. He seemed too about to speak; but if so, he was prevented by a sudden baying of hounds, mingled with loud and approaching shouts, and directly a couple of dogs, followed by three keepers dashed out of the neighboring copse. Margaret, terrified and agitated, hastily followed whither her lover pointed, and retreated into the shadow of a cluster of oaks, followed by Ruth. She had scarcely done so unperceived, when the keepers rushed upon her lover, shouting.

"Down with him—the outlaw—down with him."

Frightened almost out of consciousness, she could only see that her lover attempted what resistance he could, and that after a short but fierce contest he was overpowered, almost unarmed as he was, and borne to the ground. With all a woman's devotion, she rushed forward to his protection. But she had scarcely made a step, before she staggered and fainted. Ruth, too, was so alarmed as to be of little service; yet while, with trembling hands, she assisted to recover her mistress, so fearful was she of being discovered, that she would scarcely suffer herself to breathe.

"Oh! Ruth," were the first audible words of her mistress, "what have they done with him?—Are they gone? Why did you not try to save him?"

"Alas! dear lady, it would have been in vain," said Ruth, mingling her tears with those of her mistress, "what could I, or both of us have done, for one who had broken the forest laws?"

CHAPTER IV.

Hurried away early in the ensuing morning, Margaret had no opportunity of learning the fate of her lover. She only knew that all delusion was at an end, and that—alas! for her future happiness—she had bestowed her affections on an outlaw, one who might soon suffer the penalty of his trangessions.

On her arrival at Mountfort castle, she learned that her father had determined to celebrate the approaching anniversary of her birth, by a tournament to be given to all comers at his castle. The preparation for this festivity, though it partially diverted her mind, could not drive away her melancholy. Often would she steal away with Ruth, to find a mournful pleasure in conversing of the happy days they had spent at her father's lodge. Such conversations would generally end in a flood of tears, in which the tender-hearted hand-maiden would share. Yet never, not even for one moment, did Margaret suffer herself to dream of again meeting her lover, for well she knew that such a thing would call down upon her the eternal displeasure of her parent. Let it be recollected that in that age the distinctions of rank were almost as impassable as the grave. Nevertheless, the worm had fastened itself upon her heart, and like thousands before and since, the heiress found how fearful it was to love without hope.

Meantime the preparations for the tournament proceeded, and on the morning of the expected day, crowds thronged to the plain in front of the castle, on which the lists had been erected. The unrivalled beauty of the heiress, in whose honor the festivities were to be given, had drawn together the chivalry of the realm, and a series of courses was expected to be run, such as had not been heard of for years. But especially every tongue was loud in the praise of the young Earl of Hastings, who had just returned from the Holy land, where he had been since boyhood, with the reputation of the best lance of the army. There were many, however, of the competitors who who sneered at his pretentions, and promised themselves to unhorse him at the first shook.

"Margaret," said her father, on the morning of the tournament, "you will see lord Hastings in the lists to-day, and I wish you to mark him well for having heard of you by report, he has solicited your hand. Such an alliance would raise higher than ever our noble house. I did not hesitate.—But now never blush, sweet one; you maidens are ever thus,—what! in tears. Go to your bower, child, and get ready for the pageant. Many a proud dame will envy your lot to-day."

Little did the inflexible, though affectionate father know of the agony he was inflicting on that young heart. Margaret saw that her doom was sealed, and she knew her parent too well even to expostulate. She went to her chamber, but it was to weep. All hope was over. She had nourished the romantic idea of continuing faithful to her unhappy lover by refusing every alliance, never dreaming that her father would interfere. Short-sighted girl! Already had he chosen for her, and she knew that the decrees of fate were less inflexible than her parent.

At length, however, she aroused herself and proceeded to the lists, in all the pomp of the heiress of her father's vast possessions. How few knew the heavy heart which throbbed in agony beneath that jewelled boddice. The lists were gorgeously fitted up. A gallery in their centre, opposite to where the shock of the combatants would take place was appropriated to Margaret, who was to preside as queen of the festivities.—Around were her father's countless guests, numbering half the nobility of the realm, their wives and daughters flashing with jewels, and all envying the fortunate being, who, at that moment, would willingly have exchanged her rank and splendor for the peasant's garb, if it came attended by happiness.

The tournament began. Several courses had been run with various success, when a herald rode into the lists and proclaimed that three courses yet remained, all of which Sir Robert De Laney, a renowned knight, would engage in with any three combatants, until overpowered or victorious. Several knights instantly presented themselves.—The lot fell upon three, the Earl of Warren, Sir Edward Sidney, and Lord Hastings. At once the challenger presented himself for the first antagonist. But the skill of his opponent was in vain. Lord Warren was hurled bleeding to the ground.

The Earl of Hastings now rode into the lists, and at his appearance a buzz of admiration ran around the spectators. His mien, his horsemanship, his comparative youth, and the renown he had brought with him from the east, enlisted the popular wish in his favor. Nor did he disappoint it. At the first shock he splintered his lance against his antagonist's front, while De Laney's shaft just grazed by him. The older knight reeled in the saddle, and scarcely saved himself from falling. A shout of general applause rewarded the young Earl's skill.

But there yet remained an equally renowned competitor with whom to contend. By the laws of the tournament, Sir Edward Sidney had a right to contest with the conquerer for the honors of the day, a privilege of which he instantly signified his intention of availing himself. With equal readiness the young Earl prepared for the contest. The combatants took their places, and after a breathless hush of an instant the signal was given and they vanished from their stations. The shock of their meeting was like that of an earthquake. The knight directing his lance full at his adversary's breast, aimed to bear him by main force to the ground, but at the very instant of meeting, the young Earl bent in the saddle to evade the blow, and altering the direction of his own lance as he did so, he bore it full upon the breast of his antagonist, striking him with such force as to hurl him from the saddle like a stone from a sling.—The discomfitted knight fell heavily to the earth, and was borne off by his squires; while the victor swept onward amid the acclamations of the spectators. The herald now proclaimed Lord Hastings the conqueror of the day, and led him toward the lady Margaret to receive the prize.

Who can tell her feelings as she beheld the gallant train approaching? She saw before her her destined lover, and however she might have admired his gallant exploits had her heart been disengaged, could she—loving another as she did—look upon him with aught but aversion? But though her emotion nearly overpowered her, she composed herself sufficiently to go through her approaching duty. As the victor knelt at her feet what sudden feeling was it which shot through her bosom? Why did her cheek crimson, her breath come quick, her heart flutter wildly? And why, as the helmet was removed from lord Hastings, did she drop the crown with which she was to reward him, and with a half suppressed scream, faint away? Why! but that in the victor of the tourney she recognized her own outlaw lover.

The joy of the reviving maiden when she found her preserver bending over her, and conjuring her to speak to him once more and forgive his stratagem, we shall not attempt to describe. Suffice it to say, that the day of the tourney, which opened as the darkest, set as the brightest, in her life.

The young Earl happening to see his mistress accidentally had imbibed the romantic idea of wooing her as an unknown and untitled stranger. For this purpose he had secretly followed her down to the lodge, and attired in an outlaw's dress, had hovered around her path, waiting for a fitting opportunity to introduce himself. The manner in which he was at length favored by circumstances, as well as his subsequent success in his suit, the reader has seen. But his pretended character was not without its evils. He was seen, suspected, and captured by the forest keepers in the way we have described. He only escaped by revealing his rank. After his recovery from the wound he had received on that occasion, he had arrived at lord Montford's castle, determining to contest the prize in the approaching tourney, and then reveal himself to his mistress.

It was but a few weeks after the fete, when the young Earl of Hastings led to the alter the fair daughter of the house of Montfort, who never forgot, in her titled husband, the unknown OUTLAW LOVER.

"Patent Sermons of Dow, Jr."—Hear him discourse upon *Dandies*:

"They are mere walking sticks for female flirts, ornamented with brass heads, and barely touched with the varnish of etiquette. Brass heads, did I say?—Nay, their caputs are only half ripe muskmelons with monstrous thick rinds, and all hollow inside, containing the seeds of foolishness, swimming about with a vast quantity of sap. Their moral garments are a double breasted coat of vanity, padded with pride, and lined with the silk of self complacency; their other apparel is all in keeping and imported fresh from the devil's wholesale and retail ready-made clothing establishment. Tinkered up with broad-cloth-finger rings, safety chains, soft sodder, vanity and impudence; they are no more silver than a plated spoon is solid silver. I detest a dandy, as a cat does a wet floor. There are some vain fools in this vain world, who, after a long incubation, will hatch out from the hot bed of pride a sickly brood of furzy ideas, and then go strutting along in the path of pomposity, with all the self importance of a speckled hen with a black chicken. I have an antipathy to such people."

For the Rocky Mountains.—The steamer Trapper, belonging to the American Fur Co., left here yesterday for the *Yellow Stone River*. On board were a large number of hunters, all of whom appeared in the highest spirits, and the deck was strewed with their paraphernalia. A number of the fair sex were standing on the levee, with the heartfelt tear in their eyes, as they waved their handkerchiefs and sighed an adieu, when the boat left the landing—she will be absent about four months. Our eastern brethren expate on the pleasures of a trip with their atlantic steamers; but, pshaw, it is nothing in comparison to our inland voyage—there, all is dull and monotonous, nothing to relieve the eye—nothing to attract the attention, excepting perhaps a *Mother Carey's* chicken, or the fin of a shark—here, every day brings a change of scenery, each vieing with the other in grandeur. What a glorious trip for a worshipper of nature.—*St*

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