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[WRITTEN FOR THE ORANGEBURG NEWS.]

## MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY

### HOW ARTHUR AINSTON GOT HIS WIFE.

BY JOANNES.

#### CHAPTER I.

How are things here in Clayburg now?" asked Arthur Ainston of the driver who was taking him to the hotel.

"Everything is pretty dull, sir," replied the laconic driver, apparently half asleep, or anxious to get back to the hotel where he could loaf around between cars, and watch chances to gratify his mechanical thirst.

"Are there?" continued Arthur, seemingly anxious to learn something more from this non-communicative companion, "the two beautiful young ladies here as ever? The Misses Boyer, where are they?"

"Still in our city, I believe, sir. You appear to have lived here once; you seem to know something of the belles of the city. How long do you expect to remain with us? If it be for any length of time, you will have a chance of seeing the two young ladies of whom you inquired just a moment ago, as there is to be a dance at the hotel in a week or so, and I heard this morning that they were to be there."

Arthur observed that the moment he mentioned the names of the Misses Boyer, the driver who had before appeared dull and stupid, roused up, changed his position, and commenced to scrutinize him closely.

But not finding, in the lineaments of our hero, a resemblance to the person he was on the *qui vive* for, he withdrew his impudent and inquisitive eyes from Arthur's face, and turned them upon his horses.

Arthur thought for a moment over the answer which the driver made to him, and his inquiry whether or not he, Arthur, had ever lived in the city, and concluded that the news of his visit had got out, and that it would be best to answer him in a manner that would mislead his mind, and remove his suspicions.

This answer was then given to the driver:

"Yes I know something of this city, but my knowledge was not derived from having lived here. I have been here on business several times, but never remained long enough to become acquainted with any but those with whom I generally transacted my business. I should like very much to remain over a week and be present at the party which is to be given at the hotel, but other matters will call me away before then."

"I should like to get acquainted with the Misses Boyer, as"

"Why, I thought you were acquainted with them," interrupted the driver. "Didn't you inquire of them a few moments ago, and if they were beautiful?"

"Yes. But I did not say that I knew them personally. I remember to have met them twice upon the cars, and it was there that I observed how beautiful they were."

"What time does the up-train leave here to-morrow?" Arthur asked, as if desirous of diverting the attention of the driver from the idea of the Misses Boyer, and himself.

"Twelve o'clock," laconically replied the Dutchman, for our hero's driver was no other than such an individual.

Here the carriage drove up to the hotel. Arthur alighted, registered under a fictitious name, and requested to be shown to a room.

After the servant was dismissed, he congratulated himself upon having found out so soon after his arrival that the Misses Boyer were in the city, and that he had succeeded in eluding a recognition by the driver.

He sat down on the bed, and said to himself, "Thus far things have progressed as good as I could have wished them, but to-morrow?"

Here he got up and paced the room to and fro in a kind of abstracted mood.

After the lapse of a few moments' time, he stopped suddenly before a large mirror that was in the room, and said— "I will act honorably about the matter to the end. I will not run away with her. I will marry her right here in the city of Clayburg, in spite of all opposition. She is too good and noble to be claimed in any other way."

"I will go to sleep, and in the morning I will write to her that I am here, and that I intend to seek an interview with her father, and tell him plainly what my intentions are; that I have changed my mind from the manner in which I proposed that we should marry; and that I have a hope that my interview with her father will result in making us both feel happier."

"Yes, I will write her this and then I will go straightway to her father's store, and tell him all from my own lips; and although he has been hard and inflexible in the past; although proof against all my entreaties upon paper, methinks when he sees me, standing manly before him, pleading an honest love and asking a recognition of it at his hands; when I tell him right to his face how much I love his daughter, and how she has learned to love me in return, I say methinks he will relent, and withdraw his opposition to our marriage."

Arthur now divested himself of his clothes and was soon soundly asleep.

In his slumbers he dreamed that he had had the interview, and it resulted favorably to his wishes.

But let us learn something more of him and his courtship, and the name of the girl whose image was so fondly cherished in his heart.

Well, to hurry along, we will state that the young lady to whom he was engaged, was no other than Miss Eliza Boyer, the youngest of the Misses Boyer, the belles of which the driver made mention.

Arthur Ainston did not see them on the train, as he said, but had met them one night at the city hall, two years previous to the time of which we are writing.

It was there he got acquainted with Miss Eliza Boyer; and it was there that the germ of that love was planted in his bosom, which was destined to be the great event of Arthur Ainston's life.

be on pain of being banished forever from the society of his fair innamorata.

Arthur stopped; that is, his tongue obeyed his bidding, and no further oral declaration was attempted to be made that night.

But all could see that he had fallen desperately in love.

In every act and movement of his could be seen unmistakable signs of a love "just newly born."

And it must be admitted, that so elegant were Arthur's manners, dress, and personal appearance, that almost any girl would have felt flattered by his attentions.

That night when he went home, many resolutions to learn more of the charms, Eliza Boyer, and a faint but undefined hope of one day winning her esteem, engrossed his whole bosom.

He fell asleep thinking of this queen of beauty and intelligence.

When he awoke next morning he found his mind more absorbed than ever with the idea of herself.

The fact of it is, he approached nearly a lunatic. But if his regret and chagrin were great when he reflected who Eliza Boyer was, how immeasurably superior her position was to his, and that probably she would not recognize him outside of the ball room, they were a thousand times more intense when, on receiving the morning's mail, he found a letter from his father commanding him to return home immediately.

He read the summons over and over again as if unwilling to believe his senses.

Finally, however, he forced himself to regard it as a reality, and that he did burn that night.

Those who have loved with that warm, burning, innate love, that was now aglow in the bosom of Arthur Ainston, can well imagine the bitterness of his sorrow at this moment.

It appeared to him at first that a cruel fortune had permitted him to get a glimpse of Paradise, only to be summoned forever from its holy precincts, without one ray of hope to illumine his future life.

So greatly was his mind exercised that at one time he resolved to disregard parental authority, assert his freedom, and linger around the gates of this newly found haven of bliss.

But in his calmer moments, better impulses took possession of his bosom, and he concluded that come what would, he should never have it said of him that he was an undutiful son.

Here he fell into a gloomy reverie and was only awakened from it when called to breakfast.

He went down stairs, but to say that he ate anything would be telling an untruth. He did drink a little black tea, but that was all.

After returning to his room, he mentally swore to see Eliza Boyer, before leaving that night.

"A favorable response from you will forever bless this day in the life of—"

ARTHUR AINSTON.

After reading this note over, he rang for a servant. With a few directions he placed the little billet in the waiter's hand, and shut the door.

If his mind was troubled by the summons he got a few hours before, to return home, the suspense that his present situation placed him in, occasioned a torture ten fold heavier to bear up under.

He knew comparatively nothing of the girl to whom he had written, except her name, and that she was proud and haughty in her manners.

In this mood of mind he paced the room up and down, during the entire absence of the servant.

Presently a rap was heard at the door. Almost afraid to meet the waiter, and still more afraid to read the note, if he should have one, Arthur approached the door, opened it, and to his delight, mingled with many gases of fear, lest it should contain something to wound his feelings, received the response to his note. It was neatly incased in a beautiful envelope.

He closed the door, and fell upon the side of the bed, in a frame of mind not at all enviable.

His whole life appeared to be centered in the one grand thought of his existence, and that thought was of Eliza Boyer.

Like the man who had invested his last dollar in a large lottery scheme, and depended upon its result for the success of his future life, so Arthur regarded his love for Eliza. He was fortunate, if unfortunate, disgrace and misery were inevitable.

Thus with Arthur Ainston. All of his hopes, his aspirations, and his resolutions to one day distinguish himself, were merged in the one idea of alternate hope and fear, and depended for their success upon the revelation which he would soon learn from the note in his possession.

Raising up and standing before the mirror, he said:

"Can my nerves be so terribly affected by the beauty of a woman who perhaps cares nothing for me? It is child-like weakness in me, and I will brave the result like a man, be it even worse than I expect. I have her answer, and I will read it."

Here Arthur opened the note, which was written upon gilt-edged paper, in a beautiful and graceful hand, and read:

"Miss Eliza Boyer will see Mr. Ainston in the parlor this afternoon at 4 o'clock."

These were the only words the note contained.

How strange they appeared to Arthur! He could not understand how, if she would consent to permit him to visit her in her own parlor, she could write to him so vaguely and indefinitely.

He argued, "I have her permission to visit her, and should not complain of meeting with bad luck. Indeed, my star of success must be in the ascendency for, by George, I did not dream two hours ago of any such good fortune."

"darked eyed beauty? Did you dream about her last night?"

"I have very important business to transact this morning," responded Arthur, "and I trust you will spare me from answering any questions now."

But Arthur's friends were determined not to be put off in any such manner, and declared,—

"Now, Arthur, there is no use to deny that you love the girl, and if you will own up, we may be of assistance to you in some way. You remember that you have always said you never expected to find your affinity until you met a dark brunette, of a particular cast of features, with dark eyes, dark hair, and beautiful white teeth. Is not Miss Eliza Boyer the personification of the woman you described as your ideal one?"

"I would like to talk with you, boys, but as I have business of an urgent nature to transact, if you will excuse me this morning and come to my room to-night, about 8 o'clock, you will much oblige me, and then I promise to tell you all, as I am going away to-night."

Here Arthur tore himself away from his friends, and walked hastily up Commerce Street.

"How strangely he acts this morning," remarked one of his friends to the other. "He must have made a declaration of love last night to Miss Eliza, and received in reply one of those withering glances of rebuke, for which she is so noted for exhibiting whenever a gentleman prosines too far with her."

"I don't know," replied the other, "but I shouldn't wonder if such was Arthur's fate, if he was so foolish as to make love to Miss Eliza Boyer, or so slight an acquaintance. But we will know all to-night, so let's not speculate any further."

The two friends went their way and thought no more of Arthur, until the time for their visit to his room arrived.

Meantime, our hero was becoming more and more, if possible, infatuated with this mysterious girl.

The whole day was whiled away in a kind of listless dreamy air of abstraction, until within an hour or so of the time appointed for the interview, when he became nervous again.

Finally the hour arrived.

After retiring to his room, and carefully adjusting his toilet, Arthur Ainston started on a visit, the result of which, was either to make him excessively happy, or cause his cup of life to overflow with deep, bitter sorrow.

Arrived at the door, he rang the bell, handed his card to the servant and waited in breathless silence for her return.

Presently she re-appeared, showed him to the parlor, and said, "Miss Eliza will be here in a few minutes."

He was now left alone, to think, to wonder and to admire.

Everything in the parlor betokened a refinement,—an extravagance of taste that Arthur construed into an omen against himself.

will tell me at once in what manner you insulted me, and for what purpose you seek my forgiveness. I do not remember to have ever been insulted by you. If you are aware of any such event as having transpired, you will please to tell me as, in such a case, it must have been one offered by you which I did not observe."

"Do not remember, Miss Boyer!" eagerly exclaimed Arthur, "Why, did you not stop me abruptly on last evening when I dared to tell you a truth, and declared if ever I attempted such a thing again, the penalty should be a forfeiture of your society. Was not that alone enough to lead me to believe that I had insulted you; that I had offended either your dignity, your position, your personal beauty, or your idea of a rigid etiquette, by my presumption? Hence the note that I penned you this morning, and hence my appearance here. And I am in earnest, Miss Boyer, when I ask your forgiveness. I am going away to-night, and shall never feel happy again if I have to leave here under the impression that I was the means of rendering unhappy a single moment in the life of one so fair. If it was your dignity that I insulted, I have repented the sin; if it was your position in life, I promise never again to presume, in such a manner, to one so lofty; and if it was your beauty, I beseech an absolution on the ground that it is irresistible, and that *hoc* is no thing of the will."

"Mr. Ainston," returned Eliza, "if you are really in earnest, the surprise which your note caused me this morning, is more than equalled by your present utterances. But to shorten this interview," Eliza continued, "I will say that you did not insult me. I only spoke to you in the manner I did, because I deemed you presumptuous, and that I might avoid a shower of empty compliments. My heart sickens at the idea of ball-room declarations, and hence my conduct towards you. I trust this explanation will satisfy you."

"Perfectly," rejoined Arthur. "I thank you for it. And need I tell you it almost tempts me to repeat the presumption here under your own roof. Oh! Miss Eliza," (here Arthur dropped all formality) "if you do not believe in the sincerity of ball-room declarations of love; if it was because of your hatred for these that you refused to hear me last night, oh! will you, can you disregard and disbelieve one uttered under your own roof? Will you not believe me when I tell you that I love you as I have never loved before? when I declare that in you I have found the visioned queen of my most exaggerated dreams of beauty and intelligence? Believe me, Eliza, without your love in return for the sentiment with which your dear charms inspire me, my future will be a dreary, unhappy blank. Oh! turn not from me, my dear, do not desert me, for Heaven is my judge this is no ball-room declaration, no impulse of a moment; it is a declaration of the heart, a confession of deep and earnest love, and I entreat you to spurn it not."

"Mr. Ainston," Eliza replied, somewhat excited at Arthur's unexpected confession, "if I did not know you to be a gentleman of intelligence, I should think that the purport of your visit here, was to insult me; but as I believe it is for an honest purpose, I will not feign the affectation which would lead me to doubt you. I believe you are in earnest, sir, and I feel flattered at your good opinion of myself. You appear frank, and I shall be equally so with you in return. I thank you for your expressions of regard for me; and yet, I could wish that we had never met."

"For God's sake talk not in such a strain Eliza!" Arthur excitedly exclaimed. "Do you not know that my whole life depends upon this issue. Will

you destroy my happy dream, and crush my hopes in their inauspicious, by saying you could wish that we had never met?"

"I could wish that, Mr. Ainston," Eliza resumed, "because it has been the means of inspiring you with a passion that can never attain fruition. My life has long since been decided and many bright, golden hopes ruthlessly shattered; and I beg that you dismiss the idea of myself from your mind, and remember me only as a friend."

Eliza here got up and started a retreat, but was intercepted by Arthur, who threw himself between her and the door.

It was easily seen that she feared to remain longer in the room, lest her heart should prove too weak to resist the siege brought against it by Arthur.

And he was smart enough to see this. He knew that the woman that deliberates is lost," and that if he could only succeed in detaining her for a short while, the tender chords of sympathy that vibrated in her bosom towards him, might yield to the touch of his master hand, and his love find its reward."

So, firmly planted between Eliza and the door, Arthur passionately exclaimed:—"For Heaven's sake bear me further; just one moment more I entreat you! Oh! Eliza, if you do not love me now, say at least that you do not hate me, and that you will not teach your heart to resist the passion I faint would cherish in your precious bosom. If it is unknown to love, let mine be the happy lot to teach you its divine lore. I leave to-night. If I go with no hope from you, I shall remote region, where I shall seek to drown my sorrows in scenes unlike those around you."

"Mr. Ainston," Eliza said in a voice whose tremor betrayed her feelings, "even if inclined to listen to your declaration, you could not expect me to give you an answer now. Remember that I never met you before last evening, and I, therefore, ask you again to leave me."

Arthur, more encouraged than ever, saw now that she was either a terrible coquette, or loved him. The former he knew she was not, and summoning to his aid all the eloquence he could command, he renewed his siege.

"I know Eliza," he resumed, "that my declaration is a hasty one, and that I never met you before last night; but then we are not strangers in the strict sense of the term. I have resided here for over two years. Your father and brothers know me, and through them I know you have learned that I am a gentleman. But if you will consent to be reasonable, you shall know of me yourself. If you will not repel the pleadings of a heart yet unskilled in the art of deception; one that would spurn the idea of trifling with female delicacy, you shall learn all of me that you want to know. Oh! my dear, sweet Eliza, think that it is my life I stake upon your hands. Can you consign it to misery, and sorrow, and darkness forever? You, my adored one, are the tribunal that shall pronounce judgment upon my heart and the love it has for you. I await your sentence."

Arthur here caught Eliza passionately by the hand, and looked her in the face, full of painful and uncertain anxiety.

Like a prisoner convicted of some awful crime, standing at the bar of justice, pale, motionless, and filled with strange and conflicting emotions of fear, awaiting the sentence of death to be passed upon him, Arthur Ainston stood, before his gentle, adored Eliza, waiting in agony, and doubt to hear the doom pronounced that was to seal his fate for eternity.

Directly she raised her eyes from the floor, looked Arthur gently in the face, with an expression of tenderness and sympathy that showed how deeply her heart had been moved and said in a soft voice, "Mr. Ainston."

After standing thus for a few moments, she again hung her head and in a sweet subdued tone whispered, "Yes."

[CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.]