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Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon

Hall, Sir Caine

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CAPT'N DAVY'S HONEYMOON

By Hall Caine

Harper And Brothers - 1893

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CHAPTER I.

"My money, ma'am—my money, not me."

"So you say, sir."

"It's my money you've been marrying, ma'am."

"Maybe so, sir."

"Deny it, deny it!"

"Why should I? You say it is so, and so be it."

"Then d— — the money. It took me more till ten years to make it, and middling hard work at that; but you go bail it'll take me less nor ten months to spend it. Ay, or ten weeks, and aisy doing, too! And 'till it's gone, Mistress Quig-gin—d'ye hear me?—gone, every mortal penny of it gone, pitched into the sea, scattered to smithereens, blown to ould Harry, and dang him—I'll lave ye, ma'am, I'll lave ye; and, sink or swim, I'll darken your doors no more."

The lady and gentleman who blazed at each other with these burning words, which were pointed, and driven home by flashing eyes and quivering lips, were newly-married husband and wife. They were staying at the old Castle Mona, in Douglas, Isle of Man, and their honeymoon had not yet finished its second quarter. The gentleman was Captain Davy Quiggin, commonly called Capt'n Davy, a typical Manx sea-dog, thirty years of age; stalwart, stout, shaggy, lusty-lunged, with the tongue of a trooper, the heavy manners of a bear, the stubborn head of a stupid donkey, and the big, soft heart of the baby of a girl. The lady was Ellen Kinvig, known of old to all and sundry as Nelly, Ness, or Nell, but now to everybody concerned as Mistress Capt'n Davy Quiggin, six-and-twenty years of age, tall, comely, as blooming as the gorse; once as free as the air, and as racy of the soil as new-cut peat, but suddenly grown stately, smooth, refined, proud, and reserved. They loved each other to the point of idolatry; and yet they parted ten days after marriage with these words of wrath and madness. Something had come between them. What was it? Another man? No. Another woman? Still no. What then? A ghost, an intangible, almost an invisible but very real and divorce-making co-respondent. They call it Education.

Davy Quiggin was born in a mud house on the shore, near the old church at Ballaugh. The house had one room only, and it had been the living-room, sleeping-room, birth-room, and death-room of a family of six. Davy, who was the youngest, saw them all out. The last to go were his mother and his grandfather. They lay ill at the same time, and died on the one day. The old man died first, and Davy fixed up a herring-net in front of him, where he lay on the settle by the fire, so that his mother might not see him from her place on the bed.

Not long after that, Davy, who was fifteen years of age, went to live as farm lad with Kinvig, of Ballavolley. Kinvig was a solemn person, very stiff and starchy, and sententious in his way, a mighty man among the Methodists, and a power in the pulpit. He thought he had done an act of charity when he took Davy into his home, and Davy repaid him in due time by falling in love with Nelly, his daughter.

When that happened Davy never quite knew. "That's the way of it," he used to say. "A girl slips in, and there ye are." Nelly was in to a certainty when one night Davy came home late from the club meeting on the street, and rapped at the kitchen window. That was the signal of the home circle that some member of it was waiting at the door. Now there are ways and ways of rapping at a kitchen window. There is the pit-a-pat of a light heart, and the thud-thud of a heavy one; and there is the sharp crack-crack of haste, and the dithering que-we-we of fear. Davy had a rap of his own, and Nelly knew it.

There was a sort of a trip and dance and a rum-tum-tum in Davy's rap that always made Nelly's heart and feet leap up at the same instant. But on this unlucky night it was Nelly's mother who heard it, and opened the door. What happened then was like the dismal sneck of the outside gate to Davy for ten years thereafter. The porch was dark, and so was the little square lobby behind the door. On numerous other nights that had been an advantage in Davy's eyes, but on this occasion he thought it a snare of the evil one. Seeing something white in a petticoat he threw his arms about it and kissed and hugged it madly. It struck him at the time as strange that the arms he held did not clout him under the chin, and that the lips he

smothered did not catch breath enough to call him a gawbie, and whisper that the old people inside were listening. The truth dawned on him in a moment, and then he felt like a man with an eel crawling down his back, and he wanted nothing else for supper.

It was summer time, and Davy, though a most accomplished sleeper, found no difficulty in wakening himself with the dawn next morning. He was cutting turf in the dubs of the Curragh just then, and he had four hours of this pastime, with spells of sober meditation between, before he came up to the house for breakfast. Then as he rolled in at the porch, and stamped the water out of his long-legged boots, he saw at a glance that a thunder-cloud was brewing there. Nelly was busy at the long table before the window, laying the bowls of milk and the deep plates for the porridge. Her print frock was as sweet as the May blossom, her cheeks were nearly as red as the red rose, and like the rose her head hung down. She did not look at him as he entered. Neither did Mrs. Kinvig, who was bending over the pot swung from the hook above the fire, and working the porridge-stick round and round with unwonted energy. But Kinvig himself made up for both of them. The big man was shaving before a looking-glass propped up on the table, and against the Pilgrim's Progress and Clark's Commentaries. His left hand held the point of his nose aside between the tip of his thumb and first finger, while the other swept the razor through a hillock of lather and revealed a portion of a mouth twisted three-quarters across his face. But the moment he saw Davy he dropped the razor, and looked up with as much dignity as a man could get out of a countenance half covered with soap.

"Come in, sir," said he, with a pretense of great deference. "Mawther," he said, twisting to Mrs. Kinvig, "just wipe down a chair for the gentleman."

Davy slithered into his seat. "I'm in for it," he thought.

"They're telling me," said Kinvig, "that there is a fortune coming at you. Aw, yes, though, and that you're taking notions on a farmer's girl. Respectable man, too—one of the first that's going, with sixty acres at him and more. Amazing thick, they're telling me. Kissing behind the door, and the like of that! The capers! It was only

yesterday you came to me with nothing on your back but your father's ould trowis, cut down at the knees."

Nelly slipped out. Her mother made a noise with the porridge-pot. Davy was silent. Kinvig walloped his razor on the strop with terrific vigor, then paused, pointed the handle in Davy's direction, tried to curl up his lip into a withering sneer that was half lost in the lather, and said with bitter irony, "My house is too mane for you, sir. You must lave me. It isn't the Isle of Man itself that'll hould the likes of you."

Then Davy found his tongue. "You're right, sir," said he, leaping to his feet, "It's too poor I am for your daughter, is it? Maybe I'll be a piece richer someday, and then you'll be a taste civiler."

"Behold ye now," said Kinvig, "as bould as a goat! Cut your stick and quick."

"I'm off, sir," said Davy; and, then, looking round and remembering that he was being kicked out like a dog and would see Nelly no more, day by day, the devil took hold of him and he began to laugh in Kinvig's ridiculous face.

"Good-by, ould Sukee," he cried. "I lave you to your texes."

And, turning to where Mrs. Kinvig stood with her back to him, he cried again, "Good-by, mawther, take care of his ould head—it's swelling so much that his chapel hat is putting corns on it."

That night with his "chiss" of clothes on his shoulders, Davy came down stairs and went out at the porch. There he slipped his burden to the ground, for somebody was waiting to say farewell to him. It was the right petticoat this time, and she was on the right side of the door. The stars were shining overhead, but two that were better than any in the sky were looking into Davy's face, and they were twinkling in tears.

It was only a moment the parting lasted, but a world of love was got into it. Davy had to do penance for the insults he had heaped upon Nelly's father, and in return he got pity for those that had been shoveled upon himself.

"Good-by, Nell," he whispered; "there's thistles in everybody's crop. But no matter! I'll come back, and then it's married we'll be.

My goodness, yes, and take Ballacry and have six bas'es, and ten pigs, and a pony. But, Nelly, will ye wait for me?"

"D'ye doubt me, Davy?"

"No; but will ye though?"

"Yes."

"Then its all serene," said Davy, and with another hug and a kiss, and a lock of brown hair which was cut ready and tied in blue ribbon, he was gone with his chest into the darkness.

Davy sailed in an Irish schooner to the Pacific coast of South America. There he cut his stick again, and got a berth on a coasting steamer trading between Valparaiso and Callao. The climate was unhealthy, the ports were foul, the government was uncertain, the dangers were constant, and the hands above him dropped off rapidly. In two years Davy was skipper, and in three years more he was sailing a steamer of his own. Then the money began to tumble into his chest like crushed oats out of a Crown's shaft.

The first hundred pounds he had saved he sent home to Dumbell's bank, because he could not trust it out of the Isle of Man. But the hundreds grew to thousands, and the thousands to tens of thousands, and to send all his savings over the sea as he made them began to be slow work, like supping porridge with a pitchfork. He put much of it away in paper rolls at the bottom of his chest in the cabin, and every roll he put by stood to him for something in the Isle of Man. "That's a new cowhouse at Ballavolly." "That's Balladry." "That's ould Brew's mill at Sulby—he'll be out by this time."

All his dreams were of coming home, and sometimes he wrote letters to Nelly. The writing in them was uncertain, and the spelling was doubtful, but the love was safe enough. And when he had poured out his heart in small "i's" and capital "U's"? he always inquired how more material things were faring. "How's the herrings this sayson; and did the men do well with the mack'rel at Kinsale; and is the cowhouse new thatched, and how's the chapel going? And is the ould man still playing hang with the texes?"

Kinvig heard of Davy's prosperity, and received the news at first in silence, then with satisfaction, and at length with noisy pride. His

boy was a bould fellow. "None o' yer randy-tandy-tissimee-tea tied to the old mawther's apron-strings about *him*. He's coming home rich, and he'll buy half the island over, and make a donation of a harmonia to the chapel, and kick ould Cowley and his fiddle out."

Awaiting that event, Kinvig sent Nelly to England, to be educated according to the station she was about to fill. Nelly was four years in Liverpool, but she had as many breaks for visits home. The first time she came she minced her words affectedly, and Kinvig whispered the mother that she was getting "a fine English tongue at her." The second time she came she plagued everybody out of peace by correcting their "plaze" to "please," and the "mate" to "meat," and the "lave" to "leave." The third time she came she was silent, and looked ashamed: and the fourth time it was to meet her sweetheart on his return home after ten years' absence.

Davy came by the Sneafell from Liverpool. It was August—the height of the visiting season—and the deck of the steamer was full of tourists. Davy walked through the cobweb of feet and outstretched legs with the face of a man who thought he ought to speak to everybody. Fifty times in the first three hours he went forward to peer through the wind and the glaring sunshine for the first glimpse of the Isle of Man. When at length he saw it, like a gray bird lying on the waters far away, with the sun's light tipping the hill-tops like a feathery crest, he felt so thick about the throat that he took six steerage passengers to the bar below to help him to get rid of his hoarseness. There was a brass band aboard, and during the trip they played all the outlandish airs of Germany, but just as the packet steamed into Douglas Bay, and Davy was watching the land and remembering everything upon it, and shouting "That's Castle Mona!" "There's Fort Ann!" "Yonder's ould St. Mathews's!" they struck up "Home, Sweet Home." That was too much for Davy. He dived into his breeches' pockets, gave every German of the troupe five shillings apiece, and then sat down on a coil of rope and blubbered aloud like a baby.

Kinvig had sent a grand landau from Ramsey to fetch Capt'n Davy to Ballaugh; but before the English driver from the Mitre had identified his fare Davy had recognized an old crony, with a high, springless, country cart—Billiam Ballaneddan, who had come to

Douglas to dispatch a barrel of salted herrings to his married daughter at Liverpool, and was going back immediately. So Davy tumbled his boxes and bags and other belongings into the landau, piling them mountains high on the cushioned seats, and clambered into the cart himself. Then they set off at a race which should be home first—the cart or the carriage, the luggage or the owner of it; the English driver on his box seat with his tall hat and starchy cravat, or Billiam twidling his rope reins, and Davy on the plank seat beside him, bobbing and bumping, and rattling over the stones like a parched pea on a frying pan.

That was a tremendous drive for Davy. He shouted when he recognized anything, and as he recognized everything he shouted throughout the drive. They took the road by old Braddan Church and Union Mills, past St. John's, under the Tynwald Hill, and down Creg Willie's Hill. As he approached Kirk Michael his excitement was intense. He was nearing home and he began to know the people. "Lord save us, there's Tommy Bill-beg—how do, Tommy? And there's ould Betty! My gough, she's in yet—how do, mawther? There's little Juan Caine growed up to a man! How do, Johnny, and how's the girls and how's the ould man, and how's yourself? Goodness me, here's Liza Corlett, and a baby at her— —! I knew her when she was no more than a babby herself." This last remark to the English driver who was coming up sedately with his landau at the tail of the springless cart.

"Drive on, Billiam! Come up, ould girl—just a taste of the whip, Billiam! Do her no harm at all. Bishop's Court! Deary me, the ould house is in the same place still."

At length the square tower of Ballaugh

Church was seen above the trees with the last rays of the setting sun on its topmost story, and then Davy's eagerness swept down all his patience. He jumped up in the cart at the peril of being flung out, took off his billycock, whirled it round his head, bellowed "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" After that he would have leaped alongside to the ground and run. "Hould hard!" he cried, "I'll bate the best mare that's going." But Billiam pinned him down to the seat with one hand while he whipped up the horse to a gallop with the other.

They arrived at Ballavolly an hour and a half before they were expected. Mistress Kinvig was washing dishes in a tub on the kitchen table. Kinvig himself was sitting lame with rheumatism in the "elber chair" by the ingle. They wiped down a chair for Davy this time.

"And Nelly," said Davy. "Where's Nelly?"

"She's coming, Capt'n," said Kinvig. "Nelly!" he called up the kitchen stairs, with a knowing wink at Davy, "Here's a gentleman asking after you."

Davy was dying of impatience. Would she be the same dear old Nell?

"Nell—Nelly," he shouted, "I've kep' my word."

"Aw, give her time, Capt'n," said Kinvig; "a new frock isn't rigged up in no time, not to spake of a silk handkercher going pinning round your throat."

But Davy, who had waited ten years, would not wait a minute longer, and he was making for the stairs with the purpose of invading Nell's own bedroom, when the lady herself came sweeping down on tiptoes. Davy saw her coming in a cloud of silk, and at the next moment the slippery stuff was crumbling, and whisking, and creaking under his hands, for his arms were full of it.

"Aw, mawther," said he. "They're like honeysuckles—don't spake to me for a week. Many's the time I've been lying in my bunk a-twigging the rats squeaking and coorting overhead, and thinking to myself, Kisses is skess with you now, Davy."

The wedding came off in a week. There were terrific rejoicings. The party returned from church in the landau that brought up Davy's luggage. At the bridge six strapping fellows, headed by the blacksmith, and surrounded by a troop of women and children, stretched a rope across the road, and would not let the horses pass until the bridegroom had paid the toll. Davy had prepared himself in advance with two pounds in sixpenny bits, which made his trowsers pockets stand out like a couple of cannon balls. He fired those balls, and they broke in the air like shells.

At the wedding breakfast in the barn at Ballavolly Davy made a speech. It was a sermon to young fellows on the subject of sweet-hearts. "Don't you marry for land," said he. "It's muck," said he. "What d'ye say, Billiam—you'd like more of it? I wouldn't trust; but it's spaking the truth I am for all. Maybe you think about some dirty ould trouss: 'She's a warm girl, she's got nice things at her—bas'es and pigs, and the like of that.' But don't, if you'rr not a reg'lar blundering blockit." Then, looking down at the top of Nelly's head, where she sat with her eyes in her lap beside him, he softened down to sentiment, and said, "Marry for love, boys; stick to the girl that's good, and then go where you will she'll be the star above that you'll sail your barque by, and if you stay at home (and there's no place like it) her parting kiss at midnight will be helping you through your work all next day."

The parting kiss at midnight brought Davy's oration to a close, for a tug at his coat-tails on Nelly's side fetched him suddenly to his seat.

Two hours afterward the landau was rolling away toward the Castle Mona Hotel at Douglas, where, by Nell's arrangement, Capt'n Davy and his bride were to spend their honeymoon.

CHAPTER II.

Now it so befell that on the very day when Capt'n Davy and Mrs. Quiggin quarreled and separated, two of their friends were by their urgent invitation crossing from England to visit them, Davy's friend was Jonathan Lovibond, an Englishman, whose acquaintance he had made on the coast. Mrs. Quiggin's was Jenny Crow, a young lady of lively manners, whom she had annexed during her four years' residence at Liverpool. These two had been lovers five years before, had quarreled and parted on the eve of the time appointed for their marriage, and had not since set eyes on each other. They met for the first time afterward on the steamer that was taking them to the Isle of Man, and neither knew the destination of the other.

Miss Crow looked out of her twinkling eyes and saw a gentleman promenading on the quarter-deck before her, whom she must have thought she had somewhere seen before, but that his gigantic black mustache was a puzzle, and the little imperial on his chin was a baffling difficulty. Mr. Lovibond puffed the smoke from a colossal cigar, and wondered if the world held two pair of eyes like those big black ones which glanced up at him sometimes from a deck stool, a puffy pile of wool, two long crochet needles, and a couple of white hands, from which there flashed a diamond ring he somehow thought he knew.

These mutual meditations lasted two long hours, and then a run-away ball of the wool from the lap of the lady on the deck stool was hotly pursued by the gentleman with the mustache, and instantly all uncertainty was at an end.

After exclamations of surprise at the strange recognition (it was all so sudden), the two old friends came to closer quarters. They touched gingerly on the past, had some tender passages of delicate fencing, gave various sly hits and digs, threw out certain subtle hints, and came to a mutual and satisfactory understanding. Neither had ever looked at anybody else since their rupture, and therefore both were still unmarried.

Having reached this stage of investigation, the wool and its needles were stowed away in a basket under the chair, in order that the lady might accept the invitation of the gentleman to walk with him on the deck; and as the wind had freshened by this time, and walking in skirts was like tacking in a stiff breeze, the gentleman offered his arm to the lady, and thus they sailed forth together.

"And with whom are you to stay when we reach the island, Jenny?" said Lovibond.

"With a young Manx friend lately married," said Jenny.

"That's strange; for I am going to do the same," said Lovibond. "Where?"

"At Castle Mona," said Jenny.

"That's stranger still; for it's the place to which I am going," said Lovibond. "What's your Manx friend's name?"

"Mrs. Quiggin, now," said Jenny.

"That's strangest of all," said Lovibond; "for my friend is Captain Quiggin, and we are bound for the same place, on the same errand."

This series of coincidences thawed down the remaining frost between the pair, and they exchanged mutual confidences. They had gone so far as to promise themselves a fortnight's further enjoyment of each other's society, when their arrival at Douglas put a sudden end to their anticipations.

Two carriages were waiting for them on the pier—one, with a maid inside, was to take Jenny to Castle Mona: the other, with a boy, was to take Lovibond to Fort Ann.

The maid was Peggy Quine, seventeen years of age, of dark complexion, nearly as round as a dolley-tub, and of deadly earnest temperament. When Jenny found herself face to face and alone with this person, she lost no time in asking how it came to pass that Mrs. Quiggin was at Castle Mona while her husband was at Fort Ann.

"They've parted, ma'am," said Peggy.

"Parted?" shrieked Jenny above the rattle of the carriage glass.

"Ah, yes, ma'am," Peggy stammered; "cruel, ma'am, right cruel, cruel extraordinary. It's a wonder the capt'n doesn't think shame of his conduct. The poor mistress! She's clane heartbroken. It's a mercy to me she didn't clout him."

In two minutes more Jenny was in Mrs. Quiggin's room at Castle Mona, crying, "Gracious me, Ellen, what is this your maid tells me?"

Nelly had been eating out her heart in silence all day long, and now the flood of her pride and wrath burst out, and she poured her wrongs upon Jenny as fiercely as if that lady stood for the transgressions of her husband.

"He reproached me with my poverty," she cried.

"What?"

"Well, he told me I had only married him for his money—there's not much difference."

"And what did you say?" said Jenny.

"Say? What could I say? What would any woman say who had any respect for herself?"

"But how did he come to accuse you of marrying him for his money? Had you asked him for any?"

"Not I, indeed."

"Perhaps you hadn't loved him enough?"

"Not that either — that I know of."

"Then why did he say it?"

"Just because I wanted him to respect himself, and have some respect for his wife, too, and behave as a gentleman, and not as a raw Manx rabbit from the Calf."

Jenny gave a look of amused intelligence, and said, "Oh, oh, I see, I see! Well, let me take off my bonnet, at all events."

While this was being done in the bedroom Nelly, who was fur- tively wiping her eyes, continued the recital of her wrongs: —

"Would you believe it, Jenny, the first thing he did when we arrived here after the wedding was to shake hands with the hall porter, and the boots who took our luggage, and ask after their sisters and their mothers, and their sweethearts — the man knew them all. And when he heard from his boy, Willie Quarrie, that the cook was a person from Michael, it was as much as I could do to keep him from tearing down to the kitchen to talk about old times."

"Yes, I see," said Jenny; "he has made a fortune, but he is just the same simple Manx lad that he was ten years ago."

"Just, just! We can't go out for a walk together but he shouts, 'How do? Fine day, mates!' to the drivers of the hackney cabs across the promenade; and the joy of his life is to get up at seven in the morning and go down to the quay before breakfast to keep tally with a chalk for the fishermen counting their herrings out of the boats into the barrels."

"Not a bit changed, then, since he went away?" said Jenny, before the glass.

"Not a bit; and because I asked him to know his place, and if he is a gentleman to behave as a gentleman and speak as a gentleman and not make so easy with such as don't respect him any the better for it, he turns on me and tells me I've only married him for his money."

"Dreadful!" said Jenny, fixing her fringe. "And is this the old sweetheart you have waited ten years for?"

"Indeed, it is."

"And now that he has come back and you've married him, he has parted from you in ten days?"

"Yes; and it will be the talk of the island—indeed it will."

"Shocking! And so he has left you here on your honeymoon without a penny to bless yourself?"

"Oh, for the matter of that, he fixed something on me before the wedding—a jointure, the advocates called it."

"Terrible! Let me see. He's the one who sent you presents from America?"

"Oh; he piled presents enough on me. It's the way of the men: the stingiest will do that. They like to think they're such generous creatures. But let a poor woman count on it, and she'll soon be wakened from her dream. 'You married me for my money—deny it?'"

"Fearful!"

Jenny was leaning her forehead against the window sash, and looking vacantly out on the bay. Nelly observed her a moment, stopped suddenly in the tale of her troubles, and said, in another voice, "Jenny Crow, I believe you are laughing at me. It's always the way with you. You can take nothing seriously."

Jenny turned back to the room with a solemn face, and said, "Nellie, if you waited ten years for your husband, I suppose that he waited ten years for you."

"I suppose he did."

"And, if he is the same man as he was when he went away, I suppose his love is the same?"

"Then how *could* he say such things?"

"And, if he is the same, and his love is the same, isn't it possible that somebody else is different?"

"Now, Jenny Crow, you are going to say it's all my fault?"

"Not all, Nelly. Something has come between you."

"It's the money. Oh, Jenny, if you ever marry, marry a poor man, and then he can't fling it in your face that you are poorer than he."

"No; it can't be the money, Nelly, for the money is his, and yet it hasn't changed him. And, Nelly, isn't it a good thing in a rich man not to turn his back on his old poor comrades—not to think because he has been in the sun that people are black who are only in the shade—not to pretend to have altered his skin because his coat has changed—isn't it?"

"I see what you mean. You mean that I've driven my husband away with my bad temper."

"No; not that; but Nelly—dear old Nell—think what you're doing. Take warning from one who once made shipwreck of her own life. Think no man common who loves you—no matter what his ways are, or his manners, or his speech. Love makes the true nobility. It ennobles him who loves you and you who are beloved. Cling to it—prize it—do not throw it away. Money can not buy it, nor fame nor rank atone for it. When a woman is loved she is a queen, and he who loves her is her king."

Mrs. Quiggin was weeping behind her hands by this time, but she lifted swollen eyes to say, "I see; you would have me go to him and submit, and explain, and beg his pardon. 'Dear David, I didn't marry you for your money—' No," leaping to her feet, "I'll scrub my fingers to the bone first."

"But, Nelly—"

"Say no more, Jenny Crow, We're hot-headed people, both of us, and we'll quarrel."

Then Jenny's solemn manner was gone in an instant. She snapped her fingers, kicked up one leg a little, and said lightly, "Very well; and now let us have some dinner,"—