

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
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Ambrotox and Limping Dick

Oliver Fleming

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AMBROTOX AND LIMPING DICK.

CHAPTER I.

THE VISITOR'S SHADOW.

Randal Bellamy's country house was a place of pleasant breakfasts. From the dining room the outlook was delightful; grass, flowers and sunshine, with the host's easy charm, made it almost as easy for Theophilus Caldegard to drink his tea fresh, as for his daughter Amaryllis not to keep her host, Sir Randal, waiting for his coffee.

This morning, while she waited for the two men, the girl, remembering that this was the eighteenth of June, was surprised by the ease with which the five weeks of her stay had slipped by; and she wondered, without anxiety, at what point the guest merges into the inmate.

"I can't live here for ever," she thought; "but as long as there's room for his test-tubes, and his dinner's good, dad thinks it's all right for a girl."

And, as if it was all right, she laughed—just in time for Randal Bellamy to get full benefit of the pleasant sound.

"Laughing all alone?" he said.

"That's when the funny things happen," replied Amaryllis.

Bellamy looked down at her, as if asking a share in her merriment.

"After all, I don't know why I laughed," she said. "I was only thinking it's five whole weeks since we came here, and — —"

"And you want to go somewhere else?"

Amaryllis shook her head. "And it's gone like five days, I was going to say."

She took her seat at the table and poured out his coffee. "I'm not going to let you wait a moment for father this morning; it was two o'clock when he went to bed."

"How do you know that, you bad girl?" said Bellamy.

"Because dad can't get out of the habit of putting his boots outside his door," she replied. "And when he's pleased with his work, he throws 'em out."

"I've heard them," he said, laughing. "But last night I was in bed before twelve; I suppose he took advantage of that and sneaked back to the laboratory again."

"But I thought," said Amaryllis, after a pause, "that Ambrotox was finished and ready to make its bow to the public."

"God forbid!" said Bellamy, in a tone of such intensity that the girl was astonished.

"But surely you've been helping him to finish it—you wanted it finished," she exclaimed.

"Yes, but not published," said the man.

The girl's next eager question was cut short by the entrance of the parlour-maid with the morning's letters; and after her came Theophilus Caldegard.

His person was as unlike the popular conception of a man of science as can well be imagined. His sturdy figure, thick white hair, and the ruddy complexion of his face, where the benevolence of the mouth attracted attention before the keenness of the eyes, suggested rather the country gentleman than the man of genius whose discoveries might move a world.

He kissed his daughter, and, "Tea quick—the kettle's boiling, Amy," he said. "Morning, Bellamy."

And, as Bellamy made no response, "First time I ever saw him absorbed by a letter," he remarked:

"Best one I've had for six months," said Bellamy, looking up. "That young brother of mine's coming down by the three-ten."

"Rolling down, you mean," said Caldegard.

"Can't roll any longer—covered with moss," retorted Bellamy. "Aunt Jenny died and didn't leave me a cent."

"Why didn't he come before?" asked Caldegard.

"Been looking for something to do," said the brother. "Now he's been a soldier, I don't believe there's anything left."

"How long was he in the Army?"

"Twelve months in the trenches, two years in the Air Force, and, one time with another, ten months in hospital," replied Bellamy.

"And as soon as he's clear of the Army, he finds he's got money to burn," chuckled Caldegard. "No wonder it's six months before he pays a visit to his respectable big brother."

Amaryllis gathered up her half-read letters, and walked absent-mindedly to the open french-window.

"Oh well," continued her father, "I'm afraid there aren't many sensations left for your rolling stone."

Amaryllis went slowly down the steps into the garden, Bellamy watching her until she was out of sight.

"Look here, Caldegard," he said, turning quickly. "Your daughter knows it's a secret, but she does not know it's a deadly one."

"Well?" said Caldegard.

"My brother," continued Bellamy, "doesn't know there is a secret, and is coming to live in the middle of it. I think that your daughter should know the whole story; and, when you've met him, I hope you'll think it good business to trust my young 'un as completely as I trust yours."

CHAPTER II.

THE HEN WITH ONE CHICK.

Under the cedar tree on the south lawn of Bellamy's garden sat Amaryllis Caldegard. On the wicker table at her side lay a piece of needlework half-covering three fresh novels. But when the stable-clock on the other side of the house struck noon, it reminded her that she had sat in that pleasant shadow for more than an hour without threading her needle or reading a line.

Her reflections were coloured with a tinge of disappointment. Although her life, passed in almost daily contact with an affectionate father, who was a man of both character and intellect, had been anything but unhappy, it had lacked, at one time or another, variety and beauty. But the time spent in the exquisite Hertfordshire country surrounding the old Manor House had been, she thought, the pleasantest five weeks in her memory.

The worldly distinction of Sir Randal Bellamy gave point to the pleasure she felt in his courtesy to her father and his something more than courtesy to herself. She did not tell herself in definite thought that she counted with Randal Bellamy for something more than the mere daughter of the man whom he considered the first and most advanced synthetic chemist of the day; but there are matters perceived so instinctively by a woman that she makes no record of their discovery. If not without curiosity as to the future, she was in no haste for developments; and Bellamy's announcement of an addition to their party cast an ominous shadow across the pleasant field of the indefinite future.

On the twelfth stroke of the clock Amaryllis laughed in her effort to brush aside the clouds of her depression. Expecting her father to join her about this time, she was determined to show him the smiling face to which he was accustomed.

When he came,

"What d'you think of the news?" he said.

"What news, dad?" she asked.

"Somebody coming for you to flirt with, while the old men are busy," he replied.

"Flirt!"

"Well, I don't think it's likely that this Jack-of-all-trades has left that accomplishment out of his list," said the father.

"Rolling stones get on my nerves," objected his daughter, having known none.

"From what his brother says, this one's more like an avalanche."

Amaryllis laughed scornfully.

"Positively overwhelming!" she said. "But I'm sure I shall never —"

"Hush!" said Caldegard, looking towards the house. "Here's his brother."

Sir Randal was turning the corner of the house, with an envelope in his hand.

"Telegram," said Amaryllis softly. "P'r'aps it's the avalanche deferred."

"D'you mind having lunch half an hour earlier, Miss Caldegard?" asked Sir Randal, as he came up. "Dick — my brother — is coming by an earlier train. Just like him, always changing his mind." And he smiled, as if this were merit.

Caldegard laughed good-humouredly. "You're like a hen with one chick, Bellamy," he said.

"No doubt," said the brother. "Do you see, Miss Caldegard," he went on, sitting beside her, "how the pursuit of science can harden a generous heart? Both Dick and I were born, I believe, with the adventurous spirit. I was pushed into the most matter-of-fact profession in the world, which has kept me tied by the leg ever since. But Dick was no sooner out of school than he showed the force of character to discover the world and pursue its adventures for himself."

"But, Sir Randal, hasn't your brother ever followed any regular occupation or business?"

"As far as I know," chuckled the man, "he's followed most of 'em, and there are precious few he hasn't caught up with. Two years before the war certain matters took me to South Africa. One evening, in the smoking-room of the Grand Hotel at Capetown, a queer-looking man asked if my name was Bellamy, and, when I told him it was, inquired if Limping Dick was my brother."

"Limping Dick?" exclaimed Amaryllis.

"Yes," said Sir Randal. "That was the first time I ever heard the name he is known by from Söul to Zanzibar, from Alaska to Honolulu."

"Why do they call him that?" asked the girl.

The man smiled. "Because he has a limp," he said. "But how he came by it is more than I can tell you. I told the fellow that I had indeed a young brother Richard, and that my young brother Richard certainly had a limp. We were saved the trouble of further description by the interruption of a high-pitched voice:

"Not a shade shy of six foot tall; shoulders like Georges Carpentier's when he's pleased with life in the movies; hair black as a Crow Injun's; eyes blue as a hummin' bird's weskit; and a grip—wal, he don't wear no velvet gloves: Limpin' Dick Bellamy!"

"That's him," said the queer man. I agreed that the portrait was unmistakable, and asked if either of them could tell me where he was now, as I hadn't seen him for a long time. So the queer man told me that two years before Dick, who was then overseer of a large rubber plantation north of Banjermassin in Borneo, had given him a job. He added, however, that my brother had left Borneo some six months later. The American had first met him four years before in Bombay, and they had joined forces in a pearl-fishing expedition which took them somewhere in the Persian Gulf—the Bahr-el—Bahr-el-Benat Islands, I think; they had separated four months later and had not met again for more than three years, when the American had run across him as part owner of a cattle ranch in Southern Paraguay."

Amaryllis was interested in spite of herself; but her father had heard these things before, and was thinking of others.

"Jack-of-all-trades," he said, turning towards the house.

"And master of most," called Bellamy after him.

"What a good brother you are!" said Amaryllis softly.

"He's all the family I've got, Amaryllis," he said. "Besides, I'm almost old enough to be his father, and I often feel as if I were."

"From what you've told me, he must be thirty at least," objected the girl, "and I'm sure you're not fifty."

"Over," said Bellamy.

"You don't look it," she answered.

"Thank you."

"What for?"

"You make it easier."

"What easier?"

"What I'm going to say to you."

Amaryllis looked up, surprised.

"Before I met you, Miss Caldegard, I had got thoroughly into the way of thinking of myself not as an elderly man, but as a confirmed bachelor. For more than a month I have been enjoying your company and admiring your goodness and beauty more and more every day, without perceiving, until some few days ago, that I did so at great risk to myself. If I were twenty years younger I should put off speaking like this, in the hope of gaining ground by a longer association with you. But to-day I have made up my mind that my best chance of winning at least your affection lies in telling you simply and at once how completely you have conquered mine."

That this must come sometime, Amaryllis no doubt had foreseen; yet at this moment she felt as much surprised and embarrassed as if she had never read the signs.

If a woman, mother or sister, could have asked her yesterday whether she were willing to marry Randal Bellamy, she might, perhaps, have answered that she liked him awfully, that she valued his love, and felt very sure of being happier as his wife than as an old maid; but now, with the famous lawyer's kind and handsome face

before her, and that pleading note mixing unexpectedly with the splendid tones of his voice, her delicacy rebelled against taking so much more than she could give.

Twice she tried to speak; but, instead of words to her tongue, there came a tiresome lump in her throat and a horrid swimminess over her eyes which she was determined should not culminate in tears.

"What a dear you are, Sir Randal!" she said huskily. "But – but – oh! I do like you most awfully, but – I can't say what I mean."

The new beauty in the face which he had from the first thought so lovely, the new brightness of tears in the dark-brown eyes, and the womanly tenderness which he had never before found in her voice, made his heart quicken as never since he was thirty. That extra beat, if it told him that he was still young, warned him also of the pain which is the tribute imposed on conquered youth.

But before he found words, Caldegard appeared on the terrace, shouting that it was five minutes past one, and lunch waiting.

The pair walked side by side to the house.

"Don't answer me to-day, Amaryllis," he said, "but just turn me and it over in your mind now and then between this and Friday."

CHAPTER III.

"HUMMIN' BIRD'S WESKIT."

At a quarter past two that afternoon, Amaryllis, with her bulldog, set out for a walk.

Her father was in the laboratory, ostensibly at work, and Sir Randal, beaming expectant, had driven off to St. Albans.

Tea-time, or even dinner was early enough, thought Amaryllis, to meet the new-comer; and then, in spite of the mixture of bewilderment, pride and regret which oppressed her, she remembered the words of the American in the Cape Town bar: "Eyes blue as a hummin' bird's weskit."

"How absurd!" she exclaimed, laughing to herself.

Then she sighed, and was quite sure she really wanted to be alone, and set herself, as she strolled down through the hazel copse towards the London road, to think seriously of Randal Bellamy and his offer.

But the trouble was that Miss Caldegard had never seen a humming bird, and therefore found herself brooding on the blueness of all the blue things in her experience, from willow-pattern china to the waters of the Mediterranean, instead of considering the answer which she must give to Randal on Friday.

A quarter of a mile of winding path led her downward to the level of the road. When she reached the stile, her thought was still far from the matter she had promised to consider.

She turned to call her dog, and, knowing his insatiable curiosity, was less surprised than annoyed to find that she had let him stray. She could not remember whether she had last seen him behind her, in front, or blundering through the undergrowth, still confident, in spite of perpetual disappointment, in his power to overtake a rabbit.

Now the dog's temper, admirable with his friends, was uncertain with strangers, and Amaryllis was accustomed to keep him close at

heel in public places. So, having whistled and called in vain, she crossed the stile and looked down the road towards Iddingfield.

There was the tiresome beast, if you please, a hundred yards away, gambolling clumsily round the legs of a man walking towards her.

Her second whistle brought the animal to a sense of duty, and he trotted towards her, with many pauses to look back reluctantly at his new friend.

She caught the dog's collar with the crook of her stick, and bent down, slapping his muzzle in mild reproof.

As the stranger passed, his glance was downward, for the dog, rather than the woman. As she stood erect, she saw him standing with his back towards her, in the middle of the road, with face turned to the stile she had just crossed.

Then he swung round, raising his hat as he approached her.

"Please tell me if that path leads to the Manor House," he said.

Amaryllis saw a tall, well-made figure, a face clean-shaven and deeply sun-burnt, and under the lifted hat caught a glimpse of sleek black hair. But when she saw his eyes, she knew his name, for they were the bluest she had ever seen.

"Yes," she said. "I think you must be Mr. Richard Bellamy."

"I am," he said. "How did you know?"

"Sir Randal Bellamy was telling us about you," she answered. "I am Miss Caldegard. My father and I are staying with Sir Randal. Yes, over the stile is your quickest way to the house." And she looked down the road.

"Aren't you coming, too?" asked Dick Bellamy.

Amaryllis looked at him for a moment.

"Perhaps I'd better," she said, going towards the stile.

"Why 'better'?" he asked.

"There is no one to receive you," she replied. "Besides, the village isn't very interesting."

"Awful," said Dick. "Worst beer in England."

Amaryllis did not reply. When they were amongst the trees, he spoke again.

"I know Randal was to meet me at St. Albans, but I 'phoned from Iddingfield and told 'em to send him back at once. I got my car back from the vet. at mid-day, and if I hadn't had a bit of a smash just outside Iddingfield, I'd have got here before."

Amaryllis was a quick walker, and had set a good pace up the slope from the stile. Suddenly she remembered her companion's nick-name, and, slackening her speed, involuntarily glanced down to see if indeed this man were lame.

He came up beside her.

"It's all right, Miss Caldegard," he said kindly. "My action's a blemish, not a handicap."

"Oh, Mr. Bellamy!" she said. "I never even noticed it until this minute."

"I thought that was how you recognised me in the road," said the man.

"It wasn't that," said Amaryllis, and in fear of further questioning, whistled her dog back to the path.

"Silly old thing," she said. "He won't believe that Mr. Bunny is too quick for him; he's never caught one yet except in his dreams."

They were making their way towards the house when they heard the car drive up to the front door, and before they reached the windows of the dining-room, Randal Bellamy turned the corner.

Amaryllis stood apart watching with a certain curiosity the meeting of the brothers.

The elder's face was beaming with welcome, the younger's she could not see, but something in his bearing suggested a pleasure no less. All she heard, however, was: "Hullo, young 'un!" and "Hullo, Bill!"

And, when they came towards her, the expression of the two faces was that of men who, having breakfasted together, had met again at luncheon.

"Somebody's forestalled my solemn introduction, I see," said Randal.

"Gorgon performed the ceremony," said Amaryllis.

CHAPTER IV.

COFFEE.

Randal Bellamy at fifty was the most successful patent lawyer of his day. He had taken silk before he was forty, and for many years had enjoyed, not only the largest practice, but a distinction unrivalled in his own country and unsurpassed in the world.

Such a man's knowledge in physics, chemistry and biology, though less precise, is often wider than that of the individual specialist. His friendship with Theophilus Caldegard, begun at Cambridge, had lasted and grown stronger with the years.

On the evening of his brother's arrival he dressed for dinner later than was his custom. His bath had filled him with a boyish desire to whistle and sing; and now, as he tied his bow and felt the silk-lined comfort of his dinner-jacket, he heard with a throb of elation the soft sound of a skirt go by his door.

He murmured as he followed:

"—lentus in umbra
Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas."

But before he reached the stairhead, all other sounds were drowned by shouts of laughter from the billiard-room—good laughter and familiar; but the smile left his face and his pace slackened. He was, perhaps, too old to wake the echoes, and Dick's laugh, he thought, was infectious as the plague.

In the wide, comfortable hall used instead of the drawing-room which Bellamy hated, he found Amaryllis smiling with a sparkle in her eyes, as if she too had been laughing.

"Did you hear them?" she asked.

Randal nodded.

"Father hasn't laughed like that for years—billiards!" she said. "Your brother is just telling him shocking stories, Sir Randal."

"How d'you know?" he asked.

"I dressed as quickly as I could, and went to the billiard-room. Father couldn't speak, but just ran me out by the scruff of the neck."

At this moment her attention was distracted by the bull-dog, sliding and tumbling down the stairs in his eagerness to reach his mistress.

"Gorgon's behaving like a puppy," said Randal, smiling.

"Oh, he's been laughing, too," said Amaryllis, fondling the soft ears. "And he wants to tell me all the jokes."

And then Caldegard and Dick Bellamy came down the stairs together.

"What have you been doing to Gorgon?" asked Amaryllis.

"Never mind the dog," said her father. "It's what this 'vaudeville artist' has been doing to me!"

"Oh, Gorgon, Gorgon! If those lips could only speak!" laughed the girl. "Don't you think Gorgon's a good name for the ugly darling, Mr. Bellamy?" she said, as they went in to dinner.

"Surely the Gorgon was a kind of prehistoric suffragette," objected Dick.

"There you are, Amy," said her father, and turned to him. "Your brother and I have quite failed to convince my illiterate daughter that the word *Gorgon* is of the feminine gender."

"Anyhow," said Amaryllis defiantly, as she took her seat at the dinner-table, "I looked it up in the dictionary, and all it said was: A monster of fearful aspect."

"He deserves it," said Dick.

"He seems to have taken a great fancy to you, Mr. Bellamy," said the girl.

"Dogs always do," said Randal.

"Always at the first meeting?" asked Amaryllis.