

Milady Disdain

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Marianne Malthouse

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By the same author writing as Marianne Glenton

Farnham's Folly

Kerrigan's Curse

Writing as Marianne Malthouse

Tanya

To all my wonderful supportive family,
Glenton and Malthouse
Thanks to you all

The necessity of leaving the only home she had ever known was daunting so soon after the death of her beloved mother, but the new life she was about to embark upon was to prove both exciting and challenging for Patience Kilpatrick. Daughter of a father who had abandoned his family to fight and die for Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden, and granddaughter of the Earl of Kincaid who had given his life in the earlier Stuart cause, she had lived a life far beneath her station, and was happy to become governess to the young son of Milady Costain. Her growing confidence in herself, and the twists and turns her life takes as she becomes embroiled in the fortunes of her contemporaries in the glittering world of London's aristocracy leads her into a future she could only have dreamed of.

A wind that awoke on the moorland came sighing,
Like the voice of the heroes who perished in vain
Not for Tearlach alone the red claymore was plying,
But to win back the old world that comes not again.

A. Lang



Charles Edward Louis Philip Casimir Stuart landing
in the Hebrides during Jacobite uprising

1



The last rays of the setting sun reflected red in the tiny windows of the snug cottage nestling in its sheltered hollow, and seemed to set the honeysuckle that grew around its door aflame. Never had it looked more homely or beautiful to the young girl standing in the gateway, shading her eyes from the glare. Now that she must leave it, it was inexpressibly dear to her, for she had lived here all her eighteen years, and could not envisage life anywhere else.

Patience's father, James Kilpatrick, had been steward to Squire Griffin for twenty years, and had lived in Honeysuckle Cottage for all of them. It was a tied cottage, and Patience and her mama had stayed on there since his death six years earlier, only upon the beneficence of the squire, who had had a new house built for James' successor, a man dominated by a large wife and numerous offspring. His eldest son, a strapping young man of some twenty summers, was to be the new incumbent at the cottage, having recently wed one of the maids at the manor, and Mrs Griffin had been only too happy to bestow Patience's home upon him, in order to remove from the sphere of her only son and heir one whom she considered to be so far beneath him as to preclude his even acknowledging her existence. Unfortunately, Tom Griffin was not of her opinion, for he regarded Patience in the light of a sister, having shared his lessons with her, extricated her from the scrapes into which he had invariably led her, and protected her from her more robust contemporaries.

Mrs Griffin had strenuously resisted the idea of Patience taking lessons with her son, but for once the squire had been obstinate, for it was obvious that young Tom, no scholar, learned far more readily in competition with a mere girl, and the tutor had nothing but praise for her intelligence and industry, often infuriating the squire's lady by his less than complimentary comparison regarding Tom's mental attributes.

Tom, however, cheerfully accepted such animadversions upon his poverty of intellect, and observed that as long as he could learn to run the estate as profitably and shrewdly as his papa, he would be content.

As the squire secretly agreed, having no ambition for his son to rise above his station in life, he would let the storm rage above his head then go his own way, which was his method of dealing with a spouse who was both irascible and bigoted, and who never ceased to bewail the fact that she had married beneath her.

It was this trait that had been at the root of her enmity towards the Kilpatricks. She had never been able to forgive the fact that they were both far better bred than she could ever hope to be. Although in most impecunious circumstances all his life, being a younger son of a younger son, James Kilpatrick had nevertheless succeeded in winning the hand of Mary Sinclair, the daughter of the Earl of Kincaid, who had lost both his life and possessions by supporting the Old Pretender in the rising of 1715. It had been a love match, a privilege usually concomitant with the lower classes, and he had considered himself fortunate beyond words even though she came to him dowerless, and bearing a name that had been dishonoured and reviled by a vengeful king.

They had left Scotland and settled in Kent, where Patience had been born. She had been raised on a diet of her grandpapa's sacrifices for the Stuart cause, and ultimately informed that her papa also had lost his life in the carnage at Culloden following the same dream. Mrs Kilpatrick had never before divulged this to anyone, not even her daughter until just before she died, for although she could not but be proud of her husband for doing what he had thought was right, and giving his life for an ideal, her native shrewdness and the memory of a childhood spent in disgrace under

the shadow of a vindictive king's displeasure had kept her silent. Patience had finally understood why her mother had rarely spoken of her father since his mysterious death whilst visiting relatives in another part of the country, which was the tale she had been told and had always believed.

When the news of her husband's demise had reached Mary, she had shut herself away in her room for several hours, then had emerged determined to shield her daughter from the results of his actions. She had informed the squire that James had died of the fever whilst visiting his family in Scotland, trusting that the death in battle of one obscure man amongst so many would never come to light. She had not been mistaken, and her secret had remained safe.

To Patience, listening incredulously to this story for the first time as her mother lay dying, it all seemed such a dreadful waste of life. She cared little who sat on the throne in London, for she had never been further than five miles from the squire's estates, and had thought it of far more importance whether their small crop of vegetables would survive the frost than whether a Stuart or a scion of the House of Hanover held the crown. She thought it would have been far more to the point had her father devoted his energies to the well-being of his family instead of rushing off in such an ill-considered way to espouse a cause that was lost almost before it had begun. She had heard of the charm of the exiled Charles, and her mother who had seen him briefly once, had often sung the praises of the Bonnie Prince, but in Patience's opinion, it was a pity he had ever set foot on English soil.

Of course she had concealed her feelings from her mother, and that lady had died believing her daughter as proud as herself of her husband's heroic end.

With the passing of her mother, Patience's life began to change with bewildering speed. Mrs Griffin, who had been viewing with increased disapprobation her son's predilection for Miss Kilpatrick's company—she was quite unable to believe that Patience was not, in fact, attempting to inveigle her offspring into marriage—immediately pointed out to the squire the advantages of offering Honeysuckle Cottage to young Dalrymple. When her husband

agreed but tentatively suggested that perhaps the girl could make her home with them, she instantly paraded forth for his edification such a long, exhaustive list of reasons why it was quite impossible that the poor man was quite overcome and cravenly retreated.

Tom, upon learning that Patience was to be evicted from her home, spoke to his mother in far more forthright terms, but retreated in disorder when that artful lady dissolved into tears and demanded her smelling salts.

It was Tom who had broken the news to her that morning, a mere six weeks since Mrs Kilpatrick had been laid to rest. Patience, stunned, had stared at him in disbelief.

‘But, Tom, what shall I do? Where shall I go?’

He looked uncomfortable.

‘I do not know as yet,’ he admitted miserably. ‘There can be no question of your leaving until you have a place to go, of course, Papa would not allow it. It is a cursed bad business.’

He glowered down at his boots, and absent-mindedly scrubbed at a speck of mud marring their polish.

‘But where can I go, pray? I have no relatives who would take me, they are either dead or abroad in disgrace.’

‘I know it.’ He looked at her gloomily, then jumped to his feet and paced restlessly around the small room. ‘It’s Mama who is behind it, of course. Pa would have had you come to live with us, but you know how it is.’

‘Oh, indeed I do, your father has been more than kind,’ replied Patience earnestly. ‘I cannot expect to live on charity. I suppose I must try to gain some employment.’

‘Employment? What can *you* possibly do, miss?’ scoffed Job’s comforter.

Patience looked rather daunted for a moment, then brightened.

‘I could become a governess,’ she declared, then her face dropped as he cast her a derisive look.

‘Who would employ a chit of a girl like you, pray? You do not even look like a governess,’ he added, looking at her dispassionately.

She did not, indeed, resemble a model of that stern profession. She was of rather less than average height—Mrs Griffin usually referred to her as a poor squab of a female—very slender, with small

bones and delicate features. Her hair, which was of a soft brown, curled naturally around her small head, and her features, whilst far from classical, were generally held to be pleasing. Her limpid brown eyes now anxiously surveying Tom Griffin were, perhaps, her only claim to beauty.

He grinned suddenly.

‘Lord, I can just see you, Pattie, in charge of two or three young tearaways. They would never mind you. I ain’t saying you don’t have it in your brain box, because you do, but you are just not up to snuff, that’s all.’

‘Well, I have never had any opportunity to try,’ replied Patience defensively, and sighed. ‘If I cannot be a governess, I do not know what I can do. Perhaps I could be companion to an old lady.’

He glared at her, revolted.

‘What, spend the rest of your life running around after some old tabby who would probably lead you a dog’s life? No, we must think of something else.’

She regarded him hopefully, her head on one side, as he sat in a brown study for some moments, then he grinned ruefully.

‘I wish you will not look at me so, you look just like a puppy waiting for a bone. It’s the devil of a coil, Pattie, that’s what it is. I’ll speak to m’father about it, he’s bound to come up to scratch.’

‘Would you, Tom? I should be very grateful. It is all so very strange, first losing Mama, and now having to leave—’

She broke off, swallowed, and smiled at him valiantly.

His face twisted.

‘I know, child, I know. I had thought, perhaps, if the worst came to the worst, you could marry me, but I do not think things would be very comfortable if you did, because Mama would be as cross as a cat, and would make your life a misery. Anyway, we are both underage, and I cannot think that an elopement would be quite the thing.’

Patience, accepting this magnanimous proposal in the spirit in which it was made, shook her head emphatically.

‘Oh no, Tom, it is quite out of the question. That is why your mama is sending me away, because she is worried I may entrap you into making me an offer.’

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