

# LOVE LED TRAGEDY IN THE LIFE OF MAI SKILTON.

## The Story of Her Career, Told by John A. Turner, with Whom She Came to New York.

### Married to a Man Thrice Her Age, Separation Followed Naturally, and Just as Naturally She Went to Him She Loved.

### The Rest is a Story of Happiness While They Could Be Together, Despair When Apart, with Suicide by Poison as the End of This Tragedy of Real Life.

**B**AD as I am, I'm hardly the scoundrel that most of the recent publications relative to the sad and unfortunate death of Mrs. Mai Skilton have led the people to believe. So I'll be glad if you will publish in your columns the story of my acquaintance with Mrs. Skilton from beginning to end.

#### CHAPTER I. Forming the Acquaintance.

**M**RS. MAI SKILTON—that's the only name I knew her by—was a lovely and lovable woman. She had piercing black eyes and brown hair and a beautiful figure. She was twenty-three years old. Her father is Park Temple, who lives in Peoria, Ill., and writes amusing paragraphs and pieces for a newspaper there. Mrs. Skilton inherited his will. She was a bright girl. I call her a girl, for she was only twenty-three years old. If she liked you, she would do anything on earth for you. But she had a high temper. She could hate just as earnestly as she could love.

was going to church with the other lady and a young gentleman friend. She asked me if I'd be along the way to church. I met her and we walked around until the time church would have been over. She showed very plainly that she saw I admired her. She said she was going away next morning, that she hoped she would see me again, and she asked me to go to the depot and tell her good-by.

I went to the depot next morning with my younger brother. I did not want her husband to know I was there to tell her good-by, so I told him I was there on business.

Mrs. Skilton and her husband went from Nashville to Louisville. During the next two days I received three letters from her. I answered none of them. I thought it was best for her and myself not to do so. One from her ran like this:

Dear John: Last night when Mr. Skilton and I were sitting in the parlor he said: "Which of all the cities we have been to on our trip would you prefer to live in? I told him Nashville. He asked, 'Why?' I said, 'I like the town and the people—most there particularly Mr. Turner, who was so nice and polite to me.' He said, 'If you think so much of Mr. Turner I will see John there to see him. He seemed to like you, too, so I'll ask him in case we should separate if we have any.'

I scarcely knew what he meant, John; but he's going. He just wants to talk to you; he doesn't mean any harm. MAI. Sure enough, the next morning, when I reached father's store, Skilton was waiting for me.

"How do you do?" I said. "Where did you drop from?" Where's your wife, and how is she?"

He said: "She's very well. I left her at Louisville. I just ran down to see you for a moment."

I asked him to come into the office. He refused. We went to the rear of the store, where we were alone.

"I have been talking to my wife," he said. "Then he told me what was in his wife's letter to me, and added: 'Before I was married there were two women—I didn't know which one to take. The older one might have been more contented.'"

"Knowing that my wife thinks a good deal of you, and thinking you like her, I want to ask you, if we were to be separated, if you like to marry her?"

I was so astounded that I was silent for a moment. He added:

"I don't know how much, but if we were to separate she'd have some money."

"I said: 'Mr. Skilton, what on earth do you mean? Are you joking with me, sir?' You see he referred to Mrs. Skilton as his former wife. I did not know his purpose, but I realized that no one, man or woman, could get a divorce in thirty days. So I wrote him to this effect:

Great pleasure to be of any service to you or your wife. I will meet her as you ask, and I am only sorry that you will not accompany her. Respectfully,

JOHN A. TURNER.

In about three days I got a letter from Mrs. Skilton. She simply said to meet her on such and such a train. She was there. She showed she was very glad to see me. I escorted her to the Maxwell House and, of course, on the way inquired what had happened.



Mrs. Mai Skilton and John A. Turner. She is the woman who committed suicide at the Menlo Hotel Sunday, her death revealing a strange and sad romance. The picture is made from a photograph found by the police among her effects.

Dear Mr. Turner: I finally my wife, expects to visit Nashville some time next week and would like to have you meet her train at the depot. Either she or myself will write you and let you know just what time she will arrive. You see he referred to Mrs. Skilton as his former wife. I did not know his purpose, but I realized that no one, man or woman, could get a divorce in thirty days. So I wrote him to this effect:

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of divorce has been entered."

She showed me a typewritten letter from some Chicago lawyer in that effect. I took her to my lawyer in Nashville. He told her that it was impossible for Skilton to be divorced from her in thirty days; that she was his wife. And that the chances were he had sent her to Nashville to compromise her so that he could get a divorce. She told me she would take my advice and my lawyer's, and go to her parents.

She did not go home, she told me afterward. She went to a lawyer in Chicago. She said he told her the degree of divorce had been entered, and that he could not stop the suit. But he would see old Skilton, and try and compel him to make better provision for her.

Two weeks after she went away I got a wire from her, telling me to meet her at the Nashville depot. When she got off the train she said:

"Well, I got \$5,000 by going home. I sent some \$2,000; I put up a monument over the grave of an old friend of mine and gave his poor mother what remained of \$1,000. I have \$2,000 left, and I want you to take a trip with me."

CHAPTER III. Beginning of Our Travels.

I WAS infatuated with the girl. I was weak enough to accept. She had positively refused to go home. She had made me believe she had provided for her people. I hesitate to tell this, but it did influence me to permit her to accompany me to New York.

After a short trip through the South we came by steamer to New York. That was last July. Here, I must say, we lived too extravagantly for the sake of our pocket-book. When there was \$1,100 of which mine was the larger share—I suggested that we invest it. So we did, but continued to live too extravagantly. After eight months our money was nearly exhausted; that is, we had spent in eight months \$1,800 of her money and what money I had. Then I suggested that she take what money was left and go to her home.

She said: "John, first let me tell you that I told you a story once. I did not send any money home. I got only \$2,000, and of that I paid a lawyer \$100. I'm afraid if I go home with so little money, that they will question me too closely."

I answered: "Mai, here's our position: In two weeks we'll have no money. You know how hard it is for a man to get a position here."

I finally persuaded her to go home, knowing it best for her and me and every one concerned. The question of money between us amounted to nothing; there were no regrets about the money spent. She left here to go to her father's home with \$100 and her railroad and Pullman tickets in her pocket. She expected that I would go home, too, and that she would hear from me from Nashville, and that by and by we would see each other again.

I continued myself that it was best not to write to her. I had no money. She was in her father's house. I thought she might forget me and be happier.

But she, hearing nothing from me, and supposing I had gone to Nashville, went there. On her arrival she went to the house of a young lady to whom I had introduced her. The next day she went to my father's house. She found I was not in the city and came to New York. That was fifteen days ago.

CHAPTER IV. Beginning of the End.

SHE had been here about an hour when I met her on Broadway. I will not say I was glad to see her under the circumstances. I made her think I was. I had been forced to take cheaper and smaller lodgings. I had no money to speak of, but she knew that she could share what I had.

"What's good enough for you is good enough for me, John," she said. I took her to the Menlo Hotel.

She remained there a week. All that time I was trying to convince her of what I myself was persuaded. No man is anxious to be rid of a woman such as she was. I talked to her for her own sake. I had no thought of myself. I told her the only thing to do for her own good was to return

to her father and mother. I told her I could get the money to buy her railroad ticket. The truth was, I had to borrow the money. She finally realized that I was right and acknowledged it. I bought the ticket, took her to the Pennsylvania Railroad station in New Jersey, and put her on the train for Chicago. I kissed her good-by; but she would not let me go. She begged her, for God's sake, to appreciate the circumstances and go to her home.

She went to Chicago. On last Saturday night, four days after she went away, she walked into the hotel. I was in bed, ill with fever. I could not sleep.

"A lady wants to see you," said the clerk, entering my room.

"Who is she?"

"The tall lady who was here with you— imagine my surprise. I managed to dress myself and go downstairs. She put her arms around my neck and exclaimed: 'Oh, John, I'm so glad to get back to you!'"

"You're a foolish girl, Mai," I said; "why did you return? You know my position. If it were different—"

"Never mind about your position," she said. "I pawned one of my rings and came back to you."

She laughed and seemed perfectly content. I did not rebuke her, except in a pleasant way. I told her I would get her another room, for I was very sick. She would not do as I wished. Winded by travel she fell asleep at once. I and sleepless, I passed a most miserable night. She awoke early on Sunday. She was naturally very anxious to talk to me about her trip to and from Chicago. I told her I was weak from the loss of sleep. She would all right for a short time. Then, before I could ever get to sleep, she, poor girl, began to talk again. So the day passed.

CHAPTER V. All Ends in a Tragedy.

AT 3 o'clock Mr. Stein, one of the hotel proprietors, came into the room. He said he was going to Hoboken, and asked her if she would like to go. She hesitated. I said: "Yes, Mai,

go. The fresh air will do you good."

"Stein said he would return in half an hour, and she went across the street to get breakfast.

She returned, and Stein came for her. "When you come back, Mai," I said, "if I happen to be asleep, don't wake me. I'll leave the door unlocked. If I'm asleep take another room, and we'll see each other in the morning."

I also cautioned Mr. Stein not to waken me. They went out. I lay awake until 7:30 by my clock, when for the first time in more than fifty hours I fell asleep. At 7:55 I was awakened by loud knocking at the door, which was immediately opened from the outside and Mai came in with Mr. Stein. I said to Stein:

"For God's sake, why did you not let me sleep as I asked you? I'm nearly dead. Get me a key for another room for Mai."

Stein left the room. "I won't go anywhere else," exclaimed Mai. "Mal, please go and let me sleep," I said; and I must admit I was vexed; for when I told her to go out with Mr. Stein I begged her not to arouse me.

Mr. James Turner  
Dear Sir—  
I don't want you to think I'm hard on John. He is not naturally the same, as he did not ask me to leave Mr. Skilton and did not know that I was going to leave Mr. Skilton & come to Nashville after securing the divorce. I did not have the money when I first wrote that I was through. John that I got the money as we went away on. I don't see a naturally a good generous, honest man—and I think I was to marry the same in a different man. I was at my inaction and left Nashville together and I will pay John just as he worked hard and tried to keep the money by other ways. Very Respectfully  
Mai Temple Skilton

Letters from Mrs. Skilton to Turner's Father.

#### A TROLLEY CAR ABLAZE.

Schoolgirls Climbed on the Seats to Avoid the Flames, and a Fire Engine Was Called.

Half a dozen schoolgirls, returning to their homes in the Eastern District, from Packer Institute, on Remsen street, Brooklyn, climbed upon the seats of trolley car No. 2,145 of the cross-town line yesterday in order to avoid the flames that were dancing about on the floor. The car was bound for Williamsburg, and was running down Wiloughby street at 3:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon. At the corner of Jay street there was a report, and flames burst through the floor of the car.

The women passengers in the car screamed and got their feet out of harm's way. Somebody turned in a fire alarm, but the engine which responded was not needed.

#### STATION "D" ROBBED.

A Trusted Post Office Clerk Failed to Appear Yesterday, and \$500 Is Missing.

It was rumored yesterday that the safe in Station D, of the Post Office at No. 25 Third avenue, had been opened on Monday night, by some one having the combination, and a sum of money stolen. Louis E. Ransom, superintendent of the station, admitted last evening that quite a sum of money was missing. He declined to state the exact amount, but said \$500 would not be very far wrong.

#### SULLIVAN TWICE HURT.

John T., the Actor, Still Holds His Part in "Heartsease," and Henry Miller Givcs Him a Hard Fall.

John T. Sullivan, who plays the role of the villain in "Heartsease" at the Garden Theatre, has recalled his resignation from the company, which he tendered on the ground that Henry Miller, who impersonates the hero, used unnecessary force in throwing him to the floor of the stage at the thrilling climax in the third act of the play.

It is generally known that Mr. Miller and Mr. Sullivan are not on the very best of terms, and Mr. Sullivan's friends say that consequently Mr. Miller hasn't much regard for Sullivan's bones. At last night's performance Mr. Miller threw Mr. Sullivan to the stage with unusual energy, and the latter's body landed so far up the stage that when the curtain descended the heavy cross pole struck Mr. Sullivan quite heavily on the back and the curtain had to be raised again in order that the actor could extricate himself.

#### TROLLEY FOR THE CATSKILLS.

Daniel F. Lewis Applies to the Railroad Commissioners for Permission.

There were two hearings before the State Board of Railroad Commissioners in the Chamber of Commerce rooms yesterday morning. The application of the Catskill Electric Railway for a certificate of permission to build an electric road from the water front at Catskill to the point in front of the Grant House in Jefferson, two miles away, brought out the fact that Daniel F. Lewis, at one time president of the Brooklyn City Railroad system, is about to extend his trolley interests to the wilderness of the Catskill Mountains.

There was an opposition to the plan, and the certificate will probably be granted. The New York Central Railroad objected to an application for a trolley line between Auburn and Seneca Falls, ten miles, and the Commission will meet at Syracuse to hear both sides.

Steinitz Still Alive.

Moscow, Feb. 23.—The report that William Steinitz, the noted chess player, is dead was an error. He is still confined in a lunatic asylum.



ENGLISH SHIPS AT THE BOMBARDMENT AT GANEA.

#### CHEERS FOR THE GREEKS.

Mass Meeting at Chickering Hall Shows its Sentiments, and Applauds King George's Acts.

The mass meeting held in Chickering Hall last night to sympathize with Greece and to applaud the patriotic attitude of King George was attended by men who have been prominent in Ireland's cause, Cubans, too, several thousand Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Cretans and Thessalonians and hundreds who, some of English stock. F. Bleecker Miller presided, in the absence of Mayor Strong, who was held a prisoner at home by gout. The Rev. James Chrysal made an impassioned address and R. S. Tharin, a Washington lawyer followed. Mr. Tharin has a long white beard and is eloquent. His friends say he will be the next Minister to Greece. He piled words of scorn on diplomacy, and capped his period by saying all diplomats were Mohammedans. When he said that the King of Greece had sat quietly playing at diplomacy "until the people of Greece, Americanized by contact with Americans and her children from America, said George must go unless Crete was annexed," the audience rose in a frenzy of applause which was not equalled at any other point of the tumultuous meeting's history.

William Willard Howard, who had gone as a newspaper correspondent into Armenia; Stoyan Krastoff Vratnicky, a Bulgarian studying at Harvard; Dr. T. H. Hurlbut, an Armenian; and Miss Winchell, an American, added denunciations of the Turk. Dr. Parkhurst wrote a letter, in which he said:

"What is the matter with European civilization, and why is it that out of the six Governments that control the destinies of Europe, not one comes to the front with moral prowess enough to break the shackles of diplomacy, and to lead a path for the extermination of the unscrupulous Turk. Resolutions denouncing the Turk, applauding the Greek and expressing sympathy with Crete, were adopted with enthusiasm."

Massachusetts to Be Dry-Do-cked.

The battleship Massachusetts is the first vessel of the squadron to return to this station after the manoeuvres off Charleston Harbor. She anchored off Tompkinsville yesterday morning. The Massachusetts will go to the Navy Yard to-morrow—she will probably be the first vessel to be dry-docked in the new dry dock. She is in need of a new hull, and her hull was damaged in 1894.