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TITLE: LOVE INSTIGATED: THE STORY OF A CARVED IVORY UMBRELLA HANDLE

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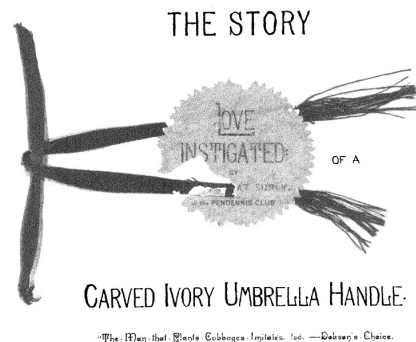
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LOVE INSTIGATED: THE STORY
OF A CARVED IVORY UMBRELLA HANDLE ***

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LOVE INSTIGATED

**BY
BELL THE CAT SURLY
of the PENDENNIS CLUB**

**THE STORY
OF A
CARVED IVORY UMBRELLA HANDLE.**

"The Man that Plants Cabbages Imitates God."—Dobson's Choice.

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LOVE PERPETUATED:— —The Story of a Dagger.

BY DOUGLASS SHERLEY,
WHO WROTE
—THE STORY OF A PICTURE.—

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SPECIAL DEDICATION
TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE SHERLEY CLUB
OF
LITTLE BRITAIN:

—DESPAIR YE NOT AT ALL—

E'EN BY SO SMALL A THING AS THIS POOR BOOKLET
MAY YOUR
LOVES BE INSTIGATED!

[img]

[img]

DEDICATED
TO EACH SINGLE SON OF ST. PENDENNIS
WHO WORSHIPS NOT AT THE SHRINE OF
THE MAIDEN PRIESTESS OF TO-DAY

—LET·HIM·LOOK·TO'T,—
OR·LIKewise·HE·MAY·SOMEWHERE·FIND
LOVE·PERPETRATED.

[img]

[img]

LOVE INSTIGATED.

IT WAS A DAISY BIT OF IVORY.

IT WAS A CURIOUS PIECE OF WORKMANSHIP.

IT WAS CARVED AND CARVED AGAIN WITH CONVENTIONAL LINES, WHICH FORMED A FEMALE HEAD OF EAST-INDIAN UNEXCEPTIONABLENESS.

IT SEEMED TO SMILE AND TO BECKON, AND THEN TO SCOWL REPELLANTLY—A LIVING MOCKERY!

IT WAS HATEFUL—OH, SO HATEFUL!—THE SIGHT OF SO CONVENTIONAL A THING.

AND YET THERE HAD BEEN SUCH A LONGING TO TOUCH IT AND TO HOLD IT IN THE HAND!

BUT SEE THE SEQUEL.

[img]

IT WAS NOT AN IDOL OF INDIA.

IT WAS THE CARVED IVORY HANDLE OF A TANNED GINGHAM UMBRELLA, OF VERY PLEBEIAN AMERICAN MANUFACTURE.

IT STOOD IN A HAND-PAINTED CHINA RECEPTACLE IN THE LONG QUIET HALL, IN THE HOUSE OF A FRIEND. IT WAS THERE WHEN I DINED WITH HIM THE NIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS.

IT GLEAMED AT ME WITH A SINISTER GLEAM OF ITS DEXTER EYE!

AND IT SEEMED TO SMILE AND TO BECKON AT ME OUT OF THE SOFT, VOLUPTUOUS ENVIRONMENT OF THE "INNER-SISTERHOOD," OF WHICH IT WAS A FELLOW.

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AND WHEN WE WERE SEATED AT THE GLITTERING TABLE, BEAUTIFUL WITH CRYSTAL AND SILVER—

AND LEMONADE AND CAKE—

AN ESTHETIC BANQUET—

IT CHANCED, BY MEREST ACCIDENT, THAT I WAS GIVEN A SEAT OPPOSITE THE PORTIERED ARCHWAY WHICH LED INTO

THE LONG QUIET HALL,

WITH ITS WINE-COLORED WEALTH OF TURKISH-BATH TOWELING THROWN BACK.

AND AS WE SAT BENEATH THE IRIDESCENT GLOW OF THE KEELY-MOTOR

ELECTRIC LAMP, WHICH

[img]

GLISTENED AND SHIMMERED ITS STAINED-GLASS IRIDESCENCE ON ALL ABOUT IT, AND GAVE ITS HUE TO THE INVIGORATING BEVERAGE, WE HEDED NOT THE ELEMENTAL WAR WAGING UPON THE QUEEN ANNE EXTERIOR OF THE HOSPITABLE MANSION OF MY FRIEND.

AND WHEN WE WERE LEFT TO OUR COFFEE AND OUR PIPES, WE TALKED OF DAGGERS, AND EPITAPHS, AND TOMBS!

AND AS HE TOLD ME IN A MYSTERIOUS WHISPER THE STORY OF THE MALAY DAGGER, "GUILTLESS OF ALL GUILF," THE VITREOUS EYE OF THAT QUAINLY CARVED ODALISQUE—FOR SUCH MY FEVERED FANCY PICTURED IT—WAS EVER GLARING AT ME WITH ITS SINISTER GLARE!

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AND WHEN OUR GHOSTLY TALK WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE ENTRANCE OF OTHER GUESTS, I QUAFFED ANOTHER CRYSTAL GOBLET OF MY FRIEND'S BRAIN-MADDENING CONCOCTION, AND CASTING A LONG, LINGERING LOOK AT THE PERSIAN RUG WHICH HID THE GRAECO-ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE OF THE VAULTED CEILING, I PASSED FROM THE GOTHIC PORTALS OF THIS ESTHETIC SHRINE INTO THE OUTER DARKNESS—BEYOND THE GLAMOUR OF THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE.

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BUT,—OH FITFUL FATE!—AS I PASSED THOUGH THE LONG, QUIET HALL AND BY THE WINE-COLORED PLUSH CORNER FROM WHOSE VOLUPTUOUS SHADOW THE SINISTER-EYED, CARVED-IVORY-HANDLE ODALISQUE CAST AN ALLURING, APPEALING LOOK TOWARD ME, AND ALL UNCONSCIOUSLY, UNINTENTIONALLY, AND UNRESISTINGLY I TOOK IT FROM ITS HAND-PAINTED CHINA RECEPTACLE, AND CLOSING THE HEAVY DOORS OF ROLLED, CATHEDRAL PLATE GLASS AFTER ME, I UNFURLED ITS SUN-TANNED GINGHAM FOLDS TO THE AFOREMENTIONED WARRING ELEMENTS. AND AS I WENDED MY DESOLATE WAY TO THE SAINTED SHRINE OF PENDENNIS, MY SEETHING BRAIN PEOPLED THE VALLEY OF UNREST WITH ELFS, AND RAVENS AND BRAHMAN GODS, AND THE DAGGER WHOSE BLOOD-STAIN BELONGED TO A VENETIAN DUKE. WHEN I PRESENTLY ENTERED THE RESOUNDING CLOISTERS OF THE ORDER OF ST. PENDENNIS—WHEN I ENTERED THIS "HOUSE WITHOUT A WOMAN" I SOUGHT THE SECLUSION OF A DARK, WINE-COLORED, PLUSH-LINED CELL, AND CARELESSLY PLACING THE TANNED GINGHAM, VEGETABLE-IVORY-HANDLED UMBRELLA ON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HEARTH BEFORE ME,

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I THREW MY MENTALLY-EXHAUSTED FRAME INTO A MASSIVE, DAMASK-COVERED CHAIR WITH HEAVILY-CARVED ARMS OF HIGHLY-POLISHED OAK, AND SOUNDED THE TINY, TINTINNABULATING CALL-BELL FOR SOMETHING TO COUNTERACT THE EFFECTS OF THE TOO-EXHILERATING POTABLES OF MY FRIEND, AND HIS NO LESS HARROWING STORIES!

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BUT WHILE I THUS SAT WAITING, WITH MY FEET TO THE COMFORTABLE FIRE, ALL AT ONCE MY GAZE WAS UNCONSCIOUSLY, UNINTENTIONALLY AND UNRESISTINGLY TRANSFIXED BY THE SINISTER GLANCE OF THE DEXTER EYE OF THE CARVED-IVORY ODALISQUE.

AND AS I SAT THERE IN THE TWILIGHT GLARE OF THE SLOWLY-CONSUMING EMBERS ON THE WIDE AND DEEP, OLD-FASHIONED, OPEN FIRE-PLACE, WITH LACQUERED-BRASS FIRE-DOGS—BENEATH THE SPELL OF THOSE STEALTHY, ROGUISH GLANCES, I, AGAINST MY WISH AND WILL, WAS LED TO THINK OF THE DARK, STRANGE AND WEIRDLY GROTESQUE THINGS OF WHICH MY FRIEND HAD TOLD ME.

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AND FINALLY, AS UNDER THE STRANGE FASCINATION OF THE VITREOUS DEXTER AND SINISTER EYES OF THE CARVED-IVORY ODALISQUE, WHICH HELD ME SPELL-BOUND, I LEARNED FROM THE THIN, CURLED LIPS OF THE SAID CARVED-IVORY ODALISQUE ITS OWN STORY.

IT WAS NOT CREATED BY LOVE.

NOR WAS IT IN ITSELF THE EMBODIMENT OF LOVE. BUT IT BORE IN ONE OF ITS FLEXIBLE RIBS THE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE ADHESIVE QUALITIES OF A LOVE DRIVEN BACK UPON ITSELF,—THE CONCENTRATION OF AN OTHERWISE WASTED FORCE.

[img] LESS THAN A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, A DUDISH RODERICK DHU STOOD FLUSTERED WITH FIERY INDIGNATION, FACE TO FACE WITH A MAIDEN PRIESTESS—A PRIDEFUL, HAUGHTY WOMAN!

IT WAS ON THE RUE QUATRIEME. IT WAS AT THE INTERSECTION OF TWO GREAT THOROUGHFARES.

THE CLOUDS HAD PARTED THEIR BANGS IN THE MIDDLE, AND WERE SHIMMERING THEIR CRYSTAL DROPS OF DISTILLED OCEAN IN TORRENTAL VOLUME UPON THE LUCKLESS WAYFARERS.

[img] IT CHANCED THAT THE PRIDEFUL MAIDEN PRIESTESS WAS HURRYING ADOWN THE BOULEVARD WITH THE SELF-SAME CARVED-IVORY-HANDLED UMBRELLA CLOSELY CLASPED IN HER DELICATE MARIE ANTOINETTE FINGERS. SHE WAS THUS ENSCONCED BEHIND THE SHELTERING TAUTNESS OF THE STOUT-RIBBED GINGHAM UMBRELLA WITH THE CARVED-IVORY HANDLE, WHEN SHE PASSED OUT OF THE SHADOW OF THE MASSIVE MARBLE EDIFICE OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND TURNED INTO THE RUE DE LA CHATAIGNE —AND UNCONSCIOUSLY, UNINTENTIONALLY AND UNRESISTINGLY PUNCHED A TEAR OUT OF THE DEXTER EYE OF THE RESISTLESS RODERICK DHU!

I AM SURE THAT CARVED-IVORY, OGGLING ODALISQUE WAS TO BLAME! I AM SURE THAT IT WANTONLY DROVE THE SPARE RIB OF THE STOUT GINGHAM UMBRELLA TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ITS OWN FOUL PURPOSE!

THE PRIDEFUL MAIDEN PRIESTESS HAD GREAT COMMISERATION FOR THE ARDENT RODERICK.

[img] SHE FRANKLY TOLD HIM SO.

AND IN A TACIT BUT POTENT—OH, SO POTENT—WAY, BADE HIM, IF HE LIKED, TO GO WITH HER TO HER SHRINE AND THERE HAVE HIS WEEPING WOUNDS BOUND UP WITH "A BIT OF EAST INDIA SILK,"—AT HER SHRINE, WHOSE DOORS SHOULD EVER BE OPEN TO HIM.

OH! CHANCE, FORTUITOUS CHANCE! HOW MANY FOLLOWERS OF ST. PENDENNIS ARE ANNUALLY ENSNARED IN THY NAME!

[img] ERE LONG,—WITHIN A MONTH, A LITTLE MONTH—THE DUDISH RODERICK DHU WAS A CRINGING DEVOTEE AT THE VESTAL SHRINE OF THE MAIDEN PRIESTESS, PRAYING THAT SHE SHOULD RECEIVE ALL HIS SUPPLIANT LOVE, AND "RIGHT SMART" OF HIS DEVOTION. HE WOULD NEVER LEAVE HER SIDE. HE WOULD NEVER, NEVER SMILE ON OTHER MAIDENS. HE WOULD SACRIFICE EACH TRUSTED AND TRUSTING FRIEND AND CREDITOR. SHE MUST RECEIVE HIS HEART AND HAND, AND HIS PARTIALLY-ECLIPSED OCCULAR!

ELSE, WHERE, ALL THE WHILE, WAS ALL THIS WEALTH OF PASSIONATE LOVE TO GO TO—IF IT WAS SPURNED AND SENT BACK TO ITS DONOR? WHO WOULD HAVE IT SECOND-HANDED?

THIS WAS, INDEED, A POSER.

IT WAS UNANSWERABLE!

[img]

SHE DID NOT ATTEMPT TO ANSWER IT. SHE ONLY CONSIDERED THE FIRST PROPOSITION.

AND SHE THOUGHT OF THE CRUEL, CRUEL DEED WHICH SHE HAD BEEN LED BY THE VITREOUS-EYED ODALISQUE OF CARVED-IVORY TO UNINTENTIONALLY, UNCONSCIOUSLY, AND UNRESISTINGLY PERPETRATE UPON HIM; AND—TO CUT A SHORT STORY SHORTER—SHE CAST HER 'MIND'S EYE, HORATIO,' UPON HIS QUEEN ANNE MANSION FRONT, AND DETERMINED TO BESTOW UPON THE INJURED INNOCENT WHAT REMAINED—AFTER FIVE SEASONS—OF THE WEALTH OF HER YOUNG LOVE.

—THUS SIMPLY IS LOVE INSTIGATED.—

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HAD THE MAIDEN PRINCESS REFUSED HIM HER SILVER-TINGED LOVE—HAD SHE SPURNED AND THROWN BACK UPON HIS HANDS HIS PASSION TORN TO TATTERS—HE MIGHT HAVE PERPETUATED HIS LOVE BY WRITING "A BOOK WITHOUT A WOMAN," OR BETTER STILL, HE MIGHT HAVE SPENT THE FORCE OF HIS EXTRAVAGANT PASSION BY EXECUTING, IN ENDLESS NUMBER AND VARIETY, PATENT IVORY-HANDLED UMBRELLAS, QUAINLY CARVED IN THE VERISIMILITY OF THE OGGING ODALISQUE, WHICH IMPELLED THE HAND THAT INSTIGATED HIS LOVE BY PEELING HIS DEXTER EYE.

BUT, ALAS! THE THOUGHTLESS PAIR OF INNOCENTS DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THEIR LOVE, BEING MUTUAL, MUST, BY THE DECREE OF ST. DOUGLASS, DIE—UNPERPETUATED—WITH THEM!

[img]

OR, IF THEY WEIGHED THE DIRE DECREE IN THE BALANCES OF THEIR SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, I DOUBT NOT THAT THEY CONSIDERED THAT IF THEY PERPETUATED THEIR LOVE THE LENGTH OF THEIR NATURAL LIVES THEY WOULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ENOUGH. AND, METHINKS THEIR HEADS WERE EQUIPOISED. THIS WORK-A-DAY WORLD HAS ALL THE DUDISH BOOKLETS AND CARVED-IVORY DAGGER AND UMBRELLA HANDLES THAT IT CAN EASILY CARRY. LET NOT ANOTHER BOOKLET BREAK OLD ATLAS' BACK.

AND "DOUGLASS, O DOUGLASS, TENDER AND TRUE," CARVE FOR US NO MORE HEATHEN GODS OF LOVE. E'EN NOW THEIR OCCUPATION'S GONE.

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THE STAR-EYED GODDESS THAT SHINES FORTH FROM THE GLITTERING SURFACE OF THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR IS GODDESS POTENT ENOUGH TO PERPETUATE THE LOVE OF THIS DAY AND GENERATION, EVEN AS BY HER INFLUENCE OFTEN IS

LOVE INSTIGATED.

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BUT THE QUAINLY CARVED VEGETABLE-IVORY ODALISQUE HANDLE OF THE TANNED-GINGHAM UMBRELLA THAT RESTED IN THE HAND-PAINTED CHINA RECEPTACLE THAT STOOD IN THE VOLUPTUOUS ENVIRONMENT OF THE WINE-COLORED PLUSH CORNER OF THE LONG, QUIET HALL OF THE HOUSE OF A FRIEND WHERE I SUPPED THE NIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS—[WAS THIS THE HOUSE THAT ZACK BUILT?—IT STILL GLARED AT ME WITH A SINISTER GLEAM OF ITS DEXTER EYE AS IT OGGLED ME FROM ITS PLACE ON THE HEARTH OF THE WINE-SCENTED CELL—PLUSH-LINED CELL—IN THE CLOISTERED PRECINCTS OF SAINT PENDENNIS.

IT SEEMED TO SMILE A READY, GARRULOUS ASSENT TO ALL THAT WHICH I HAVE SAID.

THESE WORDS IT SEEMED TO MURMUR:

OH! THOU UNMITIGATED UMBRELLA-THEIF! RETURN ME TO THE HOME OF THOSE WHOSE

LOVE | INSTIGATED, WHOSE HAPPY HOUSEHOLD | AM RESPONSIBLE FOR. WAKE YE!
SLEEPING SON OF PENDENNIS, OR BY THE GODDESS SI[L]VA, I WILL EXECUTE DIRE
VENGEANCE UPON YOU!

[img]

EVEN AS | ONCE WAS THE INSTIGATOR OF LOVE, UPON YOU MAY BE,

LOVE INSTIGATED!

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