

**TOM PIPPIN'S
WEDDING.
A NOVEL**

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Tom Pippin's wedding. A novel by H. W. Pullen

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H. W. PULLEN

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WEDDING.
A NOVEL**

TOM PIPPIN'S WEDDING.

Henry William Pallen,

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE FIGHT AT DAME EUROPA'S SCHOOL."

Pallen

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TOM PIPPIN'S WEDDING.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

A WORD ABOUT BOY-FARMING.

A SENSATION NOVEL. Three murders, two bigamies, a forgery, and a theft. A five days' trial of the innocent heroine, found guilty at last by twelve pig-headed jurymen of her country, and sentenced to death, amid the awful stillness of the Court, by a mean little judge in spectacles, whose voice falters with suppressed emotion, and who afterwards gets very properly extinguished by the Home Secretary and the Author for being such an old idiot as to sum up against the interesting prisoner at the bar.

* * * * *

Two forms emerge at midnight in November from the dark recesses of a copse, where they had lain concealed for hours, and where any one else but a house-breaker would, to say the least, have caught a very severe cold in the head. Creeping stealthily through the tangled brushwood, lest the numerous passers-by at that time of night should hear the twigs crackle, and catch the muffled sound of their footfall upon the autumn leaves, they gain at length the threshold of some lordly

domain, where their inevitable accomplice, the butler, faithless to his trust, draws back the well-greased bolt and lets them in. But the master of the house, restless with presentiment of some impending doom, and seeking a volume from the wainscoted library of his ancestors, to beguile the weary hour, foils the guilty purpose of the traitor by accosting him at the bottom of the staircase with a tragical "Ha! what have we here?"

* * * * *

The disinherited maiden, stung to madness with a sense of her cruel wrongs, kneels beside the death-bed of her stern papa. He relents not, but swears a fearful oath that she shall never possess a penny of his wealth. She, gazing at him with a peculiar light in her dark eyes, which he remembers to have noticed once before, flits ghostlike across the chamber, and feels with her thumb and forefinger for a spot in the paneling of the wall. It yields to her soft pressure, and discloses a secret drawer, with nothing in it. "Ha!" faintly cries the dying man, with something of triumph in his tone. "Ha, ha!" responds the maiden, searching him through and through with her expressive orbs; "ha, ha! remorseless one! 'tis thus, e'en thus, that I thwart your base designs!" In the inmost recesses of the drawer appears to her practiced eye another spring. She touches it, and lo! a hidden cavity reveals itself, from whence with trembling hand she snatches the last will and testament of her unnatural parent. Deliberately striking a match, warranted only to ignite upon the box—for the reader is warned that every apparently insignificant detail of these little freaks at midnight

has some important bearing on the story—she lights the wax-candles on the dressing-table, spreads the parchment out before her, erases with the finely-tempered blade of a penknife the name of her brutal cousin five times removed, and, taking the precaution—you are particularly requested to observe—to dip her pen in the ink, traces with steady hand her own name, and deposits the document again in the secret drawer. The dying man looks on aghast, powerless to hinder the unholy deed; and, in a paroxysm of rage and horror, breathes his last. At that moment the bedstead is seen to rock and heave; its curtains are swayed to and fro as if by some supernatural agency; and the cowering maiden has scarcely time to shriek, when she stands face to face with the majestic figure of her cousin five times removed.

* * * * *

This is the sort of thing that a novel-writer of the present age is expected to produce; and upon my word, indulgent reader, I am not equal to it. I am not, indeed. A quiet murder or two I might manage; but bigamies and forgeries at midnight shock me exceedingly. You will excuse me, I am sure, if I try my hand at something less horrible, but not on that account less true to life. What do you say, now, to a little bit of boy-farming? We have heard a good deal lately about Margaret Waters, and the helpless little victims of her cruelty and lust. Few British fathers, certainly not one single British mother, felt anything like pity for the wretched woman, when the news came down that she had "paid the last penalty of the law." But are you innocent of the fact, O fond mamma, that