

ADAM AND EVE

[CONTINUED FROM THE OTHER SIDE.]

dently spread themselves about the place.

Fortunately for Adam the steps that led up to the wooden oriel or balcony at that time a common adornment to the Polperro houses afforded him a tolerably safe retreat, and, screened here, he remained a silent watcher, hearing only a confused murmur and seeing nothing only an occasional movement as one and the other changed posts and passed in and out of the opposite door.

At length a general parley seemed to take place—the men fell into rank and as a slow pace moved off down the street in the direction of the quay. Adam looked cautiously out. The door was now closed. Did he open it? Might he not find that a sentinel had been left behind? How about the other door? The chances against it were as bad. The only possible way of success was by a shutter in the wall which overlooked the brook and communicated with the hiding place in which his father lay secreted. This shutter had been little used since the days of press-gangs. It was painted in so exact an imitation of the slated house-wall as to defy detection, and to mark the spot to the hurried eye a root of house oak projected out below and served to further screen the opening from view. The contrivance of this shutter entrance was well known to Adam and the mode of reaching it familiar to him; therefore if he could but elude observation he was certain of success.

The plan once decided on he began putting it into execution, and although it consumed half a lifetime to him but very few minutes had elapsed before he had crossed the road, ran west high into the brook, scaled the wall, and scrambled down on top of old Zebedee, who, stuporied by continual sleep, drank and this continual confinement, took the surprise in a wonderfully calm manner.

"Huz, father! 'tis only me, only Adam."

"'Tis right! 'tis right!" stammered Zebedee, too dazed to take in the whole matter at once. "What is it, lad, eh? They daren't gallops ha'n't tracked 'ee, have 'em? By the ho ky! but they'n givin' it us hot and strong this time, Adam, they was trampin' 'bout made here a minit ago, tryin' to keep our spirits up by s-rattin' the bulbs in our ears. Way, however'n earth did 'ee dodge 'em, eh? What's the manin' o' it all?"

"I thought they was gone," replied Adam, "so I came down to see how you were all getting on here."

"'Tis, 'tis, 'tis, 'tis, 'tis," said Zebedee, all right, I g'pose, but I can't bin let outside very much I can't have it, ye know. Four Jan' he sighed, "her's terrible moody hearted, 'bout 't all; and so's Eve, too. I never seed maid take on as they'n do, but there! I reckon it will soon be put an end to now."

"How so?" said Adam.

"Well, ye mustn't know, I've below more than you'n tawld," said the old man with a significant wink and a jerk of his head, "but Jereem he let me into it this evening when he'm up to see me for a bit. Some one o' they'n eigh cheeps a' carr' on with 'ee, and Jereem's settin' her on to run up so that he'll get in not to see what 'em' named for in to look at."

"Well?"

"'Tis," said Zebedee, "but will it be well? That's what I keeps axin' if in. He's cock sure, certin, that they can manage it all. He's s'ck, he says, of all his skelkin' and he's blamed if he will go on standin' it, neither."

"Oh," hissed Adam, "he's sick of it, is he? and in the effort he made to subdue his voice the veins in his face rose up to be purple cords. "He had notion to do with the bringing of it on us all! it's no fault of his that the place returned into a hall and we all huddled down like a pack o' dogs!"

"Ah, well, I daren't know nuth' more than that," said old Zebedee, humbly. "How so he if he's so, when he's got down off 't will be all right agin'."

"All right!" thundered Adam. "How all right! Right that he should get out and we be left here? that he should be swing but we must stay here to suffer!"

"Ah, come, come!" said the old man with the easy impatience of one ready to argue but incapable of reasoning. "Fain't no talk o' swinging, now; that was a bit o' brag on the boy's part; he is just as eager to save his neck as you or me either. But Jonathan's bin here and told eminat that makes 'em want to be off at once, for he says, what us all knows, without he's minded to if you can't slip a knot around Jonathan's clapper, and tain't that Jereem's afraid o' his tongue, only for the keepin' up of pace and quietness he fancies it would be better for us to make him self scarce for a bit."

Adam's whole body quivered as a series of rage ran through him; and Zebedee, noting the trembling movement of his hands, conveyed his impression of the cause by bestowing a glance, accompanied by a pantomime bend of the elbow, in the direction of a certain stone bottle which stood in the corner.

"Did Jonathan tell you what word 'twas he'd brought?" Adam managed to say.

"Nay; I never cast eyes on 'un. He warn't here above a few minutes afore he slipped away, none o' 'em knows where or how. He was warn'd not to go snight you, he added after a few moment's pause; 'so I reckon that you knows no more of 'un than us does."

"And Eve and Joan—were they let into the secret?" asked Adam; and the sound of his harsh voice grated even on Zebedee's dulled ears.

"'Is, I reckon," he said, half turning, "cos Eve's got to do the trick—her's to bamboozle the sodger. Odds rot it, lad!" he cried, startled at the expression that leaped into Adam's haggard face; "what's come to 'ee that you must turn round 'pon us like that! Is it the—'and you's got a spite agin' Lora! but 'tis a poor stomach you's got to rids her if you'n angered by such a bit o' phylanderin' as I've tawld 'ee of. What 'd'ee mane, then?" he added, his temper rising at such unwarrantable inconsistency. "I've knowen as honest women as ever her is that's a done that, and more too, for to get their men safe off and out 's way—'iss, and wasn't thought none the wuss of, neither. You'n grown mighty fanciful all to wance 'bout what us is to do and what us doesn't think o'. I'm sick o' such talk. 'Tain't nawthin' else fra' mornin' to night but Adam this and Adam that. I'm darned if 'tis to be wondered at if the maid plays 'ee false; by gosh! I'd do the trick, if I was she, fore I'd put up with such fantads from you or either man like 'ee. So there!"

Adam did not answer, and old Zebedee, interpreting the silence into an admission of the force of his arguments, forbore to press the advantage, and generously started a fresh topic. "They's a tawld 'ee, I reckon, 'bout the bill they's posted up, right afore the winder, by the 'Three Pichards,' he said. "'Is," he added, not waiting for an answer, "the king's pardon and wan hundred pound to be who'll discover to 'em the man who 'twas fired the fatal shot. Wan hundred pound," he sneered, "That's a fat lot, surely; and as for t' king's pardon, why 'twadn't lave us breathin' time to spend it in—not if he war left here, 'twadn't. No fear! Us ain't so bad off yet that either wan in Polperro 'ud stink their fingers w' 'bit money. Lord save 'us! such a man 'ud fetch up the devil himself to see 'un pitched head foremost down to bottom o' say, which 'ud be the end I'd vote for 'un, and see it was carr'd out too—'iss, tho' his bones bore my own flesh and hid 'pon 'em, I wud!" and in his anger the old man's rugged face grew distorted with emotion.

But Adam neither spoke nor made comment on his words. His eyes were fixed on mid-air, his nostrils worked, his mouth quivered. Within him a legion of devils seemed to have broken loose, and, sensible of the mastery they were gaining over him, he leaped up and with the wild despair of one who catches at a straw to save him from destruction, it came upon him to rush to Eve and look once more into the face of her whom he had found so fair and so good so false.

"What is it you'n gonn to do, then," said Zebedee, seeing that Adam had stooped down and was raising the panel by which exit was effected.

"Gonn to see if the coast's clear," said Adam.

"Butter into where you be," urged Zebedee. "Joan or they's sure to run up so soon as 'tis all safe."

But Adam paid no heed; muttering something of a not-knowing what he was about, he slipped up the partition and crept under, cautiously ascertained that the outer room was empty, and then, crossing the passage, stole down the stairs.

The door which led into the room was shut, but through a convenient chink Adam could take a survey of those within. Already his better self had begun a struggle in his ear, already the whisper which desire was prompting asked what if Eve stood there alone and—But no, his glance had taken in the whole; quick as the lightning's flash the details of that scene were given to Adam's gaze—Eve, bent forward, standing beside the door, over whose hatch a stranger's face was thrust, while Joan, close to the spot where Jereem still lay hid, clasped her two hands as if to stay the breath which longed to cry, "He's free!" . . . The blow dealt, the firebrand flung, each evil passion quickened into life, filled with jealousy and mad revenge, Adam turned swiftly round and backward sped his way.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The residence of Mr. J. Clay, manager of the Canada West Farm Stock Association, Bow Park farm, was destroyed by fire Friday morning. Mr. Clay's loss is estimated at about \$2,500, and is covered by insurance.

In the Concession murder case, tried at Pictou, the jury found Thos. Thompson guilty of manslaughter. He received the high sentence of six months in the county jail. W. H. Miller, on three cases of sheep stealing, received eight months in jail.

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