

# BEYOND RECALL.

## CHAPTER I.—LIKE A THIEF.

A clock was striking eleven as I stood still to listen on Richmond Hill. I was too early by an hour. There was time for a rest before going any further, and I needed it. From Old Street Road, Shoreditch, to Richmond, is not much of a walk for a young man of twenty, in good condition; but when a man's heart is heavy, and he had eaten nothing since midday (and then but bread and cheese), a march like that late at night makes him shaky at the knees and sick. I sat down on one of the benches under the elms on the terrace there, overlooking the river. The moon was not to be seen, but its light was diffused in the white, woolly mist that hung in the still air. The fallen leaves were covered with moisture; heavy drops from the boughs above plashed down now and then as if it had been raining recently. The gas burnt sluggishly in the lamp hard by, the mist forming a halo about it. I remember noticing these things, for my mind was in a condition to receive the impression of trifles—just as the fall of a pebble may be marked after a fall of snow has buried the earth.

It was chill as well as damp. I felt it, sitting there still after the warmth of walking. I turned my collar up, and hunched my shoulders up, sticking my hands deep in my pockets. The policeman on the raised causeway behind might well pause to look down and speculate upon the kind of man I was, and the reason of my coming here to sit in the horrid fog at such an hour. After glancing behind me to know whose heavy step had stopped, I settled my ears down in my collar again. It was cold. "Never mind; it's better to put up with a shiver than to walk about and grow weak with fatigue," thought I. So I sat there, watching the drops run zigzag, by fits and starts, down the glass of the lamp, as they flowed from a touching spray of elm, till the policeman, having rounded the corner and come along the terrace, stopped in front of me, planted his thumbs in his belt, gave me a nod, and spoke.

"Well, old man; got the key of the street?" he asked.

I did not then know the meaning of the phrase, but I answered, "No," briefly, feeling disinclined to meet his familiar approaches.

"Out o' collar?" he asked, in the cheerful, high-pitched tone of conscious superiority.

"No," I answered as before.

"Going to stay here all night?"

"No."

"Why you're all nose, like a poll-parrot," said he, with a laugh at his own miserable witicism. "Ain't you got nothin' else to say? What are you thinkin' about?"

"I'm thinkin'," said I, "that if I wore a decent suit of clothes, you wouldn't trouble yourself to ask me about affairs that don't concern you."

"You may as well be civil, young feller, or I may move you on a little sharper 'an what you looks for. It's my duty to keep an eye on dangerous characters, and you've got a face like what's more often seen in a dock 'n elsewhere."

I turned aside, leaning my shoulder on the back of the seat in silence, to signify to him that I had no wish to quarrel or make friends.

"Oh, you may turn your back to the gas," he continued, "but I've got your face printed on to my mind, and I could identify you on the book as sure as if I'd got your photograph in my note-book, I could."

He waited for me to reply—for even a dispute must be an agreeable relief to the monotony of night duty—but getting not a word more from me he presently went off with measured step, slipping his lantern in his belt, and giving me one more scowl over his shoulder.

The half-hour chimed; I might move on now without waiting for the constable's aid; it was too chill sitting there. The policeman was standing in the shadow of a tree, not far from where he had left me. He made himself known by turning the light of his lantern as I passed—a gratuitous insult, as it seemed to me. I wondered if he really thought I was a thief; perhaps my jaded look justified the suspicion.

I turned down towards Ham, by the path through the field, and got out into the lower road. The mist there was thicker than above, so that it was difficult to keep to the path. A dull, yellow spot of light guided me onward from one roadside lamp to the next.

I had gone but a hundred yards or so along the road, when I heard the shrill sound of a policeman's whistle behind me. It was a stupid thing to make an enemy of that constable. I did not want him on my heels. Was he following me? I stood still and looked back. Nothing was visible but the grey mist and the dim glow of the lamp I had passed. I held my breath to listen, and, hearing no sound, came to the conclusion that, having followed me down the hill, and there being at a loss which way to turn, he had given up the pursuit, contenting himself with a vindictive whistle. It is a law of nature, thought I, the strong extirpate the weak; and this fellow is no worse than the well-fed dog who snaps at a starved and spiritless cur.

With this reflection I was about to go on again, when a quick, heavy step fell suddenly upon my ear, and a man passed so close that I could hear his deep breathing and distinguish his silhouette against the lighter background. It was a second constable, hastening to answer the call of my first acquaintance. He must have cut across the strip of common that borders the road in that part. The damp turf made his approach noiseless until he gained the hard pathway. He did not see me, that is certain, for the moment after he reached the road he broke into a run as the whistle was blown again.

I waited till the retreating footsteps grew faint, and then I hurried on towards Ham with all the haste and silence possible, for if the police got upon my scent the purpose with which I had come here would be frustrated. When I got through the village, and, stopping, heard no sound, I felt safe.

About half a mile beyond Ham is an estate which at that time had recently been purchased by Mr. Percival Thane. It derives its name, the "Cedars," from a majestic avenue of those trees which line the carriage drive from the road, by the river-side to the house. In the front the grounds are separated from the road by a pair of enormous iron gates and a lake. The eyles are protected by heavily buttressed brick walls ten feet high, but the back

is cut off from the adjoining park by a wooden paling, then in course of repair. By an opening in these palings I got into the grounds easily, for I knew my way well. I was not afraid of pursuit. The police would never think of looking for me here, whither only one could make his way on such a night who was accustomed to groping along the walls in the dark. Yet I had to approach the house with caution. The clock in the belfry over the stables had struck out twelve just before I reached the "Cedars." Idle people don't go early to bed like those who have to be in their workshops by six in the morning. Some of the servants might yet be about. There had been a fierce storm a few days before, and the ground in the little wicket was covered with fragments of rotten boughs that creaked sharply under foot. It was a relief when I reached the wicket and felt the soft turf of the paddock under my feet. By another wicket I entered the garden, and now skirting the inside of the high wall I drew near the house. It was black as night when I reached the shrubbery. There was no possibility of distinguishing the path from the borders. Presently I drove my foot with a crash into a bell glass, and for a few minutes I stood in doubt whether to beat a retreat or go on; then, as no sound indicated that my misadventure had raised an alarm, I ventured to push on again. A dozen cautious paces brought me to an opening. The lawn was before me now, and looking across I made out a feeble point of light that showed where the house stood. Keeping close to the shrubbery, I skirted the lawn until I was close enough to the house to make out the sashes of the one window illuminated from within; then I stopped. The blind was down; the time had not yet come.

The clock close at hand struck one—the sudden clang in the perfect silence scaring me; yet still I stood there, with my eyes on the blind, shivering with cold and mental agitation. Ten minutes more passed and then a corner of the blind was raised. I had shot in my hand ready; I threw them and heard them patter upon the verandah under the window. The blind dropped immediately, and I crossed the lawn to the south side of the house, with which the domed conservatory is connected, and there at the door I waited, shivering with cold, and apathetic like a dog waiting to be let in.

I heard a key turn in the lock, and the door grating as it opened; then a soft voice asked, in a whisper, "is that you, Kit?"

"Yes," I answered in a sullen undertone.

"Here are the india-rubbers. Be careful; they have only just gone up."

I had grown callous to deprecation. It was nothing to me now to play the part of a sneaking thief. Without a word I took the overshoes and slipped them on my feet, as I kicked off my old shoes one after the other.

The girl coming from the light could not see me as distinctly as I saw her. She waited there till I told her I was ready; then she turned about, and, feeling her way with outstretched hands, retraced her steps noiselessly through the conservatory, and I followed, softly closing the door behind me. We passed through a room where the foot sank deep in the yielding carpet. "If I had but a few feet of this for my bed, thought I; what a luxury!" There was a light in the hall. The reflected rays glittered here and there in glass and polished furniture, and costly nicknacks. My guide, raising her finger in warning, went on first to the foot of the great stairs, to make sure that no one was stirring, and then beckoned me. At one time I would have scorned to follow any woman in this ignoble manner; but that time was passed; now my only feeling was of hunger and cold. "I hope there's a fire and something to eat up here," thought I, as I stealthily followed along the corridor past the chambers where the household were asleep. We came to a door that stood partly open, and went in.

It was like a drawing-room. You wouldn't have known it for a bed chamber but for the bed with its sides down, quilt and tent hangings of blue satin covered with lace, and a glimpse of the toilet room beyond. The panels of the doors were painted to match the hangings of the bed, the window curtains and the quilted stuffing of the chairs and lounges—a pale blue picked out with gold. There were cabinets of beautiful workmanship in the corners filled with pretty trifles, slender stands for cut flowers, and tables for every use—all that caprice could suggest or ingenuity supply to an extravagant taste. But I took no notice then of these things—I was too cold for that. Leaving my companion to fasten the door, I hastened across the room, and, sinking on my knees in the soft, thick hearthrug, I spread out my clammy, cold hands to catch the generous glow of the fire.

"Are you so cold, dear?" said a voice behind me presently, in a low, tender tone of commiseration.

I turned round without rising and looked up, my eyes blushing at first, for I was dazzled, as if I were looking at a great light. The wrap in which she had muffled herself to fetch me was thrown off, and now her head, her neck, and her arms were bare. She wore an evening dress of delicate rose-pink, and a thick silk that, following the line of her figure to the waist, broke there into sharp folds, like a drapery of the old wood-carvers. A glow of light clung about the fabric, making her arms look like unpolished marble, just as her face was made whiter by contrast with her dark hair coiled upon her head. Diamonds sparkled on her slender throat, and on her wrists and hands. Looking upwards at her she seemed taller and more graceful than ever I had seen her before. The fine curves of her figure were those of a woman rather than a girl of eighteen. There was no color in her face. Her eyes were large and dark, and a tear of pity added to their lustre. That is what I saw, and what I see now as I write. It was a vision to impress itself forever on my mind. In the soft glow of the wax lights she stood there, bending over me. It recalled to my mind a picture I had seen of Diana descending to Endymion on Setmos. But what an Endymion!

My eye, travelling down to her little foot, in its buckled shoe and light silk stocking, fell upon my red hand as I rested it for support on the rug—on my frayed cuff and threadbare sleeve—on my "thief's friend," as we in Shoreditch called those in india-rubbers—on my coarse sock and mudded fringe on my corduroy trousers. A reek of

quolor and poverty rose with a steam from my sodden clothes.

Yet to this young and beautiful creature before me I was more than Endymion to Diana. They were lovers; we, alas, were husband and wife!

## CHAPTER II.

### CAUGHT.

"Are you so cold, dear, that you cannot speak to me?" she asked again in mournful reproach.

"Yes, and I am hungry and wet," I added, sharply, as she put her hand upon my shoulder and bent lower. But that warning did not prevent her kissing my cheek.

There are misfortunes that soften a man's whole nature; mine had hardened my heart and made me brutal. I lost sight of her when I looked at myself, and the momentary feeling of delight and admiration changed to loathing and disgust. "Why should I be thus, ragged and starving, an object to be pitied by my wife?" I asked myself. "Why should I be compelled to shiver in the fog till the household was at rest, that I might creep stealthily, like a thief at her heels, to her rooms?" It was all my own fault; yet, sored by misfortune, brutalised by hardship, I bore a rancorous ill will towards my poor wife, as though she were the cause of my sufferings. I had not the grace to acknowledge her kiss. Moodily I bent over the fire, unbottling my jacket that the heat might get at my chilled body.

Swiftly and silently she brought a table to the fireside, and set out the contents of a lunch basket she had prepared for me, and then, having set a chair before it, she again laid her hand timidly on my shoulder, and said—

"I have your supper ready, Kit."

On that I got up, and seating myself in the chair ran my eye greedily over the good things. She poured out a tumbler of Burgundy; I gulped it down, and then attacked the ham, leaving the chicken till my craving was first satisfied with more solid food. All this time I spoke never a word, not even to thank her for the provision she had made.

"Papa gave a dinner party, and some of the gentlemen did not leave till past twelve; that is why I had to keep you so long waiting," said my wife, apologetically, thinking that my ill-humor arose from this cause.

"And that is why you are dressed up like a princess," muttered I, glancing at her malignantly. She made no reply. Perhaps she gave me yet credit for sufficient sense to see that she must receive her father's guests becomingly, and that to have changed her dress after their departure would have prolonged my stay outside. As I glanced at her I perceived that she had taken off her diamonds, in deference probably to my senseless susceptibility.

"Why have you removed your trinkets?" I continued. "Are you afraid I shall take them?"

"Oh, Kit!" she said, clasping her trembling hands, and with supplication in her tender eyes. I pushed my glass towards her to refill, and having done with the ham began upon the fowl.

"Who has been here to-night?" I asked, after eating in silence a while.

"Some boating gentlemen, to whom we were introduced yesterday by Major Cleveden."

"And who's Major Cleveden?"

"A friend of papa's. They were very intimate in India; and," she added, admonitively, for I had raised my voice in speaking, "he sleeps in the next room."

"Oh, he is staying in the house?"

"He has been with us a week. He came the very day after you were here."

"Where's his wife?"

"He is not married."

"I see; your father thinks he would be a suitable catch for you—anything with a title—anything that would give him a place in society."

I had fallen now into a jealous mood. "Major Cleveden is old enough to be my father," said she, with a look and an accent which showed how innocent she was of suspecting the thing I spoke of. "But he is a real friend, for all that," she continued, her spirit rising in revolt against the unmerited harshness—"a friend whom I could trust with my life; generous and kind—yes as generous and kind as you were once, Kit."

I pushed my plate away and turned to the fire. "Yes," thought I, "when one is rich it is not difficult to be generous; in a moral sense or in a material sense the thing is equally true. And I was rich then in hope and courage; now I'm a beggar in everything, and all my feelings are sordid and mean and base. I'm done for."

Hebe crept to my side, and kneeling on the rug leaned her arms upon my knee (though she would have shrunk from placing her delicate skin in contact with such foul stuff as my trousers were made of at another time), and looking up into my face, with all her sweet tenderness, she murmured—

"It is only eleven months ago dear."

I knew what she meant. It was eleven months ago that she ran away for a day from the Parsonage to be clandestinely married to me. That was just before I left Feltenham to come to London and "make my fortune."

How we loved each other then; how we clung together as the time came to "part"; how she ran weeping after me to say goodbye; how she promised each other to meet again quite soon—as soon as I had found employment, and got a little home ready for her! Oh, she wouldn't mind how small it was, or what privations she was put to, so that we could only live together. That was before her father came home with half a million of money; before she knew what it was to wear silk and diamonds; before I had found that my skill, which passed for genius in a small provincial town, was looked upon as very poor talent in London.

"I thought I had the world on a string then," said I.

"You felt your power, dear; that is all. You knew you had gifts of a high order. Oh, every one said there was no one so clever. You cannot have lost your talent?"

"No," said I bitterly. "I have just enough left, and the consciousness of it, to make me a bad workman. That's all it's good for. I've yet got to find my level and reconcile myself to it before I can be a steady workman. There are thousands of fellows with as much skill as I have at wood-carving—I know it—thousands who would be glad to work at the bench ten hours a day for eighteen shillings a week!"

"Eighteen shillings a week—would that keep us two, Kit?" she asked hopefully. I laughed.

"Why, a year's wages at that rate wouldn't buy the dress you are wearing," said I.

"I could do without it," said she. "I wore nothing but stuff eleven months ago."

That softened my heart. But I was not such a fool in worldly matters as I had been a year back. Ay, we were fools then, indeed—boy and girl tools, nothing more. She seventeen; I only just in my twentieth year. It should be illegal for such simpletons to marry. A year in London had opened my eyes, and I had used them to advantage in learning something of the reality of life.

"No; I've done one foolish thing. I'll not do another of the same sort. That would be just a crime," said I.

"A crime! I don't understand you. What foolish thing Kit?"

"Supposing I settled down to the life of a plodding artisan—suppose I got a place at eighteen shillings a week?"

"Yes," said she cheerfully, drawing a little closer.

"Supposing I could manage to get some sort of a home for you—a room in the suburb with a few sticks of furniture, where you would have to do the drudgery; and be cribbed up all day while I was at work?" I looked down to see what effect this picture made upon her. She was actually smiling. The dreamy look in her eyes showed that she was not thinking of the hardships and miseries, only of the romantic sentiment ascribed to the bearing of burdens by loving hearts.

"Yes, dear," she said again, encouragingly.

"Do you know what would happen then?" I asked.

She held her head on one side, and, looking in the fire wistfully, said, after a moment's imagining of the worst that could happen—

"I'm afraid papa would be very angry."

"That's certain enough. You've told me enough about him to show that he loves himself more than he loves you. That's only natural. He wouldn't have sent you to England, and lived alone in India for sixteen years otherwise."

"The doctor ordered me to be sent to England, dear, when I was a child."

"Yes; but the doctor did not order him to live in India till he was an old man."

"Well, dear?" said she, admitting the conclusion with a sigh.

"His purpose in coming to England was to get what money could not procure him out there—a position in society. He is ambitious. You have said so. Your beauty has encouraged him to hope for an alliance which will favor his designs even more than his wealth. If he found you were married to such a—a thing as I, even he would abandon you to the man of your choice, and go back to India, taking his precious money with him."

"Well, dear," she said again as I paused, "you do not want his money."

"No, not a penny of it."

"Nor I," with a cheerful shake of her pretty head.

"You would be content with the single room."

"And you, Kit?"

I could go no further for the minute, looking down at her little face all aglow with love. She stretched up her arms and drew my face down to her lips, and my brain swam as if I had been suddenly brought out of the darkness face to face with a glimpse of paradise. It was a return of the old dream of simple days. It passed. I was awake again.

"Yes, your father would abandon you to the man of your choice," I said.

"Well, dear?" she said once more.

"You see nothing more than that?"

"No, nothing."

"I do. You see what hunger and cold do for me—they make me a brute. I must be hungry and cold again. The privations I suffer you must suffer also. That will not add to my contentment. Your love must die. You must think with regret of all you have sacrificed. You must wish that we had never met—wish me dead. We must hate each other."

She stopped me, saying "No! no! no!" in terror, and covering her mouth with her hand, as though she feared her emotion would force from her a betraying cry.

"You would," I insisted; "you do not know what hardships are; what life is yet awhile."

"We cannot go on for ever like this, Kit. It isn't natural; it is too cruel."

"Life is cruel," I said; and then lapsing into moody meditation, I added, vaguely, "No, we cannot go on like this. Something must be done. Who were those men who dined here?"

"Officers in the army, two of them, and another was Lord Somebody. I forget his name. It doesn't matter. Don't worry about them." She saw my face clouding again.

"But it does matter. Of course they are invited to come again."

"I don't know." Her voice quavered with fear. She knew that jealousy was getting the mastery of me.

"Yes, you do know," I muttered.

"I—I think papa gave them a general invitation."

"Yes, and you know they'll come. He will throw you at the head of that fellow with the handle before his name. I'm glad I didn't know they were here. I should have gone mad, as I shivered out there in the fog, if I had known that you, down there amongst the flowers, were smiling at men and listening to their flattery. Oh, they'll come again! You had better not tell me next time," I added, fiercely. Then, in consequence I pursued, for I could not get the gnawing suspicion out of my heart, "Those diamonds were put on to please them; which you took off not to offend me. Perhaps you did not wish me to know that you had been decking yourself out to fascinate those men?"

She rose, and, fetching the diamonds, said, gently—

"Take them away with you, Kit."

"No; it hasn't come to that yet," said I brutally. "I came here as a thief, but I leave empty handed. I'm ashamed when I think that I owe your father for what I have eaten. But I'll finish that bottle nevertheless," and I poured out and drank another tumbler of Burgundy.

It did me good. I was warm enough now, and sinking my head in my shoulders I sank down into the soft quilted chair, and stretched my legs out before the fire.

"If you would take my purse, dear," whispered my wife, leaning over me, "only as a loan, it would help you to face your troubles with more courage; then you would overcome them, and getting on little by little you could pay me back again."

She slipped a purse into my hand, and I

was weak enough, base enough, to put it in my pocket. But the consciousness of my own indignity made me savage, and going back to the old theme I tortured my poor little wife with my jealous taunts until she wept, and I fell asleep in the chair. It was thus our meetings generally ended. Hebe watched over me. Oh Heaven, what a contrast between us two!

I know not how long I had been asleep when I woke with a start, hearing a shrill whistle. For the moment I thought I had been dreaming of the police that followed me down the hill. But there was my wife sitting beside me and clutching my arm. Then another whistle sounded outside below the window.

"What is it?" gasped Hebe.

"A window sash was thrown up, audible enough to our strained ears."

"A voice called out, 'Who's there?'"

"Then from below came the clear reply—

'Police, sir! Come down and let us in, please. And let some one look to that room on your right. There's a light there, and there's burglars in the house!'"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Appreciated Afterward.

There are times when men have to be treated like children: when they are very ill, for instance, or when they are in imminent danger which must be averted first and explained afterward. A member of the Alpine Club read a paper before that body on the comparative skill of travellers and guides—a question of great practical interest to mountain climbers, and one as to which there exists a considerable difference of opinion. He began his paper by relating an anecdote:

Some years ago a member of this club was ascending a small and easy peak in company with a famous Oberland guide. Part of their course lay over a snow-field sinking gradually on one side, and ended sharply by a precipice on the other.

The two men were walking along, not far from the edge of this precipice, when the Englishman, thinking that an easier path might be made by going nearer the edge, diverged a little from his companion's track. To his surprise the guide immediately caught hold of him, and pulled him back with more vigor than a ceremony, nearly throwing him down in the operation.

Wrathful, and half inclined to return the compliment, the Englishman remonstrated. The guide's only answer was to point to a small crack, apparently like scores of other cracks in the icy snow, which ran for some distance parallel to the edge of the precipice, and about fifteen feet from it.

The traveller was not satisfied, but was too wise to spend time in dispute while a desired summit was still some distance above him. They went on their way, gauged the top, and the traveller's equanimity was restored by a splendid view.

When, on the descent, the scene of the morning's unpleasantness was reached, the guide pointed to the little crack in the snow, which had grown perceptibly wider. "This," he said, "marks the place where the true snow-field ends. I feel certain that the ice from here to the edge is nothing but an unsupported cornice hanging over the tremendous precipice beneath. It might possibly have borne your weight in early morning, though I don't think it would. As to what it will bear now that a powerful sun has been on it for some time—why, let us see!"

With that he struck the snow on the further side of the crack with his axe. A huge mass, twenty or thirty feet long, at once broke way, and went roaring down the cliff.

The Englishman shivered to think how near he had come, even on an easy mountain and in smiling weather, to going down the precipice in just such an avalanche.

### ADAM'S HEIGHT.

The Statements Differ Widely, But Some of Them Are Very Precise.

I have often wondered where M. Henrion, the French savant, got his data for the curious speculations he gives as to the height and other proportions of Adam and Eve. In his remarkable work, "The Degeneration of the Human Race," published in 1718, the learned academician gravely informs his readers that Adam was 123 feet and 9 inches in height, while his disobedient consort was but a paltry 118 feet from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head. Of course all who have read very extensively of Talmudic literature, or even Baring-Gould's "Legends of the Patriarch Prophecies," remember the wonderful stories told of how Adam was made; of his gigantic size, and how, after the fall, his stature was reduced several miles by the offended God himself. The Talmud has this to say of Adam's height: "He was so tall that he stood with feet on earth and head in Heaven until God pressed him down at the time of the fall." Rabbi Jhuda says that when he lay on the earth "his body completely covered it." Another Talmudic story says: "to judge how long he was, understand that his body stretched from one end of the earth to the other, and it takes a man 500 years to walk that distance. The angels were awed with wonder when they saw that gigantic human being and bowed before him, crying, 'Holy, holy, holy.' Then God reduced his size by cutting off great chunks of flesh." These are all absurd legendary stories, of course, but where did Henrion get his figures for the 123-foot calculation mentioned in the opening?

### MURDEE WILL OUT.

A Strathroy Man Confesses His Crime After Ten Years—He Killed his Partner.

A Harrisville, Mich., despatch says:—Upon examination Alfred Henshaw, one of the most wealthy citizens here, broke down and confessed to a brutal murder committed by him at Strathroy, Ont., ten years ago. Henshaw was a lumberman in Strathroy, and became involved in financial troubles. His partner, Richard Drake, found fault with his conduct, and one night in a quarrel Henshaw stabbed him to death in the office, locked the body in the safe, and fled. Ten days later the body was discovered, but no clue could be found to the murderer. Large rewards were offered, but nothing came of them. Six months ago a son of Drake offered two local detectives \$1,000 if they should capture his father's murderer. The men accepted, and after a long chase through New York, Mexico, San Francisco, Chicago, and Michigan they finally located Henshaw here.