

THE DEAN AND HIS DAUGHTER

CHAPTER XIII.

Next morning about eleven o'clock, Mrs. Fortescue and I were sitting together chatting unconcernedly, and really without any thought of the matters that so gravely menaced my peace of mind.

I after all had come to accept the position, and to see that at the very worst I should be a gainer in certain respects.

I had changed a state of slavery in what was little better than a hovel, under my father, for a slavery in many ways more irksome, although the bars of my cage were gilded. Probably Sir Henry would fail in the august tribunal presided over by Sir James Hannen. Justice is not always infallible; but my cause must assuredly prevail. In any case I should be rid of my father, rid of my husband, and comfortably provided for for the remainder of my days.

Recollect what a strange life mine had been, and then think how I must have welcomed the prospect of liberty, even though it came with unwelcome conditions.

I should be at last, assuming the very worst, an entirely free woman, as free as the air, still young, and without the loss of a single soul whom I loved or cared for.

There was shrewd wisdom in what Mrs. Fortescue had said; and I began to feel the same reckless spirit again coming over me as that in which I had flung away Sir Henry's money in Paris.

While I was looking over these things, seated in the window and looking down the street towards the sea, I saw Mr. Sabine coming towards the house with a cigar in his mouth.

I mention this little detail, because it is one of many circumstances that will enable my readers to form their own judgment of the man. A fly was passing him and he stopped it.

A few words passed between him and the driver. Then the man took the cigar from Mr. Sabine, put it into his own mouth, touched his hat gratefully, and drove on.

"There's a man for you my dear" said Mrs. Fortescue. "I dare say that cigar cost him two shillings or a half-a-crown; and so, although he has only just begun it, he gives it to that cabman, who has never smoked anything like it before in his life and never will again. Now I call that simple, unaffected, kindness from the heart. It has the secret of kindness, which is thoughtfulness."

Mr. Sabine (I have before described his peculiar gait) slouched along to our door knocked, and was shown in.

The first thing to be done was tell him all that had happened. He listened without interruption, and with an expression of amusement on his features.

"Did you ever hear anything more monstrous, more shameful, more outrageous, more downright and abominably mean and contemptible, and cruel and vindictive in your life?" asked Mrs. Fortescue, stamping her foot by way of emphasis at each important adjective.

"I don't know," he answered lightly. "I really feel disposed to say for my own part that after one or two things which I have seen, and one or two others that I know of, nothing astonishes me. Sir Henry is, to put the matter as mildly as possible, a miserable, unhappy old fellow, eaten up with doubts and fears and vanities, as much of his own creation as Falstaff's men in buckram, and entirely devoid of these redeeming points which his age and experience ought to have given him. His morbid vanity would be ludicrous were it not, as it happens, so troublesome."

"Well, he must go his own way. There is no help for it. The faithful Jackson will of course do her duty—that is to say, she will lie through thick and thin. There will be any number of other witnesses at a few pounds a head to swear to all kinds of things that never happened, and whose evidence will tally as neatly as the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, when it has been fitted together by the ingenuity of counsel."

"There will be a stupid jury utterly incapable of appreciating evidence, and the counsel for the petitioner will tell them that he leaves the case with confidence in their hands, never having yet seen or addressed twelve more intelligent men. Dear me! It almost reminds me of 'Pickwick.' When a juryman is in doubt, or when he wants to get away, he always finds for the plaintiff. The plaintiff would not have gone to law, he argues with himself unless he knew he was right, and he must know a great deal more about it than we do."

We both burst out laughing. Then Mrs. Fortescue said: "Pray, light another cigar, Mr. Sabine. Neither of us minds."

"I never smoke in the morning," he answered, gravely.

"That," I replied, shaking my finger at him, "is wickedly untrue. We saw you smoking as you came along, and saw you give your cigar away."

He laughed and lit a cigar. Common-place as the remark may seem, I cannot help noticing here that it is only your bourgeois who needs a genuine request to be pressed upon him. As the blue smoke began to curl about the room, Mrs. Fortescue produced champagne.

"Quite harmless, my dear," she observed, "if properly qualified." And she filled up the tumblers with seltzer from a gazogene.

We were laughing and talking together, when I heard a parley in the passage, and then the steps of a man on the stairs. The door was opened without the formality of knocking, and a painfully respectable-looking man, about fifty years of age, with gold-rimmed spectacles, and a silk umbrella, made his appearance.

"Lady Craven?" he asked, looking from me to Mrs. Fortescue.

"This is for you, my lady." And he politely handed me a piece of paper. "This gentleman, I presume, is Mr. Sabine? I thought so. And this is for you, sir. That lady, I presume, is Mrs. Fortescue?"

"Good Heavens, man!" burst out Mrs. Fortescue. "You're not going to serve me with a citation, are you? My poor husband has been dead for years."

"No, Madam. But I wished to be able to recognize you again. Good-day, my lady; good-day, madam; good-day, sir." And with a bow that Sir Henry himself might have studied with advantage, the stranger withdrew.

There were a few seconds of silence. Then Mr. Sabine shook himself, and said very quietly and steadily: "Do not allow yourself to be troubled by all this, Lady Craven. I will watch over you from first to last, and the one thing absolutely necessary at present is that you should keep your mind at ease. Whatever you may do you must not allow yourself to break down. It would be fatal to the last degree. Mrs. Fortescue must look after you most carefully."

"Trust me for that," cried the little woman. "Mr. Sabine is quite right my dear. And now for to-day at any rate we will let this unpleasant matter pass altogether out of our minds. Mr. Sabine, you mustn't dine here; you must finish your champagne and seltzer and go away. Call tomorrow morning about ten, and if you are very good and penitent, and the weather is very fine, I will go out for a walk with you myself. We must have no more worry to-day. Now get away at once to the tennis court, or to your yacht, or anywhere you like, and do not trouble us any more. Sufficient for to-day has been the trouble thereof."

Mr. Sabine laughed and took his departure.

"Now look here, my dear," again insisted Mrs. Fortescue, "no more talk about this worry. No more shop; we've had quite enough for to-day. I for myself am going to be happy."

And, by way of giving effect to this virtuous resolution, she poked the fire vigorously, composed herself in an armchair, and began to toast her feet.

There was another ring at the door that afternoon, and there were more steps on the staircase. Even Mrs. Fortescue looked puzzled.

"Come in," she snapped out viciously, as a knock made itself heard on the door. "Come in, whoever you are."

The door was opened again, and the Very Reverend the Dean of Southwick appeared on the threshold and stepped into the room. His gaiters, his buckled shoes, his decollet coat, his shawl hat with its rosette, were faultless. "Dressed for his part, my dear," as Mrs. Fortescue afterwards most unfeelingly observed.

My father seated himself with solemn dignity, and in his own way took up his parable.

"Miriam," he said, looking at Mrs. Fortescue, "I wish to speak to you alone."

"And I do not intend to speak to you alone, papa. I had much sooner that Mrs. Fortescue remained."

He was not at all staggered by the rebuff. Mrs. Fortescue, describing the interview afterwards, claimed the result as being "first blood" for myself, whatever that may mean.

"Then, Miriam, I must say that I have come down with the very deepest pain and grief, and I must also add the very deepest sense of shame and humiliation. I know everything; and no one feels more deeply than myself that the present is not time for upbraiding. I have come because it is my duty as a father to—to—"

"To do what, Mr. St. Aubyn?" burst in Mrs. Fortescue. "Do you think your daughter wants you down here pottering and bothering about like a bumble bee under a glass? What good on earth can you do, and who wants either you or your interference?"

"I am not addressing my remarks to you, madam," interposed the Dean. "I have my own opinion, as every right-thinking person must have, of your conduct—of the guilty part you have played in this terrible tragedy."

"Have you?" asked Mrs. Fortescue. "And what may be your own opinion of your own part of it? Take my advice, Mr. Dean, go back to your hotel. Have you not the tact to see that you are not wanted?"

Utterly regardless of this interruption, my father continued:

"This terrible, this crushing news, Miriam, has reached me from Sir Henry himself. He himself suggested—that I gathered from his letter—that I should come down here; I should have done so in any event. It is a fatal and indelible stain that you have inflicted on the family name. Were your poor mother alive she would never have survived the shock. For myself I am heart-broken; I shall never again lift up my head. A life that might have been of service under Divine guidance to the Church, and possibly to the State, is hopelessly wrecked. But why should I speak of myself? My first duty, my daughter, is towards you."

I was by this time quivering with indignation. "How dare you assume my guilt?" I cried out passionately. "How dare you do it?"

"Alas, my child," he said, "the matter is beyond proof; it is idle to talk of guilt, and innocence, and of proof, where everything is known."

"It is not idle!" I answered, now thoroughly roused; "and you, who sold me, are the last person in the world who ought to constitute yourself my judge. You sold me for your own price, and you have received it. Now, leave me and go! As surely as I shall have to answer in this world and in the next, the guilt of all this misery rests with you, and you alone!"

"I repeat, Miriam—"

"Go!" I repeated, and advanced towards him. I felt as if I were possessed. I could feel the pulses in my head throbbing. I could hear the beating of my heart as distinctly as I heard the stamp of my foot upon the floor.

My father looked round helplessly for a minute, and then, with a limp effort to retain his dignity, turned round and left the room.

I never before saw him so thoroughly cowed, even in the presence of the most insistent and obdurate creditor. He positively seemed to shrink within his canonicals and his limbs trembled under him as he aided himself by the balustrades down into the street.

The tension had been too great, and I only remember that, some time afterwards, I found Mrs. Fortescue sponging my forehead

with Eau de Cologne, and that the room was swimming round me.

"No talking," said the little woman "no talking. I have sent out for some sal volatile, and here you are. Down with it and let me put this cloak over your feet, and then just go to sleep again. If you don't I shall send out for the doctor. But if you are good, and do as you are told, I will sit here by you and won't move until you are all right again."

I smiled gratefully at her, and she sat down close by me. Then my eyes closed, and I suppose I must have fallen asleep, again; for, when I next remember anything it was to find the room dark, and it was not until I stirred that Mrs. Fortescue, who was still sitting by me, lit the candles, bustled about, attending to the fire, and her labor concluded, exclaimed triumphantly: "And now, my dear, we'll have a nice quiet evening together, with no more talking or worry. And I shall sleep to-night in your room, in case you should want me."

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Sabine, who had not taken advantage of Mrs. Fortescue's invitation, made his appearance next morning about eleven o'clock, and, of course, we began almost immediately to discuss the crisis.

"Sir Henry," he said, "has his own attorneys. They are, I perceive from the interesting document with which they have favored me, Messrs. Nisi, Slowcoach & Absolute, a very respectable firm in Lincoln's Inn Fields—just a sort of firm an Ambassador ought to employ. I shall have my own solicitor, of course, and a separate defence. That is absolutely necessary."

"I know nothing about these matters," I said.

"You, Lady Craven, had better go to Messrs. Wylie & Wylie, the sharpest firm in London. I will give you a letter of introduction to George Wylie myself. He is about the cleverest man I know in his profession, or out of it, and if he takes up a case, *con amore*, will win it if it is to be won. If he had gone to the Bar he would have been an Attorney-General long ago. The great advantage of going to him is, when once you are in his hands, you have really no further trouble. He never needs to be stirred up or even jogged. He takes a pride in his work, and he can only pursue it for its own sake, for one way or another he must be by this time a very rich man."

I went up town accordingly, and saw Mr. Wylie—a sharp-featured little man, dressed in perfectly good taste, and with the most extreme possession of manner.

He listened to what I had to say, took notes of it, said he would arrange every detail, and give the matter his own personal attention, and so bowed me out with the assurance that I should hear from him at once, if it were necessary for him to see me again.

There was something in his manner that seemed to reassure me, and I made my way back to Brighton in infinitely better spirits than when I left it.

There was evidently nothing more to be done, except as Mrs. Fortescue observed, to trust in Providence and keep our powder dry. I really believe that Mrs. Fortescue would, like Sir Thomas More, have joked upon the scaffold. Meantime, by Mr. Wylie's advice, Mrs. Fortescue and I remained in Brighton, while Mr. Sabine went away to London, although we heard from him two or three times a week.

And I now began to see how much I had misjudged Mrs. Fortescue. In the moment of trial, when I had imagined she would forsake me, she proved my most staunch and kindest friend. She was with me literally day and night.

I knew that it was her regular time to return to Paris, and I pressed her to go. But she answered that she had already let her hat, and should consequently stop with me.

What I should have done without her I hardly like to think; very possibly something foolish or desperate. But she kept me bright and cheerful in spite of myself; insisted on taking me out for walks and drives; assured me that dry champagne was better than all the sal volatile in the world, and made me act on the advice, and kept me up chatting at night until she could make sure in her own mind that I was sufficiently tired to go soundly to sleep the moment I went to bed.

"Sleep, my dear," she insisted, "sleep, champagne, and exercise are the three finest things in the world for the health, the temper, and the complexion. I believe I should look ninety if I did not dose myself with them regularly. They save all your doctor's bills, and keep you young and happy ever. They are the salad-dressing of life, which without them, would be a very sorry dish indeed of very bitter herbs."

I had forgotten to mention money matters; these gave me no trouble. I received a letter from Messrs. Nisi, Slowcoach & Absolute, intimating that, in order to avoid any unpleasant application for alimony, they had received instructions from their client to place a thousand pounds to my credit at any bank I might direct; and that, should the hearing of the suit be at all delayed, a further sum would be at my disposal on any application for it.

Thus, then, there was nothing to do but to wait; and I agreed with Mrs. Fortescue that we might as well remain comfortably at Brighton, as trouble ourselves with a move or anything like traveling.

In this manner nearly six months passed pleasantly and almost rapidly away. Then, after Easter, came what Mr. Wylie called the summer sittings, and the case of Craven & Sabine found its way into the list, and, as Mr. Wylie gave me to understand, might come on any day.

Application was made to the Court to fix day for it, with an intimation that it might possibly last two or three days, if not more, and ultimately a day was appointed towards the end of May.

The evening before I came up to town with Mrs. Fortescue, and at the suggestion of Mr. Wylie, we took lodgings together in Sackville Street. "Lodgings," said Mr. Wylie, "look better than an hotel; and Sackville Street is sufficiently near the Law Courts, and is a most unexceptional locality."

It is not my intention to go into the details of the trial. I suppose it was very much like any trials of the same sort. A vast amount of the evidence was purely formal.

Sir Henry, of course, could prove nothing at all bearing on the real issue. The Very Reverend the Dean looked the very picture of paternal anguish, and with sublime ingenuity contrived to give the jury the impression that he had warned me

against Mr. Sabine, that he had specially come to London to do so, and had been practically refused admission by me to the house, and told to mind his own business; and—this of course—that the whole thing would bring his gray hairs with shame and sorrow to the grave. His voice trembled with emotion as he told his story, and the jury were visibly affected.

The important witness, the one whose evidence decided the case, was Miss Jackson. She had evidently kept a most careful diary, and her memory was never once at fault, although, as Mr. Wylie whispered to me, she was far too clever to over-look herself with details.

She declared that the frequency of Mr. Sabine's visit had aroused her suspicions; and that she had spoken to me on the subject, and had been sharply reprimanded, and told to hold her tongue; that, without her constituting herself in any way a spy, circumstances had been so recklessly forced upon her notice that she could not help observing them. These circumstances she gave in detail, with a most malignant ingenuity.

Ultimately, she said she had felt it her duty to communicate with Sir Henry himself, and having done so, had of course left my service.

Cross-examination failed to shake her in any way, and I saw that Mr. Wylie by no means liked the turn which her evidence had given to the case.

The other witnesses on Sir Henry's side were comparatively unimportant; but the jury exchanged glances with one another when it was proved by the lawyer's clerk, who served the citation, that he found Mr. Sabine, Mrs. Fortescue, and myself altogether in my sitting-room at eleven in the morning, drinking champagne out of tumblers.

Another witness, whom none of us had expected, was a coastguardsman, who proved that, after dark, I had accompanied Mr. Sabine on board his yacht, which was lying in the offing, and had stayed on board at least a couple of hours.

Asked where the yacht and the crew now were, he replied that, to the best of his belief, they were now in the Mediterranean, but that the yacht had sailed shortly after my visit to her.

This piece of evidence was, of course, strictly true, and I did not need Mr. Wylie to tell me that it produced a very unfavorable impression.

After this, even I had sufficient sense to see that the case was virtually over. I was called, and I, on my oath, denied the shameful charge brought against me. And I do not think that I was more nervous or hesitating than might have been expected under cross-examination. But I could not tell, instinctively, that the jury did not believe me.

Mr. Sabine made, as Mr. Wylie remarked to me, an admirable witness.

Mrs. Fortescue puzzled Sir Henry's counsel extremely. It was admitted that she had been staying with me, with Sir Henry's consent, and that she consequently enjoyed his confidence.

She declared that, with the exception of the one visit to the yacht, she did not believe I had been out of her sight the whole time that we were at Brighton; and, as she afterwards said herself, the more they pressed her with questions, the less change they got out of her.

This practically ended the case, although I can even now recollect the vigorous and magnificently brilliant speech which my counsel made in my behalf, and in which, I am pleased to say, he did not at all go out of his way to consider the feelings of the Dean of Southwick, or even to spare him unnecessary pain.

Terrible as the crisis was, I enjoyed hearing things said of my father which I had often felt, but never been able to express. And when he spoke of my unhappy girlhood without a mother's care, and without companions, and invited the jury to believe that I was, in reality, more ignorant of the world and of its conventions than any village school girl could be, I did not need Mr. Wylie to whisper to me that the case was magnificently put.

The summing up was a very lucid recapitulation of the evidence, coupled with what certainly seemed to me a somewhat feeble running comment.

If, his lordship told the jury, they believed the evidence of Miss Jackson, then, of course, there was an end of the whole matter, and it was for them to say whether they believed her. If she was telling the truth, she was only discharging a painful duty. If she was telling falsehoods, they must conclude that she was doing so out of the most pure and wanton malignity, inasmuch as it had not even been suggested for a moment that I had in any way done anything to arouse in her a feeling of revenge.

Mrs. Fortescue's evidence was too negative to be of much service in enabling them to make up their minds. As far as it went it was in my favor, but it went a very little way.

My own denial was no doubt entitled to their most careful consideration, as also was that of Mr. Sabine, the co-respondent. They could not have shut their eyes to the fact that on one side or the other there must be something very like wilful perjury. It was only their duty to remember the gravity of their issues which they were called upon to determine, and to allow no consideration of the result of their verdict to influence them in the slightest degree.

How far all this aided the twelve Middlesex tradesmen who filled the box I cannot pretend to say. They were absent for about an hour and a half, and at the end of that time they returned into Court with their minds made up.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pamphlet on Consumption.

A pamphlet has just been issued by the Quebec Provincial Board of Health upon "Consumption," giving an account of what is known about the disease and the means of preventing its contagion. One-sixth of the deaths it says throughout the world are caused by this disease. Consumption or phthisis, is the last or softening period of tuberculosis. This is a germ disease, and is consequently contagious. Its germ or microbe may be transmitted first, by heredity; second, by inhalation of air containing these germs; third, by contaminated food; and fourth, by inscription of a wound. The pamphlet goes on to give a full account of the causes as well as the means to be adopted for its prevention. The pamphlet is very favorably spoken of in medical circles, and is being largely circulated.

ONE WAY TO COURT TRADE.

A Blacksmith of Years ago Hit upon a Happy Plan.

We are apt to think that people of fifty or sixty years ago, were not up to the tricks of trade as they are at the present day. But the following anecdote will show that they were quite as sharp and shrewd as the men who are now trying to outdo and overreach each other in business circles.

Mr. B—, who was living in the little town of A—, and carrying on the blacksmith business there, found trade in that section rather dull, and as the place was small could not see very promising prospects for the future. Being an ambitious man, he determined to move his business to the thriving town of W—. Not being well-known there, of course, work did not come in very fast, and matters began to look serious; for his capital was very small and would not admit of a heavy drain upon it. Clearly something must be done, so he set his wits to work, and soon hit upon a plan, which he proceeded without delay to carry out.

He was not, as a general thing, one of the church-going kind of people, but the following Sabbath, dressing himself in his best he appeared at the congregational church of that town. The minister noticed the new comer, and, after he had attended there a short time called upon him, and at last brought his horse there to be shod. He offered him the usual price for his services, but was somewhat surprised upon being told by Mr. B. that he always shod ministers' horses free, and as a minister's salary in those days was not as liberal as it is at the present time, he was very much pleased. In the course of a few weeks, every minister for miles around came to Mr. B. to have their horses shod, having heard of his liberal terms, and as he did his work well, of course, the members of the different congregations many of them followed suit, and it is needless to say Mr. B.—succeeded in building up a large and lucrative business.

A MONTREAL BANK SWINDLER.

An Accepted Cheque Raised From \$3 to \$933—A Clever Piece of Forgery.

A clever piece of forgery was perpetrated upon one of the Montreal banks the other day. During the course of the day a cheque for \$3 signed by C. V. Lindsay, was presented at the Molsons Bank for acceptance. Mr. Lindsay having an account there the cheque was at once marked good and returned to the party presenting it. At the general day's clearance after the closing of the bank the cheque was sent into the Molsons Bank from the Bank de People but in the meantime it had been increased to call for \$933, which amount the Banque de People had paid on same. The cheque was payable to Hetu & Cashman and was duly endorsed by them. There is no clue as to who the forger was and the Banque de People stand to lose the difference of \$930. The writing of the cheque was cleanly changed from three to nine hundred and eighty-three, and the figures 933 were perforated with a machine.

Unloading Bananas.

An Eastern exchange describes the unloading of bananas as follows:—

It is an interesting sight to watch the unloading of a banana steamer. The wharves are always crowded with teams, either awaiting their turn for a load or receiving their quota of the luscious fruit, which is stowed away by the thousands of bunches down in the hold of the vessel. Everything moves with celerity and dispatch, and it is wonderful how soon the steamer can be relieved of her cargo. Gangs of men, generally of the colored persuasion, are at work in different parts of the steamer passing out the bunches, so that the wagons, which are backed right up to the edge of the wharf at several points, can be readily supplied with a load. So soon as one receives the required number another takes its place, and thus the work continues until the cargo is discharged. Men with a quick eye and good judgment are stationed where they can watch the work closely, and decide upon the merit of each and every bunch, so that the fruit is as good as rapidly as it comes out of the vessel, various grades being assigned to their respective places.

Cereal Crops in Japan.

Although the cultivated lands of Japan are scarcely equal to one-eighth of the total area of the country, yet the home-grown produce is sufficient in ordinary seasons to meet the requirements of a population which exceeds 40,000,000 of people. Expressed in English measure there are 11,390,000 acres of arable land, of which 6,813,000 acres are occupied by rice, 4,234,000 acres by other cereals, and the remaining area by divers kinds of crops. Rice is grown in every province of the empire from south to north, and the mean yield is equal to about 30 bushels per acre, though the yield varies widely according to soil and situation. While wheat, barley and rye are capable of successful cultivation in all parts of the country, barley tends to predominate in the provinces of the northeast, and rye in those of the southwest.

A DESPERATE AFFRAY.

Men Fight With Scythes and Pitchforks Around a Corpse.

A Dublin despatch says:—An old woman who owned half an acre of ground at Nenagh, county of Tipperary, died Friday without leaving a relative or specifying an heir. Her neighbors quarreled on Saturday over the possession of her land. Some 30 men fought with scythes and pitchforks round her hut. Eventually they broke down the door, upset the body and beat each other with the candles, which had stood round the body. When the fight was ended two men lay dead at the doorstep and five others were too severely wounded to walk from the scene of the conflict. A farmer named Dwyer, living near Nenagh, was killed in another quarrel on Friday.