

# UNDER A CLOUD.

A THRILLING TALE OF HUMAN LIFE.

## CHAPTER XIII. THE WEDDING DAY.

Four weeks had passed since Malcolm Stratton's insane attempt—four weeks of an utterly prostrating illness from which he was slowly recovering, when, one morning, Guest entered the room where Brettison was seated by his friend's couch, and made an announcement which wrought a sudden change in the convalescent.

"I expected it," he said quietly; and then, after a pause, "I will go with you."

Guest opened and shut his mouth without speaking for a few moments. Then,

"Go—with me? You go with me? Why, it would be madness."

"Madness, madness, old fellow," said Stratton feebly, "but I tell you I am quite strong now."

"Very far from it," said Brettison. "And I say so too," cried Guest, "look here, old fellow, do you mean to assert that you are compos mentis?"

"Of course," said Stratton, smiling. "Then I say you are not," cried Guest, "and Mr. Brettison will second me. You are weak as a rat in spite of all our watching, and feeding, and care."

"All this long weary month," sighed Stratton. "Heaven bless you both for what you have done."

"Never mind about blessings; be a little grateful to Mr. Brettison, who has been like a hundred hospital nurses rolled into one, and give up this mad idea."

"But it is not mad," pleaded Stratton. "I only want to go to the church. I am quite strong enough now. I want to see her married, that is all. Mr. Brettison, you see how calm I am."

"Yes, very," said the old botanist, smiling sadly. "Calm with your temples throbbing and your veins too full. My dear boy, if you go to that wedding, you will overexcite yourself and we shall have a serious relapse."

"If I do go?" said Stratton quietly. "I shall certainly have it. I mean to go."

He rose from the couch on which he had been lying, walked into the bedroom, and closed the door.

"Did you ever see such a mule, Mr. Brettison?" cried Guest as soon as they were alone. "I was a fool to come in and tell him I was going; but I thought he had got over it, and he knew it was to-day."

"You are going as one of the friends?" "Yes, Miss Jerrold asked me," said Guest, rather consciously; "and of course he would have known afterward, and reproached me for not telling him. What is to be done?"

"Certainly not thwart him," replied Brettison. "I was going out into the country to-day."

"Collecting?" "Yes, my dear sir, a little. My great hobby, Mr. Guest. But I will not go. We should do more harm than good by stopping him, so I'll go to one church with him."

"But I dread a scene," said Guest. "Suppose he should turn wild at seeing her lead up the aisle. Fancy the consequences. It would be cruel to the lady. It is not as if she had jilted him."

"Never cared for him a bit, did she?" whispered Brettison.

"H'm! Well, sir, I don't quite like to say. At all events, Miss Myra Jerrold accepted this Mr. Barron before poor old Malcolm spoke a word, and I am convinced that she felt certain he did not care for her."

"An unfortunate business, Guest. Poor lad! poor lad! But there, he recovered and any opposition would, I am sure throw him back."

"But the lady?" "Have no fear; Malcolm Stratton will, I am sure, be guilty of no insane folly. I know him better than you, Guest."

"I think not," said the young man, smiling. "We will not argue the point," replied the old botanist, taking Guest's hand. "We both think we know him better than anyone else, and after all have not half sounded the depths of his nature."

"Well, I leave him to you," said Guest. "I have no time to spare. I'm off now, old fellow," he cried approaching the bedroom door.

"All right," cried Stratton cheerfully as he came back and held out his hand. "My kindest regards to Edie. Don't be afraid, old fellow; I am going to behave sensibly. You need not fear a scene."

"But I—"

to himself that his friend had been blind in his love, for Myra was hard and unemotional as her cousin was sweet and lovable.

He misjudged her again as he saw her leave the church leaning upon her husband's arm, while now he was privileged to escort Edie, one of the four bridesmaids, back to Bourne Square.

"She never would have cared for poor old Malcolm," he said to himself as he followed the newly married couple with his eyes, Barron carefully and nearly as pale as his wife, but looking proud, eager, and handsome, as he handed Myra into the carriage.

"The happy pair," whispered Edie as she placed her little hand upon Guest's arm. "Get me to the carriage, please, as quickly as you can, or I shall cry and make a scene."

"Yes, yes," he whispered back. "This way; but Edie, I've been looking all round the church and can't see him. Did you catch sight of Stratton?"

"No," said the girl with some surprise. "And did not wish to. I could only see that poor girl going through the ceremony, and I felt all the time I could read her thoughts. O Percy Guest, if she only had not had so much pride, or Malcolm Stratton had been as bold as he was speaking and strange, this never could have been!"

Back at Bourne Square with all the hurry and excitement of a wedding morning, the house crowded with friends, and Sir Mark all eagerness to do the honors of his place well to all. Carriages thronged the roadway; a couple of policemen kept back the little crowd, and the admiral's servants, re-enforced by half a dozen of Gunter's men, had a busy time supplying the wants of the guests.

"Well, you two," said a voice, suddenly behind Edie, who was listening to a remark made by Guest, "don't look in that dreamy way at everyone. I've been watching you for ever so long. Don't you know that this is the happiest day of Myra's life?"

"No aunt," said Edie shortly; do you?" Miss Jerrold shrugged her shoulders. "Go and keep near her, my dear, till they leave. I haven't the heart. Edie, am I a wretchedly prejudiced old maid, or is there something not nice about that man?"

"Ah, there you are, Edie," cried the admiral excitedly. "Myra is just going to cut the cake. Mr. Guest, take my sister and give her some champagne. Edie, my dear, I don't like poor Myra's looks. I must see to the people, and have a word with James Barron before they start; and I've got to speak, too, and how to get through it I don't know."

"What do you want me to do, uncle?" "What I told you, my dear," cried the old man testily. "Go and keep with my poor darling till the last."

Edie crept to her cousin's side and stayed there during the admiral's speech, one which contained more heart than head; listened with heaving breast to the toast of the bride's health, and to the well-spoken, manly reply made by James Barron. And so on till the time when the bride might slip away to change her dress for the journey down to Southampton, the wedding trip commencing the next day on board the great steamer outward bound for the West.

"Guest, my lad," said the admiral, drawing the young man aside, "servants are all very well, but I'd be thankful if you'd see yourself that Mr. Barron's carriage is up to the door in time. Myra is not well, and she has sent a message to me to beg that she may be allowed to slip away quietly with a few good-bys. I suppose they people will have all the satin slipper and rice throwing foolery."

"You may depend upon me, Sir Mark," said Guest eagerly; and he set about his task at once, greatly to the butler's disgust.

The minutes went swiftly then; the guests gathering on the staircase and crowding the hall, while the carriage, with its servants, stood waiting, with an avenue of people down to the door.

Guest was on the step seeing that the wraps and various little articles needed on the journey were handed in. Barron, looking flushed and proud, was in the hall, with his hand grasped by Sir Mark, and a murmur of excitement and a cheer announced that the bride was coming down, when the bridegroom's carriage began to move on.

The sudden starting of the horses made Guest turn sharply.

"Hi! Stop! Do you hear?" he shouted, and several of the servants waiting outside took up the cry, "Coming down." But the carriage moved on and a four-wheeled cab took its place, amid a roar of laughter from the crowd.

At the same moment three businesslike-looking men stepped into the hall, and before the butler and footmen could stop them they were close up to the foot of the staircase.

Sir Mark turned upon them angrily, but one of them gripped his arm and said quickly:

"Sir Mark Jerrold?" "Yes, What is this intrusion?" "Upstairs, sir, quick. Stop the young lady from coming down."

The man's manner was so impressive that it forced Sir Mark to act, and he shouted up the broad staircase:

"Edie! one moment—not yet." Then, as if resenting the fact that he should have obeyed this man, he turned sharply in time to hear the words:

"James Dale—in the queen's name. Here is my warrant. No nonsense; we are three to one."

The bridegroom was struggling in the policemen's arms, and in the hand which he freed there was a revolver.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### STRATTON'S THANKSGIVING.

There was a slight struggle, the sharp click of steel, and before Sir Mark could find words to express his rage and astonishment, Barron was being hurried out of the hall by two of the men who had made the unceremonious entry, while the two policemen there for another purpose, in

driven off.

Sir Mark had meantime made an effort to follow, but the man who had spoken barred his way.

"You scoundrel! Who are you?" roared the admiral. "What does this mean?"

"Superintendent Abingdon, Great Scotland Yard, sir," was the quiet reply. "It means, sir, that I've saved the young lady from a painful scene, and you from a terrible mishap."

"But, oh, there is some horrible blunder! That is my friend, my son-in-law, Mr. Barron."

"No, sir, an alias. James Dale, whom we have wanted for months. Dodged us by keeping abroad. Couldn't run him to earth before—stayed on the Continent; and he was off abroad again, but we were just in time."

"I tell you," thundered Sir Mark, "it is a horrible mistake. Here, Guest—the carriage; we must follow them at once. Ladies, some of you—oh here is my sister. Rebecca, go up to Myra and keep her in her room. A little mistake; Barron has been called away—a business mistake. Tell her to be calm. Now, sir," he cried sternly to the officer, "you do not leave my side. Mr. Guest come with us."

"Where to, Sir Mark?" said the man quietly.

"To Scotland Yard."

"Excuse me, sir; it is no mistake. I'll go with you, of course, but you will thank me one of those days for being so prompt. You have been imposed upon by one of the cleverest scoundrels of his time. James Dale is—"

"Mr. James Barron, man."

"No, Sir Mark; James Dale, charged with swindling the Russian Government of a tremendous sum by the issuing of forged rouble notes."

"And just off to Buenos Ayres."

"To the West Indies, man—to his estate."

"Yes, sir," said the man dryly; "he's going to his estate, but it isn't there."

Sir Mark looked wildly round at the crowd of friends who were drawing away, and without another word accompanied the officer to the carriage, where, as soon as they were started, the latter addressed himself to Guest, the admiral having sunk back in one corner, trying to collect his thoughts, but only to begin listening intently.

"No mistake, sir," said the officer. "I wish for the gentleman's sake there was a prisoner has been carrying on the game for a long time with a conperplate printer, a man named Henderson—"

"Henderson?" "Yes, sir," said the man, "and it was through a letter we found in his pocket that we knew what was going on here, and arrived just in time for the young lady."

Guest glanced at Sir Mark and met his eyes.

"Quite the gentleman, our friend Dale," continued the officer. "Schoolmaster once I found. Speaks languages, plays and sings. Great yachting man. Deceive anybody but his game's up now. Couldn't live in England as it was. Where did he say he was going—West Indies, sir?"

Guest nodded.

"Well, he was going on farther south. He had taken tickets for the River Plate."

Sir Mark started violently.

There was silence for a few moments, and Guest's resentment against Myra died out as he thought of the poor girl in the power of a scoundrel thousands of miles from home.

"Lady has money, I suppose?" whispered the officer from behind his hand. Guest gave a short, sharp nod, and then felt annoyed with himself, but the officer took no heed and went on:

"Of course she would have, sir. Well my gentleman will not be able to touch that, and I suppose there will be no difficulty about getting a divorce."

Those words a flood of thought flashed through Guest's brain, and he recalled conversations held with Edie respecting the marriage, and the girl's boldly expressed belief that her cousin would gladly have sworn back but for her promise and her pride.

He would have hurried off to Bench Inn with the information, but he was bound to go on to the police office and see the matter through with Sir Mark; and in due time they reached Scotland Yard, to find Barron, or Dale, in a kind of desk, listening idly to the evidence given by the officers who had helped to execute the warrant.

But the man's whole aspect changed as he saw Sir Mark and Guest enter.

"Communicate with Garner of Ely Place at once for me, Sir Mark," he said at parting. "It will be all right. Comfort Myra, and tell her it's an absurd mistake," he continued as Guest was looking at a letter the detective officer held for his perusal; and then he turned indignantly as Barron held out his hand.

Sir Mark was about to take it when Guest struck his hand down.

"How dare you?" began the prisoner. "Don't touch the scoundrel, Sir Mark," cried Guest fiercely. "It is all true."

"You cur!" roared the prisoner. "You turn against me? But I know the reason for that: our friend the rejected in Bencher's Inn."

"Come away, Sir Mark," cried Guest. "The man is an utter knave."

"I will not believe it," cried Sir Mark. "Read that letter, the," said Guest quietly, "written on paper bearing your crest, from your own house, to his confederate, Samuel Henderson, the printer of the forged Russian notes."

Sir Mark sat silent and thoughtful in the corner of his carriage as he and Guest were driven back, till they were near the house, when he turned suddenly to his companion.

"Thank you, Guest," he said warmly. "Nothing like a friend in need. Hang it, sir, I'd sooner take my ships into action than again meet my guests here at home. But it has to be done," he said, "and our side beaten. I will not believe that Mr. Barron is guilty, nor yet that I could have been made a fool. The man is a gentleman, and I'll stand by him to the last in spite of all that is said against him. What do you say, sir—what do you say?"

"Do you wish me to speak, Sir Mark?" "Of course."

"Then I say that the man is an utter scoundrel; that you have been horribly deceived; and that—there, I am making you angry."

"Not a bit, Guest; not a bit. I'm afraid you are right, but I must fight this out."

The door was reached and Sir Mark uttered a sigh of relief, for there was no crowd—not a carriage to be seen; and, upon entering the house, it was to find that every friend and visitor had departed.

Sir Mark strode in upright and firm, and Guest stopped to say good-by.

"No, no, my lad; don't leave me yet," said the old man. "Come up and face the ladies first."

He led the way up into the drawing room, expecting to find Myra prostrate; but there was only one figure to greet him—his sister. The door, however, had hardly closed before Edie, who had been with her cousin, ran to the room flushed and eager.

"Where is Myra?"

"Coming down, uncle. We—auntie and I—persuaded her to go to her room."

"Is she much broken down—much?" "My dear Mark!" cried his sister sharply, "Myra is a sensible girl. Now, then, don't keep us in suspense. Tell me; is it all true about that man?"

"Yes, Rebecca—I mean no," cried Sir Mark furiously; "of course not, and I'm going to instruct counsel and—"

"Amme, it's some enemy's work. I'll pour such a broadside into him! Why, confound it all!" he cried, as a sudden thought struck him, and he turned to Guest, "this must be some of your friend's work."

"Sir Mark!" "Oh, uncle!"

"Don't talk stuff, Mark," cried his sister almost at the same moment. "Is it likely? Then it is all true. What an escape! Well, I'm glad it happened when it did."

Sir Mark gave a furious stamp on the floor, but turned calmly enough on Guest, offering his hand.

"You will excuse me now, Sir Mark."

"Eh? What? Going? Well, if you must. But don't leave me in the lurch, my lad. Come back and have a bit of dinner with me. I shall be very dull, no; I won't ask you here. It will be miserable. Meet me at the club."

Guest promised, and then shook hands with Miss Jerrold, who pressed his fingers warmly; but when he turned to say good-by to Edie she was not in the room.

"Too upset," he muttered as he went down. "Might have said good-by though."

"Good-by, Mr. Guest," came from the little conservatory half-way down to the hall; and there was Edie waiting. "No, no; don't stop me. I must run up to Myra. Good-by, Percy. Oh, I am so glad."

## ROUND THE WHOLE WORLD

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE.

Old and New World Events of Interest Chronicled Briefly—Interesting Happenings of Recent Date.

South Austria owns her own railway system.

Members of the Austrian Parliament get \$4 per day.

England expends annually on pictures at least three million pounds.

Prof. John Stuart Blackie, of Edinburgh has passed his 85th birthday.

In England householders have to pay a tax on each male servant in their employ.

Street bands are not permitted in Germany unless they accompany processions.

The little country of Hesse owns two hundred and twenty-six miles of railroad.

The population of Peru under the Incas was twelve times greater than it is today.

A statue of Marshal de Machon will be erected at Autun. It is to be thirty feet high.

In Russia, as in France, Italy and Spain, titles carry no privileges, either official or social.

Windsor Castle has been used for a royal residence seven hundred and eighty-four years.

The French Government is about to introduce a bill fining railroad companies for late trains.

The textile congress of France has decided to adopt a standard list of prices, as in England.

The Netherlands own nearly one thousand miles of railroad, all in the best of condition.

A large per cent. of the railways of Italy are owned by the Government and leased to corporations.

The Grand Duke Paul of Russia is one of the few living royal giants. He is 7 feet 9 inches in height.

Victoria, Australia, owns all the railroads in the colony, two thousand three hundred and forty-one miles.

Three hundred thousand dollars worth of Victor Hugo's works have been sold annually for the last six years.

Governors of British West Indian colonies are endeavoring to promote a federation of West Indian colonies.

The French people, it is said, now pay more attention to eating and drinking and less to dancing than formerly.

Japanese workmen bathe the whole body once a day, and some of them twice. Public baths are provided on every street.

Mary Elizabeth Kyo, a London lady who passed the century mark four years ago, has kept 20,000 nights under one roof.

Queen Victoria always uses powdered cinnamon on melons, and the same favorite spice is used in flavoring most of her sweets.

The world's oyster fisheries produce annually 4,439,000,000 oysters, half of which are consumed within three days after being taken.

There is a movement in London to provide help for the less fortunate members of the legal profession and their widows and children.

An Indian carpet, weighing three tons, and made by the prisoners in the Agra jail for Queen Victoria, has just been received at Windsor Castle.

Hungary is about to hold an exhibition of historical relics to celebrate the millennial anniversary of the foundation of the kingdom of Arpad in 894.

Pope Leo is 85 years old and thin and fragile physically, but his activity of mind and eagerness for work seem rather to increase than diminish.

All the Protestant churches in Prussia will celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden on December 9.

It is reported that an extensive deposit of an unusual stone has been discovered at Mount Huxley, on the west coast of Tasmania, in the Mount Lyell district.

The results of the recent expedition to the polar regions prove that north of seventy-five degrees the ice over the whole surface averages six thousand feet in thickness.

The highest spot inhabited by human beings on this globe is the Buddhist cloister of Hanle, Tibet, where twenty-one monks live at an altitude of sixteen thousand feet.

It is reported in London that when Ambassador Bayard returns to England honorary degrees will be conferred upon him by the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

A woman has been appointed keeper of the Leasowes lighthouse, near Liverpool, with a salary of \$375 a year, a house and garden and an annual allowance of twelve tons of coal.

Official statistics show that the total number of blast furnaces blowing in the United Kingdom is 274 out of a total of 719. The pig iron trade is reported duller than ever before.

King Humbert is a royal sportsman of unusual skill with the rifle. He went out on his hunting lodge at Valle del Orco one day recently and killed 18 wild goats and 32 chamois.

George Williams is said to have founded the Young Men's Christian Association, with eighty of his associates, in a London dry-goods store, in which he was then a low salaried clerk.

A portrait of Charles I., in an art gallery at Oxford, is composed entirely of small letters. The head and ruff contain the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the book of Psalms.

More than two hundred French cities have already taken steps to erect statues in honor of the late President Carnot and many others will do likewise, while others will have Carnot squares and avenues.

Christa is the pet name of the Queen Regent of Spain, a lady who has won the respect of the civilized world for the persistence and high-mindedness with which she has performed the duties of her position.

Five packages of nickel coins in transit from Berlin to the Italian treasury were stolen recently. They were part of the \$2,000,000 worth of nickel coin ordered from Messrs. Krupp by the Italian Government.