

UNDER A CLOUD.

A THRILLING TALE OF HUMAN LIFE.

CHAPTER XX.
THE MORNING PAPER.

No one by any stretch of the imagination could have called the admiral a good reader. In fact, a person might very well have been considered to be strictly within the limits of truth if he had declared the old officer to be the worst reader he ever heard. But so it was, from the crookedness of human nature, that he always made a point of reading every piece of news in the paper which he considered interesting, aloud, for the benefit of those with him at the breakfast table.

Matters happen strangely quite as frequently as they go on in the regular groove of routine, and hence it happened one morning at breakfast, that is to say, on the morning after the tragedy at the convict prison, that Sir Mark put on his gold spectacles as soon as he had finished his eggs and bacon and one cup of coffee, and, taking the freshly aired paper, opened it with a good deal of rustling noise, and coughed.

Edie looked across at her cousin with a mischievous smile but Myra was gazing thoughtfully before her, and the glance missed its mark.

"Hum! ha!" growled Sir Mark, "London, South, and Channel. Same as number three. Confound number three! Who wants to refer to that? Oh here we are: 'Light winds, shifting to the east. Fine generally.' Climate's improving, girls. More coffee, Myra. Pass my cup, Edie, dear."

He skimmed over the summary, and then turned to the police cases, found nothing particular, and went on to the sessions, stopping to refresh himself from time to time, while Edie wondered what her cousin's thoughts might be. "Dear me!" exclaimed the admiral suddenly; "how singular! I must read you this, girls. Here's another forgery of foreign banknotes."

The click of Myra's teacup as she suddenly set it down made the admiral drop the paper and read in his child's blank face the terrible slip he had made.

"O Myra, my darling!" he cried apologetically; "I am so sorry," and he turned to Edie, who looked daggers.

"It is nothing, papa," said Myra coldly, as she tried hard to master her emotion.

"But it is something, my dear. I wouldn't have said a word only I caught sight of Percy Guest's name as junior partner for the defense."

It was Edie's turn now to look startled, and Sir Mark hurriedly fixed upon her to become the scapegoat for his awkward allusion, and divert Myra's attention.

"Can't congratulate the prisoner upon his counsel," he said. "The man's too young and inexperienced. Only the other day a mere student. It's like putting a midshipman as second in command of an ironclad."

Edie's eyes now seemed to dart flames, and she looked up boldly at her uncle.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I mean it. Very nice fellow, Percy Guest, in a social way, but I should be sorry to trust an important case with him. Here, I'll read it, and see what it's all about. No; never mind, I know you girls don't care about law."

The morning meal had been commenced cheerfully. There was sunshine without and at the table, Edie had thought how bright and well her cousin looked, and argued pleasant times of the future.

"If she could only feel herself free," was her constant thought when Myra gave way to some fit of despondency. "I'm sure that she loves Malcolm Stratton, and what is the good of a stupid old law if all it does is to make people uncomfortable. I wish I knew the Archbishop of Canterbury or the judge of the Court of Divorce, or whoever it is settles those things. I'd soon make them see matters in a different light. Poor Myra would be obedient then, and there'd be an end of all this moping. I believe she delights in making herself miserable."

It was just when Edie had reached this point and she was stirring her tea, and thinking how easily she could settle matters if she were at the head of affairs, so as to make everybody happy, herself included, when her uncle made his malapropos remarks.

There was no more sunshine in the dining room after that. Myra looked cold and pale, the admiral was uncomfortable behind the paper, in which he enveloped himself as in a cloud, from which came a hand at intervals to feel about the table in an absurd way for toast or his coffee cup, which was twice nearly overturned.

Then he became visible for a moment or two as he turned the paper, but it closed him in again, and from behind it there came, now and then, a fidgeting, nervous cough, which was as annoying to the utterer as to those who listened.

"Going out to-day, girls?" asked Sir Mark at last, but without removing the paper.

"Yes, uncle," said Edie sharply, for her cousin had given her an imploring look, and the girl could see that Myra was greatly agitated still; "the carriage is coming round at two. Shall we drop you at the club?"

"Great Heavens!" ejaculated the old man in a tone which startled both his hearers, and as if expecting from some premonition, Myra thrust back her chair and sat gazing at the paper wildly.

"What is it, uncle?" cried Edie.

"Eh? Oh, nothing, my dear," said Sir Mark confusedly, as he rustled the paper and hurriedly turned it. "More horrors. These editors seem to revel in them, or the public do. So shocking; no sooner is one at an end, than another begins."

He had screened his face again as quickly as he could, for he was a miserable dis-

sembler, and Edie and Myra exchanged glances. Then, rising slowly with her hand pressed to her breast, Myra made as if to go to the other side of the table, but her strength failed her, and as her father cleared his throat with a sonorous cough, she clung to the edge, crumbling up the white cloth in her damp fingers.

Edie rose too, but throwing up her head, Myra motioned her back imperiously, and stood for a few moments with her lips parted and eyes dilated, gazing at the paper, as if devouring its contents while from behind, it came the admiral's voice with forced carelessness.

"For my part," he said, with a clumsy effort to hide his own emotion, "I am beginning to think that the ordinary daily newspapers are unsuitable reading for young ladies, who had better keep to the magazines and journals specially devoted to their wants."

There was no word spoken in return, and after another cough, the old man continued: "What was that you said about dropping me at the club? By all means, yes. My leg was rather bad in the night, Don't care so much about walking as I used."

Still there was no reply, and, as if struck by the notion that he had been left alone in the room, Sir Mark coughed again nervously, and slowly moved himself in his chair, to turn the paper slightly aside, and, as if by accident, so that he could see beyond one side.

He sat there the next moment petrified, and staring at his daughter's wildly excited face, for resting one hand on the table, she was leaning toward him, her hand extended to take the paper, and her eyes questioning his, while Edie, looking terribly agitated, was also leaning forward as if to restrain her cousin.

Sir Mark's lips parted and moved, but he made no sound, then recovering himself, he hastily closed the paper, doubled it over again, and rose from his chair.

"Myra, my darling!" he cried, "are you ill?"

Her lips now moved in turn, but without a sound at first; then she threw back her head, and her eyes grew more dilated as she cried hoarsely:

"That paper—there is news—something about my husband."

"Edie, ring! She is ill," cried Sir Mark.

"No, stop!" cried Myra. "I am not a child now, father. I tell you that there is news in that paper about my husband. Give it to me. I will see."

Sir Mark was as agitated now as his child, and with a hurried gesture, perfectly natural under the circumstances, he thrust the paper behind him. "No, no, my child," he stammered, with his florid face growing mottled and strange.

"I say there is, father, and you are deceiving me."

"Well, yes, a little, my darling," he said hastily. "A little. Not for your ears, dear. Another time when you are cool and calm, you know. Edie, my dear, come to her; talk to her. Myra, my child, leave it to me."

Myra's hand went to her throat as if she were stifling, but once more she forced back her emotion.

"Something about—the prison—my husband?"

"Yes, yes, my dear. Nothing so very particular. Now do—do leave it to me, and try to be calm. You frighten me. There there, my pet," he continued, trying to take her hand; "go to your room for a bit with Edie, and—yes, lie down."

"Give me the paper," she said hoarsely.

"No, no, I cannot, indeed, my dear."

"Ah!" cried the agitated girl wildly. "I know—they have set him free?"

Sir Mark glanced at his niece, and then passed his hand over his bearded forehead.

"Yes, yes, my dear," he faltered; "he is free."

"Ah and he will come here and claim me, and then—"

She reeled as if to fall, but her force of will was too great, and she mastered her emotion again, stepped forward, and seized the paper, her senses swimming as she turned it again and again, till the large type of the telegram caught her attention.

Then she closed her eyes for a few moments, drew a long breath, and they saw her compress her lips and read without a tremor:

DARING ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

SERIOUS AFFRAY.

Our correspondent at Grey Cliff telegraphs of a desperate attempt made by three of the convicts at The Foreland last night about eight o'clock. By some means they managed to elude the vigilance of the warders after the cells had been visited and lights were out, reached the yard, and scaled the lofty wall. Then, favored by the darkness of the night, they threaded their way among the sentries, and reached the cliffs of the dangerous rocky coast, where, their evasion having been discovered they were brought to bay by a party of armed warders. In the affray which ensued two of the warders were dangerously wounded with stones, and the convicts were making their way down the cliff to the sea when orders were given to fire. One of the men was shot down, while, in the desperate attempt to escape recapture, the others went headlong down the almost perpendicular precipice which guards the eastern side of the Foreland.

Upon the warders descending with ropes, two of the men were brought up, one with a shot through the leg, the other suffering from a badly fractured skull while, in spite of the vigorous search by the boats of H.M.S. Merlin, the body of the third man, which had been heard to plunge into the sea, was not recovered. We regret to add that the man injured by his fall expired in the ambulance on the way back to the prison. He was the notorious convict Barron, or Dale, sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, about a twelvemonth ago, for the daring fraud upon the Russian Government by the issue of forged ruble notes.

The paper fell from Myra's hands as she stood there motionless, and apparently unmoved by the tidings she had read. Then turning slowly, she held out her hand to Edie, who obeyed the imploring look in her

eyes, and led her from the dining-room to her own chamber without a word.

"Myra," she whispered then, and she pressed closely towards her cousin, whose lips now parted, and she heard almost like a sigh:

"Free—free!"

"Talk to me, dear talk to me," whispered Edie. "It frightens me when you look like that."

Myra turned to her, caught her cousin to her breast, and kissed her rapidly twice. Then, thrusting her away, she whispered faintly:

"Go now—go, dear. I can bear no more; and when, a few moments later, Edie looked back from the door she was about to close, Myra was in the act of sinking upon her knees by the bedside, where she buried her face in her hands.

But hardly had the door closed when she sprang to her feet, and hurried across to shoot the bolt, and then stand with her hands to her head, and starting eyes, picturing in imagination the scene of the past night. The darkness and James Barron—her husband—the man who had haunted her night and day in connection with the hour when he would come back and claim her, not at the end of seven years, but earlier released before his time—that man—while she sat below in her room at the piano—yes, she recalled vividly every minute of the previous night—she sat playing the melodies of old ballads, favorites of her father, with Percy Guest talking to Edie, and at that time this man was fighting to escape—this man, her horror. And had he succeeded he would have come there.

She shuddered as, from the brief description of the struggle, she saw him trying to descend the rocky face of the cliff, stumble when shots were fired, and fall headlong upon the cruel stones.

It was horrible—too horrible to bear; and yet she felt obliged to dwell upon it all, and go over it again and again, shuddering at the pictures her active brain evoked till the agony was maddening.

Then, to make her horror culminate, doubt stepped in to ask her, as if in an insidious whisper, whether she could believe it to be all true, and not some reporter's error.

She felt as if she were withering beneath some cold mental blast, and in spite of the horror, her hopes and dreams, which would have place, shrank back again. For it might be a mistake. Some other wretched man had striven to escape, and in the hurry and darkness had been mistaken for her husband.

But hope came again directly, and while shuddering at the thoughts, she recalled how explicit it had all been. There could be no mistake. "She was wife no longer—tied no more by those hated bonds to a wretched adventurer—a forger—whose sole aim had been to get her father's money—she was free, and Malcolm Stratton had told her—"

She shuddered again at the horror of dwelling upon such thoughts at a moment when her ears were stunned by the news of death; but the thoughts were imperious. She had never loved this man, and the ceremony had only been performed under misapprehension. Once more she was free—free to follow the bent of her affections—free to give herself to the man she knew she loved.

What had Malcolm Stratton said—that had he said?

A mist had been gathering about her mental vision, and she staggered toward her bedside, once more to sink down and bury her burning face in her hands, for her emotion was greater than she could bear.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Her Adam's Fall.

It was the custom not many years ago, in certain parts of Scotland, for the minister to make catechetical visitations among his people. An amusing anecdote is related of a worthy Scotch woman who, intent upon her own trouble, made honest but personal answer to the minister's questions.

Her husband, whose name was Adam, had one very serious fault, for which he had been severely reproved by the minister. Seeing the good man approaching one day, Adam, who was just getting over a drinking spell, hid himself under the bed and told his wife to say that he was off fishing.

The minister came in and was politely received by Jenny. He began by asking if she had studied the catechism which he had left at his last visit.

"Deed, sir, an' I ha' studied it a muckle bit," was her answer.

Thinking to test her knowledge a little, the minister asked, "Weel, Jenny, can ye tell me the cause o' Adam's fall?"

Jenny's mind was too much occupied with the misdeeds of her own Adam to give any thought to the great progenitor of the human race, and she replied with some warmth:

"Deed, sir, it was naething else but drink; and then she turned towards the bed and said:

"Adam ye may as well come out, for the doctor keus brawly what's the matter; some clashin' deevils o' neighbors ha'e telt him a' boot it. Sae coom oot an' speak for yourself."

Eloquence Interrupted.

During a political campaign, a well-known lawyer in a Western state was addressing an audience composed principally of farmers. Like a wise speaker—and a shrewd candidate—he tried to suit his speech to the occasion.

In a tone which he evidently considered both cordial and honest, and with a winning smile, he began:

"My friends, my sympathies have always been with the tillers of the soil. My father was a practical farmer, and so was my grandfather before him. I myself was born on a farm, and was, so to speak, reared between two stalks of corn."

Here his eloquence was rudely interrupted by the trumpet tones of a farmer in the rear of the hall.

"Jimmiey crickets!" he shouted, "if you aint a pumpkin!"

The house "came down," and the candidate, for the moment, at least, was sadly embarrassed.

Her Smiles.

She smiled on me. Her eyes were brown, and on her head a lovely crown of golden tresses capped a brow. As white as snow. I see it now. I asked her to be mine, and she—

Alack, alack, she smiled at me.

FAMOUS BATTLES.

Some of the Great Conflicts Fought in Ancient and Modern Times.

At the battle of Agincourt 62,000 men were present, and the slain numbered 11,400 or 18 per cent.

At the battle of Bannockburn there were 135,000 men engaged, the slain numbered 38,000, or 28 per cent.

The Battle of the Forty was a duel between twenty French and the same number of Italian knights about 1593.

At Gettysburg 140,000 men were opposed, and of this number the total Federal loss was 28,198; the total Confederate loss was 37,000.

The battle of Bannockburn was one of the most decisive ever fought. It was in 1471, and closed the age of baron rule in England.

The Battle of the British Soldiers is a name given to the battle of Inkermann, November 5, 1854, because the British troops bore the brunt of the fighting.

At Poitiers, in 1356, 80,000 French were defeated by the Black Prince with less than 50,000 men. The French King, John, was captured and his army completely routed.

The Battle of the Diamond was a fight between the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland in 1795. It had its name from Diamond in the County Antrim where it was fought.

At Sadowa 402,000 men were opposed, of whom 33,000 were killed, wounded or taken prisoners. This was 8 per cent. a far smaller figure than in any leading battle of the Napoleonic wars.

The battle of the Moat was a conflict before Medina, between Mohammed and Abu Sofian. It was so called because most of the fighting was done in the moat that Mohammed had dug to protect the city from the besiegers.

The Tearless Battle was fought between the Spartans on one side and the Arcadians and Arjives on the other, B. C. 267. Not a Spartan fell in the engagement, and so, Plutarch says, the Lacedaemonians called it the Tearless Battle.

The Battle of the Thirty was a duel, fought in 1351, near Josselin, in France, by thirty English and thirty French knights, to settle a boundary dispute. At first the English were successful but the French rallied and finally won the day.

In the battle of Marengo 58,000 men participated and of that number 13,000 were killed or wounded, about 22 per cent. Napoleon thought Marengo his greatest victory. He always kept throughout life the uniform worn on that day.

The battle of Brandywine was one of the worst of Washington's numerous defeats. The name originated, it is said, from a Dutch brandy distillery on the banks of the stream Brandywine, variously spelled, being a Dutch name for brandy, or "burned wine."

The Battle of the Emperors was fought at Austerlitz, 1805. The Emperors present were Napoleon, Francis of Austria and Alexander of Russia. Over 170,000 men were actually engaged in the battle, and of this number 23,000 were killed or wounded, or 13 per cent. of the whole.

The Battle of Arbela is wrongly named, as it was fought B. C. 331 at Gaugamela, "the camels' house," twenty miles from Arbela. The Greeks, with 50,000 men, opposed the Persians with 1,000,000. The Greek historians claim that 300,000 dead Persians were left on the field.

At the Battle of Thrasymene, between the Romans and the Carthaginians, there were 65,000 men engaged. The Romans were taken by surprise and defeated with great slaughter. The total number of men killed on both sides was 17,000, or about 27 per cent. of the number engaged in the conflict.

The Battle of the rocks is another name for the Battle of Falkenstein, in 1814. The French mountaineers posted themselves on the heights and let loose great masses of rock and earth on the German attacking force. Whole ranks were overthrown by a single avalanche, and the attack was abandoned.

The Battle of Nations was the conflict in 1813 at Leipzig. The nations engaged were the French, Austrians, Russians and Prussians. The allies numbered 160,000, the French almost as many. The fighting continued during three days; the allies lost nearly 50,000 men in killed and wounded; the French 60,000.

At Gravelotte there were 320,000 men opposed, and the killed and wounded numbered 48,000. The French suffered most, because they were compelled to undertake an attack on a very strong position defended by the whole German force. The French defeat at Gravelotte resulted in the fall of Metz and the surrender of Bazaine's army.

The Battle of the Butchers and Carpenters was a civil strife between two factions in Paris in 1413. The Duke of Burgundy armed and led the butchers; the Duke of Orleans armed and led the carpenters. A regular battle was fought in the streets and public squares of Paris; the carpenters were victorious and drove the butchers out of the city.

The Battle of Belahoe is famous in Irish history as a spoiling of the spoilers. Two chieftains, O'Neil and O'Donnell, had made a thieving excursion into a neighboring territory and were returning with their plunder, when they met an English force, and, after a brief and feeble resistance, ran away, leaving their booty in the hands of the English.

At Waterloo 149,000 men were engaged, of whom 51,000 were killed, wounded or taken prisoners. In proportion to the number engaged Waterloo was one of the bloodiest battles of history, no less than 35 per cent. of the whole number being placed hors de combat. The British artillery fired 9,467 rounds, or one for every Frenchman killed in the battle.

The Battle of Dettingen, 1743, was the last in which an English King appeared in person on a battlefield. This was fought by the English against the French, in behalf of Maria Theresa, of Austria. The King was George II., who proved himself a valiant little man, and at the peril of his life led the troops against the enemy and won a victory.

The best burglar-proof safes are made of alternate layers of hard and soft metal which are welded together. This combination will not yield to either drill or sledge hammer.

Poets' Corner.

The Lawyer.

BY JOHN IMBIE, TORONTO, CAN.
Who pleads his case "against wind and tide,
And swings his robe from side to side,
As proud as any new-made bride?
The consequential Lawyer!

Who loves his client and his brief,
Yet who expounds beyond belief,
Till all around gasp for relief,
From the long-winded Lawyer!

Who gathers evidence with care,
And knows how best to "split a hair,"
That makes the honest Judge to stare!
The cute and cunning Lawyer!

Who knows the merits of each case,
Defines the motive, time and place,
Cross-questions witness face to face!
The cool, clear-headed Lawyer!

Who looks just spoiling for a fight,
To right a wrong or wrong a right,
Because he is a legal light!
The enterprising Lawyer!

How glad and happy does he feel
To win a case after appeal,
And makes defendat squirm and squeal
At costs from plaintiff's Lawyer!

To say that Justice must be blind
Is but a libel most unkind,—
She swings a sword in front, behind,
To scare both Judge and Lawyer!

He helps us in our time of need,
From cruel wrong or faulty deed,—
Let's not forget he has to feed—
Fee well your faithful Lawyer.

A Husking Song.

Husk away! As the ears we hurl,
Ribbed and beaded with gold and pearl,
Let our toil to tune keep time,
Proving boys we have ears for rhyme,
Singing gaily as birds at morn,
To music's measure we toss the corn.

Husk away, till close of day,
Then for a dance with the girls—hurrah!
Husk away! 'Tis the farmer's creed—
Friendly work should be done with speed;
Neighborly hearts to fingers spy
Lend a vigor that makes things fly.

Zeal of friendship and frolic born
Makes quick work with a neighbor's corn,
Husk away, till close of day,
Then for the fiddle and fun—hurrah!

Husk away! In our harbors wait
Goody ships for their perils freight—
Waits the housewife for fresh ground meal
Wait we all for the sweet papaw,
Crowning dish of our feast of corn,
Husk away, till close of day,
Then for frolic and fun—hurrah!

Husk away! In the rosy west
Sinks the glowing sun to rest;
Ere the shadows of twilight gray
Darken the face of the dying day,
From its scabbard the last ear torn
Shall cap upon hillock of shining corn.
Husk away! The time for play
Is close at hand, then for sport—hurrah!

Love and Life.

Sweet! we were happy, you and I,
Ere words of warfare came between;
Ere storms of passion swept our sky,
That all so blue and bright had been,
But like a mad stream rushing,
Its vernal banks o'erplashing,
Our sword-like speech came flashing,
And Sundered all between.

Love! it was as heavens are
Upon a clear and cloudless night,
When every golden, gleaming star
That earthward smiles is shining bright,
But peace afar was driven,
By jealous doubts riven,
Till love's serenest heaven,
Was turned to darkest night.

Life! it was sweet and free from care,
For love, and faith in you, were life,
And both in you seemed doubly fair,
Who were with double fairness life,
But from the wordy shower
Of doubt and anger's hour
Sprang forth a bitter flower
To poison love and life.

Sleep Sweet.

Sleep sweet within this quiet room
Oh, thou, whose'er thou art,
And let no mournful yesterday
Disturb thy peaceful heart.

Nor let to-morrow scare thy rest
With dreams of coming ill,
Thy Maker is thy charest friend,
His love surrounds thee still.

Forget thyself and all the world,
Put out each feverish light;
The stars are watching overhead,
Sleep sweet—Good-night! Good-night!

And He Got Two Fair Fares.

Lady (to cabman)—"We can't ride,
Crowded into a cab, we are sure to crush
our sleeves!"



Cabman—"O, that's provided for, madam! My cab has sleeve protectors constructed on the harmonica principle. When they are drawn out you have plenty of room side by side!"

Dot's Theory.

Little Dick—"Why is women wearing vests like men?"
Little Dot—"Vests has a strap and buckle behind, you know, and I 'pects the womens wants to lace themselves up like the men do."

The Only Course.

Son (reading)—"There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." What kind of a tide does that mean?"
Practical Father—"Tied down to business."

According to London Electricity, a Mr. Hill, of Manchester, who seems to have invented a number of curious contrivances, has lately devised an electrical parrot teacher, which is made up of a phonograph, a motor, an electro-magnet and a battery.