

A TROUBLESOME LADY.

CHAPTER II.

Though fifty miles from a railroad, the valley of the Troublesome was well settled by ranchmen, and the little village of Parkville, a few miles from Oliver's cabin, was the meeting place for a large section of country. Here gathered miners from the distant peaks, prospectors, cow-boys and sheep-herders from ranches, with the drift around such a place, gamblers and men with no visible means of support. In the rough mob that congregated in the two saloons at Parkville Oliver often saw the Frenchman. He was generally intoxicated, always the wildest of the merry-makers. He met him and Louis riding late at night at a mad pace with other vagabonds invited from the town, and he heard of orgies at De Restaud's home that reeked of city slums. Oliver himself never ventured towards De Restaud's house; the road was a private one, and he had no wish to come in contact with the owner. Sometimes he pitied the young wife when he thought of her, but as the days wore on her image faded. He had never mentioned her but the once to Doctor John, yet he hoped before he went away from the Troublesome to see her again. He had promised to be her friend.

Mike had told him the story in the valley was that she had come to Colorado Springs with a consumptive mother, and that the Frenchman, who was more careful then, and boarded at the hotel with them, wormed himself into the mother's confidence to such an extent that on her death-bed she desired to leave her daughter in De Restaud's care and prevailed upon her to be married then. A sentimental little creature like the girl could not refuse; Oliver had an uncomfortable feeling that she would be too easily led. De Restaud had brought his wife to the lonely ranch after her mother's death, and had kept her a prisoner. He was madly jealous of her, his crazed brain imagining all sorts of things she never dreamed of doing. Then it was also thought that, as he had entire control of her money, he kept her away from her friends for fear they might question his guardianship.

Oliver was thinking of her one night two weeks after his strange visit. He was alone by the fire, for Doctor John had gone to see the sick wife of a ranchman; the doctor said he felt the errand hopeless, as the man had told his wife's condition, but if they thought he might help he would go.

"He is a good old chap," Oliver said, aloud. The shepherd dog, thinking the compliment intended for him, gently thumped his tail on the floor. "There's his gawn and cap; he'll make an old guy of himself because his old landlady made them for him. I wish I had told him more about the girl at the ranch; he might have suggested something. Perhaps she can't get letters to her old aunt. If half the stories I hear are true, she ought never to stay there. The man is crazy."

Mac whined uneasily, and went to the door, standing listening, his head down. "Watching for the doctor, Mac? He won't be back for hours yet. Hark!" The dog growled, then barked loudly. There was the sound of hurrying footsteps on the gravel ground, and the door was opened without ceremony. In her yellow gown, bareheaded and dust-stained, her little dog held to her breast, De Restaud's wife staggered into the room, her face ghastly in its pallor, her eyes red with weeping, even the dog cowering with fright and pain.

"My God!" cried Oliver, leaping to his feet. "Is he out there?"

"No, no; I am alone."

"Child, how could you come here? how could you come?" he cried, vexedly. "Why, would murder you, if he knew?"

"Don't send me away!" she screamed, pleading, please, Mr. Oliver! I thought all the way you were kind and would help me. Look at the marks on my throat; he choked me; and there are welts on my arms, paining me dreadfully; and he—he kicked my dog. I think his leg is broken. Don't mind me. Look at Skye; is he badly hurt?"

Oliver took the shivering little beast in his arms.

"Only bruised," he said, gently; "but you—" He was sick with the horror of it! to strike that child! "You look so ill. Sit here in the big chair. Indeed you shall not go back; Doctor John and I will take care of that; and if he comes, you know," with that sweet smile of his, "your husband is a little man."

"I don't know what I did," she said, dazedly. "Maybe because I rode my pony down past here, and Louis told him, or Arnette. He was drunk and ugly when he struck me and kicked Skye out of the way. Skye tried to bite him, and I interfered. Then I think I fainted, for I woke on my bed all hurt and bewildered. Arnette came creeping in, sort of soared, and said he was sorry and had gone off to the village, but I pushed her out and locked the door. When he came back and they were playing cards I climbed down over the roof and ran here across the fields, not in the road, a long, dreadful way. Now you seem as if you were sorry I came!" She reached down, lifted her dog to her lap, and hid her face in its coat.

"I only cared for your sake," he answered, softly. When she bent her head he could see the cruel marks on her throat, and she still sobbed as she spoke. Was ever man so placed? He almost wished the coward who had struck her would come, that he could meet him; then reason told him he had no right to settle this woman's quarrel. He wished she wore his sister; but did he in his heart? How girlish and fair she was in the firelit room! For a moment a fierce desire to keep her there, to defend her, swept over him. Then he said, almost coldly,—

"Will they not miss you, Mrs. de Restaud?"

"Not that!" she cried, piteously. "Call me Minny. I don't want to hear his name! He never comes to my room when he has them there, you know, and he has told me never to open my door; so I am safe until morning. I prayed all the way you'd be here and alone. I knew you could tell me how to get to the railroad. I saw away across the hills your light, and how I ran there! I knew your dog would not hurt me, but I was afraid of cows; there were some lying down, and they got up as I ran past, and I screamed right out, I was so scared. I watched you sitting here through the window, your dog at your feet. You looked so good and kind, I felt I could go right in and tell you; perhaps you had a sister who

died, or some one you loved; you would hate to think they should go back to that dreadful place, and you would think of me alone and friendless, and help me."

She went to him and clung to his arm, trembling and sobbing. "You will not send me back? You will not send me back?" "You know I will not; but what shall I do, if any one should see you here? Don't cry like that; I can't think what to do. Try to be brave."

She lifted her tear-wet face. "If you knew my life for two years, Mr. Oliver, you would think I had been brave. It is not fear that makes me cry now, only that you are kind and there is some one in the wide world who will help me."

"Now sit down again," he said, drawing the chair up for her. "Let us plan what to do. Where is your aunt now?"

"In Newcastle, Maine, my dear old home. She is my father's sister, and lives there all alone. She was out to visit me, but she and Henri quarrelled; she is a great big woman, and she slapped him—oh, I was so glad!" vindictively,—"and he just went into fits about it, the insult to the family honor. She thought, though, because I was married I must make the best of things; she's a member of the Orthodox church back there, and they are very particular. I thought you could take me to the railroad and lead me the money to pay my fare; he has all my money, you know, and never gives me any,—for fear, I suppose, I would run away. But Aunt Hannah will pay you; she's awfully honest, but she wants her due to the last farthing; that's New England, you know."

She half smiled, and leaned back in the chair comfortably. The ridiculous dog was fast asleep after his trials. Oliver thought it not unlikely Mrs. de Restaud would take a nap too.

He went swiftly and woke up Mike and sent him for his horses and the buckboard. Mike looked out of the corner of his eye at the young woman; he knew who she was, for he was an observing youth, and he whistled softly to himself while he harnessed the mettlesome horses. Oliver saw the look, and felt the first cold water of the world's criticism.

"Now, the money question need not bother you at all," he said, coming back to her side. "You see, I'm a well-to-do old bachelor, with no demands upon me. When you get to Maine you send it back or not, just as you please. I owe you something for that supper, you know."

"That supper you had to gobble for fear of Henri? Wasn't it funny?"

"A case of boy and frogs; what was fun to you was death to me."

"You were not afraid a bit," she said, looking up with admiring eyes. "I have thought of you so much since that day, and I always pictured you afraid of nothing and doing all sorts of brave acts."

Oliver had a very uncomfortable feeling that he was decidedly afraid this moment of what the world would say. He could even fancy Doctor John's cool incredulous glance, and his "Craig, haven't you had lessons enough in the past?" and "It's a dangerous path, old boy."

"You are very kind to think of me at all," he said distantly. "And, now, haven't you a hat?"

"No, nor a shawl. I'll be a queer-looking traveller."

"That Turkish dressing-gown of the doctor's,—could that be used as an ulster?"

"It might, by a lunatic. Perhaps I could play that," she said hopefully.

"Leave that for me, Mrs. Minny," laughed Oliver; "Doctor John will think after this I need not play it. That cap of his,—he don't look human in it, but you might try."

"I have been looking at it. Does it do?" putting it coquettishly over her curls.

"Very becoming. You could be eccentric, you know, and prefer to make your own hats; for that has a home-made look. There, I believe he has a shawl. Doctor John is a regular old maid, luckily for us."

He brought her a thick gray shawl, which he draped over her shoulders. It quite covered her, and she looked very small and odd.

"You look like a child in its big sister's clothes," Oliver said, abruptly leaving her. He was not made of iron, and she kept looking at him with happy affectionate eyes. "Haven't you a shawl-pin?"

"How could I, when I had no shawl?" she laughed. "Do you think women are pin-cushions?"

He departed and rummaged around in his room; then he returned in triumph with a diamond scarf-pin.

"Some woman gave me that atrocity; it will do well for the shawl."

"I am glad to take it away because a woman gave it to you. I hate to think of anybody else liking you. Is Doctor John a young man?"

Oliver thought she was either an experienced flirt or the most innocent of young persons, but her liking was so honest and apparent he felt the better for it.

"No, Mrs. Minny; he is an old chap, like me."

"I do not think you old," with a tender glance. "Besides, I'm twenty myself."

He put on his overcoat in silence, and turned out the lamp. "Must the dog go?" he asked, resignedly.

"Of course. I would die without him. Mike was waiting with the horses."

"Where will I be after tellin' the doctor you've gone, sor?" he asked, calmly as if a midnight elopement was not unusual.

"Tell him," said Oliver, thoughtfully, "that Mrs. de Restaud came to me for assistance to get to the railroad, and I took her there; there was nothing else to do. He must say nothing if De Restaud comes, and keep him from finding out, if possible, that I helped his wife. I trust to your Irish wit, Mike, to send him away from the cabin in the dark. If I can make it I will be back here by noon to-morrow."

"The greaser livin' forenaint the wather-tank have a good horse, sor," said Mike, as he cautiously released the horses' heads and they started down the road on a gallop.

oats and a city stable. Mrs. de Restaud as the buckboard swung around often touched him; she caught his arm once with a little cry as they plunged into a hollow; but he talked distantly of her journey, restraining any affectionate confidences on her part with references to the absent Aunt Hannah.

She would go to Colorado Springs; the train passed through there; she had a friend,—a poor woman—well, their washerwoman when she and mamma lived there that winter; and this washerwoman was really a nice lady, who could buy her some proper clothes.

"But the money!" she cried, in dismay. "Have you got any with you?"

They were going up a hill, the horses panting heavily. Oliver took a roll of bills and put them in her hand. As his fingers met hers, every nerve in his frame thrilled.

"This seems a great deal," she said, timidly. "Perhaps Aunt Hannah would not like to pay so much."

"You need not spend it all, Mrs. Minny, then; and, besides, the bills are small; that's what makes them seem so small. Now please put them carefully in your pocket, and don't let the dog chew them."

She laughed merrily. "Of course not, you goose! Oh, this ride is lovely! I never saw horses go so fast. Even if he should follow you you would not let him take me."

She clung to his arm then, but he freed himself gently.

"I have to drive, you know," he said, coldly. He meant to do or to say nothing that the whole world should not know, but it was very hard to be distant, she seemed such a child. He felt she cowered away from him at his words, hurt and frightened, but he forced himself to be silent. At last she said, timidly,—

"I know you hate me; and I seem to realize all at once you are almost a stranger; and I have asked of you more than one should ever require from an old, old friend."

"Please, Mrs. Minny, don't. I am silent because I'm thinking of your journey, if I should miss the train, if the washerwoman should be dead or moved,—for washerwomen are migratory,—if even Aunt Hannah should fail you."

"But the town will be there, and Mr. Perkins, the depot-master, is a neighbor; his wife takes care of Aunt Hannah's cat and parrot when she goes visiting."

"That, of course, alters things."

"The only thing I fear from Aunt Hannah," she said, dubiously, "is a long moral lecture about the duties of married women and their having chosen a path—she says parth; they do down there—and ought to walk in it. She wouldn't let me run away with her."

"Show her your bruises," Oliver said hoarsely.

"I will; for she told me if he struck me I could come to her; and sometimes, honestly, Mr. Oliver, I used to tease him so he would and I might have my chance."

Oliver whistled softly under his breath; he would not have liked Doctor John to hear that speech. "You must not tell her, he said, quickly, "about this ride and coming to my house."

"Why not? I would like her to know how good you were."

There was no need, but he lashed his horses angrily; then he said, curtly, "I am so sorry you cannot understand. Could you explain it satisfactorily to Mr. de Restaud?"

"How cross you are! and I know you look just as you did when I talked mean about him,—a sort of disgusted impatience. But he is not a reasonable being. Other people may be."

"Would you have gone to those amiable friends of his for assistance to get to the railroad?"

"Of course not. You know that."

"Well, how is the world to know that I am any better?"

"I suppose being a lawyer makes you so smart," she said, in a melancholy tone; she assured her dog in a whisper he was the only being who loved her, her only friend; that she was silly and frivolous, Aunt Hannah said, and seemed to be a great trouble to mere strangers of good dispositions. Oliver said never a word; a little smile curved his lips, but he did not turn his head. Soon she grew quiet, and her head dropped against his shoulder, the soft wind lifting her curls to blow across his cheek. The dog, ornamented with the doctor's cap, slept in her lap.

Across the level land before them crept the gray glimmer of the dawn. Rose-colored light flamed in the far east, reflecting on the new snow on distant mountain-peaks, Prairie-dogs hopped out of their holes and sat on their hind legs discussing local politics and happenings, the bill to abolish free rents for rattlesnakes, and the extortions of horned owls. The Skye terrier disgustfully flung off the doctor's cap and barked angrily at the small dogs. Mrs. de Restaud lifted her head with a little start, blushed and slapped the Skye terrier.

"Do be quiet, Skye,—I am afraid I tired you, Mr. Oliver."

He would have liked to say a sweet thing to her,—to most women he would,—but his role now was that of benevolent friend; so he only answered vaguely, "Not at all, as if he did not know to what she referred. The horses dragged themselves wearily forward; it was six o'clock, and they had come fifty miles over a difficult road in less than seven hours. Two parallel lines of iron stretched far in the distance; the clumsy outline of a water-tank loomed up just ahead. The goal was reached, and away in the north a ribbon of smoke outlined on the sky proclaimed the coming train. Oliver lifted Mrs. de Restaud down. Skye rushed madly to the hole of a venturesome prairie dog who had taken up a residence near the tank and was out enjoying the morning air. The terrier found only a vanishing, and vented his annoyance at this and all the other vagrant dogs in shrill barks. His mistress was vastly amused; the strangeness of her undertaking had quite gone out of her head.

Oliver, in some concern, gave her advice regarding her journey; he was uncertain of his horses about the train, and had to stand by their heads; so Mrs. Minny frisked about with her dog, entirely confident her difficulties were over.

"You must send me word to Denver when you get to Maine," he said, "and be sure and make no acquaintances on the cars."

"One would think I was just out of boarding-school."

"The primary department," he said, crossly. "I wish you would be reasonable and listen a moment. I shall tell the conductor you are one of a camping-party and

your mother is ill at Colorado Springs,—that you had to leave in such a hurry to catch the train; you had no time to get ready. If I must tell wrong stories for you Mrs. Minny, please don't make me out in a lie the first thing."

"How good you are!" she said, softly. "I shall never, never forget what you have done for me. I shall say to myself, Minny you may be frivolous,—Aunt Hannah says so,—but one big handsome man is your friend and always will be."

"Always, Mrs. Minny, to the end of my life."

The rush of the near train terrified his horses almost beyond control, and he was obliged to send her for the conductor when the train stopped for water. The obliging official showed no surprise at Oliver's ingenious story; he was used to camping-parties. He imparted the welcome news that the state-room was vacant,—she could have that,—and accepted two fine cigars.

"My daughter is unused to travelling alone," Oliver said, gravely; "so you will telegraph for a carriage to meet her at the Springs, and see that she gets out at the right place?"

The conductor would be very happy to oblige. Then the young lady asked meekly if a dog, a very little one, might also ride in the state-room.

"He might," said the official, "if hidden under a shawl; for if this precaution is not taken, on the next trip all the women in the train will be bringing along their dogs. And I guess it's time to get aboard."

"Good-by," said Oliver, holding out his hand.

Mrs. Minny picked up her dog; with it under one arm, she took Oliver's hand, reached up, and shamelessly kissed him, a ghost of a kiss touching his cheek.

"Good-by, papa," she called, running to the car, and from the step waved farewell until the train vanished in the distance.

Oliver, as he drove along the road by the track in search of the Mexican who had the good horse, was almost dazed. He could not forget that farewell. He was haunted by the presence of the little lady of the Troublesome. He had not retraced the kiss,—well, there was no time,—but how thoughtless, in front of the train! and was there ever another woman like her? He had never seen one. Trying as she was all that long way, could any man have played the role of honest friend better? "Not even Doctor John," said Oliver.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A DARING EXPERIMENT.

Morphine Taken With Impunity.

Dr. William Moor of New York, discovered that permanganate of potash was an absolute antidote for morphine poisoning. At a meeting of his brethren he propounded his theory, and proposed to prove it by taking what ordinarily would prove a fatal dose of morphine, and then cancel its effects by swallowing the antidote. The medical men present endeavored to dissuade him from so risky an experiment, pointing out that it could be quite as convincingly demonstrated on some of the lower animals. However correct the theory might be shown in a glass that permanganate of potash was capable of destroying the fatal properties of morphine, there was a possibility that the chemical contents of the stomach might interfere with its successful working and lead to fatal results.

Dr. Moor was not inclined to listen to the fears of his fellow-practitioners. They, on the other hand, desired to wash their hands of any responsibility, and passed a resolution to that effect, and refused to allow the chemist of the society to measure out the poison. Some of the gentlemen went so far as to personally implore Dr. Moor not to persist in his rash experiment, but he assured them that he had the utmost confidence that there was no danger.

He measured himself out three grains of morphine, three times as much as is necessary to produce death. The deadly drug was put in a spoonful of water and then swallowed. It was a most dramatic moment. Two of the spectators, unable to bear the tenseness of feeling, left the room, while the others looked on spellbound. Dr. Moor had his antidote ready. His theory is that for each grain of morphine a grain of the permanganate of potash is required to be taken. To make assurance doubly sure however, the daring experimentalist partook of four grains. About thirty seconds elapsed between the two doses. The physicians regarded Dr. Moor with interest. He remained calm and cheerful. As time went on, the deadly languor that usually follows the taking of morphine did not ensue, and, as much to the surprise as to the relief of all, it was recognized that Dr. Moor had discovered an absolute antidote. The matter is attracting a great deal of attention among physicians.

A DESTITUTE ENGLISHMAN.

He Could Not Live at Home after being in Canada, so Returned Here, but is Out of Work.

A Vancouver despatch says:—Among the citizens of Vancouver there is little, if any, distress this winter, but the unemployed are flocking in daily from the Sound, and during the winter months there is nothing for them to do. One instance will illustrate a hundred. Your correspondent's attention was called to the destitute condition of a young Englishman named Baker. He was asked: "Why are you not working?" He replied: "Can't get any work to do. Am an Englishman, strong, healthy, good education; have been employed as stenographer and typist in offices all my life. I read a pamphlet about farming in Canada, and it turned my head. I came to Canada and was engaged for a short time in an office in shorthand work. I resigned to seek employment on a farm. I didn't get it and was obliged to return home. Well, an Englishman who has once become accustomed to the freedom and newness of Canada cannot contentedly settle in England again. I soon returned, this time to San Francisco. I found thousands out of work there, and thousands coming. The more soup kitchens they started the more unemployed flocked into the city. I came to Victoria strapped and sold all my clothes but what I had on my back. From there I drifted to Vancouver. My money gave out, all but a few pence. I had been sleeping in buildings under construction and living on bread alone for five days, until the ladies of the Relief Committee found me."

CROSSING THE CHANNEL.

An Englishman Would Rather Go to the Cape Any Time.

It has always struck me, writes Luke Sharp, in the Detroit Free Press, as rather funny, that while England collectively claims to rule the waves, all Englishmen individually hate to cross the channel. He thinks nothing of taking a voyage to the Cape, to India, to Australia, to America or any other part of the world, but every Englishman abhors the channel.

There are five methods of crossing the channel from England to the continent, and I name them, beginning with the shortest and ending with the longest. First, from Dover to Calais; second from Folkestone to Boulogne; third, from Newhaven to Dieppe; fourth, from Dover to Ostend, and fifth, from Southampton to Havre or St. Malo.

The Dover-Calais route is often unreasonably long because of the wretched boats that sometimes make the crossing. A famous route is a standing exemplification of the greatest patience of Englishmen. It is the highest-priced route, and the one that has the worst boats. I crossed the other Sunday in a little tub that would not be allowed to act as a ferry boat on the Detroit river. Some of the boats crossing from Calais to Dover are not so bad, but in taking a ticket a man never knows whether he is to cross in a tub or in one of the better boats. The company has the monopoly and the patient public stand it. When one thinks of a Fall River line from New York to Fall River or Newport, and the comfort, elegance and luxury of the boats, as well as the cheapness of the fare from the New York to Boston, one wonders at the patience of the Englishman who puts up with such wretched accommodation and pays such a high price for it.

The line between London and Paris ought to be one of the most valuable routes in the world, and doubtless it would be, if it were properly managed. As it is, the Dover-Calais route is a disgrace to civilization, and, in my opinion, the second worst of those crossing the channel.

The Boulogne and Folkestone route I should class as the best. The boats are good, and they practically consume but little more than is taken by going via Dover and Calais. Then, too, Boulogne is a picturesque town, while Calais is a flat, stale and unprofitable village, and not worth looking at.

The worst route of all is that between Newhaven and Dieppe. The steamers are reasonably large and powerful, but the first-class accommodation on them is beneath contempt. Half the night is consumed in making the crossing and no adequate accommodation is provided for even the first-class passenger. He is compelled to sleep on a series of shelves in one large cabin, unless he is willing to pay an exorbitant price for a stateroom holding four persons, and if one person alone occupies a stateroom he has to pay four prices for it. But the staterooms are few, and often when a man is willing to pay the exorbitant charge he is compelled to rest his weary head on the benches and greasy plush pillows provided in the main cabin.

The boats, too, have an uncomfortable habit of missing the tide and keeping the passengers out in the channel until the water is deep enough in the harbor to allow them to get in, and as this usually happens when a storm is on, the experience of lying to, in a rough sea in sight of port, is one of the most exasperating things that a man can be called upon to endure.

The Southampton route to Havre or St. Malo is really a most comfortable trip for one who does not mind a night voyage. The boats are the largest and most powerful on the channel. Two first-class cabins are provided, and those who wish it can get a comfortable sleeping bunk, similar to those in a Pullman car, where they can undress comfortably and get a good night's sleep, and this without any extra charge above first-class fare. Unfortunately, as a Paris route, the boats run only three times a week. If they ran every night I am convinced that this would be a most popular road to Paris, for the journey from London to Southampton is but two hours by good trains, and the journey from Havre to Paris is the shortest and most interesting, as it passes along the Seine through the most picturesque scenery of northern France. It is the route taken by French transatlantic travelers to reach Paris. Compared with the long and uninteresting route from Calais to Paris the route from Havre is much to be preferred.

The line of boats running from Dover to Ostend belongs to the Belgian government, and is the only line crossing the channel that is not English. The boats are splendid vessels, Clyde-built and powerful, and they do the journey in about four hours. They trouble with the Ostend boats, however, is that they are too big for the men who work them. The Belgian engineers, captains and officers are apparently not the men to operate such fine steamers. More accidents occur on the Dover-Ostend line than on any other route crossing the channel, although some very serious disasters have happened on the French coast near Dieppe, as, for instance, when the fine steamer Victoria was lost through the negligence of the Frenchman who operated the fog signal on that iron-bound coast. The signalman went to bed, and the fog arose while he was asleep. His wife woke him when the fog came up, and he started a fire under the boiler, which supplied steam for the fog-whistle, but with the first toot of the horn the steamer Victoria went on the rocks, and a number of her passengers were drowned in attempting to reach the land.

For the American passengers coming by the Inman line, or the North German Lloy to Southampton, the route by Havre is the best to Paris. From London the best route is undoubtedly that by Folkestone and Boulogne.

Her Part.

Perhaps there is no man who needs a good wife more than the editor of a newspaper. It is pleasant, therefore, to find the following in an exchange: "Your husband is the editor of the Bugle I believe," said a neighbor who had dropped in for a friendly call.

"Yes."

"And as you have no family, and have considerable leisure on your hands, you assist him now and then in his editorial work, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes," answered the brisk little woman, hiding her berry-stained fingers under her apron, "I edit nearly all his inside matter."