UNDER A CLOUD

THRILLING TALE OF HUMAN LIFE.

CHAPTER XLIII. THE REVELATION.

"It was the act of a woman, Stratton, said Brettison with an apologetic smile, "but I am only a weak old man, and never weaker than in those moments.

"I could not have been there a moment, and I must have glided down, or you would have heard me. I came to and for a moment could not understand why I was there. Then all came back with overwhelmlook through.

"You were returning from the door, and the next moment were standing by the body, with the pistol in your hand, apparently unharmed; and then, to my horror, weapon upon yourselt; but to my intense relief I saw you thrust it into your pocket, and in utter despair began to unfasten the door enemy was dead. then stand by the body as if reft of sense, utterly helpless as to what course to pursue. While sharing your misery I fornerving myself for the encounter I was about to come round, but your looks chaincountenance and reading its meaning, as bedroom like a drunken man, and dropped enough. ing down. Then carefully closing both, 'Heaven, I thank thee! My poor lad is ingly put me aside. you went to the window to peer out furtively from the side of the blind, as if to make out whether by any possibility anyone could have overlooked the scene.

"I knew that you had some plan in mind by your actions, and it rapidly dawned on me what it was, as, like one suffering from nightmare I stood watching, with the cold sweat gathering on my face, as I saw you go toward the other side of the areplace, come into right again and take a chair in the same direction.

hold open the door, and now came the hor- he continued. ror of the scene."

Stratton uttered a low groan as he sat Brettison went on:

dilemma by concealing the body, and I looked on, speechless with horror, as I saw you stoop to seize the arms, droop forward, and fall across the chest."

"I was faint from my hurt," said Stratton, almost in a whisper.

"But you rose directly, and I saw you drag the body toward the door of your bathroom, and, as if drawn there to know the rest, I came back here and stood listening by that loose panel, where the scene stood out as vividly before me as if I were in the same room.

Stratton groaned, while, excited by his

narration, Brettison went on: "You were evidently faint still, and weak, for I heard you stop again and again, only to resume the dreadful task of dragging the body along the floor, till at last you stood within a few feet of me, and I could hear your labored breathing for a few startled from his seat. minutes, followed by a sound that knew to be the throwing back of the bath hid; and then followed what you know-that horrible struggle with a weight with which you were not fit to cope. A minute later the lid was closed and you shut and locked on : the bath closet door, while I sat down, faint and exhausted, to try and think out what I should do.

had locked; and I shuddered as I thought | child. of what that place contained, and how easily the discovery might follow.

ing plainly to me.

"At times you were angry, at o her times Guest spoke loudly, and twice over he husband! Living? Great Heavens!" had the outer door open to talk to people on the landing.

"Those were my opportunities, and, helped by strength I did not think I posthrough the door and laid him there."

He pointed to the heavy rug in front of act." the fireplace, and, as if fascinated, Stratton gazed at the spot.

the moment; I had but to close the door, and his faculties and made the effort of following secure itslightly. I left the proper fastening his old friend's narrative almost beyond his up till a future time, and I'll tell you that powers. now-the fastening up took place at the 'I closed that door at once, in dread time when you working shudderingly in now lest the moans should have heard; the dark, taking in cans of spirit, and and, able to grasp the position, I pouring them g rgling and echoing into could work cooly enough. Going down on the bath ; and I heard all this, and, the final my kne s with sponge and basin, I soon screwing down of the lid and screwing up found that there was a small orifice behind of your door. I tell you I heard it ali, boy, the right ear. This had bled freely, but it and still worked on in your service."

"Yes. Why did I do all this? Did I not next to find its place of exit. know that in spite of all your scheming and "There was none. The bullet was, in ton excitedly. precautions, sooner or later the discovery all probability, still in the head. must be made. Was I to let you live on with 'He meaned a little as I bathed away that horror waiting always at your elbow, all traces of the injury; and when I had manner changed. His face had lighted up driving you mad with dread, as I felt it done, save that tiny orifice just behind the at Brettison's announcement, for the was for your sake, boy, that I fought as I ear, there was nothing to show that he was knowledge that he was not answerable for did, and brought your victim out here." | not sleeping, for the face was quite com- the convict's death-that he had not slain "Tell me at once what you did-with posed.

racked my brains for hours and evoked

body to the hiding-place in there. could do no more. It was madness to keep a cab, and had myself driven to the house the poor wretch where I had laid him; of an old servant, who was a pensioner of the grave with that knowledge always on discovery might come at any time. Once I mine in South London. She was just about my brain. You have spared me that. thought of leaving him there and going to retire for the night, but readily made away myself-disappearing, as it were, from preparations for the reception of an unforing force, and I crept back to the panel to the world. I could keep my chambers tunate friend of mine who had met with an untouched for months-perhaps years-by accident, while I hurried back, discharged sending a check to the agent from time to my cab, took a fresh one-the man, for time. But I knew that this must end in ample pay, being willing enough to underdiscovery. An unforeseen event might take my task, and soon found for me a result in the chambers being opened and strong helper. searched, and, in all probability, the dead it seemed as if you were about to use the might take revenge and prove our betrayer and, on taking the man up with me, left unexpected." -you, as a naturalist, know how.

again, drew it open, listened, and all was still. You and Guest were, in all probabi- him, on a lounge, and I returned to the miracle. Come, I shall see you and Myra

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE REVELATION CONTINUED -A LIGHTNING STROKE.

The moment before these last words escaped from Brettison's lips Stratton had been sitting there with his elbows on the table, his face worn, haggard, and full of horror and disgust; but now the interest in his old friend's statement returned, and he watched him eagerly. The explanation old servant's house. was comi g at last. The half-cynical, in-"I soon divined, though, that it was to different manner, too, had passed away, as

trembling and agitated as I had never been there with his face buried in his hands, and | before, to stoop down at once and then go upon one knee there—there on the "I was all clear to me now. You were rug. His head was just there, boy, and seeking for a way out of your terrible his face a little on one side, so that the profile of the vile scoundrel stood out, clearly cut, ag inst the background of dark chocolate wood."

Brettison's manner was now excited, his quite calmly, as if asleep.

assailed me-that I had been deceived- wished to convey it to him by words, that the door I had, in imagination, seen | "'A bad case, sir,' he said at last. passed one arm beneath the shoulders as our emment specialists in consultation? before, raised him a little, and once more there was a low moan."

"What?" cried Stratton wildly, as he

said Brettison; then, drawing a panting one feels that there can be none. Poor breath, as if the effort of recalling the fellow, his face tells the tale plainly enough. terrible scene, with its excitement, was Drink. Stimulus after stimulus till the almost more than he could bear, he went brandy, or whatever it is, ceases to have

think that he was alive, knowing that the effect more rapid. Yes, ceases to have its fear. It is cowardly to refuse. When shall sound might have been caused by the es- effect, and more is used. Then the digestive the meeting be ?" cape of a little air from the cavity of the powers break down, the over-goaded brain "I must have sat there for a long time, for chest. For a few minutes I was sure that leaps from its bounds, and we have the I was roused by the sound of voices in your this was so, and my hopes were all dashed delirium that ends in men feeling that life room, and I heard the scene that took place again. People have called me a learned is not worth living, and makes them suiciwith the admirai. I knew that you fainted, man, Malcolm; but, before a difficulty dal like this." and that Guest tried the door which you like that, I was a poor, helpless, ignorant "You remember the very words?"

"Mastering myself, though, at last, I ingly.

He sank back into his chair, staring widly; and then, in a hoarse whisper: "Go on !" he panted, "go on !"

"The way of escape was open widely sessed, I worked on, dragging the body out now," cried Brettison, reaching over to inch by inch, and lowering it down. A clutch his companion's wrist, "and I could dozen times over I felt that I must be see my way clearly. It was madness to heard, but you were both too intent upon attempt to move the body of a dead man yourselves, and your words often rose to a through the streets, boy-detection was quarrel on one side, and, as I said, at such | certain ; but to take a sick or injured man times I worked, till at last I bore the man | from one place to another was simplicity itself, and I breathed freely. I could

"Not dead-not dead !" muttered Stratton, who looked as if he had received some "The rest of the task was lighter for terrible men al blow, which had confused

had ceased; and, grasping at once that "In my service ?" said Stratton blankly. | the bullet had gone upward, I examined

"What to do next? Not a moment, I a tremendous weight, which had crushed "Let me tell you my own way. Old men felt, must be lost, if I wished to save his him down, suddenly removed; but, like a are tedicus, Stratton, and I am, I suppose, life; and, with a feeling of grim cynicism, a sudden, scathing flash, came the horror no exception to the rule. However, I will I asked myself whether I did. For I was of Myra's position once more. be brief, for I am torturing you, I fear. I in a dilemma. Ou one hand, if I saved! There was no selfishness in the feeling; er it was cigarettes or unrequited love.

him, it cleared you from what might de- his thoughts were solely of and for her. volve in a charge of murder; on the other The man still lived, and she was his wife hand, if I let him die, Myra would be free, -tied to an escaped convict, and at his

and some day-"No, no, impossible!" groaned Stratton. "Go on."

"I could not decide what I ought to do at first, for-I confess it--I was dragged | ing despair at his own helpless position. both ways; but I took the right road, Stratton.

"It was late, but it was a case of dozens of plans, but there was always some emergency, and the man's face helped me terrible obstacle in the way, and at last I to tell the tale I meant to tell. There was extended to him, and the two men sat, sat back here in utter despair, seeing the swollen nose and there were the pimply hand grasped in hand, silently for the space nothing but the plain fact before me-tnat | blotches of the man who drank. That was | of some minutes. your wisdom was greater than mine, and sufficient for me; and, with a strength of that the only way out of the difficult was which I did not believe myself capable, I the one you had chosen-to restore the dragged him by the shoulders into my bedroom and locked him in. Then, taking "It was miserably humiliating, but I my hat, I made my way out unseen, took

him in my room, while I went into the "I gave that up, then, like the rest, and, chamber, trembling lest I should find our

fellow I had brought up. I gave the man happy yet." "Going back to the hearthrug, sick and brandy, took a glass myself, and, before

with an eager, hunted look you went to fulness of my heart, though it was long erign for his pains, so he found no cause to wound?" the outer door, opened it, and stood look- before I could utter other words than - object; and when I offered to help laugh-

> "A bold, indifferent manner was all, I Stratton eagerly. felt, that was necessary; and fortune favored me, for we did not pass a soul, and the placing of an apparently tipsy man in a four-wheel cab was not novelty enough to excite the interest of passers by. I was the authorities?" quite right, I tell you; a bold, careless front carried all before it, and in a very few minutes I had left my chambers locked up, free to go yonder and make her life a burthe helper was on the box seat, and we den?" were rolled over Blackfriars Bridge to my

was tetched."

"The doctor came, saw the patient, and applying proper bandages to the wound, ery." while Barron lay perfectly insensible, only uttering a low moun now and then, as if he felt pain when touched ; otherwise he lay | your rule?"

words low and hearse, and his manner had . "And as the doctor busied himself he proved contagious; for Stratton's lips asked no questions; but, as if he were parted, and he leaned over toward the influenced by my thoughts as I stood by him, watching him and waiting to give him "For a few minutes I could do no more," a garble-there, a lying-version of the continued Brettison. "A horrible dread incident, he at last took the very view as I

open before me had closed again, and that can do no more now. The bullet is evident-I was once more shut in with the terrible ly deeply imbedded. I will not take the difficulty. But, nerving myself again, I risk of probing for it. Shall I get one of

"I shook my head.

" Fatal?' I said at last. "He shrugged his shoulders.

" ' Must speak plainly, sir,' he said. ' It "Wait patiently, and you shall hear," is of no use to talk of hope to a man when its effect. I knew one poor fellow who used "I lowered him again, not daring to to heat brandy over a spirit lamp to make its

said Stratton, looking at his friend wonder-

thrust my hand into his breast; but I "Word for word," said Brettison slowly, "But this time I had made up my mind could feel nothing. I fancied there was a "and always shall. I remember, too, the how to act; and, after stealing out to get pulsation, but could not tell but that it thrill of horror that ran through my nerves the necessary tools, I waited my time and might be caused by my own throbbing as he stood for a few moments with his the park of that city. This is little Laurine set to work. It was along task, for I had to arteries. I tried the wrists, and then, back to me, between me and the bed, bendwork and not make a sound; but the tearing open the collar of his shirt, thrust ing first over his patient, and then straightold fastening soon gave way, and I drew the my hand in there, and the pulsation was ening himself up and raising one arm-his door pen and stood shivering in the narrow plain now. More, I distinctly felt a throb, right-with the fist clenched, all but the place, with yours and Guest's words com- as a low moan once more escaped the man's index finger, which he passed over his shoulder to touch, with the point of the "Not dead?" gasped Stratton. "Her finger, the spot behind his own ear where the bullet had entered.

"For a few moments I did not understand his gesture ; then I grasped the fact, and followed his thoughts. He was, in imagination, holding a pistol to his head as he thought his patient must have held it when the trigger was drawn. He had completely taken my view that I wished to impart, and he was thinking of the inquest and the evidence he would have to give."

Stratton looked at him for a few mements with dilated eyes.

At last he spoke, for Brettison had become wrapped in thought, and sat gazing before him, as if seeing the whole horror Devany, who is the smallest bicyclist in once again.

words, "attend him-to the end; did he say-at the inquest -that it was suicide ?" start from his musings, and watching the of her which is given here shows what a effect of his words on his companion; "he roguish little face she has, and what a tended him, but James Dale, or Barron, did not die. He is living now."

CHAPTER XLV.

BRETTISON IS MYSTERIOUS.

"James Barron living now?" cried Strat-

"Thank Heaven!" But as the words left his lips his whole the husband of the woman he loved-was

mercy, unless Brettison had done his duty and handed him over to the authorities. But with his sympathetic feeling for her, there came over him a sense of overwhelm-

He passed his hand across his eyes, threw up his head, and seemed more like the old Malcolm Stratton, as he held out his hand to his friend, took that which was eagerly

Brettison was first to speak. "Then you think, in spite of all, I did

"I think you saved that man's life," said Stratton with a faint, sad smile upon his lip. "But for you I must have gone to can sleep without waking to think of that man's blood being on my hands."

"And there is hope for you yet," whispered Brettison earnestly.

"Where?" said Stratton mournfully. "In the other world?"

"Bah! Despairing at your age? Why, man, this life is full of change and surprise. "The rest was easy. I lied to them, Nothing comes to pass so often as the Stratton shook his head.

"What! Doubting, in the face of all I have told you just now? Why, man, my "But he was lying back as I had left news must have come upon you like a

now, I stayed there watching your wild by my emotion, I literally reeled into my delirium tremens, for the face was evidence and, thank God, I am once more a man-1 smoke!" free from the great horror of my life. Now, | "But you take such comfort in smoking," upon my knees by my pillow in the thank. ' My new companion was to have a sov- tell me. The man recovered from his she persisted.

"Yes," said Brettison, looking at Stratton curiously, "he is quite recovered from

"' Oh, I can carry him,' he said, 'like a | that; only much changed."

"Yes; not many hours since."

"Brettison!" "Yes? Why do you start like that?"

"Then you have not handed him over to up." "No. Why should I?"

"Man, you ask me that? You leave him

suffered enough?"

"Tell me where is the man. He has idiot. I am an idiot no longer." made his examination carefully, ending by been in your charge ever since his recov-

> "From the wound? Yes." "And he submits to your dictation-to

"Because he fears that you will give him to me; you shall not judge too hastily. Wait till you know all my reasons."

" Tell me them."

"Not now." "When then?"

"After you have seen James Barron." "Seen him? Meet that man again? cried Stratton, with a look of horror. "Yes."

"Impossible !" "No; it is my wish-my prayer. Come

with me and see him. Then you shall decide what shall be done; and I will give a fool. What is there to blame you you my word that I will follow out your about?" wishes to the letter." "You promise that?"

Brettison gave him his hand in token of his promise, and Stratton stood thinking for a moment or two.

"Yes," he said then, "I have no cause to "To-morrow."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Baby Bicyclist.

Out in San Francisco there may be seen any bright day a tiny figure on a tiny bicycle, scurrying along the roadways of



LITTLE LAURINE DEVANY, The smallest cyclist in the world.

the world. She is only three years old, a "And did he," said Stratton, in broken de r little girl, with fluffy yellow hair and "No," said Brettison, looking up with a it weighs only twelve pounds. The picture upon my lawyer !" chubby little sprite she is in her blouse and say it is something to remember, as those twinkling legs churn the pedals and the bright curls toss back from beneath the wind.

Quite a Surprise.

Why, good.

Great Scott! what's the matter with this pudding? She-Mercy ! how does it taste ?

Conflicting Symptoms.

Poor Cholly ! What did he die of ?

MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

"Mrs. Bowser," began Mr. Bowser the other evening as he laid aside his paper, "have you missed anything in particular to-night?"

"You haven't smoked since dinner and I was wondering if you didn't feel well," she

"No. I have not smoked since dinner, and I shall never smoke another cigar. I have been figuring, Mrs. Bowser-I have not only been figuring, but I have been to a doctor and had a long talk and learned something new."

"You are not going to give up smoking again? You know how it always affects you when you try to stop."

"I know nothing about it!" he stiffly replied. "I have never tried to give up smoking. If I had determined to abandon the habit I should have done so."

"But on twenty different occasions you -you"-

"Never mind what I have tried to do on twenty different occasions, Mrs. Bowser !" he interrupted, with a wave of his hand, " As I said before, I have been figuring. My cigar bill will average \$3 per week,' "But you enjoy smoking."

"That has nothing to do with the matter. Three dollars per week is \$156 per year. In the course of ten years I throw away about \$1,600. If I smoke for forty "Silence!" cried Stratton sternly. "Im- years, which is quite probable, I have got my intentions of seeking help; and in disgust, I stooped down to reverse my utilizing the help I had brought, purposely possible! All that is past. Brettison, I burned up the sum of \$7,000. Not only repulsive task, when, as I touched the body sprinkled the wounded man with spirit-a accept my fate in all thankfulness for what that, but I have meanwhile paid the docand half raised his head and shoulders from hint being sufficient to direct the helper's I know. If Myra and I ever meet again, tor's at least \$3,000 to cure the ills arising the floor, like a flash of lightening, the way thoughts into the channel that this person I can take her hand and look her calmly from the habit. There you have it, Mrs. ed me to the spot, and, utterly helpless out of the difficulty came. Then, overcome he was to help to the eyes. I know my position now, Bowser-10,000 big dollars gone up in

"What if I do?" he replied. "No man has a moral right to throw away \$10,000. Smoking is a vice-a habit. No man who is a man should let a habit make an idiot "You have seen him lately, then?" cried of him. I had a long talk with a doctor and he told me that smoking begot about forty different ailments of the human system. It also shortens human life by from five to ten years. My mind is fully made

" And you will quit smoking ?"

" I will quit."

" But can you ?" "Mrs. Bowser," he said as he arose and stood before her, with his thumbs in the "I did not say so," replied Brettison armholes of his vest, "I am a determined calmly. "Suppose I had handed the man man. There is no such word as 'can't' in "Here he was carried in, but old Mary over to the authorities, what then? The my vocabulary. I shall quit smoking. I shook her head at the scent of the spirits, news would have been in every paper of the have quit. The \$3 which I have heretofore but assisted willingly till my charge was convict's marvelous escape from death. | wasted, and worse than wasted, will here-"I came back to this very chair, Stratton, laid upon the bed, the cabman and his Pleasant reading for the Bourne Square after be handed to you every Saturday. It companion dismissed, and then the doctor | breakfast table. Surely that poor girl has | will buy your hats, hosiery and gloves. For the last fifteen years I have been an

"I wouldn't try to break off all at once," she replied, as he promenaded around the

"That's where my strength of character will come in Mrs. Bowser. No man can break off a habit by degrees. I have put my foot down, and there it will stay. I will conquer or die, and I don't expect to "No; he does not fear that. But listen die. As I had neglected to state, the doctor gave me something to take three times a day to remove the desire to smoke. I will now take the first dose. Have the girl bring me up a little water in a glass." "You-you won't blame me?" queried

Mrs. Bowser as she pressed the button. "Blame fiddlesticks! That's a nice way to encouage a husband to preserve his health and save money ! How can I blame you? I contract the habit of smoking ten cigars a day. I am a fool. I make up my mind to smoke no more. I get over being

"But every time you have tried it before you have-

"Never tried it before - never! I am now trying for the first and last time. Here goes for the dose. A.h.h! That instantly quiets the craving for the weed! Ten thousand dollars saved and ten years added to my life !"

Mrs. Bowser had no word of encourage ment. She had been through the mill about 20 times, and the result had always been the same. Mr. Bowser sat down again and tried to read, got up and wandered around the house, was moody and taciturn for the next two hours and when ready for bed complained of cramps and dizziness. He dropped to sleep soon after tumbling into bed, however, and it was midnight before his doleful sighs and groans aroused Mrs. Bowser. She lay quiet and let him go on and was not a bit surprised when he finally crept carefully out of bed, fumbled around in a drawer of his dresser for a cigar, and having lighted the weed sat down by the open window and puffed and grunted in his enjoyment.

"Mr. Bowser," she suddenly broke in on him, "you are a desperate man !" He gave a sudden start, but sank back in hopes she was talking in her sleep.

"You will conquer or die! For 15 years you have been an idiot !"

He was fairly caught, and for a minute he made no reply. Then he suddenly remembered that there was a loophole for escape, and he walked over to the bed and towered above her and said:

"Woman, were you silly enough to believe I didn's see through your perfidious scheme?"

"What perfidious scheme?" "Never you mind! It was as clear to me as daylight, and I would have been an idiot to fall into the trap! This is the last cirblue eyes. She rides a wheel that had hair that breaks the camel's back, Mrs. to be made especially for her, of course, and Bowser! To-morrow your lawyer can call

"But what for?" "To see about the divorce and alimony! I have reached the limit! That's all! Any bloomers. Those who have seen her ride further discussion can be confined to our

respective attorneys !" And having silenced and crushed Mrs. Bowser after the usual fashion he smoked Tam o' Shanter as she races before the three cigars in succession and tumbled back into bed with his good nature fully restored and a wish that it were morning, so he could keep right on smoking all day.

Useless.

Watts-I see that some one has invented an automatic cradle for rocking the baby. I wonder if it would be an infringement if a fellow were to get up an automatic spanking machine?

Potts- It wouldn't be an infringement, but neither would it sell. What satisfaction The doctors are not quite certain wheth- could an outraged parent get out of a mere machine?