

FATE'S INSTRUMENTS.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

George's "companions" were none other than the fussy clerk and the fat policeman. The female warder had vanished; and although there were some prison officials whose office dated from before Nelly Game's imprisonment, George felt that, unless his first two witnesses were favorable, it would be useless to press the matter, and did not at present enlist their services. Mr. Jennings, the Lincoln's Inn barrister, had proved utterly hopeless. George showed him the photograph. "I shouldn't have recognized it from Eve's," said Mr. Jennings; and George felt that he might, without duplicity, ignore such a useless witness.

Neaera laughed a little at the proposal when it was submitted to her, but expressed her willingness to consent to it. Gerald was almost angry with her for not being angry at the indignity.

"He goes too far, upon my word he does," he muttered.

"What does it matter, dear?" asked Neaera. "It will be rather fun."

Lord Tottlebury raised a hand in grave protest.

"My dear Neaera!" said he.

"Not much fun for George," Gerald remarked in grim triumph.

"I suppose Mr. Blodwell's chambers will do?" asked Lord Tottlebury. "It seems convenient."

But here Neaera, rather to his surprise, had her own views. She wasn't going down to musty chambers to be stared at—yes, Gerald, all lawyers stared—and taken for a beach-of-promise person, and generally besmirched with legal mire. No; nor she wouldn't have Mr. George Neston's spies in her house; nor would she put herself out the least about it.

"Then it must be in my house," said Lord Tottlebury.

Neaera acquiesced, merely adding that the valuables had better be locked up.

"And when? We had better say some afternoon, I suppose."

"I am engaged every afternoon for a fortnight."

"My dear," said Lord Tottlebury, "business must take precedence."

Neaera did not see it; but at last she made a suggestion. "I am dining with you en famille the day after tomorrow. Let them come then."

"That'll do," said George. "Ten minutes after dinner will settle the whole business."

Lord Tottlebury made no objection. George had suggested that a couple of other ladies should be present, to make the trial fairer; and it was decided to invite Isabel Bourne, and Miss Laura Pocklington, daughter of the great Mrs. Pocklington. Mrs. Pocklington would come with her daughter, and it was felt that her presence would add authority to the proceedings. Maud Neston was away; indeed, her absence had been thought desirable, pending the settlement of this unpleasant affair.

Lord Tottlebury always made the most of his chances of solemnity, and, if left to his own bent, would have invested the present occasion with an impressiveness not far short of a death sentence. But he was powerless in face of the determined frivolity with which Neaera treated the whole matter. Mrs. Pocklington found herself, apparently, invited to assist at a farce, instead of a melodrama, and with her famous tact at once recognized the situation; her elaborate playfulness sanctioned the hair-brained chatter of the girls, and made Gerald's fierce indignation seem disproportionate to the subject. Dinner passed in a whirl of jokes and gibes, George affording ample material; and afterwards the ladies, flushed with past laughter, and constantly yielding to fresh hilarity at Neaera's sallies, awaited the coming of George and his party with no diminution of gaiety.

A knock was heard at the door.

"Here are the minions of the law, Mrs. Witt!" cried Laura Pocklington. "Then I must prepare for the dungeon," said Neaera, and rearranging her hair before a mirror.

"It quite reminds me," said Mrs. Pocklington, "of the dear Queen of Scots."

Lord Tottlebury was, in spite of his pre-occupation, beginning to argue about the propriety of Mrs. Pocklington's epithet, when George was shown in. He looked weary, bored, disgusted. After shaking hands with Lord Tottlebury, he bowed generally to the room, and said:

"I propose to bring Mr. Jennings, the clerk, in first; then the policeman. It will be better they should come separately."

Lord Tottlebury nodded. Gerald had ostentatiously turned his back on his cousin. Mrs. Pocklington fanned herself with an air of amused protest, which the girls reproduced in a broader form. No one spoke, till Neaera herself said with a laugh:

"Arrange your effects as you please, Mr. Neston."

George looked at her. She was dressed with extraordinary richness, considering the occasion, her neck and arms, disclosed by her evening gown, glittered with diamonds; a circlet of the same stones adorned her golden hair, which was arranged in a lofty erection on her head. She met his look with derisive defiance, smiling in response to the sarcastic smile on his face. George's smile was called forth by the recognition of his opponent's tactics. Her choice of time and place had enabled her to call to her aid all the arts of millinery and the resources of wealth to dazzle and blind the eyes of those who sought to find in her the shabby draggle-tailed girl of eight years before. Old Mr. Jennings had come under strong protest. He was, he said, half blind eight years ago, and more than half now; he had seen hundreds of interesting young criminals and could no more recognize one from another than to-day's breakfast egg from yesterday week's; as for police photographs, everybody knew

they only darkened truth. Still he came, because George had constrained him.

Neaera, Isabel, and Laura Pocklington took their places side by side, Neaera on the right, leaning her arm on the chimney-piece, in her favorite pose of languid thoughtfulness; Isabel was next her. Lord Tottlebury met Mr. Jennings with cold civility, and gave him a chair. The old man wiped his spectacles and put them on. A pause ensued.

"George," said Lord Tottlebury, "I suppose you have explained?"

"Yes," said George. "Mr. Jennings, can you say whether any, and which, of the persons present is Nelly Game?"

Gerald turned round to watch the trial.

"Is the person suspected—supposed to be Nelly Game—in the room?" asked Mr. Jennings, with some surprise. He had expected to see a group of maid-servants.

"Certainly," said Lord Tottlebury, with a grim smile. And Mrs. Pocklington chuckled.

"Then I certainly can't," said Mr. Jennings. And there was an end of that, at an end no other than what George had expected. The fat policeman was his sheet-anchor.

The fat policeman, or to give him his proper name, Sergeant Stubbs, unlike Mr. Jennings, was enjoying himself. A trip to London gratis, with expenses on a liberal scale, and an identification at the end—could the heart of mortal constable desire more? Know the girl? Of course he would, among a thousand! It was his business to know people and he did not mean to fail, especially in the service of so considerate an employer. So he walked in confidently, sat himself down, and received his instructions with professional imperturbability.

The ladies stood and smiled at Stubbs. Stubbs sat and peered at the ladies, and, being a man at heart, thought they were a set of as likely girls as he'd ever seen; so he told Mrs. Stubbs afterwards. But which was Nelly Game?

"It isn't her in the middle," said Stubbs, at last.

"Then," said George, "we needn't trouble Miss Bourne any longer."

Isabel went and sat down, with a scornful toss of her head, and Laura Pocklington and Neaera stood side by side.

"I feel as if it were the judgment of Paris," whispered the latter audibly, and Mrs. Pocklington and Gerald tittered. Stubbs had once been to Paris on business, but he did not see what it had to do with the present occasion, unless indeed it were something about a previous conviction.

"It isn't her," he said, after another pause, pointing a stupid forefinger at Laura Pocklington.

There was a little shiver of dismay. George rigidly repressed every indication of satisfaction. Neaera stood calm and smiling, bending a look of amused kindness on Stubbs; but the palm of the white hand on the mantle-piece grew pink as the white fingers pressed against it.

"Would you like to see me a little nearer?" she asked, and, stepping forward to where Stubbs sat, she stood right in front of him.

George felt inclined to cry "Brava!" as if he were at the play.

Stubbs was puzzled. There was a likeness, but there was so much unlikeness too. It really wasn't fair to dress people up differently. How was a man to know them?

"Might I see the photograph again, sir?" he asked George.

"Certainly not," exclaimed Gerald angrily. George ignored him.

"I had rather," he said, "you told us what you think without it."

George had sent Lord Tottlebury the photograph, and everybody had looked at it and declared it was not the least like Neaera.

Stubbs resumed his survey. At last he said, pressing his hand over his eyes, "I can't swear to her, sir."

"Very well," said George. "That'll do."

But Neaera laughed.

"Swear to me, Mr. Stubbs!" said she. "But do you mean to think I'm like this Nelly Game?"

"Game," not "Games," Mrs. Witt, said George, smiling again.

"Well, then 'Game.'"

"Yes, miss, you've a look of her."

"Of course she has," said Mrs. Pocklington. "or Mr. George would never have made the mistake." Mrs. Pocklington liked George, and wanted to let him down easily.

"That's all you can say?" asked Lord Tottlebury.

"Yes, sir; I mean, my lord."

"It comes to nothing," said Lord Tottlebury, decisively.

"Why, Neaera," said he, "it's in your handwriting!"

George started, and he thought he saw Neaera start just perceptibly.

"Of course," she said. "That's only a copy."

"My dear, you never told me so," said Lord Tottlebury; "and I have never seen your handwriting."

"But they never saw this."

"It was stupid of me," said Neaera, penitently; "but I never thought of there being any mistake. What difference does it make?"

George's heart was hardened. He was sure she had, if not tried to pass off the copy as an original from the first, at any rate taken advantage of the error.

"Have you the original?" he asked.

"No," said Neaera. "I sent it to somebody ever so long ago, and never got it back."

"When did you make this copy?"

"When I sent away the original."

"To whom?" began George again.

"I won't have it," cried Gerald. "You shan't cross-examine her with your infernal insinuations. Do you mean that she forged this?"

"George grew stubborn.

"I should like to see the original," he said.

"Then you can't," retorted Gerald, angrily.

George shrugged his shoulders, turned and left the room.

And they all comforted and cosseted Neaera, and abused George, and made up their minds to let the world know how badly he was behaving.

"It's our duty to society," said Lord Tottlebury.

CHAPTER VII.

"I should eat humble-pie, George," said Mr. Bodwell, tapping his eye-glasses against his front teeth. "She's one too many for you."

"Do you think I'm wrong?"

"On your whole, I incline to think you're right. But I should eat humble pie if I were you, all the same."

The suggested diet is palatable to nobody, and the power of consuming it without contortion is rightly put high in the list of virtues, if virtue be proportionate to difficulty. To a man of George Neston's temperance penance was hard, even when enforced by the consciousness of sin; to bend the knees in abasement, when the soul was erect in self-approval, came nigh impossibility.

Still it was unquestionably necessary that he should assume the sheet and candle, or put up with an alternative hardly, if at all, less unpleasant. The "Fourth Paragraph" had appeared. It was called a paragraph for the sake of uniformity, but it was in reality a narrative, stretching to a couple of columns, and giving a detailed account of the attempted identification. For once, George implicitly believed the editor's statement that his information came to him on unimpeachable authority. The story was clearly not only inspired by, but actually written by the hand of Gerald himself, and it breathed a bitter hostility to himself that grieved George none the less because it was very natural. This hostility showed itself, here and there, in direct attack upon, more constantly in irony and ingenious ridicule, George's look, manner, tones, and walk were all pressed into the service. In a word, the article certainly made him look an idiot; he rather thought it made him look a malignant idiot.

"What can you do?" demanded Mr. Blodwell again. "You can't bring up any more people from Pecton. You chose your witnesses, and they let you in."

George nodded.

"You went to Bournemouth, and you found—what? Not that Mrs. Whatsher-name—Horne—was a myth, as you expected, or conveniently—and, mind you, not uncomplaisably—dead, as I expected, but an actual, existent, highly respectable, though somewhat doting, old lady. She had you badly there, George my boy!"

"Yes," admitted George. I wonder if she knew the woman was alive?"

"She chanced it; wished she might be dead, perhaps, but chanced it. That, George, is where Mrs. Witt is great."

"Mrs. Horne doesn't remember her being there in March, or indeed April."

"Perhaps not; but she doesn't say the contrary."

"Oh, no. She said that if the character says March, of course it was March."

"The 'of course' betrays a lay mind. But still the character does say March—for what it's worth."

"The copy of it does."

"I know what you mean. But think before you say that, George. It's pretty strong; and you haven't a tittle of evidence to support you."

"I don't want to say a word. I'll let them alone, if they'll let me alone. But that woman's Nelly Game, as sure as I'm—"

"An infernally obstinate chap," put in Mr. Blodwell.

Probably what George meant by being "let alone" was the cessation of paragraphs in the Bull's-eye. If so, his wish was not gratified. "Will Mr. George Neston—George's name was no longer "withheld"—"retract" took, in the columns of that publication, much the position occupied by Delenda est Carthago in the speeches of Cato the Elder. It met the reader on the middle page; it lurked for him in the leading article; it appeared, by way of playful reference, in the city intelligence; one man declared he found it in an advertisement, but this no doubt was an oversight—or perhaps a lie.

George was not more sensitive than other men, but the annoyance was extreme. The whole world seemed full of people reading the Bull's-eye, some with grave reprobation, some with offensive chuckling's.

But if the Bull's-eye would not leave him alone, a large number of people did. He was not exactly cut; but his invitations diminished, the greetings he received grew less cordial than of yore; he was not turned out of the houses he went to, but he was not much pressed to come again. He was made to feel that right-minded and reasonable people—a very every body uses to describe themselves—were against him, and that, if he wished to re-enter the good graces of society, he must do so by the strait and narrow gate of penitence and apology.

(To be Continued.)

NOT IN THEIR SET.

He—I do not see why such a dear little duck as you are should not be welcome in society.

She—Oh, the society of our city is run by a lot of old hens, and little ducks don't belong to their set.

HEALTH.

"HIVES."

A distressing though by no means serious ailment is that commonly called "hives" or "nettle-rash." It manifests itself by the sudden appearance upon the skin of slight elevations of a whitish, pinkish, or reddish color, and surrounded by a more or less distinct ring.

The eruptions are attended by burning, tingling, stinging sensations, which usually are very annoying. One impulsively scratches, but though this may relieve the disagreeable sensation for the moment, it causes more of the eruption to appear.

The advent of the disease is usually very sudden, a few minutes frequently sufficing for its development. The eruption often leaves one portion of the body as suddenly as it comes, and without any apparent cause, reappears somewhere else. When it disappears it usually leaves no traces.

All portions of the body are liable to the rash, but it more frequently occurs upon those parts which are subject to the pressure or contact of the clothes. Children are particularly subject to the affection. The eruption lasts from a few hours to a few days, during which time frequent outbreaks may occur.

The cause of the disease may be external or internal. Certain external irritants and poisons produce it. Not infrequently it is brought on by the stinging of nettles or certain insects, for example, fleas and mosquitoes.

By far the most common cause, however, is some disordered condition of the stomach and intestines. Certain articles of food, as fish, oysters, clams, crabs, lobsters, pork—especially sausage—oatmeal, mushrooms, raspberries, and strawberries, favor the development of this disease. It is to be remembered, however, that when an eruption is caused by any of these articles, a more or less pronounced individual peculiarity exists.

The successful treatment of "hives" depends upon the detection and removal of the cause.

The diet should be of the simplest kind; all stimulating foods and drinks being avoided. If the stomach is disordered, treatment should be directed toward restoring it to a healthy condition.

The eruption itself may be treated with lotions and baths. Ease is often afforded by sopping the affected parts with vinegar and water. Alcohol, either diluted or of full strength, applied as a lotion, will frequently give decided relief.

Underclothing which is found to be irritating should not be worn, and the bed-covering should be light and the sleeping-room cool.

AMOUNT OF SLEEP REQUIRED.

"A healthy infant sleeps most of the time during the first few weeks," says the Medical Journal, "and in the early years people are disposed to let children sleep as they will. But when six or seven years old, when school begins, this sensible policy comes to an end, and sleep is put off persistently through all the years up to manhood and womanhood. At the age of ten or eleven the child is allowed to sleep only eight or nine hours, when its parents should insist on its having what it absolutely needs, which is ten or eleven at least. Up to twenty a youth needs nine hours' sleep, and an adult should have eight. Insufficient sleep is one of the crying evils of the day. The want of proper rest and normal conditions of the brain, produces a lamentable condition, deterioration in both body and mind, and exhaustion, excitability, and intellectual disorders are gradually taking the place of the love of work, general well-being, and the spirit of initiative."

THIN BREAD AND BUTTER.

Many physicians, according to a lecturer on dietetics, are ordering thin bread and butter for delicate patients, especially those suffering from dyspepsia, consumption and anaemia, or any who need to take on flesh. This thin bread and butter insensibly induces persons to eat much more butter than they have any idea of. It is extraordinary, says the lecturer, how short a way a pat of fresh butter will go if spread on a number of thin slices of bread. This is one advantage, and a great one, in the feeding of invalids, for they are thereby provided with an excellent form of the fat which is so essential for their nutrition in a way that lures them to take it without rebellion. But the thin bread and butter has another advantage equally as great—it is very digestible and easily assimilated. Fresh butter made from cream is very much more digestible when spread upon thin slices of bread than the same amount of cream eaten as cream, per se, would be.

USE FOR TURPENTINE.

Turpentine is the best friend housekeepers have, and a supply should always be kept on hand. It is good for burns, excellent for corns, good for rheumatism and sore throat, and a quick remedy for fits or convulsions. It is a sure preventive against moths, a few drops rendering garments safe from such invasion during the summer. It drives away ants and bugs from cupboards and corners by putting a few drops on the shelves. It effectually destroys bugs, and injures neither furniture nor clothing. For cleaning paint add a spoonful to a pail of warm water. A little in the suds on wash-day makes washing easier.

TO REFRESH THE EYES.

If the eyes become tired and painful because of the bright sunshine on the sand and water try this method, suggested by a physician, of resting and refreshing them. Take a cup brimful of water and add sufficient salt to be faintly perceptible to the taste. Hold your eyes to the water so that your lashes touch it, then wink once, and the eyes will be suffused; do not wipe them. This so refreshes the eyes that they feel like a new pair, and

they will be so strengthened that they will be little danger of those irritable, some wrinkles forming about the eyes (while at the shore), because they are tired or overstrained.

SECRET POLICE SYSTEM.

Account of the Russian Method of Capturing Persons, Criminal and Innocent.

A correspondent writing of the Russian police system, says:

The merest shadow of suspicion is all that is necessary to land some unfortunate in prison. Nine-tenths of these suspects are as innocent of the crimes attributed to them as a citizen in this far-off country. But that makes no difference. If the Russian police arrested guilty people only there would be many empty prisons in the Czar's domain. Innocence counts for naught when brought face to face with the Third Section.

The Third Section is one of the three divisions of the Russian police system. The first division, or section, is the ordinary street police force, the members of which are uniformed, and patrol the streets of the big cities just as they do in this and other countries. They arrest the petty offenders, the thieves, thugs, murderers and black-legs in general, who always infest cities of importance. There is nothing unusual about them except their willingness to be bribed on every occasion. They are miserably paid; in fact, the members of the three divisions are underpaid, and, as a result, blackmail, bribery and extortion thrive in Russia to an extent unknown in any other country the world over.

SECOND AND THIRD SECTIONS.

The Second Section is made up of the rural police, the chiefs of which are appointed by the State, and the ordinary officers of the different villages. These are the most rapacious wretches on the face of the earth, and the way they grind down the helpless people in their control would bring tears to the eyes of a man of stone.

The Third Section, whose chief is spoken of in a whisper as the White Terror, is made up of the dreaded secret police. The organization of this force is a well guarded mystery, and therein lies its vast power. It is under the immediate control of the Minister of the Interior, and its one particular business is to ferret out enemies of the Czar and of the Imperial Government.

Much has been written about the Third Section, but no complete story of its organization has ever been told. Even the cleverest and most relied upon detectives in its employ do not know the real facts of the matter. Englishmen who have lived in the principal Russian cities, and who have written about it, have only been able to obtain the barest skeleton of its formation, but that is as much as any one knows.

SECRECY AND MYSTERY.

Secrecy and mystery form its foundation. How many men compose the force is unknown. They may number 500, and possibly 50,000. The section includes men placed in every walk of life, from the humblest to the most powerful, the artisan and the diplomat, the high army officer and the common soldier, the laborer and the society man, the merchant and the thief. In every big city the world over are men of the Third Section. They swarm in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Constantinople and the great capitals of Europe. The cities of Asia are full of them.

Those in the Russian cities have no regular hours for reporting for duty, as is the case with members of the detective force in the ordinary city. They are on duty all the time. Few of the agents know one another. This is regarded as a great advantage. An agent could be in the company of nine other agents, and not one in the group of ten would know that he was in the presence of fellow-officers. Their superiors confer with them in secret, and they never meet at one place. It is an everyday occurrence for an agent to turn in a report accusing another agent of suspicious conduct. The latter is simply following up some case, and the other, not knowing him to be a secret officer, makes his report. So elaborate, complete and extensive is this organized spy system that little goes on that does not reach the ears of some official.

NEW MARRIAGE ACT.

Some Very Important Changes Have Been Made In the New Law.

The Act of the Ontario Legislature, passed last Session, entitled "The Marriage Act, 1896," which consolidates and amends the Acts relating to the Solemnization of Marriage, will come into force on August 1st. Copies of the Act in pamphlet form will be supplied by all Clerks of the Peace at ten cents each copy, and as there are many alterations, important to be known by the clergy, there should be many enquiries for copies.

The Act declares who only may solemnize marriage in Ontario, viz: Clergy, etc., who are resident in the Dominion, (and it may be added that penalties are imposed by the Statutes of Canada on those who officiate without lawful authority.)

Banns are to be published, (though on one Sunday only,) one week before a marriage in the parish or municipality, etc., in which each party lives, when they live in different parishes, etc., and a certificate of the publication, when in two parishes, is to be given to the Minister who solemnizes the marriage.

Licenses are to be issued on affidavits to be made by both parties, and the degrees of affinity which bar marriage are to be printed on the affidavits and to be explained to applicants.

Banns and Licenses to lapse if the proposed marriage be not solemnized within three months.

Marriages may not be solemnized between 10 o'clock p.m. and 6 a.m. except under special circumstances.

Two adult witnesses are to sign the register and some changes are made in register books.

Several of the provisions need revision and some changes and corrections are still desirable.