

# AN ALTERED PURPOSE

## CHAPTER III.

During the next few days Rodbury was from home a great deal. To his wife's inquiries he repeated his statement that he had some important affairs to attend to; and in this he was in a sense telling the truth. Among other things he visited a shipping office in the city; he saw his solicitor more than once; he arranged with the executors of his grandfather's will, and he was with his friend Ashwell every day, sometimes twice in the day.

He was with him one night just before the time he had agreed upon to join Sparle, only one clear day being left.

"You do not look well, Cyrus," said his friend; "you are letting these matters excite you to a dangerous extent."

"Perhaps I am," returned Rodbury, passing his hand over his brow. He had indeed a fagged, haggard look, which justifies his friend's remark. "It is very well to advise me not to allow these things to worry me; but just consider for a moment what 'these things' are. No one but a scoundrel could do them at all. I have had such a hardening career, but I must own I am really surprised at having enough vitality in my conscience to disturb me."

"I am sorry to hear you speak like this," replied Ashwell, who was palpably hurt by his friend's words. "You know you are releasing the girl from a union which will soon be, if it is not already, hateful to her, while to you it must be simply maddening. You provide handsomely."

"Oh, yes, yes—that is all right," interrupted the other; "and you must not think I intended any reflection upon you—far from it. I know that your advice has been what you felt was the best; but then, you see, you have not to carry it out. I shall be out of the way of her ravings and frenzy, I know; but I can picture them, and shall hear them as plainly as though she was by my side. Then the children too—they are helpless innocent things, who have done me no harm."

"They will certainly not be more helpless by your action," said Ashwell; "you provide for their education and their future. Do think, if only for a moment, of what they would grow up to be, with such a mother and such friends! However respectable according to their own standard, to you they would be a constant source of misery and mortification."

"That is enough, Herbert," again interrupted the visitor. "I am going to do it; that is settled. But I am not well to-night; I shiver one moment, and feel all on fire the next. I shall not be better until the next two days are past. Everything is ready, and tomorrow night I start from Euston Square. I will tell you how I have arranged."

He went on to detail certain plans, connected, as the reader must long since have perceived, with the abandonment of his wife and children. He was going abroad for at least a year, perhaps two years—it might even be for ever; and a solicitor—not the Launceston family solicitor, we may be sure—would explain to his wife that the marriage being illegal, she was at liberty to marry again; that Mr. Rodbury was gone, never to return, but that she was left independent, as were the children. This handsome mode of dealing with her would effectually allay all anger at the desertion; and long ere Cyrus returned from his tour, her wealth would have gained her an alliance in her own sphere, and all inquiry for him would have ceased.

Of course there were an infinity of details springing out of such a scheme as this; a mean dishonorable scheme, in which, but for the facility with which the best of us find arguments to justify our wrongdoing, it would have been wonderful to see such a man as Ashwell allowing himself to take an active part.

After a long interview, which was far from tending to compose his nerves, Rodbury went home, conscious that he was indeed "out of sorts," as he phrased it, and conscious too, once or twice, that he had forgotten where he was, and even where he was going. He rallied from this immediately; but these were ugly symptoms, and each moment he felt that he required a greater effort to throw them off. "I shall be glad when it is done," he muttered, as he turned into his own secluded street. "I shall not, I hope, then feel quite so much of the hangdog and the sneak as I do now. I can hardly bear to see the light in the window where I know Rose is waiting for me, listening for my step; and listening, too, for the slightest noise from the room where the children are sleeping. They have never done me any harm, and poor Rose has striven to the best of her power to make me happy. Dear! I am a model husband and father!"

Then, he started to find himself wandering into a wholly different train of thought, and although his feet had mechanically, as it were, carried him to his own gate, he had for the last minute been in fancy walking over the well-remembered downs and hollows among which his youth had been passed. Another week of this would kill me," he muttered as he opened the door; "I almost wish I had not come home."

As he had divined, Rose was awaiting his return, and had prepared some delicacy—it passed for a delicacy with her friends—for his supper. When she found he would not touch the little repast, and complained of his head, her wifely anxiety took alarm; she noted how flushed and strange he looked, and insisted upon his lying down at once, then busied herself in applying cooling lotion to his brow, and made him a cup of tea, midnight though it was.

She was a good nurse, and a loving tender wife, despite her faults and vulgarities, for which, indeed, she was in

nowise responsible. She had been taught no better; and that her character was such as Rodbury well knew it to be, proved the goodness of the heart, which could not be materially affected even by such a training as hers had been.

"If you are not better in the morning, Frank," she said, as she sat by the head of the bed, and looked anxiously into his flushed face, "we must send for Dr. Berge, the first thing."

"I shall be all right in the morning," said Rodbury; but his words were hardly distinct; "only I feel so chilly now."

She knew he could not be suffering from great cold, yet laid more clothes on him, and then in a few minutes he complained of the heat, and reproached her with smothering him under so many blankets.

All his utterances wandered away into broken incomprehensible speech; and thus it continued all night, Rose never slackening in her attention, or murmuring at the irritable, often unkind remarks he made. It was a long night, yet morning came at last; but no care on the part of Rose, no change from night to day, could benefit Rodbury, and Dr. Berge had to be sent for.

By this time the invalid had ceased to speak, or, at any rate, to speak distinctly, although he almost constantly uttered unintelligible phrases. His danger of some kind of fever coming on; there had been a deal of it in the neighborhood, and she had been very frightened on account of the children.

The doctor said she was right. Her husband was down with a fever, but not of the kind which, as he knew, better than most persons, had been so rife in the vicinity. Her husband was suffering from smallpox. So, for the present, Frank Rodbury's scheme ended in the disease which seems to inspire more terror than any other of the malignant scourges which afflict humanity.

The house was speedily cleared of all inmates save the sick man, his devoted wife, and a trained nurse; for the Rodburys were for that neighborhood wealthy people, and could afford all which might lighten or soothe such an illness. Yet such an illness was never yet passed lightly through, although in the end Rodbury recovered, and was as well as before—he used in after-years to say he was better—and although it happened with him, as it does now and then with such patients, that he was scarcely marked by the terrible "pitting" of the disease.

Dr. Berge congratulated him, and told him that he owed his escape chiefly to his wife, "who," said the portly, genial old doctor, "is the best nurse I ever saw. Mrs. Garminger, whom I recommended, you know, is a first-rate nurse, as professional nurses go; but it is no disrespect to her to say that Mrs. Rodbury is worth half-a-dozen of her or any other paid attendant."

Rodbury agreed in this opinion. He knew, and had marked all through, without prompting, what his wife had done; and now he was out of danger and could think collectedly, he did so think of Rose, and was not satisfied with his solution of the old problem, let him study it as he might.

With regained strength he felt, and desisted himself for so feeling, his previous horror of his position; and with the morbid sensitiveness of an invalid noted, even watched for, the faults and shortcomings in the woman who had risked her own life to save his, and whose pale thin features so brightly shone up when she saw him smile, and who was so happy when he showed symptoms of reviving strength.

He had long since written to Ashwell, at an agreed address, and directed to a feigned name—such an arrangement would be sure to suggest itself to Frank Rodbury. This was, in a sense, to Ashwell's relief, for he fully thought that his friend had gone abroad without seeing him again, or which was as strange, without taking full possession of his inheritance. He, Rodbury, had said that he would call on his friend as soon as it was safe for him to go out, and consult him as to what should now be done.

Never before had Rodbury known such a conflict in his mind as to what he should do and what he ought to do. What he should and what he ought to do was, it was true, chiefly considered as regarded his own welfare and comfort; but yet some minor amount of thought for others mingled with this and greatly aided to trouble him. All through his life he had been accustomed to consult only the gratification of his own desires, and to act as seemed most agreeable to himself, so that even so much wavering as this was a sign of improvement.

But he was heir to a large fortune; there was a fine home in one of the most beautiful of English counties awaiting him, or scenes of gaiety and brilliancy in foreign lands might be his, should he prefer them; and despite his better but feebler self, the loathing of his present home—and horror at the idea of taking from it such a woman as Rose to show as his wife—rolled back upon him like a tide, and he determined to carry out his old resolve.

"It will be better for her as well as myself," was the ready sophistry which rose in his mind. "She will be a good deal happier in her own sphere, where she shall never want, and the children—well, she would not like to lose them." So by the time he was fairly convalescent, his plans were in much the same position as before his illness.

He had been out several times. On the first occasion Rose went with him for a ride. This was in a carriage hired from the nearest livery stable. They traversed the West End of London—Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace, Regent Street, Oxford Street, and the like being included in the tour—thus affording a treat of the highest kind to Rose, who, although a Londoner born and bred, had not seen this fashionable, this aristocratic, this fairyland district in short, half-a-dozen times in her life.

She was delighted with the excursion, and so pleased to know that her husband was able to be out again and could sit by her side, looking as handsome as ever—his beauty must be taken on Rose's estimate—that her poor eyes, weakened, it might be, by the fatigues of nursing, or perhaps by some hidden cause, filled over and anon with tears. Yet she would not go for a second drive, and was indeed more languid and weak than even her recent fatigues would account for, or than suited her brisk, energetic temperament.

Rodbury saw this, but decided it would pass off; women were always nervous, or defiant, or excited. These, or one of these, accounted for all her symptoms to one so easily disposed to be satisfied.

Again the eve of his intended departure arrived; again he had an interview with Ashwell, when he boastfully contrasted his renovated health with the wretched state in which he was when he paid his previous farewell visit, as it was intended to be. Ashwell was less enthusiastic; he had been touched by what he heard of Rose's conduct, and had once or twice ventured upon a suggestion, or an approach to one, by which he hinted at Rodbury's taking his wife abroad with him, where nobody would know her, or be likely to find fault with her; but this was not well received, and so was not pressed.

Going home from this final interview—home for the last time after that night he would be free from all these sordid surroundings—he was startled by coming suddenly upon Mr. Sparle, his partner, who was sauntering slowly up and down a neighbouring street, and evidently waiting for him. He was dressed respectably after his fashion; but this was a fashion which almost proclaimed his trade, and he was smoking a short clay pipe.

"I thought you were a hundred miles off, Jack," said Rodbury, overcoming a strong impulse to shudder in disgust; "I did not dream of seeing you here."

"No, I daresay you did not," replied Sparle; "but somehow, I did not feel easy about Rose, and—and there were two or three other things weighing a good deal on my mind, so I have run up, not to see you, but to get in yet, nor you neither," he continued, as Rodbury was about to turn into the street in which he lived; "I want a little talk first."

"Talk away then!" exclaimed his companion, assuming a lightness and indifference he was really far from feeling.

"I came up to see how Rose was getting on," resumed Sparle. "I was up two or three times while you were ill, as I suppose you know. But I heard from a party who lived about here some things I didn't like; and, in fact, he says he believes you are going to make a bolt of it."

This speech was enough to stagger most men. To find his secret intention so accurately divined, and by a stranger of whose very existence he had been ignorant! It required his utmost nerve to repeat his careless laugh, and to inquire: "What next? Am I going to take the stock with me, or do I mean to make you a present of it?"

"I had thought of that," said Sparle, after a pause; "and I am glad to hear you speak so easy about it. We have never been exactly chums, you know; but I did not believe you were the man for such conduct. But here is out candid and say who you are, and what your friends are? You never told us why you named your boy Cyrus, you never even told us what his right name was. I found out, however, that he was registered Launceston as well."

"You did, did you?" interrupted Rodbury.

"Yes, I tell you straight I did," returned his companion; "and more than that, I found there was a place of that name down below Plymouth; and I sent a man as had been in the police all the way down there to inquire after any Cyruses and Rodburys what he might find. It cost me ten pounds, if it cost me a penny, and all to no good."

"That was a pity indeed," said Rodbury as the speaker paused. He was far quicker than Sparle, and had run swiftly over the probable consequences of this activity on the part of his brother-in-law.

"Now, don't sneer at a fellow's anxiety," resumed Sparle. "I have no relations in the world but my sisters, and I would do anything for them; yes and for your two children, Frank. You may not think it, but I am very fond of them as well, and I want them as well as Rose to be put straight, especially now."

For a little while Rodbury said nothing; his companion had unconsciously supplied him with additional reasons for carrying out his plans without delay. Sparle's quest had luckily failed in one instance; but some unfortunate accident might betray him—Rodbury. The knowledge of his son's second name, given when he never dreamt of the inheritance which had since become his, and the bestowal of which he now bitterly regretted, showed how dangerous such inquiries might become.

"Well, we will go in now," he began at last, "if you have quite finished all you have to say."

"All right; I understand you," retorted Sparle. "I have pretty high finished, so we will go in. You have not been home all day, I believe?"

"No, I have not. You are correct in that belief, as in so many other things," replied Rodbury. "Have you anything to say about that?"

"Well," Sparle began slowly, after a brief pause, "not a great deal, only you heard me say 'especially now,' when I wanted things put straight, did you not?"

"I did; and wondered why it was 'especially now,' as you seem to have been meddling in my affairs for a good while past," was the gracious answer of Rodbury.

"What I meant was just this," continued the other: "you have not been home since breakfast, so do not know everything. If I was anxious about Rose before, I am more anxious now, for while you were out, she got worse. I went for Dr. Berge, and he says she is very ill. In fact, Frank Rodbury, your wife is took with the worst kind of smallpox, and I don't think even you will sneer at that."

"Rose attacked by smallpox!" echoed Rodbury, who was almost stunned for the moment at hearing this, while a host of images instantly flashed through his mind.

"Yes, sir," replied Sparle, gravely; "your wife is took with the smallpox, and Dr. Berge says it will go hard with her."

To be continued.

**TORTOISE TENACITY OF LIFE.**  
The vital spark in tortoises is very strong. There is a record of a tortoise which lived six months after its brains had been removed. Another, which had suffered decapitation, showed life in the severed head three days afterwards.

**THE PECULIAR NILE.**  
For over 1,200 miles the Nile does not receive a single tributary stream.

## PERSONAL POINTERS.

Notes of Interest About Some of the Great Folks of the World.

The Hon. T. F. Bayard has accepted an invitation to visit the English potteries.

Mark Twain is in London, preparing his book descriptive of his recent tour around the world.

D. L. Moody, the evangelist, is to begin a series of revival meetings in Boston on January 1.

Cardinal Hohenlohe is the one hundred and fiftieth cardinal to die since Leo XIII. became pope.

President Cleveland will be 60 years old two weeks after the expiration of his present term of office.

Mrs. Herman Davis, of New York, is the only woman who has ridden her wheel over the great St. Bernard Pass.

The young king of Spain may be seen any fine morning taking his sea bath at San Sebastian, where the Spanish court is now in residence.

Dr. Nansen will lecture in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Belfast, Dublin and Swansea.

Count von Walderssee, who rumor persists in declaring is to succeed Prince Hohenlohe as the Imperial Chancellor of Germany, has an American wife.

With reference to Rudyard Kipling W. D. Howells says: "His is the lushest voice now lifted in the world—the clearest, the bravest, with the fewest false notes in it."

Rear Admiral Penrose-Fitzgerald, of the British navy, is now engaged on a biography of the late Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon, whose life was a very eventful one.

The agent of the Duke of Portland has distributed among forty-two charities the sum of nearly \$10,000, paid by visitors to Welbeck Abbey during the past tourist season.

Sir Henry Irving, in laying the foundation stone of the new Passmore Edwards Dulwich public library, recently spoke briefly of the incalculable value of free libraries as a medium of good.

A bronze monument has been erected in Paris to the memory of Jean Leclaire, the man who fifty-four years ago introduced among the workmen of his factory a system of profit-sharing.

The Connecticut Humane Society has awarded a medal to Eugene Walker, of Hartford, a lad 17 years old, who, at the risk of his own life, saved a man from drowning last September.

An Italian named Corzetto has invented an apparatus which enabled him to remain under water eighteen hours. Owing to an accident to the apparatus, however, he came near being gashed.

By the death of Lord Congleton the House of Lords has lost its oldest baron. The late peer was 87. He was not, however, the oldest peer of the realm, that distinction being held by the Earl of Mansfield, who is 90.

The empress of Russia intends to keep as a souvenir of her visit to France all the bouquets and crowns of flowers offered to her by the French people, and has given orders to have them prepared for preservation.

A conscience-stricken man in Oregon on his deathbed recently handed over to Louis Davenport the sum of \$27,000, which represented the accumulations of \$8,000 worth of gold dust stolen from Davenport thirty years ago.

When the czar, on his recent visit to Paris, presented M. Brisson with the St. Andreas Order the latter cut off his much-cherished long beard because it concealed the order (which is worn around the neck) from view.

Frederick Nansen will receive a special gold medal from the Royal Geographical Society when he goes to London, as he has already received the society's highest award, the gold medal, for his explorations in Greenland.

Chang Chin Tung, the viceroy of Hupoh, China, who has hitherto obstructed the work on the Hankow railroad, is one of the pioneers of the new manufacturing industry in China. He owns and operates an immense cotton mill in Wuchang.

In commemoration of the book of Melancthon, Luther's co-worker, 400 years ago, a memorial building is to be erected in the native town of the reformer, Bretten, in Baden. The cornerstone is to be laid on the very day of his nativity, February 16, next.

Sir Arthur Sullivan can now command \$3,500 down for one song, while from "The Lost Chord" alone it is said that he has realized over \$50,000. Signor Tosti, the composer of "Forever and Forever," whose first manuscripts were "declined with thanks," can now command \$1,250 for a song.

## WINTER WRINKLES.

Brown—"I wonder why Paynter was so angry when I asked him what school of art he belonged to?" Smith—"What school? That implies that he has something to learn."

"It is said that we shall all pass away as a tale that is told." "That sounds all right; but tales that are told don't pass away—they are forever being told over again."

"Have you no pride at all?" asked the Earnest Worker. "Nup," said the Cumber of the Ground. "I am waitin' till it gets cheaper. Pride, you know must have a fall."

Attorney—"On what ground, madam, do you wish to apply for a divorce from your husband?" Fair client—"On the ground, sir, that he hasn't any ground. He made me believe he had a farm!"

Freddie—"Oh, if I was only certain that she loves me?" George—"Why don't you ask her?" Freddie—"That would end the uncertainty and make me miserable in another way."

"Waddington, I notice you don't talk much when you dine out." "No; it takes all the brains I can muster to work things so I won't come out with an oyster fork for my after-dinner coffee."

"What chumps these old-time fellows must have been. They used to write and talk by the hour about the value of a collegiate education." "Well?" "And they never heard of football." The time of year is now at hand

## YOUNG FOLKS.

### "POOR BAKER BOY OF VENICE."

It was on a bright beautiful spring morning in 1507, that Pietro Fasca, a dark-haired, handsome young boy started on his daily rounds through the narrow streets of Venice, to deliver the fresh rolls, hot from his father's oven, which he carried. The air was fragrant with the perfume of flowers, and joyous with the glad song of birds, and as Pietro tripped merrily along over the paved footpaths between the houses, he joined in the concert overhead, little thinking that a dark cloud was so soon to shut him out forever from the all that now made life so bright and cheery. As he turned into a narrow alley to cross to the home of one of his customers, he spied something shining on the way before him, and stooping to pick it up, found himself in possession of a small jewelled scabbard. He placed the glittering toy in his pocket and hurried on singing his bread song: "Fiar di Farina."

So light-hearted and free was he, that he did not notice a prostrate form by the door until he almost stumbled over it. Thinking some belated merry-maker, with a brain confused by drink, had mistaken the doorstep for a pillow, he stooped, and shaking the figure, lightly, said: "Come, come, sir; you need to go to bed to sleep off your wine. The pavement is no place to rest." Then, as the light came more brightly, he perceived by the rich garments of the sleeper that he was of the nobility. "Courage, signor," he exclaimed, "give me your hand, and I will help you up."

As there was no response to his words he set his basket down to examine more closely the condition of the poor drunkard. While he bent over the prostrate form, he was horrified to discover that the man was dead, murdered, for the handle of a jewelled dagger which had pierced his heart, was plainly visible, and underneath a pool of blood told the story of treachery in a way that could not be covered up or denied. What should he do? How could he leave the dead man alone! And yet he did not wish to disappoint his customers by keeping them waiting for their breakfast rolls.

While he hesitated, the police arrived, and the boy, thinking there was no longer need for his presence, picked up his basket and hurried away. Poor, innocent Pietro! The flight cost him his life. Before he had gone many yards, the officers saw the retreating figure and pursued him. In vain he protested his innocence. The stains of blood on his hands and clothes, his hasty flight, and more than all, the scabbard in his pocket which exactly fitted the dagger in the nobleman's heart, witnessed against him. His tears and prayers were of no avail, and just as the sun rose, bathing sea and land in its yellow light, Pietro took his farewell look of beautiful, treacherous Venice. In one of the noisome dungeons under the Bridge of Sighs he was shut away from all the brightness and happiness of earth.

The trial was long and bitterly contested, for even in the sixteenth century there were those who contended for justice, and declared that circumstantial evidence alone was not sufficient to condemn him. The prisoner's character was good, and no motive could be ascribed for the crime, but the victim was a nobleman, and his death must be avenged, even if the innocent perchance should suffer. During the trial the boy became very ill, the result of his long confinement in the damp dungeon, but even the sympathy excited by his weakness was not strong enough to save him from the gallows, and his old father lived to witness his only son's execution.

Some years after Pietro had died upon the Piazzetta, the real criminal confessed that he had allowed an innocent boy to bear his infamy and give his life up in his stead. The Senate desiring to atone in a measure for the wrong thus inflicted, donated a perpetual light in St. Mark's in memory of the baker's boy who had suffered unjustly through their hasty judgment.

The records show that in every criminal case that came up before the tribunal from that time until the end of the republic the Senate decreed that in memory of Pietro's innocence the caution should be given: "Remember the poor baker boy of Venice." It is often safer, always braver, to stand our ground even when in danger.

### CURIOSITIES OF INSECTS.

The common hercules beetle can lift 112 times its own weight.

The microscope is said to show 4,000 muscles in an anglerworm.

Zopherus Mexicanus, a species of beetle, can cut its way out of a tin can.

According to Reaumur, a hungry wasp will kill a thousand flies in a day.

The dragon the "snake feeder" has 28,000 facets in both of its compound eyes.

Some grasshoppers have no ears. Others have them situated on the side of the leg.

### ARTIFICIAL BRAVERY.

A French doctor is said to have discovered a means of injecting courage into men by means of a syringe. The material he uses is a mixture of sea water and phenic acid.

### TO REMOVE A CINDER.

A railroad engineer is an authority for the advice to rub the well eye persistently until the offending cinder is out of the other. Unless the flying speck is hot or sharpened, and has sunk into the ball, this treatment, he says, will certainly be efficacious.