

A MAN'S REVENGE;

OR, THE CONVICT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued).

"Come, sir," repeated the servant, taking his arm.

"Yes, yes; I come, Simmons. What a deuced hurry you're in. Don't you see my nephew, curse you? He's staying in the village. Well, Duncan, good-bye, my boy. I don't ask you to share my solitude for I sought it with the desire of hugging it to my breast. But all the same, if sometimes you'll look me up I'll be glad to see you. You remind me of what I once was before darkness descended on me. Good-bye, my boy. May you find your art worthy of all your devotion."

Duncan wrung the thin hand with an uneasy feeling of tenderness, for he had a tender corner in his heart for this strangely afflicted uncle of his. The remembrance of kindnesses received in childhood days, of the handsome laughing face, had not faded away entirely.

He turned to the village, pondering deeply on the strange illness that had made the lively, dashing youth a mindless man. It was fifteen years ago that the malady had attacked Ralph Freer, and all one knew of it was that he had been found in an unconscious condition in the lowest quarter of Nunechster. How he had got there no one knew. He himself, on recovery, could not tell, for on abatement of the fever that held him in its throes for many days his mind had gone completely. He was a helpless babe, babbling and childless once more.

Duncan remembered all that plainly, for he was then a boy of twelve, and the injured man had been nursed at his home. He recalled the ominous whispers he had heard, of the strange coincidence of his uncle's illness, dating from the first appearance in public of the woman he had loved, as the affianced bride of Lord Cruse at the Nunechster Hunt Ball, and the mysterious disappearance of that woman's only child, a little girl of three! Long after the Assembly Rooms had closed on that fateful night Ralph Freer was found insensible and robbed. At the same time the search for the missing child had begun, but the cloud had never risen from him. Despite every effort for recovery the lost child had not been found. The queries as to her disappearance remained unanswered. Had Ralph known anything about it? None could tell. Had he himself spirited her away from a mad sense of revenge? No one knew. What seemed most probable to all was, that he had pursued the kidnapper and met his fate in trying to rescue the child.

At all events his life was ruined. His memory had fled; he had forgotten everything that had happened since his last vision of the woman he adored. At times he was almost mad and had to be put under restraint. Everything that could be done for him was done. He spent years abroad to return half dazed and broken spirited. The very mention of the woman he had loved called anger to his eyes, and set his nerves on fire.

Duncan's face darkened as he thought, then softened again, for he knew Lady Cruse, and had for her the devotion of a young man for a noble-hearted woman. Besides, had she not suffered atrociously herself. With a little shiver he recalled the terrible meeting she had had with the convalescent man, when she had implored him to remember, to tell what he knew. He had seen her kneeling before his uncle, her beautiful eyes streaming. The look of despair with which she had passed him on her way out after the fruitless interview was as vivid now in his memory as though he had seen it yesterday. If in her marriage to Lord Cruse, which took place some months later, she had found the happiness of true love, it was also true that she had taken an inconsolable trouble. Even now the search for the missing child continued, fifteen years later, when hope had faded in every breast but hers.

"Some day I shall find her!" she had said once to him, with the beautiful smile that thrilled all that knew her.

He sighed deeply. He felt sure that she was but the innocent cause of his uncle's condition. She was so good, so honorable.

"No, she was certainly not to blame for poor Uncle Ralph's illness. I cannot believe she was a flirt," he soliloquised as Sea View Cottage seemed to spring up close to him, "and if I could help to chase the sorrow from her face, how gladly would I do it! But no doubt the child is dead, so can never be found again."

He pushed open the little gate. The lighted lamp on the table within his window sent a soft glow out into the scented garden. His landlady appeared at the open door.

"Well, sir, your luggage has come first," she exclaimed, reproachfully. "I thought you were lost. It's nearly two hours since you went away."

"Oh, I'm exceedingly sorry, Miss Green," replied the young man with his winsome smile. "But it is so beautiful here; I went for a little stroll and quite forgot what time it was."

"Lucky I never made the tea, nor cooked the eggs, else they would have been sheer waste. But we've had our surprise too, sir."

"So I see by your glowing eyes, Miss

Green. Something nice, I suppose. I declare you were handsome before, but it's made you quite scrumptious."

"Oh, now, Mr. Sinclair, an' me turnin' forty," simpered the woman, blushing with pleasure. "It is nice, Me brother an' Sunbeam's father is home again."

"Oh, he is, is he?" exclaimed the young man. "And what does he say about me. Am I to turn out?"

"No, sir; of course not. He's real pleased you're here. Tomorrow he'll see you, perhaps; tonight he's that taken up with Sunbeam, he's no eyes for anyone else."

"And Sunbeam? Is she taken up with him?"

"Lor, yes. She loves her father like a true chip of the old block."

"Heaven forbid!" silently ejaculated Duncan.

"They're quite pretty together," continued the woman eagerly. "She's so dainty, him so hardened by his travels; quite a contrast, but as loving as two doves. And he's been a good father to her. When she was quite a wee 'un he called her Sunbeam, 'cos it gladdened his widowed heart to look on her bright face, and the name has stuck to her since."

"What is her real name?" queried Duncan with placid curiosity.

"Just Sunbeam. It was that from the first. Folks say that's no Christian name, but I say it is. Why, it rejoices me to say it, for Sunbeam she is and Sunbeam she'll be to the end of the chapter. Bill would black the eyes of any who brought a cloud to her face. But I'm worrying you with my talk. I'll fetch your tea in."

Duncan glanced round the cosy little room with a smile.

"Well," he reflected. "I may have come to a dull place, but I've had plenty of events crowded into my life since my arrival. Sunbeam—Sunbeam's father—my Uncle Ralph. I wonder how many more surprises I'm to get, and if any of them will lead to adventure of any kind!"

CHAPTER V.

"What are you goin' to do with yourself now, Bill?" asked his sister a few days later as he sat silent in the little kitchen. The man took his pipe from his mouth and grinned cunningly.

"That's just wot I was deliberatin' on, Helly. You know yourself that I never 'ave worked by the sweat of my brow, nor never shall. I ain't such a greenhorn yet. I was just thinkin' over one or two jobs when you spoke. Likely as not I shall only be a few days 'ere. Villages ain't the best place for my sort. Towns are more 'orspitable."

Helly put down the saucer, and she had been cleaning and came close up to him. Her round eyes held a world of inquiry, her full cheeks had paled.

"You don't mean to say that you're off again. Remember your hand has lost its cunning, Bill. For my sake don't be rash. Remember me and her."

"Jist becoss I do remember you I must make plans. You can't starve. An' honest work don't pay. What could I do if I did. Who'd 'ave me, eh?" sneered Bill, plunging his hands into his peckets and sucking his pipe.

She sighed. Ready tears sprang to her eyes.

"You've growed soft, Helly; soft and flabby. Why do you want to starve?"

"My savings will last many years," she murmured, bending over the fire.

He chuckled, amused.

"Your savings were mine! You don't mind that money, then?"

"Of course not," she exclaimed, indignantly. "I'm with you, as before. No, it isn't that. It's because your luck's gone, and also because of Sunbeam. She takes that to heart. She's as good as gold, you see."

"Oh, that's it, is it? I'd like to know where she'd be if I felt as good as gold myself. As for my luck, that's rot! It'll come back. If it doesn't, and she gets on your mind, you know wot to do. For goodness' sake don't turn into a crying female. Sunbeam ought to know better than to talk like that."

"Yet she loves you, Bill. Her heart is true to you. But she prays that your ways may change. It's real amusin' to hear her sometimes, her that owes all to your ways."

Her eyes streamed with tears of mirth. Bill's face softened intensely.

"Yes, she's cunning," he muttered, chewing the pipe stem to keep it from falling, "and beautiful than I thought, Helly; praps too beautiful for what I want."

"For what you want? Bill, what d'you mean? You ain't going to corrupt that child's mind, the child wot's been a heaven to us both?"

He twisted round uneasily in his chair. All softening expressions slid from his face. His mouth set in a hard, cruel line.

"Bill, you ain't goin' to—," began the woman. But he checked her with a frown, exclaiming angrily—

"Sunbeam's got to work for 'er old father now; the father wot risked so much for her. Bein' a good girl, she'll obey. What was the good of all the money spent on her if she can't repay us? Never you mind, Helly, Sunbeam won't suffer, and if she'll forget to say

her prayers for me and work as I wish, then in a very short time we shall be rollin' in money. Then we can emigrate and start a 'oly life, if you like. Give over that sniffin, and call the girl 'ere. We'll get that job over afore that young moon-gazer turns up for his meal. Of course the girl will kick at first. I expect it. But she'll soon give in."

"If you mean her to steal, she'll die first," replied his sister, going towards the door.

"Not that. I've another dodge. If she won't do wot I want, she'll marry Gentleman Dan—"

"What!" screamed Helly. "Sunbeam marry that beast! God knows the evil he's done! Why, Bill, you'd a heart once; where is it now? I thought you loved Sunbeam. You could not bear her out of your sight?"

"My heart's right enough. Only it ain't wallowin' in fat yet. I love Sunbeam, yes, and I meant to do my best by her. But there's one or two jobs I 'ave on she must 'elp in. If not Gentleman Dan, who has a tight 'old on me, shall 'ave 'er. It's one or the other. He comes to-night to gaze on her face. She can choose then. But it's one or 'other. Either this big deal which I share with 'er or 'er. He's set on one or 'other. An' when she's his wife, he'll make her work, you bet."

"But you can't. If you do that, Bill, I'll stop it. I love the girl. I won't be a party to this. I'll go to those that—"

He had risen and seized her hands roughly.

"No you won't. I know how to stop your tongue, my girl. D'ye think only I've made me eddicate the girl like that an' work for 'er all these years? What a soft fool you must think me. Where is she? Let's 'ave it out now."

Cowed and subdued, she crept from the room and climbed the narrow stairs. She opened the girl's bedroom door gently.

Sunbeam, sitting by the open window, turned a pale little face to greet her.

"Why, Auntie, dear, were you calling me?" she asked, rising and putting her arm lovingly round Helly's shoulder.

"No, my duck. But I want you all the same. Your father wants you, Sunbeam. And, mw darling, don't mind too much what he says. Take things calm. He's in a temper, an' will say things he doesn't mean. Be patient with him, Sunbeam, and remember that I love you."

The beautiful hazel eyes had widened in alarm. A slight flush covered the girl's face.

"Why, is he enry with me, Aunt Helly?"

"Oh, not with you more'n with any one. But he's in a different mood. Bear with him, my duck."

Sunbeam sighed. Even as her aunt had entered the room she had been struggling with her feelings of disapproval of this man who was her father. As Duncan had surmised, the feelings of reverence for him had received their death blow the night before. Her heart was aching with anger for her disloyalty to the man; and at the same time she felt herself envying the smallest village child whose father's hands were simply soiled with honest labor.

"Oh, for a clean name!" she had sighed, wiping away her blinding tears. Therefore contrition for her lack of pride in a man who evidently was devoid of shame, made her more willing to bear with his temper, more anxious to atone for her shortcomings. At the kitchen door she kissed her aunt again, whispering in her ear:

"I'll be patient, don't worry!"

The next moment she turned, smiling to her father.

"Do you want me, dear?" she asked, meeting his angry eyes unflinchingly.

"Yes," he growled, his expression softening nevertheless, for he loved her as much as he could love any one. "I want to talk over one or two matters. For my stay in this 'ole won't be a long one. An' in a cardboard 'ouse like this 'tis as well to talk business when no one else is in it."

Sunbeam nodded her head. There was something in his face and voice she had neither seen nor heard before. What could he have to say? Was he meditating some fresh burglary? A shiver ran through her.

"Sunbeam, you can't say I've bin a bad father to you?"

She started. Love sprang to her face. She took his roughened hand.

"You have been the best of fathers. I thank you from the bottom of my heart," she whispered in a low voice, pressing her soft lips to the horny skin.

He glanced triumphantly at his sister, exclaiming in an exultant tone:

"Then as I've won such gratitood, Sunbeam, you can't refuse to be a doctifal daughter?"

"Of course not! Have I ever been anything but dutifal?"

"I'm goin' to let you be so, more, by asking you to do a simple thing for me. Mind you, a thing no good girl would refuse to do for a parent wot 'as risked even his neck for her."

The girl's eyes widened, her lips grew dry. A pang of fear shot through her heart. "What could it be? She glanced at her aunt. The woman sat as though turned to stone, a mortal dread in her eyes. The sight was not reassuring, but Sunbeam was plucky.

"What is it, father?" she asked, smiling sweetly at him. "To hear your voice, and see Aunt Helly's face, I might imagine something terrible. But I'm sure it cannot be that."

"Of course not," he retorted gruffly, turning his eyes away. "You've been well eddicated an' I want you to help me to do one or two jobs, this way. You're to git into the places as governess or anything you like, visitor if you can, and—"

But a low exclamation drove the words from his lips. Sunbeam was standing before him with a horror-stricken face.

"Oh, father, stop. Don't! Anything but that! I cannot do it! Don't be angry with me, but I cannot do this thing you ask."

"You cannot! But you must. I've got

father an' you must obey. Where's the 'arm? Ain't you been eddicated on money got that way. Ain't you livin' on it now. What'r your aunt's savin's but her share out of my koolin, eh?" he exclaimed brutally, though his eyes were still averted from the quivering pleading face.

"Oh, Aunt Helly! Is it true?" she faltered, turning despairingly to the other woman who was weeping silently, with furtive glances at her brother's bullet-shaped head as she sat behind him.

"My darling, yes! Forgive me. I never told you, but yes, it's true."

"True that all your money 'at bought this, and feeds us, is illegotten? Oh, Auntie, when you saw hiv distressed I was to hear how my education had been paid for, why did you keep this from me?"

"'Cause I was afraid you'd leave me, maybe, you seemed so dead set against such doings," sobbed Helly.

Sunbeam sighed.

"As a child I never knew. Until the villagers began to scoff I was kept in ignorance. Oh, father, what have you done? It would have been better to let me die like my poor mother."

Bill Green sprang to his feet. His patience, scant at any time, had fled. Even his overpowering love for the girl had no control over his unchained anger. He took her roughly by the arm.

(To be continued).

A GIGANTIC JOKE.

The Old Man Brought His Animals and Bits of Things.

The love of animals is deeply implanted in the Magyar character, and most of the peasant farmers of Hungary own valuable horses and high-bred stock. They are well-to-do, although they live in a primitive manner, have a keen sense of humor, and are ready to take trouble to put the laugh on some one else. In "The Whirlpool of Europe" this story is told of one of the Magyar farmers:

A typical peasant farmer, a man of considerable wealth, was well-known for his adherence to old clothes and customs. On one occasion a young farmer, new to the district, who had taken a small holding not far from that of the old man, perceived a shabby figure leaning against the gate on the edge of his property and said, "Hi, old man! Do you want some work?"

The wearer of a shabby sheepskin took his long pipe out of his mouth and nodded gravely.

"Well, you can come along to-morrow and look after some of my sheep. Bring any of your bits of things or animals with you; there's plenty of room on my farm."

The next day, as the young farmer walked across his fields, he saw a cloud of dust coming up the road. Presently there emerged from it a herd of cows, horses and sheep—hundreds of animals with their driver. The cavalcade swept past the astonished man. Behind it came a huge wagon, creaking and groaning, laden with heavy furniture, in the front of which sat his shabby acquaintance of the day before.

"You told me to bring my animals and bits of things," said the old man, "and here we are."

AN AGED BRITISH TREE.

The Cowthorpe Oak, Reputed 500 Years Old, Flourishing in York.

One of the oldest of British trees is the Cowthorpe oak, which has been standing near Wetherby, in Yorkshire, for 500 years, according to veracious chronicle. It is a tree that has been described often and has figured in works of fiction.

It is related of this tree that on one occasion as many as forty persons have been gathered within the hollow of its trunk, although it must be confessed that some of these were children. The most recent measurement showed that its girth of trunk at the ground was 54 feet 3 inches and the cavity was 11 feet by 9 feet.

The tree is not now so very tall, reaching only 37 feet into the air. There are twenty-five props about the tree to support the falling branches.

The cavity has been noticeable only since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many of the earlier measurements show that the tree once was much greater in girth than now.

Aged as it is the tree bore acorns in 1901 and 1905 and always produces a fair amount of foliage. In 1903 an acorn borne by the Cowthorpe oak was planted near by and a tree is growing up slowly as a memorial to the parent.

FROST AND FLOWERS.

Man, in his attempts to guide nature to his own ends and purposes, has never better succeeded than in his dealings with flowers. He has almost changed them at his will, giving them shapes, colors, and even seasons, to suit himself. Recently the new methods of producing artificial cold have been taken advantage of in floriculture to retard the blooming of flowers, as well as to preserve them after being cut. Interesting experiments have been made at Dijon, France, by Monsieur Verrier, using the cold-storage room of an abattoir and the cellar of a brewery. Not only the temperature but the amount of moisture in the air have to be taken into account. On the average, a temperature of 36° Fahrenheit served best for both cut and growing flowers. An azalea in bud was kept 50 days in a latent state, after which the temperature being increased, it bloomed for a month. Hyacinths and Bengal roses were similarly treated. Cut flowers were kept in excellent condition for two and three months. The ultimate aim of the experiments is to enable the floriculturist to make his plants bloom much according to his pleasure.

ON THE FARM

THE MISFORTUNE OF BUMPER WHEAT CROPS.

"About the biggest curse this country has is the bumper crop of wheat," said Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Dominion Live-stock Commissioner, addressing a Manitoba meeting of stockmen last winter. "Some three times since I first came into this province we got farmers started fairly well along live-stock lines and along dairy lines, and were getting them to try various live-stock branches. Creameries were being built, pigpens erected, and people were doing fairly well, but there would come one of these big crops of wheat and everyone would throw up his herd, and the first thing we knew the cattle were sold, the pigs were sold and the fowls were allowed to freeze to death. Creameries were closed up. Every man was plowing, and it was forty bushels to the acre and \$1 a bushel!" The fact of the matter is that with all credit to wheat, we must, if we wish to succeed in this country, look to our live-stock.

While it may occur to the satirist to suggest that next winter Dr. Rutherford may be able to lead in a hymn of praise for the blessing of a slim crop of wheat, nevertheless there was much wisdom in his words. Mankind is ever prone to shortsighted conduct which very often leads to commercial suicide, and it is only when the easy down-grade path is providentially blocked that he begins the climb to higher and more stable levels of success.

So much for official philosophy. Continuing the Live-stock Commissioner touched on a question that will awaken the interest of Eastern as well as prairie cattlemen:

"Complaint has been made that it does not pay to go into beef production in the West. As matters are a man, after considerable expense and trouble, has prepared a number of fat cattle for sale and then finds very great difficulty in getting their proper value in the market. You all know what has been achieved by the united concerted action of the grain-growers of this country. The same thing can be done with regard to the marketing of cattle. It is simply a matter of combination on the part of the producers, and, in my opinion, there is a very profitable field for the production of beef. The export of cattle bred in this country is large, and it is getting larger all the time. In 1904 30,000 head of cattle were shipped east; in 1905, 32,000, and in 1906, 35,000. For years large numbers have been sent and a lot of these cattle are shipped at a loss to the owner.

"In the States the cattle are shipped from the ranches to the Middle States, and there fed up, and at the end of ninety days are sent in to Chicago, and are carefully culled, and only the best are sent forward for export to European markets. They sell from a penny to two-pence a pound more than Canadian cattle. On the other hand our cattle are shipped right through, and when they arrive on the other side of the Atlantic are a disgrace to Canadian breeders. It has always struck me on this phase of the matter that there is a great field in our Province of Manitoba and in what is now Saskatchewan, as well as some parts of Ontario, for the finishing of these cattle. I think if these cattle could be taken by our Manitoba farmers in the fall and put into feed lots and fed on coarse grains, that it would pay very well indeed to finish these cattle here and send them forward to a properly safeguarded market in Europe or in the east. I think that could be done very profitably. We have more coarse feed in this province and in Saskatchewan than in any other part of the world that I know of. It is a ridiculous thing to ship cattle and also to ship our coarse grains. I intend to go thoroughly into this question with a view to establishing a paying and profitable cattle trade from Manitoba to Europe."

SILAGE GOOD TO USE NOW.

Now is the time to commence stabling and feeding the cows nights so as to work them gradually over to winter conditions. The autumn pastures are no longer very nourishing, and, though furnishing a good deal of appetizing forage, they should be supplemented, for best results, with green corn, hay, roots or silage, and a moderate meal ration.

There is nothing better than silage. Many dairymen labor under a false impression that silage is not good to feed until it has cured for six weeks or a month in the silo. This is a mistake. Silage is at its very best during the first week after it is ensiled. At this stage fermentation has only nicely commenced, and the first stage of the process gives the cut corn the odor and flavor of fresh cider. At this stage the cows will eat it greedily, and do well on it. Cattle which would require to be accustomed to cured silage will eat this sweet, fragrant feed at once, without demur. The only caution necessary is to exercise care when throwing out the silage to keep the surface level, to avoid digging holes with shovel or fork, and to tramp around the edges occasionally. It must be remembered that the unsettled surface is loose and unless one is lowering the level pretty rapidly, it is liable to deteriorate as new layers are exposed to the air from day to day. Owing to carelessness in throwing out the silage some have experienced a waste with this early-autumn feeding, but there need be no difficulty if one feeds a reasonable amount per day and observes the precautions above indicated.

Never judge any man's religion by what he says when you step on his corn. It is well to understand that it is sometimes well to stand from under.