

FORTUNE FAVORS THE BRAVE, OR, A LOOK INTO THE PAST

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd)

As she met the glance of those black eyes, she shivered, then pride gave her strength. With a bow she was passing him, when Thomas Crawshaw stopped her.

"Wait a bit, Nancy, I want a word with you, if you please."

She turned pale as death. Was this the fulfillment already of her vague presentiment?

"You seem to have something on your mind, Nancy," Crawshaw went on, fixing her with his eyes; "have you had bad news from home?"

The last sentence roused her anger.

"I have business indoors, Mr. Crawshaw; you will pardon me if I leave you, I—"

"Your business can wait," he said, quietly, and at his tone she shrank back.

There was a nasty air of determination about him; she felt a sudden loathing and fear spring up anew for this man.

"I have waited for this opportunity, Nancy," Crawshaw went on slowly, "and I am not going to lose it, now I've got it; I have a good deal to say to you, my girl."

He paused, and Nancy, weakened from her long, anxious mental struggle, and faint with the heat, leaned her hand on the top of the rustic seat to support herself.

But though she was physically weak, her mental courage was strong.

"You can have nothing to say to me to which I care to listen," she said, in quiet, forcible tones.

A flash of anger shot across Crawshaw's swarthy face.

"I've got a question to ask you," he replied, shortly, "and I want an answer!"

Nancy turned her eyes upon the roses nodding near. Oh! if they were but human, and could help her to escape this man! She felt a curious sensation, as though a net were suddenly flung about her, and she was being gradually drawn toward her old life.

She passed one cold, trembling hand over her eyes, while Crawshaw watched her carefully.

"You know what it is, Nancy," he remarked, coming a step nearer.

She shook her head and shrank away from him.

Crawshaw's face darkened.

"Your memory must be bad, then," he said, curtly. "There is only one question I am likely to ask you, Nancy, and you've heard it before."

She was trembling in every limb now.

"Then I have but to give you the same answer as I have always done," she replied, in a voice that would tremble.

"I think not."

Crawshaw spoke in ominously calm accents. He paused, and then said, with great deliberation:

"Will you be my wife, Nancy Hamilton?"

She retreated from him with a shudder.

"No—no—never!" she murmured, overwhelmed with fear and disgust. "I—I would sooner die! Let me pass. I—"

But Crawshaw was not to be dismissed so easily; he caught her arm, and drew her back.

"Die or not, you shall be my wife!" he muttered, furiously. His face was pale to his lips, and the effect was horrible, with his coal-black eyes and hair. "I have sworn it, and I mean to stick to my oath."

Nancy wrenched her arm from his grasp.

"I am not the lonely, friendless girl I was," she answered him, though she was trembling in every limb. "I have friends who will protect me from such vulgar threats. I—"

"Friends!" he repeated, passionately. "Yes, I know your friend—your lover, Nancy—the man who gets the kisses that belong to me. Well, go to him, and see if he will protect you, and keep your uncle, Henry Chaplin, out of a prison cell."

Nancy was rushing impetuously away, when his last words stayed her; the hot flush of anger died from her face.

"A prison cell?" she repeated, slowly, yet with growing horror. "My uncle—what—what do you mean?"

"I mean," said Crawshaw, speaking very quietly, "that your uncle has very foolishly occupied himself with forging my name to the tune of a couple of hundred pounds; that's what I mean, Miss Nancy. This old scoundrel confessed it to me with his own lips only yesterday."

"And—and—it rests in your hands?"

The girl's lips could get no further.

Mr. Crawshaw took out a gorgeous case, and without an apology lit a cigar.

"Yes," he said, carelessly, flinging away the match, "it rests in my hands whether I will prosecute him or no; or, rather, I should say it rests in yours, Nancy."

"In mine?"

The two words were whispered faintly.

"Yes, in yours. Marry me and I'll say no more about it, though the old chap has done me out of two hundred quid. But you refuse me, and—well, Henry Chaplin will son."

Nancy paused; her brain reeled. Her uncle, her mother's beloved brother—the only creature in the wide world who had given her love and tenderness in those old miserable days—her poor, broken-down uncle in a prison cell!—it was horrible!

"I do not believe it!—I do not believe it!" she cried, fiercely, turning on him.

"Then your uncle's own hand must prove the truth. Miss Leicester entrusted me with some letters for you that have arrived by the second post. Unless I am mistaken I see Henry Chaplin's scrawl among them."

He took the letters out of his coat pocket and handed them to her.

Despite herself she took them. She let the others fall to the ground; they were only invitations to garden parties, etc., in the neighborhood; and sinking onto a seat, she opened her uncle's. Her eyes were dim with growing horror and pain; but she read enough to know that Crawshaw had indeed spoken the truth.

"Nancy, for God's sakes," the poor creature wrote, "save me! I have seen him. He tells me it rests in your hands, child. By your mother's memory, I implore you, save me from a felon's shame—a felon's cell! I was mad—mad with trouble; but I am sane now. I will work to repay him, but he will give me no time. You can alone save me, Nancy—you!"

She crushed in her hand the written cry of the broken-hearted man, her head sank on her breast, while Crawshaw, standing close beside, watched with breathless eagerness the agony she was enduring.

She lifted her eyes, and gazed at the flowers shedding their fragrance on the air, and some words of the poet came back to her in a vague, strange way:

"I shall never again be friends with roses."

Never again would she feel the tumultuous happiness, the exquisite delight, that had grown with their scent only a few short hours ago. It was gone, never to be returned, never to come again!

A lover's dream, short as a midge's life, had been born beside those roses; and now a tragedy—for what else could such a sacrifice be called?—was in progress beneath them.

She was silent so long that the man grew impatient.

"Well," he said, roughly, "what is it to be? I am waiting for your answer, and I must write to my solicitors by this afternoon's post. Have you thought it all out, and are you going to stick to your lover?"—how his eyes glowed as he spoke of Darnley—"and see your uncle—"

Nancy put out her hand with a shudder.

"No—no—not that—I—I consent to—help him."

"You will be my wife?"

Crawshaw flung his cigar away, and approached her closely.

Nancy could hardly breathe; her strength seemed to leave her suddenly; she shut her eyes to hide his face from her sight.

"Yes," she said, in choked, strained tones, "if—it is—to save him, I—will be your wife."

With an exclamation of triumph, Crawshaw had her in his arms, and kissed her pale, cold lips.

"At last!—at last!" he muttered. "I've vowed it should be, and it has come. I've loved you from first to last. Even now, when I could marry any woman I chose, I've come back to you, Nancy."

He kissed her again, but she made no response, she lay like an image of stone in his arms. Her apathy angered him. He loosened his hold, so that she staggered back and nearly fell; but as he came near her all her misery awoke, and she felt as though she would go mad if he touched her.

"Go—go—leave me!" she whispered, shrinking farther away from him.

With a savage exclamation, yet with an exultant heart, Thomas Crawshaw obeyed her.

"I have won," he said, triumphantly, to himself; but as he was moving away he turned. "Understand," he said, curtly, "you've not to utter one word of this to a living-soul. Let the world know nothing, except that you are my wife of your own free will. If I find out you have spoken to any one of them, I shall put your uncle's case in the hands of the proper authorities without delay."

If Nancy heard, she made no sign, and as she walked away, glorying in his cowardly conquest, she fell prone on the ground in silent agony and unfathomable despair.

And still the sun shone and the roses nodded, heedless of her broken heart and ruined life, heedless that her joyous spirit is lowered, her loving nature.

"All bereft,
As when some tower doth fall,
With battlements and wall,
And gates, and bridge, and all,
And nothing left."

CHAPTER XI.

The long summer day which heralded the evening of Derrick's return; and she expressed such a decided wish for Miss Leicester's companionship, that despite herself the little mistress of Ripstone Hall had to throw up her own inclinations and attach herself to her aunt, who was also her guest.

Luncheon was but scantily attended, for Lady Burton and her two daughters, with Capt. and Mrs. Fairfax, had driven over to another lawn-tennis meeting some miles off; and although Lord Merefield was present, and Mr. Crawshaw also, the meal was only a dull affair.

"Most of us," said Mr. Shovelton, "are looking out for ourselves; I think we'll all admit that. The trouble with most of us is that we don't do this intelligently; we are always thinking of ourselves and our own interests only; and that's where we slip a cog. Let me illustrate:

"I buy fruit to carry home; I've done that for—well, a good many years, and for a long time I bought around in various places. Then one day some years ago I stopped at a store where I liked the looks of the fruit and where, as I noticed a moment later, the paper bags were a little heavier than those I had been accustomed to find. The bags here cost the dealer more, maybe a quarter or a half a cent more a piece; but I liked the looks of them. They were good, stout bags that wouldn't break on the way home.

"And when this dealer had put the fruit in one of these bags ho

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round. She tried to get up and speak to me, but she cannot even open her lips. I am quite determined, Merefield"—turning to her cousin, and addressing him alone—"I am quite determined to have Dr. Knowles here, if she is not better soon."

"I will ride over at once," Lord Merefield offered, eagerly. "It won't take me long, Dolly."

"I shall be very happy to accommodate Miss Leicester," Mr. Crawshaw broke in, blandly. He had been lolling back in his chair, very silent, but with a curious smile hovering about the corners of his mouth, a smile which had vaguely irritated and annoyed Miss Leicester.

(To be continued.)

BALKY HORSES.

A Fault Sometimes Inherited—Simple Ways to Overcome It.

The incorrigible balky horses of the rural districts find their way to wholesale markets, where under the test of hauling a heavy truck wagon on a paved street with the wheels blocked the vice is immediately discovered, says the Horse Shoer's Journal.

If the animal has been sold as serviceably sound and guaranteed a willing worker and a cheerful puller the buyer rejects his purchase and the horse is resold without any guarantee except clear title of ownership.

Some horses have learned to balk by being overloaded and abused. Their courage has been overtaxed and they rebel, disheartened at the task they are asked to perform.

Other horses appear to balk from natural inclination and appear foaled full of innate stubbornness.

Balking, like windsucking, cribbing, weaving and halter pulling, is a vice developed by natural inheritance. In breaking young horses to harness too much caution

didn't simply twist the neck of it and hand it over to me so in a form inconvenient to carry. He folded the top of the bag over and rolled it down to form a handle—a grip piece; and then he tied this bundle around securely with twine, thus making it up altogether into a bundle that was secure and handy to carry.

"Of course I liked all that, and I found that he always did up his packages so or putting on sometimes a wood and wire handle; but he always made the package secure and handy for me. He had some thought for me, and I've been buying of him ever since; and if he should move I'd follow him. I would go out of my way to trade with him."

"The moral is this: Any small storekeeper, if his goods are right, can build up a trade and hold it and increase it if he has the intelligence and the human quality that prompts him faithfully to consider not himself alone but as well the wants and interests of his customers."

AFTER 22 YEARS.

Body of Guide, Perfectly Preserved, Yielded up by a Glacier.

The body of a guide, perfectly preserved, has been yielded up by one of the Swiss glaciers after a period of twenty-two years. In 1868 the guide fell into a crevasse. His body was lately recovered, its appearance unchanged by its long imprisonment in the ice.

There have been other cases of the bringing back of a long-lost body held for years in the close embrace of the ice, says Harper's Weekly. One of the first instances on record relates to the Hamel accident, which occurred in 1820. Several guides were swept down by an avalanche and hurled into a crevasse.

Hamel prophesied the glacier would yield them up in the course of one thousand years, but Forbes proved that the end of the glacier would be reached by the bodies in 70 years. This statement was considered bold, but its accuracy borne out by the event. In 70 years the flow of ice brought bodies to light.

1866 Henry Arkwright was lost in a glacier. In just thirty-one years his brother received a telegram from the Mayor of Chamouni stating that the body had been found. Every article of clothing intact. His name and regiment could be read clearly on his handkerchief, and his gold pencil-case opened and shut as easily as when he last used it, three decades ago.

More people have the gift of gab than the gift of silence.

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