

THE DOUBLE TEST.

By Beryl Willow.

Continued.

"Are you not weary, Mr. Fairchild, of this glitter, which so many worship as if all the jewels here were genuine, and all the rhetoric sincere? The open air is better."

She took my arm, and we passed into the gardens. The glittering moon was high in heaven, chasing a host of stars across the skies; the air was balmy as a tropic breeze, and the soft murmur of neighboring waters stole through the grounds like a whisper of invisible lips. Numbers of the guests were, like ourselves, enjoying a promenade through the spacious grounds, which stretched from the rear of the mansion, in a tasteful grove, down to the river bank, which formed the western boundary of my friend's estate. For some time we strolled vacantly along the winding paths, engaged in varying conversation, and often passing, in our irregular wanderings, others who, like ourselves, preferred the sublime beauty of the world about us to the artificial splendor of the parlor.

"And so you expect a quick release from these scenes of display," said Miss Seymour, in answer to myself. "Is it possible that you regret to exchange this life of questionable enjoyment for a path of undoubted usefulness?"

"Nature has fitted me to enjoy the social circle as well as most men," I replied; "and yet I am not Hindoo enough to worship pleasure as a deity."

"From our brief acquaintance, I should have marked Mr. Fairchild as one of her most devoted worshippers," she said, "for few attend her courts as steadily or devoutly."

"Nay, Miss Seymour," I remonstrated, "do not judge me prematurely. I am perhaps less fascinated by the mere life I have been leading than by some of those who lend the sanction of wealth and cultivation to its senseless ceremonies. Surely, one as vulnerable to social life as I am may consistently yield to spells that have been countenanced by one as gifted and accomplished as yourself."

I thought I could detect a scornful smile upon her lip as she replied: "The drunkard has his Lethæan cup, the brute his hour of repose, and these seasons of excitement answer to the same demand for rest."

"A specious theory," I rejoined, "but one that cannot be sustained. This endless round of chatter and parade excites to-day only to forsake to-morrow." "You speak confidently; and yet few suffer themselves to doubt the power of trifles even like these to soothe unpleasant thoughts. Perhaps my own discrepancy of theory and practice may originate in a desire to fully satisfy myself whether these fleeting follies have really any potency for 'minds diseased.'"

"Let me hope that Miss Seymour cannot have encountered anything so fearful as to drive her to the waters of oblivion at the expense of reason. Indeed, I cannot conceive how such a necessity could come upon one so undeserving it," I said, with a profound failure in my attempt at gallantry.

"My hypothesis did not convey a right to speculate on what I have endured," she added, coldly. "I am not one, however, whose path has been so thornless as to give me no sympathy with sorrow, nor one so nearly an angel as to be free from error. You have gallantry enough, I suspect, to believe that what may not be readily explained may yet involve no guilt, for suffering is not limited to any corner of the globe."

"Far be it from me, dearest Miss Seymour," I said, "to revive the secret griefs which have afflicted one so perfect. Let me prove to you the depths of my esteem by avowing here the love which you must have recognized. Though I cannot claim the favor which long acquaintance merits, the briefest passions are not always the least worthy. I know my presumption in aspiring to worth so priceless; but if you knew how the thought of a future without you shakes me with dread, how the days would be sunless and the nights wretched with despair, you would look kindly on me. Oh, tell me that I may hope, and I shall be blest forever!"

As I bent above the averted head, and clasped the yielding figure to my heart, the weight of uncertainty lifted from above me, and my soul looked into heaven. Suddenly she rose from my embrace, and with her eyes flashing through tears exclaimed:—

"Henry Fairchild, you speak of time as lightly as a boy! And are you indeed one of that herd who think a week's devotion wins a woman's heart? I had thought you higher, nobler than they. But learn from me that if so brief a space of flattery wins one who wear a woman's form, it can never secure a true woman's love."

"You judge me harshly," I cried. "You do not know me if you think my love, though born in an hour, can die as soon. Name but the proof, if proof you desire, and I swear it shall be given."

"I will ask but a little thing, Henry Fairchild," she said, wildly, "a very little thing to one who truly loves. Let us separate now, never more to meet until I call you to me. Ask me not when it will be; it may be months, nay, years; but it shall come as surely as that moon shall wax and wane forever."

"And will naught else suffice?" I asked.

"Nothing but an age of separation for months, years, perchance forever? Oh, picture to yourself a dying heart, that withers with the very dream it cherishes; picture a life on which love's sun has set forever. Bid me perform all possibilities, but do not doom me to an infinite despair."

"No," she said; "though it scatters my heart's best hopes to the four winds of heaven, I cannot yield the trial. Obey, and you go forth fenced in from harm by the strong love of a woman whose first true heart is yours; refuse, and this side of the grave there shall be for either of us no dawn of hope."

I shuddered to look upon her radiant figure, as, with head thrown back, a countenance as pale as marble, and eyes that mocked the radiance of the skies on which she gazed, she pointed to the zenith. Instinctively I bent before, her as a slave might bend before his patron saint.

"And must I thus be banished?" I moaned. "A day without thee seems an eternity; how can I seal myself in darkness, it may be forever? Oh, you are cold and cruel, and do not love me!"

"Henry!" she said passionately, "you are unjust. A love like mine for you lives only in a woman's soul, and I will suffer no maidenly bashfulness to blind you to your utter selfishness. Will you alone endure the agony? You speak as if I doomed you to a penance in which I bear no part. O God, that I might indeed escape the bitter tears that will flow as I recall this hour! Selfish trembler! your pillow will be roses compared with mine, whose hand thus severs the chain that may never again be linked. But, Henry"—and here her frenzied voice subsided into tenderness and solemn sadness—"hear me swear that, should we part to meet no more on earth, before the judgment-seat of God, if no other woman with her woman's love shall call the hers, I will rise up beside thee, and call thee mine! But to-morrow, Henry, to-morrow decide; until then deem the love confessed which must bear so cruel penance afterward. Let us go in."

And she wound her arms around my neck, and leaned her head upon my shoulder. "Darling! adored! I murmured, mad with passion, 'I accept the trial.' "No," she answered, "not now; to-morrow I will listen."

I caught her to my bosom in an agony of love, desperation, and delight, and pressed a shower of kisses upon the smooth white forehead, the quivering lips, the tear-wet eyes; then, whispering in her ear a last good-night, rushed from the garden.

CHAPTER III.

My steps, on leaving Mary Seymour, were bent towards my own abode. In the retirement of my chamber it was then the pride which would have scorned to show its weakness before men gave way; and, casting myself in agony upon the sofa, I wept out something of the surcharged tempest of my feelings. It was neither anger, misery, nor injured pride alone that prompted so fierce a torrent of tears; it was a compound of them all, and something more; yet I scarcely knew the reason of my agitation. The one whom of all the world I most worshipped had confessed she loved me, and what could I—who but a few hours previous would have considered that happiness cheaply purchased by years of suffering—what more could I desire? Alas for human foresight! who ever acknowledged Fortune's favors, though his coffers overdraped with an abundance? Thus I, who but an hour before persuaded myself that, knowing the heart of Mary Seymour to be mine, I could calmly look ages of probation in the face, now wept unmanly tears at prospect of brief delay.

"Perhaps this trial may end to-morrow," whispered hope, as I lay pondering the strange demand. "No," murmured doubt; "those bitter tears, that stern and mournful face, those chilling words could only herald some unending trial. Oh that I might see its justice!"

And thus agitated by conflicting moods, I alternately paced the floor with heated and indignant tread, and then anon paused to muse upon the transcendent loveliness which had so enthralled me. In this way passed the hours; far, however, from subsiding into quietude by the lapse of time, as the more violent first symptoms of my passion wore away, they were replaced by a feverish vexation, which seemed to find a sort of fearful pleasure in torturing itself with contradictory and false conclusions.

"Is this the eloquence," I muttered, "that has melted justice at the bar and awakened pity in a heart of stone? and a weak woman yet unmoved by all? By Heaven, it shall not be! I have pleaded less earnestly in behalf of

human life, with more effect; and is this not a case of life? or more than death? Ah! death were a glad alternative to a life of fruitless pain. Who can count the chances of a minute? Yet she dooms me to an age of chances! And for what? A whim! a woman's caprice! Yes, it must be a caprice! a cruel jest, to test the power of her charms, to lure me as a trophy in her train, and then, it may be to cheat me in the end. Shall I submit to such palpable deceit? And yet, wherefore this whim? She said she loved me; she did not lie; that tear and tone of agony were never counterfeit; she suffers more than I. I shrink from contemplating the reason of such sacrifice! What dark, unfathomable mystery yawns beneath this dread decree? A mystery—a shadow? Yes, it may be—what? Can any honorable secret thus compel a woman to shroud herself in darkness? Can such a woman, angel as she seems, be linked to a concealed and terrible event? I shudder to admit it may be. Lucifer was the star of the morning, and yet if she were, after all, unworthy!"

A sudden ring at the door arrested my attention. A moment afterward a card was handed me, on which I read the following:—"Paul Devereux would see Mr. Fairchild on matters of great interest to both, and hopes that the nature of his business will excuse all want of ceremony."

Though in no very fitting temper for the transaction of business, I concluded to learn the nature of this strangely unseasonable visit, and directed the servant to admit the stranger, who proved to be a gentleman of prepossessing exterior, and who, apologizing for his untimely call, seated himself with a graceful self-possession, indicating unquestionable birth and breeding. For a minute or two succeeding his entrance he sat quietly fixing his eyes upon the carpet, evidently thinking how best to introduce the subject of his interview.

"Whenever you choose to impart the nature of your business," said I, at length, "I shall be pleased to listen. It must be indeed a subject of importance that demands attention at so late an hour."

"You speak truly, sir," he answered; "but before proceeding, let me inquire if you are not laboring under some deep intellectual excitement? My profession—that of medicine—will excuse my inquiry, for I would not increase a flame already serious."

"Sir," said I, ashamed that my weakness should have been perceptible, "what excitement I may labor under will affect the thread of your remarks but little, and I beg you will proceed."

As I finished speaking, I flung myself into a seat, and surveyed the features of the stranger with a scrutinizing gaze. The examination was quite satisfactory. The high cylindrical forehead, shielded somewhat from the ardent suns that had embrowned his cheeks, was pale and noble, and the hair that curled above it was black and glossy as a raven's plume. The keen dark eye and firm but pleasant mouth gave an air of decision to a face otherwise too feminine, for the close-cut beard could not conceal the almost womanish beauty of his chin and throat.

He broke the silence thus employed by asking permission to refer to some events having a connection with myself. I assented, and he continued:—"Twelve years ago last winter you taught school in a secluded corner of Herkimer County; twelve years ago, on the twenty-third of November, you struck a blow in behalf of a poor, despondent, and wretched orphan child; twelve years ago, on the fifth day of April last, you closed your school, and when all was over a loving hand laid a cluster of wild roses in your palm."

"Stay!" I interrupted, startled from my self-possession by the stranger's knowledge of the past. "Can you tell me anything of that precious child?"

"You are too hasty," said the stranger, with a quiet smile, "were your fancy not distempered by some late excitement, you would have judged that I do not appear to recapitulate these facts without a knowledge of the actors and an intention to communicate it."

I bowed impatiently, and he continued:—"I need scarcely say to you, who know what followed, the shadows fell that night upon at least one happy heart—the heart of Maggie Fulmer. In that wide world which had hitherto accorded her but scorn and coldness, she had found one heart of tenderness, one being who promised unalterable love. Is this true?"

"It is," I replied, "and God knows how religiously I kept my promise. Not a day, not an hour was she absent from my thoughts, until—"

"Until you found that the world pays little heed to pretty flowers, unless they bloom in choice and cultivated gardens; until you began to fear that, were your blossom of the hillside transplanted to a fashionable parlor, its owner would become ridiculous, and itself unhappy?"

"You have guessed shrewdly, but rather wide of the mark," I said. "I never suffered myself to compare the child of poverty with the favorites of fortune, for a generous heart and noble spirit are themselves the best estate."

"I have no need to learn of the generous soul of Mr. Fairfield," observed the stranger. "For I am not ignorant of his past singularly upright career."

I bowed in acknowledgment, and he proceeded:—"However thoroughly you sought to drive such difficulties from your mind, even your most cautious tenderness could not blot their shadow from your letters as the months succeeding your departure from Smalley gradually widened into years, blending your memories of Maggie and her merits, as they grew dimmer, with new and brighter visions, which sadly impaired the older ones by contrast. Think you that an over-sensitive mind, like that of Maggie Fulmer, could fail to trace the outlines of a fear that had once darkened the page while it was written? Your letters, it is true, were very, very kind, and would have satisfied many an ardent mistress; but the doubt which grew larger and larger in your soul could not escape the eyes of Maggie; and then, Mr. Fairfield, you received no more letters."

"Thus far," I said, as the speaker evidently paused for a remark, "thus far you seem to know all. What constant but ineffectual attempts I subsequently made to discover the retreat of her who had been so long the moving element of many a dream you must surely know since you know so much."

"Something of that I know," he answered; "but my business here to-night is not so much with the past as with the future."

"Proceed, sir," I observed, "and you need no assurance from me that if any means of mine can benefit Maggie Fulmer, I shall need no prompting."

"Let us follow for a moment further, then, her fortunes," he resumed. "You need no minute narration to imagine her constant application of your advice, after your departure as before; and her unceasing aspiration after the prizes you bade her struggle for—wisdom and goodness. Had wealth lain at her command, which could smooth away the fearful difficulties in her path, the task would have been easier, though many, even with such advantages, esteem it hopeless; but for that unaided child of sorrow to climb the steep of life, in poverty and hunger, destitute of friends, of means, and almost of books, was a task which few can appreciate who have not done the same. Can you not realize, Mr. Fairfield, the long and weary pilgrimage, the secret tears, the uncomplaining toil, the unwearied study, the hopeful trust which witnessed and sustained the struggle? And if, indeed, it might be said at last that her fortunes assumed a brighter aspect, as she rose by slow gradations from the dependence of the girl to the independence of a woman, it is none the less a truth that her guiding stars along the toilsome journey were the counsels of Henry Fairfield, the noble future he mapped out for her unfledged ambition, and, more than all, the memory of—himself. Such, sir, is the history, in part, of the school-girl Maggie Fulmer, now grown into a woman whom experience sad and bitter have made wise, and who is in all things but wealth and adventitious rank your equal. And my errand here this night, sir, is simply to inquire how, after so many years of cruel privation and brave endurance, you would meet her?"

There was something in this question, or the emphasis conveying it, that stung me strangely. Full as my heart already was of pity for the unhappy child whose servile lot had never blossomed but with hope to welcome at last, his words seemed to imply, "Mr. Fairfield, your integrity has withstood many trials, but here you will act the coward." Perhaps the contrast which I had drawn while he was speaking, between the gentle nature of Maggie, who had, through years of suffering, looked only to my love for a return, and the wayward, capricious coquette, Mary Seymour, who a few hours previous had met me with a cold condition which must separate us perchance forever, had originated the suspicion, for I could find no such expression as I looked again into the penetrating eyes before which I felt the secrets of thoughts unfolding like the pages of a familiar book. In my present irritable mood, I was vexed at the cool superiority of the stranger, and made a powerful struggle for my dignity.

"Sir," said I, "if I have thus far submitted to be catechized by one of whose authority to speak in this matter I know nothing, I am scarcely so forgetful of our relative positions as to discuss with him my probable conduct under any supposable circumstances. If your business be to trifle with my feelings, your errand, sir, is perilous. If you have any definite purpose, it would be wise perhaps to state it."

The fine face of the stranger was overcast with a look of haughtiness as he replied: "My authority for this interview, sir, is Miss Margaret Fulmer, and my specific purpose is to learn how much the Henry Fairfield of thirty has changed from the Henry Fairfield of eighteen. The picture which I drew is not a fancy sketch, but wholly true. You may think, as many might, that the end scarcely warranted such disproportioned sacrifices; but love only can estimate the power of a woman's will, and her solace during all has been a hope that the one who gave a color to her whole existence is the same as when he said to her, twelve years ago—"

"Tell me that you love me, Maggie, and some time, when you have outlived these girlhood troubles, we may realize this dream together." As I have said, sir, she has lived years upon the anticipation of this hour. She has at last become, what you taught her was worthy of the love of all men, a being of intelligence, respectability, and virtue, and in this position desires to know if you have forgotten and ceased to love the Maggie of your boyhood. Sickness, poverty, and the vicissitudes of misfortune have failed to erase your image from her heart, and she now offers you the boundless affection of one who, if poor, is virtuous and respected; who, if she has suffered from misfortune, has not wrecked therein her nobleness of soul; and who, though she has forgotten volumes from the past, still wears in her bosom an image which bears your name."

To be continued next week.

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FURNITURE.

Come and see our great Bargains in

We will sell for the next 30 DAYS our well known and selected stock at prices that will astonish every one.

Our \$35 Bed-room set for \$25.

Our \$30 one for \$23.

Our \$20 one for \$15.

Everything in proportion for the next 30 days

Come along and you will get a Bargain.

ANDERSON, NUGENT & CO.,
Kent St., Lindsay.

What a Correspondent says of The House of

OWEN MCGARVEY & Son,

What the Proper Application of Printers' Ink has Produced
—A model piece of Furniture that Captured Foreign Medals



That the success of every business man depends upon his ability to advertise cannot be gainsaid. Indeed the efficacy of printers' ink lies in its proper application. The man who knows how to advertise the goods he really carries, and not the goods he does not keep, is the man who will thrive best. Many merchants nowadays judiciously spread their advertisement all over a popular newspaper; but when the buyers visit their places they find that their best goods exist only on paper. This class of men know how to pay for an "ad." but they do not know how to advertise. It is a rare thing to find a house that comes up to its advertisement in these times, and rarer still are those that the advertisement does not come up to. During my travels in search of news I have found one of the rarer specimens, and the way I happened to find it was through the following unique advertisement:—

"Carrie, dear,"

said her father, and he said it with a good deal of satisfaction, "William asked me for your hand last night, and I consented." "Well, Pa, that's the first bill of mine you haven't objected to." Carrie had evidently not been purchasing her

Household Furniture

from OWEN MCGARVEY & SON, Nos. 1849, 1851 & 1853 Notre Dame Street, or there would have been no objection to the bills sent. Owen McGarvey & Son carry a most complete stock of parlor, dining-room, library and fancy articles, such as the most beautiful odd-piece suites, in plushes of all the newest shades, with ladies' desks, easels, statuette tables, gilt chairs, ottomans and piano stools, with the newest and largest assortment of rattan rockers, easy chairs, reclining chairs, swing seats, cribs, and a full line of the very much admired bent furniture from Vienna, Austria, and their prices are acknowledged the cheapest—quality considered—in the city; and to provide for Carrie and Willie's further and future wants, we have now daily arriving, the very finest stock of

BABY CARRIAGES AND PERAMBULATORS

ever on view in this city, varying in price from 7, 8.50, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 60, 75 and up to 85 dollars, the highest priced ones the finest styles and finish yet made in the United States, will be found at Owen McGarvey & Son's oldest and largest furniture store in the city.

When I read this advertisement my curiosity was naturally aroused, and I went to McGarvey's expecting to find, as I had found elsewhere, the best of his goods to exist on paper; but I was mistaken. I found that the advertisement did not come up to the house, and that it takes six spacious flats to hold the very best of his goods which are not mentioned in the advertisement. For example, there is no mention made of the pieces of furniture that captured foreign medals at the various exhibitions. There is a mention made of the fact that the goods are substantially the stock from bottom to top, but there is no mention that brought the firm several bronze and silver medals, together with a diploma for exquisite workmanship. The prizes were awarded by the Paris, Belgium and Indian Colonial Exhibitions. Mr. McGarvey, who by the way is a most affable gentleman, took me through every one of his six flats, where I had the pleasure of inspecting some of the finest furniture I have ever seen, and that's saying a good deal when the fact is considered that I have seen some of the very best New York affords. The pieces of furniture that took the prizes, a cut of which is given above, consists of a drawing room chair and a centre table. The table is made of ebony, with sides of free ornamental scrollwork carving, the legs similarly treated, to which brass claws are attached, and the chair is of that kind known as wire backed, upholstered very richly in crimson and old gold brocade.

The real merit and beauty of these articles is beyond my power of description. In order that the real beauty of the elegant furniture may be seen to advantage, Mr. McGarvey has a portion of his second flat divided into apartments. These are furnished with some of his best furniture in such a way as to resemble a palatial dwelling. A parlor, dining-room, bed-room and even the hall-way are so luxuriously arranged as to suggest the rich blessings of a home made beautiful by the exquisite touch of the experienced housewife. These apartments are models of perfection, and any housekeeper who gets a view of them will turn green with envy.

After making a tour of the various departments on the upper flats we made a descent in the handsome elevator to the first floor, where the pleasant recollection of childhood days came up before me like a dream, when I beheld the perfect gems of baby carriages displayed to public view.

I wished a wish—but then 'twere vain,
To wish one's self a child again.

I must confess that never since I was an "infant terrible" was I so completely carried away with a baby carriage. I will not attempt to describe any one in particular, but will venture to say that any one of them would take a prize at an exhibition if held to-morrow and this is not saying a great deal.

J. A. ARNEAUX

OWEN MCGARVEY & SON,

1849, 1851, and 1853 Notre Dame Street, Montreal.