

RUTHVEN'S WARD

BY FLORENCE MARRIAT.



CHAPTER I.—CONTINUED.

"Well, I've no alternative but to commit you for theft," said the magistrate, "with the option of a fine—three weeks, or a penalty of five shillings. Remove the prisoner, constable, and call the next case."

The hearts of the populace burned within them at the sentence, but beyond a low murmur, immediately checked by the cry of "Silence," they dared give their indignation no vent. Ruthven's heart burned in unison with theirs. That delicate, frightened-looking child, who had evidently neither understood the offense for which she had been brought there, nor the punishment that had been awarded it, to be sent to prison for three weeks, to herd with the lowest and vilest of her sex, and then to be released—for what end? Ruthven knew what he longed to do, but false shame and the fear of ridicule prevented him for a moment from carrying it out. But a long wall of terror, as the constables were removing the prisoner from the dock, decided him.

"Oh, sir! don't take me to prison," she screamed. "Don't take me to prison. I'll never do it again, indeed I won't. But I was so hungry. Let me off this time, and I'll never do it again—no! not if I die—indeed I won't!" She was appealing frantically to the policemen, as if they had the power to mitigate her sentence, as they lifted her, not unkindly, but decidedly, off the scene of action.

"Remove the prisoner!" repeated the magistrate, angrily, as her shrieks reached his ears; and Ruthven's mind was made up. He went round and met the constable at the other entrance.

"I wish to pay this fine," he said, "and will look after your prisoner for a few days. I suppose it's allowable?"

"Of course it's allowable, sir. So long as the fine is paid, that's all we have to do with the matter. So now you'd better thank the gentleman for your liberty, and see you don't get into no more scrapes. D'ye hear?"

Ruthven felt himself to be in an awkward position. There were spectators to the interview, and he did not know what to do—what was best to be done. But the little girl was gazing up into his face with her wistful blue eyes, and the look of want and starvation upon her pinched features did more for her than any amount of eloquence could have effected.

"Come here—Peg—what's your name? Are you very hungry still?"

"I'm ailsy hungry," the child replied, in a frightened whisper.

"You can speak out to me. I won't hurt you. Have you no friends no home?"

"None, sir. I never did have."

"How do you live? Who feeds you?"

"I picks up things."

"And where do you sleep?"

"Under the market arches, and sometimes in a doorway."

"And aren't you cold at night?"

The girl only shivered for reply, and crossed her naked, dry feet one over the other. As she did so, Ruthven marked they were covered with sores.

"Would you like to be respectable, Peg?"

"What's that, sir?"

"To be kept clean, and have warm clothes, and a good dinner every day."

"Shouldn't I? But no one won't give them to me."

"I will, if you'll be a good girl in return. Will you come with me, Peg?"

"Along with you? Of course I will, if you'll take me. Why, it's all because of you I ain't in prison. I'd go with you to the other end of the world, and be glad to."

"All right, I'll see what I can do for you. Here, cab!"

He hailed two cabs at the same moment, and placing the child in one, took up his own position in the other. He felt very benevolently disposed—foolishly so, as he already began to tell himself; but he could not quite go the length of driving in the same cab as Miss O'Reilly. As the two vehicles took their way toward Kensington, Ruthven experienced some decided qualms of fear as to how Mrs. Garrett would receive the new addition to the household. She had told him only that morning that, sorely as it went against her grain to have a young girl racketing about the house, she felt she could not go on much longer without some help.

"For I ain't so young as I was, Mr. James, and the work Master Hamilton makes is past believing, what with his litter and his boots; and so, though I always says gals is not worth their salt, with their himpudence and their break-ages, still some one I must have, or I shall lay up altogether, and the work will be at a stand-still."

Ruthven had suggested the assistance of a boy instead.

"Lor! Mr. James, as if one boy in the house wasn't more than enough nuisance already. No, sir; no boys for me, if you please. If help I must have, let it be with a little trouble as may be; so, with your leave, I'll look out for a respectable young gal to do the scrubbing and such like for me."

Ruthven had remembered this speech as he stood in the police court. Mrs. Garrett wanted a young girl, and here was a young girl in want of a home. Why shouldn't she do for Mrs. Garrett?

It all seemed very feasible at the moment, but when he had completed the bargain, and was driving to Kensington to introduce his protegee to his housekeeper, he felt that he might perhaps have been a little hasty. However, before he had had full time for repentance, the brace of cabs rattled up to his front door, and Mrs. Garrett appeared upon the threshold, ready to welcome the apparent visitors.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING could exceed the housekeeper's surprise at seeing her master return home at so unusual a time of the day, except, perhaps, the intelligence which followed it.

"Bless my soul, Mr. James! nothing's the matter, I hope? You haven't broke your leg, nor heard bad news, nor had any misfortune, surely?"

"No, Mrs. Garrett, my legs are all right, thank you," replied Ruthven, leaping to the ground; "but look here! I want to speak to you for a moment," and, linking his arm through that of the old woman, he led her back into the passage.

"You told me, this morning, that you wanted a girl to help with the housework, and so I've brought you one."

"You've brought me a gal? Lor! Mr. James, you're joking!"

"I am not, indeed. She's in the other cab; and I want you to be very kind to her, and look after her well, and all that sort of thing, for me."

"But you'll excuse me, sir, for asking. Who is she?—for you can't bring any sort of gal into a respectable house like this, to knock about the things and damage every article she touches."

Ruthven considered a moment. He felt it would not do, all at once, to initiate Mrs. Garrett into the antecedents of Miss Peg O'Reilly, and decided that a little innocent deception was necessary to win the housekeeper over to his cause.

"Now, listen to me, Garrett. I ask you to take charge of this girl for me as a favor. I know she is not all that she should be, in outward appearance at least, to form your companion; but, with your ready wit, you can remedy that in a few hours, and I have a peculiar reason for wishing to befriend the child."

"You know her people, then, Mr. James?" said the housekeeper, suspiciously.

"Of course—of course," he answered, hastily; "and all about her. She's been terribly misused and half starved; so feed her up well, and don't let her out of your sight; and here's a five-pound note. Get some clothes, and make her look decent as soon as you can; and—that's all. You'll find her in the other cab."

Saying which, Ruthven leaped back with all speed into his own vehicle, only desirous to get out of ear-shot before Mrs. Garrett should introduce herself to Peg O'Reilly. He could "do good by stealth," but he certainly "blushed to find it fame."

As soon as her master's cab had driven away, the housekeeper beckoned to the second one to advance, and descended the steps to welcome Mr. Ruthven's protegee.

What was her astonishment to find, sitting in a scared attitude at the bottom of the cab, what appeared at first sight to be a bundle of rags, and proved on nearer inspection to be a half-starved, weird-looking child, with filthy hair and skin, and a look of intense fright upon her features. The dirt dignified the precise old woman beyond measure; but the evident fear of the poor girl was in excited her compassion.

"Lor! bless me! This can't be the gal as Mr. James meant?"

"Where's the gentleman? Him as is so kind to me?" demanded Peg, anxiously.

The gentleman's gone away and left you to my charge, so you had better get down and come indoors with me."

"You won't send me to prison?" demanded Miss Peg O'Reilly.

"Bless the child! what are you talking about? Here, come, get into the house quick, do!—before we have all the neighbors' heads out of the windows staring at us."

And having bundled Peg out of the cab, Mrs. Garrett paid the driver's fare, with magnificent disregard of his laughter at her discomfiture, and followed her new companion into the house.

"And now I just wonder where Mr. James picked you up, and what call he's got to befriend you," she soliloquized, as she regarded her.

"He got me out of the perlice court, the gentleman did," replied Peg, start-

ing at the unusual way by which she was surrounded.

"Why! you've never a thief, I hope," cried Mrs. Garrett.

"Yes, ma'am, I am," said the girl, unhesitatingly. "I took three onions, 'cause I was so 'lear,' and the perlice-man saw me and took me off to the lock-up, and they would have sent me to prison, too, only the kind gentleman brought me here instead."

"Just like Mr. James," murmured the housekeeper; but she was a good old countrywoman, and Peg's story shocked her, less on her own account than on that of the girl's.

"Poor child!" she exclaimed, "it would have been just like 'em to have sent you there, a set of blundering old fools! And all for the sake of three onions! Hadn't you nothing better to eat, then?"

"Please, ma'am, I haven't had nothing to eat for three days at least."

"And what's your mother about to serve you so?"

"I haven't got a mother, nor a father, nor any one."

"Where do you live?"

"Anywhere's. I walk about the streets all day, and at night I sleep on the door-steps—only the policeman will make me keep moving about, from one to the other all night."

"It gives me the shudders to think on," said Mrs. Garrett. "And Mr. James has actually picked up a gal out of the very streets to be his under-house maid. Why, we may all be robbed and murdered in our beds. Oh, these men—these men! They are so scatter-brained, there's no making head nor tail of them."

Her attention was diverted by Peg pulling at the skirt of her gown.

"I won't rob and murder, please, ma'am, I'd be glad to do something for the gentleman that brought me here. He looks so real kind, he does."

"And so he is, child—the best gentleman that ever stepped on the earth. What's your name?"

"They call me Peg O'Reilly in the market, so I suppose that's it. Some one told me once that my mother's name was Nan O'Reilly, and she sold matches, and she died in the work-house."

"And why didn't you stay in the work-house, then? Wouldn't they keep you?"

"I stayed there till I was ten, and then a lady, who kept a grocer's shop, wanted me to be her servant; but she beat and starved me terrible, and so I run away from her and tried to get my own living."

"And a nice business you seem to have made of it. However, if you behave, you're provided for now; so you may think yourself lucky. But come along into the kitchen and I'll get you something to eat. I must give you a warm bath and get you some other clothes before Master Hamilton comes home, or you'll frighten him out of the house again."

"Who's Master Hamilton? Another gentleman?"

"Well, he'll be a gentleman some day, I suppose, if he lives long enough, and conducts himself as such; but he's only a lad at present. He's Mr. Ruthven's nephew; but no more like him in face nor spirit, than you are."

When Peg O'Reilly had bread and cheese and cold meat set before her, she fell to work with a ravenous hunger that made the tears rise to good Mrs. Garrett's eyes, and rendered the task that followed the meal less unpalatable than it otherwise would have been.

The girl could understand the uses of food and drink; but those of the bath were less familiar to her, and had it not been for the housekeeper's decision, might not have proved so efficacious as they did.

"Now, I can't have no nonsense!" she exclaimed, as she saw Peg stepping into the warm water as faintly as though it had been the broken flints her bare feet were accustomed to traverse; "into it you go, head over ears, and you don't come out again until I've had my will of you. I've never had a speck of dirt in this house, and you don't begin it, I can tell you."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MENDING DAY NOTES.

Suggestions of Mothers Who Would Make Best Use of the Needle.

On Monday I wash my doll's clothes. On Tuesday smoothly press 'em; On Wednesday mend their little hose. On Thursday neatly dress 'em.

As a child Wednesday was my bete noir, for not only was I obliged to mend "my doll's clothes," but my own as well, to say nothing of darning for the boys.

Remembering in later years the old adage that "misyery loves company," I have always done my mending and darning in company with two or three matrons of my immediate neighborhood, meeting at each other's houses on Wednesday afternoon, so that I have come to enjoy it. Now, a workman is worthy of his tools—and good tools, too—so you will do well to lay in an outfit comprising a good sharp scissors and shears, needles, long and short and of all degrees of fineness, spool silk and silk twist, with strong, smooth linen thread, a piece of wax, an emery, strong sewing cotton, fine twilled binding tape of various widths and buttons of pearl, linen, agate, bone and metal. There is a "just how" even in sewing on a shoe button. Use stout linen thread, a No. 4 needle, wax the thread, and although you double it, knot only one end of the thread to avoid a clumsy knot which might hurt the foot; take three stitches to each button, fasten with an extra stitch in the lining of the shoe and go on to the next button without cutting the thread.

"What makes men of mature years wear so sad an expression?" "Probably they are so mortified to think they have forgotten all they thought they knew when they left school."—Boston Transcript.

IN WOMAN'S CORNER.

INTERESTING READING FOR DAMES AND DAMSELS.

Some Current Notes of the Modes—Turban in Emerald Green—Cardinal Red—The Gray Lady—Married Men as Ushers—The Household.



HERE are plenty of women built with the air demurs, just the correct air for Lenten wear, and when they are gowned in one of the subdued costumes "prescribed" by the fashionable couturieres one might imagine them saluting going about in smart clothing. Somehow we always associate violets and gray gowns with the Lenten season, and from their former favoritism they are very good evidences. But this year brilliant colors are by no means de trop in the churches. No, not even red, that most glaring of all colors. One effective gown is worn by a bonny little bride, belonging to the cream of the smart set; she is a blonde, too, but just the pale, pure style to whom red is infinitely becoming. Her gown is smart from beginning to finish, and yet there is nothing obtrusive.

Turban in Emerald Green.

Trig and trim are the jaunty spring hats the Frenchmen have sent us as models. Becoming, too, to an astonishing degree, when their plainness is fully considered, for to most faces a generous allowance of fullness of the hat is necessary. One of the most swagger hats of the season is a small affair of roughly woven chenille in dull

Married Ushers at Weddings.

Married men as ushers are now so common at weddings as to no longer excite comment. "Matron of honor," too, is a new term that is scarcely new any more, so often is it heard and exemplified in the attendance at the altar of some close friend or relative of the bride, of a woman who has already been there as chief actor herself. At the wedding recently in Brooklyn of Miss Dike, her only sister, Mrs. Murray Boocock, was her first attendant, and nothing could have been more appropriate. Her place then, if ever, was by her sister's side, and the fact that she has been for two or three years entitled to write Mrs. before her name did not mar her right in youthful or charming appearance to the role of first bridesmaid.

The Gray Lady.

And now we have the fin de siecle Lenten girl, swager from top to toe, in all her pretty finery, which is neither too gay for church nor too dull for the small tea which is to follow. It is built of an oddly mixed goods, showing a blending of two soft shades of smoke gray, the lighter shade predominating. The gown is made with a very full, flaring skirt, having no less than ten godets. It is all lined with soft violet taffeta, and is utterly devoid of decoration.

The bodice is a dainty conceit, combining a blouse and Eton effect. The main part of the body, namely, the blouse, is made of creamy white mull, set on very full and allowed to droop perceptibly over the narrow silver girdle. Over the back fits a corselet of gray velvet, outlined at the top with a glittering silver braid. This extends smoothly under the arms and halfway across the front in Eton jacket style. It has a facing of velvet. There are semi-tight sleeves of velvet, finished at the waist by a long, loose point, resting

PRETTY PETTICOATS.



black, with a thick brim rolled up at the sides to touch a rather high, square crown of the same stuff. A twisted scarf of yellow lace encircles the crown and stands aloft at one side in stiff, wired loops. A lot of small choux of Dutch blue velvet tip the hat slightly at one side, giving an exceedingly jaunty effect. With this smart cheap coiffure is arranged quite high at the back, so as to tip it well over the forehead and eyes, in the latest approved mode.

Another genuinely smart hat is made of silver gray Neapolitan, as transparent as gauze. The brim is wide and flaring, tilted at the back in a series of careless knots, into which are tucked masses of crimson roses, mignonette and pale purple violets. Through the twisted rope of scarlet velvet encircling the crown is run a huge bow of brownish lace, caught by glistening rhinestone ornaments. A similar twist of velvet forms a bandeau under the brim. Emerald green, a remarkably vivid shade, is in high favor in millinery. A very modish little turban of black satin straw has an oval crown and a flatly rolling brim—that is, a brim well set out from the crown, then rolling up almost the height of the crown. Between the crown and the brim is arranged a thick rope of emerald green velvet, stuck through here and there with bunches of deep purple parma violets, and big wings, thick with rhinestones.



The trimming is perfectly flat, and yet it has the most chic and finished effect. Emerald green, in small touches, is seen on many of the hats, even when the trimming is entirely of another color. It seems to be the basis of color this spring, just as black has been for so long.—Ez.

HE WAS THERE.

Alkali Ike Tells of What Happened at the Wedding He Attended.

"Did you attend the wedding out at old man Juckett's place last night, Ike?" asked Judge Springer, the well-known Oklahoma jurist.

"Yep," answered Alkali Ike.

"Had a lively time, I presume?"

"Eh—yah! Some ways it was middlin' lively an' other ways it was slower than snails," writes the humorist of the New York Herald. "Thar was no shootin' an' the licker was mizsable. But, take it all around, up one side an' down the other, it was what you might call a pleasant affair from start to finish. The preacher didn't show up at the appointed hour, but we didn't miss him for quite a spell, owing to the fact that the bride's mother, who 'peared to be an advanced woman, sorter objected to Kickapoo Pete, who was supposed to be the groom, and got after him with the soap paddle or suthin' of the kind an' chased him all over the lot."

"She needn't have put herself to the trouble, for the bride got to thinkin' the matter over an' concluded that she'd just as soon marry Three-Fingered Babcock, who had sorter been shinnin' around her some time before, an' she didn't know but she'd a little sooner, Nacheral enough, this kinder riled Kickapoo, an' him an' Three-Fingered got to jowlin' over it an' I reckon they would have fought it out if Jim Whipsaw from the Rattlesnake place ranch hadn't pacified 'em an' got 'em to playin' cards to settle the question."

"This promised to satisfy all parties concerned, but the bride found out that Three-Fingered had put up \$2.50 on his side against her hand in marriage, which Kickapoo had staked, which made her so blamed mad that she swore if they didn't value her pure affection at more'n \$2.50 she'd be hanged if she'd marry either of 'em! This sorter complicated matters again, but Jim Whipsaw soothed an' comforted her an' when the preacher showed up, by gosh, Miss Daisy an' Jim stepped forward, hand in hand, to be married."

"Meanwhile Kickapoo had put up \$2.50 against Three-Fingered's stakes an' they were playin' along as contented as a couple of kittens. They slipped their hands into a book an' gave it to Appetite Bill to hold while the preacher was gittin' off the solemn words that made the two young hearts one. An' then, after they had congratulated the bride, thar came the call to supper an' so they concluded to make it a show-down. Accordin', Appetite Bill opened the book an' burcussed if both hands didn't consist of four sees an' a king. Thereupon they divided the stakes and shook hands. An' then everybody adjourned to the supper table, feelin' that it was indeed good to be thar."

THAT TERRIBLE BOY.

He Explained Matters Which His Mother Did Not Want Known.

A woman, accompanied by her son, who was about 9 years old, was a passenger on the Staten Island boat the other day, says the Detroit Free Press. She was a very nervous woman and he a boy who wanted to see what was going on. He wanted to see the boat leave the slip, but the mother seized his arm and said:

"Harry, what did I tell you? Now, you sit right down and keep quiet."

Later on he wanted to see Castle William and Ellis Island, but she gave him a cuff on the ear and exclaimed:

"Harry, m at I whip you before all these people?"

"But, can't I see anything?" he protested.

"Yes, you can look around the cabin."

He was quiet for five minutes and then edged away to look at an ocean steamer. He had only reached the window when the mother was after him, and as she shook him and flopped him down she said:

"I don't know why I brought you along."

"I do," he answered.

"The idea of your acting as you do."

"You brung me along," he continued, in a voice which reached every part of the cabin, "because you was going to get married and give me a new pa, but when we got there he didn't show up, and I hope he never will."

During the next ten minutes that boy had the range of the boat, while his mother sat bolt upright and kept her eyes fastened on the ceiling.

Well Fighters Well Paid.

Spanish bull fighters get salaries as large as those of exceptionally great actors. "First swords," like Mazzantini or Guerrita, who is not 30, yet earns an income which is never less than £3,800 in one year, and owns near Cadix a villa and park where in the winter months he entertains his friends with lavish hospitality. Mazzantini has £80,000 invested, and it is a bad year for him when he does not earn £10,000.

Huge Indian Skeleton Found.

A skeleton of an Indian six feet six inches long and twenty-four inches across the shoulders, huddled in a stone coffin, was discovered in a mound near Shelbyville, Ind., last week. The skull was of a different shape from any other found in mounds thereabouts, being perfectly flat on the top and back.

The Salvation Army.

I would to God that every church in America was animated with the spirit of the Salvation army. If so, what a golden stream of treasure would pour into the storehouses of heaven from from what has been regarded as the waste-heaps of human life.—Rev. L. A. Banks.

While we are drinking the bitter, Christ is preparing the sweet.

small cakes are no longer in demand at evening parties. Dainty fruit sandwiches have taken their place. Bread is cut very thin and lightly buttered and then spread with raisins, dates or candied cherries that have been chopped fine and moistened with orange juice, sherry or madeira. Roll and tie with baby ribbons. Lemonade or punch is served with these.