

MY HALF SISTER

By ELTON HARRIS

CHAPTER I.

"It is not like going home at all," said Mollie L'Estrange disconsolately, looking round at the open trunks, the wearing apparel spread upon every available chair or bed in the school dormitory. "And I had no idea that I possessed so many things."

"You had been these four years here," said the German governess stolidly, "and you spend much money, had child! But they will be pleased to see you home—oh, yes!"

"I don't know who will be pleased, I am sure," returned Mollie, with a sigh, "for there is only my half-sister Kate."

"Ach, Himmel! Well, she is no doubt looking forward to your return. She is older than you—wiser?"

"She is ten years old," interrupted the girl, sitting down on the edge of the bed, and regarding the well-meaning Fraulein gloomily. "When I last saw her she was about six, and my stepfather spoilt her shamefully."

"What? With whom will you live then, mine Mollie? With the stepfather?"

"Oh, no; he died twelve months ago. I shall live at Chalfont House, the property of my half-sister, Kate, with her, and her aunt, Madame Dubois."

"Ach, a French lady!"

"No, but she married a Frenchman. She is now a widow with one son, and after my mother's death she went to keep house for her brother, Mr. Barlowe."

"Thy stepfather?"

"I never called him that. And a strange look of scorn and bitterness swept over the girl's pretty, glowing face. "It is wrong to hate any one, but I hated him living, and I find it hard not to hate him dead."

"So, so, the Bible tells us to hate no man," reproved the governess, with a placid shake of her head, as she began to fold up some of her favorite pupil's clothes.

"And I try not to do so; I pray every night to forgive him," burst forth Mollie in a shaking voice, "but he separated me from my mother; he did not make her happy."

She paused abruptly, conscious how impossible it was to make the solid Fraulein understand that the wrongs that were ranking in her mind had grown with her growth, and become part of her life; and, as a rosy-checked German maid entered at the same moment and announced that she had been sent to assist Fraulein L'Estrange to pack, nothing more was said.

For four years Mollie L'Estrange had been left at Frau Seckendorf's school in Hanover, without once returning to England, without any one coming to see her. But she had been very happy, for she had naturally a merry, buoyant disposition, and was the pet and favorite of the school establishment, from the grave, kindly Frau herself downwards.

Then she was liberally supplied with pocket money by her father's trustees, generously paid for in every way, while Frau Seckendorf had carte blanche to do everything for her amusement in the holidays, and the time had gone so fast that Mollie could hardly believe she was nearly nineteen, and that a few days would see her once more in her native land. Ah, that dear native land! How often in her dreams had she seen it as it would be looking now, with the first faint breath of spring rustling through the bare, brown branches, the leaves sprouting in the heather, the violets peeping forth from some sheltered spot! Yes, though there was no one now in the house where she was born to welcome her home with affection, it would be something to be in England in the sweet spring time, to gather violets and primroses in the well-remembered woods and fields around Reversion.

The packing was accomplished at last, more by the Fraulein's and Liza's exertions than her own, for the girl was restless and excited, torn by conflicting feelings, sorry to bid farewell to quaint old Hanover, and all those who had been so kind to her since she came there—a pale, motherless child of fourteen—yet anxious to rush into the future, to see what it held in store for her.

So when the trunks were shut and Liza had departed with her armful of the gifts she had bestowed upon her, Mollie made her way with unusual sedateness to Frau Seckendorf's private apartments. Since the girls of her own age had left one by one, and she had outgrown the class rooms, she had been promoted to the use of these saloons, and taken out to concerts, theaters, and coffee parties by the good Frau, who was secretly immensely proud of the pretty, well-dressed English heiress confided to her care, and watched over her with a vigilant eye; and Mollie looked round them with a friendly glance, and a sigh at the thought that after tomorrow she should see them no more.

The dusk was falling fast; it was difficult to see the houses across the wide street, and as she stood by the window, she saw, standing in the middle of the street, a man in a dark coat, who was looking at her with a steady gaze.

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little fingers, her thoughts went back to her childhood days as they had not done for a long time, and scene after scene seemed to rise before her.

Mollie could not remember her father at all, for he had died when she was but a few months old, but her pretty young mother had been her playfellow, and until her sixth year, her constant companion. Then came the days when a tall, dark man was always with her mother, and that dearly loved parent was somehow not the same to her, while the dark man used to bring her sweets, and smile grimly when she put her hands behind her back, and refused to accept them.

Yes, from the very first Mollie had disliked and distrusted Leonard Barlowe, and he had cordially returned the feeling. With her mother's second marriage all her troubles began, and the child would often sob herself to sleep at night, feeling neglected and forlorn, missing the tender voice, the lullaby ever since she could remember.

Afterwards Mollie grew to know that her mother had not forgotten her, but that her stepfather, jealous and morose, resented even the affection she bestowed to her own child, and timid and clinging by nature, she had not the strength of character to oppose him in any way. Mollie was sent to school soon after the birth of her half-sister, Kate, and though she spent the holidays at home, Chalfont House was never the same place again.

Looking at the past through the softening vista of time, Mollie knew that her woes had not been imaginary. She would have been fond enough of the little usurper, who seemed to have pushed her out of her place, had she been allowed, for she was neither jealous nor revengeful; but Mr. Barlowe, while spoiling Kate until she was unbearable, resented the least attention shown to Mollie, and the holidays had been misery, school a refuge. She gradually grew to know that her mother was miserable; that she only dare careen her in private and that she feared her handsome dark husband more than she loved him.

How well she remembered the time she had any talk with her mother! It was the night before her return to school, and her mother came into her room as she was preparing for bed, and, closing the door, took her into her arms as if she were a baby again, kissed and cried over her in a passionate heart-broken way, saying that whatever happened to the future, she must never doubt her poor mother's love, that save her dear father, no one was so precious to her, no one; and that her last thought and prayer would be for her own Mollie.

It was not until her death a few months later that Mollie understood what she meant, Chalfont and a good income had been Mrs. Barlowe's private property, and she left them to her husband for his lifetime, and then to her daughter Kate, no mention being made of her elder child, save that, falling them, she would be her heiress.

This had not been her mother's wish—Mollie knew as well as if she had been told—and the fierce anger burned in her heart, not for the loss of the property, but for what Mr. Barlowe had made her mother suffer. Oh, how she hated him as she saw his fine eyes roving with an air of proprietorship round her mother's room! In her childish heart she felt that he had got what he had schemed for, and it mattered little to him that he had ruined her mother's and her life to obtain it.

They lived at open warfare during the months before she was sent to Hanover; and it was an additional blow to find that he had constituted himself her guardian in her mother's place. His motive was not far to seek. Mollie was her father's heiress, and though he could not touch the principal, a handsome allowance was made for the care of Colonel L'Estrange's daughter.

And now he, too, was dead, and she was going back to live at Chalfont House with her little half-sister and Madame Dubois! Were brighter times coming, she wondered, as, in company with the English governess, she once more set foot on her native land, or was Madame Dubois but a repetition of Leonard Barlowe?

It was a bleak March day when the governess put her charge into a first class carriage at one of the great London stations, and reluctantly bade her farewell, after carefully ascertaining that two elderly ladies in the further corner were going the same journey, and Reversion would be reached in little over an hour, where Madame Dubois was sure to be at the station. So she kissed the pet and pride of Frau Seckendorf's school with tearful eyes, and hurried away to catch her own train, while Mollie sank back in the corner of her carriage, sorry to part with her last friend, yet excited at the prospect before her.

For a little while she occupied herself in watching one familiar object after another appear, as the express left the chimneys behind and rushed through the green country. It was amusing her to see the great houses in the waiting rooms once again, they flashed through the station. Then she suddenly became aware that the two ladies were talking very hard, and she heard her own name.

"You will find Reversion looking much the same, Louise," the elder was saying. "The people alter, but not the place. Why, you have not been here since the year poor Mrs. L'Estrange married Mr. Barlowe, have you?"

"No; how pretty she was! I know no one liked him; you thought him an adventurer. What has he done since her death?"

"Oh, he feathered his nest well—got the whole of her property for himself and his wretched little girl, to the exclusion of the elder child! Every one knew that his poor wife was horribly afraid of him, and he had it all his own way. Well, I must not say more, for he was hurried to his account with all his sins upon his head, and no time to repent him of his wickedness."

"What do you mean?"

"Did you not see it in the papers? It was the talk of Reversion! He was found murdered in his study nearly twelve months ago. Yes, I remember, it was on Easter Sunday."

"Murdered?" echoed the other blankly. "That handsome man? Who did it?"

"It has never been found out."

CHAPTER II.

Murdered! Could this awful word, so full of terrible meaning, apply to her stepfather, who she had last seen standing at the door of Chalfont House, full of life and health, holding the fretful Kate by the hand? Mollie sat up and turned hastily to the two ladies, the color fading from her face.

"My name is L'Estrange," she stammered nervously, looking from one to the other. "I am Mrs. Barlowe's eldest daughter. I thought I ought to tell you. I—I did not know that he died like that; no one told me. Are you sure?"

Mollie could see the ladies were gazing at her with a steady gaze, but she was too eager to learn the truth to mind that, or anything else. Why had she been allowed to come home in ignorance of the tragedy that hung undiscovered over Chalfont House? In the pause before any one spoke she was not conscious of feeling any sorrow for her dead stepfather, nor had these ladies expressed any; but she did feel a thrill of horror at the thought of the crime that had been committed in the house where she was born—her mother's house—and could not repress a shudder. Then, the first lady got up, and, coming over, sat down heavily in the seat opposite to her.

"I am heartily sorry you have heard me, my dear," she said kindly. "It is a lesson to me not to talk of my neighbors in the train. But are you really Amy Barlowe's child? Yes, looking at you, I can see your dear father. Your parents were my dearest friends. You do not remember me, but surely you have not forgotten Reggie and Joyce?"

Mollie started, and, leaning forward, turned her beautiful, miserable grey eyes on the speaker with dawning recognition.

"Yes—yes, I do now," she cried. "You are Mrs. Anstruther; you live in that pretty white house near the church. Oh, Mrs. Anstruther, about this dreadful thing about Mr. Barlowe, Madame Dubois wrote that he died suddenly, and she was now my guardian; but how did it happen? Why was I not told?" And she glanced imploringly at the pleasant motherly face now regarding her with a troubled frown.

(To be continued.)

CRUELTY IN TONE.

Cross Words Kill a Bird in Its Cage.

A bird which receives a scolding is made as miserable and unhappy thereby as a child would be. To illustrate our Dumb Animals tells the following story: A Massachusetts woman had, a few years ago, a beautiful canary bird which she dearly loved, and to which she had never spoken an unkind word in her life. One Sunday the church organist was away, and she stopped after church to play the organ for the Sunday school. In consequence of this the dinner had to be put off an hour, and when she got home her good husband was very hungry, and he spoke to her unkindly. The things were put on and they sat down in silence at the table, and presently the bird began to chirp at her as it always had to attract her attention. To shame her husband for having spoken so, she turned to the bird, and for the first time in her life spoke to it in a most violent and angry tone. In less than five minutes there was a fluttering in the cage. She sprang to the cage—the bird was dead. Mrs. Hendricks, the wife of the late vice-president of the United States, says that she once killed a mockingbird in the same way. It annoyed her by loud singing. To stop it she spoke in a violent tone, and pretended to throw something at it, and within five minutes it was dead.

A Boy's Revenge.

The present German emperor, then a small boy, attended the wedding of the prince and princess of Wales. He was under the charge of his two uncles, the duke of Edinburgh and the duke of Connaught. As may be expected, young William fidgeted sadly, and consequently received an occasional warning tap on the shoulder. But how he did revenge himself! His uncles were in Highland dress, and the future emperor slyly knelt down and bit into their bare legs with great enjoyment. Boston Journal.

RUIN WOULD FOLLOW BRYAN'S ELECTION

What the Manufacturers of the Country Believe Would Happen

Manufacturers and their immediate customers are beginning to get themselves in shape for the dull times that they know would ensue in the event of the election of Mr. Bryan. Reports from all over the country indicate that "Bryan" clauses are soon to be the rule in signing new contracts. The latest is a contract entered into between the New Haven Carriage company and the J. Curley company of Brooklyn. The contract specifies that the New Haven company shall furnish the Curley company with a certain number of carriages at a certain price until November 15th, 1901. With the contract received by the Curley company was the following letter from the New Haven company:

"We inclose herein agreements signed. You will notice that we have made an indorsement at the bottom. Will you please indorse this yourself? It is just as good policy for you to indorse it as it is for us, for you do not wish to be bound down by anything in case of such adverse circumstances as would occur in the event of Bryan's election."

The indorsement reads: "This agreement to be null and void in case William J. Bryan is elected president of the United States in November, 1900."

Other large concerns are indorsing important contracts in this way, their managers well knowing that a long season of business depression would follow the success of the Democratic ticket. A large Philadelphia dry goods house in placing contracts abroad insists that the contracts be similarly indorsed. The business men know what four years of Bryanism would mean to them and the working people are equally aware of the fact. If these classes are not prosperous, they will be unable to consume as much of the products of the farm as they would in the event of Republican success, and the farmer knows the value of having an era of prosperity among those who eat and wear his products.

PATRIOTISM NOT IMPERIALISM.

"Was it imperialism that like a mighty torrent swept across this great prairie state and called to arms your boys in 1861? Was it imperialism that caused thousands of the boys, young and aggressive and equally as patriotic as you, to respond to the nation's call in 1898? Those boys who went forth two years ago went to keep the old flag here, to defend it at Santiago, San Juan, Cavite and to keep it from defilement at the hands of Aguinaldo and his Tagal Malays, and all the sympathizers both abroad and at home. No imperialism in that; simply patriotism—a term unknown to some of our boy orators. I say to you that when any one tries to scare you about the attitude of the boys of '61, say to them that they went forth, not for gain, but that the flag that went up at Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, Cavite—carried, too, by those heroes—Dewey, Sampson and Schley—went there to stay; to stay forever, to stay as long as a drop of American blood courses in the veins of our American young men. We all demanded that the war

come; we were all imperialists and I hope that we will always so remain, for I tell you that when God Almighty gets done with the American army in the Philippines, then, and then only will the boys in blue march away."—General John C. Black (Democrat.)

SCHURZ ON MANY SIDES.

This is not the first campaign in which Carl Schurz has changed about and worked with his former political opponents; nor the first time that he

... I must say that I have not seen so much greater evidence of getting sympathy from my sympathizers than from those who are denounced as the contrary."

General Schurz did not undertake to conduct the war for President Lincoln after that, but he has never been any too loyal a Republican. He has twice left the party before this campaign, the most notable occasion being when he would not support the late James G. Blaine.

It might be added that Mr. Schurz sees only "Imperialism" in this campaign, and that he joins Mr. Bryan in hiding the financial issue, the most important of all.

National Honor Endangered.

"Although a lifelong Democrat, I cannot refrain from placing myself on record against the party which has elected, since about five years, to espouse the cause of free silver coinage

A Story in Figures

EXPORTS TO ASIA

1895

\$17,325,057

1900

\$64,913,984

EXPORTS TO OCEANICA

1895

\$13,109,231

1900

\$43,390,927

has criticized his own party. In the latter part of 1862 he attacked the conduct of the civil war and gave his opinions to President Lincoln in unmeasured terms. On the 21th of November in that year, Mr. Lincoln wrote him a long letter in which he said: "If I must disregard my own judgment, and take yours, I must also take that of others; and by the time that I should reject all that I should be advised to reject, I would have none left, Republican or others—not even yourself. For, be assured, my dear sir, that there are other men who have their hearts in it, that think you are performing your part as poorly as you think I am performing

and other equally dangerous Populistic fallacies. What I am surprised to find is to hear of many Democratic business men express a doubt as to the necessity of again voting for McKinley on account of the improbability (?) of Mr. Bryan permitting any legislation after his election, which might prove hurtful to the business interests of the country. I shall continue to vote against populism and repudiation and will vote for President McKinley, and will not throw my vote away by voting for a gold Democrat."—Adolph Hillich, Merchant, New York.

People, as a rule, hear better with their right ear than with their left ear.

A NEBRASKA FARMER DISPROVES BRYAN'S CLAIM

Mr. William Jennings Bryan, the Popo-Democratic candidate for the Presidency, insists that the farmers of the United States have not derived any benefit from the existing prosperity.

A Nebraska farmer proves that Mr. Bryan is wrong. He sends us a statement showing what he realized from his 160-acre farm in 1896 and this year, taking exactly the same qualities of each product from his account books. Thus:

| 1896 | 1900 |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 400 bushels wheat at 48c.... \$192.00 | 400 bushels wheat at 60c.... \$240.00 |
| 1,200 bushels oats at 14c.... 168.00 | 1,200 bushels oats at 18c.... 216.00 |
| 2,500 bushels corn at 15c.... 375.00 | 2,500 bushels corn at 30c.... 750.00 |
| 13,500 pounds steers at 4c.... 520.00 | 13,000 pounds steers at 5½c.... 715.00 |
| 5,000 pounds hogs at 3c.... 150.00 | 5,000 pounds hogs at 4.7c.... 235.00 |
| 200 pounds butter at 10c.... 20.00 | 200 pounds butter at 17c.... 34.00 |
| 200 dozen eggs at 7c.... 14.00 | 200 dozen eggs at 12c.... 24.00 |
| | \$2,214.00 |
| | 1,419.00 |
| Balance in favor of 1900..... | \$775.00 |

Mr. Bryan will observe that this Nebraska farmer received over 50 per cent more money this year than he did in 1896, for precisely the same quantities of his products. Mr. Bryan should study the exhibit. It will be interesting to Farmer Bryan, who might compare it with his own account sales this year.

Candidate Bryan should not tell falsehoods about the prices of farm products. If he is still in doubt let him run over to Everett, in his own state, and have a chat with the farmer who supplied these figures.