

MY HALF SISTER

XXX By ELTON HARRIS XXX

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

It was terribly galling, but until she came of age there was no help for it. Well, the only thing to do was to make the best of things, and be as happy as circumstances would permit. But this was easier said than done; there was not a soul in Chalfont she liked or trusted, and time hung heavily on her hands, for she could not always be with the Anstruthers, even had Madame allowed it, and no one else came near them. Madame, had she known it, was in rather a difficulty. She greatly valued the Anstruthers' acquaintance, making a point of stopping to speak whenever she met them in Reversion, and hoping those who kept aloof from Chalfont would observe it; but, strange to say, she had forgotten Reggie, who, indeed, was not often at home, and now Kate had aroused her suspicions she was much perplexed.

She had her own plans for Mollie and if it came to a choice between them and the Anstruthers' friendship, she must reluctantly abandon their friendship.

Mollie soon found the difference; she was never left alone for a minute. Was she going into Reversion, Madame was going; also, or Henri would accompany her; there was nothing he would enjoy more.

"What do you think of Henri, Joyce?" asked Mollie the Saturday afternoon preceding Easter Sunday, when she had managed to evade both the Dubois, and, taking Kate to put a wreath on their mother's grave, had gone on to the White house.

The White house was not so large as Chalfont, but it had a beautiful old garden, and the two girls were wandering up and down the sheltered paths, while Kate took a solemn, dignified ride on the old swing under the trees that had recalled to Mollie her childhood days.

"He was very pleasant the few times he has been here," Joyce responded doubtfully, pausing to look at the yellow daffodils, the sweet-scented jonquils that lifted their heads from the dark mould. "But do you like him, Mollie?"

"I am afraid not," said she, thoughtfully. "You see, Joyce dear, he acts so strangely. He pretends to me that he loves England and the country, and I know he loves nothing but his beloved Paris. Yesterday he insisted upon accompanying me for a country walk, and Madame said nothing, though she was angry when Reggie went with me to get moss. I know he hated it, for he had on French patent leather boots, and really could hardly limp home; and then, as I was going upstairs, I heard him swearing awfully to himself as he pulled them off. But he paid me compliments all the time, and he tells me that he adores 'le sport,' but he does not understand a gun, and he dare not drive the chestnuts, I know. And—and I cannot help thinking that because I shall have money—"

She looked at Joyce, wistfully, and Joyce not wishing to meet those sweet gray eyes at the moment, contemplated the daffodils, while she rapidly turned over in her own mind how to answer. Reversion both said and thought a great deal about the inmates of Chalfont that it would be a great pity for Mollie to know. For good or evil she was unfortunately in Madame Dubois' care at present; therefore why make her feet more uncomfortable than was necessary?

That Henri was paying court to the hairdresser seemed likely enough; her fortune would be a large one to a Frenchman; and that her own darling, handsome Reggie had more than a liking for the lovely, slender girl herself was equally true. Raising her eyes from the flowers, Joyce caught sight of both young men advancing towards them, and Reggie called out:

"I have brought you a visitor, Joyce. Mollie, come and have a swing with the child, for the sake of old lang syne."

They all turned back together to the spot where Kate was slowly swinging herself to and fro. But Joyce felt far from comfortable as she stood with the young Frenchman watching the half-sisters, as Reggie's strong, brown hand on the rope sent them flying up and down—Mollie's pink-and-white face like the spring day itself; Kate's frown curls floating on the breeze.

It was a pretty picture enough of youth, and, perhaps, looking at two of the faces, of love. But Henri did not seem to appreciate it as he stood scowling at his sister's little black mouse-face, while his sharp black eyes roved from one to the other, and his remarks grew lower and lower.

"I shall have a swing put up in my grounds," announced Kate condescendingly, as they came to a fall stop.

"Mother had one made near the tennis-lawn," said Mollie, pushing back her rebellious curls, and frowning her eyes.

"Oh, that is not good enough," replied the child, her deep-set gray eyes fixed on her sister with cool insistence. "Chalfont is my property, and I shall have everything done that I like."

Reggie took his hand off the ropes with a muttered exclamation that sounded not unlike "Hit the beast," and asked Mollie to come down to look at the tennis court, and as Henri seemed determined to go also, Joyce disregarded her brother's appealing eye, and watched them off, for she had noticed the sudden flush on Mollie's face. She knew how tenderly the girl regarded everything her mother had done, and in some wrath determined to have a word with the vain-glorious owner of Chalfont, whom, indeed, she would dearly have enjoyed shaking.

Kate was looking after the retreating trio with rather a disconcerted expression, for her sharp ears had caught Reggie's remark, and she liked Reggie; her boasting had been principally to impress him with her importance.

"Every one seems to like Mollie!" she said crossly. "I suppose it is because she is a L'Estrange; Jane and Harriet say so. Though I think it is horribly mean of the Reversion people not to call on us, and make such a fuss over her, for, as Jane often says, I am the heiress and mistress of Chalfont, and much richer than Mollie."

"I will tell you why every one likes Mollie," replied Joyce, regarding the stylishly arrayed little limp severely. "It is not alone because she is very pretty, but because she is always pleasant and sunny. Who ever heard Mollie say biting and unkind things on purpose to hurt people, or boasting about her possessions?"

"I suppose you mean that I do," and Kate sat still on the swing, and flung her curls back with an angry gesture.

"Yet Mollie has got some money, you know, or Aunt Clare would not make such a fuss of her. Harriet says that she is sure she means to marry her to Henri; I heard her. But Jane says that with my permission I ought to marry a title; and I intend to."

And having delivered herself of these sentiments in her high childish voice she pushed the swing off with one thin, black-silk-stocking leg.

"Who are Jane and Harriet?" asked Joyce shortly.

"My servants."

"Oh! And when you marry this nobleman, suppose you have two dear little girls, you will naturally leave this property to the younger?"

"Certainly not; that would not be fair. I should leave the most to the elder, or divide it." Kate had begun with lofty eloquence, then she caught Joyce's eye, and, being a very quick child, saw the pit into which she had fallen, and stopped abruptly. "You think Mollie has not been properly treated? The people in Reversion think so," she ended, below her breath.

"That has nothing to do with us, Kate," Joyce said gravely. "But if you can see this, perhaps—though you are so young—you can also see how well Mollie behaves. She does not grudge you anything, though Chalfont was her home before you were born. She never says bitter things to you, yet who has the most reason? I wonder you don't love her!"

Joyce never forgot the strange old look on the little thin face, as the child glanced at her after a dead pause. There was something both sad and weird about it; she might have been a hundred, with all the cares of life on her small shoulders, and looking at her Joyce remembered with a wave of compassion that she was but 16, and, if report said true, her life had never been as other children's. She had been a tool in her father's hands from birth; she was one in her aunt's now. Spoiled from policy, neglected from want of affection, left to the care of ignorant servants, who flattered her for their own ends and filled her head with nonsense, what chance had the unfortunate little heiress had?

"Come along," she said, holding out her hand to the silent child. "I see my mother beckoning to us from the drawing room window; let us run and call the others in for some tea."

ment of indignation because Henri, after all the rebuffs she had given him, had actually dared to call her "Mollie" before the Anstruthers and a few visitors who had come in, and assumed airs of proprietorship as he marched them home.

So as Kate skipped off after the sulky-looking maid, she turned abruptly to the young man, who was lounging in the doorway furtively watching her with a faint cynical smile in his round black eyes. She was but a school girl, this young English meek, but she was adorably pretty, with a skin—ah, such lovely white skin—that would not Celestine or Lucie give for it!

"Monseur Dubois," she said gently, fixing her clear gray eyes upon his dark face, "now my half-sister is gone I wish to speak to you—to remind you that we are mere acquaintances, and to such I am not 'Mollie,' but Miss L'Estrange. I am sorry you have forced me to mention this. I hoped that you understood it."

For a moment they stood facing each other, but her eyes never quailed before his; she had spirit and courage, this mere school girl, he recognized, yet a very evil look came into his face for a second ere he replied:

"And why for not, mademoiselle; you are my mother's ward, and that long-legged Anstruther he calls you what he please, doesn't he?"

"The Anstruthers are old family friends," she said hurriedly. "But it is not a subject to argue. I simply state my wishes, which I feel sure you will respect."

"Do not be too confident," he muttered between his teeth. "It is possible that I may resent being treated worse than this other fellow—"

"You have no right to resent anything, monsieur," she interrupted, with a haughty gesture. "I am alone here, but I can appeal to Madame Dubois, as I am in her care."

And she paused irresolutely as his mocking laugh fell upon her ear.

"Bah, mademoiselle, she lives but for me!" he said, with veiled insolence. "I am master here."

It was true Mollie's heart was beating uncomfortably fast; the prospect looked gloomy; but she had plenty of spirit, and Henri's whole manner was so detestable that her pride came to her aid and stilled her fears.

"If I am not treated with ordinary politeness, and allowed to live in peace, I shall complain to my trustees," she retorted, with flashing eyes.

"Of no use at all," he returned, with a sweeping bow. Then, coming closer and laying a small claw-like hand on her arm: "See here, Mollie-lee, you are in my mother's power absolutely for two years, and she has an awful temper when opposed. You had better be friends with me, I Henri Dubois, offer you my friendship."

Mollie shrank from his touch, from the sound of his thin, false voice, with unutterable loathing, realising, poor child! with terrible distinctness that, like the man in the parable, she had fallen among thieves; then she drew back, throwing up her head with a scornful jerk, while her knees trembled so much that she leaned back against the door for support.

"You have again disregarded my wishes, monsieur," and by a great effort she spoke firmly. "I have nothing more to say." And she went down the steps into the garden.

(To be Continued.)

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This question arises in the family every day. Let us answer it to-day. Try

Jell-O,

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It seems to be the fashion for women to ignore health and sacrifice it to the little every-day trials, or offer it up on the altar of devotion to daily tasks. Then again the nervous organization of women is constantly attacked by woman's natural experiences, so that it is practically impossible for her to retain the beauty which nature gave her, unless she has discriminating advice and right support.

Dr. Greene's Nervura

for the Blood and Nerves.

Trial and troubles are easily overcome by the women whose strength is the genuine strength of perfect health. Dr. Greene's Nervura blood and nerve remedy, bridges the chasm that separates the sickly woman from happiness. It fills her veins with blood that is pure and clean.

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"In regard to myself, I have suffered for years with disease, having been troubled with great nervousness, female complaints, indigestion, and great weakness and prostration. I did not have strength to do much of anything. Knowing the great value of health and strength I consulted doctors and took many medicines, but they all failed to cure me, and I grew worse rather than better. I happened to see in the papers how much good Dr. Greene's Nervura blood and nerve remedy, was doing in restoring to health everybody who took it, and I thought I would try a bottle. I used it and to my surprise I began to gain strength every day. I am so thankful that I tried it! It is certainly the most excellent tonic and strength giver. I recommend it very highly and wish that other people who are troubled in any way would take warning and use it."

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At all the stages of a woman's life Dr. Greene's Nervura blood and nerve remedy, is shown to be efficient to ward off the results of nervousness, or overwork, or impure blood. From early girlhood to advanced years, this world-renowned medicine builds up the forces destroyed by disease, grief, or over-exertion, and the effects of this great medicine are quickly felt and permanently retained. Let women guard well their health, and consult Dr. Greene freely. Nothing they can possibly do will so surely keep them strong and well, or repair the exhaustion from acute illness, nothing will work so continually to the preservation of beauty as the great health-giving Nervura. Dr. Greene's office is at 25 West 14th Street, New York City, where he may be consulted either by personal call or by letter. Women may write in perfect confidence, and get Dr. Greene's advice free.

Dr. Bull's COUGH SYRUP

Cures a Cough or Cold at once. Coughs Croup, Whooping-Cough, Bronchitis, Grippe and Consumption. Quick, sure results. Dr. Bull's Pills cure Constipation. 50 pills 10c.

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Keeps both rider and saddle perfectly dry in the heaviest rain. Slicker will disappear. Ask for Fish Brand Pommel Slicker—it is entirely new. It is not for sale in your town, write for catalogue to A. J. TOWER, Boston, Mass.

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Reasons of French Preparations.

Lord Salisbury is not wrong when he alludes to the very unfavorable feeling toward England existing throughout the world, but to suppose that this feeling can lead to anything more unless England herself provokes it, especially to believe that this pretended explosion is to occur at any precise date, such as November of the present year, is simply idiotic and ridiculous. In any case we are sure of one thing, that France at any rate is contemplating nothing of the kind, and in the present state of the world a coalition could not be formed against England without France. It is true that for some time past we have become accustomed to contemplate the possibility of a rupture with England, and we have even made definite preparations in consequence, but we have been compelled to do this by circumstances that were not of our seeking, which we have been very reluctant to take into account—Paris Journal des Debats.

The Sustaining Power of Bananas.

One of the most courageous marches ever taken was that of Col. Willcocks to Kumasi. We hear that during the march from Kumasi the whole party lived on bananas. On one occasion they even waded shoulder high through a river for two hours. Does anyone want a higher test of endurance on a vegetable diet than this?—The Vegetarian.

Supreme Bench Dignity Itzaksoma.

That the dignity of the Supreme bench is sometimes burdensome is illustrated by a remark made by Justice Brewer to a Washington official. The justice was about to take his vacation, and he said: "I am glad I am going to a resort where I can wear one galling, no collar, and roll up my pants."

Finest Roads in World.

Bermuda and the Bahama islands boast of the finest roads in the world. They are made of coral, and are as smooth as a dancing floor and never dirty. The coral is smoothed and pressed with rollers until it is practically solid.

Cell, Not Horse Show.

While he was dressing for the horse show at Chicago Alberto Aristodomo Dianico Giuseppe de Otairio Scartabelli de Poriza, said by the police who have examined his passports, to be an Italian count, was arrested Wednesday night at the Victoria hotel, where he had been living in sumptuous style for a week. He is charged with forgery.

Big Four Elect Directors.

At the annual election of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway company at Cincinnati, Wednesday, W. K. Vanderbilt, Chauncey M. Depew, J. Pierpont Morgan and Melville E. Ingalls were re-elected directors for three years. Among the improvements contemplated is a short line via Rising Sun to Louisville.

Earl of Darnley Dead.

Edward Henry Stuart Bligh, seventh earl of Darnley, is dead. He was born in 1851. The earl of Darnley was son of the sixth earl of Darnley, his mother being Lady Harriet Mary Pelham, a daughter of the earl of Chichester. He was educated at Eton and Christ church, Oxford.

Rider's Injure Proves Fatal.

Harry W. Smith of Philadelphia, who was injured during a steeplechase at Pimlico, Wednesday, died at the University hospital, Baltimore, never having regained consciousness after his fall. The body was sent to his Philadelphia home. Physicians at the hospital said that Mr. Smith's skull was terribly fractured, and no operation was performed except to pick out a few of the splinters of bone and cleanse the wound of the clots of blood. They say they believe Mr. Smith fell upon a stone.