DAWN.

CHAPTER XII.

When the doctor had gone upstairs, Philip went into the dining-room to eat something, only to find that food was repugnant to him; he could scarcely swallow a mouthful. To some extent, however, he supplied its place by wine, of which he drank several glasses. Then, drawn by a strange fascination he went back into the little study, and remembering the will, bethought himself that it might be as well to secure it. In taking it off the table, however, a folded and much erased sheet of manuscript was disclosed. Recognizing Bellamy's writing, he took it up and commenced to read the draft, for it was nothing else. Its substance was as follows:

The document began by stating that the testator's former will was declared null and void on account of the "treacherous and dishonorable conduct of his son, Philip." It then, in brief, but sweeping terms bequeathed and devised to trustees, of whom Philip was not one, the unentailed property and personality to be held by them: firstly, for the benefit of any son that might be born to the said disinherited Philip by his wife Hilda—the question of daughters, being, probably by accident, passed over in silence—and failing such issue, then to the testator's nephew, George Caresfoot, absolutely,i subject, however to the following curious condition: Should the said George Caresfoot, either by deed of gift or will, attempt to reconvey the estate to his cousin Philip, or to descendants of the said Philip, then the gift over to the said George was to be of no effect, and the whole was to pass to some distant cousins of the testator's who lived in Scotland. Then followed several legacies and one charge on the estate to the extent of £1,000 a year payable to the separate use of the aforesaid Hilda Caresfoot for life, and reverting at death to the holder of the estate.

In plain English Philip was, under this draft, totally disinherited, first in favor of his own male issue, by his wife Hilda, all mention of daughters being omitted, and failing such issue, in favor of his hated cousin George, who, as though to add insult to injury was prohibited from willing the property back either to himself or his descendants, by whom the testator had probably understood the children of a second marriage.

Philip read the document over twice carefully.

"Phew!" he said, "that was touch and go. Thank Heaven he had no time to carry out his kind intentions."

But presedntly a terible thought struck him. He rang the bell hastily. It was answered by the footman, who, since he had an hour before helped to carry the poor master up-stairs, had become quite demoralized. It was some time before Philip could get an answer to his question as to whether or no any one had been with his father that day while he was out. At last he succeeded in extracting a reply from the man that nobody had been except the young lady—"leastways, he begged pardon, Mrs. Caresfoot, as he was told she was."

"Never mind her," said Philip, feeling as though a load had been taken from his breast, "you are sure nobody else has been?"

"No, sir, nobody, leastways he begged pardon, nobody except Lawyer Bellamy and his clerk, who had been there all the afternoon writing, with a black bag, and had sent for Simmons to be witnessed."

"You can go," said Philip, in a quiet voice. He saw it all now, he had let the old man die after he had executed the fresh will disinheriting him. He had let him die; he had effectually and beyond redemption cut his own throat. Doubtless, too, Bellamy had taken the new will with him; there was no chance of this being able to destroy it.

By degrees, however, his fit of brooding gave way to one of sullen fury against his wife, himself, but most of all against his dead father. Drunk with excitement, rage and baffled avarice, he seized a candle and staggered up to the room where the corpse had been laid, launching imprecations as he went at his dead father's head. But when he came face to face with that dread Presence his passion died, and a cold sense of the awful quiet and omnipotence of death came upon him and chilled him into fear. In some indistinct way he realized how impotent is the chafing of the waters of Mortality against the iron-bound coasts of Death. To what purpose did he rail against that solemn, quiet thing, that husk and mask of life which lay in unmoved mockery of his reviling?

His father was dead, and he, even he, had killed his father. He was his father's murderer. And then a terror of the reckoning that must one day be struck between that dead man's spirit and his own took possession of him and a foreknowledge of the awful shadow under which he must henceforth lie crept into his mind and froze the very marrow in his bones. He looked again at the face, and, to his excited imagination, it appeared to have assumed a sardonic smile. The curse of Cain fell upon him as he looked, and weighed him down; his hair rose, and the cold sweat poured from his forehead. At length he could bear it no longer, but turning, fled out of the room and out of the house far into the night.

When haggard with mental and bodily exhaustion, he at length returned, it was after midnight. He foundk Dr. Caley waiting for him; he had just come from the sickroom and wore an anxious look upon his face.

"Your wife has been delivered of a fine girl," he said; "but I am bound to tell you that her condition is far from satisfactory. The case is a most complicated and dangerous one."

"A girl!" groaned Philip, mindful of the will. "Are your sure that it is a girl?"

"Of course I am sure," answered the doctor testify.

"And Hilda ill—I don't understand."

"Look here, my good fellow, you are upset; take a glass of brandy and go to bed. Your wife does not wish to see you now, but, if necessary, I will send for you. Now, do as I tell you, or you will be down next. Your nerves are seriously shaken."

Philip did as he was bid, and, as soon as he had seen him off to his room, the doctor returned up-stairs.

In the early morning he sent for two of his brother practitioners, and they held a consultation the upshot of which was that they had come to the conclusion that nothingg short of a miracle could save Hilda's life—a conclusion that she herself had arrived at some hours before.

"Doctor," she said, "I trust you to let me know when the end is near. I wish my husband to be present when I die, but not before."

"Hush, my child—never talk of dying yet. Please God, you have many years of life before you."

She shook her golden head a little sadly.

"No, doctor, my sand has run out, and perhaps it is as well. Give me the child—why do you keep the child away from me? It is the messenger sent to call me to a happier world. Yes, she is an angel messenger. When I am gone see that you call her 'Angela,' so that I may know by what name to greet her when the time comes."

During the course of the morning she expressed a strong desire to see Maria Lee, who was accordingly sent sent for.

It will be remembered that old Mr. Caresfoot had on the previous day, immediately after Hilda had left him, sat down and written to Maria Lee. In this note he told her the whole shameful truth, ending with a few words of bitter humiliation and self-reproach that such a thing should have befallen her at the hands of one bearing his name. Over the agony of shame and grief thus let loose upon this unfortunate girl we will draw a veil. It is fortunate for the endurance of human reason that life does not hold many such hours as that through which she passed after the receipt of this letter. As was but natural, notwithstanding old Mr. Caresfoot's brief vindication of Hilda's conduct in his letter, Maria was filled with indignation at what to herself she called her treachery and deceit.

While she was yet full of these thoughts a messenger came galloping over from Bratham Abbey, bringing a note from Dr. Caley that told her of her old friend's sudden death, and of Hilda's dangerous condition and her desire to see her. The receipt of his news plunged her into a fresh access of grief, for she had grown fond of the old man; nor had the warm affection for Hilda that had found a place in her gentle heart been altogether wrenched away; and now, that she heard that her rival was face to face, with that King of Terrors before whom all earthly love, hate, hope and ambition must fall down and cease their troubling, it revived in all its force; nor did any thought of her own wrongs come to chill it.

Within half an hour she was at the door of the Abbey House, where the doctor met her, and, in answer to her eager question, told her that, humanly speaking, it was impossible her friend could live through another twenty-four hours, adding an injunction that she must not stay with her long.

She entered the sick room with a heavy heart, and there from Hilda's dying lips she heard the story of her marriage and of Philip's perfidy. Their reconciliation was as complete as her friend's failing voice and strength would allow. At length she tore herself away, and, turning at the door, took her last look at Hilda, who had raised herself upon her elbow, and was gazing at her retreating form with an earnestness that was very touching. The eyes, Maria felt, were taking their fill of what they looked upon for the last time in this world. Catching her tearful gaze, the dying woman smiled, and lifting her hand pointed upward. Thus they parted.

But Maria could control herself no longer; her own blasted prospects, the loss of the man she loved, and the affecting scene through which she had just passed, all helped to break her down. Running down stairs into the dining-room, she threw herself on a sofa, and gave full passage to her grief. Presently she became aware that she was not alone. Philip stood before her, or rather the wreck of him whom she knew as Philip. Indeed it was hard to recognize in this scared man, with disheveled hair, white and trembling lips, and eyes ringed round with black, the bold, handsome youth, whom she had loved. The sight of him stayed her sorrow, and a sense of her bitter injuries rushed in upon her.

"What do you want with me?" she asked.

"Want, I want forgiveness. I am crushed, Maria, crushed—quite crushed," and he put his hands to his face and sobbed.

She answered him with the quiet dignity that good women can command in moments of emergency—dignity of a very different stamp from Hilda's haughty pride, but perhaps as impressive in its way.

"You ask forgiveness of me, and say that you are crushed. Has it occurred to you that, without fault of my own, except the fault of trusting you as entirely as I loved you, I too am crushed? Do you know that you have wantonly, or to gain selfish ends, broken my heart, blighted my name, and driven me from my home, for I can live here no more? Do you understand that you have done me one of the greatest injuries one person can do another? I say, do you know all this, Philip Caresfoot, and knowing it, do you still ask me to forgive you? Do you think it possible that I can forgive?"

He had never heard her speak like this before, and did not remember that intense feeling is the mother of eloquence. He gazed at her for a moment in astonishment; then he dropped his face into his hands again and groaned, making no other answer. After waiting awhile, she went on:

"I am an insignificant creature, I know, and perhaps the mite of my happiness or misery makes little difference in the scale of things; but to me the gift of all my love was everything. I gave it to you, Philip—gave it without a doubt or murmur, gave it with both hands. I can never have it back to give again! How you have treated it you best know." Here she broke down a little, and then continued: "It may seem curious, but though my love has been so mistakenly given; though you to whom it was given have dealt so ill with it, yet am I anxious that on my side there should be no bitter memory that, in looking back at all this in after years, you should never be able to dwell upon any harsh or unkind word of mine. It is on that account, and also because I feel that it is not for me to judge you, and that you have already too much to bear, that I do as you ask me, and say, 'Philip, from my heart I forgive you, as I thrust that the Almighty may forgive me.'"

He flung himself upon his knees before her and tried to take her hand. "You do not know how you have humbled me," he groaned.

She gazed at him with pity.

"I am sorry," she said; "I did not wish to humble you. I have one word more to say, and then I must go. I have just bid my last earthly farewell to—your wife. My farewell to you must be as complete as that, as complete as though the grave had already swallowed one of us. We have done with each other forever. I do not think that I shall come back here. In my waking moments your name shall never willingly pass my lips again. I will say it for the last time now. Philip, Philip, Philip, whom I chose to love out of all the world, I pray God that He will take me or deaden the edge of what I suffer, and that He may never let my feet cross your path or my eyes fall upon your face again."

In another second she had passed out of the room and out of his life.

. . . . . .

That night, or rather just before dawn on the following morning, Hilda, knowing that her end was very near, sent for her husband.

"Go quickly, doctor," she said. "I shall die at dawn."

The doctor found him seated in the same spot where Maria Lee had left him.

"What, more misery!" he said, when he had told his errand. "I cannot bear it. There is a curse upon me—death and wickedness, misery and death!"

"You must come if you wish to see your wife alive."

"I will come," and he rose and followed him.

A sad sight awaited him. The moment of the gray dawn was drawing near, and by his wife's request, a window had been unshuttered that her dimmed eyes might once more look upon the light. On the great bed in the center of the room lay Hilda whose life was now quickly draining from her, and by her side was placed the sleeping infant. She was raised and supported on either side by pillows, and her unbound golden hair fell around her shoulders, inclosing her face as in a frame. Her pallid countenance seemed touched with an awful beauty that had not belonged to it in life, while in her eyes was that dread and prescient gaze which sometimes come to those who are about to solve death's mystery.

By the side of the bed knelt Mr. Fraser, the clergyman of the parish, repeating in an earnest tone the prayers for the dying, while the sad faced attendants moved with muffled tread backward and forward from the ring of light around the bed into the dark shadows that lay beyond.

When Philip came the clergyman ceased praying, and drew back into the further part of the room, as did Pigott and the nurse, the former taking the baby wtih her.

Hilda motioned to him to come close to her. He came and bent over and kissed her, and she, with an effort, threw one ivory arm around his neck and smiled sweetly. After about a minute, during which she was apparently collecting her thoughts, she spoke in a low voice, and in her native tongue.

"I have not sent for you before, Philip, for two reasons—first, because I wished to spare you pain; and next in order that I might have time to rid my mind of angry thoughts against you. They are all gone now—gone with every other earthly interest; but I was angry with you, Philip. And now listen to me—for I have not got much time—and do not forget my words in future years when the story of my life will seem but as a shadow that once fell upon your path. Change your ways, Philip dear, abandon deceit, atone for the past; if you can, make your peace with Maria Lee, and marry her—ah! it is a pity that you did not do that at first, and leave me to go my ways—and above all, humble your heart before the Power that I am about to face. I love you, dear, and, notwithstanding all, I am thankful to have been your wife. Please God, we shall meet again."

She paused awhile and then spoke in English to the astonishment of all in the room, her voice was strong and clear, and she uttered her words with an energy that, under the circumstances, seemed almost awful.

"Tell her to bring the child."

There was no need for Philip to repeat what she said, for Pigott heard her, and at once came forward with the baby, which she laid beside her.

The dying woman placed her hand upon its tiny head, and, turning her eyes upward, with the rapt expression of one who sees a vision, said:

"May the power of God be about you to protect you, my motherless babe; may angels guard you and make you as they are; and may the heavy curse and everlasting doom of the Almighty fall upon those who would bring evil upon you!"

She paused, and then addressed her husband.

"Philip, you have heard my words; in your charge I leave the child; see that you never betray my trust."

Then, turning to Pigott, she said, in a fainter voice:

"Thank you, for your kindness to me. You have a good face, if you can, stop with my child, and give her your love and care. And now, may God have mercy on my soul!"

Then came a minute's silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of those who stood around, till a ray of light from the rising sun struggled through the gray mist of the morning, and, touching the heads of mother and child, illumined them as with a glory. It passed as quickly as it came, drawing away with it the mother's life. Suddenly, as it faded, she spread out her arms, sighed and smiled. When the doctor reached the bed, her story was told: she had fallen asleep.

Death had been very gentle with her.

CHAPTER XIII.

Go, my reader, if the day is dull, and you feel inclined to moralize—for whatever may be said to the contrary, there are less useful occupations—and look at your village churchyard. What do you see before you? A plot of inclosed ground, backed by a gray old church, a number of tombstones more or less decrepit, and a great quantity of little oblong mounds covered with rank grass. If you have any imagination any power of thought, you will see more than that. First, with the instinctive selfishness of human nature, you will recognize your own future habitation; perhaps your eye will mark the identical spot where the body you love must lie through all seasons and weathers, through the slow centuries that will flit so fast for you, till the crash of doom. It is good that you should think of that, although it makes you shudder. The English churchyard takes the place of the Egyptian mummy at the feast, or the slave in the Roman conqueror's car—it mocks your vigor and whisper of the end of beauty and strength.

Probably you need some such reminder. But, if giving to the inevitable, the sigh that is its due, you pursue the vein of thought, it may further occur to you that the plot before you is in a sense a summary of the aspirations of humanity. It marks the realization of human hopes, it is the crown of human ambitions, the grave of human failures. Here, too, is the end of man, and here the birth-place of the angel or the demon. It is his sure inheritance, one that he never solicits and never squanders; and, last, it is the only certain resting-place of sleepless, tired mortality.

Here it was that they brought Hilda and the old squire, and laid them side by side against the coffin of yeoman Caresfoot, whose fancy it had been to be buried in stone, and then, piling primroses, and blackthorn blooms upon their graves, left them to their chilly sleep. Farewell to them, they have passed, to where, as yet, we may not follow. Violent old man and proud and lovely woman, rest in peace, if peace be the portion of you both!

To return to the living. The news of the sudden decease of old Mr. Caresfoot; of the discovery of Philip's secret marriage and the death of his wife; of the terms of the old man's will, under which Hilda being dead and having and having only left a daughter behind her, George inherited all the unentailed portion of the property, with the curious provision that he was never to leave it back to Philip or his children: of the sudden departure of Miss Lee and of many other things, that were some of them true and some of them false, following as they did upon the heels of the great dinner-party, and the announcement made thereat, threw the country-side into a state of indescribable ferment. When this settled down, it left a strong and permanent residuum of public indignation and contempt directed against Philip, the more cordially, perhaps, becuse he was no longer a rich man. People very rarely express contempt or indignation against a rich man who happens to be their neighbor in the country, whatever he may have done. They keep their virtue for those who are impoverished, or for their unfortunate relations. But for Philip it was felt that there was no excuse and no forgiveness; he had lost both his character and his money, and must therefore be cut, and from that day forward he was cut accordingly.

As for Philip himself, he was fortunately, as yet, ignorant of the kind intentions of his friends and neighbors, who had been so fond of him a week ago. He had enough upon his shoulders without that—for he had spoken no lie when he told Maria Lee that he was crushed by the dreadful and repeated blows that had fallen upon him, blows that had robbed him of everything that had made life worth living, and given him in return nothing but an infant who could not inherit, and who was therefore only an incumbrance.

Who is it that says, "After all let a bad man take what pains he may to push it down, a human soul is an awful, ghostly, unique possession for a bad man to have?" During the time that had elapsed between the death and burial of his father and wife, Philip had become thoroughly acquainted with the truth of this remark.

(To Be Continued.)

ENGLISH SERVANTS' WAGES.

The official statistics show that the general average of wages for all classes of domestic servants in London is only $76.25 a year, or $6.35 a month. Good butlers are paid as much as $150 a year. Ladies' maids come next, and those who have accomplishments get very nearly the same wages. The official statistics show that the average for all of London is $121.75 a year. The average for cooks is $107.75 a year; for housemaids, $81.25; nursemaids, $89.50, and laundresses, $94.25. These averages are drawn from many thousand individual cases reported to the bureau of labor and statistics by the employment agencies in London, and may be regarded as accurate, although they do not refer to the highest class of servants, such as are found in the houses of the nobility and aristocracy.

FAD FOR MILLIONAIRES.

Millionaire women now have a fad for wearing diamonds on the finger nails. The new fashion decrees that the women with long bank accounts shall have a tiny gold cap made for each of their fingers. From the cap is suspended on the outerside a big diamond drop, which sparkles most satisfactorily; there is one large sparkle for each finger nail. Of course, the sparkles are not so conspicuous as they would be if a large number of rings were not worn at the same time.

SKELETONS LINE THE TRAIL,

And Gold Dust is Weighed Like Bags of Meat on the Scales at Dawson City.

Waldo C. Curtiss, of Winsted, Conn., who is 22 years old and went to the Klondike last July, has sent his father an account of his adventures on the way and his prospects.

"It is through sheer good luck that I am here to write you now," he says. "I fell in with a party of seven other fellows and at Lake Linderman we found a man who had constructed a large boat or scow, roughly built and capable of carrying about a dozen persons. He offered to take us through the rapids and down the Yukon for $40 each and let us have the privilege of working our own passage. We were not long in accepting his offer, so we put aboard our outfit and tied it on the best we could, and started on our journey through the several lakes and rapids to and down the Yukon. It was a case of hustle from the beginning of the journey to the end to save our lives as well as our outfit. We ran the different rapids without losing anything to speak of until we reached the treacherous White Horse Rapids. Here we lost much of our outfit, as we were submerged many times. Among the minor things which I prized most highly was the loss of my films and developing materials, as I had taken many views all along on the overland trail from Dyea, Alaska, and through the different canons.

"It takes about two and a half minutes to shoot Miles Canon, but we ran it without accident, although four different times I came near losing all.

"The journey from Dyea to Klondike is

DOTTED WITH STAKES,

marking the last resting place of those less fortunate than myself. I also saw many skeletons and bodies of men, who had lost their lives in the rapids and could not be reached to be buried. We ran on to piles of wreckage, logs, and sadns bars, but the worst are the sharp-sand bars, but the worst are the surface of the water in the White Horse as to strike the bottom of the boat, which throws it out of course and makes it exceedingly dangerous for its occupants.

"But I am here at Dawson City at last, in what is supposed to be the richest mining camp in the world where dollars are as nickels in the State and wages are $15 a day, meals $1.50 each, and consist of moose steak or fried salmon, two pieces of potato, and a cup of tea or coffee, with a little bread and butter. Whiskey is 50 cents a drink and never saw a still. Talk about rat poison; it isn't in it. Gambling houses are thicker than mosquitoes in Maine which are not half as thick as they are here.

'In order to get a letter you must begin at one end of the town and take each gambling hell and saloon in rotation for you will be as likely to find your letter in any one of them as at the Alaska Commercial Company's store, which is considered the headquarters. Everybody brings in letters and they are left promiscuously about the town. I brought in over a dozen myself. Every letter costs $1 each, the carrier of which is willingly paid.

"I have been offered $15 a day of ten hours at the mines and shall go up to-morrow and take in the situation. They claim some of the mines here are running $500 to $800 to a pan. I do not know that gold is being brought into Dawson in abundance. I have seen them throw it on a scale to weigh in bags like meal. I saw the first day here what was claimed to be several millions. One man had nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth. Nearly all dealing is done in gold dust here."

HAPPY THOUGHT.

Saved His Life By Shouting "Vive La France."

An amusing frontier incident is reported by Dalziel from the village of Schoelbach, in the neighbourhool of Metz.

A boy who was minding a flock of sheep on a small island in the river was caught in a violent storm, during which the rain fell in torrents. The river rose rapidly and threatened to cover the island.

The boy shouted for help and his cries were heard by two German policeman and several villagers, but none of them would venture into the swollen stream. The boy had almost given himself up for lost, when he remembered hearing some of his playmates say: "If you want a policeman shout 'Vive la France!'"

He immediately began to shout "Vive la France," whereupon the two policemen plunged into the river, seized the boy, dragged him across to the mainland and off to the police station, where they charged him with uttering seditious cries.

OLD MARRIAGE CUSTOM.

The people of Lithuania believe in being forearmed for emergency. At least so a curious custom in regard to the marriage ceremony would seem to indicate. It is said that before the marriage is celebrated the mother of the bride gives her daughter a parting maternal box on the ears in the presence of a number of witnesses. The reason for this remarkable proceeding is that if the wife should at any time wish to secure a divorce she would have to plead that physical force was used to make her enter the bonds of matrimony.