A MAN'S REVENGE;

OR, THE CONVICT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued).

As they passed the lonely cottage where Sinclair had found his uncle, Sir Ralph Freer, Bill nodded his head towards its hazy lights.

"Who lives there?" he asked. "A funny place for a villager that, about two miles from St. Lawrence, eh?"

"Yes," replied Sunbeam. "It belongs to old Captain Nash, a dear old man. I've often had tea with him. He's about the only person who doesn't——" She hesitated.

"I know. Who doesn't turn 'is back on you 'cos I'm your father. Five years your aunt 'as lived 'ere, and the wooden 'eaded critturs 'aven't found out that there's more good in her little finger than in their great bodies. Fools! And so this old capt'in is good to you?"

"He was. He's been gone now a month or two. He went to Hull, where his married daughter lives, and the cottage was empty until a week ago. Some invalid gentleman is there, I think. But I did not catch the name."

"Oh, well, it don't matter to me. No one with a lot o' cash would come there. Too simple like an' too quiet. And I ain't the fellow to frighten a sickly man. Nor if you told me your old capt'in had 'is floors paved with gold, I shouldn't have the 'eart to rob off him when he'd bin good to my little maid."

She squeezed his arm lovingly. A glow of relief thrilled her. She felt sure he would be kind.

A few minutes later they stopped. They had reached the Half Way House. Bill opened thte door and entered the bar. Sunbeam followed and smiled recognition on the woman behind the counter.

"You'll have a drink," said her father, "to keep the fog out." He handed her a glass as he spoke.

"No, thank you," she exclaimed hastily.

"But you must. We're two miles an' a 'alf from 'ome, a wretched walk in this mist. Besides," he added in a low voice, "you want it; we've a lot o' talkin' ahead of us."

"Been to the town?" asked the woman, smiling.

"Yes," exclaimed Bill, hurriedly. "A nasty walk, and no one to give us a lift. Bad evening for your trade, missus. We seem your only customers."

"Well, I ain't had many yet. But it's early. About eight, that's all. We don't often see you this way, missie," she added, smiling again at Sunbeam.

"You'll see her oftener now I'm 'ere!" laughed Bill, flinging a coin down and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Now then, Sunbeam, we must trudge on. Haven't you finished that? Gimme it then."

He emptied her glass and put it down noisily. Then rolled across the room and opened the door.

"Good night, marm good luck to you," he said, as Sunbeam passed out in front of him.

Outside he seized her arm and drew her round the house down a lane that led to the crowded outhouses. From there, the lane, instead of terminating, as one might have expected, in a yard, continued past the buildings between two high hedges.

"Where are we going?" asked Sunbeam, surprised, a vague fear trembling in her voice.

"To Gentleman Dan's," replied her father.

"But there are no houses here! It is only a bridle road. There's nothing beyond but fields and a wood."

But even as she spoke her heart sank. For she remembered that beyond the wood stood a cottage which had belonged to an old hedge-cutter. The man, who had lived alone and was supposed to have great savings hidden about the premises, had been found murdered in the early spring, about two or three days after the deed had been committed. And the mystery had never yet been solved. The cottage had remained unoccupied ever since, people shunning it with horror.

"Oh, yes, there is," replied Bill. "There's a cottage beyond the wood where a murder was done. Dan has rented that cottage for a bit. He got it cheap. He rents it from the people at Half Way House."

"But," stammered the girl, "if he's known he might be suspected of the——"

"Not he. You may be sure he runs no risk. Though it's rum you should think of that. I 'ad the same thought when he showed me it. 'Ow did he know about the place? Any'ow that's nothing to do with us. Our business ain't about murder, and wot's more, I've never yet stained me 'ands with blood. Strike me dead if I lie."

She remained silent, puzzling about Dan's motive in taking the place. Could he have murdered poor old Dick for the sake of a few pounds? And was he there for the purpose of finding the hidden money? The idea, however, seemed too improbable. He was there by coincidence merely, so as to make his plans with Bill, free from interference.

But her nervousness did not leave her. Awakened fear is not easily lulled into silence. She crept closer to her father as they entered the wood, and peered with frightened eyes at the ghost-like trees and bushes as they seemed to spring up suddenly before them. The light streaming from the open door of the cottage was greeted by her with a sigh of relief. For a second her dread of Gentleman Dan was forgotten.

But when, hearing their footsteps, he appeared on the threshold before them, her heart gave a great bound, and for a moment her breath stopped. Although she had not seen him for some years, she recognized him at once, and, although his back being to the light, his features were barely discernible, she could have described them accurately, so vivid had been the impression made by him throughout her childhood. She shrank back behind Bill. Now that she was face to face with Dan, the terror of the wood was a mere bagatelle.

"So there you are!" he exclaimed, in a low refined voice; "I was wondering if you were coming to-night. Or rather if you were going to bring Miss Sunbeam. Come in, you must be tired after your walk," he added, turning to her, his eyes fixed insolently on her pale face. "How you've grown! But you're just the same. I should have picked you out of a crowd."

She smiled weakly. His big black eyes shot terror into her. With the full light on his dark, clean-shaven face, her old dread of him revived, intensified. She remembered whispered tales, told by her aunt, of his refined cruelty, his utter wickedness. Everybody was afraid of him, even her father.

She sat down, trembling, and looked round the room. It was very bare. A small deal table stood in the middle. On it, a candle burning low in the sockets, a whiskey bottle and a couple of glasses. Three rush-seated chairs, a rusty fender, a couple of shelves with coarse crockery upon them, completed its contents. Another door led into a scullery, with stairs to the top floor.

She wondered how Gentleman Dan, who was known to be fond of comfort, could have taken such a dreary place. And then the remembrance of the murdered man flashed upon her mind and she turned to her companions.

They were talking hurriedly in low tones, Bill now and then raising his glass to his lips and drinking greedily. Dan, his eyes gleaming with excitement, glancing occasionally across at her with a little smile upon his thin straight lips. She shuddered. Those terrible eyes!

Scraps of sentences fell upon her ears. They were sufficient to tell her that they were laying plans for what promised a big "haul." A feeling of intense nausea crept up in her. Why oh why had she been given such a father? Horror at her disloyalty quenched the thought. She began to pray silently, her eyes closed.

Suddenly their voices grew louder. Her name was repeated frequently. She paused in her prayers to listen. The terrible moment was upon her. Soon she would have to join in to face her father, who, now that he had been drinking heavily would be difficult to manage, and listen to Gentleman Dan's smooth sneers and cruel soft voice.

Sunbeam'll go . . . then we'll try her at Lady Denver's. I've 'ad my eye on that tiara for years . . . then Lady Cruse will be there . . . her diamond necklace makes me mouth water. . . . Havin' been a toff yourself, you can see they'll never suspect 'er o' 'elping us . . ."

The words died off in a gurgle. She winced and opened her eyes. Gentleman Dan was looking at her. But she sat silent, a smile upon her lips, a peculiar expression upon her face.

Bill turned heavily in his chair.

"Sunbeam!" he called huskily. "Come 'ere! Roight 'ere, near the light. I want to speak to you. I want to 'ear your answer to my question, the one wot I asked yer this morning. Come on. Wot are you waitin' for, 'ave you gone to sleep?"

She started. The terrible moment had come at last. The heavy mist without seemed to weigh upon her breast. Her lips were dry and her tongue unable to articulate. She felt incapable of moving. But only for a moment. As he burst out into a storm of curses she rose. Sinclair's words rang in her ears. She would be brave.

She stepped across the room and stopped in front of him. The light fell full upon her face. It was as white as death, but in her eyes shone a look of such calm resolve that her father blinked in astonishment at her, and his curses died away in a low growl.

Then clearing his voice, he demanded sulkily:

"Well, then? Wot 'ave you got to say for yourself?"

CHAPTER IX.

A silence sharp as a blade fell between them. She looked steadily into his flushed face. Gentleman Dan leaned across the table, his eyes fixed compellingly on hers, his lips parted as though about to speak.

"Now, then, wot d'ye mean? 'Ave you lost your tongue?" blurted Bill with an uneasy laugh.

"I told you this morning what I meant, father. I have not changed my mind," she said quietly, laying her hand on the table as though for support.

He uttered a curse and started towards her. Then fell back heavily in his chair, his eyes rolling with anger, his hands heavily clenched.

"You mean that you refuse to 'elp us—to repay me all I've done for you—you want me and your aunt to die o' want when you could 'elp us to comfort—you offer us a stone 'stead o' bread. Ungrateful hussy. You actually refuse t. do your duty by your old father?"

"I refuse to do that," replied Sunbeam "because it seems wrong to me. If I can earn money honestly I will, but not in that way. I—I would rather die than—steal—or help others to do so."

She choked nervously over the words. The color crept to her brow as she met Gentleman Dan's sneering smile. What was the good of talking to them like that? They could not understand.

Bill turned to his companion.

"D'you hear that?" he spluttered, pouring himself out another glassful of the spirit with a shaking hand. "That's the girl I slaved for an' risked my life for. That's her gratitood. I told 'er that it was that or you. I could 'ave sworn she'd choose that and leave you to get your bride elsewhere. But——"

"Fool," ejaculated Dan, his eyes flashing. "Do you think I shan't have her, that you use me merely as a threat? Sooner or later she shall be mine. I swore it years ago. Now, that I've seen her, I say it again. Things remain as I said. If she will enter into our plans I'll leave her alone for a bit, if she won't the sooner she marries me and learns to turn her education to some account the better for us both. I don't like to interfere between parent and child, but as you've promised her to me I think I've a right to know whether she really means what she says. Your blustering, Bill, is enough to frighten a wild cat. You're not patient enough. You can't expect her to see things with your eyes. If you'd followed my advice and trained her to the profession things would have been different; instead, you educate her like a lady, send her to swell schools and the like, and look fit to murder her 'cos she won't fall in with your ideas of right and wrong. Ladies don't steal each other's money or jewels, they keep to stealing each other's reputations with their tongues. If your daughter's a failure, you've yourself to blame. However, you remember our compact. But be patient with her; patience is a virtue in all trades, even in ours."

"Patience be blowed!" ejaculated Bill, banging his fists noisily on the table. "I've 'ad enough patience. These years in quod I've spent laying my plans with 'er acting 'er part in them. Do you think I'm going to give them up for a slip of a gal like 'er. Gorn with your sermonizing. And you, Sunbeam, just say again wot you mean? I'll 'ave the patience to 'ear you again. Here's Dan awaiting to claim you. Which do you choose; to obey me and come home, or to marry 'im?"

She drew a long breath and leaned heavily on the table. Her face had grown paler as Dan spoke and she turned appealingly to her father as the smooth silken tones ceased, to shrink back alarmed at the vehemence of his rough retort. For she realized that she could hope for no relenting from him. He was already half-drunk and the devil of evil had chased all softening influences from his blackened heart. She knew that she was entirely at their mercy, and, for a second, fear held her in its throes. Then again the vision of Duncan's face floated before her eyes and courage returned to her. Right was right. Had not he said so?

With a little gasp she flung back her head, exclaiming loudly—

"I choose neither!"

With an oath Bill thrust out his hand and struck her violently on the mouth. She staggered back giddily. The blood rushed from her heart. A numbness seized her in every limb. But above and beyound all was the thought that the man she had loved in spite of his misdoings, had so disgraced his manhood.

Tears gushed from her eyes.

"Father," she murmured, moving unsteadily towards him. "You don't mean it. You made a mistake. You love me—you——"

He flung her back roughly.

"Ungrateful hussy," he spat "I wash me hands o' you now. Dan, you can have her when you like. You can keep her here to make sure o' her. I trust you. Lock 'er up, or——"

"Oh, father, father! What have I done that you should be so unkind? Let me come home with you, at least," she pleaded, shaking off Dan's detaining hand and seizing her father by the sleeve. "Have you forgotten your Sunbeam, your little girl?"

Great sobs choked her. She clung to his arms pleadingly, the tears pouring down her uplifted face. "I love you, father. I'll do anything for you, if you'll take me back."

Half ashamed, he turned to her eagerly.

"Then stop that blubbering and say you'll do wot I want. We've wasted enough time over that a'ready. Dan's worn out with your 'ysterics."

Gentleman Dan laughed.

"Not at all," he murmured softly; "it amuses me, Miss Sunbeam."

But, unheeding him, she drew back her hands from her father's arm, saying in as quiet a voice as she could command—

"I will do anything but that. I shall never change on that point."

Bill's anger returned in full force. He swung round upon her, his hand upraised. But as she cowered before him, her eyes raised in alarm to his furious face, he drew back with another oath.

"Then keep to your pint," he stormed. "An' leave me alone or I'll murder you. Don't you see the devil's up in me? Gorn out o' my sight or I'll kill you as I stand."

She crept to the door, even the wood was preferable to this. Out in the cool air her ebbing strength would return.

But as she laid her hand on the knob Gentleman Dan put his upon it.

"Not yet, my girl," he said, smiling knowingly. "You forget that you are mine. Your father has given you to me and I do not mean to let you go."

She sprang aside with a little cry and leaned panting against the wall. Dan smiled, evidently understanding, and enjoying her horror of him. His eyes gleamed with anything but friendliness though his coolness was not even ruffled.

Bill, lolling across the table, his eyes stupid and bloodshot, chuckled gleefully.

"That's it, tame her, my boy. Clip her wings and teach her wot I cannot."

She glanced at him despairingly. In that moment of terror and loneliness death would have been sweet.

"As I can't trust you away from me now you're mine, bright Sunbeam, I'm going to keep you here, until to-morrow. After that I'll teach you the duties of a wife. And if, in a few months you're not the sharpest woman in our profession my name isn't Dan Hubbard. As you treat me so will I treat you. That's fair, isn't it?"

Her head dropped on her breast.

"Kill me," she murmured; "kill me and get it over now."

He laughed.

"Kill you? Not I. You're to be my little wife to-morrow. Your father has given you to me."

Then before she could guess at his intention he had seized her in his arms and carried her across the room.

"Father father help me" she cried, struggling frantically, as Dan bore her up the steep staircase.

But a low chuckle and a volley of oaths were his sole response.

"He's given you to me," murmured Dan, laughing softly. "I'm not going to give you up now."

She flung out her arms and hit him wildly in the face. With a low exclamation of rage he stopped and covered her face with burning kisses.

"There!" he said, "I'll teach you to show your temper. And now you can cool yourself in here. This is your cage, good-night. To-morrow, when you are good I'll let you out, my tamed dove. Until then, good-bye. You need fear no harm. No one will come near you. You're as safe as death."

He pushed her from him as he spoke. She staggered back against a bed. With a laugh he pulled the door to noisily.

Cowering in the darkness of the unknown room she heard him turn the key in the lock. Then a sharp metallic sound like the fall of a key fell on her ears. She held her breath as he groped without, evidently trying to find it, until with a disappointed oath, and a muttered, "It doesn't matter. She's safe enough," he went slowly downstairs.

Then indeed did she realize, as she quivered with fear at the remembrance of the horror that had perhaps taken place in that very spot, that she was forgotten and forsaken by the man whom she called father.

(To be continued).

WHAT HIS INTENTIONS WERE.

Young Man Explained Them to the Damsel's Father.

"Freddy," murmured the sweet damsel, as she flung her arms around the young man's neck and yanked down the band of his tie where it had got hitched up in unsightly fashion above his collar-stud—"Freddy, papa is in the study and he is dying to have a chat with you."

Freddy wilted. For the moment he felt willing to allow the old gentleman to expire in the study and the bosom of his family, but his better nature prevailed. He owed some sacrifice to the charming creature at his side, so he said, like a hero: "Very well, Gladys. I will go in and see papa, if he is at liberty.'

He was. In fact, he was very much at liberty. He had been like it for about two hours, with nothing else to do but just wait for Freddy.

"Come in, young man, and shut the door," he said. The young man obeyed.

"Sit down," said the father.

"Thanks," said Freddy, as he fixed himself on the edge of a chair. "It's a nice evening."

"I didn't ask you here to talk about the weather," remarked the stern parent,, as he slued his chair round so as to get the young man into focus.

"No?' gasped Freddy, faintly. "You didn't?"

"I did not," echoed papa. "The question I'm asking you is: What are your intentions when you call here to spend the evening with my daughter?"

It was the straight question. To his credit, be it said, the young man never flinched. "Oh! that's rather an easy one," he said. "I'll answer it in a minute. My intentions? Yes, of course. Well, in the first place, you know, this is a nice house, and Gladys is a nice girl, and I intend, whenever I call, to make the best of things, and to sit on the sofa with Gladys, and to get her to turn the gas down low so as to save your gas bill, and sometimes to have a little snack of supper, if it's only a sandwich, and to talk pretty things and not worry about anything, to forget the cruel world and just revel in the delight of the moment, and—and—in short, my intentions are to have a real good time of it, don't you know. I hope you understand?"

It seemed that papa did understand, and he signified the fact in the usual manner. When Freddy had sorted himself out of the geranium-bed and was limping sadly homeward, he murmured:—

"These fathers are the most incomprehensible men on earth. They ask you a straight question, man to man, and when they get a truthful answer they don't like it!"

Any man can get along with any woman: all he has to do is to let her have her way.

ON THE FARM.

CLEANING MILK VESSELS.

Rusty milk cans should not be tolerated. Even a singly rusty patch in a can is dangerous. Rust creates a sponge-like honeycombed condition in the texture of iron, and in cases lodges in the interstices thus formed, providing food for the various families of objectionable and putrefactive organisms. From these emanate an infective or putrefying series of ferments, which are distributed throughout the milk or cream stored in the can. Further, a peculiar chalybeate or rusty iron flavor is noticeable in the dairy or butter as a result of the lactic acid generated in the milk attacking the iron and combining and dissolving it. And not only is the milk in the cans themselves affected adversely but also the whole supply in the receiving vat. Hence it can be seen how imperative it is that cans showing rust should at once be sent to the tinsmith to have them removed, or reject them and get new ones. Well-made cans generally have lids not likely under reasonable care to become loose, and so necessitate the daily use of the rags and cloths to secure them firmly, this being another objectionable practice. If they do become ill-fitting through carelessness or other causes it costs but a trifle to have their rims remodelled and rendered serviceable again.

When the cans have been brought back from the factory and the skim milk or whey emptied from them the next thing is to see that they are thoroughly cleansed. Cold water should first be used in rinsing out the milk for the reason that milk contains a certain proportion of albumen (white of egg), and if hot water is used instead the albumen is cooked on the sides of the vessel, there to remain and to become a menace to the next can of milk. This should be followed by washing with boiling water and for prolonging the useful age of the can one of the most effective agents is the use of a boiling solution of ordinary washing soda in the proportion of one pound of soda to 20 gallons of water. Provided this solution is applied boiling hot it is beneficial in two ways, namely by acting as a wholesome and innocuous germicide or microbe killer and also a preventive of rust.

The cans should be rinsed with water well boiled and afterwards inverted on a raised platform exposed to the sunlight, out of range of any objectionable odors and where there is no floating dust. Sometimes the cleansing can be done by stream and where practicable this is undoubtedly the best way. Not only should milk cans thus be cared for, but the interiors frequently examined to detect any flaws in the seams, which, with dents, are as dangerous to the sound keeping qualities of milk as rust or dirty rags around the lids.

SIMPLE MILK TESTING METHOD.

The inhabitants of the Island of Jersey, from whence came the celebrated Jersey cattle, have a very simple way of testing milk to tell the pure from the impure. They simply boil the milk in an enamelled sauce pan. If it boils without curdling it is said to be fit for use. If it curdles before it begins to boil they consider it impure and is not used as food by the people or their most valuable calves.

The cause of the curdling is said to be filth, acidity, age and contamination.

If the milk has been kept in vessels in a room where there is a great deal of dirt, or if that contains a little dirt that come from the hands of the milker or from the udder of the cow at milking time, it will curdle when it is being boiled. If it has been kept in a room where the temperature has been high the milk becomes "tinted" and will curdle when boiled. If it has stood a long time even in a temperature which is low enough to hinder it from becoming sour, it will slightly curdle when boiled. Milk coming from diseased udders or from cows that have just freshened will also curdle before it will boil.

The test is a simple one and should be employed by every housekeeper.

HOW PRIZE BUTTER WAS MADE.

George H. Bristol, who won the first prize on dairy butter at the Illinois State Fair, says of his dairy methods: I keep only Jersey cows and endeavor to have my stables and all dairy utensils as clean as possible. I feed and milk regularly, giving ground feed corn, oats and bran mixed for the grain ration and for roughage shredded corn fodder and alfalfa hay. I use a separator, keeping the cream at 50 degrees F. I warm before churning, and then churn to granules about the size of wheat. I then draw off the buttermilk, wash twice in clean well water, salt about one and a quarter ounces to the pound, work a little in the worker, and then pack.

NO KNEAD TO WORRY.

In these degenerate days a housewife who makes her own bread has cause for genuine pride, and Mrs. Bronson can, and does, boast that she has not patronized a baker during the whole of her married life.

A little while ago she left a pan of dough to rise in the kitchen, and then went to attend to other duties.

Presently her son Thomas sought her out.

"I say, mum," he said, excitedly, "there's a mouse just jumped into your bread-pan."

"Oh, Tommy!" she cried frantically, "did you take it out?"

"Not much, mum. Don't like 'em," was the juvenile's answer. "But I did just as well. I throwed the cat in after him, and she's diggin' him out like billyoh!"