A MAN'S REVENGE;

OR, THE CONVICT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XIV.

All that morning Sunbeam kept on recalling Eileen's angry look and words, and puzzling over them. She could not find any reason for such a marked dislike from one who had never seen her before, and a slight uneasiness ruffled the calm that had descended upon her. Pride prevented her questioning Miss Field, the governess, and her charge, as to the beautiful stranger's footing in the house, and no chance word was uttered that could enlighten her. Nor did she see Eileen again, somewhat to her disappointment, for she wished to ask her what she had done to provoke such marked antipathy, and longed for the opportunity of doing so with the ardour of a youth at the scent of battle.

But Eileen did not return to the house with Lady Larkin, and Sunbeam lunched in the schoolroom after a short walk in the Park. Lady Larkin had sent up word for her to go down to the drawing-room at three o'clock, ready to accompany her on a shopping expedition in order to obtain the various necessities she required. But it was long before that hour when James came to request her immediate presence. She glanced inquiringly at Miss Field as he left the room after delivering his message.

"I suppose Lady Cruse wishes to see you," said Miss Field, smiling encouragingly. "She has lunched here to-day and is interested in young girls. No doubt Lady Larkin has told her about you already."

"Why is she interested in young girls?" asked Sunbeam, rising from her seat as she spoke.

"I think it is because she lost her only child, a girl, years ago," replied Miss Field. "But I will tell you about that another time. You had better go down at once. Perhaps she knows of something that may suit you, if she approves of you. And I am sure she will do that."

"I hope so," faltered Sunbeam, smoothing her hair with a hasty hand. "Perhaps it is silly of me, Miss Field, but I feel rather nervous."

The governess laughed, her somewhat hard face softening.

"Poor child!" she exclaimed, gently. "And you need not. They are both the kindest souls in the world, ever ready to help those less fortunate than themselves."

But in spite of that cheering assurance the girl felt her knees shaking beneath her as she entered the drawing-room, and, for a moment, the mist before her eyes prevented her from distinguishing any object distinctly.

Then she glanced around the immense room, half hoping that Eileen was there, but saw Lady Larkin and a stranger only. They had stopped talking, and were observing her.

"So you are Sunbeam?" said Lady Cruse, rising and holding out her hand. "Lady Larkin has told me all about you, and I felt that I must make your acquaintance at once."

A letter fluttered from her knees to the ground as she rose. Sunbeam stooped and picked it up. Lady Cruse laughed as she took it, exclaiming:

"It's Sir Ralph's! Poor Sir Ralph! what would he say if he knew that I had read it, Adele. Also what should he say if he knew what I have proposed to do for his little protege. He dislikes me so, poor man! And yet, once——" She sighed, and a sad look chased the smile from her face, "My little one loved him so! Poor Sir Ralph! Will he consent, I wonder?"

Lady Larkin smiled, her eyes on Sunbeam's attentive face.

"That I cannot say," she exclaimed. "We must wait. He says that he is coming up in a few days to make final arrangements for Sunbeam's comfort. I suppose, as she has run away, to prevent any guessing at his participation in her act he thinks it wiser not to come at once. Therefore, until he appears, Sunbeam must remain with me. My husband thinks it better. But she must know what your kind offer is. Sit down, Sunbeam; we have a great deal to say. Lady Cruse, on hearing you want to do something, has kindly suggested your going to her as a companion. It is good of her. But, as I said, we must wait before deciding. As Sir Ralph Freer has taken up the cudjels for you, you will have to consult him a little. He may have something to tell you about your father when he comes. You may even be able to go home then."

"No, I do not think so," replied Sunbeam, coloring deeply. "I think I shall never return now. My father will be angry for a long time, and——"

"You will come to me?" interposed Lady Cruse eagerly, her eyes bright with excitement, for she felt strangly drawn to this girl of the people with the appearance of a young queen.

Sunbeam blushed again as she looked from one to the other questioning. But for the moment words failed her, although a longing to say yes invaded her heart with overpowering force. She felt that she would do anything to chase the sadness from Lady Cruse's eyes. Never before had she felt so attracted by any one.

"Would you care to come to me, Sunbeam, and brighten my home a little?" asked Lady Cruse. "I am a lonely woman; a young life like yours would be a continual pleasure. And I think you could be very happy with me. What do you think about it? If your friend, Sir Ralph approves, will you come?"

"I should like to beyond all things," exclaimed the girl. "But there is something I ought to tell you. You do not know all about me. I am not——"

She hesitated, checked by a smile on the older woman's face.

"I know enough! I want a young heart, a young face, a young life—that is all. I do not think I need fear anything dreadful now I have seen you, Sunbeam. Lady Larkin has told me that you have run away from your father to escape a distasteful marriage. There is no crime in that."

"Oh, but I am not even what you might call of respectable parentage," broke in Sunbeam, hot with excitement. "What Sir Ralph kept back is what you ought to know. . . . My father is nothing but a burglar. . . He has been in prison seven years . . . Even your servants would shun me, if they knew it. Even the village people did, and——"

Lady Cruse drew her to her and kissed her, exclaiming—

"That makes no difference, Sunbeam. I feel sure you are right. To a hungry heart such things are trifles. And now I ask you to be a daughter to me, to replace the little girl I lost so many years ago. You are homeless—I am childless. We can thus help each other. So, if Sir Ralph consents, will you come?"

Sunbeam hesitated. Again the hot blood rushed to her brow.

"If Sir Ralph and Mr. Sinclair say yes, I do. I must ask them both, as they made me promise to do nothing without consulting them. And Mr. Sinclair——"

"Will, of course, leave all that to Sir Ralph Freer," interposed Adele, somewhat stiffly. "You see, he is a young man who is very much taken up with his own affairs. If Sir Ralph consents that will be enough, won't it?"

Sunbeam glanced at her, puzzled.

"Of course," she said.

"Of course," she hesitatingly replied, "only Mr. Sinclair found me, and knows all, so——"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Adele in some confusion. "He handed the responsibility on to his uncle which was sensible of him; for his fiancee, Miss Eileen Riviere, takes up all his spare time, and I am afraid you would have found him somewhat of a broken reed."

Both women noticed the effect of those words upon Sunbeam with different feelings. Adele's heart sank as the girl's blush changed to a deathlike pallor, a pained expression filling her dark eyes. And for the moment she felt vexed with herself for causing both, though, for Eileen's sake, she knew she had done the wisest thing.

Lady Cruse, not seeing the necessity for it, felt angry with her friend for her bluntness. It was feminine, of course, that Adele should at once think it wise to nip any bit of romance in the child's heart, as things stood, but foolish also, and not untouched with feminine meanness. Therefore, she sought to change the subject by saying kindly—

"All I ask is for you to leave your father entirely. And after all Sir Ralph says, I do not think that would be such a terrible task, since you wish to remain in hiding from him."

"Oh no—at least not at present, though the day might come when I should feel that I must see him. You see, a blood tie is never quite dissolved."

Lady Cruse shook her head.

"I know, my child. Nor perhaps then should I wish it to be. I should be the last person to rob a parent of a child willingly. But we can consider that matter later. For the present you have left him willingly, therefore, he need not know where you are. Now, Adele, I will leave you both. As soon as Sir Ralph has heard my proposal to have Sunbeam, for a time, at all events, let me know. I told you when you first sang her praises that she might be the girl I have sought for so long as companion. Now I have seen her I do not wish to relinquish the plan. I want her exceedingly. Do your best for me."

She kissed Sunbeam again with tears in her eyes. And the girl was conscious of a great longing to throw her arms around the stately neck. She had never seen any one so beautiful, so fascinating as this sad-faced woman, whose eyes pierced to her soul. Her heart was overflowing with gratitude to her when Lady Larkin returned, saying brightly—

"You are a lucky girl, Sunbeam. Lady Cruse is the nicest woman I know. Of course Sir Ralph will advise you to accept her offer."

"But she looks so unhappy that I felt inclined to cry. Is she unhappy, Lady Larkin?"

"She had a great sorrow. Many years ago she lost her little girl—the child disappeared from her home whilst Lady Cruse was at a ball. She was a widow then, and engaged to Lord Cruse. And, although she and her husband are devoted to each other, she has never forgotten that terrible grief. Even now she is searching for the child. Though everybody but herself is sure that the little thing must have died."

"Oh, poor Lady Cruse! How dreadful for her! And she has never heard anything at all about the child.?"

Lady Larkin shook her heard.

"Never. How she disappeared, why, and wherefore, are subjects buried in the depths of mystery. But that was years ago. The girl must have been found had she lived. I'm glad she likes you, Sunbeam, as you will be very happy there, if you go. Like your namesake, you pierce the clouds and win hearts at first sight. I did not expect Lady Cruse to say so much to-day. That she did is proof positive that you have won her to your side. You have conquered us all, little girl."

"No, not all," murmured Sunbeam, smiling, but with a sharp pang of pain as she recalled Eileen's attitude towards her.

"Nearly all of them," replied Lady Larkin, divining her thought, and wondering if the girl's sudden gravity was due to the remembrance that Duncan was engaged to Eileen.

"I'm half sorry I told her," she mused. "But it is better. Eileen must not be upset. Her jealousy is already up in arms. If one must be sacrificed, that one is Sunbeam, of course. For I cannot believe that Duncan has not made love to her, she is so charming. If I know anything of men, he could not help himself."

CHAPTER XV.

Meanwhile, complete consternation reigned in the back regions of Sea View Cottage. For, as Bill was eating a hearty breakfast before starting out, Gentleman Dan burst into the kitchen, his face aflame with anger, and demanded Sunbeam at once.

"Sunbeam! What d'ye mean?" gasped the ex-convict, his mouth full, his eyes starting from his head. "Isn't Sunbeam at your place? Are you mad to come here like this?"

"I tell you Sunbeam must be here," retorted the other, breathlessly. "Bring her forward at once, you old scamp. I'll have none of your tricks, remember!"

Bill pushed back his hair angrily.

"'Old your row," he snarled. "I suppose this is your dodge to sneak her right away? You pretend she's gorn, and come gassing 'ere. But I wasn't born yesterday. She's safe enough, I'll warrant."

But even as he spoke his fears of the previous night had returned, greatly intensified by the morning depression from the evening's liquor. He recalled her face at the bar window. Perhaps Dan was speaking gospel truth, and she had really gone. If so, where? He turned appealingly to Hetty, who with a low cry of anguish had run cautiously to close the door leading into the passage.

"Nonsense!" retorted Dan, dropping into a chair and mopping his brow vigorously. "You know well enough, Bill, that I have done no such thing. Don't bluff me. . . Is she here or isn't she?"

"No," growled Bill, glaring viciously at his weeping sister who had seized Dan's arm, exclaiming:

"What do you mean? Where is she? Has she run away really, Dan If so, the darling may be killed—fallen over the cliffs and got crushed to death!"

She sobbed convulsively. Bill shivered, and Dan grew white as she spoke, though he exclaimed angrily, turning to the other man—

"You know better than I do, so speak up. You've hidden her somewhere. How else could she have got away? The window was boarded up; she has not touched it . . . the door yas locked. Somehow or other you got her out. Where is she? For your sister's sake you might speak at any rate, for the game's up. I'm bound to find you out in the nd."

"On my oath, Dan, I know nought. This is a shock to me. I was eating my breakfast so as to come to you at once. I dunno what to think, on my oath."

"Your oath! Pheugh!" sneered Dan with a low voice. "What's that, Bill Green? Come, confess your game, or I'll——'

"On my mother's bones, then, strike me dead if I lie. I stayed at 'Alf Way House and then came 'ome. But I remember now seeing 'er eyes looking in through the bar winder at me. And yet when I runned out she'd gorn, and I thought it was my fancy. But it must have been 'er. Why didn't I guess that? Where the deuce then can she be? Can she have gorn all those hours ago?"

He stopped aghast. His heart sank into his boots. A horrid fear clutched his throat. He tried to speak again, and choked violently in the effort.

Hetty, wiping her tears, turned expectantly to Dan, who looked utterly bewildered as he realized that Bill was telling the truth, and was as much at sea in the matter as himself.

"She's gone!" he explained, after a slight pause. "And perhaps you did see her, then. . . . When I got home I found the light in the kitchen out, and thinking that funny I went to the foot of the stairs to listen. But seeing a light shining under her door I thought nothing more about it, and settled myself in the kitchen for the night. I slept soundly, and only woke about an hour or so ago. Then I went up to call her, angry with myself for oversleeping and being late, for the train we ought to catch goes in a very short time. Even if we find her now we can't get it. Getting no answer, I picked up the key I had dropped the night before, and opened the door. The room was empty. Not a stick was out of place, the candle had burned away entirely and the bed was untouched. Naturally I thought you must have sneaked back and let her out, locking the door again. But now I can think of nothing. Unless she managed to scoop the key in, and——"

"Never mind that now!" exclaimed Hetty, rising excitedly, "the thing is to find her. She may be hurt, dying, dead perhaps."

Her voice dropped to an ominous whisper.

"Yes," ejaculated Bill, "we must look fer 'er. She must be near. As for her being dead, Het, 'old your noise. You always cackle nonsense when you open your jaw. Just stuff your lodger's ears, and keep your eyes on 'im. Dan and me will go and look. We don't want anyone to know yet . . . say she's staying at Olnay for the night if he asks you about 'er."

"Let me come with you. . . . I shall be worrying all the time about her," she pleaded, laying a detaining hand on his shoulder.

"Nonsense! Do you want to rouse suspicions?" retorted Dan, as Bill shook himself free with a low curse. "We shall find her hiding in one of the small caves beneath the cliff or perhaps nearer home than that. Young 'uns like her never seek death willingly, and as the mist cleared off early after dark she cannot have met it accidentally like. We'll find her right enough, and go on at once by the next train."

Hetty sighed heavily. But she checked her sobs, although her heart was full of misgivings. For she knew that—as often before, she must give in to the two men who had ruled her more or less for so many years.

"I wish you had stayed where you was, Bill," she snapped, her eyes flashing.

The men laughed.

"That's kind to the one what's kept you all your life, but gratitood ain't to be found growing on bushes, and if you just keep your tongue from wagging, it don't matter to me what you think," retorted her brother, sidling up to the back door and lifting the latch.

"We were happy enough, Sunbeam and me, until you came. Now the Lord alone knows when I'll see he ragain with a smile on her face," she continued sulkily. "Oh, that'll be very soon," exclaimed Dan, good-humoredly. "When she is my wife she'll be smiling from morning to night. So keep your pecker up and look cheerful, or you may get us all into trouble.

With which piece of advice he followed Bill out into the garden, and then on to the main road.

Hetty watched them from the window with streaming eyes. But hearing Sinclair come downstairs she turned back to her work, which at that moment consisted in preparing the breakfast.

He glanced inquiringly at her as she carried it in and wished her good-morning cheerfully, adding—

"And I hope the night's rest has dispelled the clouds that oppressed you last night, Miss Green."

"Some clouds don't go away ever, sir," she replied in a solemn voice, her eyes averted. For the life of her she couldn't look into his merry face just then. Besides he might see that she had been crying.

"You seem very quiet here, this morning," he continued. "I suppose the sun has called your niece out, and——"

"Sunbeam stayed away last night, at Olnay, with some friends," interrupted Hetty.

"Oh!" ejaculated Duncan, wondering what she meant, and looking up sharply. "Then when you said she was in bed and fast asleep last night you really did not know if that was true?"

She looked confused.

"No," she stammered, "I don't exactly. But it was late, and as she was with quiet folk I guessed I spoke the truth. We'll ask her when she comes back—if she comes to-day. For they may persuade her to stop on, and there's precious little in St. Lawrence to want to make her come back. I hope you've all you want, sir. Are you going sketching all day, and will you take your lunch with you?"

"Not to-day, thanks. I shall stay in St Lawrence. Perhaps, to-morrow or the next day I shall go up to town. I have business that may demand my presence there."

He smiled to himself as he heard her sigh of relief, but as she closed the door a look of intense gravity clouded his features and he knit his brows, perplexed.

"What does it mean?" he mused. "Does she lie, or have those rascals told her that? Is she in the plot, or isn't she? At all events, she does not know I heard Gentleman Dan's unceremonious entrance. The rascals have gone off now. I wonder what will happen? By now Uncle Ralph is home with Adele. Poor little Sunbeam! . . . I must not go to my uncle's yet, in case the scamps get on to the right scent. But I'll not quit the village to-day. I'll sketch the church . . . My landlady looked glum when I told her I should remain. For some reason or other she wanted to get rid of me."

(To be continued).

EVICTION BY SMOKE.

Strange Scene on a Kent Farm—Bailiff Wins After a Hard Fight.

Goose Farm, Broad Oak, Canterbury, England, was the other day the scene of some curious eviction proceedings.

Six days earlier a county court bailiff went to the farm to persuade the tenant, Mr. A. W. Minter, to quit, in accordance with the terms of a notice which had been served upon him. The tenant replied by barricading his doors. Thereupon the bailiff had the windows boarded up on the outside and the chimneys stopped.

Finding that the occupants of the farmhouse showed no sign of capitulation, the bailiff decided upon more forcible measures. By means of a drain tester, a concoction of tar-twine and cayenne pepper he sought to smoke them out. From eleven o'clock until three evil-smelling fumes were steadily pumped into the building. Then the barricades were suddenly removed from the front door, and the farmer, accompanied by his mother and a little terrier, appeared on the threshold. They were cheered by a huge crowd of villagers and visitors from Canterbury. The bailiff and the occupants of the farm shook hands with great heartiness; and the crowd cheered again as the new tenant stepped across the threshold of the hardly won citadel.

ON THE FARM.

TREAT THE SHEEP FOR TICKS.

In order to avoid trouble in the flock from ticks, lice or scab, the sheep should, without fail, be treated twice a year with one of the proprietary dips on the market. In a few days after shearing the ewes in the spring, the lambs should be dipped, and some of the preparation rubbed over the ewes. Again, before winter sets in, the whole flock should be either dipped or have the "dip" poured upon the animals from a coffee pot or other vessel, the wool being "shed" or opened at intervals of four or five inches for that purpose. With short-wooled sheep, dipping at this season is quite practicable and safe, but with the long-wooled breeds, the waste of material is such that pouring is much more economical, as no tank is required, and much less of the dip is used. To facilitate the work of pouring, three persons are required, one to hold the sheep, one to shed the wool, and another to pour the liquid, which should be applied warm. The man holding the sheep first sets it upon its rump, the back leaning against him, and with his hands sheds the wool on its neck and breast, while another man is shedding on the belly, thighs and lower sides, and the pourer attends to both. The sheep is then allowed to stand up, an opening in the wool is made the full length of the spine, from rump to crown, and a liberal portion poured in, which runs down the sides, completing the operation, about a quart of the solution being sufficient for each sheep. Two men and a boy, or three strong and active boys, will thus treat from fifty to seventy sheep in a day, and the expense for labor and material is so little, compared with the profit in the growth of wool, to say nothing of the comfort and thrift of the sheep insured, as to make it a prime necessity in the management of the flock. The fact that no ticks may be noticed at this season is no reason why the treatment should not be used, as the pest may develop during the winter, or scurf and scab may appear, causing the sheep to rub their wool off and fail in condition, when the treatment cannot well be administered, owing to the ewes being forward with lamb and the weather too cold. If, after the flock has been treated, sheep from untreated flocks are purchased, they should be subjected to the process before being permitted to join the flock, as they may infect the cleansed animals with ticks or the germs of the dread disease known as scab, causing much worry and loss. The flockmaster whose flock is suffering from any of these preventable causes, will also suffer in his pocket and in his mind from his neglect, while, on the other hand, having done his duty by his sheep, he will enjoy seeing them healthy and prosperous, and will be well repaid in the increase of wool and mutton or strong lambs for his labor and the small expense involved.

THE OPEN FRONT HEN HOUSE.

I have been trying to practice what I preach in poultry progress, writes a correspondent. My newest hen house just completed has its front of two inch mesh wire netting. The building is fifteen feet wide and forty feet long. Its length may be increased at will. The roof is double pitch with the peak nearer the front than the rear. I shall have to confess that this is partly for looks. A single pitch or shed roof takes less lumber. The house is divided by partitions of wire netting into pens ten feet wide because I wish to separate my fowls into several small flocks. If I had been seeking to build a house to hold laying hens at least expense of material, construction and use I should have cut loose from the double pitch roof and the partitions. My house would have been constructed of the most economical suitable material obtainable, its width would have been fifteen feet, unless the lumber to be used would cut to better advantage for a different width of the house. The back of the house should be three feet high and the front six feet or higher if necessary, to give the right pitch for the kind of roof covering to be used. The roof to be of single pitch, the front of the house enclosed by wire netting, except the lower two feet, which are boarded. If there is danger of snow drifting into the front of the house the wire netting may be reinforced by curtains of burlap or cotton cloth let down when occasion requires. The floor is well drained ground, elevated enough to keep out all surface water. My house is covered with asbestite paper held in place by narrow strips of thin board. Roosts in pairs extend along near the back of the house. There are no rooslink platforms.

Water should be supplied by pipes and be continuously running. If the water must be brought daily it must be kept in pails or fountains inserted in front of the house where they can be emptied and filled from the outside of the house.

LIKE WATER.

A little three-year-old, whose mother was making a simple cough medicine for him, watched the process, and asked if it was good. He was permitted to taste, and exclaimed: "It's awfully good, mamma. Let's keep it all for papa."