A MAN'S REVENGE;

OR, THE CONVICT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued).

"What else could I do?" exclaimed the girl in passionate tones, her heart filling with despair as she read Duncan's stern face. "Your pearls were missing—they had to be recovered——"

"I would rather have thrown them to the bottom of the sea than recover them at such a cost," interposed Lady Cruse bitterly.

"But I did not know that! I thought it my duty to defend my visitors' property. The only suspicious character was Sunbeam. They took her half an hour ago."

"Where to?"

"To Munton," replied Eileen, naming the county town five miles off. She looked up at him as she spoke, a world of appeal in her eyes; but he turned aside with an angry murmur, and moved over to the open window through which Lady Cruse had already passed in search of her husband.

"Adele, do you think me wrong?" implored Eileen, turning a pleading face to Lady Larkin.

"Not quite, dear," replied Adele, soothingly. "But perhaps hasty. I can hardly believe Sunbeam could do such a thing. If only you had waited until we returned! If only——"

"Ah, but in a case like this you must be prompt. Lady Cruse will realize that when her pearls are found. Now, of course, she thinks more of Sunbeam. And yet all along I guessed the girl was a sneak. You all believed in her too quickly."

She swept from the room as she spoke. She felt that the anger and disappointment struggling within her would betray her if she remained with her guests any longer. For, although she had dreaded Duncan's behaviour on hearing of Sunbeam's arrest, she had expected more open support than she had received.

"And that is all the thanks I get for saving their things at my own discomfort!" she stormed as she pushed open the library door.

Half-way across the room she stopped. For at one of the writing tables sat Duncan, his face white and stern, his eyes intent on the work before him.

"Duncan," she said, almost unconsciously, "I did not know you were here, I——"

He raised his head and looked at her. She shivered. His eyes were so cold, they cut like steel.

"I am going now," he replied stiffly. "I have been writing to Sir George Cade, in case I cannot see him, and——"

"Sir George Cade!" she exclaimed, with a thrill of anger.

"Yes. He is, as you know, a magistrate. I am glad you came in now, Eileen. I wanted to speak to you alone, to tell you that I am going this evening to Munton. The Cruses and I have decided to put up at the hotel."

The color ebbed from her face, and her eyes widened with anger.

"You are leaving Brackley?" she asked Her voice sounded weak and low above the tumult in her brain.

"Yes. You see we feel that some one ought to be near Sunbeam—you have been very cruel to her—she must see that we three, at all events, believe in her."

"But you—you, you are nothing to her, why should you go?" she demanded quaveringly, her slight figure swaying to and fro with the violence of the motion that shook her. "Besides, what else could I do? I did what I ought to have done in any case," she ended vehemently.

"You might have waited, or——"

"And let the chances of getting back the pearls grow less. Of course, she gave them to an accomplice—if she hasn't hidden them—and we have discovered that no one entered the house. Oh, you may stick up for her, but she is guilty. She has deceived you all, but I saw through her from the first. Tell her that when you see her, if you like.. And go—I don't care."

She laughed hoarsely, and turned her burning face from his. For, despite her tone of bravado, her eyes were wet with unshed tears. Now, if ever, she knew he did not love her, and that all the plotting in the world would not make him love any but Sunbeam.

A storm of passion swept through her. If she could have killed Sunbeam now, how gladly would she have done it!

"Of course you don't approve of what I have done, you never do!" she jerked out as his silence remained unbroken.

"No. I am sorry that I cannot approve of this act of yours, and——"

"And yet you profess to love me, to——"

"Love does not always see perfection in——"

"Ah, but you never have loved me!" she exclaimed, flashing around upon him; "I know that all the time you have been caring for this girl, this burglar's child, this thief—Well then, you are welcome to her—Go. I want you no longer. I will be second to no one. I will not take unwilling love from any."

Duncan steadied himself against the table For the sudden shock of her words made him reel as though struck He was free! She said so! She wished him to go!

"Eileen," he said, and his voice sounded thick and strained, "do you mean what you say? That you do not care sufficiently for me to——"

"I did not say that," she interrupted. "But, all the same, I do say that I am tired of this Sunbeam; that either you are mine or not mine. You choose now between me and that girl. If you go to Munton, you leave Brackley in every sense—you go free—free to offer your heart to a thief!"

A peal of laughter parted her pale lips. She flung back the hair from her forehead with an angry gesture. "You must choose between us, must discard one of us; which is it to be? Me, as you know me, or this girl of whom you really know nothing."

"Hush!" he interrupted, his eyes full of pain. "Forgive me, Eileen, but I cannot leave that child alone nor——"

"Fudge! You love her. You have chosen, and I admire your taste. I am jilted for her—a village lass with a convict father. Can I hold up my head again, think you?"

"Eileen, my child, you are unkind to yourself. Be serious and——"

"Kiss and be friends, perhaps? No, Duncan. I must say I have tried my best to keep you from Sunbeam, but now I see it is useless—I throw down the glove. But for all that you won't get her yet. She is in prison. Love cannot unlock the prison gate—I will see that the case is carried through."

He smiled faintly.

"She is innocent," he said.

"So you say!—Well, go to her. Remember you are free. Remember also I am her enemy still. I give you up because I wish to prevent your giving me up That is all. I save my amour-propre."

"But at what a cost, my God!" cried out her heart, as, with bowed head, he passed her on his way to Sunbeam.

CHAPTER XXV.

When Lady Cruse's maid had burst into Sunbeam's room, followed by Eileen and the village policeman, and demanded the missing pearls, Sunbeam realized that after all her father had succeeded in his quest to some extent, and that the task she had set herself was to be harder than she had imagined. Her horror and distress were mistaken at once for fearful guilt as she listened in silence to the servant's excited accusation, unable to defend herself in any way, and determined more than ever to shield her father.

But she did not expect such sudden measures to be taken, and drew back with a cry as the policeman explained his intention of taking her away at once. Then, reading hostility in Eileen's white face, she realized that her friends were absent and that resistance would be in vain. So she allowed him to take her away without a murmur, and passed through the hall lined with whispering, shocked servants, like a young queen walking to the scaffold, her head erect, her lips set in proud resignation.

"As bold as brass," was the murmur that swept towards her. But as she entered the closed carriage, the tears she had struggled so hard to keep back gushed forth, and she wept unrestrainedly, in spite of the constable's presence.

"Cryin' ain't a bit of good," he muttered. "You fork out them pearls, or say what you've done with them, and p'raps they'll let you off lightly as it's your first offence."

The words had the effect of restoring her self-control, and, remembering that it was wiser to keep silent, she turned her face to the window, checking the eager words she longed to utter.

"Your first offence," the man had said in what he meant to be a conciliatory tone, his eyes resting admiringly on her troubled face. She shivered as she recalled them. Would every one say that? Knowing who and what she was, would not the whole world confess that she had merely done what every one expected, and that she would probably commit the like again very shortly? What would Lady Cruse say? And Mr. Sinclair? . . It was impossible that they should agree with a lot of unkind ignorant people . . . they at least would act differently! But how she wished the pearls had not gone! If only her father had taken something else instead. something belonging to another, to Eileen even. . . . She was sufficiently human and resentful to wish that.

But the more she reflected the more difficult she felt it would be to prove her innocence, even to these two, without betraying Bill, so that by the time they reached the county gaol she had fully grasped the horror and grimness of her position. She might never be cleared of suspicion, everybody must believe her guilty to some extent. Every hope within her died a sudden death. She passed into the sombre building with a heavy heart. This was the place she had been born to, the place her father knew as well as home. Therefore, how could she imagine the world would smile upon her. Even her staunchest friend must doubt her word. She shivered again. It hurt her to see Duncan's eyes, with the shadow of suspicion within them . . . and they looked at her from every corner of the cell she had been taken to.

It seemed as though she had been there for hours, watching the shadows deepen on the walls, recalling old memories with all their bitter sweetness, praying for strength to bear her trouble and screen her father, when the key rattled in the lock, a bolt was shot, the door opened, and Lady Cruse entered hurriedly with a little cry of pain.

"Sunbeam, my poor child!" she exclaimed, holding out her arms.

Sunbeam, who had risen and stood hesitating, her knees trembling beneath her, sprang towards her.

"Oh, Lady Cruse, then you don't believe it?" she faltered

"Of course not! Am not I your friend? My poor girl! What can I do to make up for this?"

"You already do so by not doubting me. If you and one or two others believe in me, I do not much mind about the rest. Miss Riviere has never liked me."

"She has behaved shamefully," replied Lady Cruse, indignantly, her arm around the girl. "But I have come for you, dear. I am going to take you away."

Sunbeam started. Sudden joy flooded her heart. She was then free, no longer suspected! But her friend's next words damped her delight. The long lane of trouble had no turning yet.

"We have done all we can do, my child, for the present. You are allowed out on bail. My husband has fortunately managed that—he and Mr. Sinclair."

Again Sunbeam started, and the hot blood rushed to the roots of her hair. Mr Sinclair still believed in her!

"Do they then believe that I am not guilty?" she stammered, her eyes seeking her friend's with longing wistfulness.

"Of course, my child. How could they think otherwise?"

"Oh, but you forget! It . . . dishonesty . . . is in my blood. You forget that . . ."

"I forget nothing. You are not dishonest, my child, and——"

"But your pearls, Lady Cruse! Oh, if only they could be found! It is good of you, after losing them, to say I am innocent. For, of course, things look very bad for me. Miss Riviere found me in——"

"I know. Of course you have some explanation of that. We all know that you must have some mystery to tell us later. Not now, though, in this place. Come, let us leave it and go back."

But Sunbeam stood still with a world of fear in her face. How could she go back to Brackley?

"Oh, I can't," she moaned, wringing her hands, nervously. "Please don't ask me to go there. I would rather stay here. Those last minutes at Brackley were so terrible that I dare not return with suspicion still upon me. I——"

"Nor do we ask you to, dear. We are staying at the hotel, and will remain there until this is quite cleared up. That is where I mean to take you now, for we do not intend returning to Brackley. Come, I have a carriage waiting. No one at the hotel need know anything about it."

She led the way into the dark cold passage, and Sunbeam followed her with a feeling of relief. The thought of returning to Brackley, and facing Eileen's scornful eyes, had been too terrible, but now, though still suspected, the burden would not be so hard to bear; with only those who loved her with her.

"If only I could find the pearls," she mused. wishing that Bill had given her the address he had promised, and which now she felt she would never get. "If only I could tell them all! But how can I, in spite of all their goodness?"

She felt a little nervous when, after her arrival at the hotel, she entered the sitting-room Lady Cruse had engaged and came face to face with Lord Cruse. Though he had always been kind to her she still felt shy with him. and wondered if his devotion to his wife would make him, despite himself, really believe her innocent. For it was commonly said that Lord Cruse believed, and did everything, that his wife wished.

But as he took Sunbeam's hand and smiled into her face with his eyes full of kind sympathy, she knew that in his heart of hearts he did not doubt her, and gained courage from the fact.

"Poor Sunbeam, so you have been made the scapegoat, have you?" he said gently. "Well, we'll stand by you and help you through—every cloud has a silver lining, you know, and even sunbeams get overclouded sometimes, don't they?"

"Then you also believe in me!" she exclaimed, her lips quivering with emotion.

"Of course I do! We all do—my wife. myself and Sinclair."

Again her heart thumped with joy. But he was at Brackley. Eileen might in time make him think otherwise. For he loved Eileen.

"It was very kind of you to trouble about me," she continued, looking up gratefully. "Lady Cruse told me what you did—had it not been for that I should have remained there all night."

She gave a little shudder as she spoke.

He laughed.

"You must thank Sinclair. He did all the work; I was only a figure head. Useless persons like myself are occasionally in requisition. We performed a feat, they inform us—Sinclair, however, is theo ne you must hank."

"And you also," replied Sunbeam. "For I understand then that without you I should not be here. I suppose it was unusual to——"

"Thank Sinclair," he interrupted, turning aside. She knit her brows.

"I cannot, for he is at Brackley, so of course I must thank the one upon the spot," she exclaimed with a little laugh.

"Sinclair is here also," he replied, peeping at her over the book he had opened.

The hot color flooded her face, a look of astonishment filled her eyes.

"Has Mr. Sinclair left Brackley?" she asked in wondering tones.

"Yes. He is staying here also. You see, Sunbeam, your friends could not forsake you, and——"

"But then, she, Miss Riviere, had me arrested, and she is——"

The word died in her throat. A sudden hope had strangled it. Could it be possible that Sinclair no longer cared for Eileen? That he had left her forever? But why should he do that? As he had found her and protected her he evidently felt it his duty to see her through this dreary trouble. Perhaps he had quarrelled with Eileen about it—but anything else was impossible. Had not Lady Larkin said he loved Eileen, and had always done so? Lovers' quarrels were soon made up. Later, when the suspicion had been cleared away, he would return to Brackley and to his love. Yes. Anything else was impossible.

She longed to ask what really happened on the return of the house party, and what Sinclair had done to procure her liberty so quickly, but shyness bound her tongue. She felt more afraid than ever of mentioning the name she loved. Presently Lady Cruse came in.

"You must try to look happy, Sunbeam," she said, laying her hand on the girl's shining hair, as she passed behind her. "And presently, after dinner, we will put all our heads together and see what we can do to catch the real culprit and prove your innocence."

Sunbeam sighed.

"I cannot tell you anything," she murmured. "I wish I could. I would give much to be able to do so. I would give the world to find your pearls again, and I wish with all my heart that——"

She stopped suddenly, and glanced at Lady Cruse with startled eyes.

"I know, my child, that you will do your utmost to help me to find them. And I think we shall succeed. But what distresses me most at present is your position. And though you are free, Miss Riviere has not withdrawn her accusation."

Sunbeam looked serious.

"And she will never do that either," she replied emphatically.

"Why? What have you done to rouse her dislike?" asked Lady Cruse, though she guessed pretty well what was the cause.

"Nothing! She hated me from the first. But to-day I thought things were to be so different, until——"

She paused, recalling Eileen's offer of friendship and its subsequent withdrawal. What was the good of repeating it all?

"She has never liked me," she added. "No one has ever been so good to me as you are. And yet—if you knew—how——"

Sunbeam bowed her head to hide the tears in her eyes. How could she be loyal to her father at the expense of such a friend?

"If only I could find your pearls?" she whispered in a broken voice. "But I can do nothing—nothing—to show my gratitude for all you have done for me, not even that!"

Lady Cruse smiled as she drew the girl to her.

"You are a loyal little soul, Sunbeam. And now here's dinner—and Cruse, and Duncan. Smile, and forget the storm."

Raising her head Sunbeam looked shyly at Duncan. His smile warmed her to the heart. Trust and affection shone in his eyes. How could she have pictured them full of doubt?

(To be continued).

ON THE FARM

SHREDDED FODDER.

A correspondent of "Hoards Dairyman," speaking from personal experience, says:

"Men grumble at the small income from the farm and neglect to notice that no other business could be so wasteful and not utterly fail. Shredding fodder is one way of making a valuable feed out of that which is too often left in the fields to "waste its sweetness on the desert air."

The experiment stations tell us that 1½ tons of good shredded fodder is equal to a ton of the best timothy hay. Also that corn which produces 60 bushels an acre will make said ton and a half of fodder. My own experience leads me to believe that these are conservative statements.

This fall we cut 28 acres of fodder to feed during the winter and save our timothy hay to sell next spring. Ordinarily it isn't considered good farming to sell hay, but at prevailing prices we believe we are justified in so doing. Part of the money the hay brings will be used to buy bran and oilmeal, which can be combined with the fodder and corn so as to produce a balanced ration for cattle and horses.

Fodder should be cut when the ears have all begun to dent and glaze. Then it will make a feed which is palatable and nutritious. In this vicinity two-thirds of the farmers let their fodder get so ripe before they cut it, that much of its feeding value is lost. Generally it will be perfectly safe to shred after the corn has been cut six weeks. Sometimes it will do sooner, depending on the weather and the ripeness of the corn when cut. We have never had a particle of fodder to mold and spoil. On the contrary it comes out of the mows looking so fresh and green and appetizing that we think it worth two-thirds as much as the same amount of either timothy or clover hay.

If it hasn't been standing in the shock long enough to be thoroughly cured at the time you shred, be very careful to manage the blower so the fodder will be kept level all over the mow. If allowed to form a big pile in the middle, that part will settle down so solid that it will spoil. Several times when the machine was late getting round to our farm, we have put a man in the mow to level it off and tramp it down, thus economizing space. However, this is risky business unless it has stood in the shock seven or eight weeks.

We like to have all feed and stock under shelter during winter, and I can think of nothing that would sooner cause me to leave the farm than to be compelled to go to the field on a snowy, blustering morning and get fodder for the cattle. "Wilful waste makes woeful want." Shredding fodder is one method of increasing the fertility and stock carrying capacity of our farms.

TOP DRESSING WINTER WHEAT.

A correspondent says: "It is the custom among most farmers to plow under the manure hauled upon wheat ground in late and early autumn rather than to use it as a top dressing. As most of the ground plowed under at this time is to be seeded the next spring, it is a question of fertilizing of both the wheat and the clover crops.

As to the clover, there can be no question but that the manure will best aid the growth of the little plants if put on the top of the soil either before sowing the wheat or during the winter. There is nothing like fine stable manure applied as a top dressing to insure a good catch of clover.

One can usually tell just where it has been placed by the appearance of the clover the next season. As for wheat, there may be some question as to whether the manure would be of more value if plowed under or put on the surface, but the experience of most farmers has convinced them that top dressing is best for wheat, and some are even practising it for corn and all crops.

It is certain that top dressing will give quicker results, for the young plant gets the nourishment sooner and it appears to be of greater benefit to the crop.

If the manure is rather coarse it can be applied after the wheat is sown, or even during the winter, if it must be spread, but if put on with a manure spreader it can be spread at any time, even before the wheat is sown if not spread too thickly.

The only objection is the heavy draft of the spreader on plowed ground. On soft or low ground it might be better to leave the manure until the ground is frozen before applying it with the spreader.

Top dressing is being practised more and more by farmers as the theory long advocated by scientists. The manure when put on top leaches through the surface soil during rains, but if plowed under much of it leaches downward beyond the reach of young plants, and if the soil is leachy it may go beyond the reach of roots altogether. The scientist tells us that one load of manure spread evenly on the surface is worth two plowed under for most crops, and I think experience teaches the same lesson.'

MUTTON CHOPS.

Give the sheep all the clover or mixed hay they will eat up clean.

If the ewes are not in fine condition, they should have a grain ration of wheat bran, ground oats and peas. About one half pound of grain to each sheep will be a profitable ration.

The doors should be wide open so that the sheep will not be injured by passing through them.

Do not neglect to provide plenty of pure, clean water. It is necessary for the health of the flock. It does not pay to let sheep eat snow to satisfy their thirst.

Lack of exercise in ewes during winter means weak lambs at yarding time. Sometimes the feeder must compel the ewes to exercise by feeding them at a distance from the barn. Confinement in close yards always means more or less in work and dead lambs.

Feed them well so they will make a good growth.

Those intended for the butcher should be fattened and sold before the young lambs come.

Sometimes we may get ewes to own their lambs by feeding them by hand till the dams have a good supply of milk. To hasten this time, give the ewes plenty of nourishing food.

Be sure the sheep barns are well ventilated. One night's overheating in a close stable will cause colds.

MIGHT BE USEFUL.

Governor of Prison—"Well, here is your discharge, and you are now a free man. Here are two dollars for you. Your conduct has been excellent, and I hope you will, for the future, devote yourself to an honorable calling."

Burglar—"I certainly will try to do so."

Governor of Prison—"Well, you can go. Is there anything you want?"

Burglar—"Please, sir, I should like to get my old jemmy. The police took it from me, and I want it back. It might come in useful."