

AS FORTUNE SMILES.

A TALE OF THE OLD AND NEW WORLD.

CHAPTER IX.

The Maclanes had no difficulty in discovering the place where Sir William Cuthbertson had performed his operation and where his distinguished patient was slowly recovering. It was a pretty little cottage standing in a tiny walled garden on a sparsely frequented road between Shepton and Hallford-on-Thames. A former owner had given it the fanciful name of "The Rest." The place was within easy reach of London, and, although at a comparatively short distance, the river teemed with buoyant life and revelry, along the lane, shaded by huge elms and wild chestnuts, solitude was made musical only by the feathered songsters of the skies, and the sigh of the leaves quivering with the summer breeze.

The nearest habitation, a small house usually let furnished during the boating season, was about five-and-twenty yards away, and unoccupied at the time. Other residences, strewn here and there along the road, were hidden deep in park-like grounds, and gave rise to no disturbing noises.

The room in which Herbert was lying was situated on the ground floor of the little cottage. It was spacious, and plainly, but extremely comfortably, furnished. The walls were painted a bluish stone-gray, and no pattern of any kind attracted attention. There were no pictures on the walls, and the doors, and windows were hung with curtains of a softly, dull-colored material. The two big windows looked across a small but beautifully kept lawn, on to a brick wall smothered with Virginia creeper. The sky-line was nearly hidden by giant elms in the full wealth of their leafy green. All was simply harmonious—no violences of taste or shade shocked the eye. It was homeliness and comfort made solid, and yet placed within such balmy rest as a mountain wilderness could scarcely surpass.

Herbert had to pass his days and his nights on his couch. Thanks to the excellent care bestowed upon him, he had suffered from hardly any fever, and the wound resulting from his operation was healing fast.

Not a soul entered his room but the softly-spoken, grave-visaged, gray-headed attendant, who moved with a noiseless solicitude and anticipated his every want, his every wish. The hours seemed eternal, but his determination strengthened him and made his temporary loneliness less bitter. All around him solemn silence reigned. His attendant moved stealthily like a cat, and no disturbing footfall reached his ear from anywhere. It was only at the rarest intervals that the grating of wheels on the soft, clayey road outside became audible, or that a passer-by, more noisy than usual, intruded upon his privacy by the faint sound of the snatch of a song.

And yet, had he but known it, he would have felt less lonely, from the fact that an anxious, loving heart was watching over him in the same house, that dainty, tiny hands assisted in the preparation of his meals, that a good woman's voice was lifted nightly in prayer for his recovery.

Lucy had succeeded in obtaining Sir William Cuthbertson's permission to live in the cottage with Herbert, upon the express condition that her presence should not be betrayed by sound or sign, that she should remain in the wing of the house opposite to that where young Cleve was stretched on his bed of pain. It can easily be guessed how gladly she consented to these conditions; she would have consented to any terms to be allowed to remain near the man she loved so well.

If there was one person in this world who sincerely hoped and prayed for Herbert's cure, that person was Lucy Maclane; and yet no person in the world—her father and cousin included—could have more dreaded the fatal day when Herbert would be cured; when remembrance, fierce and relentless, would assert its sway and ruthlessly dash away the curtain which she had woven at such cost and under such severe trials. Her mind was stretched on the perpetual rack of the most terrible doubt, with but the faintest glimmer of hope piercing the darkness that threatened.

What would Herbert remember? How much would he remember? Would truth stand before him naked, shameless, cold and cruel? Would he know that her father was an assassin? Would he despise her and bid her go from him.

And yet, so holy is a true woman, that in her heart of hearts she prayed that Heaven might let him speedily recover.

The young Earl had been lying on his couch something over a fortnight, when the cottage next to the Nest received two visitors. One of them was the landlord of the Grayhound Inn, who held the key of the place and was charged with its letting; the second was a middle-aged man, dressed in unassuming gentlemanly gray tweeds, and having the appearance of a person well-to-do in a middle walk of life, of a servant who fortune had favored, or of a tradesman early retired from business. He was of medium height, and stoutly built; a bull-neck gave him a look of forbidding strength, and his hand, red and blotchy, were evidences of the fact that he had not passed his youth in mere idleness. There was a peculiar cunning about an otherwise insignificant face—the kind of stealth and slyness that would not be deterred from stooping to the mean; a face that would not, by its first sight, secure for its owner a position of trust in a bank. Yet, it was not an unpleasant face, and it grinned with a mixture of cockney and outlandish humor. The small, sandy moustache drooped after the fashion, at a later period barbequed by Mr. Southern as Brother Sam, and gave a peculiar admixture of simplicity to the otherwise not over-prepossessing

features. The visitor examined the little house and its grounds with the utmost care. He drew on a scrap of paper a small plan of the place, and if the landlord had stayed with him he might have been seen measuring with paces the distance between the Nest and the unoccupied house, which boasted of the high-sounding appellation, "Reedon Lodge." The man obtained all particulars from mine host of the "Greyhound," discussed questions of rent and other conditions, and finally withdrew, after securing a promise from the landlord that he should have the refusal of the place for forty-eight hours.

The person thus circumstantially introduced at this portion of our history was Mr. Edward Wall, known to some as Ned Wall, and to others, especially those who had made his acquaintance out West, during Pike's Peak Rush, as Pug-nosed Ned. Mr. Ned Wall had, at an early period of his career, done faithful service to her Majesty, in various of her Majesty's jails. In the result, Mr. Ned Wall came to look upon his native land, where the liberty to steal was so shamefully denied to the subject, as a very hot-bed of oppression, and the fledging Blue-skin winged away to the freer fields of the Far West. Such is the perversity of fate, however, that Mr. Ned Wall made the amazing discovery that those who obtain gold by simply digging it from the earth objected to having it taken from them without their leave, by a young man in whose welfare they took no special interest. Mr. Ned Wall would certainly, on two several occasions, have been strung up by the neck until dead had not the powerful intervention of Mr. George Maclane saved him from untimely extinction.

Mr. George Maclane had found Mr. Ned Wall an unscrupulous but useful sweep, ready to do any dirty work, as long as his belly was filled, and, in addition to that, neat with his fingers and glib with his tongue, an excellent bargainer and a stony-hearted taskmaster to those placed under his charge. In the end, Pug-nosed Ned blossomed into Mr. Edward Wall, and became a hybrid between a private secretary and a valet of both the Maclanes, who, in that capacity, took him with them to Europe.

On the evening of the day when Mr. Edward Wall had inspected Reedon Lodge, the Maclanes were closeted with their representatives at The Boltens. Ned exhibited his plan of the lodge, and of the adjoining cottage and grounds, and pointed out the exact location of the room in which Herbert was lying.

George's coldly glittering eye devoured every line, every mark.

"I guess it's all right, Ned," he said, at last. "Only yew've got to make sure of yewr measurement—dead sartin sure. We mustn't get wrong, right or left, an' inch. Yew'll go down to-morrow, an' hire that cottage, and pay him three months' rent on the nail, and if he wants references, say yew're a stranger, an' leave him a fifty-pound note as yewr bond. An', mind now, it's five-an'-twenty thousand golden dollars as yew're workin' for, so yew jest fix up yewr hind-sight an' tek keer that yew don't get eached, nohow."

A diabolical smile lit up his face.

"We've got it all fixed an' square now, Dave," he exclaimed. "It only wants the pluck an' a week's hard work, an' I guess we'll stop his jaw forever. He won't remember nothin' about Dick Ashland, nor nobody else, when we've done with him, yew bet."

CHAPTER X.

There were not more than a dozen residences along the lane where Reedon Lodge was situated, and the inhabitants of none of these took any interest in the fact that the little furnished house had been let. The three tradesmen—the butcher, the baker and the grocer—who called were told by Mr. Sylvanus Thompson, as Mr. Edward Wall chose to call himself, that he obtained his supplies from London, and that a daily quarter loaf, and a rather unusually large supply of eggs, butter and milk were all that was required. Mr. Sylvanus Thompson had one friend staying with him, who, the tradesman imagined, was sailing, as he never, on any occasion, showed himself. There was also, so the tradesmen told one another, a tall elderly servant, the baker's boy had seen him. The lad could not in any way describe his features, as the man's face was swathed in a handkerchief, as though he were suffering from a toothache, and he was standing at the end of the rather dark hall. The two last-mentioned personages must have arrived during the night as no one had seen them enter the house.

The tradesmen soon became convinced, not only that Mr. Sylvanus Thompson obtained his supplies from London, but also that he was laying in a considerable store. He was continually journeying to and from London in his dog-cart, and on his return invariably brought with him a collection of parcels and boxes of all kinds and shapes. Some of these even seemed to be of considerable weight, for, one day, when Mr. Sylvanus Thompson was resting his horse in front of the "Greyhound," a lad playfully put his hand underneath one of them and found it too heavy for his boyish strength. It was written down for moist sugar, and rotten bad moist sugar it must have been, the grocer said, to be so heavy.

With all that, Mr. Sylvanus Thompson, his journeyings and his idiosyncrasies, excited but faint interest in the neighborhood. The river was swarming with boating men and their ladies, and their joyous laughter rung over the tranquil waters. The innkeepers and lodging-house proprietors had their hands full, and Mr. Sylvanus Thompson's nearest neighbor, Sir William Cuthbertson, was represented only by the grave-visaged attendant, who seemed to be attending to nobody or nothing but his patient, who asked no questions and permitted no chatter, and by Lucy, who never for a moment left her side of the Nest.

Murder as a fine art is taught to perfection by two professors—masters of invention; cupidity and fear. These fierce and cold-blooded teachers sum up their pupils' ability and capacity of endurance to a nicety, and find for him a way of accomplishing his devilish work more suitable to his habits in life. Thus, a man well versed in the secrets of chemistry, desirous to rid himself of an enemy, would most

likely have recourse to subtle poisons. The platelayer who has a deadly quarrel with his railway company loosens a few screws and throws half a dozen sleepers across the line. Thus also George Maclane with his experiences as a miner fresh in his mind, hit upon the plan of digging an underground mine from Reedon Lodge to the Nest, and blowing Lord Cleve, with his dangerous memory, into atoms.

George Maclane was not a man to do things by halves, or without careful deliberation. To the servants at the Boltens the information had been vouchsafed that their masters were taking a short tour in the country, and Mr. Edward Wall was left in charge in their absence. Nobody had seen them enter Reedon Lodge, and nobody would see them leave. The only person upon whose shoulders the crime would be laid was Mr. Edward Wall, and he was promised five thousand pounds and twelve hours' start to get away. The actual gold and notes were exhibited before the young man's greedy eyes, and in doing so Mr. George Maclane made the one mistake in his otherwise nicely calculated arrangements. He allowed Mr. Edward Wall to see that a very much larger sum in sovereigns and notes was kept in the strongbox at The Boltens.

The murderous plan was simple enough. They would lay two three-hour fuses to make sure of success, in case by any possible accident one of these should fail. They would resume their own garments, and in the middle of the night walk as far as Windsor, where they would take the early morning train for some station along the Great Western line, and thence pretend to be engaged on a walking tour. In the meantime, the mine would have exploded and annihilated Lord Cleve. They had never been seen in the business, and could not be suspected. As to Mr. Edward Wall it was his own interest to get away and save his neck.

Of course, there was the remote danger of failure and detection, but they both agreed that it was not more profitable to be hanged for the murder of Dick Ashland than to run the risk of the added charge of having, for a second time, attempted to take Lord Cleve's life. On the one side, the near certainty of exposure and retribution stared them in the face; on the other, the possibility of escape and continued fortune grinned temptingly.

The ground had been measured by Ned Wall, and in the dead of night George himself climbed the dividing wall, and made sure of his position. He could not possibly fail in direction or disposition. The work of sinking the small shaft and of digging the mine proved to be more troublesome than they had bargained for. Luckily for them, they had to dig only through a sandy, gravelly soil, at the bottom of which they found a stiff clay through which they were able to run their tunnel without the necessity of structural supports. But the work had to be done with the utmost caution, slowly and gradually, so that no sound should reach the outer world. They had to lie on their stomachs for hours, and to use their tools in the most guarded manner. As the narrow tunnel increased in length, the air became stifling, their own breath half suffocated them, and time after time they had to make a speedy exit to escape personal danger. They slept in the room overhead, and the blinds there, as well as on the ground floor, were kept continually closely drawn.

The lower room soon assumed the appearance of a cessment breastwork in war time—with its furniture piled in one corner, the carpet taken up, the floor partly removed, the great black, gaping hole in the centre, with the excavated earth heaped against the walls, and numerous parcels and boxes, containing gunpowder and gun-cotton, stacked ready for use. Diggers' and miners' tools were strewn all over the place. The only article of furniture which remained in use was a mahogany table, scratched, soiled and damaged, and two equally ill-used chairs, the red damask covers of which were torn and stained beyond repair.

Instead of a week twelve interminable days passed before they saw themselves near the end of their scheme. It was a lovely summer night, and all the world around was hushed in balmy sleep, when the two Maclanes emerged from their fiendish hole, utterly tired and worn out, but exultant with a hellish joy at the high approach of the result. The mine was dug. Right underneath Lord Cleve's chamber a space of some four feet cubed had been dug out, and this was in the course of the morning Ned Wall was to receive his five thousand pounds and to be allowed to escape; in the evening the fuses were to be laid, and three hours after that the Earl of Cleve would no longer be able to remember anything.

The evening was warm and the perspiration was standing in great drops on the two wretches' faces. They refreshed themselves with their usual beverage, neat brandy, and on this occasion bottle after bottle was emptied before, with a toss of the head, and a half surly "Good night, Ned," David and George Maclane groped their way upstairs and threw themselves on their beds. Fifteen minutes afterward they were both snoring soundly.

Now it would have been an astonishing fact if Mr. Edward Wall had been able to act honestly even toward his companions in crime. Mr. Edward Wall was a thief by education and profession. Thieves have, like other mortals, a shrewd perception of quantities in arithmetic, and Mr. Edward Wall conceived the idea that it would be more profitable to steal the larger sum of money at The Boltens than to be contented with the smaller one offered by the Maclanes. Perhaps, who knew, he might be able to steal both, and that would certainly be the most satisfactory arrangement. In addition to that, Mr. Edward Wall had been turning over in his mind the murderous scheme, and its dangers to his precious neck. An apparently brilliant idea struck him. If Lord Cleve were blown into smithereens, the person immediately implicated would be himself, and pursuit would be hot and furious after him; but if he were to hoist Mesrs. Maclane by their own petard and blow them to atoms instead, it might so happen that the public would say, "Served the wretches' right. They fell into their own trap." He weighed the two courses. On the one hand five thousand pounds and the bloodhounds of the law at his heels within twelve hours, himself the first person suspected and tracked and hunted. On the other hand, the chances of a very much larger booty, and pursuit nothing near as deadly, nor as swift—in fact, no proof whatever that

the Maclanes had not ended their miserable existence by an accident interrupting their devilish scheme.

Mr. Edward Wall had passed his boyhood under an expert professor in the art of picking pockets. He strengthened his shaking nerves by huge draughts from the remaining brandy bottles, and then, taking off his shoes, he stole upstairs.

The two men were sleeping soundly. Ned knew the disposition of the room perfectly, and groping his way about as noiselessly as a cat, he crept to George Maclane's bedside, and from beneath his pillow, with a cleverness and delicacy only possible to the experienced pickpocket, he took the latter's waistcoat without so much as ruffling the breath of the sleeper. In the pocket of that garment he found the bunch of small keys among which he knew would be the one that opened the strong box at The Boltens, and he replaced the waistcoat as softly and unperceptively as he had taken it.

Hanging over a chair, by the sleeping man's bed, was his coat, and Mr. Wall without further ado drew from his pocket which he knew contained the notes that were to be his reward on the morrow. Then, without a much as a breath, he stole downstairs again and assured himself by the light of a small shaded lamp that he was really in possession of the objects of his search.

All this being done with a neatness and deliberateness that stamped him as an expert pickpocket of high proficiency, Mr. Wall cut, with a big jack-knife, the strings of the parcels containing the gunpowder, and removed the already open tops of the boxes filled with the same explosive and with gun-cotton. He spread heaps of this in a semi-circle on the floor. Behind this he piled the rest of the nether material and filed the crevices with loose gunpowder. Then he put the heavy boards of the broken floor on the centre lot and overtopped these again with a few shovelfuls of the clayey earth lying in the corner of the room. He did his work noiselessly, nothing clanged or fell, and it was all completed with barely a sound. As if to satisfy a spirit of daintiness, he washed his hands and face, combed his hair, and brushed his clothes, and gave a glimpse into a small pocket-mirror to be sure that no speck soiled his face. Then he took from the packet containing them half a dozen fuses and cut them at the point marked three hours. It was ten o'clock, and as he lighted the devilish things and so placed them that their ends were well inserted among the loose pile, he calculated that he could reach The Boltens and be away again before they would do their appointed work.

Without a look back, he opened the front door and went out. He stole on tiptoe to the gate, and closed it silently behind him. Then he walked swiftly to the "Greyhound," where, already during the day, he had ordered his dog-cart and horse to be kept ready for him.

The animal was fresh and swift, and travelled over the eighteen miles of smooth road in something under an hour and a half.

The servants at The Boltens had been accustomed to see Mr. Wall arrive and go away at all sorts of hours, and bearing all sorts of articles. They naturally made no attempt to follow him upstairs, nor to watch his actions in his employers' rooms.

At one o'clock that night the steamer "Josephine" sailed from St. Katherine's Docks for Boulogne. Among its passengers was a pug-nosed man, who, in spite of the balmy warmth of the Summer night, had half-hidden his face in a muffler. That gentleman was Mr. Edward Wall.

Mr. Edward Wall was at that moment the proud possessor of nearly fifty thousand pounds in notes of the Bank of England and the Bank of France, and of a not insignificant sum in golden sovereigns and napoleons.

In the meantime, the fuses at Reedon Lodge were burning slowly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Cyclists Should Not Do This.

The dangerous practice of cyclists carrying children on the front part of their machines is denounced. A correspondent writes:—This custom cannot be too strongly reprobated, as it is fraught with the greatest danger to the little ones so placed. But what makes it still more deplorable is that the chief delinquents are fond fathers, who are under the impression they are giving their offspring a delightful treat. If the child loses his footing or if the rests give way his little legs will in all likelihood be amputated by the spokes, and his body otherwise mutilated. Some time ago a child in the North of England suffered lamentable and serious injury through an accident to a machine on which his father was carrying him. Cycling is at no time altogether free from peril, and the danger is increased tenfold when the rider is self-handicapped in the manner referred to. During my cycling career I have had two machines spoilt—in the one case being run into, in the other by a runaway horse going over it. On this latter occasion I just managed to save my life by dismounting on the off-side. Had a child been riding in front of my bicycle when either of these accidents occurred its life would most probably have been sacrificed.

Next Polar Expedition.

The honor of equipping and sending out the next polar expedition will probably belong to Canada. At the approaching meeting of the Ontario Land Surveyor's Association a report submitting the basis of such an expedition is expected from a special committee appointed for the purpose. It is certain now that nothing but money will stand in the way of the early fitting out and dispatching of the proposed expedition, and this is not expected to be long wanting, as a large measure of government assistance is absolutely certain. According to the contention of the association, the north pole is in Canadian territory, and the men above all others best able to reach it are Canadian surveyors, accustomed to outdoor work in low temperature from life-long training. The committee having the matter in hand is an exceptionally strong one, the members being all famous in Canadian exploratory work. Canadians do not believe in an open sea about the pole, and are planning to make the trip by sledges entirely.

A WONDERFUL MARCH

Most Remarkable and Unexpected Feat of Modern Warfare.

Col. Kelly's march from Gilgit to Chitral is one of the most wonderful and unexpected feats of modern warfare. For an expedition to reach Chitral by this route at this season of the year has always been deemed impossible. The London Times, discussing the ways and means of rescuing Dr. Robertson, shut up in Chitral fort with 300 men, said, only a fortnight ago:—

Chitral can, of course, be reached, as it has been reached hitherto, from Kashmir. But the road is six hundred miles long, and is blocked with snow for half the year. In the present emergency, for example, we cannot by that road relieve the British force in Chitral before June, while it is of urgent importance, as we have just pointed out, that we should reach that place not later than the end of April.

Mr. George Curzon, M. P., who has recently visited Chitral by this route, says: "It is probably the most difficult and certainly the loftiest mountain region in the world." The Shandar Pass, by which Col. Kelly crossed the mountains, is 12,000 feet above sea level, and is impassable to beasts of burden. Col. Kelly's men had to carry not only their baggage, but the field guns on their backs; the snow was deep and the cold intense. Some of the men were frost-bitten and others were smitten with snow-blindness; but they got there. As a matter of fact they have quite forestalled the bigger expedition, which is approaching Chitral by the shorter and easier route from Peshawar. On April 7th Col. Kelly's 500 men were within sixty miles of Chitral, while Sir Robert Lowe's army of 14,000 is still several days' journey distant. Col. Kelly has been fortunate as well as plucky, especially if he has undertaken this risky relief expedition without orders. It is certainly difficult to co-ordinate it with the larger undertaking; but if it is a mistake, it is the mistake of a man with a great head and a stout heart. Still, one wonders how the gallant five hundred would have fared if they had descended upon Chitral from their snowbound heights, and Umra Khan's hosts had been able to devote all their attention to this little band of heroes, hampered with their baggage and the care of the snow blind and the frost bitten. As it was, Umra Khan was too much concerned with the British army approaching from the south to pay much attention to a small expedition coming over inaccessible mountains from the east, and Col. Kelly's men will probably get all the glory of relieving Dr. Robertson without doing any fighting, as Umra Khan has had to draw off his men to meet the more serious invasion. The big expedition will greet the men from Gilgit with mingled feelings—surprise to see them at all, admiration of their pluck, and envy of their good fortune. Their achievement is certainly a remarkable one. On a small scale Col. Kelly has repeated the feat by which Hannibal astonished the ancient and Napoleon the modern world.

PATHETIC SCENE IN COURT.

Bessie Superior Asked the Guards to Kill Her When She Heard the Jury's Verdict of Guilty Against Her for Theft.

That the way of the transgressor is hard was exemplified in a forcible manner the other evening in the Court of Queen's Bench at Montreal.

The case on trial was that of two women, Superior and Grant, who were accused of shoplifting in the wholesale warerooms of Gault Bros. & Co. After deliberating for over five hours the jury came into Court at 5.40 and rendered the following verdict:—"That we painfully regret having to render a verdict of guilty against the two prisoners under the indictment. In the case of prisoner Grant, we strongly beg the clemency of the Court, as, owing to her condition at the time, her mind may have been temporarily weakened. The prisoner Superior we also strongly recommend to the mercy of the Court."

During the delivery of the verdict an air of suppressed excitement pervaded the closely-crowded court room, and every one strained forward to catch the words that would mean liberty or prison to the two accused women. The foreman of the jury had scarcely uttered the word guilty when Bessie Superior was seen to reel forward and grasp the iron railing of the prisoners' dock. Then came an agonizing cry of despair and bitter anguish, and the next instant she lay struggling on the floor in a fit of hysteria. Her cries were heartrending and for a few minutes it was impossible for the Court to proceed. When she had partially recovered she pleaded with the guards to kill her as she had brought disgrace upon her poor old parents. As she was being assisted to a chair she clutched wildly at her hair and screamed for her father to whom she said that she was going mad. During this scene the other prisoner stood facing the Judge with head bowed on the railing of the dock sobbing as if her heart would break. It was evident that they felt keenly their sad positions. When quiet had been restored His Honor Judge Wurtelle announced to the jury that he fully concurred with them in their verdict and at the same time remarked that they had rendered justice to society. The learned judge promised to give their requests for clemency and mercy very careful consideration.

As soon as Court adjourned the two prisoners were escorted by four policemen through the crowded corridors to the street where they were placed in a cabin charge of Sergeant Kyle, and rapidly driven away to the common goal to await sentence. Mr. Superior was grief stricken, and his daughter was being placed in the cab he fell to the asphalt pavement at the door in a faint.

The post dare help himself wherever he lists—wherever he finds material suited to his work. He may even appropriate entire columns with their carved capitals, if the temple he thus supports be a beautiful one.—Heine.