

Love Kept Its Faith;

Or, The Girl With the Nut Brown Hair and Dreamy Eyes.

CHAPTER X.

Three days David passed in Paradise, and then of his own volition plunged into torment; three days he lived upon his discovery made amid the blooms of the Little Man, and at the end sank to the sordid level of commercialism, became the shipowner with ears attuned only to the chink of gold. In a moment of exaltation he ventured from the pleasant by-ways of the present into the mist-veiled paths of anticipation, from Margery Manesty he turned to the life he was about to offer her, and, lo! it shrivelled up even as he took the measure of its length and breadth.

All that yesterday was so good and so big suddenly became dwarfed, pitifully insignificant. Now he began to see the thing of which Michael Strang had spoken. The fleet his fathers had labored to build and he had been so proud to own, was after all but one of brigs and schooners; and now that he came to think of it, his house, which had been so satisfying, had been in every truth his home, was by comparison—God help the man who indulges in comparisons—only half as big as Sliddlemere.

Yesterday in his life he had detected nought to dissatisfy, no reason for revolt, its quiet had pleased him, so that he had not even known that it was quiet, but now what a meagre inconsequent thing it seemed. How could he drag Margery from the stately calm of Sliddlemere to the hum-drum stagnation of Wybern. For her sake it was clearly his duty to aspire to a larger, a wider life.

Moreover, though Margery must, in a matter of this character, rank first, yet he also had himself to consider. It was not just that he should stand still. The Graham fleet had one ship, nay, even less than that, for a beginning, and why should the expansion of the business cease now? Yes, it was clear that Michael Strang was in the right. This was not a doubtful ambition from which he ought to run away, but an ideal to be courted and won.

On second thoughts, moreover, the task would not be difficult either. There was no trade like that of ships and freights for making fortunes—and making them quickly—quickly—quickly. Ah, there was the rub.

David dug his hands into his palms, his pulse beat madly, perspiration gathered upon his brow in clammy beads, on the shadow screen of imagination there loomed his father's face, upon his ears the words of his father's parting plea fell brokenly and his own promise given in the presence of Death. Out of the living past they came to help or to condemn.

Now indeed he had come to grip with life, now he was in the throes of a soul conflict, the God man in battle with his Bad self. This, to the man who disdained his home as quiet and his days as commonplace! Strange how life deals with her children, with what strictest equity she meets them. No sooner had David Graham rebelled against the calm of his home than it became the centre of distraction, no sooner repined against the tranquillity of his days than he found them frothing with agitation.

For the soothing of his angered conscience, the easing of the roughened road dipping steeply down to the nether plains, he sought at the outset to persuade himself that black was really white, and wronging the essence of righteousness, but conscience is not to be so easily fooled, and at no period in the conflict had he any misconception as to the nature of the issues involved. He saw distinctly that the expansion which had satisfied his fathers had been a natural process, and that the thing whereat he himself proposed to aim was revolution; that they had added ship to ship during long years of waiting and accumulation, whereas he would abandon fleet for fleet, that all their dealings had been conducted on lines of methodical caution, and that in his heart there was the madness of haste. He knew, too, not that the end was wrong, but that haste demanded means, as haste to wealth always does, whereby his soul might be seared and other lives gashed and hacked beyond repair. Knew all this without making admission of the con-

viction, knew, and still staggered onward towards the night.

From the beginning to the end there was no respite, the battle was one admitting of no truce. Hour by hour, day after day, the struggle was waged fiercely, with grim desperation, in the sanctuary of his own room, or the completer solitude of the moors that link the mountains with the sea; at one period a fight for faith, a name, the purity of a flag, at another the agonizing conflict of a soul seeking an excuse for sin. Soon love hid her face and fled the scene, and though David still sought comfort in the idea that he was acting for Margery's sake, it was but a shallow fiction, powerless to help. Ambition only was the compelling force.

Through it all, too, he remained alone. In his environment there was no visible change, outwardly, all remained as it had been; Bella waited upon his needs as of old, and Cap'n Dan came and went and talked when opportunity offered; but, save for the tale of his white pain-drawn face which made them fear for his health, they were absolutely cut off from him. His was the isolation of the silent man. A word, a sentence, just the exposure of a corner of his secret, and a little army all sufficient for his salvation would have been at his command. But though David desired the peace which passeth all understanding, he craved for the wages of sin, and so he set a seal upon his lips, nor removed it until, under the shelter of the night, he took counsel with Michael Strang.

There was no harm in a chat, he would just ask for a little advice, for a few details as to how the thing could be managed, and then, if he didn't like it, he could let it drop.

A guttering candle held above his head, Michael peered into the blackness of the narrow street, so narrow that only the smallest of the boys deigned to use it for hop-step, and jump, and when he discerned the figure of David Graham at the step he made a great show of surprise, but whether it was genuine or mere affectation cannot be declared. His face was ever a perfect mask for the concealment of his thoughts.

"Good evening, Mr. Graham, good evening, this is indeed a pleasure," he suavely exclaimed, smiling sleekly the while. "You'll honor my home by coming in, won't you?"

Responding with alacrity to the invitation, for he feared the over-looking of prying eyes, David joined his host in the gloomy hall and followed him into the sitting-room, where, though the night was chill, no cheering firelight glowed and their shadows ran up the walls and lay along the ceiling.

Another word of welcome, the offer of a chair, and Strang was about to seat himself also, but, after a moment's hesitation, he grudgingly declared that the occasion demanded a little more illumination and proceeded to light the lamp. Then he turned the back of his chair to the rays, so that his face should have the shade, and besought the reason of the call.

David shifted uneasily, and, after a halting attempt, blurted out—

"Well, the fact is, Mr. Strang, I've been thinking about the Line business, about which we've been talking lately, and I would like a little further conversation on the subject."

"Ah, exactly," Strang replied, with something which was surely first cousin to a sneer; "you want advice, and so, like the worthy gentleman in the Scriptures, let me see Nick-Nick-Nicholas, no, Nichodemus, ah, that was the person, you come by night—well, never mind, Mr. David, you're an eminent precedent to plead, and better by night than not at all. You come in the night in search of light, ha, ha, not bad that, is it? Ha, ha! Well now, in what way can I serve you?"

David opened his lips to reply, but they were parched and hot and the words he wanted hung back; the speech he had marshalled for the occasion had fled. But Strang would not see his confusion, and soon he had himself pretty well in hand again.

"Well—er," he stammered, "the more I think about it the more in-

clined I am to your opinion that Allerdale ought to be equal to a Line as well as Bransty or Netherport, and—of course you'll understand I'm not very particular about it, but still if it can be done I don't see why I shouldn't attempt it. Now what would you advise as a start? I am afraid I can't hope for much out of the methods on which my"—no, his father must be kept out of the business—"on which we have hitherto worked, and I've thought that you might not mind telling me how you—that is—telling me a little of the methods employed by other houses."

There was no mistaking the sneer on the thin lips now, nor mistaking the flash of unholy joy burning in the cruel eyes; but when David dared a look the face of the man of whom he sought guidance was beaming with benevolent pity.

"My dear young friend," Strang rubbed his claw-like fingers round and about each other, "I quite understand you, quite. I may say that I am not at all surprised to hear you prefer such a request, it is most reasonable, yes, most reasonable; in fact, if you will permit me to say so, it is exactly the request that a youth with the world at his feet might be expected to make, and I consider that it does you extreme credit."

David's heart beat responsively to the master touch, there was at least one person in the world by whom he was understood.

"Now, let us see," Strang went on, "let us see how and where we stand. The case, I take it, is simply this. You are the owner of an estate which has been worked by your ancestors upon a philanthropic rather than upon a commercial basis. Hitherto—you will pardon me saying it, won't you?—hitherto, you have been, so to speak, in leading strings, but now you have reached an age which justifies you in untying the knots and assuming a position of independent control, and as any other brainy young man of business would do, you are inquiring whether the old way has been the right one, that's all."

David's head was erect now; eyes aglow, lips parted, he was gazing into the charmer's face. Thus the serpent and the dove.

"It goes without saying," the purring voice went on, "that you are inspired by the very worthy desire to maintain the traditions of your house, and, speaking as one who has had some practical knowledge of ships and sailors, I venture to suggest that this can still be done, and at the same time that you as owner, can obtain that which is your due."

What, David, surely not a smile! "There have been occasions when your father and I have not seen eye to eye, but, my dear Mr. David, I always honored him, and I have always cherished his memory. But, after all, deeply though I respected his aims, my judgment compelled me to regard him as a mistaken man. The fact is, Mr. David, your father allowed his heart to run away with his head."

"I admit that there are ships sailing every day out of Allerdale under-manned, unseaworthy, and with poorly fed crews; but your ships are not merely well-manned, they are over-manned; your ships are seaworthy, and they could be made equally so at an expenditure which would put several hundreds a year into your pockets; and as for your crews—pooh—they are not only properly fed, you are gorging them, pampering them to a ridiculous extent."

"You have asked for my advice—here it is. Give your men plenty of salt junk and duff, but don't run to Eccles cakes and brandy snaps; have enough sailors, but not too many, they are only in each other's way, and if a ship does go down there are so many more lives needlessly wasted—a capital stroke that, Mr. Michael Strang, capital—and don't waste money on repairs that are not called for, the ships won't sail any better for it, they won't carry more cargo, and they won't float any longer in a storm."

Greedily, David listened to the advice tendered him, but his heart beat madly against its walls as he heard this other voice proclaim the completeness of his surrender, the renunciation of all the principles he had promised to protect.

"You abandon nothing, you merely modify, made the old conform to the new," Strang in cold, even tones assured him, and then lest he should betray his own eagerness and scare his prey, he suggested that, having regard to all the circumstances, it would perhaps after all be better to let the matter drop. Better to let another have the fortune and the honor, better to go on in the old, old way—as though the old, old way were something to be despised—than to risk the loss of that which David seemed to value.

No! Very good. Mr. David would think it over, very good. Certainly he might call again for

another chat, and any experience he, Mr. Strang, had acquired was at his service. It was very likely that a few points in addition to those he had mentioned might recur to him, and if so he would be happy to pass them on. Good-night.

Good-night, forsooth! 'Tis Michael Strang that bids good-night! And after that?

Listen to him now, with the bolts of his door shot home and David Graham on the outer side. Listen to him as he stands alone in his bare miserlike room, with the yellow glare of the lamp licking his sallow face.

"He'll think it over; oh, yes, he'll think it over, and he'll go my way when he's done his thinking. He wants to make money and still remain as saintly as his deeply-respected father—and I've told him—to do it. A little innocent counsel on the judicious manning of crews; by-and-by we'll talk of the trimming of cargoes and the advantages of insurance; after that of other things. . . . And then I'll crush him—crush him—crush him."

The man ground his heel into his resounding boards.

"I've waited for this hour," he continued in a high-pitched voice, "waited for it years and years, waited in longing and always with confidence. The Graham tribe has had its day, and now mine has dawned. For years they have flaunted their flag of righteousness in my face; they have made their money, and the addle-pated public has fawned upon them, patted them on the back and sung itself hoarse in their praise, while I have got naught but kicks and evil looks. But at last the tables are turned; this is my hour, mine, mine, mine. When David Graham leaves my clutch his name will be a thing on which men shall pour their curses, and the fame of the father shall be forgotten in the infamy of the son."

Slowly his speech ended, he turned and began to pace the boards. Once he paused to extinguish the lamp and relight the candle, and then back to his walk again, over the floor, chair to settee, and back again. Thus, until the candle flared upward and then sank feebly down into its socket. As Michael Strang groped for the door, he muttered—

"To-morrow I must begin to look for my tools."

(To be continued.)

SLAVE TRADE IS ACTIVE.

British Warships Are Few on the Red Sea Coast.

The slave trade is becoming increasingly active in the southern part of the Red Sea and in the East African waters. This is attributed entirely to the reduction of the British squadrons in these waters.

From Aden to the Mozambique the British flag is nowadays very seldom seen at all. On the other hand, the German cruisers are increasing in number in these waters, and pay frequent visits to ports where the White Ensign was formerly the only familiar naval flag.

The secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society stated recently that there was no doubt that slavery was on the increase despite the fact that Mr. McKenna in the British House of Commons declared that after making inquiries he was led to believe that there had been no increase in the slave trade.

"Just about the time that Mr. McKenna made this statement," he continued, "I received news from our Aden correspondent that there had been a great increase in the slave trade, owing to the fact that the guardship now stationed at Aden, H.M.S. Philomel, is absolutely out of date, slow, and useless."

"While the Philomel can only do about ten knots, the slave dhows which race in and out of the ports can do nearly fifteen."

"There is another useless guardship at Berbera, on the Somaliland coast, which communicates with the Philomel by wireless telegraphy. The movements of these ships are known to all the slave dealers, who pursue their trade with impunity."

LIMITATIONS OF ROYALTY.

The late King Oscar of Sweden was the least conventional of monarchs, but he had to courtesy to custom, nevertheless.

The King and Monsieur Bonnier, the botanist, met as strangers, while out in search of flowers near Stockholm. They were soon the best of friends, and Bonnier suggested lunch at his inn.

"Come home with me instead," said the other.

When the way led to the palace gates Bonnier hesitated.

"I'm sorry," said his companion, "but I happen to be the king of this country, and this is the only place where I can entertain my friends."

About the Farm

VITALITY OF SEEDS IN MANURE.

Experiments conducted to ascertain the vitality of weed seeds after passing through the digestive tract of an animal, led E. I. Oswald, of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, to report as follows:

In experiments in which the manure remained (1) for six months in a barnyard heap; and (2) for a short while in piles, it was found that in the first case there was no danger, and in the second case little danger of distributing germinable weed seeds. In the experiments in which the weed seeds were fed to yearling steers, and the manure handled in various ways, it was found that:

1. When the manure was hauled directly from the stable as a top-dressing, an average of only 12.3 per cent. of the seed fed to animals germinated.

2. Where the manure was hauled directly from the stable upon the land, and plowed under, 2.3 per cent. of the seeds fed to animals came up.

3. Where the droppings remained on the pasture fields, unadulterated as they fell, an average of only 3.1 per cent. of the seeds fed to animals germinated.

The results indicate that, in general, it is safe to assume that the vitality of weed seeds is destroyed in well-rotted manure, but that many pass unharmed through the digestive tracts of animals, and may be carried to the land if the manure is not well rotted before use. The feeding stuffs comprised about 50 of the most dangerous weeds found in the State.

The above conclusions, however, would be misleading and unfortunate if unaccompanied by the remainder that serious waste of fertility results from the decomposition of manure. Roughly speaking, it may be said that experiments have shown that it requires two loads of fresh manure to make one load of rotted, and, for most purposes a load of rotted is worth little if any more than a load of fresh. The true policy is, therefore, so to arrange the system of farming that most if not all the manure may be applied in a fresh state to land intended for corn and other such crops, the cultivation of which will incidentally destroy the seedling weeds.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

There is only one way to establish a reputation for furnishing good stock, and that is to furnish no other kind.

No one but a fancier should keep several breeds of fowls. Let the farmer choose that breed which gives him the most pleasure to care for, and, as a rule, the money received goes far toward that end.

It is he who thinks sheep can provide their own food and who need no shelter during the inclement months of winter, who is the first to cry out that raising sheep does not pay. The shepherd's intelligence should be superior to that of his sheep and must be if he would make a success of the business.

You can fatten hogs in two-thirds of the time where corn is soaked, and claim fully 25 per cent. is saved in feed, as the same amount of feed will contribute more to growth and fat; at the same time, the feed thus treated, contains less heat, which is of great advantage. Pigs only five weeks old will eat soaked corn readily, and where a sow has a large litter it supplements their rations to a considerable extent. Soak the corn once a day.

Never use a ram of your own raising that will be connected with your flock. This trying to get into a flock of thoroughbreds by using rams of one's own raising and breeding, has destroyed more good sheep than anything else. Where one man succeeds, 999 fail. As often as a ram is needed, buy one of the same breed, but not connected by blood relations. Have the eyes numbered from one upward as high as your flock goes; carry a small notebook in your pocket and if anything happens to one of the eyes that will injure her for breeding or for keeping, it should be noted down, as it will be of great assistance in culling your flock, which should be done at shearing time.

ANXIOUS FOR INFORMATION.

One day the office boy went to the editor of the Soaring Eagle and said: "There's a tramp at the door, and he says he has had nothing to eat for six days."

"Fetch him in," said the editor, "if we can find out how he does we can run this paper another week."