

Diamond Cut Diamond

OR,
THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

Upstairs again, were the head and under-accounts' offices, Mr. Halliday's private room, which faced the courtyard, and was prepared with a cheerful modern paper, and was altogether humanized and friendly-looking, inspiring no mysterious notions whatever in the minds of the clerks, and their sample rooms, and packing rooms, filled up the remainder of the house up to the furthest corner of its uppermost storey. It may be mentioned that to be sent for to Mr. Halliday's private room, was of no more moment to the young man who was summoned, than to go to Mr. Philibut, the head accountant; he ran up stairs with an equally light heart to either, three steps at a time, hands in his pockets, and a subdued whistle upon his lips; it was a thing which was constantly happening, and created no disturbance whatever in anybody's mind. But to be sent for to speak to Mr. Dane, was a very different matter. It very seldom happened, and when it did, was looked upon as an event of a portentous nature, all his companions looking on with beating hearts and awe-stricken countenances at the victim, who, with blanched cheeks, went forth to meet his doom.

Upon a certain grey and somewhat moist morning in the month of May, all the clerks at Dane and Trichet's were sitting together over their daily duties. In the outer rooms the pens scratched freely, wooden chairs scraped restlessly upon the wooden floor, and subdued whispers of conversation concerning some "run" or "trick" next Saturday in St. Albans or Sevenosks, were carried on surreptitiously between ill-kempt heads bent mysteriously under cover of those customary sounds of daily toil. In the second room behind carefully closed folding doors, life was taken in an altogether easier fashion. The carpeted floor gave forth no inharmonious scrapings, neither did the rapid scratchings of pen interfere to any serious degree with the conversation, whilst the presence of the morning papers upon a side table gave evidence that the three privileged young men who occupied this room were in no danger of overtaking their strength by the assiduity of their labors. As a matter of fact, the House might enter no doubt, had dispensed with their services altogether, but for the fact that the House was pre-eminently conservative in its customs. From time immemorial there had always been three upper clerks, who were some of the gentlemen upon the regular staff, and so the habit was kept up, not so much from any inherent merit in the system, as from a due regard to the ancient usages of the firm.

In older days, no doubt, the chairs in the second room were reserved for the younger brothers and cousins, and for the sons of widows whose husbands had in some fashion been connected with the partners. But for a long time there has been a parity of sons to claim the doubtful privilege of the position, and it was only within the last year that a truly astonishing fact had come to pass. The old names of the firm were, by a curious coincidence, reproduced in the upper clerks' office.

Geoffrey Dane had been transplanted, at his father's request, from an idle life at home, to one vacant stool, whilst a young man of the name of Albert Trichet had been suddenly raised from the outer offices to fill another. Trichet, or Tricky, as his fellow clerks called him, was in himself a mystery. Whether or no he had any right to the name he bore, was a matter which possibly Matthew Dane was alone aware of; but at some time when he was spoken of before his chief, the green-eyed would smile in a curious manner, which led beholders to suppose that he knew more of the matter than he was willing to say—possibly, he had at any rate no legal right to it, perhaps his connection with the extinct family of the Lyons partner was so remote as scarcely to warrant the claim at all.

Geoffrey and Miles Faulkner were of opinion that Albert was Trichet's only son, and that he had adopted the name as a means of bringing himself into notice and favor.

Albert himself, it may be said, believed religiously in his moral right to the name, and with it, in a Divine right of inheritance, which he tested in his own eyes, with a certain amount of importance in the House. He came, he told his friends, of a side branch, but undoubtedly of a true branch of the old family, of which he was the last survivor. When he was asked confidentially, he would sometimes hint mysteriously that he had been able once to be of service to Mr. Dane, and that Mr. Dane was not likely ever to forget it. There is no doubt that he cherished hopes of being one day admitted into partnership, on the strength both of this unknown service and of his name.

It is hardly necessary to say that these hopes, which were as clear as daylight to Matthew Dane, had never been in the smallest degree encouraged by him. Never, in his wildest imaginings, had he hitherto contemplated for a moment the very remotest possibility of such a contingency as turning Albert Trichet into a partner. If he allowed him to retain the fiction of his name, it was in order to award him without making invidious preferences, according to the exact measure of his merits, but no more. Philibut, the head accountant, with his heritage of four sons, had passed through the great man's brain as a possible successor to the fortunes of the house, but never Albert Trichet. He was too good a judge of human nature, and had too genuine a reverence for the greatness he represented, to fling it rashly into the hands of the unworthy, or the adventurer.

In person, Albert Trichet was small and thin, he had dark hair, and small, cunning-looking eyes, his skin was brown and wrinkled, and he cultivated a small black moustache, carefully waxed up at the ends, and a still smaller black tuft upon his chin, which

added to the foreign aspect he was devious of keeping up. Sometimes, indeed, Albert even affected a slight foreign accent, but this was only when he was particularly desirous of impressing his origin upon others—any affectation in speech is troublesome to remember, and "Tricky" only remembered it occasionally.

The third occupant of the room, was in appearance, exceedingly different to his companions. He was a large, fair man, of almost Herculean proportions; his broad shoulders and deeper chest were a source of envy and admiration to his friends, and the muscles of his huge arms were felt to be worthy of all respect by his foes. It is no doubt one of the ineradicable primary instincts of man that physical strength always carries with it, per se, a large amount of veneration. Not all the refining influences of civilization, not all the elevating principles of education and mental superiority can obliterate that blind and unreasoning homage which man accords to him whose bodily strength surpasses that of his fellows. There is a fascination about it, no doubt it appeals to the senses alone, and to those lower attributes which man shares with animals and not with angels; but for all that, we most of us unconsciously bow to it. Strength, like beauty, is felt to be a gift of the gods, and as such, an excellence in itself. To Miles Faulkner this great gift of physical power had been freely meted out. His frame was massive, his force of endurance immeasurable; he was as one of the giants of ancient lore. Had his soul only been as ferocious and warlike as his huge frame was massive and well-knit, then, indeed, he would have been a man to be feared as well as admired.

But Providence had equalized matters. In disposition, Miles Faulkner was as gentle and lamb-like as any timid maiden. His heart was soft and tender, his smile sweet and shy. This Samson of modern life would have died rather than hurt a fly—and not the slightest gibe or the blackest injury to himself could have drawn from him more than a gentle expostulation or a pitiful smile. But if, in his presence, a woman were insulted or a child or an animal ill-treated, then wait and see, what Miles would have to say to it! There were stories told as to his method of procedure under these circumstances. Once, it was said, he had come across a crowd of drunken men who were tormenting a poor old crippled woman. One had taken her stall away, others were tossing about her wares in the muddy gutter—others were holding her by the arms pinned back against the wall of a house. Then came Faulkner like an avenging angel upon the scene. There was not, of course, a policeman to be seen, in the dirty street; but Miles, with his own strong arm, was ready and prompt to act. A crack to the right of him, a crack to the left, a few straight blows hit out well from the shoulder, and it was all over—he ran and drew a meter, groaning, or fled terrified in all directions, whilst Miles was leading the poor trembling old woman away to her home, supporting her with his arm as tenderly as though she had been his own mother. Once again a tale was told of some young man who was torturing a poor half-starved cur by tying ropes to its legs and dragging it head-down a stony road. There was a canal, and a high brick wall handy, as Miles Faulkner came along, and met the inhuman masqueraders. One strong grip of his fist behind one offender's coat collar, another wrench at the arm of the other, and both were disposed of. One was lifted completely up over the wall into a timber yard beyond, and the other dropped quietly into the canal; while Miles united the grinding ropes round the poor dog's legs, and carried him home to his own lodgings under his arm.

These things were matters of history and "ironers" called for the galling ropes upon his legs which those cruel ropes had made—lives and fourishes still to testify to the truth of it.

But to see Miles now, as he sits balanced on a paper knife, with the thumb of one hand and the forefinger of the other, with a bland smile upon his broad rugged face, and one kindly "glittering" behind his eyelids, whilst the other blinks in pleasant sympathy to see him now, who would not have been easy to credit him with these grim tales of bloodshed and revenge.

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pledged to secrecy—that was an offensive remark, Geoffrey, and I think you ought to apologise. Don't you think so, Miles?"

"I confess I don't see it. Geoffrey only spoke his opinion; we can say what we think in this room, Tricky, without giving offence, and I'm certain Miles meant none."

Faulkner said this with his usual placid smile; he was always the arbitrator and the peace-maker in any dispute.

"I meant no offence, Tricky," said Geoff.

"In that case I withdraw my remark," replied the other; "but, Geoff, do you think it could have been your aunt?" he pursued eagerly.

Geoffrey laughed outright. Trichet's insatiable curiosity was of an acute degree of amusement to his companions. "I should say it was in the highest degree improbable," he replied, remembering that he had seen Mrs. Dane and the Holiday girls home after a half-wet and a clock in the morning—the girls fresh as daisies and their unfortunate chaperon in the last stages of fatigue and exhaustion.

Geoffrey felt absolutely certain that morning, it could not very decidedly have been his wife.

Then Geoffrey dipped his pen into the ink and bent his head over his writing again. He took very little interest in Albert's speculation, although something he hardly knew what, had arrested his attention at the beginning of his story.

"What a fool I am," he said to himself. "Every time I hear a woman mentioned my thoughts fly to her. It shows what a contemptible condition of mind I must be in. She has left me and betrayed my affection. I have not determined to forget her, I read out her image from my fancy! It's only a matter of time after all. How pretty Angel looked last night! How well that soft white dress suited her and the crimson roses in her bosom. No mystery about that girl, I'll be bound!" and then there flashed back suddenly into his memory something that Rose de Brouf had said to him once. "You will marry her well that soft white dress in her and the crimson roses in her bosom. No mystery about that girl, I'll be bound!" and then there flashed back suddenly into his memory something that Rose de Brouf had said to him once.

He felt a sudden sense of suffocation, the pen dropped from his fingers, and he passed his hand hurriedly across his face.

Then the door opened, and the messenger stood upon the threshold. Had Mademoiselle Brouf entered the room, poor Geoffrey would have flattered himself that for her harshness and cruelty to him he had cast her forth from his heart, could hardly have staid.

Mr. Dane would be glad if Mr. Trichet would step into his room for a moment, was the message, and Albert rose quickly with a delightful sense of importance to obey the summons.

Mr. Dane's room consisted of one inner chamber and an outer vestibule with messengers and errand boys had occasionally to wait for orders. There was a boy waiting there now as Trichet went through to the holy of holies within.

Mr. Dane laid down his pen as his clerk entered, and surveyed him for the space of some ten seconds in a critical silence which was rather trying to the object; it was as though he were weighing in his own mind whether or no the young man who flattered his confidence. During the scrutiny Albert looked modestly down at the floor.

"I think it was you who opened the door to the young man who flattered his confidence. During the scrutiny Albert looked modestly down at the floor."

fixed upon his clerk. "You were in that train, Trichet?" the words this time were no longer an assertion of fact, they were an interrogation.

"Undoubtedly I was in it, sir," replied Trichet, with assurance. "I was in one of the three last carriages of the train, which escaped as by a miracle from the fate of the front portion—six carriages followed the engine off the lines, and were dashed into a thousand pieces at the bottom of the embankment. Leon de Brouf was in one of them—I had seen him get in at the station."

"Ah, are you quite certain, Trichet, that de Brouf was killed?"

To Be Continued.

DREYFUS'S ISLAND HOME.

The Great Tragedy in Its Neighborhood That Cost About 12,000 Lives.

The island on which Dreyfus is imprisoned, within sight of the South American coast and twenty-seven miles from Cayenne, French Guiana, is known as Devil's Island, Ile du Diable, while the three islands in the little group are known together as Salvation Islands, Ile du Salut. The contrast between these islands is certainly striking, and the way in which they became applied to these little rocks is interesting, and calls to mind one of the greatest tragedies in colonization that ever occurred.

The islands have considerable verdure, but in the early days of French Guiana they had a reputation for sterility which they did not deserve, and on this account no use was made of them. They were named Ile du Diable, and were thought to be of no value until thousands of wretched immigrants from France who were perishing among the pestilential swamps of the Kourou River fled to them in the hope that they might escape death.

It was in 1763 that about 13,000 persons from Alsace, Lorraine and Saintonge were landed on the banks of the Kourou. France was smarting under the humiliation of having been compelled to cede Canada to England, and the bright idea occurred to some of her public men to replace the lost territory by dubbing Guiana "Equatorial France" and sending thither fleet after fleet of colonists. A more cruelly mismanaged enterprise was never known. The men who aroused in France enthusiasm for emigration knew nothing whatever of the country to which they invited the poor victims. They recalled that in Canada the French had greatly enjoyed the sport of skating, and accordingly a large supply of skates was sent with the colonists to tropical America. It was thought, also, that in their leisure hours they would require amusement and so

A COMPANY OF ACTORS, was sent on one of the ships to build a theatre in Equatorial France. Those who provided these means of diversion, however, forgot to send sufficient food supplies, and no arrangements were made for landing and housing the settlers. The Chevalier de Turgot, who was appointed leader of the expedition, took care to remain in France.

The unhappy victims of this blunder began to perish by thousands, and they thought that if they could only get away from the plague spot where they had landed they might have a chance to live. They were told that the three islands which they saw off shore were the Ile du Diable, and that they were worth nothing for human uses. "At least," cried the poor unfortunates in their desperation, "they are swept by ocean breezes. There is no poison in the air among those islands. We will call them the Ile du Salut, for we may hope that they will save us from utter extinction."

This is how it happened that the three islands came to be known as Salvation Islands and the name has clung to them ever since. As a group they are known by no other name. The immigrants gathered up what was left of the supply of provisions, and 3,800 men, women and children, all that were left of the 13,000 who had landed on the neighboring coast, crowded upon the narrow, rocky area which could contain only about 400 persons. They landed on the islands without shelter or clothing, and being exposed to bad weather and having only the scantiest supply of food their suffering was great and most of them died on the rocks which they had hoped would help to save their lives.

It is now that they succeeded in getting back to the French port from which they had sailed. The Salvation Islands were not occupied again until 1852, when the transport of convicts to Guiana began. Saint Joseph and the Ile Royal now form the convict station proper. On English maps the three islands are called the Salut Islands, and the name Ile du Diable, originally extended over the group, now applies only to the island on which Dreyfus is a prisoner, and which is occupied only by him and his guards.

The islands are of about the same size. They form the apex of a triangle, and between them are deep channels where large vessels may ride at anchor or lie moored to the shore. They have little wood or water, but rain is stored in cisterns. The shores are rocky, and here and there jut out into promontories and cliffs. From Devil's Island Dreyfus may plainly see the other two islands and the mainland, only seven miles away.

IN THE WEATHER BUREAU.

The youthful prophet was plainly mortified. He had just been appointed and his first prediction had not been verified.

The Sculptor's Romance.

She had often noticed him before. He always sat in the same spot, with bowed head and a crayon in his hand. Beside him were the pictures he had drawn, no mere daubs, crude in color, and sketchy in treatment, but real artistic gems. Strange that a man of genius should be reduced to this.

She was young, beautiful and wealthy. What could she have in common with a street artist, however great his talent? She did not like poverty, sorrow or affliction, in any shape or form. If it came prominently before her she stepped aside with a shudder; it undoubtedly had the power to ruffle momentarily the surface of her lotus-eating existence.

To-day she had a better opportunity of examining his work than she had ever had before. She had been passing an idle hour in the park at a time not consecrated to fashion, and as she sauntered through the gate on her homeward way her eyes rested upon some of the artist's recently completed sketches, and lingered there.

Five minutes—ten minutes passed—and still she remained chained to the spot, her gaze fascinated by the scene before her. It represented an old-fashioned churchyard, with a little ivy-clad church nestling among the trees. But it was not upon the sacred edifice that her eyes were riveted, but on a grave which, from its beauty of design and comparatively recent structure, stood apart from the others, which were all more or less in different stages of decay.

The artist, following his own poetic fancy, had made three studies of the grave as it appeared in summer, autumn and winter. The first showed it almost smothered in flowers. Climbing roses clambered over the base and wound about the exquisitely carved figure of the angel, who stood erect with outstretched wings and hands pointing to the skies. In the next sketch no trace of the roses remained, but in their place the tomb was strewn with withered leaves, emblematic of the decay of life's hopes. The third showed the leafless branches of the trees, waving in ghostly fashion over the dark swept monument, which now stood alone in stately grandeur, unhidden by any earthly shroud. The gleaming figure of the angel, denuded of all earth's favors, still pointed triumphantly upward in reminder of the life everlasting, which was still further exemplified by the inscription, "Till the Day Break," which was carved in raised letters on the pedestal.

The heart of the beautiful woman was stirred with a strange emotion. She had not seen the original for ten long years.

"You seem to know this part of the country well," she said, addressing the artist, who looked up startled as her musical tones fell on his ear. "This is certainly a faithful portraiture."

"It ought to be," he remarked, "the design was executed by me."

"By you?" she exclaimed, amazed. "Surely not! That was the work of a rising artist already famed in his profession, not—"

"Not by a street picture maker who craves your charity," he replied, with a touch of bitterness. "You are right. But strange as it may appear, I, too, was once honored and respected, but had the misfortune to be unfortunate. It is a crime that the world never forgives."

He drew his sombrero still further over his eyes, but not before she had time to notice, that his handsome, haggard features, bore traces of refinement, and that his voice had a cultured ring. After all, it was none of her business, she argued; yet, as she dropped a coin in the box, her eyes still rested lingeringly on the pictures.

"I like these," she said slowly, unwillingly almost to speak, "I know this part of Cornwall well. What would you charge for three duplicate copies of the sketches?"

My days of fixed prices are a thing of the past," the artist replied with cold courtesy. "The remuneration I would leave entirely to you."

"Very well. Bring them next week to this address. Wait, I will put an hour, so that you may find me home." She handed him the card, and with a slight inclination passed on.

long, buried in profound thought, then a wild longing came over him to escape from his shackles and buy back self-respect, and all that made life worth living.

He pondered long into the night, and it was not until the first rosy streaks of dawn illumined the heavens that he laid aside his briarwood, and stretching himself upon his camp-bedstead, fell asleep. He was a man of impulse. Once having made up his mind to a certain course he never wavered in its fulfillment, and from henceforth his "pitch" knew him no more. That week he modeled an exquisite portrait of his fair patroness from memory, and begged her acceptance of it.

Even the apostle beauty felt a thrill of pleasurable emotion as she noticed the subtle flattery expressed in every curve of the medallion. She compared it favorably with portraits of herself by two of the most eminent academicians, and felt that it would be ungrateful not to give Mr. Gerard sitting.

"Who could have imagined you were such a genius?" she said laughingly, some weeks later when the picture was nearing completion. Gerard, in his silk blouse, and irreproachable get-up, with all the paraphernalia of art surrounding him, and aristocratic air of "Royal Kensington" permeating the tasteful studio, seemed altogether a different order of being from Gerard the street artist.

He pointed on assiduously. Mrs. Vivian glanced at him curiously, her interest in him growing deeper. She wished to lift the veil of mystery which surrounded this man, who was so different from the satellites which revolved around her, and of whom she grew so weary. There was something grand in his air of stern self-repression, she thought, although she would have wished him to be more communicative.

"Will you think me very impertinent, Mr. Gerard, if I mention something that has been exercising my mind for some time past? It is this. On the first day I made your acquaintance through seeing the sketches you had drawn of my father's grave, and expressed my surprise, you replied that the design had been your own. Now, on looking over some papers recently, I found the original estimate, and the artist's name was not Gerard. Were you then working under a pseudonym?"

"Yes." The reply came stern and cold from Gilbert Gerard's set lips, as he laid down his brush and crossed the room. "I was working under an alias, but not a voluntary one. If you will deign to listen I will give you in as few words as possible, an outline of the history of my life. I would not, at all events, like you to regard me as an impostor."

"That I could never do; your work speaks for itself."

"It has never been allowed to till now," he replied gloomily. "When I completed my art education I was a young fellow without means, and therefore gladly joined lots with a sculptor who had already made a name in the profession. We shared the same studio, and in a very short time I learned the reason of my so-called friend's kindness and generosity. I, like several others before me, was the monkey employed to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. He was a man of great plausibility and succeeded by dint of push in getting a good many orders. Beyond this, and inscribing his name on the finished work, his industry ceased. In the case of your father's tomb I revolted and said that it should be known as my work. Then ensued a quarrel, and I suggested that we should part. The monument was then all but finished. On the same day I was driving a very fidgety mare when suddenly she bolted on the brow of a hill, and I was pitched out on my head. They carried me to a hospital, concussion of the brain followed, and for about a year my mind was a perfect blank. When I recovered I went down to Cornwall, and, as I expected, there stood the monument bearing the usual signature. You are right. My long illness had cost thousands, for it took the best men to get me to pull me together, and their charges are not modest. This coupled with an unlucky investment, completed my misfortunes. The few friends I had made deserted me, as friends are wont to do, and genius, if it pleases you to dignify my efforts by that name, is worse than useless without money and without influence. If I had pointed out I should have been openly ridiculed, and people would have seen my mind had not recovered its balance. And so I drifted on to what you found me, a man to whom existence was a living death. You rescued me from the slough of despair, and my future is yours to mold as you will. I desire no better fate."

He raised her hand to his lips, and she made no resistance.

"Don't idealize me, pray," she said, with a little nervous laugh. "I don't deserve it. I never saw you before, then a social butterfly, and as such only seek the sweetness of life and none of its gall—that is to say, voluntarily." "You altogether belie yourself," returned Gerard, gravely. "You belong to the really few fine natures which are incapable of appreciating their own nobility. At present it is incensed with an element of worldly cynicism and hardness, which, however, lies only on the surface and does not represent your true self at all. Although you expressed no word of sympathy at the recital of my wrongs, I noticed the pallor which spread over your face; that was enough for me."

Mrs. Vivian blushed as she cast at him one of her speaking upward glances. "You are always making wonderful discoveries," she remarked. "I wonder what the next one will be?"

"Shall I tell you?" asked Gerard, meaningly, gazing at her with all his soul in his eyes.

But the beauty shook her head and vouchsafed no reply. He must have enlightened her, however, on a subsequent occasion, for some months later she was electrified at the news that the lovely Mrs. Vivian, whose feet princes had languished in vain, had married an obscure artist of whom they had never even heard.

But Mrs. Gerard was sublimely indifferent to praise or blame, whether more than usually venomous remark reached her ears, she glanced at her handsome husband and delivered herself of the following aphorism: "To the discoverer of the benefit of your genius you discovered my heart. I put it to the world which was the greater feat of the two?"