

MY HALF SISTER

By ELTON HARRIS

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"Oh, I know you think us the dirt beneath your feet!" he sneered, his face livid, as he twirled his little black moustache and glared at her with unwilling admiration. "We are nothing, no; no; but it is those who we laugh, oh, yes! I snap my fingers at Revertion, for which we are not good enough; but they shall accept us, though they did not my amiable uncle, whom, I allow, you had no cause to love."

"I shall certainly let all Revertion know if I am made unhappy here," she answered, with a sudden flash of comprehension, under which Henri winced. "For Mr. Barlowe, I had little cause to like him; but he is dead! he came to a terrible end! Have you any chance of discovering who killed him, or why?"

So intent had they been in their conversation that they had been oblivious to the clang of the garden gate and the sound of wheels. As Mollie turned quickly to see Madame Dubois driving up, the horses lathered by their reckless speed, but well in hand, she did not notice that Henri's face had gone a sickly yellow, that the fingers holding a cigarette suddenly crushed it as in a vice. Madame looked from Mollie's flushed face, to her son's sullen, dark one, as she drew up, and her lips tightened; but the girl entered the house before her, and once out of sight, dashed to her own room.

What was she to do? she thought, as with clenched hands she paced her room. What could she do but keep her eyes open, and bear it? She was surprised to find that she was neither frightened nor dismayed; indeed, wondering more what Reggie would think if he knew—Reggie, whose blue eyes had given a sudden flash as that "Mollie" had caught his ear. Yet it was a matter of relief when madame appeared as usual at dinner, even making a little show of affection for her, though looking pale and distraught, while Henri was effusively polite.

But nothing could prevent the evening being dreary and constrained, and as early as she could, she bade mother and son good night. At the far end of the large square hall was the handsome oak door of Mr. Barlowe's study, and she paused at the foot of the stairs to regard it with a felling akin to awe. What scene had that closed door witnessed 12 months ago that very night? What was the secret of Leonard Barlowe's tragic death? Well indeed it was for Mollie that the future is hidden from us; that she could not foresee the manner in which the truth would be revealed!

As she went slowly up stairs the drawing room door opened suddenly and madame came out and walked swiftly across to the closed door, her usually stately step faltering and uneven, her face wild and haggard; but ere she had gone many yards Henri had slipped after her, caught her by the arm, and pulled her roughly back. "Let me go!" she cried excitedly. "Have you not tormented me enough?—you, for whom I have borne everything; you, whom I have shielded?"

"There, don't make a fuss and rouse the place!" he said hoarsely. "For heaven's sake come back and calm yourself. What is the use of getting in a frenzy because an unfortunate event has happened in the house, and the servants say it is haunted? Come back, I say!" And the drawing room door closed again on their angry voices without either having perceived Mollie's presence on the stairs above.

She went on to her room down the dimly-lighted corridors, for madame was economical in lights in some instances. There was a feeling of unrest and mystery abroad in the house tonight, more to be felt than described, which unconsciously influenced her. She wished she were not so young. How long it seemed since she had left her peaceful German life behind, and been plunged into a sea of difficulties; yet she would not have gone back. Unbidden rose the thought that there was no Reggie in Hanover.

She took her Bible and read a chapter, trying to fix her thoughts on the Easter day that would soon dawn, the day our Lord rose from the dead. The warm old dressing gown in which she was wrapped accentuated the brightness of her hair, and her lovely face showed sweet and thoughtful in the gas light, but as she closed the book it was with a sigh that she put her elbows on the toilet table and dropped her white chin into them.

All the evening her thoughts had been back with her mother—remembering her sorrows and sufferings—and yet there kept running in her mind also the words she had just read, "Love your enemies." Ah! how impossible it seemed; to how many more than poor little Mollie has it appeared too hard a precept to follow! But she struggled for it, asking help from above to forgive Leonard Barlowe, and endeavor to live in peace with her relatives, returning good for evil.

A hasty rattling at the door handle, Kate's voice screaming, roused her, and, running to open it, the child almost fell against her, her thin little face colorless, her tiny hands grasping, as if for dear life, at the folds of her dressing gown.

"Let me stay with you, dear, dear Mollie!" she sobbed and sighed. "I cannot—cannot stop alone; I should die!"

It was terrible to see the nervous excitement, the fear that shook the child from head to foot, and as Mollie caught her up she only remembered that she was her mother's baby, the little sister she had tried to love. Shutting the door, she carried her to the window, pausing to wrap a rug round her, for she was in her small night gown, just as she had jumped out of bed, and shivering violently.

"Yes, yes, you shall stay with me," she said soothingly, in her round, soft voice. "But what is the matter? Where are Jane and Harriet?"

"Jane has gone; she said she was not going to stay in this house tonight for anything we could offer her. She just got the gardener's boy to take her box after dark, and went. I don't know what Aunt Clare will say, and Harriet will not sleep in my room without her."

"What! they both slept there?"

"Yes, because of the strange noises and—and things. I woke up and called out, and when I got up and felt Harriet was not there, and her blankets were gone, my heart seemed to stop beating—I could not breathe. All I thought of was you; I should be safe if I could get to you. Something passed me in the passage; I felt it brushing against me. It was a ghost, wasn't it?" And she cowered down into Mollie's arms, a pitiable object indeed.

Kate was almost beside herself, and it was long ere Mollie could calm her agitation. Inwardly the sister's heart burned with wrath against the two maids, who in their own ignorant fear had left this highly-strung child alone at such a time, after the shock of the preceding year. Seriously alarmed, she rubbed the icy little hands and feet, talking cheerfully the while, and then rocked to and fro until the breathing grew quieter, and the flaxen head lay still on her shoulder, while she hummed the old lullaby which had sounded in her own drowsy ears when she was a little child.

"Mother sang that," Kate said, suddenly looking up with a faint smile. "When I found I was alone, I said all I could remember of my prayers—'Our Father' over and over again."

"I am glad of that," replied Mollie simply. "I feared you did not, Kate." "I am a Freethinker in the daytime; but at night in the dark, when I am frightened, I always say all I can think of," said the child, with quaint innocence, all the self-importance knocked out of her for the moment by terror.

She listened very quietly when Mollie tried to show her that this was wrong, and then her thoughts went back to the last Easter eve, and she spoke of her father.

"It was very cold—oh, very!" she said reflectively. "He took me out in the dogcart, and I cried with the cold, so he was cross. I did not know he was going to die, you see, or I would have tried not to."

"But you loved him, Kate?"

"Pretty well," she responded truthfully, for she had not words to express what she was sharp enough to know—that her father had cared for her for what she had represented to him. "When I went to the study to say good night to him, he called out he was busy, so I went away. Next morning when I awoke the snow was thick, and I heard screams and shrieks, so I jumped out of bed and ran to the top of the stairs and looked down, and all the servants were there at the study door, looking in and wringing their hands, and crying, and Aunt Clare, with her hair streaming about, calling out that they must get a doctor and send for Henri. I went further down the stairs and asked what was the matter, and they shrieked more and said: 'Take the child away.' But I would not go until nurse calmed me, and she told me my father was dead. I asked what made him die, and she said: 'Want of breath.' And then heaps of people came, and there was a bequest."

"Inquest," corrected Mollie, with a shiver, the little girl's words bringing the whole scene before her with startling vividness; then, as she felt that Kate was again shuddering in her arms, she added: "But we will not think of it any more."

"I can't help it!" she moaned, trembling. "Something in black has glided up and down the passage ever since. That door is heard to open and shut when every one is in bed. All the servants know this, and won't stay. Ask them."

"Oh, Kate, this is really nonsense!" Mollie exclaimed in horror; then, drawing back the blind she pointed to the still, quiet night without, where the soft breeze was sighing through

the budding trees, the moon riding serene in the dark blue sky above. "And see, even the weather is different this year. Look at the beautiful world God has given us to live in! And if we are good He will certainly take care of us; we need fear nothing. Why, even a little sparrow cannot fall to the ground but what He sees it; and we are His children, whom the Lord Christ came to save."

Kate drank in her words with a look of old intelligence that made her seem as if she had never been a child. But as Mollie put her into bed, two slight arms were suddenly flung round the soft white throat, and she whispered with passionate fervor:

"Oh, I am glad—I am awfully glad that God has given me you for a sister, Mollie."

But long after the little one had fallen asleep, Mollie sat by her, thinking, thinking—what did it all mean?

CHAPTER VI.

Who had killed Leonard Barlowe? For days Mollie pondered over this question, and another one that would keep coming back to her—had the Dubois any private knowledge that had not been published to the world? They must have known more of Mr. Barlowe, his past life and enemies, than any outsider could possibly do. Henri had hated his uncle, she knew, yet surely he had had no hand in sending him out of the world; that could not be the meaning of madame's wild words! That he was cold-blooded and cynical to a degree about everything save himself was clear; but it was incredible that he could have committed such a crime undetected; besides, Kate said that he had been in London at the time.

She thrust the thought from her, and determined to try and think no evil—a good resolution put to a very hard test when she discovered that her freedom was gone, and that madame was always making slighting remarks upon the Anstruthers, implying that Mrs. Anstruther was a worldly mother, who had engaged her daughter to a rich man, and was now seeking an heiress for her son. About this latter, indeed, she shook her head ominously; she had heard tales of him—he was a terrible flirt, or worse.

It was in vain Mollie protested hotly that the young naval officer to whom Joyce was engaged was far from rich; that she had never heard a word against Reggie, that Mrs. Anstruther was kindness itself and had loved her mother. Madame nodded her handsome dark head mysteriously, and said her dear Mollie was very young and innocent, and all young men were not like Henri, so good and wise and trustworthy. Certainly she had plenty of opportunity of discovering these virtues in Henri, had they existed for he spent the greater part of his time hanging about her, and she grew heartily tired of him and the tales of his gay Parisian life.

Why did he not return to it? she thought wearily. Why did he stay on here, rolling his black eyes at her sentimentally, and pretending that Revertion was now more to him than Paris?

"It is because I am an heiress," she thought wrathfully, when he had accompanied her to the Anstruthers, and kept so close to her that she had been unable to have the good grumble to Joyce that would have relieved her pent-up feelings. "Oh, this hateful money! My mother's life was ruined for it, and they would ruin mine. But I am not so gentle as she; and madame will find that I have a will of my own. I think she suspects it, for sometimes I see her eyes fixed on me with such a strange expression. God forgive me if I wrong them; but somehow I mistrust them utterly."

(To be continued.)

Made Some Queer Wagers.

Gen. Francis V. Greene's story of the queer bet made by officers at Gettysburg recalls other strange wagers. Harmon, at the Stanwix hotel, in Detroit, several years ago, bet he could hold his head submerged in a bathtub for 125 seconds without taking air. He won.

In Philadelphia some years ago a gentleman made a wager of \$100 that he could jump into water eight feet deep and undress himself completely. Any one who has ever made the attempt to remove his clothing after being thoroughly drenched to the skin, even when standing on terra firma, with plenty of room to "hop around on one leg," will at once realize the difficulty of accomplishing the feat while in the water. However, it was done in the instance noted. A chap named Curtis in Berkshire county, Massachusetts, for a wager of a horse, ran five miles in forty-one minutes, and wound up the race with a jump of eleven feet six inches. An Englishman named Head won \$5,000 by walking 600 miles in ten days, but the exertion so used him up that he never walked much afterward, either on wagers or otherwise.—New York Telegraph.

To Mount Photos on Glass.

To mount photos on glass proceed as follows: Soak four ounces of gelatine in cold water for half an hour, then place in a glass jar, adding sixteen ounces of water; put the jar in a large dish of warm water and dissolve the gelatine. When dissolved pour into a shallow tray. Have your prints rolled on a roller, albumen side out; take the print by the corners and pass rapidly through the gelatine, taking great care to avoid air bubbles. Hang up with clips to dry, and when dry squeeze carefully on to the glass. The better the quality of the glass the better the effect.

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CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

Week after week dragged on in weary sameness. No one ever came to call, sometimes there was hardly a servant in the house. Madame grew daily more silent and morose, and while she absolutely adored the ground her little French dandy of a son stepped upon, they often had fierce quarrels in private.

Madame's only amusement was reckless driving, and the sight of the mail phaeton with its fiery chestnuts tearing about the country, and madame, sitting square and grim in the driving seat, grew a familiar one round Revertion. Henri generally declined to accompany her; he had not nerve to stand it, nor had Kate; but Mollie often went, for she rather enjoyed it, and it had the great advantage of taking her out of Henri's society for a time.

"It is all very well!" exclaimed Reggie half angrily. "Let her break her own neck if it pleases her, but she has no business to break yours!"

It was a glorious spring afternoon, bright sunshine was flooding the quaint old Revertion High street, and the phaeton had no sooner drawn up with a clatter before the post office, and madame gone in, than Mr. Anstruther's tall, soldierly form appeared at the Conservative club doorway opposite, and he lost no time in coming round to Mollie's side. The groom was at the excited horses' heads, so they could talk unrestrainedly, and as Reggie's brown face was upturned to Mollie's, and his blue eyes sought hers, they were certainly making the most of their chance.

"I don't mind; she drives very well," she replied. "You never saw such strong hands as she has!" "She drives as if she were possessed!" he retorted. "I don't like—well, it is not fit for you to be whirled round the country like a tornado."

"It is better than stopping at home," Mollie answered, laughing. "You see, there is no room for Henri."

"Henri!" said Mr. Anstruther, with a slight grimace. "One rarely sees you nowadays without that detestable little tailor's block. There, Mollie, I beg your pardon; you may like him, but you are not going to throw over your old friends for your new, are you? The mater and Joyce declare that they believe you are not allowed to come to see them. Tell me, is it true?"

"I am afraid it is, Reggie," was the response, given dolefully. "Please beg them not to think me ungrateful. It is not very nice at Chalfont; but I shall do the best."

"It is a burning shame!" he burst out hotly. "What right have they to make you unhappy? I should like to wring their necks."

"Don't be bloodthirsty!—and she laughed. "And I do not intend to be unhappy, especially if you will explain to Mrs. Anstruther—"

"All right," replied Reggie promptly; then persuasively: "Mollie, don't you think that it is very selfish of you to wear those violets, when you see that I have none?"

"I had not thought of it in that light," she said demurely. "Poor little Kate gathered them for me."

"Suppose you see how they look in my coat?"

"Well, I don't wish to be selfish," she said, unfastening them, and leaning down to put them in his outstretched hand.

Reggie caught the hand, flowers and all, and, as he looked up into those beautiful soft grey eyes that had played such havoc with his heart, he said, with quickening breath:

"Look here, Mollie, I hate to think of you miserable; it is more than I—than any fellow can stand. Oh, bother! here she comes! I can see her feathers bobbing through the door. When shall I see you again?"

"Impossible to say, for madame and Henri seem to have taken a dislike to—everyone. But don't worry, I am not miserable; at least, not very; tell Joyce."

"And Henri—do you like him? Is he a pretty good sort?" he demanded hastily.

But madame had caught sight of a pair of broad shoulders, a closely-cropped sunny head, and ere Mollie could reply she had swept out, her glance falling with equal disfavor on Reggie fastening the violets in his buttonhole, and Mollie's smiling face.

"You are making a long stay in Revertion this time, Mr. Anstruther," she said blandly, as she gathered up the reins.

"Yes, there is no place like home, and I have heaps of friends here!" he answered pleasantly, raising his hat. "By the way, Madame Dubois, I hope the rumor I heard at the club this afternoon is true—that the police have some important clue respecting poor Mr. Barlowe's assailant?"

For a moment madame turned her eyes with a quick, wild glance on him, reminding Mollie somehow of a savage animal caught in a trap; but the next instant she had recovered herself with a determined effort, and answered calmly:

"This is news to me, indeed, for I

have heard no such thing. How is it we have not been told—we, who have the best right to know; we, who have longed and looked for the truth to be found out all this weary year? No, I cannot believe it; I fear to hope! Look, I am quite overcome at the thought! Tell me all you know!"

She was overcome. She had worked herself up as she proceeded, yet the girl at her side felt that the reason she gave was not the true one, and again it occurred to her that madame knew more than she had ever told; yet she might be misjudging her. Perhaps she had cared for Mr. Barlowe with something of the fierce tenderness she showed for Henri!

But she had little time to think. Madame ascertained all Reggie knew, and chatted a few minutes with self-possession; but directly she had turned the horses' heads and they were leaving Revertion behind, her face grew black as a thunder-cloud, her lips were pressed together in a thin line, and her eyes, burning with a somber fire, glanced over the horses' heads unseeingly as she urged them on.

Never did Mollie forget that drive! How much faster did she mean to go? she thought, in nerve terror. She was a brave girl, with nerves well under control; but it was mad—mad to tear along like this. She was absolutely obliged to hold on tight as they swayed from side to side; while, as they shaved past a heavy wagon and swept round a corner, she saw that the groom at the back was standing up in his seat watching the road anxiously, his face chalky and white.

She tried to remonstrate once or twice, so did the man; but madame only answered impatiently, and, if possible, went faster, and it seemed a Providence indeed that the roads were quiet that afternoon. Many times Mollie glanced up at the set face beside her, lighted by a fierce look of exultation, as trees and hedges vanished from sight almost before seen, and the wind blew cold on their faces. Was she trying to drive away from her own thoughts, flying where no man pursued?

Mollie could scarcely believe her own good fortune when she once more alighted at the hall door of Chalfont, safe and sound. Kate came running to meet them, and as madame caught sight of her it evidently recalled something to her mind, for she paused and turned to Mollie with a frown.

"You seemed to be talking very earnestly with that young Anstruther," she said abruptly. "What was it about?"

"Nothing that would interest you, madame," she answered politely.

"I am your guardian, and insist upon knowing." Then, as Mollie's frank face was turned upon her, madame either remembered the old proverb about taking a horse to the water, but failing to make him drink; or that the L'Estrange were a family of soldiers, and that the fighting spirit was flashing resentfully from those grey eyes now, for she added hastily: "I know the world; you do not; and I forbid you to give flowers to gentlemen. Yes, Kate, my precious one, you should give your violets to auntie, not to your half-sister, who did not value them."

And she swept away in quest of her son.

"They were here, to do as she pleased with," the child called after her sulkily, as she hung round Mollie, and made grimaces after her retreating relative. "You see, Mollie, you ought to have given them to Henri, who is so good, so adorable, so sweet!"

"Hush! hush, Kate!" said the elder girl quickly. Angry as she was she would not encourage the child against her aunt, and she walked to the door and stood looking out into the sunshine with misty eyes. "Love thine enemies," she thought. "Overcome evil with good." Oh, it was really too hard; she could not try.

The groom's voice speaking to the gardener, who was bedding out the tulips in the borders, here came wafted towards her.

"Tomorrow I gives notice. Yes, I lose my place, sure enough; but if I sticks it, who would look to the missus and kids when I lose my life? See them 'orses all lathered up? Several times I thought we were done. We were bound to go, and the young lady, she sat as still—well, I never see her equal for pluck—and the wheels ground away."

God had been very good to her, and brought her safely through danger, thought Mollie remorsefully, and yet she had just been grumbling! Then she wondered what Reggie would have felt had they been killed; and then she saw Kate's sharp, hazel eyes watching her intently, so she took her hand and raced round the garden until they came to the swing, splendid with new ropes.

"Why, Kate, how is this?" she cried. "I thought it would be nice to use the swing our mother had put up," muttered she ungraciously.

And when Mollie pulled her down on the seat by her side and kissed her thin cheek, she blushed quite guiltily, as if detected in some crime!

CHAPTER VII.

Dinner was very late that day, for Henri did not return home from a visit to the police station until long after the usual hour, and then Mollie heard him tell his mother that the rumor must have originated through some tramp being taken up with suspicious articles in his possession; but otherwise the inspector had no further clue to the perpetrator of the crime.

It was a warm night, almost sultry, and Mollie opened the long French windows and went out onto the pantiles, leaving them alone, though Henri's high tones sneering at the English police, and at madame for believing all she heard, reached her for some time.

How soft and fresh the air felt; how high above her head the myriads of stars were twinkling in the vast vaults of heaven! There was a whisper of coming summer in the little breeze that just lifted the curls on her brow, speaking of the primroses that were blooming down by the stream, the violets in the shady woods. The roof covering the pantiles was supported by iron pillars, and the scene was the same as from her bedroom window, which was just above. But Mollie never tired of it, and was standing in dreamy thought, when a voice close to her startled her.

"Ah! mademoiselle, I have found you at last. I have been looking for you everywhere!" said Henri briskly, closing the glass doors. "You enjoy the lovely night—yes?"

"Anyone would, monsieur," Mollie replied, adding mischievously: "Surely it makes you think of Paris—the lights, music, dancing, and all that kind of thing—does it not?"

"You are laughing at me, mademoiselle," he said, with a very genuine sigh as the vision rose before him. "But tell me, would you not like to go there, see all these things—are you not tired of being here?"

"Oh, no. Why, when I was in Germany I was just longing to be home to watch the flowers come out, to ramble in the woods."

Henri shrugged his shoulders and glanced down at his dainty boots.

"Yet it is very unpleasant for you," he argued. "My mother is peculiar. She has never recovered from the shock of her brother's sudden death. Two years with her would appal me, were I a girl. And had I the chance of going to beautiful Paris, having a home of my own, a husband devoted to me, I should take it, would not you?"

"No!" said Mollie quickly, suppressing a gasp of dismay. "Besides, what good would they be to me if I were not devoted, too. I am going in"—and she moved to the window.

"Stay, do not be so cruel!" and he stepped in front of her. "You know I love, adore you. Only say, 'Henri, I return your ardent affection, and will be yours!' and my life will be spent in making you happy."

"But I don't—I never could!" she cried, not waiting to choose her words in her hurry. "Nor do you love me, Henri, so let us say no more about it."

"I tell you I do!" protested he sullenly. "Why do you doubt me? Consent, and I will carry you to my gay Paris and teach you to love! And he came nearer and laid a hand on her arm.

Instinctively she shrank back. His face, sallow and cunning, was too near to be pleasant; his black eyes were fixed, with an expression of assured triumph, on hers. Clearly to be read in them was the conviction that he, Henri Dubois, was hardly likely to be refused, that no girl could resist when he pleaded. And yet there was a certain admiration there too, which she had felt and hated for the last few weeks.

(To be Continued.)

Killing of Pup Roils Her.

Mrs. Richard Ferguson ("Grace Passmore") of the "McCarthy Mishaps" company threw a bottle at a Fort Wayne, Cincinnati and Louisville baggageman at Muncie, Ind., recently, because her pet bull pup, which she had been compelled to put in her car at Hartford City, was killed by falling parcels en route to Muncie. The man dodged, and the bottle was shattered on the side of the car. Other thespians and railroad men interfered and peace was restored. The company boarded the train at Hartford City, but the conductor refused to allow Mrs. Ferguson and another woman in the troupe to take their pets into the passenger coach. Mrs. Ferguson says her pet was worth \$10, and she has filed a claim with the company. The bottle hurled at the baggageman was used to feed the dog and was full of milk, which splashed over the trainmen in the car. Ferguson says he was astonished at his wife's poor aim, as she was once a crack baseball pitcher.

English Were Unneighborly.

The Duc d'Orleans, whose sister is married to the new king of Italy's cousin and heir-presumptive, has been unable to sell York house, Twickenham. The ex-prince of France has, therefore, decided to shut the place up, save for a caretaker, for three years. Possibly he hopes in that time his curious behavior will have been forgotten by the English and that he can once more claim neighborly relations there. The duc was recently at Marienbad. His sister, the Duchesse d'Aosta, was always a great favorite in England. She is in curious contrast to the new queen of Italy, being fair, but her royal highness is, in her own style, one of the handsomest women in Europe. The queen and the duchesse together are a wonderfully handsome pair—the one brunette, the other blond.