

MY HALF SISTER

By ELTON HARRIS

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 Reverton. 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 Reverton 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 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 Reverton 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 Reverton 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 unseeing as she urged them on.

Never did Mollie forget that drive! How much faster did she mean to go? She thought, in real terror. She was a brave girl, but 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 gray 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 hers, 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 'orss 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 see 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 some 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 pantries, 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 pantries 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, salow 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 Rolls 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 his 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 Maribad. His sister, the Duchesse d'Acosta, 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.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

COMFORTING WORDS TO THOSE IN DECLINING YEARS.

Some Thoughts Suggested by the Invitation to Christ to Abide Overnight in an Oriental Village—The Eternal Resting Place.

(Copyright, 1900, by Louis Kloppsch.)
Washington, Oct. 7.—In this sermon Dr. Talmage discourses upon the invitation given to Christ to stay overnight in the oriental village and makes some consolatory suggestions. The text is Luke xxiv, 29, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening."

Two villagers, having concluded their errand in Jerusalem, have started out at the city gate and are on their way to Emmaus, the place of their residence. They go with a sad heart. Jesus, who had been their admiration and their joy, has been basely massacred and entombed. As with sad face and broken heart they pass on their way a stranger accosts them. They tell him their anxieties and bitterness of soul. He in turn, talks to them, mightily expounding the Scriptures. He throws over them the fascination of intelligent conversation. They forget the time and notice not the objects they pass and before they are aware have come up in front of their house. They pause before the entrance and attempt to persuade the stranger to tarry with them. They press upon him their hospitalities. Night is coming on and he may meet a prowling wild beast or be obliged to lie unsheltered from the dew. He cannot go much further now. Why not stop there and continue their pleasant conversation? They take him by the arm and they insist upon his coming in, addressing him in the words, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening." The lamps are lighted, the table is spread, pleasant socialities are enkindled. They rejoice in the presence of the stranger guest. He asks a blessing upon the bread they eat, and he hands a piece of it to each. Suddenly, and with overwhelming power the thought flashes upon the astounded people—"It is the Lord! And as they sit in breathless wonder, looking upon the resurrected body of Jesus, he vanished. The interview ended. He was gone.

Our Greatest Need.
The great want of all is to have Jesus abide with them. It is a dismal thing to be getting old without the rejuvenating influence of religion. When we stop on the down grade of life and see that it dips to the cold verge of the cold river, we want to behold some one near who will help us across it. When the sight loses its power to glance and gather up, we need the faith that can illumine. When we feel the failure of the ear, we need the clear tones of that voice which in olden times broke up the silence of the deaf with cadence of mercy. When the axmen of death hew down whole forests of strength and beauty around us, and we are left in solitude, we need the dove of divine mercy to sing in our branches. When the shadows begin to fall and we feel that the day is fast spent, we need most of all to supplicate the beneficent Jesus in the prayer of the villagers, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening."

The request of the text is an appropriate exclamation for all those who are approaching the gloomy hour of temptation. There is nothing easier than to be good natured when everything pleases, or to be humble when there is nothing to puff us up or forgiving when we have not been assailed or honest when we have no inducement to fraud. But you have felt the grapple of some temptation. Your nature at some time quaked and groaned under the infernal force. You felt that the devil was after you. You saw your Christian forces retreating. You feared that you would fall in the awful wrestle with sin and be thrown into the dust. The gloom thickened. The first indications of the night were seen.

The Source of Strength.
When the night of the soul came on and all the denizens of darkness came riding upon the winds of perdition, who gave strength to the soul? Who gave calmness to the heart? Who broke the spell of infernal enchantment? He who heard the request of the villagers, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening." One of the forts of France was attacked and the outworks were taken before night. The besieging army lay down, thinking that there was but little to do in the morning and that the soldiery in the fort could be easily made to surrender. But during the night, through a back stair, they escaped into the country. In the morning the besieging army sprang upon the battlements, but found that their prey was gone. So when we are assailed by temptation, there is always some secret stair by which we might get off. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able, but with every temptation will bring a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.

The prayer of the text is appropriate for all who are anticipating sorrow. The greatest folly that ever grew on this planet is the tendency to borrow trouble. But there are times when approaching sorrow is so evident that we need to be making especial preparations for its coming. One of your children has lately become a favorite. The cry of that child strikes deeper into the heart than the cry of all the others. You think more about it. You give it more attention not because it is any more of a treasure than the others; but because it is becoming frail. There is something in the cheek, in the eye and in the walk that makes

you quite sure that the leaves of the flower are going to be scattered. The utmost nursing and medical attendance becomes ineffectual. The pulse becomes feeble, the complexion lighter, the step weaker, the laugh fainter. No more romping for that one through hall and parlor. The nursery is darkened by an approaching calamity. The heart feels with mournful anticipation that the sun is going down. Night speeds on. It is toward evening.

Life's Balance Sheet.

You had a considerable estate and felt independent. In five minutes on one fair balance sheet you could see just how you stood with the world. But there came complications; something that you imagined impossible happened. The best friends you had proved traitor to your interests. A sudden crash of national misfortune prostrated your credit. You may feel anxious about where you are standing and fear that the next turn of the commercial wheel will bring you prostrate. You foresee what you consider certain defalcation. You think of the anguish of telling your friends that you are not worth a dollar. You know not how you will ever bring your children home from school. You wonder how you will stand the selling of your library or the moving into a plainer house. The misfortunes of life have accumulated. You wonder what makes the sky so dark. It is toward evening.

Trouble is an apothecary that mixes a great many drafts, bitter and sour and nauseous, and you must drink some one of them. Trouble puts up a great many packs, and you must carry some one of them. There is no sandal so thick and well adjusted but some thorn will strike through it. There is no sound so sweet but the undertaker's screwdriver grates through it. In this swift shuttle of the heart some of the threads must break. The journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus will soon be ended. Our Bible, our common sense, our observation, reiterate in tones that we cannot mistake and ought not to disregard, it is toward evening.

Fighting Against Misfortune.

Listen to Paul's battle shout with misfortune. Hark to the mounting Latimer's fire song. Look at the glory that hath reft the dungeon and filled the earth and heavens with the crash of the falling manacles of despotism. And then look at those who have tried to cure themselves by human prescriptions, attempting to heal gangrene with patch of court plaster and to stop the plague of dying empires with the quackery of earthly wisdom. Nothing can speak peace to the soul, nothing can unstrap our crushing burdens, nothing can overcome our spiritual foes, nothing can open our eyes to see the surrounding horses and chariots of salvation that fill all the mountains, but the voice and command of him who stopped one night at Emmaus.

The words of the text are pertinent to us all from the fact that we are nearing the evening of death. I have heard it said that we ought to live as though each moment were to be our last. I do not believe that theory. As far as preparation is concerned, we ought always to be thinking of death, for we have duties in life that demand our attention. When a man is selling goods, it is his business to think of the bargain he is making. When a man is pleading in the courts it is his duty to think of the interests of his clients. When a clerk is adding up accounts, it is his duty to keep his mind upon the column of figures. He who fills up his life with thoughts of death is far from being the highest style of Christian. I knew a man who used often to say at night, "I wish I might die before morning!" He is now an infidel. But there are times when we can and ought to give ourselves to the contemplation of that solemn moment when the soul time ends and eternity begins. We must go through that one pass. There is no roundabout way, no bypath, no circuitous route. Die we must, and it will be to us a shameful occurrence or a time of admirable behavior. Our friends may stretch out their hands to keep us back, but no imploration on their part can hinder us. They might offer large retainers, but death would not take the fee. The breath will fail, and the eyes will close, and the heart will stop. You may hang the couch with gorgeous tapestry, but what does death care for bed curtains?

The Eternal Resting Place.

This ought not to be a depressing theme. Who wants to live here forever? The world has always treated me well, and every day I feel less and less like scolding and complaining, but yet I would not want to make this my eternal residence. I love to watch the clouds and bathe my soul in the blue sea of heaven, but I expect when the firmament is rolled away as a scroll to see a new heaven, grander, higher and more glorious. You ought to be willing to exchange your body that has headaches and sideaches and weaknesses innumerable, that limps with the stone bruise or festers with the thorn or flames on the funeral pyre of fevers, for an incorruptible body and an eye that blinks not before the Jasper gates and the great white throne. But between that and this there is an hour about which no man should be reckless or foolhardy. I doubt not your courage, but I tell you that you will want something better than a strong arm, a good aim and a trusty sword when you come to your last battle. You will need a better robe than any you have in your wardrobe to keep you warm in that place.

Circumstances do not make so much difference. It may be bright day when you push off from the planet

or it may be dark night, and while the owl is hooting from the forest. It may be spring, and your soul may go out among the blossoms, apple orchards, swinging their censers in the way. It may be winter and the earth in a snow shroud. It may be autumn and the forests set on fire by the retreating year; dead nature laid out in state. It may be with your wife's hand in your hand or you may be in a strange hotel with a servant faithful to the last. It may be in the rail train, shot off the switch and tumbling in long reverberation down the embankment—crash! crash! I know not the time; I know not the mode, but the days of our life are being subtracted away, and we shall come down to the time when we have but ten days left, then nine days, then eight days, then seven days, six days, five days, four days, three days, two days, one day. Then hours, three hours, two hours, one hour. Then only minutes left, five minutes, four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one minute.

The Evening Shadows.

You are almost through with the abuse and backbiting of enemies. They will call you no more by evil names. Your good deeds will not longer be misinterpreted or your honor flouted. The troubles of earth will end in the felicities of heaven! Toward evening! The bereavements of earth will soon be lifted! You will not much longer stand pouring your grief in the tomb like Rachael weeping for her children or David mourning for Absalom. Broken hearts bound up. Wounds healed. Tears wiped away. Sorrows terminated. No more sounding of the dead march! Toward evening! Death will come, sweet as slumbers to the eyelids of the babe, as full rations to a starving soldier, as evening hour to the exhausted workman. The sky will take on its sunset glow, every cloud a fire psalm, every lake a glassy mirror; the forests transfigured; delicate mists climbing the air. Your friends will announce it; your pulses will beat it; your joys will ring it; your lips will whisper it: "Toward evening."

STORY OF A BEAVER.

An Interesting Anecdote About a Captive Canadian.

A. D. Bartlett, son of the late superintendent of the London Zoo, has an interesting story of a captive Canadian beaver. A large willow tree in the gardens had blown down. A branch about twelve feet long and thirty inches in circumference was firmly fixed in the ground in the beaver's inclosure. When the beaver was watched to see what he would do. The beaver soon visited the spot, and, walking around the limb, commenced to bite off the bark and gnaw the wood about twelve inches from the ground. The rapidity of his progress was astonishing. He seemed to put his whole strength into his task, although he left off every few minutes to rest and look upward, as if to determine which way the tree would fall. Now and then he went into his pond, which was about three feet from the base of the tree. Then he would come out again with renewed energy, and his powerful teeth would set at work anew upon the branch. About 4 o'clock, to the surprise of those who saw him, he left his work and came hastily toward the iron fence. The cause of this sudden movement was soon apparent. He had heard in the distance the sound of the wheelbarrow, which was brought daily to his paddock, and from which he was anxiously expecting his supper. The keeper, not wishing to disappoint the beaver, although sorry to see his task interrupted, gave him his usual allowance of carrots and bread. The fellow ate it, and was seen swimming about the pool until about 5:30. Then he returned to his work. In ten minutes the "tree" fell to the ground. Afterward the beaver cut the log into three convenient lengths, one of which he used in the under part of his house.

PAWNEE ROCK.

Historic Indian Battle Spot Disappearing Year After Year.

Nine miles northeast of Larned, Kan., is a low, disintegrating pile of red sandstone, which is all that is now left of the once imposing Pawnee rock. This rock, which received its name from the tribe of Indians known as the Pawnees, has an interesting history—a history acquired during the time when this part of the country was a wild and dreary desert, inhabited only by the Indians and herds of roaming buffalo. On this rock have been waged many bloody conflicts between the Indians and travelers of the famous Santa Fe trail, and also between the different tribes of plains Indians. Surrounded by vast prairies with the trail running along its base, it afforded a good hiding place and battle ground for the savages. In its primitive state Pawnee rock rose to a considerable height, and from its summit a beautiful panorama spread before the lover of nature, and even now, from its reduced height, can be seen for miles a widespread landscape. Comparatively little remains to be seen of that once imposing promontory of the Kansas "desert," for the hand of man has done more in twenty years to efface it from the earth than the elements in centuries of time. The material obtained by the destruction of this landmark of the early days, is used in the construction of dwellings, bridges, etc., by the inhabitants in the fertile valleys surrounding this spot.

Precise, but Disagreeable.

"You have traveled abroad?" inquired the well-meaning conversationist. And the man who worries about words answered stiffly: "Possibly you will inform me of some way in which I could have been abroad without traveling."—Washington Star.