

CRIPPS, THE CARRIER

BY R. D. BLACKMORE

Author of "LORNA DOONE," "ALICE LORRAINE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

"You pretty dear, come and let me pat you," the young lady cried, looking down at the dog, as if there were nobody else in the world. "Oh, I am so fond of dogs—what is your name? Come and tell me, darling."

"Her name is 'Grace,'" said the master, advancing in a bashful but not clumsy way. "The most beautiful name in the world, I think."

"Oh, do you think so, Mr. —, but I beg your pardon, you have not told me what your own name is, I think."

"I hope you are quite well," he answered, turning his gun away carefully; "quite well this fine afternoon. How beautiful it is to see the sun, and all the things coming back again so!"

"Oh, good, and the lovely willow trees! I never noticed them before. I had no idea that they did all this." She was stroking the flossiness as she spoke.

"Neither had I," said the young man, trying to be most agreeable, and glancing shyly at the haze of silver in lily fingers glistening; "but do not you think that they do it because—because they can scarcely help themselves?"

"No! how can you be so stupid? Excuse me—I did not mean that, I am sure. But they do it because it is their nature; and they like to do it."

"You know them, no doubt; and you understand them, because you are like them."

He was frightened as soon as he had

you have important things to attend to, and that it looks—indeed it does—as if it was coming on to rain?"

"I assure you there is no fear of that—although if it did, there is plenty of shelter. But look at the sun—how it shines in your hair! Oh, why do you keep your hair so short? It looks as if it ought to be ten feet long."

"Well, suppose that it was—not quite ten feet, for that would be rather hard to manage—but say only half that length, and then for a very good reason was all cut off—but this is altogether another thing, and in no way can concern you. I give you a very good day, sir."

"No, no; you will give me a very bad day if you hurry away so suddenly. I am anxious to know a great deal more about you. Why do you live in this lonely place, quite as if you were imprisoned here? And what makes you look so unhappy sometimes, although your nature is so bright? There! what a brute I am! I have made you cry. I ought to shoot myself."

"You must not talk of such wicked things. I am not crying; I am very happy—at least, I mean quite happy enough. Good-bye! or I shall never bear you again."

As she turned away, without looking at him, he saw her pure young breast was filled with a grief he must not intrude upon. And at the same moment he caught a glimpse through the trees of some one coming. So he lifted his smart



"I HOPE YOU ARE WELL," HE ANSWERED, TURNING HIS GUN AWAY CAREFULLY.

said this: which he thought (while he uttered it) rather good.

"I am really astonished," the fair maid said, with the gleam of a smile in her lively eyes, but her bright lips very steadfast, "to be compared to a willow tree. I thought that a willow means—but never mind, I am glad to be like a willow."

"Oh, no! oh, no! You are not one bit—I am sure you will never be like a willow. What could I have been thinking of?"

"No harm whatever, I am sure of that," she answered, with so sweet a look that he stopped from scraping the toe of his boot on a clump of moss; and in his heart was wholly taken up with her—"I am sure that you meant to be very polite."

"More than that—a great deal more than that—oh, ever so much more than that!"

She let him look at her for a moment, because he had something that he wanted to express. And she, from pure natural curiosity, would have been glad to know what it was. And so their eyes dwelt upon one another just long enough for each to be almost ashamed of leaving off; and in that short time they seemed to be pleased with one another's nature. The youth was the first to look away; because he feared that he might be rude; whereas a maiden cannot be rude. With the speed of a glance she knew all that, and she blushed at the color these things were taking. "I am sure that I ought to go," she said.

"And so ought I, long and long ago. I am sure I cannot tell why I stop. If you were to get into any trouble—"

"You are very kind. You need not be anxious. If you do not know why you stop—the sooner you run away at full speed, the better."

"Oh, I hope you won't say that," he replied, being gifted by nature with powers of coaxing which only wanted practice. "I really think that you scarcely ought to say so unkind a thing as that."

"Very well, then. May I say this, that

Glenzarry cap, and in sad perplexity strode away. But over his shoulder he softly said, "I shall come again—you must let me do that—I am sure that I can help you."

The young lady made no answer; but turned, as soon as she thought he was out of sight, and wistfully looked after him.

"Here comes that Miss Patch, of course," she said. "I wonder whether she has spied him out. Her eyes are always everywhere."

"Oh, my darling child," cried Miss Patch, an elderly lady of great dignity; "I had no idea you were gone so far. Come in, I beg of you, come this moment; what has excited you like this?"

"Nothing at all. At least, I mean, I am not in the least excited. Oh! look at the beautiful sunset!"

Miss Patch, with deep gravity, took out her spectacles, placed them on her fine Roman nose, and gazed eastward to watch the sunset.

"Oh, dear no! not there," cried her charge in a hurry; "here, it is all in this direction."

"I thought that I saw a spotted dog," the lady answered, still gazing steadily down the side of the forest by which the youth had made his exit; "a spotted dog, Grace, I am almost sure."

"Yes, I dare say. I believe that there is a dog with some spots in the neighborhood."

CHAPTER XI.

The carrier, with a decisive gesture, settled his face, and whole body, and members into a grim and yet flexible aspect, as if he were driving a half-broken horse, and must be prepared for any sort of start. And yet with all this he reconciled a duty receptive deference, and a pleasant readiness, as if he were his own Dobbin, just fresh from stable.

"I need not tell you, Master Cripps," said Russel, "how I have picked up many little things which have been coming to my knowledge lately. And I will not be too positive about any of

them; because I made such a mistake in the beginning of this inquiry. All my suspicions at first were set on a man who was purely innocent—a legal gentleman of fair repute, to whom I have now made all honorable amends. In the most candid manner he has forgiven me, and desires no better than to act in the best faith with us."

"Asking your pardon for interrupting—did the gentleman happen to have a sharp name?"

"Yes, Cripps, he did. But no more of that. I was oversharp myself, no doubt; he is thoroughly blameless, and more than that, his behavior has been most generous, most unvarying. I can never do justice to him."

"Well, your worship, no—perhaps not 'A' would take a rare sharp 'un to do so."

"You hold by the vulgar prejudice—well, I should be the last to blame you. That, however, has nothing to do with what I want to ask you. But first, I must tell you my reason, Cripps. You know I have no faith whatever in that man, John Smith. At first I thought him a tool of Mr. — never mind who. Since I was so wrong I am now convinced that John Smith is 'art and part' in the whole affair himself. He has thrown dust in our eyes throughout. He has stopped us from taking the proper track. Do you remember what discredit he threw on your sister's story?"

"He didn't believe a word of 'un. Had a good mind, I had, to 'a' knocked 'un down."

"To be sure, Cripps, I wonder that you forebore. Though violent measures must not be encouraged. And I myself thought that your sister might have made some mistake through her scare in the dark. Poor thing! What a brave girl not to shriek or faint!"

"Ay, your worship, that her be."

"And now for the man with this villainous voice. You know, that I never was satisfied with that wretched affair that was called an 'inquest.' Enough that the whole was pompous child's play guided by crafty hands beneath; as happens with most inquests. I only doubted the more, friend Cripps; I only doubted the more, from having a wrong way taken to extinguish doubts."

"To be sure, your worship; a lie on the back of another lie makes 'un go heavier."

"Well, never mind; only this I did. For a few days, perhaps, I was overcome; and the illness of my dear old friend, the Squire, and the trouble of managing so that he should not hear anything to kill him; and my own slowness at the back of it all; for I never, as you know, am hasty—these things, one and another, kept me from going on horseback anywhere."

"To be sure, your worship, to be sure. You ought to be always 'a' horseback I've a seed you many times on the bench; but you looks a very poor stick there, compared to what 'ee be a horseback."

"Well, after the weather began to change from that tremendous frost and snow, and the poor Squire fell into the quiet state that he has been in ever since, I found nothing would do for me, my health not being quite as usual, except to take long rides. I will tell you just what happened to me. I never believed, and never will, that poor Miss Oglender is dead. The coroner and the jury believed that they had her remains before them, although for the Squire's sake they forebore to identify her in the verdict. Your sister, no doubt, believed the same; and so did almost every one. I could not go, I could not go—no doubt I was a fool; but I could not face the chance of what I might see, after what I had heard of it. Well, I began to ride about, saying nothing, of course, to anyone. And the more I rode the more my spirit and faith in good things came back to me. And I think I have been rewarded, Cripps; at last I have been rewarded. It is not very much; but still it is like a flash of light to me. I have found out the man with the horrible voice."

"Your worship—the man as laid hold of the pickaxe?"

"I have found him, Cripps, I do believe. But rather by pure luck than skill."

"There be no such thing as luck, your worship; if you will excuse me."

"Well, it was last Wednesday night, I was coming home from a long and wet and muddy ride. I had been to the foreman of the nursery whence the potatoes came. It was raining hard, and he was in a shed, with a green balze apron on, seeing to some potting work. I got him away from the other men, and I found him a very sharp fellow indeed. He remembered all about those potatoes, especially as Squire Oglender had ridden from Oxford, in the snowy weather, to ask many questions about them. But the Squire could not put the questions I did. I threw away all little scruples, and I told the good foreman every word, so far as we know it yet, at least. He was shocked beyond expression—not at the poor Squire's loss and anguish, but that anybody should have dared to middle with his own pet 'oak leaf,' and, above all, his new pet seal."

"I sealed them myself," he said, "sealed them myself, sir, with the new coat of arms that we paid for that month, because of the tricks of the trade, sir! Has anybody dared to imitate—?"

"No, Mr. Foreman, I said, 'they simply cut away your seal altogether, and tied it again without any seal.' 'Oh, then,' he replied, 'that quite alters the case. If they had only meddled with our new arms, while the money was hot that we paid for them, what a case we might have had! But to knock them off—no action lies!'"

(To be continued.)

A Young Critic.

"Papa," said the pastor's little girl, watching him constructing and revising his Sunday sermon, "does God tell you what to write?" "Yes, my child, God tells me." "Then what do you scratch 'a' out for?"

In order to join the great silent majority a man must either die or get married.

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Suggestions How to Find Relief from Such Suffering.



While no woman is entirely free from periodical suffering, it does not seem to be the plan of nature that women should suffer so severely. Menstruation is a severe strain on a woman's vitality. If it is painful or irregular something is wrong which should be set right or it will lead to a serious derangement of the whole female organism.

More than fifty thousand women have testified in grateful letters to Mrs. Pinkham that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound overcomes painful and irregular menstruation.

It provides a safe and sure way of escape from distressing and dangerous weaknesses and diseases.

The two following letters tell so convincingly what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will do for women, they cannot fail to bring hope to thousands of sufferers.

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Dear Mrs. Pinkham—
"Your medicine is indeed an ideal medicine for women. I suffered misery for years with painful periods, headaches, and bearing-down pains. I consulted two different physicians but failed to get any relief. A friend from the East advised me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I did so, and no longer suffer as I did before. My periods are natural; every ache and pain is gone, and my general health is much improved. I advise all women who suffer to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."

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"I might have been spared many months of suffering and pain had I only known of the efficacy of Lydia E. Pinkham's Ask Mrs. Pinkham's Advice—A Woman Best Understands a Woman's Ills."

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It is stated in Washington that under the Townsend rate bill, if a rate is fixed by the Commission it cannot be lowered by a railroad. Should an emergency arise calling for a decreased rate, the railroads or shippers would have to appeal again to the Commission, there being no latitude allowed, whatever the circumstances. Hitherto a maximum rate has been the rule, but no such concession is made under the proposed legislation.

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We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.
F. J. CHENEY & CO., Props., Toledo, O. We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by their firm.
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Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Price 75c per bottle. Sold by all Druggists. Testimonials free.
Hall's Family Pills are the best.

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Investors in Nebraska Real Estate will find this true. Now is the time to get in on the ground floor. We have some choice investments. Write us for further information.
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Such testimony should be accepted by all women as convincing evidence that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound stands without a peer as a remedy for all the distressing ills of women.

The success of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound rests upon the well-earned gratitude of American women.

When women are troubled with irregular, suppressed or painful menstruation, leucorrhoea, displacement or ulceration of the womb, that bearing-down feeling, inflammation of the ovaries, backache, bloating, (or flatulency), general debility, indigestion and nervous prostration, or are beset with such symptoms as dizziness, faintness, lassitude, excitability, irritability, nervousness, sleeplessness, melancholy, they should remember there is one tried and true remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound at once removes such troubles. Refuse to buy any other medicine, for you need the best.

Don't hesitate to write to Mrs. Pinkham if there is anything about your sickness you do not understand. She will treat you with kindness and her advice is free. No woman ever regretted writing her and she has helped thousands. Address Lynn, Mass.

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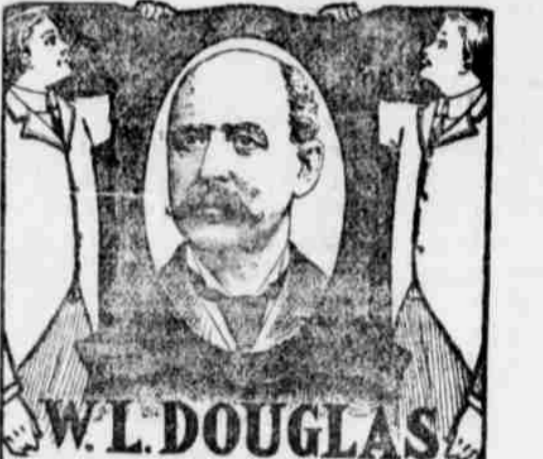
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