

One Man's Evil

By EFFIE ROWLAND

CHAPTER I.

The scene was lonely enough, yet not without a touch of beauty. For miles around not a habitation could be seen; everything was silent and solitary; in fact, there was something incongruous in the gleaming metals of the railway that wound itself, snake-like, through the verdure-clad country, and the little wayside station had a very desolate air save when some big express train drew up for a few minutes to board the small mail-bag or such stray passengers as the nearest settlement beyond the hills had to send on the road to civilization.

There were only a man and a youth in charge of this depot, yet on this particular day the rough platform had a fair complement of people. Strange-looking individuals they were, all clad alike in a somber kind of uniform, and sitting for the most part in a stolid, gloomy fashion.

It was only when they moved in obedience to the sharp, rough voice of a man who seemed to be guardian to the whole party that the clink of iron revealed the fact that these men were prisoners. The man in charge of the little railway station had eyed the gang dubiously as they had alighted from a special carriage in the last express.

"It seems mean," he said to himself, "to eat when maybe it's hours since they have tasted food. There's one of them," he mused on, glancing toward the end of the row, "that looks fair done out. Not a bad face that, neither; must have been handsome. At any rate, he don't look like the others."

The man about whom he mused was sitting with his hands clasped between his knees, and his eyes fixed almost abstractedly on the distant beauty of the landscape. At first it would have been easy to have classed him in with the rest of his companions, but the eyes of the north-countrymen had been acute. There was a distinct difference in this one prisoner from the others. He was a slighter, more delicate build, and though his face had a worn, sad expression, there was nothing evil in it.

He seemed to be one by himself, for the man further noticed that, as the warders passed to and fro, or stood speaking to each other, there seemed to be a kind of mute conversation passing between their charges.

The thought flashed through the mind of the station master that it was a dangerous looking gang, that upon which he was gazing, and even while this thought crept into definite form he sprung to his feet.

All at once that line of gray-clad automatons was a moving mass. The still summer air was broken by discordant voices and brutal cries. The two warders were surrounded.

The attack had been so swift, so unexpected, that they were taken off their guard. Before they had time to get at their revolvers their arms were pinioned, and the weapons had been dragged from them.

The station master was not one to stand by and see such things without joining in. He rushed from his office across the line. Everything passed in horrid, confused fashion before his eyes, yet he had instantly noted that the man who had attracted his attention as being different from the rest was not one of those who had brought on the assault.

This man was standing apart, leaning in a half-dazed fashion against the shed. His feet were chained together, yet all at once, as the man from the office sprang on to the platform, he, too, moved forward. Swift as lightning he pushed himself into the struggling throng. With such heavy loads about his ankles it was not easy for him to move, yet a kind of superhuman strength passed into his veins as he pulled off the man who was trying to choke the life out of the poor creature lying at his feet.

"No!" he cried, and his voice sounded strained and hoarse, and yet was full of authority. "You shall not murder him! He has done you no harm! What do you want—your freedom? Well, take it while you can; but don't stain your hands with an innocent man's blood!"

His words were greeted by a storm of cries, some menacing, some exultant. It looked for a moment to the station master as if he, too, would lie on the ground beside the self-strangled man who, but a moment before, had been guardian to this unruly crowd; but the common sense that lay beneath his words struck home suddenly.

Having robbed the warders of their keys, as well as their weapons, it was an easy matter to unlock the chains from the feet of all the prisoners, and in an incredibly short time the station platform held none of them save that one who, at risk of his own life, had stood between his late comrades and murder.

Not knowing exactly how to act, the station master had watched these proceedings standing aloof. He was ready to have rushed to the warders' assistance had he not been forestalled in this. As it was, he busied himself pouring hot water between the pale lips of the younger of the two warders, who had been less badly mauled than his companion, and while he did so, his eyes went with admiration to the figure of the convict who still knelt beside the other man, endeavoring to give him help.

"It's a brave lad, and no mistake," said

honest Ben Coop to himself. "I was right to have picked him out from the rest. Whatever brought him to this, he's not fit to be wasting his life out in a prison yard, that's pretty sure!"

And then Ben awoke to the gravity of the situation. He looked about him for the lad that generally helped him; but at the first sound of the struggle this boy had disappeared. There was no one but himself and the convict to give aid to the two warders till the train arrived.

It took him a very little time to drag the warder from the ground to the bench, and the other man sat and looked at him as he moistened the lips and the brows of the injured man. The prisoner recovered his strength and his calmness. He swallowed a mouthful or two of food that had been given to him, not because he cared in the least to eat it, but because he had been touched by the kindness shown him, and it was a natural instinct with him to govern courtesy for courtesy. After a few minutes Ben turned to him again.

"He is come to," he said; "but I don't think he will be fit for much this day or two. It was pretty quick work, and I am sorry for this bit of land, with all those scoundrels loose upon it."

"Where will they go?" asked the convict, in a low voice.

His eyes wandered around the landscape, that lay so placid and beautiful in the sunshine.

"I expect," Ben said, thoughtfully, "this was a put-up thing. There must have been one of them as knows their ways about here. The town, as they call it, lies a good three miles away; but they will make their way to it. You didn't go with them," Ben said, suddenly. "Why?"

The faintest of faint smiles passed over the face of the convict.

"My path is not with them," he said. "Besides," he added, with terrible bitterness, "I am content to be what I am, to stay where I am. Freedom is a dead word to me."

"Ay, man," exclaimed Ben Coop, not without emotion, "but that is a terrible thing to say."

He felt his heart moved more and more by this strange man. As the time drew near for the train to approach Ben went up to the prisoner and stretched out his hand.

"I feel all the better for having known you," he said. "I hope some day I'll see you in different straits to this. If ever you need a friend, lad, make your way here; there will always be a bite and sup for you wherever Ben Coop is."

For an instant a great change passed over the face of the convict; the cold despair dropped from it; the eyes seemed to shine and the lips to smile.

"Thank you, friend!" he said. "And God bless you! It does me good to hear you speak, for I believe you come from the same part of the old country as I do."

"I am Lancashire, sir," Ben hurried to say. "I was a pit lad, working since I can remember in the mines of the Mill Cross estate."

The light all went out of the other man's eyes, and the lips grew cold and white. He paused a moment, and then he spoke, deliberately and most bitterly.

"There is a name struck out of the annals of the Mill Cross family; there is one missing who is not mourned, one who is dead in honor, though living still. If ever you go back to the old country, ask them to tell you the story of that lost man, Ben Coop, and when you hear it think of me."

The train whizzed up to the little platform; the young warder ranged himself beside his prisoner. In an instant there was a group of car men clustered around him, listening to what had happened.

Ben was called upon to give his testimony, and half a dozen hands were put forward to carry the wounded warder to a berth in the train.

There was no more time or opportunity for Ben Coop to snatch a word with his fellow countryman. He watched the prisoner pushed into a kind of van, and heard the bolt of the lock with a cold sensation at his heart.

He performed his usual duties in a far-off, dazed manner; and then the train moved slowly out of the station, and Ben was left alone, with only the memory of that pale, sorrowful face to remain with him.

CHAPTER II.

In sunny June London wears its pleasantest aspect. There may be a vast amount of selfishness, callous extravagance and other uncharitableness cloaked beneath the gaiety of a London season; nevertheless, at no time in the rest of the year is there that indescribable sensation of life, and the enjoyment of life, found floating in the atmosphere. And there are some people who seem born simply to live in this atmosphere of perpetual amusement and whirl of fashion. Such a one was Lady Betty Marchmont.

She came of an old Irish family, and possessed any amount of cousins and nieces, who were only too enchanted to spend a few weeks with her; but she had not been very successful as a chaperone. The world would not take her seriously in this light; and after a little while her various charges gradually realized that it was not such a pleasant thing as they had imagined to pass a season in town with "pretty Aunt Betty."

When the last of her debutantes had gone back to the country, Lady Betty had declared to herself that she would have no more girls. But she made it a point of appearing very sympathetic and charming to her husband; and when she had heard all he had to say on a particular occasion, she quite delighted him by the ready way in which she fell in with what he had arranged.

"My dear Ned!" she cried, "of course your brother's child must come here. Why has she never been before? An heiress, you tell me? Well, that's something very desirable in this particular age; and no doubt she is beautiful, too."

There was a degree of sarcasm in this remark, which, happily, escaped Mr. Marchmont; he did not notice that his wife's bright eyes had glanced up and down at his tall, ungainly figure as she said these words.

Mr. Marchmont looked over his blue spectacles at his wife.

"I don't think Antonia has any intention of marrying," he said seriously. "As I explained to you, my dear, I have asked the girl to come to us, because I have learned that she has a very dull and dreary life up in the North. You must not expect to find her frivolous."

Lady Betty frowned in spirit. She felt that she could quickly conjure up a picture of this unknown girl. Fortunately, she was going to a very bright luncheon party, and the necessity of making herself look as pretty as possible helped to dispel the vision that her imagination had conjured up of the girl, who, before another week had gone, was going to be under her care. Nevertheless, she could not live without sympathy, and a few hours later she found herself demanding this sympathy from the man who sat beside her at lunch.

Lady Betty had more than a penchant for Gerald Tenby. She always had two or three handsome young men dangling after her, and her vanity had been extremely gratified when Mr. Tenby joined the ranks of her admirers—for Gerald Tenby was a man about whom society was beginning to talk.

The money that would come to him was counted by the world as something fabulous. Everybody knew that the Mill Cross estate was no mere bagatelle; that apart from the coal interest the head of the family possessed wealth that rolled from thousands into something like millions. It was no wonder, therefore, that Gerald Tenby found himself a society favorite.

"You must be very kind to me to-day," she said to him, as she ate a dainty lunch and caught a refreshing glimpse of herself from time to time in one of the many mirrors. "I have had a great shock."

"I hope nothing has happened," he said.

"Nothing has happened except the unexpected," Lady Betty replied. "My dear old husband has recalled himself to my existence in the most annoying manner, for he wants me, just when I had determined not to be bothered with any of my former relations, to play the chaperon to some lump of a country girl, whose existence I had comfortably forgotten till it was recalled to me this morning."

"Ah! this is, indeed, a heavy blow," he said. "It's all very well for you to laugh, Gerald," she said; "but you don't have to bore yourself from morning to night with a stupid bumpkin who does not know the difference between the moon and a green cheese. What induced me to give in to Edward this morning I really don't know. He took me by surprise, and before I knew where I was he had disappeared to send a telegram, and tell this creature that she could come as soon as she liked. So there's an end of all my fun. I know she's going to be simply awful!" Lady Betty cried. "Her name is enough to give one the shivers! Did you ever hear of a girl being called Antonia before?"

Gerald Tenby had been smiling amusedly, scarcely hearing what his companion said. His thoughts were not very definite or very serious, but at the mention of the name "Antonia" he suddenly became rigid, and the smile froze on his lips.

"Antonia?" he repeated to himself. "Antonia Marchmont? What strange fate is this?"

It was strange, yet true, that Tenby had never dreamed of associating Antonia with the pretty little society woman whom he saw so frequently, although the similarity of name might have led him to do so. There was certainly a wide world of difference between that girl who lived in the bleak north country and Lady Betty Marchmont.

Tenby could not at the first outset reconcile his memory of Antonia with the surroundings and the kind of life lived by all those many people among whom he now moved. He felt irritable and almost uneasy at the thought of her coming to London. He had tried so hard to forget her this last year or so, and he had almost succeeded in doing so.

Even when he had gone north on his frequent visits of duty to his uncle, Sir Maurice Tenby, he had always managed to avoid coming in contact with Antonia. Her home lay not many miles distant, and Gerald could well remember the day when Antonia had been almost a daily visitor at Mill Cross Court.

There was nothing to take the girl there nowadays—at least, that was what he said to himself, savagely, for he did not suppose that Antonia would care to waste much time in paying visits to an old man, and since the marriage of Bertha Tenby, her girl friend, and the sudden disappearance of Hubert Tenby, there had been no one to share Sir Maurice's solitude.

Gerald only went to Mill Cross because he was obliged to go, but he hated going. There was an atmosphere of sorrow in the old place heavy as a pall, and, though his uncle was always courteous and seemed much interested in his doings, Gerald Tenby never could rid his mind of the feeling that the proud man in his heart secretly resented his coming.

(To be continued.)

More wives would respect their husbands if they were not so well acquainted.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Stolen sweets are often hard to digest.

The crop of optimism in San Francisco apparently escaped damage from any source.

Victims of the habit claim that cigarettes contain tobacco, but you can't believe all you see in the papers.

When Ben Franklin decided in favor of the turkey as the national bird he had heard little about the American hen.

Life is a good deal like billiards. It is the fate of most people to do their best when it will not go into the records.

"One does not care to bandy words with the President of the United States."—H. H. Rogers. You bet one doesn't.

The folding baby carriage has arrived for the benefit of flat dwellers. Now let genius run riot until a baby is invented that can be shut up.

Probably the earthquake left the old mission churches as an example to the San Franciscans of the difference between good and bad building.

Uncle Russell Sage expects to retire from business. There is no truth, however, in the report that he is a candidate for United States Senator.

Maxim Gorky traveled a very short route in this country to the ranks of men that the free and enlightened people of the United States have not much use for.

The story that there is a sponge trust has been denied. But it is susceptible of proof that the stock of a sponge company is sometimes fearfully watered.

The Countess de Castelfane insists on having an absolute divorce. It really looks as if Boni will have to look around for some other means of gaining a livelihood.

Probably the reason marriage licenses were in such demand in San Francisco immediately after the fire was because the girls wanted husbands who were well broke.

At Wyckoff, N. J., a wealthy farmer committed suicide because he was afraid of dying poor. His heirs must have convinced him that that is little short of a criminal offense.

The word obey is omitted from the form of marriage service in the new Presbyterian Book of Worship. The compilers evidently sought to bring the service into closer conformity with the actual conditions of married life.

Scotty, the Death Valley miner, has gone on the stage in a sensational drama written around his own exploits. He is supported by several dogs that are said to be highly intelligent and worth the price of admission. The management is to be congratulated.

Next to a penitentiary experience is that of being quarantined at home because of some contagious disease. It means a taste of how it goes to be without friend. People walk hurriedly by, and look at the one quarantined as if he were some sort of a dangerous character. It is bad enough to have one's children down with a dangerous disease, but add to this temporary abandonment by friends, and you have the limit.

It is plainly the duty of every state in the Union so to distribute the deposit of its funds that the suspension of any small number of banks will not cause serious trouble. Kansas has been suffering difficulties and thousands of her employees have been worrying because the money to pay them for work done for the State was put in an unfortunate institution which has closed its doors. Surely there have been instances enough of bad banking in the history of this country to warn every State not to put too much faith in the careful management of a single place of deposit.

"Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind" makes him the easy prey of the white sharper, but whose mind tutored in a law school and stimulated by the atmosphere of the national capital is capable of attaining contingent fees of unprecedented dimensions! Robert S. Owen, a Cherokee, has won a suit for his nation for \$5,000,000 against the United States, being the cost of the tribe's removal from Georgia to the Indian territory sixty-eight years ago. Of his he is to receive 15 per cent. For winning another case this same copper-hued attorney got \$265,000 from the Chickasaws and Choctaws. The members of the Washington bar must be

kicking themselves that they never procured a law requiring Indian tribes to employ only white lawyers.

It has been deemed of sufficient public importance to be cabled across the Atlantic that J. Pierpont Morgan dined in London the other night on brown bread, fish and vegetables. It appears that a rich man's stomach is no more plutocratic than that of a poor man. Alexander the Great is said to have wept and drunk himself to death because there were no more worlds for him to conquer. In the same spirit the multimillionaire must sometimes shed tears in secret over the fact that, with all his power to command dainties and luxuries, he is physically incapable of any more wants to be gratified than are possessed by the poorest. The newly-rich may think they can revel in excesses. But outraged nature soon brings them up with a sharp turn. It is an old and true saying that the world owes every one a living. It is a part of the same truth that the world owes no one the living of thousands. A living is all that anyone can have. Morgan's millions are to him useless surplus. He can't eat them; he can't wear them; he can't in any way consume them in this world; and he can't take them with him to any other. Nature is inexorable. In all her wise and complete laws there is no provision for a millionaire.

The decision of western railways to make low rates to homeseekers weekly insures a heavy passenger traffic westward this season. Among the army of homeseekers will be many of the foreigners who are pouring into the country by hundreds of thousands. Most of the immigrants were farmers in their native land and prefer to become so here. Those who stay in cities usually do so because they get stranded there. Another big class that will take advantage of the rates will be composed of the sons of prosperous middle western farmers. The fathers have made their fortunes by "taking up" new land and holding it while it grew in value and the sons are ambitious to do likewise. Many land owners also will sell out and go west to buy more and cheaper acres. There isn't so much good soil to be got almost for the mere asking as there was a quarter century ago. The Middle West, once the promised land of the homeseeker, is now pretty well settled. There is still a great deal of such soil, however. There is still some of it in as old States as Missouri and Arkansas. There is some in western Kansas and western Nebraska. But most of it is in the Northwest and Southwest; and for these sections a majority of the homeseekers will buy tickets. A large part of them will settle in Texas, where there are many thousands of fertile and untilled acres. Another large part will settle in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Oregon, and Washington. Many others will be induced to follow former neighbors to the Canadian Northwest. Land hunger has long been one of the strong appetites of men. It has done more to populate the extensive territory of the United States than any other force. It has been the chief cause of many foreigners coming here and has been the sole cause of most Easterners moving west and of most Westerners moving farther west. That it is more potent sometimes than even love of country is shown not only by the numerous foreigners who have come to America but by the many Americans who are going to Canada. Most men who haven't land would like to have some, and those who have some want more. Land hunger will continue to send forth trainloads of homeseekers every year, until all the cultivable soil on the continent is taken. Probably not until then will it become possible to get the intensive system of farming widely substituted for the extensive system. Men enjoy the ownership of land as well as its produce; and as long as they can become owners of many acres will not try to see how much they can grow on a few.

Intensive Farming.

Hilda possessed a hot temper and an aching tooth, and the one she had endured the pain of the one as long as she could, she took both to the nearest dentist. "I can't tell until I look at it," said he, "whether to pull or to fill it."

The dentist was at no time renowned for gentleness, and on this occasion he handled his instruments with what seemed to Hilda very much like unnecessary roughness.

With her blue eyes blazing with wrath, she bore the torture as long as she could, but a badly aimed turn of the drill finished her. Leaping from the dental chair, she tore the rubber dam from her swollen countenance, hurled it at the dentist, and exclaimed, as she made for the door:

"Farmer! Plowman! Mys mou! Is no garden! Mys too! Is no trees! You can't pull heem, nor you skan't full heem. Go buy yone beeg farm if you will dig potatoes!"

Utterly Unreasonable.

Mamma—Don't you like Auntie Frie? Johnny—Oh, she's very kind, but she'd expect a boy to keep quiet on Christmas.