

One Man's Evil

By EFFIE ROWLAND

CHAPTER VII.

Antonia remained talking with Lady Charlotte for so long that she found as she drove fleetly back to her uncle's house that she had left herself very little time in which to dress for dinner.

Her thoughts were complex as she drove along. The keen sensation of pleasure had left her, for though she had convinced herself that Lady Charlotte absolutely believed in Hubert's honor, she had also convinced herself that she must not expect to work matters any easier because of this.

Suddenly Antonia started and opened her eyes almost wildly. There was a confused noise in her ears, a shouting, and then a scream, and after that she felt herself rudely thrown—where, she knew not. A sharp pain shot through her frame, and after that all was a blank.

When she opened her eyes she found herself the center of a small crowd, and she realized that there had been an accident.

She had been stunned for a few moments, and she found herself resting in a chair which had been hurriedly brought out of a shop close by.

Her hat had been knocked off, and her dress was torn. With a great effort she rose from the chair and attempted to pick up her hat. Then it was that she realized she was hurt, for her small right hand was throbbing with pain, and hung by her side swollen and useless.

A woman instantly stepped forward to help her, and though she was common and rough of voice, Antonia accepted her help.

"You cannot go home by yourself, miss," she said. "I'll go with you. Come inside this doorway for a moment while I get a four-wheeler."

Antonia moved as she was bidden. Everything was dull and confused about her, almost as if she were in a dream; and then the dream went suddenly, and a great cry broke from her lips, for her eyes had looked into another pair of eyes, and her heart had recognized her love.

"Hubert! Hubert!" she cried, and her voice was full of immeasurable joy.

The woman who was supporting her looked across at a young man, who came toward them—not quickly, but slowly, like one who doubted his senses.

"The young lady's had an accident, sir," she said, at once jumping to the conclusion that these two were well known to each other.

At her words Hubert Tenby started. He stretched out both hands to the girl.

"Antonia!" he said, hoarsely: "is it you? It seems like a dream! Speak! Let me hear your voice!"

Antonia smiled at him bravely and happily. She stretched out her one sound hand to him.

"It is no dream, Hubert, dear," she said. "I am your friend. I knew I should see you again." Then, conscious that the woman beside her was looking at them curiously, Antonia turned to her. "You have been very kind to me," she said. "I don't know how to thank you; but I'm feeling better. I will walk a little way. This gentleman will go with me."

"All right, my dear. Perhaps the air will do you good; though you don't look to me as if you were fit for much, and you had best have that hand looked to, or else you will have some trouble with it."

Antonia and Hubert, with clasped hands, moved on unconsciously. They were both struggling against the bewildering sense of joy and amazement. The man remembered the position first.

"You are hurt, Antonia," he said. "There is a bruise on your forehead. It must have been you who was thrown out of the cab as I came up—you, of all people in the world! Oh! how strange life is! But come, dear, you must not stand here. Let me take you somewhere. That woman was right. You must rest; you look so white, I am sure you are in pain."

"You were in my thoughts so vividly, Hubert," she said, "that it seemed at first quite natural to see you before me. I have just come from your grandmother's. We have been talking of you all the afternoon."

"You must let me help you, dear," he said. "See; here is a cab. Will you get into this?"

"Yes; and tell him to drive. It does not matter where," she answered him, almost wildly. "I am not suffering really, Hubert. What is a pain in my wrist in such a moment as this? You shall tie your handkerchief tightly round it, and I will wait till I get home."

Hubert put her gently into the four-wheeler cab, told the man to drive slowly until he had received further instructions. Then, as they rolled away, he sat beside her, and, taking her small, injured hand in his, he tore his handkerchief into strips and bound it in careful fashion round the bruised wrist.

His whole being, thrilled with intense joy. Could it possibly be true that it was he who sat there, close to Antonia; that they were actually together; that this was no dream that would vanish in a few minutes as it had vanished so often in the cold, silent prison cell?

"Why have you been so long in coming, Hubert?" she asked in a low voice. "If I had known there was a heart like yours waiting to welcome me, do you think I would have remained away a day longer than I could have helped?"

Antonia, why did I never know that you loved me? You do love me, don't you?"

"With my heart, with my life, with my soul!" she answered him.

A cry broke from Hubert Tenby's lips. He approached as if to kiss her, and then he turned from her and buried his face in his hands.

"You must not love me, Antonia," he said, hoarsely. "I am not fit for your love. I am a dishonored, outcast man, who has neither home nor name."

"You shall not say these things to me, Hubert," the girl answered him. "You know they are false, just as I have known they are false. You cannot change my love. It was given to you unconsciously years ago when Bertha and you and I used to be so much together. Do you think a woman's heart is so easily changed?"

He lifted his face at her words, and, bending forward, kissed her reverently on her lips.

"Just at that awful time," he said, "I had a little story to tell you, Antonia, that was never told. I had dreams in my heart, beautiful hopes of a future when you would be with me—for I, too, loved you in his same fashion that you have loved me."

"Oh, Hubert!" the girl cried, and there was anguish in her voice. "If only you had spoken this story! If only I had known of this all this long, weary, terrible time! But I have had nothing to give me a glimmer of light. Sometimes, indeed," Antonia said, with a blush, "sometimes it has been darker than others, because, Hubert, I have felt that to give a love unasked was not what I ought to have done."

The old cab horse was ambling along in comfortable fashion. It was long past the hour in which dinner was served in Lady Betty's household, but Antonia had forgotten that! Forgotten everything save that she was here, with her hand clasped in Hubert's; that she was looking into his beautiful eyes, the only point about him that seemed to have been untouched in the bitter experiences through which he had passed. For the Hubert she had known had been a very different creature to this man who sat beside her. There seemed to be age and trouble, and even want written in his appearance.

His face was lined, and his hair touched with gray. How different to that splendid young figure that had been the ideal of her girlhood!

"Let us get out," she said to him, suddenly. "We can sit and talk here in the open air. And oh, Hubert! my heart is so full! I have so much to tell you, so much to hear!"

He stopped the cab as she wished, and helped her to alight. In a few words Antonia told him with whom she was staying.

He bid the cab wait for them, and drawing her hand through his arm, they walked slowly along a secluded path. Crowds of people were sauntering about the park, finding air and rest after their day's work. There was no one to look with curiosity on these two. There were so many others lost in deep conversation, as they went.

"They said you were dead, Hubert!" she murmured once. "Every one believed it except myself, and I knew that you would come back. I feel afraid to ask you for your story since you went away. There is a look in your face that signifies such suffering."

So lost were they in their conversation that they took no heed of anything about them, and so, as they re-entered the cab and drove slowly away, they were quite unaware that their movements had suddenly attracted the attention of a man driving in a hansom through the park, nor that this man had scopped his cab, had got out, and was gazing after them with an expression on his face that signified both consternation and excitement.

For one instant George Stanton paused, re-complused, then he got into the hansom again, and gave the driver a sharp order. "Keep that four-wheeler in sight," he said.

He flung himself into a corner of the cab and lit his lip almost savagely. He was in evening dress, and had evidently been on his way to dine. On the seat beside him was a box of costly flowers.

A quarter of an hour before he had been in a most comfortable frame of mind; now, all at once, this was changed. It was one thing to determine to deal very sharply with Hubert Tenby when the prospect of this same Hubert Tenby's return was problematical, and quite another thing to find at the very outset of his career of prosperity that the future of this career was threatened and made doubtful. For unless his eyes had played him false, the man whose place Gerald Tenby was holding so falsely had actually passed before him a moment ago.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lady Betty was in the drawing room when Antonia's cab finally brought her back to her uncle's house. Dinner was a thing of the past, although it had been delayed for quite half an hour in order to give Antonia an opportunity of appearing.

"I went to have tea with Lady Charlotte Singleton," the girl said. "On my way home my hansom came into collision with an omnibus. I was thrown out of the cab and slightly hurt. It was not

this, however, that delayed me in returning. A wonderful thing has happened," Antonia said, with a tremor in her voice. Despite her knowledge of Lady Betty's utter lack of sympathy, she could not prevent that thrill of joy; she could not utterly set aside her happiness.

"As I stood alone in the crowd that gathered about me," she went on, "I suddenly felt that there was some one near that I knew; and I was right, for there, close beside me, was one whom the world has supposed to be dead—a friend I have mourned—"

She broke off, and Lady Betty sat forward, looking at her intently.

"It must be some one you care for very deeply," she said, in a slow way, when she spoke. "I have never seen you excited before. Dear Antonia, do forgive me; but you are so amusing, you know. You take everything so much in earnest. You are the sort of girl who would imagine the most casual flirtation to signify everything that was serious. It is the case of one life one love with you. Of course, this 'great friend' of yours was a man?"

Antonia winced as any proud nature must have done beneath this kind of badinage, but she had that in her heart now that made such perpetual sunshine there that nothing mattered.

"Yes," she answered. "my friend is a man. You heard me speaking of him only the other day."

Lady Betty gave a great start. Instantly her face changed. Her cunning mind rushed like lightning through all the possibilities conjured up by the suggestion Antonia's last words produced.

"Are you speaking of that Hubert Tenby?" she asked.

Antonia looked her straight in the eyes.

"Yes, I am speaking of Hubert. You remember, Lady Betty, that I said I could not bring myself to believe that he was dead. I had nothing at that time to guide me to such a belief, yet I have never swerved from it, and so to-day, when I looked and saw Hubert standing before me, it seemed the most natural thing in the world that he should be there."

Lady Betty sank back on her cushions again.

"If you are really a friend of Hubert Tenby's," she said, "you will advise him to put as much distance as possible between himself and England. I wonder at his coming back at all! Men of his stamp are generally cautious."

Antonia drew up her figure to its full height. Her eyes flamed.

"Men of Hubert's stamp," she said, in a low voice, "know nothing of cowardice. It was sorrow and treachery that drove him away; but now that he has come back again he means to stay."

"At your invitation, I suppose?" remarked Lady Betty, with another sneer. Antonia turned and walked to the door.

"When a man has suffered what Hubert has suffered—when a man is convinced that the blackest treachery has been worked against him—he needs no invitation to turn and find the means of giving back to him his honor," she said; and with that she passed out, and Lady Betty sat staring at the closed door.

Hubert Tenby stood and watched Antonia enter her uncle's house, with his heart a mixture of great joy and deepest sadness.

He had not driven up to the door with the girl, although Antonia would have been proud to have been seen with him by all the world.

"We shall soon meet, my dearest," he said, and Antonia had smiled.

"Yes, to-morrow," and then Hubert had been compelled to check the girl's eagerness.

"It may not be to-morrow, Antonia," he had said. "You know I love you just as now I know you love me; but, my dear one, the path is not clear for us yet. Just because you love me, so will you understand that I must not let myself forget the truth of my position. There is work for me to do, Antonia; much to be accomplished before I can stand with your hand in mine, and let the world know you belong to me."

Bewildered by his thoughts, Hubert felt he was in no condition to walk; so a fleet hansom quickly bore him away to an unpretentious quarter, where he and Ben were staying, and all the time another hansom was bowing after him, and another man was sitting in that hansom, turning over the situation, and finding it more unpleasant whichever way it was looked at.

"There must be no delay," Stanton muttered to himself as he saw Hubert pay for his cab and enter his hotel. "Mischief may have been done already. If only I had chanced to meet him before he came in contact with this girl! As it is, I must satisfy myself that he is staying here, and get some information."

To one skilled in such matters it was very easy work pumping the porter who lounged on the hotel steps. A shade fell over the man's face when he heard that Hubert was not alone.

"Is there going to be a fight?" he asked himself. "What ill luck! Why should this boy appear now? I wish, for his own sake, he had never set foot here. Desperate needs make desperate men, and I am in no way fit to handle the matter with kid gloves."

Jumping into a hansom, he directed the man as quick as he could to the address he had given him in the first place. The flowers were still on the seat beside him, and inside his breast pocket there lay a flat jewel case, which was one of the many purchases he had made that afternoon.

(To be continued.)

It seems impossible.

Mrs. Laws—Well, I do think that Mrs. Penderson is the strangest woman I have ever seen.

Mrs. Laws—Why so?

Mrs. Laws—Why, she told me yesterday that her daughter Mary's baby isn't perfect.—Somerville Journal.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Too many people neglect their plain duty for something more attractive.

A clergyman suggests "it is better to smoke here than hereafter." It depends on the brand.

A Philadelphian's heart has been extracted, mended and replaced—probably all done between beats.

King Edward is reported to be living on toast and tea. He must have read the report of the commissioners.

A Japanese philosopher jumped into the crater of a volcano, and they call it suicide, not scientific curiosity.

Somehow, you instinctively expect something solid and substantial in the way of statesmanship from a man named Petrukevitch.

H. G. Wells declares that there will never be an American Shakespeare. Pooh! There will never be an English Cyrus Townsend Brady.

Now that Uncle Sam is going to build the largest battleship in the world, no said bar along the Atlantic coast is safe from discovery.

That old assertion that "a man is what he eats" cannot apply to those who eat the packing-house products, if Upton Sinclair is telling the truth.

Rojestvensky is to be tried in Russia for surrendering to the Japanese, and this is likely to be a much more serious affair for him than firing on those North Sea fishermen was.

Dr. Holt concludes that at 80 a man is a drawback to the community to the extent of \$872.84. The doctor ought to hold a little session with Colonel Brown, the "bird and bee" man.

A scientist estimates that the electrical energy of a flash of lightning if it could be utilized, would be worth \$1,400. The damage sometimes wrought by its misapplication amounts to many times that.

The new Queen of Spain narrowly escaped being blown to pieces on her wedding day by one of her loving subjects. Loving subjects, it appears, continue to be good things for kings and queens to keep as far away from as possible.

One of the Pennsylvania Railroad clerks who received a salary varying from \$30 to \$126 a month says he purchased \$75,000 worth of coal stock. Wouldn't he and the girl who can keep house on \$10 a week be able to save money, though!

One of the Pennsylvania Railroad clerks admits that his graft from the coal companies has amounted to \$46,000 during the past thirteen years. That was only a little more than \$3,500 a year, and he probably considered it no more than he ought to have had for not demanding a raise of pay.

Photographs of the ruins of San Francisco show the steel skeletons of the big business buildings standing amid heaps of brick and stone. Men learn by experience, and now they know that in earthquake regions the steel frame is the best for tall buildings. Japan, with its average of a shock a day, may now begin to build lofty structures.

"Graft," the word that in current slang means a kind of stealing, has an interesting conjectural origin. It is not related to the word which means a shoot or scion of a tree, but to the root in the word "grave," meaning dig. Thence the word comes to mean in dialect, "work." The bobo, to distinguish himself from a roadster who piles a trade and earns something in the course of his vagabondage, says that the more industrious itinerant is a "grafter." One thief, speaking to another about his next line of "work," says, "What graft have you to do now?" "Graft," the thief's visible—or invisible—means of support, has evidently become a permanent part of our vocabulary.

Arbitration is not any longer an experiment nor even a series of experiments. It is now the settled practice of the civilized nations when disputes arise between them and is universally recognized in international law. A government which will not try arbitration before resorting to arms is in these days scarcely considered respectable.

War, instead of being the general practice of nations as it was a century ago when serious disputes arose between them, is no longer resorted to except in rare instances, and in most of these instances the causes run far back into the past and have created deep prejudices and deeply rooted feelings of distrust and animosity, which do not readily yield to rational pacific treatment.

Dr. Woods Hutchinson, who is usually a very cheerful and optimistic philosopher, startled the convention of the American Medical Association by declaring that it is lamentable to see old men clinging to life with determination and occupying places that should be given to young men in need of opportunities. "After men have drunk of life to the limit they ought to go to the scrap heap," he is quoted as saying. The rhetoric is rather mixed, but Dr. Hutchinson, we believe, was "cruel only to be kind." He said "the scrap heap," but he probably meant the easy chair. He said "clinging to life," but he meant clinging to professional or business employment. The old men should rest and enjoy the fruits of their industry and foresight. The battle of life is for the young. As President Roosevelt said at the dinner in honor of Justice Brown: "There is but one thing better than the right to do honorable service, and that is the right to rest after the honorable service has been well done." Justice Brown, we all hope, has many years of peace, enjoyment and happiness before him. He has earned them, and certainly Dr. Hutchinson would not consign such men to the scrap heap. What he intended to do was to emphasize the folly and injustice of struggling and toiling when there is no need of it. We work to live, and yet the ways of many indicate the theory that we live to work. He who has performed his duties to himself, his family, his community, is entitled to rest. If he has accumulated a competence and fails to profit by it he is merely a victim of habit and superstitious veneration of work for its own sake. The gospel of recreation, contemplation and rest is a good one to preach to American business and professional men, but it is a gospel of life, not of death; of joy, not of scrap-heap misery.

Most men are reasonably amenable to honest criticism of their acts and opinions. The man who resents such criticism invites suspicion of his own good intentions. It is safe to say that though the average man may not be actually grateful for having attention drawn to his shortcomings he will not take umbrage at the strictures if he believes them to be inspired by honesty and good faith. On the other hand even well-deserved criticism, if it be plainly malicious or dishonest, naturally excites resentment. This is because such criticism is really not criticism at all, but merely the manifestation of malignity or mendacity. As in most other human affairs, it is the intent that counts. Ill intent defeats an otherwise meritorious action. This was the sentiment more largely expressed by James H. Eckels in his address at a recent grain dealers' banquet in Chicago. The country is deluged with a flood of pseudo criticism of all kinds of men and things. If we accepted even a tithe of it as warranted there would be no hope for the country because according to the sensational critics there is neither honesty nor honor left within its boundaries. As we know that honor and honesty are really the rule instead of the exception, it is clear that the indiscriminate charges must be dishonest. Honest criticism, as Mr. Eckels pointed out, is the right of every American citizen. It may even be styled a duty when it is applied to public affairs. But any one who reads the reckless and hysterical deliverances of certain publications and who hears the equally irresponsible talk from scores of platforms will speedily become convinced that "honest" criticism is a designation which cannot be applied to those emanations. Business men, merchants, politicians, being human, are liable to error, but while there are evils to be corrected and wrongs to be righted the desired end is not to be attained by lumping all business men, merchants and politicians together and proclaiming the whole lot to be irreclaimable scoundrels. That is not criticism of any kind—honest or dishonest. It is mere sensationalism tinged with blackguardism. Such methods would defeat a righteous purpose. They are certain to defeat a purpose which is obviously selfish and iniquitous. This country contains within itself the potentiality for remedying any evils that may develop in its commercial or its political systems. Open and fearless criticism of any abuse will eventually correct that abuse. With this certainty in mind we can well afford to ignore the mere sensationalism which makes a pretext for assault upon the just and the unjust alike. That sort of thing will inevitably kill itself off.

In Their Own Code.

"Here! Wait a minute," cried the proprietor of the restaurant. "This half-dollar is bad."

"Well," replied the customer, as he hurried out, "so was the dinner it pays for."—Philadelphia Ledger.

When a woman doesn't powder she regards herself as a broad-minded woman if she doesn't object when other women do it.