

# Deacon Rankin's Daughter.

BY ELIZABETH BIGLOW.

"It's dreadful curious that minister's sons and deacons' daughters should always be greater trials than other folks' children. I wouldn't have believed when Sylvia was a child that she would grow up to be such a thorn in your side, Sister Sarah. But you'll have to bear it, as the Lord's will, and trust that she'll be brought sometimes to see the error of her ways."

Aunt Dorcas rocked vigorously, and made her knitting-needles click with a will, as she always did when she talked of Syl's shortcomings.

Syl, who was in the kitchen making preparations for dinner, heard every word through the half open door—as it was very likely Aunt Dorcas meant that she should; and Syl sighed heavily, for Aunt Dorcas was the power in the family, and now that she had taken sides against her, Syl foresaw greater trials in the future than she had yet encountered.

Syl's trouble was that oldest and most common among maidens—the course of true love would not be persuaded to run smooth. Its current was ruffled in the most common way, too, by her father's stern displeasure, and her mother's ceaseless fretting and coaxing.

Years before, when they were both little more than children, she and Will Everett had fallen in love with each other, and the love had grown and strengthened as they grew to maturity. At last Will was poor, being only a clerk in the one dry goods store that Plimptonville boasted. He had his mother and little sister to support, too; and as Plimptonville people declared, had enough on his hands without thinking of getting married.

Deacon Rankin did not object to him because he was poor. On, no! the deacon was not so worldly as that—according to his own statement. In other respects Will did not come up to his idea of what his son-in-law should be. He belonged to a secret society, and the deacon abominated secret societies. Silas Daggett, the proprietor of the dry goods store, agreed with him perfectly; he even had serious doubts as to the propriety of keeping in his store a young man who belonged to a secret society, and used to go to the deacon's house to ask his advice and talk the matter over, two or three evenings in a week when he first came to Plimptonville and opened the store.

Will smoked, too, Silas Daggett did not smoke. He shook his head sadly over these shortcomings of Will's, and told the deacon of a great deal of good advice and warning thrown away upon the headstrong young man.

Will dressed too well, also; he was ruining himself by extravagance. Mr. Silas Daggett was of opinion that fully half of his salary was spent in that way. Countless other accusations, of a like nature, were brought against poor Will, and from twice a week Silas Daggett's visits increased to every night, and finally it became evident that his visits were intended for Syl, and the delight of Deacon Rankin and his wife knew no bounds.

But Syl—ungrateful, unreasonable girl!—frowned upon the suit of Mr. Daggett; she even went so far as to leave the room when he called, and she had been caught walking with Will Everett after her father had forbidden her speaking to the misguided young man.

Now matters were at their very worst; Silas Daggett had proposed, and her father declared she should marry him. All her tears and entreaties had availed nothing, and at last she had got her spirit up, and stoutly declared she would never marry him.

Aunt Dorcas was sent for in haste; if anybody could conquer Syl's rebellious spirit she could. But even Aunt Dorcas failed; the utmost concession that could be obtained from Syl was a promise that she will never marry Will without her father's consent. She would not promise not to see or speak to Will, as they tried to make her.

Silas Daggett is established in the deacon's house as a boarder, that he might have all possible opportunity for prosecuting his suit, and Syl and her hardness of heart.

Syl began to think she should go wild listening to it.

Her patience gave out at last. She shut the pantry door forcibly—very forcibly; I might as well own that she slammed it, for Syl was not an angel by any means. She hardly dared to go to put into the oven the biscuits she had made, for she felt so angry that she was not at all sure that she should not say something impertinent to Aunt Dorcas. But it had to be done, so she ran out and whisked them into the oven, hoping that she might be as heavy as her heart, since Aunt Dorcas was to eat them.

When she went back there was a flash of the pantry window—Will's face—looking so white and haggard that she hardly knew it.

"What's the matter? Will! What makes you look so white? And oh, how did you dare to shut the door like that?"

"Father says I must come home."

Syl so that she trembled and could not speak. Will reached through the window and caught her hands, and almost crushed them in his clasp.

"Will you stand by me, Syl, when all the world scorns and jeers at me for a thief, or will you decide that your father's worldly wisdom is best, after all, and marry that honest, godly man, Silas Daggett?"

The fierce scorn in Will's voice told Syl, that whatever his new trouble might be, Silas Daggett was at the bottom of it.

"What has he done now? Do tell me, Will!"

"The safe was robbed last night—you hadn't heard of that? The village is alive with it. The safe and money-drawer. Stevens paid Daggett five thousand dollars yesterday; he left it in the safe, intending, so he says, to put it in the bank this morning. Of course he managed to make suspicion fall on me at once, and he has a warrant now for my arrest."

Indignation got the better of Syl's fears at once.

"How dared he?—how could he? What possible reason could he give for suspecting you?"

"Oh, a good many. He is keen enough, you know, and I believe he has been planning this for a long time. A key was broken off in the lock of the money-drawer, and the other was found in the pocket of my coat, which I left in the store. Of course it's no use for me to say that I left the coat in the store. Daggett says I didn't, and of course his word could not be doubted. Then I was out until after eleven o'clock last night, and I can't say where I was; that is against me, you know."

"Can't? Why not? Don't mind me; don't think of me! Tell just where you were, and I will tell too! How can he prove you guilty when you are innocent?"

"If he can't prove me guilty, neither can I prove myself innocent, and the disgrace will cling to me—will cling to you, too, Syl, until you cast me off. I think you had better do it dear; I seem fated to bring nothing but trouble upon you."

Syl's brown eyes flashed, and then slowly filled with tears.

"Will, don't talk like that; do try to have more hope and courage. Silas Daggett is a bad man, I know—I was sure of it from the first; and he is sly and cunning, but we shall find a way out of this trouble, or, if not, we will bear it together."

Will was evidently not to be cheered, but Syl's courage made him ashamed of his weakness. Syl let him stay a few moments longer; she wanted to hear the details of the robbery, and she could not let him go until she had inspired him with a little hope and confidence, and then she hurried him away. She knew that it would not help her cause to have her friend find him there.

When he was out of sight, Syl sat down on the window seat and buried her face in her hands. She had spent all her stock of hope and courage in trying to cheer Will. The future did look gloomy to her.

Silas Daggett was so powerful and so unscrupulous, and her father would be sure to be on his side, and leave no stone unturned to prove Will guilty; as he said, it would be very hard for him to prove himself innocent.

Silas Daggett had woven a subtle snare. Syl knew him well enough to be sure of that. She did not believe that he had been robbed at all, but had formed the plot for the sole purpose of ruining Will, and so winning her—or, rather her father's money, upon which his affections were firmly fixed.

Some way must be found to outwit him, Syl said to herself, over and over again, as she sat there in the pantry window, but still no way suggested itself; and she had promised never to marry Will without her father's consent, and that would never be given now. Syl gave way to despair at that thought, and cried until her head ached and the biscuits were burned to a cinder in the oven.

The deacon looked at her red eyes when he came home to dinner, and having, doubtless, a little pity for his daughter in his heart, forebore to enlarge upon the subject of the robbery, as Syl expected he would; but he spoke as if there was no doubt of Will's guilt. Aunt Dorcas and Syl's mother groaned in unison, and said it was no more than they had expected, and Silas Daggett had—or Syl fancied that he had—a look of complacency under the distress and anxiety that he assumed.

Syl scrutinized him carefully at every opportunity, and was more firmly convinced each moment that he himself was the robber whom he expressed such anxiety to bring to justice; and once she said, quietly, yet with a searching glance at his face:

"I will do all that I can to bring him to justice, Mr. Daggett."

A dark red flush came to Mr. Daggett's face, but he answered, with a calm, but in a tone that was very glad of her aid.

"But what could she do? She could think of nothing, she thought, that would help her."

It was a great risk, being only a maid going to the bank, and Syl trembled and hesitated until she saw Silas Daggett's look, that proved his guilt as certain.

gained from the conversation at the dinner table.

The key of the store door had been in Will's possession, and that told against him, as the thief seemed to have entered in that way; at least, according to Silas Daggett, though Deacon Rankin did remind him that somebody had discovered that a window in the back part of the store was unfastened. And then that half of the broken key found in Will's pocket! For herself, she had not the slightest doubt as to how it came there; but could the public ever be brought to believe that Silas Daggett had been guilty of so base an act?

The next few days were full of anxiety and suspense that tried her sorely. Will was examined and committed for trial. Syl began to feel that she must do something. She went down to the store one morning, with no definite purpose in her mind, but with the hope that she might make some discovery. Silas Daggett, who had grown more tender and devoted with every day since Will's arrest, was radiant with delight at receiving a visit from her. Nothing daunted by Syl's coldness, he described to her at great length the means which the robber must have taken to secure the money.

"But I would like to see the window which father said was found unfastened," Syl said, interrupting him.

And he led the way to it, but at the same time assuring her—rather nervously and with unnecessary vehemence Syl thought—that it was impossible the thief could have entered in that way.

Syl looked out of the window, which was some distance above the ground, and her eye was instantly attracted by foot-prints made in the yielding ground had frozen there securely. Somebody had climbed in at and jumped out of that window. The tracks ran down beside the building, and ended at that window. Syl said nothing, but it seemed to her that Silas Daggett must hear the loud, fierce beating of her heart.

She flew home on the wind, and rushed up stairs to Mr. Daggett's room, and found a pair of boots in his closet. Hardly waiting to put a piece of paper around them, she hurried back to the store. But she did not wish to be seen this time, so she went through a back street, and stole slyly to that spot beneath the window; and Silas' boots fitted exactly into the tracks! Syl had expected it, but she was wild with delight, nevertheless.

If Aunt Dorcas could have seen the frantic hugging which she bestowed upon Silas' boots, she would have been more fully convinced that her prophecy would be fulfilled. But Syl's delight was a little dampened before she reached home by the reflection that the discovery she had made might not be considered sufficient proof of Silas Daggett's guilt. She carried the boots to his room, with her heart divided between hope and fear.

As she turned to leave the room her eye was caught by some bits of paper, which he had evidently used in shaving, lying on the bureau. They were pieces of a letter, and Syl looked them over half curiously, half carelessly, until she read something that made her heart beat faster.

"Don't be afraid of a little job like that," she read, by putting two of the pieces together. "Do it yourself," was another. "In your coat, between the lining and the outside," on another.

What if that meant the money? What if he had hidden the money in that way? thought Syl. She ransacked his closet and searched all his coats in vain; and then she sat down and deliberated, with what result will be seen by her next action.

"I want you, and Mr. Daggett, and Sheriff Allen to go down to the store with me," she said to her father, at the dinner-table. "I have made a discovery that I think may be of some importance."

The deacon stared as if he thought she must have taken leave of her senses, and Silas Daggett grew a shade paler—or was it only Syl's fancy? But they granted her request, after a little laughter and jesting about her "discovery."

Syl led them quietly around to that spot under the back window, where the tracks were.

The sheriff opened his eyes wide at sight of the tracks, and said: "It is strange that these were not seen before. Here is evidently where the fellow got in."

"Will you ask Mr. Daggett to step into them?" said Syl, quietly.

They all laughed a little uneasily. Anybody could see now that Silas was pale.

"Of course Mr. Daggett will not object to doing so, if it will give you any satisfaction," said Mr. Allen.

And Silas Daggett could do nothing but comply with the request, and it was evident to all that the tracks had been made by his feet.

"But what does that prove? What do you mean, Sylvia?" said the deacon, angrily, but evidently perturbed in spirit.

"Nothing," said Syl; "only since Mr. Daggett is so obliging, he will probably show us what is between the lining and the outside of his coat."

sively that doubt was no longer possible.

He made no resistance, and when the coat was opened the bonds and bank notes which he had stolen from himself were discovered.

The letter by means of which Syl had made her discovery was found to have come from a friend of Silas, of whom he had asked counsel with regard to his plan of running Will, and thus securing Deacon Rankin's heiress. I wish that I had space to describe the scene, especially the discomfiture of the honest Silas, but I can only relate a little "aside" between Syl and her father.

"This must be hushed up, Sylvia—hushed right up!" said the deacon, nervously. "Why, it would ruin me! I should be a laughing-stock! I—I've made so much of him. What a reproach upon the church!"

"Well, I will agree to say nothing about it—since, of course, you will see that Will is entirely cleared from suspicion—that is, on one condition; and if you don't agree to that, why, I shall feel it my duty to tell the whole story," said saucy Syl.

"And the condition is?" said the deacon, anxiously.

"Why, that you give your consent to my marrying Will; and then you know that pretty cottage that you promised to give me if I would marry Silas Daggett, you must give to Will and me; and, pa—as the deacon was turning away—nicely furnished, you know; and, pa—wait a minute—right away, you know."

"I am glad I haven't but one daughter," said the deacon to himself. "What they say of deacons' daughters is true every word of it!"

## Slings and Arrows.

The casting of the die is always an impressive moment.

The least belligerent of men will come to blows when he has a cold in his head.

"How's business? Oh, pickin' up," as the collector of cigar stubs said to his friend.

A humorist is one of the few people who have no objection to being told they are the laughing stock of the community.

Some men think nothing of jumping a contract, but it's a warm day when any one can jump a cold that he has contracted.

Just because the girls like to make eyes at the men is no reason why the latter should expect eyes the proposals of marriage.

John L. Sullivan does not owe his success (?) to talent; he is just one of those men who go steadily pounding along through life.—St. Joseph News.

## The Shortest Sentence.

We often read of a 99-year sentence of a criminal, which I believe is the longest sentence that can be imposed while the present statutes are upon the books. Ninety-nine years being the longest time for which one can be sentenced for the commission of any crime, however heinous, it is natural for one to inquire the length of the shortest sentence that can be imposed and yet be regarded as a criminal conviction. One hour, the verdict of a Maine court in 1869, is the shortest American sentence that has yet come under the writer's notice. This was greatly overshadowed in January, 1881, by an English judge, who sentenced a woman to five minutes in jail for having married a man without obtaining a divorce from a former husband. This was the shortest sentence on record.

## Endures the Cold.

A learned professor of the Paris Academy of science has been making experiments which have resulted in convincing him that the rabbit is of all living things the most capable of withstanding a very low temperature. Inclosed all night in a block of ice, a rabbit was found next day getting on very comfortably and evidently not aware of anything very peculiar in his circumstances. In this regard the rabbit leaves far behind our faithful friend the dog, though, according to the learned professor, sheep, goats and pigs take good second, third and fourth.

## New York in 2801.

New York Dame (a thousand years hence)—"Tell my daughter she must not forget that dinner will be an hour earlier to day. She is in Egypt."

Automatic Servant—"Yes, mum."

[Telephone a phonographic signal to Pyramid station, No. 99,999.]

Dame—"I see the air-ship from Market street, Japan, nearing the window. Bring my husband's slippers and dressing gown."

Automatic Servant—"Yes, mum."

Dame—"Now touch buttons A. L. R. T. V. W. and X. I think that will be all we will want for dinner. Here comes my daughter on her bi-wing flyer, just in time. Call up number 8,999."

Servant—"Yes, mum."

## Explaining the Item.

Client—"You have an item in your bill: 'Advice, Jan. 8, 85.' That was a day before I retained you."

Lawyer—"I know it. But don't you remember the 8th I told you you'd better let me take the case for you?"

Client—"Yes."

Lawyer—"Well, that's advi-

## THE CARPENTERS MATE.

Twenty years ago I commanded one of the vessels, the Norseman, of the old Allensworth line of Liverpool. She was in the East India trade at the time and I was about to make my first voyage as master. I had been with her the previous voyage in the capacity of chief mate, and was more than pleased when the firm called me into their private office and offered me the command of the ship.

I had just been married, and it is needless to say that I excepted the firm's offer, at the same time arranging to have my wife accompany me on the voyage.

"I have a favor to ask of you, Capt. Thornton," said Mr. Burlingame, the senior partner, when we were alone, "and I rely upon your honor to keep the matter confidential."

I bowed and Mr. Burlingame went on—

"My daughter Evelyn has become infatuated with one of my clerks, and he has had the assurance to ask her hand in marriage. He has been dismissed from our employ, and I have seen nothing of him since. My daughter has taken the matter to heart, and I have decided to send her out with you on a voyage, in hope the change of scene and the companionship of your wife and yourself may bring back the roses to her cheek. Anything you can do to assist in making her forget this wretched infatuation will be appreciated."

I had little faith in my ability to cause Miss Evelyn to forget her lover; besides, as I had just entered the married state myself, I could hardly be expected to sympathize with a plan for the separation of two loving hearts, but I promised to care for the shipowner's daughter as far as was in my power, and the interview terminated.

The following morning my wife and I went aboard the Norseman, which lay at anchor in the Mersey. At nine o'clock Mr. Burlingame and his daughter came aboard. The latter was a handsome young lady of twenty-two years, but her sweet face was pale and sad, and although she said nothing it was evident that the thought of leaving home affected her deeply.

Farewells were over, the anchor was weighed, and Mr. Burlingame, after a parting grasp of the hand and a whispered admonition to "take good care of Evelyn," stepped aboard the tender and returned to shore. We were towed down the Mersey, crossed the bar, and dismissed the tug pilot bore away for the Cape of Good Hope.

After we were well under way all hands were called aft to choose watches. As the crew filed by, one of their number, a fine looking young fellow attracted my attention.

"Who's that young man?" I asked pointing him out to Mr. Everson, my chief mate.

"Kenneth Gardner; he shipped as carpenter's mate," was the reply.

Just as the crew ranged themselves in a line a little abaft the mainmast the ladies came on deck and walked forward to where I was standing.

As I turned to greet them I was startled by a scream from Miss Burlingame, and the next moment I was holding her limp form in my arms. She was at once taken below and soon recovered consciousness; but could give no explanation of her fainting fit.

We were scarcely two weeks out before I noticed a great change in Miss Burlingame. The roses returned to her cheeks, and she seemed well pleased with her situation aboard the Norseman.

She went all over the ship, sometimes accompanied by my wife, and sometimes alone. Several times I noticed her in conversation with the carpenter's mate, and my curiosity being aroused, I walked forward one day and got into conversation with him.

I found Gardner an intelligent fellow, possessing a surprising familiarity with the rules of navigation and all matters pertaining to the merchant marine. I thought it a little singular that a man of his intelligence and apparent ability had no better position than that of carpenter's mate on a merchantman, and told him so.

His reply was that his limited resources had prevented his gratifying in any other way his passion for traveling and seeing the world. The explanation was not satisfactory, but a look into the handsome, manly face convinced me that whatever his reasons were for being on the Norseman in his present capacity, they did not concern me, and I asked him no further questions on the matter.

In due time we doubled the Cape of Good Hope, ran the castings down, and crossing the Bay of Bengal, sighted one morning the low sandhills and, later, the flat, sandy coast at the mouth of the Hooghly. We took aboard a native pilot, and were soon lying at anchor at Golden Beach, about eleven miles below Calcutta. I went ashore accompanied by my wife and Miss Burlingame.

During the voyage the young lady had regained her health and spirits, and had become well acquainted with the carpenter's mate. While they took no liberties, I began to feel anxious about the matter, and regretted that the handsome youth was a member of my crew. I pitied the poor clerk left in

## Old England and meditated on the fickleness of women.

At Calcutta we landed a cargo of jute for Melbourne that put out to sea. On the morning of the sixth day out the barometer began to fall rapidly, and as the typhoon season was at hand I felt a little anxious, although there was no indication of danger in the clear sky and the light breeze which fanned the surface of the Indian Ocean.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the sky to windward showed signs of a gathering storm. Professional pride told me to crowd on all sail so long as the wind continued fair, but experience whispered that the lives of the ship's crew, my wife and Miss Burlingame depended to a great extent upon my seamanship and good judgment. I considered the matter a few minutes, and then, summoning the chief mate, said—

"Mr. Everson, call all hands take in the light sail, send down the studding-sail yards and boom, skyball, royal and topgallant yards fore and aft, and close reef the topsails and courses."

The mate, whose hair and beard were whitened by the ocean blast of forty years, regarded me in surprise for a moment, then touched his cap and returned to the waist. I could see that the old salt doubted the advisability of the course I was pursuing.

The orders for shortening sail were rapidly executed, and in less than twenty minutes the Norseman was all snug fore and aft. In the meantime the horizon became overcast with a heavy bank of copper-colored clouds in the thirty years I have followed the sea I have never seen the elements array in a more terrific line of battle than they were at 3:30 of the afternoon of September 15, 1870.

The hatches were carefully battened down and the watch kept below to see care what rest they might, while I paced the quarter deck, restless and uneasy. The breeze gradually died out and a dead calm ensued.

The ladies came on deck and chafed me for shortening sail.

The barometer continued falling, and I again ordered all hands called. A line of foam was approaching on the starboard beam.

"Hard a port!"

"Hard a port, sir!" responded the helmsman.

I seized my trumpet and gave my orders.

"Haul up your courses."

The command was promptly executed, and the men started aloft to furl. They were too late.

"Down for your lives! Down!"

The tidal wave struck us on our port quarter, breaking over the poop deck, accompanied by a fearful gust of wind. Away went our courses, and the topsails were literally blown from the bolt ropes.

I looked for the ladies who had been standing on the quarter-deck. Merciful heavens! they had been washed overboard, and I saw their agonized faces half a ship's length to leeward.

With a yell to lower away the starboard boat I plunged into the sea, as I rose to the surface I heard a cool voice beside me—

"Cheer up, Cap'n we'll save them sure."

I glanced over my shoulder and saw the carpenter's mate.

It seemed as though Providence had intervened in our behalf, for after the first terrible gust the wind subsided. We reached the ladies and looked around for the boat. It was coming, the crew pulling like demons, while in the sheets sat Everson, urging them to greater exertion.

By the time we returned to the ship the cyclone had broken upon us in all its fury, and for three days we drifted at the mercy of the storm.

On the morning of the fourth day the wind and sea went down, the damage to the Norseman was quickly repaired, and we stood away for Melbourne.

Upon our arrival Kenneth Gardner asked for his discharge, which I could not refuse him. As the papers had been filled out I took occasion to thank the young man warmly in behalf of Mr. Burlingame, and intimated that it would be to his advantage to return to Liverpool as soon as possible, giving him at the same time a letter of introduction to my employer, which contained a detailed description of the gallant conduct of Gardner in saving Miss Evelyn's life.

The ladies were ashore, stopping at one of the hotels, and I was to join them later in the day. I appeared about five o'clock. Mrs. Thompson was suffering from a headache, and Miss Burlingame had gone for a drive.

The young lady came in half an hour after accompanied by Kenneth Gardner. Exchanging greetings, the latter placed in my hands a document. I opened it and was taken back aback at the contents. It was a certificate signed by a leading clergyman of Melbourne, stating that Hiram Holsworth and Evelyn Burlingame had that day been united in marriage.

Of course, I gave them my blessing, I couldn't help it. I believe I kissed the bride several times, and would have continued had not my wife objected.

The next thing was to bid Mr. Burlingame adieu, and so, as far as possible, I tried to seem that his discharged clerk had rather played it off on the old man. I received his answer at San Francisco in the person of Captain Gordon, who had been sent out to relieve me of the command of the Norseman, but the agents of Burlingame and Co. were instructed to pay me a full year's salary.

Burlingame died of apoplexy, and as Evelyn was the only heir, she inherited all his vast wealth.