

WOMAN AGAINST WOMAN.

BY MRS. M. E. HOLMES.

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

The moments of excitement and anxiety while the burglars were captured had driven it from his mind, but now he remembered all that Sir Humphrey had said, and even while his heart was torn with fear that she, perchance, was lost to him forever, a thrill of pride went through him for her sake.

Sir Humphrey was pacing the floor of the library as the Earl entered.

"You have no picture of your wife to show me, have you?" he asked abruptly.

Roy colored with pain, for in the acknowledgment that he possessed no memento of Alice, he had to own to the past feelings of coldness, unjustness, and contempt.

"I have none," he replied quietly, but Sir Humphrey read his face.

"Please God you will need none," he observed. "Surely she must be found to-night, Darrell."

Their hands unconsciously tightened in each other's grasp.

"I dare not think of it," muttered Roy hoarsely. "The old woman has confessed that—Jura loved her. She is in his hands. When I know this I feel mad!"

"Take me to your mother," the older man said gently. "It is not right you should both know the history of this girl who so strangely became your wife."

Al, Darrell, truth is indeed stranger than fiction, and this child's story is a proof of that.

Roy turned and led the way to his mother's room.

Lady Darrell rose, with outstretched hands, as Sir Humphrey entered.

"Welcome home, old friends," she said warmly. "How many years have passed since we met, and to meet now at such a time! Roy has briefly told me how it comes that you are here; as yet I am in a maze of astonishment."

"I will not leave you there long, dear lady," Sir Humphrey placed her carefully in her chair. "I will make my story as short as possible. You may remember years ago, when the Abbey was not the ruined place it is now, that occasionally my son, and sometimes I myself, came to it in the autumn, and despite its cheerless character managed to be very comfortable with a few good, intimate friends, who found the sport around a simple compensation for the solitary grandeur of the domicile."

"The autumn your husband died I believe you spent abroad, this man—putting his hand on Roy's shoulder—was then an infant, for some reason—I forget what now, business I think—I was unable to visit the Abbey. Fulke, my son, departed without me. I thought him surrounded with his friends, but after a few weeks had elapsed I soon discovered this was not so. To explain briefly, Fulke had purposefully visited the Abbey alone save for his servants, drawn thither by a woman. This was a girl, a governess, whom he had met and protected from some insult, and attracted by her great beauty, fallen madly in love with. The governess, Margaret Dornton, soon after this meeting left her situation. Fulke discovered she had returned to the only home she knew, an old maiden aunt, living in the town of Nestley, and without a word he took her. The rest was simple; his love bore down all her scruples, she was a dependent, unhappy young woman."

"Fulk soon won his way; she became his wife. Judge me harshly if you will, but on receiving the news I refused to see them, to acknowledge her as my daughter, or assist Fulke to provide for the low-born wife he had chosen, as I then called her. Since then I have discovered that she was the daughter of an officer, a brave, gallant man, in every way my son's equal, but blinded as I was with rage and pride, I doubt if I even had known it then, it would have availed much. Two years passed, all letters that reached me I burned unopened. My friends tried to reconcile us; I was firm. Then came the news—sudden, awful, terrible—Sir Humphrey passed his hand over his brow. "Fulke was dead, I read it in a newspaper. He had had an accident, and died instantaneously. Then my remorse began. I set out for Italy, where my poor son lay. He was buried when I arrived. His wife had disappeared, taking her child with her. For year after year I have searched without avail, when a few weeks ago fate flung me against a farmer in America, a man named Brown, who had in this highland town. Without knowing me, he gave vent to a grumble at the country, stating why he had come away from England. The name of Margaret Dornton, the girl you had married, told me at once my search was ended. Then with threats and cajoling I got the truth out of the man and his wife. My son's wife had died under their roof. Broken-hearted, sick unto death, she had dragged herself from Italy to place Fulke's child in my arms. Her aunt was dead. She was utterly alone. Feeling that her own end was approaching, she traveled to Nestley, hearing I was at the Abbey, but before she could reach me she passed away. Brown confesses now that she left a sum of money in their hands, with her dying command that the child was to be taken to me. How they kept that command you know. On every hand I have heard of their cruelty and neglect of my grandchild, and their robbery of the money that should have been hers. I had given my word that they should go unpunished if they told all, but I confess to having felt a desire to mete them out the justice they deserved. When I know all I hastened to Nestley, traveled down with Geoffrey, and learnt that my search was far from ended, and that the child I loved was found, ruthlessly torn from my arms, perhaps forever."

Lady Darrell stretched out her thin, white hand.

"Have courage, dear friend," she said gently. "She will be found—I am sure of it."

Roy bent and kissed his mother, his face white and agitated.

"She shall be found if she is alive," he said hoarsely. "I will bring her back to you myself, Sir Humphrey."

Without another word, he strode from the room, and down the stairs to the other two.

"I am ready whenever you like," he said abruptly.

Geoffrey Armistead looked up from his note-book.

"Newton has returned from Nestley. No one answering our description has left the station. They have telegraphed up to London for more men, and have sent some police to Moretown, which place I propose we visit ourselves."

Frank got up eagerly, while the Earl buttoned his rising gloves in a nervous manner.

Geoffrey Armistead alone was calm—he was too used to trickery and deceit and his quiet manner was as a rock of strength to the other two men, who were trembling with excitement.

"We will take Newton and another man with us," he declared; and in a few moments the whole party were once more on horseback and away.

Alice sat beside Myra as the pony, urged by the whip, almost flew through the dark path.

She also gazed at the side of the cart, and clutched it as if its firm hardness were the barrier between her and worse than death.

Occasionally her apprehension would be so great that a sigh escaped her, but beyond that she made no sign.

As they rattled on, the pony grew gradually distressed.

"He can't go much further," Myra said, suddenly breaking the silence.

"We must get out in a few minutes and walk the rest."

"What will you do with him?" Alice asked hurriedly.

"Nothing. Just leave him beside the road; some one will find him and take him home. Now, jump down—we've got a good mile to go yet."

Alice stopped to pat the good little animal who had helped her so well, then clasping the hand Myra held out, they hurried on over the rough road almost at a run.

It was now quite dark; the stars shone here and there, but the moon refused to lighten the gloom.

"Now we can rest," Myra said breathlessly as they approached the town; "we must make some plans. It is too late to get to London to-night we must take a room at the inn."

"Yes," murmured Alice almost spent with fatigue, sinking to the ground.

"Then the first thing in the morning we can creep out, get to the station, go up to town, once there, I know of a safe corner to hide till you can let your friends know."

Alice shuddered; the image of Valerie's dark revengeful face clouded out the vision of the Earl's as she had last beheld it. She only remembered how Valerie hated her, and she dreaded her.

"No, no," she said faintly; "I shall not let them know I am best lost; I will work, beg—starve—but I will not go back."

Myra looked at her curiously.

"You have a husband," she said abruptly; "do you not love him?"

A blush covered Alice's pale face, but the darkness hid it.

"I have no husband," she said in low tones. "I am nothing to him. He is nothing to me. There is another who has greater claim on him than I have."

Myra rose to her feet again.

"You are tired and ill; let us get into the town and find a room."

"Have you money?" asked Alice, rising with difficulty.

"Yes," Myra answered briefly; "enough to last till we get safely away. Here is the inn. Now then, stand behind me; I must tell some lie or we shall not get in."

Alice shrank back into the darkness of the portico, while Myra rang the bell loudly.

Moretown was an early place, and the inn was closed for the night.

"We want a room," she said boldly, as the sleepy landlord appeared—"a room for my mistress and myself. We've lost the last train to London. My mistress was telegraphed for, her brother is very ill. We start by the first train in the morning."

The man rubbed his chin and looked doubtful for a moment.

"My mistress is a lady," he said after a while. "Has your gotten money?"

"Money; yes," Myra chinked her purse. "Make haste and don't ask any more questions, or my mistress will just go off to the other inn."

"Lawks no. Come ye in. I daresay it's all right; but it's main queer to see two young women out this time of night."

"I hold your tongue and lead the way up," Myra commanded; and as the man lit a candle, she dragged Alice in, who was half fainting with fatigue and fear.

"Lawks, she do look ill!" exclaimed the man. "Be she going to die, missus? If so, she can't come in here."

"Die! No, fool! She's upset, as you would be if your brother were as ill as hers. There, go on! Fetch us some food, and be quick about it."

The man tolled up the old-fashioned staircase, and Myra followed with some difficulty, for she supported Alice, whose strength was going at every step.

Once inside the sweet-smelling bedroom, Myra put her gently into chair, and with one faint sigh Alice's head sank back, and she became unconscious.

CHAPTER XVII.

As soon as the food came, Myra busied herself in restoring the poor girl who lay before her so white and cold.

"Her strength is gone," she murmured, wetting the pale lips with some brandy she had ordered; "she wants the fire of revenge and jealousy to keep her up as I am kept."

Her efforts were soon rewarded; Alice's dark eyelashes were lifted, and she looked round. She smiled faintly as she met the glance of Myra's great dark eyes, and tried to rise.

"First you must eat some food, and then you must lie down on the bed and sleep. I have told that fool to call us at six—the train goes at half-past; we are close to the station."

"But will he not reach us before then?" gasped Alice.

"We must risk that," Myra said gloomily. "He will be inensensible for some time, and then the cart has gone, so we have a very food start. But be brave, you are free now; trust in me, and you shall remain free, or my life will answer for it. He shall not get

you into his power, the cruel, cowardly villain."

Alice bent and kissed her brown hair.

"Has he wronged you?" she whispered.

"Wronged? aye, most shamefully. But now eat, and then to sleep."

Alice swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread—she could do no more then with feeble steps made her way to the bed, and flung herself on it. In a few minutes she was asleep.

Myra folded her arms and stood gazing at her for some time. The fair, pale beauty of the young face touched her great womanly heart with pity; she read the traces of sorrow round the sweet mouth, and from the few words Alice had uttered, she knew that some grief had entered this other girl's life too.

"She is too frail to bear much," she murmured; "what shall I do with her? I am not fit to live with her, besides, I live now for revenge?" she clenched her hand. "Who is she, I wonder, and why will she not seek her friends? Perhaps she may think differently in the morning. Now I must rest."

Myra hung herself into a chair. She would not disturb Alice.

"She can sleep," she murmured; "my brain refuses to be stilled. She has done no wrong, while I—Oh, George—George, how cruel you have been and how I loved you!"

She covered her face with her hands, and choking sobs broke from her lips.

Alice stirred uneasily in her sleep, but her fatigue was too great; she did not waken, and by and by Myra's paroxysm of grief died away and she too slept.

The two girls were safely away before the chloroform began to leave Count Jura's brain, then he gradually came to his senses. He groaned a little, and moved uneasily on the ground, then as his brain grew clearer, he staggered to his feet and leaned against a portion of the broken wall to think.

"What happened?" he mused, passing a hand over his brow. "I am stifled—tell to the—Ah, I remember! It was Myra, curse her! Where is she now? Can they be gone?"

He stood upright and peered into the darkness, not a sound met his ear.

"Curse her, she is gone, and the other with her! Now what to do—What is this?" His foot struck the box on the ground; he stooped. "The diamonds. Great Heaven! they have left them. Good! I will take them. Which way will they have gone? Quick, let me think. The pony cart. To Moretown, of course; then to London. Curse that woman! I could wring her neck!"

He lifted the diamonds and staggered along.

The cart was gone as he feared. He stood still and thought what to do.

He must walk; there was no other way. It would be madness to stay in the vaults. Paul Ross was growing suspicious, and the Count felt that Paul's fear about the Grange robbery coming on wrong was well founded. No, he must get away.

The few steps he took seemed miles; the perspiration trickled from his brow; still he went on.

Just as he was growing altogether spent, his quick ear caught the sound of something moving towards him. He drew his revolver, and, creeping into the bushes, waited. The noise came nearer, his eye saw the outline of some one.

He strode forward a little with an exclamation of delight, put away his revolver and went towards it.

It was the pony and cart Myra had deserted. The pony walked on slowly, browsing the grass as he went.

Count Jura could have embraced the animal.

He thought for a moment, then drew the pony back from the road, unharmed him, tethered him to a tree, then hiding the diamonds under the straw of the bottom of the cart, he wrapped himself in the cloak he had placed before under the seat, and made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

He was thoroughly worn out with fatigue, and in a very few minutes was fast asleep.

The landlord of the inn was up early. It was market day at Moretown, and he would do good business. It wanted a few minutes to six o'clock, but already the market people were coming into the town and he would have to get breakfast for some.

His wife was busy in the kitchen, and away from her sharp eye the landlord found many an opportunity to exchange greetings with his friends.

So quickly did the time pass in this congenial occupation, that the clock struck six before he remembered the duty he had to perform in wakening Myra and her supposed mistress.

Flowers by the Wayside.

No doubt we owe many plant names to the inventive genius of our forefathers, to whom the shape or habit of a flower suggested the name chosen for it, as in the case of the dandelion. This name is not at all far-fetched, for it is but a rendering in the vernacular of the French words dent-de-lion—tooth of the lion—referring to the tooth-edged plant. A common and useful herb is tansy, which word is a shortening of the French *Saint Athanasie*. The name nettle comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *netel*, meaning a needle, and from the same source we get scrob, a shrub, and garden, or garden or enclosure. Solomon's seal was supposed to bear a seal on its root, which was visible on its being cut through, but the real reason is a different one. The plant is a rhizome, and in creeping, underground stems send up a new growth every year, leaving the scar of last year like the remains of a miniature extinct volcano, or a deeply-indented seal. The name potato probably comes from the native name of the sweet potato, *batata*, as to *patatoes* comes from *tanyat*, the Malay name of the plant. Foxglove—*lolit's* glove—is suggestive of its name, and so is wall flower, snapdragon, kidney beans, scarlet runner, and many others. Horse chestnut is so called because the turks used to grind the nuts and give them to such of their horses as were broken-winded. Sweet William is quite a puzzle. Some say it is a corruption of *Saint William*, and it has even been suggested that it refers to the divine William, the bard of Avon.

CALLING THE COWS.

BY HERMAN HAYL.

"I don't know why, I don't know how, but surely, 'twas no harm at all, to stop a minute at the plow and lie on to her milking call!"

"Go—Bess—Go!"

"It sounded so. Across the yellow-blossomed corn! Surely, the moon was never born Who would not leave his team and come To help her drive the cattle home."

The old folk lived across the hill. But surely, 'twas no harm at all To kiss her, while the tolls were still A list'ning to her milking call: "Go—Bess—Go!"

It made the lady robin start, The squirrel beat the leaves apart To see us two a-walking down Toward the sleepy little town.

I don't know how, I don't know why, But surely, 'twas no harm at all The stars were in the summer sky Before the cattle reached their stall. "Go—Bess—Go!"

It rings on so. The moon, from off his great white shield, Has leapt back into the field, And all the whi-pling echoes come And follow me a-walking home.

BACK FROM THE TOMB.

The guests filled slowly into the hotel's great dining-hall and took their places, the waiters began to serve them leisurely, to give the tardy ones time to arrive, and to save themselves the bother of bringing back the courses, and the old fathers, the yearly habitués, with whom the season was far advanced, kept a close watch on the door each time it opened, hoping for the coming of new faces.

New faces! the single distract on of all pleasure resorts. We go to dinner chiefly to canvas the daily arrivals, to wonder who they are, what they do and what they think. A restless desire seems to have taken possession of us, a longing for pleasant adventures, for friendly acquaintances perhaps for possible lovers. In this elbow-to-elbow life our unknown neighbors become of paramount importance. Curiosity is piqued, sympathy on the alert and the social instinct doubly active.

We have met for a week, friendships for a month, and view all men with the special eyes of water-gate intimacy. Sometimes during an hour's chat after dinner, under the trees of the park, where ripples a healing spring, we dis over men of superior intellect and surprising merit, and a month later have wholly forgotten these new friends, so charming at first sight.

There, too, more specially than elsewhere, serious and lasting ties are formed. We see each other every day, we learn to know each other's soul, and in the affection that springs up so rapidly between us there is mingled much of the sweet abend of old and tender intimacies. And later on, how tender are the memories cherished of the first hours of this friendship, of the first communion of the heart.

Julie had been in my room, which I followed to the cemetery and saw placed in the family vault. This was in the country, in the Province of Lorraine.

"It had been my wish to, that she should be buried in her jewels, bracelets, necklaces, and rings, all presents that I had given her, and in her first ball dress. You can imagine, sir, the state of my heart in returning home. She was all that I had left, my wife had been dead for many years. I returned, in truth, half mad, shut myself alone in my room and fell into my chair dazed, unable to move, merely a miserable, breathing wreck."

"on my old valet, Prosper, who had helped me place Juliette in her coffin and lay her away for her last sleep, came in noiselessly to see if he could not induce me to eat. I shook my head, answering nothing. He persisted."

"Mon-sieur is wrong; this will make him ill. Will monsieur allow me, then, to put him to bed?"

"No, no," I answered. "Let me alone."

"He yielded and withdrew."

"How many hours passed I do not know. What a night! What a night! It was very cold; my fire of logs had long since burned out in the great fireplace, and the wind, a wintry blast, charged with an icy frost, howled and screamed about the house and strained at my windows with a curiously sinister sound."

"Long hours, I say, rolled by, I sat still where I had fallen, prostrated, overwhelmed; my eyes wide open, but my body strengthless, dead; my soul drowned in despair. Suddenly the great bell gave a loud peal."

"I gave such a leap that my chair cracked under me. The slow, solemn sound rang through the empty house. I looked at the clock."

"It was 2 in the morning. Who could be coming at such an hour?"

"Twice again the bell pulled sharply. The servants would never answer, perhaps never hear it. I took up a candle and made my way to the door. I was about to demand: 'Who's there?' but, ashamed of the weakness, nerved myself and drew back the bolts. My heart throbbed, my pulse beat, I threw back the panel brusquely, and there, in the darkness, saw a shape like a phantom, dressed in white."

"I recoiled, speechless with anguish, stammering: 'Who—who are you?'"

"A voice answered: 'It is I, father.'"

"It was my child, Juliette."

"True! I thought myself mad. I shuddered shrinking backward before the specter as it advanced, gesticulating with my hand to ward off the apparition. It is that gesture which has never left me."

"Again the phantom: 'Father, father! See, I am not dead. Some one came to rob me of my jewels—they cut off my finger—the living blood revived me.'"

"And I saw then that she was covered with blood. I fell to my knees panting, sobbing, laughing, all in one. As soon as I regained my senses, but still so bewildered I scarcely comprehended the happiness that had come to me. I took her in my arms, carried her to my room, and rang frantically for Prosper to rekindle the fire, bring a warm drink for her and go for the doctor."

"He came running, entered, gazed a moment at my daughter in the chair, gave a gasp of fright and horror and fell back—dead."

and daughter coming toward me with slow steps. I bowed to them in that pleasant continental fashion with which one always salutes his hotel companions. The gentlemen hated at once."

"Pardon me, sir," said he, "but may I ask if you can direct us to a short walk, easy and pretty, if possible?"

"Certainly," I answered, and I offered to lead them myself to the valley through which the swift river flows—a deep narrow cleft between two great declivities, rocky and wooded."

They accepted, and as we walked we naturally discussed the virtue of the mineral waters. They had, as I surmised, come there on his daughter's account."

"She has a strange malady," said he, "the seat of which her physicians cannot determine. She suffers from the most ineluctable nervous symptoms. Sometimes they declare her ill of heart disease sometimes of a liver complaint, again of a spinal trouble. At present they attribute it to the stomach—that great motor and regulator of the body—this prorean disease of a thousand forms, a thousand modes of attack. It is why we are here. I myself, think it her nerves. In any case it is very sad."

This reminded me of his own jerking hand.

"It may be hereditary," says I, "your own nerves are a little disturbed are they not?"

"Mine," he answered tranquilly. "Not at all; I have always possessed the calmest nerves." Then, suddenly, as if bethinking himself:

"For this," touching his hand, "is not nerves, but the result of a shock, a terrible shock that I suffered once. Fancy it, sir: this child of mine has been buried alive!"

I could find nothing to say; I was dumb with surprise.

"Yes," he continued, "buried alive; but hear the story, it is not long. For some time past Juliette had seemed affected with a disordered action of the heart. We were finally certain that the trouble was organic and feared the worst. One day it came, she was brought in lifeless—dead. She had fallen dead while walking in the garden. Physicians came in haste, but nothing could be done. She was gone. For two days and two nights I watched beside her myself, and with my own hands placed her in her coffin, which I followed to the cemetery and saw placed in the family vault. This was in the country, in the Province of Lorraine."

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"He came running, entered, gazed a moment at my daughter in the chair, gave a gasp of fright and horror and fell back—dead."

"It was he who had opened the vault, who had wounded and robbed my child and then abandoned her; for he could not efface all trace of his deed; and he had not even taken the trouble to return the coffin to its niche sure, besides, of not being suspected by me, who trusted him so fully. We are truly very unfortunate people, monsieur."

He was silent.

Meanwhile night had come on, enveloping in the gloom the still and solitary little valley; a sort of mysterious dread seemed to fall upon me in presence of these strange beings—this corpse come to life and this father with his painful gestures.

"Let us return," said I; "the night has grown chill."

And still in silence, we retraced our steps back to the hotel, and I shortly afterward returned to the city. I lost all further knowledge of the two peculiar visitors to my favorite summer resort.—Chicago Post

FEW BOOKS LIVE.

To Be Forgotten Is the Fate of a Great Majority of Writers.

The day is far distant when such poets as Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, such historians as Gibbon, Hume, Macaulay, Prescott, and Parkman, and such novelists as Sir Walter Scott, Balzac, Thackeray, and Hawthorne will cease to be read, writes A. R. Spofford in the Forum. The constant consumption by the reading world of new editions of standard authors in ever more attractive styles of printing, binding, and illustration is proof of the ultimate soundness of the public taste.

Our leading publishers of the conservative class are continually bringing out, and working over in different styles