

THE Story of Francis Cludde

A Romance of Queen Mary's Reign.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XIX.

The bitterness of that hour long past, when he had left me for death, when he had played with the human being for life and striven without a thought of pity to corrupt me by hopes and fears the most awful that mortals know, was in my voice as I spoke. I rejoiced that vengeance had come upon him at last, and that I was its instrument. I saw the par of a great fear creep into his dark cheek and read in his eyes the vicious passion of a wild beast trapped and felt no pity. "Master Clarence," I said and laughed—laughed mockingly. "You do not look pleased to see your friends, do you? Perhaps you do not remember me. Stand forward, Master Bertie. May be he will recognize you."

But though Master Bertie came forward and stood by my side, gazing at him, the villain's eyes did not for an instant shift from mine. "It is the man!" my companion said after a solemn pause, for the other, breathing fast, made no answer. "He was a spy in the pay of Bishop Gardiner, when I knew him. At the bishop's death I heard that he passed into the service of the Spanish ambassador, the Count de Feria. He called himself at that time Clarence. I recognize him."

The quiet words had their effect. From full one half of the savage crew round us a fierce murmur rose more terrible than any loud outcry yet so seemed a relief to the doomed man. He forced himself to look away from me and to confront the dark ring of menacing faces which hemmed in. The moment he did so he appeared to find courage and words. "They take me for another man!" he cried in hoarse accents. "I know nothing of them!" and he added a fearful oath. "He knows me. Ask him."

Who pointed to Walter Kingstone, who was sitting on the ground outside the ring, and who alone had not risen under the excitement of my challenge. On being thus appealed to he looked up suddenly. "If I am to choose between you," he said bitterly, "I will say which is the true man, I know which I shall pick."

"Which?" Clarence murmured. "Which?" This time his tone was different. In his voice was the ring of hope. "I should give my vote for you," Kingstone replied, looking contemptuously at him. "I know something about you, but of the other gentleman I know nothing."

"And not much of the person you call 'Credwell,'" I rejoined fiercely, "since you do not know his real name."

"I know this much," the young man answered, tapping his boot with his scabbard with studied carelessness, "that he lent me some money and seemed a good fellow and one that I could trust. As for his name, I know it for his name by his fancy perhaps. You call yourself Carey. Well, I know a good many Careys, but I do not know you, nor ever heard of you."

"I swung round on him with a hot check, but he turned his face upon my tongue was anticipated by Master Bertie, who drew me forcibly back. "Leave this to me, Francis," he said. "And you watch that man, Master Kingstone and gentlemen," he continued, turning again to them and drawing himself up to his full height as he addressed them, "listen if you please. You know me, if you do not know my friend. The honor of Richard Bertie has never been challenged until to-day, nor ever will be with impunity. Leave my name to me, and let me put me in it. I, Richard Bertie, say that that man is a paid spy and informer, come here in quest of blood money, and he, Credwell, a nameless scoundrel, says that I lie. Choose between us, or look at him and judge. Look!"

He was right to bid them look. As the savage murmur rose again and took from the wretched man his last hope, as the ugliness of despair and wicked, impotent passion distorted his face, he was indeed the most deadly witness against himself.

The lights which shone on treacherous weapons half hidden or on the glittering eyes of cruel men whose blood was roused fell on nothing so dangerous as the wild, despairing face which, unmasked and eyed by a quick aversion, still defied us. Traitor and spy as he was, he had the merit of courage at least. He would die game. And even as I, with a first feeling of pity for him, discerned this, his sword was out, and with a curse he lunged at me.

Penruddocke saved me by a bullet which sent me reeling against the wall, so that the villain's thrust was spent on air. Before he could repeat it four or five men flung themselves upon him from behind. For a moment there was a great uproar, while the group surrounding him swayed to and fro as he dragged his captors up and down with a strength I should not have expected. But the end was certain, and we stood looking on quietly. In a minute or two they had him down, and disarming him bound his hands.

"You he seemed to have a special hatred," I said. "Curse you," he panted, glaring at me as he lay helpless. "You have been my evil angel! From the first day I saw you you have thwarted me in every plan, and now you have brought me to this!"

"Not I, but yourself," I answered. "My curse was on you, and it was the rage and hate in his face so terrible that I turned away shuddering and sick at heart. 'If I could have killed you,' he cried, 'I would have died contented.'"

"Enough!" interposed Penruddocke briskly. "It is well for us that Master Bertie and his friend came here to-night. Heaven grant it be not too late! We do not need," he added, looking around, "any more evidence, I think!"

when he had tortured me by the very same hopes and fears which now racked his own spirit.

Penruddocke came back, Master Bertie following him. "It must not be done tonight," he announced quietly, with a nod which meant that he would explain the reason afterward. "We will meet again tomorrow at 4 in the afternoon. Until then two must remain on guard with him. It is right he should have some time to repent, and he shall have it."

This did not at once find favor. "Why not run him through now?" said one loudly, "and meet tomorrow at some place unknown to him? If we come here again, we shall, likely enough, walk straight into the trap."

"Well, have it that way, if you please," answered Sir Thomas, shrugging his shoulder. "But do not blame me afterward if you find we have let slip a golden opportunity. Be fools if you like. I dare say it will not make much difference in the end!"

He spoke at random, but he knew how to deal with his crew. It seemed, for on this those who had objected assented reluctantly to the course he proposed. "Barnes and Walters are here in hiding, so they had better be the two to guard him," he continued. "There is no fear that they will be inclined to let him go." I looked at the men whom the glances of their fellows singled out and found them to belong to the little knot of fanatics I had before remarked—dark, stern, sternly worth, if the matter ever came to fighting, all the rest of the band put together.

"At 4, tomorrow, then, we meet," Sir Thomas concluded lightly. "Then we will deal with him, never fear! Now it is near midnight, and we must be going to get to bed together, or we shall attract attention."

Half an hour later Master Bertie and I rode softly out of the courtyard and turned our faces toward the city. The night wind came sweeping across the valley of the Thames and met us half way, as we reached the brow of the hill. It seemed laden with melancholy whispers. The wretched enterprise, ill conceived, ill ordered, and in its very nature desperate, to which we were in honor committed, would be accounted of for in any degree of forbidding. But the scene through which we had just passed, and on my part the knowledge that I had given up a fellow being to death, had their depressing influences. For some time I rode in silence, which I was the first to break.

"Why did you put off his punishment?" I asked. "Because I think he will give us information in the interval," Bertie answered briefly. "Information which will be of great use to us."

"And you will spare him if he does?" I asked. "It seemed to me neither justice nor mercy."

"No," he said, "there is no fear of that. Those who go with ropes round their necks are not to be spared. But drowning men will catch at straws, and ten to one he will babble."

I shivered. "It is bad business," I said. "He thought I referred to the conspiracy, and he investigated bitterly against it, reproaching himself for bringing me into it and for his folly in believing the rosy accounts of men whose worthless lives to lose. 'There is only one thing gained,' he said, 'we are likely to pay dearly for that, so we may think the more of it. We have been the means of punishing a villain.'"

"Yes," I said, "that is true. It was a strange meeting and a strange record! You might ask me, and you would not get it from me."

"Not strange," Master Bertie answered gravely. "I would rather call it providential. Let us think of that and be of better courage, friend. We have the experiment, but as if our footstep looked over our time."

I looked back. For some minutes I had thought I heard behind us a light footstep more like the pattering of a dog than anything else. I could see nothing, but the moon was young and the sky overcast. "Do you hear some one following us?" I said.

Master Bertie drew rein suddenly, and turning in the saddle we listened. For only a moment, though I still heard the sound. The next instant only the wind toying with the November leaves and sighing away in the distance came to our ears. "No," he said, "I think it must have been your fancy, I hear nothing."

But when we rode on the sound became again, though at first more faintly, as if our follower had learned prudence and fallen farther behind. "Do not stop, but listen!" I said softly. "Cannot you hear the pattering of a naked foot?"

"I hear something," he answered. "I am afraid you are right and that we are followed."

"What is to be done?" I said, my thoughts busy. "There is a wooden wall in front," he answered, "with a little open ground on this side of it. We will ride under the trees and then stop suddenly. Perhaps we shall be able to distinguish him as he crosses the open behind us. We made the experiment, but as if our follower had divined the plan his footstep ceased to sound before we had stopped our horses. He had fallen farther behind. 'We might ride quickly back,' I suggested, 'and surprise him.'"

"It would be useless," Bertie answered. "There is too much cover close to the road. Let us rather trot on and outstrip him."

We did trot on, and what with the tramp of our horses as they swung along the road and the sharp passage of the wind by our ears we heard no more of the footstep behind. But when we presently pulled up to breathe our horses—or rather within a few minutes of our doing so—there it was behind us, nearer and louder than before. I shivered as I listened, and presently, acting on a sudden impulse, I wheeled my horse round and spurred him back a dozen paces along the road.

I pulled up. There was movement in the shadow of the trees on my right, and I leaned forward, peering in that direction. Gradually I made out the lines of a figure standing still, as though gazing at me—a strange, distorted figure, hunched, short and in some way, though no lineament of the face was visible, expressive of a strange and wild malevolence. It was the witch! The witch whom I had seen in the kitchen at the Gatehouse. "Now, then, had she come here? How had she, old, lame, decrepit, kept up with us?"

I trembled as she raised her hand, and standing otherwise motionless pointed at me out of the gloom. The trembling violently, with its ears laid

back, and as she moved its terror increased, it plunged wildly. I had to give for a moment all my attention to it, and though I tried in mere revolt against the fear which I felt was overcoming me to urge it nearer my efforts vain. After several minutes I saw the beast whirled round, and getting the better of me galloped down the road toward London.

"What is it?" cried Master Bertie as I came speedily up with him. He had ridden slowly on. "What is the matter?"

"Something in the hedge startled it," I explained, trying to soothe the horse. "I could not clearly see what it was." "A rabbit, I dare say," he remarked, deceived by my manner.

"Perhaps it was," I answered. Some impulse, not unnatural, led me to say nothing about what I had seen. I was not quite sure that my eyes had not deceived me. I feared his ridicule, too, though he was not very prone to ridicule. And above all I shrank from explaining the medley of superstitious fear, distrust and abhorrence in which I held the creature who had shown so strange a knowledge of my life.

We were already near Holborn, and reading without further adventure a modest inn near the Bars we retired to a room we had engaged and lay down with none of the gallant hopes which had last night formed the subject of our talk. Yet we slept well, for depression goes better with sleep than does the tumult of anticipation, and I was up early and down in the yard looking to the horses before London was well awake. As I entered the stable a man lying curled up in the straw rolled lazily over, and shading his eyes groaned up. Apparently he recognized me, for he got slowly to his feet. "Morning!" he said gruffly.

I stood staring at him, wondering if I had made a mistake. "What are you doing here, my man?" I said sharply when I had made certain I knew him, and that he was really the surly hostler from the Gatehouse tavern at Highgate. "Why did you come here? Why have you followed us?"

"Come about your business," he answered. "To give you that."

I took the note he held out to me. "From whom?" I said. "Who sent it by you?"

"Cannot tell," he replied, shaking his head. "Cannot or will not?" I retorted. "Both," he said doggedly. "But there! If you want to know what sort of a kernel is in the nut, crack the nut. I looked at the note he had given me. It was but a slip of paper folded thrice. The sender had not addressed or sealed or fastened it in any way, had taken no care either to insure its reaching its destination or to prevent prying eyes seeing the contents. If one of our associates had sent it, he had been guilty of the grossest carelessness. "You are sure it is for me?" I said.

"As sure as mortal can be," he answered. "Only that it was given me for a man, and not a mouse! You are not afraid of mice?"

I was not, but he edged away as he spoke and looked with so much alarm that I took no care either to insure its reaching its destination or to prevent prying eyes seeing the contents. If one of our associates had sent it, he had been guilty of the grossest carelessness. "You are sure it is for me?" I said.

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FOR FEMINE EYES



MORNING FROCK OF PINK CHAMBRAY. The accompanying sketch shows a becoming and smart morning gown of chambray—linen, percale or gingham also being suitable for such a gown. The short skirt was cut in two parts, the upper part being joined to the lower under a stitched tuck. Bands trimmed the bodice and skirt, the frock fastening at the left side of the front. The low turndown collar was of white hand embroidered linen, and was worn with a tie of black satin.

FOUR SEASONABLE DESSERT SUGGESTIONS

Preserve Melons for Winter. Take watermelons about this time of the year and cover them with a thick coat of varnish, being sure to have them thoroughly covered to insure air tightness. Put away in a cool, dry place, and they can be served all winter.

Cream of Strawberry Pie. Make a shell and six strips of puff paste; plain pastry will do. To one box of crushed strawberries add one-half cupful of sugar; thoroughly blend, cover, and set aside. Whip one cupful of rich sweet cream until it begins to thicken, then slowly add one-half cupful of powdered sugar and continue to whip until it is quite thick; then add one-half teaspoonful of vanilla extract. Mix the strawberries with the cream and fill the pie. Then lay the strips on top. Serve at once. A delicious pie, quickly and easily prepared.

Blueberry Pudding. Beat three eggs separately, add the yolks to one cup of sugar creamed with one tablespoonful of butter; add alternately two cups of flour sifted with three teaspoons of baking powder, and one cup of milk. Flavor with a little nutmeg and add more flour, if necessary, to make a soft batter. The last moment fold in the whites of the eggs beaten stiff and one-half teaspoon of salt and a quart of berries well dredged in flour. Bake half an hour and serve with cherry sauce. Cream one-quarter cup of butter, add one cup sugar and one cup of stoned cherries.

Raspberry Mousse. Mash a quart of berries, add one-half cup of powdered sugar and one tablespoonful of granulated gelatin which has been soaked in cold water and dissolved in one-quarter cup of hot water. Stir up until the mixture begins to thicken, then add one cup of cream beaten stiff, and fold in one banana cut in thin slices. Turn into a mold, put on ice, and after three hours serve with sponge cake.

CANDLES FOR TIRED EYES. When the excessive light of the gas jet or the electric bulb tires weak eyes, resort to the good old tallow candle. In sick rooms, where a candle would do the best service during the night, it is entirely forgotten, and the tired eyes of the invalid are forced to endure a light that perhaps is constantly working injury, and adding nervousness to the other malady.

Candles could also easily be used to economize on the gas bill. Furnishing a holder with one for each bedroom can be done at small cost with good result.

Shades might also be bought for them at a small cost and give them even a neater appearance and save them from flickering in airy rooms.

For the sick room, wax candles are preferred, as they never produce smoke or smell.

They seem to soothe the nerves of the invalid, and in this way help to produce a restful night.

In spite of the fact that the University of Moscow does not admit women students it is to have the first woman professor ever appointed in Russia. Dr. Donchakova is the woman. She is a graduate of Zurich and is looked upon as an authority in pathology.

Miss Sweet—So you prefer beauty to money? Cholly—Yes, indeed! Beauty is even more lasting than money nowadays.

ROASTING MEAT IN A JAR. "At last I have found a way of roasting meats which costs little in gas and nothing at all in trouble," said a young housekeeper who is fond of cooking and likes to try experiments. "I take a two-gallon butter jar, one that is as wide as it is high. You can get one for 10 cents. I wash the roast, season it to taste and place it in the jar dry—not a drop of water. No, it won't burn and the steam makes the gravy. To keep the steam in I have a good cover, heavily weighted, to hold it down tight. I place the jar over a gas burner with an asbestos mat between and the gas not too high. Then I just let it alone. In a couple of hours or so, according to the size of the roast, it is done to a turn, with gravy golden brown and ready for thickening.

"This process makes even tough meat tender and the gravy is nicer than the gravy of meat roasted in the oven. But what commends it to me is the fact that in roasting meat this way there is no stooping down and scorching your face every few minutes to baste. You can just put the jar over the fire and go out shopping and when you come back put the chief part of your dinner is done. I have prepared six-pound roasts in this way.

"I've made a schedule of the length of time needed for cooking different kinds of meat: For beef, 20 to 40 minutes; chicken, 30 to 35 minutes; pork, 20 to 30 minutes; game duck, 30 to 40 minutes."

SANITARY RULES FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER

The Housewife Should Know That All Supplies Are Pure and Clean.

The food committee of the National Consumers' league, with headquarters in New York city, has just issued a leaflet of sanitary maxims which every housewife should read to tell intelligent consumers what they will not have, and manufacturers will fall in line if they know that there will be no sale for their products unless they conform to the pure food laws. Among the "maxims" are the following:

"Clean water, clean food, clean streets, clean houses, keep us healthy."

At the store—buy food at the cleanest stores only. Buy only clean, fresh food. Refuse to take food handled by dirty hands. Insist upon its being well wrapped. Paper bags are best. Buy only the purest candles.

Is the candy pure and clean that your children buy from the pushcart? Do not buy decayed fruit because it is cheap. Do not buy bread and cake at dirty bakeries. Look into the baking rooms if possible. Are they clean? Examine the packages of cereals for worms before cooking. Packages on standing often become infested with worms and are sometimes found at the best stores.

Does your grocer keep his butter and milk in clean, cold places and are they covered? Does he keep his candies, figs, dates, berries, lettuce, bread, etc., exposed to flies and dust from the street, in shop or show windows? Fly-carry dirt and disease to food and man.

Are your grocer, butcher and baker cleanly in person? Are their clerks cleanly? Urge them to keep their goods off the sidewalk. There is danger of disease in street dirt. Ask the delicatessen storekeeper and the pushcart man to keep their eatables covered. Refuse to buy food sold in open buckets which stand in the store day after day.

In the Kitchen. Keep all food covered in the ice box or cupboard. A paper bag is easily slipped over a pitcher or platter of food to protect it. Save your clean paper bags. Keep your ice box clean and filled with ice if possible. Don't leave food standing around in kitchen or living room. Don't stand in a sink or wash tub. Keep your garbage can clean and covered, and don't stand it near the ice box or where you keep food. Protect All Food From Flies—Wash thoroughly all meat, fish and vegetables and fruit before using. Boil or filter the drinking water if it is not clear. Don't let drinking water stand uncovered. The air of living rooms is full of dirt from human breath and human bodies; therefore air your rooms daily. Keep your cooking utensils clean and off the floor. Vermin and mice carry infection. They never stay in clean places. Don't serve food on a dirty table, nor from dirty utensils. Keep the dishes clean, and everything else that has to do with food. The cook's hands must be clean. Typhoid fever has been contracted from dirty hands. Keep flies out of your house, especially the kitchen.

A Few Milk Rules. Tuberculosis kills 5,000,000 people annually. Milk may be carried through infected milk. Select a milkman who has clean hands, clean clothes, clean wagon, clean cans, clean bottles. Do not select a milkman because he sells milk cheap. Refuse milk that shows a deposit of dirt in the bottom of the bottle. Do not forget that dirt in milk is a menace to health. Do not forget that dirty milk may kill a baby. Always keep pasteurized milk cool. Use at once. Do not forget that germs multiply more rapidly in pasteurized milk than in any other. Do not leave milk uncovered anywhere.

Do not leave milk in a warm room or unchilled ice box. Protect it from flies. Do not leave it out of doors in the sun, or exposed to cats and dogs. Do not use the milk bottles for anything but milk. Wash and scald milk bottles as soon as emptied. Return clean bottles to the milkman. Buy only bottled milk if possible. While these "maxims" may horrify some good housekeepers, who would never think of being guilty of the negligence implied, they are homes with- out number, nice homes, too, where sanitary and hygienic rules are violated constantly. In some of these it is because the housekeeper is young or inexperienced. In others, here the care of the kitchen and marketing are left entirely to servants ignorant or constitutionally careless.

THREE WAYS TO PREPARE VEGETABLES

How to Prepare Spinach. One peck of spinach, washed and boiled until tender and salted when boiling. Drain, pour cold water over it and drain again. Chop fine. Mince two slices of bacon and fry brown, take one large onion minced and fried in bacon fat, leaving bacon in. When done turn in spinach, add three tablespoonfuls of cream, a little flour to thicken, a dash of pepper, and a small spoonful of sugar. Fry thoroughly.

Preparing Lettuce for Use. Rinse and pick the lettuce to pieces. Have a clean cloth ready, lay lettuce in the cloth, fold up, and lay the cloth on the ice about two hours before serving. You will find the lettuce crisp and the water absorbed.

Preparing Radishes for Use. Wash and trim radishes. Place them in a bowl of water, get bowl on the ice two or three hours before using. This makes them hard and crisp and removes the strong taste.

WASHING CUT GLASS. Dust cut glass with a small paint brush having long, pliable bristles; this is far better than a cloth. To wash cut glass use a little borax dissolved in like warm water. This will restore the brilliancy which has been dimmed by washing in common dish water. This treatment is just as good for pressed glass and some of the better grades of pressed glass when well cared for look better than neglected cut glass. Remember that a sudden change of temperature must be avoided with all glass.

There are about 11,315,000 families in France, of which 1,034,720 have no children.