

THE WAY of the WORLD.



CHAPTER XXIII.
ANOTHER VILE PLOT.

No sooner had Groundwig departed on his mission of crime than Manning set himself to prosecuting plans for his marriage and bridal tour with renewed activity.

His first thought was to persuade Mary to name an earlier day for the nuptials, and to this end he assigned as a reason a despatch from some foreign mercantile house, offering him a splendid position with a large salary, provided he could report for duty at a certain day, naming a time that would require his departure within two or three days.

He concluded he could not give Mary such a reason for consenting to change the day fixed for the wedding without danger of exciting her suspicions that all was not right, so he would trust Groundwig.

Mary and several of her intimate friends suggested that the wedding should be at 6 o'clock in the evening, that it should be made a gala day as far as possible, and that the invitations should be general, and the ceremony public.

It was arranged that the beautiful lawn in front of the house should be the place, and the Episcopal clergyman in charge of the church at the County Seat should be invited to solemnize the marriage.

Mary and her assistants at once began making preparations for the great event. The wedding tulle was selected, and nimble fingers fashioned and fitted the bride's gown. It was white silk, without trimmings or decorations or ornaments of any kind. Arrayed in white, she was the prettiest, and in white she looked the more the bride.

It was one of the loveliest days in June. In and around the Nordrum homestead from early morn all was confusion, and everybody about the premises was on the stir, crowding and pushing and trying to help do something. Mary had retired to her chamber, and, assisted by her dressing maid, proceeded to arrange her toilet.

The pleasing and exciting task completed, and the compliments of the bride's maids lavishly bestowed upon her, she asked to be left alone until time to proceed to the altar.

During the days the prospective bride and her friends had been making these preparations, Manning had by no means been idle. With him they were days of excitement, fear, doubt, and rejoicing, and almost the last moments were moments of inexpressible anxiety, overwhelming him with apprehensions of the greatest possible evil.

He first learned of Louis' arrival in New York by the receipt, as operator, of the two messages Louis had sent his mother and Mary. These dispatches were quickly destroyed.

Then Groundwig had conveyed to him the glad tidings of Louis' conviction of grand larceny and the five years' sentence to hard labor in the penitentiary.

Groundwig must be on that. In another minute the train pulled in and pulled out, and Groundwig was the only passenger that alighted. A whispered conference was held between the two, and while talking Manning caught enough of a dispatch that was going over the wire to make him yell with delight.

"Groundwig," exultingly exclaimed Manning, "God in Heaven approves of my acts. The next west-bound train has met with an accident, and will be at least four hours late. That train is the one Patterson must connect with at Jamestown. I shall be married and on the south-bound train, and fifty miles away before he can reach this station. Who says now that fortune don't favor the brave, no matter what they do if their conscience approves their acts?"

"Groundwig, I have won on every side. Mary Nordrum once my wife I will be her such a devoted loving husband will never have cause to think she has been deceived. I will be her slave. Yea, I will die for her. If necessary, I will die to keep her from marrying another. But enough of this. Meet me here in an hour and I will have the money for you that I promised."

"There comes the purchaser of my farm for the deed; he brings the purchase price with him. Go, now, and come at the hour named."

The trade was completed, the money paid, and Manning, jumping into his buggy, drove to the Nordrum place, where he met Mary who appeared somewhat depressed, but in the excitement he paid little attention to it, and telling her the sale of his farm had been consummated, that all the preparations had been made for the bridal tour, that the south-bound train was reported on time, he hurried back to meet his engagement with Groundwig.

The new operator was now in charge of the station. Groundwig, disguised, and hideous, was there impatient and nervous.

Manning came in hurried and excited. He handed his faithful accomplice a roll of banknotes in full satisfaction of all services rendered, and as he turned the operator remarked as though telling an item of ordinary news that the road was just ordered clear of all trains for a special.

Manning, excitedly and confessedly asked: "How far is the line to be cleared?" "To this station."

"A freight or passenger?" "Neither, a locomotive and tender." "When does it start?" "This moment—three thirty."

Not another word was said. Groundwig had been an attentive listener to every word. He understood well what it all meant. More villainy for him.

More labor of love to appease his own hate. Both men stepped out upon the platform. "Clear the track to Sandy Lake," rung in Manning's ears like a funeral dirge at a wedding. The most ominous words of all that had passed over the wires since this bold conspiracy was set on foot.

A special for Louis Patterson and at that moment it must be whirling westward at its greatest possible speed. At this last hour should be, Charles Manning, be foiled and cheated of the hand of her he loved better than life? Never.

There is still one more chance. Now then, for the most desperate means to meet the most desperate case. "Groundwig, for God's sake get your brains to working quick—quicker than ever before! That is Louis Patterson's special. Yes, I know, and I know you know already what I am going to propose."

evidence of his excessive nervous excitement, which would have exhausted that power, and prostrated even a stronger man, had not the prize been the hand of Mary Nordrum.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Have of a Woman's Glance.

She was a piquet little octoiron, with a pretty face and stylish attire. As she started from the curb at a busy junction near the Brooklyn City Hall she gave a pert glance at a well-dressed colored man who happened to halt beside her, and he turned to cross the street, too. The girl reached the opposite curb just as the man reached the middle of the street, and as she turned to walk on she gave another roguish glance and a toss of her head and hurried out of sight. The man's attention was attracted to the girl and he failed to note a swiftly approaching trolley car until it nearly ran him down; then he made a wild leap which would have done credit to a circus clown, and landed on the curb on his hands and knees.

A heavy two-horse team was coming in the other direction; the driver's attention was attracted from his horses to the antics of the man and one of them slipped and went down on its knees. A few yards behind the team was a trolley road switch, and the switchman's attention being diverted to the stumbling team, he neglected to turn the switch, and allowed a car that should have turned off there to run several yards on the wrong track. Another car, following, ran over the switch, others behind it were halted, and at least four cars in all had to back to allow the first car to take the switch. Then, as the second car of the string started to back rather suddenly it barely escaped collision with a car running into the switch from the branch, and, narrowest shave of all, came within a hand's breadth of running down an elderly man who was crossing the street, and who became confused by the shouting and the irregular movements of the cars. And all this the havoc of a woman's eyes.—New York Sun.

Esthetics as to Meats.

Late advices from Europe bring the intelligence that Oscar Wilde does not approve of butcher shops. "They are opposed to all aesthetic principles," says he. "They should be kept hid underground and the meat customers wish to buy they can ask for pictures of the best chops and steaks and choose therefrom without offending their eyes and noses." This is certainly an ingenious suggestion, and we have no doubt that our leading butchers will act upon it. Aside from the aesthetics of the new way of marketing will do much for the art of photographing. Instead of going a long way to the meat market Saturday forenoon the woman will simply telephone Friday night for "proofs of the best spareribs," or will inquire if "the negatives of those sausages we had last winter" are still preserved. Further stimulus will be given to experiments in photography by persons who dote on sweet-breads, kidneys, tripe, and liver. For, by persuading calves, sheep, and pigs to swallow small cameras, and then taking electric flash light views of their insides, butchers can furnish photographs of those viands months ahead of the season. The experiment is well worth trying.—Buffalo Courier.

Geographical Joke.

The Japanese are a very polite people, but they sometimes like to play a joke. In a roundabout, Oriental way, upon the men of the West. In the days of the second Empire Baron Gros was sent to Japan to demand the opening of certain ports to French commerce. Among the rest he named to the Japanese ministers a certain city.

The Japanese functionaries smiled so broadly when he preferred the request that the French Ambassador asked them to tell him what gave them so much amusement; but instead of answering, the Japanese minister said: "We will open the port in question, my lord, if France, in her turn, will open a certain port to us."

"What port is that?" asked the Frenchman. "The port of Liverpool." "But, your excellencies," laughing, "Liverpool is not a French port, but an English one." "Yes?" answered the Japanese. "And the port you named to us is not in Japan, but in Corea!" The French Ambassador was compelled to admit that the joke was upon him.—Youth's Companion.

A Hotel "Hoodoo."

A short, heavy-set man entered the Holland House recently and wrote his name on the register. As he dropped the pen he closed the register with a bang. "Don't do that," exclaimed one of the clerks, hurriedly opening the register again. "Why not? Too much noise?" asked the guest. "No. It kills business," said the clerk. "I am not superstitious, but it is well known that a shut register means a poor business. You cannot find a hotel clerk in town who will not say the same thing."

"What cures the evil once it is done?" asked the guest. "Keep the register upside down for two hours," said the clerk. "I will wager that not a register in one of the big hotels is closed four times a year, unless it is done by the guests before the clerks can prevent it." Clerks at the Fifth Avenue, Hoffman, Crunswick, and Buckingham hotels corroborated their brother of the Holland House.—New York Sun.

A DRESSMAKER'S DILEMMA.

I'm but a simple dressmaker in quite a humble way. Who takes to do her duty and would never disobey. A plain common-sense girl in the Empire State.

Now Uncle Jim who preaches in the chapel over these. And looks his little back-wards though I've also heard him swear. Came in to me the other night and solemnly sat down. And said: "Mamma, let me see your hat unbuttoned down."

I know he hated fashions, but I thought I'd brought the dress. He took the sheets, examined them and cried in triumph: "Yes. I feared to touch your style in gowns as you do in hats. As you've brought yourself beneath the proper's curse."

Looked in blank amazement at my uncle, was he mad? What could he find so awful in a simple shoulder cape? This year, since I had heard that ladies' shoulders should be high. We had to pad the use sea; Paris to him, not I.

He to my Bible from the shelf before my wondering eyes. And found the thirteenth chapter of Ezekiel's prophecies. And "read," said he, "the thirteenth verse. Thus saith the Lord God: 'Woe to the woman that seweth to all around her.'" To the woman that seweth to all around her? Is it so?

The words were there as clear as day. "And now," said Uncle Jim, "just close between the prophet's curse and fashion's latest whim. 'Thou Ezekiel had in mind, to you the Lord with 'Woe.' If you dress from this time another pad you sew."

This saying he departed, and I tared the matter up. And after half an hour felt no wiser than before. At least I thought I'd venture forth, to ease my troubled mind. And ask our learned rector, who is always very kind.

I found him in his study, and in listening to my I thought he laughed a little, though I could not see his face. And then he opened his sin books and certain foot notes read. "The authorized translation is not quite correct," he said.

A SECOND-HAND GIRL.

"Another room is gone," said Betsey. "Oh?" said Mrs. Moore. "Why, the ceiling came down plump in the north chamber last night," explained Betsey, standing in the doorway, with the mop in one hand and a pail of water in the other. "Looks exactly as if there'd been an avalanche of lime dust there. Guess it was the rain done it. I've known that ruff was leaky this good while. An' it's my duty to tell ye, ma'am, the back staircase ain't safe to use no longer. There's one step gone and the balusters loose. And cook says she's that nervous she can't stay in the house with the loose bricks tumbling down the kitchen chimney every time the wind rises a bit."

Mrs. Moore sighed. She was a handsome, high-featured woman with dark eyes and a shabby-kenteel silk wrapper worn at the elbows. "Ne'er mind, Betsey," said she. "It'll be all right, once Miss Ethel's married. Doctor Darrow is a man of wealth. He will rebuild the old Moore homestead for us."

"Well," muttered Betsey, "it's a good thing the wedding's coming soon, or there wouldn't be no house left to rebuild."

At the same moment a pretty young gypsy of sixteen was rushing frantically into one of the great, sparsely furnished bedrooms with a pasteboard box in her hand. Overhead plump little plaster Cupids swung garlands of flowers from the cracked and discolored cornice; a faded rug supplied the place of carpet, and the merry sunshine played hide-and-seek with the worn places in the yellow damask curtains, and a beautiful young girl sat at a rheumatic writing-desk, with her chin supported in her hands and her sea blue eyes fixed dreamily on space.

"Ethel! Ethel! Here's another box come by express!" screamed the young sister, breathless with rapture. "It must be the veil! Do open it, and look! Do, Ethel, please. Oh, I never saw a wedding veil before in all my life, and I do so want to see what it's like!"

Ethel Moore looked up. "You can open it," said she, without change of posture. "Well, I declare," said Milly, "any one would think I was the bride! Well, here goes! Oh, oh! isn't it beautiful?"

Ethel leaned forward a little and scrutinized the delicate folds of lace more closely. "Yes," she said indifferently, "it's pretty enough. But it's the wrong pattern; it doesn't match the flounces and the jabot." "Only three days now, and the wrong pattern of lace! What are people thinking of?"

"Oh, let it stay!" listlessly uttered Ethel. "What difference does it make whether it is one pattern or another?" "What difference?" Millicent looked hard at her sister. "Oh, Ethel, Ethel! I'm so sorry Cousin Jim is coming to the wedding!"

ant, deep-toned voice. "But can you tell me the way to Moore's Cliff?"

Milly turned, and saw a handsome man, with a light valise in his hand. "To Moore's Cliff?" she repeated. "Why, I am Millicent Moore, and I'm going straight there! I—think—you must be Jim!"

"That is my name," he answered brightly. "And you are little Milly, of course?"

She looked gravely at him. He could almost read the sudden changes of thought in her blue, solemn eyes and varying color.

"Please get into the cart," said she. "I suppose I must take you to the Cliff, as there's no depot wagon here. But," touching the phlegmatic pony with her whip-lash, "I'm almost sorry you're come."

"Sorry? Why, little Milly! And I thought we were to be such friends," he cried.

"I think perhaps I'd better tell you all about it," said she, speaking as if she had not heard his words. "No one knows it all but me and Ethel. Ethel won't be pleased, but—oh—oh, Jim, hadn't you better go away without seeing her?"

"Go away without seeing her! And why?"

"Oh," faltered Milly, letting the reins drop, "she's so unhappy! She's going to be married to a very rich man—Doctor Darrow from New York. We are so poor, you know, and all that money that papa invested in the Grand Tochoomey bank's gone, and Moore's Cliff is all falling to ruin, and mamma's cried three days and three nights, and so Ethel said 'Yes.' But oh, she is so miserable. And if you come back, Jim, the old love will burn up again in her heart, for she does love you, Jim—she told me so. She has loved you ever since that time you exchanged rings at Saratoga; and she has got the little blue ring still. And she hates the very idea of marrying Doctor Darrow—only—only—mamma has made her feel that it was her duty. Oh, don't look so stern and white at me, Jim—dear Jim! It's a dreadful thing to have to tell you, but I think you ought to know. Please, please don't ever let mamma or Ethel know that I said this to you. But if you could make them believe you were engaged to somebody else," said Milly, with a sudden flush of hope dyeing her cheek, "then I think Ethel might learn to be happy with the New York man."

"Engaged to somebody else, eh?" said this unknown confidant. "But to whom? To yourself, for example?"

"Yes. Why not?" said Milly, with the utmost gravity. "Merely as a business matter, you know. We'll call it me—only you must go away, Jim, and not see her again."

"Stop the horse," he said, quietly. "Wait until I can lift my valise out, and good-by, my little fiancée!"

"You are really going?" rapturously exclaimed Milly, clapping her small gauntleted hands. "Oh, Jim, how good of you—how noble! I almost think I love you now. And remember, this is for Ethel's sake."

"For Ethel's sake?" repeated her companion, and he smiled and nodded. "I shall reach the station by this cross-cut through the woods," he said, "in time for the next down train, and—"

The close of the sentence was lost in the clatter of a tinware wagon that just then jolted along, inclining the Moore pony to mad emulation, and, before Milly could check his enthusiasm, she was nearly at the tumble-down gates of the old mansion itself.

Ethel herself was in the tangled rose garden, gathering white and cream colored and royal roses—Ethel, more flushed and lovelier than any princess; and beside her, under the full radiance of the June sunshine, strolled a tall, handsome young man, carrying the basket and the scissors.

Broth. But mamma is to have the settlement just the same; to rebuild Moore's Cliff with, and there is a thousand a year for me as long as I live. Oh, Jim, I don't deserve it—I won't take it!"

"Yes, you will," said business-like Jim—"you will take all you can get. We can't live on air, you know, darling, and my income is rather slim as yet. He's a good old duffer—"

"Old?" half angrily interrupted Ethel. "No older than your self! But what does this mean—about the ring? He's a I am to give it to Millicent for her self. She will know what it means. Well, if this isn't the strangest riddle!"

Milly looked defiantly at her sister when the message was delivered to her.

"But I won't take the ring," she said, half hysterically, resisting Ethel's effort to slip the suterb diamond solitaire on her finger.

"You must," said Ethel. "Jim's turquoise is a deal more precious to me than this great gem. The wedding is to come off just the same, but Jim is to be the groom. Oh, what are diamonds to me? I am so very, very happy."

"And this is all you care for, Doctor Darrow's noble generosity," said Milly, with scarlet cheek and quick coming breath. "No, I won't wear the ring. I'll keep it, and—and sometimes look at it. Oh, what a fool I was! And why'd I say all those things? There's only one thing that remains to me—I must go to work and learn to be a great painter as soon as possible, so that I can pay back the money which mamma and Ethel are using so mercilessly."

It was just a year afterward, and Millicent Moore was sitting on the ruined stone terrace feeding her pet peacock Le Roy with kernels of corn.

Her open sketch book lay beside her, the sweet summer wind was ruffling her curls, when LeRoy uttered a discordant sound and flew away, startled by the presence of a stranger.

Milly sprang up. "Doctor Darrow!" she exclaimed. "Call me Jim, as you did the first day," he said. "Little Milly, you don't know what you saved me from when you mistook me for the cousin whom you had never seen. Don't shrink away so, Milly. Have you forgotten that you are engaged to me?"

Through all the previous year Milly had been rehearsing this very scene to herself. She had planned the exact phrasology in which she would express our appreciation, her polite indifference. He should never know that she liked him. She would let him see that she regarded the whole thing as a joke, and yet now that the time had come, she was struck dumb, and sat blushing and silent like any school girl.

"Milly," he said gently, "Don't shrink away from me. A year ago I believed that life had no more charm or me; but thinking of those blue eyes of yours, I have come to a different conclusion. Dearest, you engaged yourself to me as a mere matter of form. Will you do it again—this time in real earnest?"

And the end of Milly's carefully studied speech was— "Yes."

So there was a Mrs. Darrow in the Moore family, after all, and when Ethel Elliott, in a shabby pension at Luce n, read the marriage notice, she exclaimed scornfully.

"Well, I never thought Millicent would take up with a second-hand sweetheart!"

Milly Elliott made no reply; he was gloomily surveying a pile of unrecipited bills.

"Do you hear, Jim?" asked his wife sharply. "Millicent is married, and to my old beau."

"Yes, I hear," he answered abstractedly.

"Well, why don't you say something about it?"

"I've only one thing to say," snarled the Spanish faced hero "any idiot who gets married does a very stupid thing. Five hundred francs milliner's bill—a hundred francs board. Good heavens! what is going to become of us?"

"I thought you loved me, Jim. I'm sure Doctor Darrow did."

"Th'n I wish you had married him," said Elliott, deliberately.—Wav'ry Magazine.

A Hundred Dollars a Dozen.

A Polish resident of the western part of the city is firmly convinced that it is better to have a dozen chickens stolen than not to find a pocketbook with \$100 in it. This Polish citizen had been out of employment for several months, and his means of support for his family gradually dwindled until the chickens were about all he had left. And then one night somebody stole the chickens. It seemed as if he had had about all he could endure before but this was the last straw. He grazed disconsolately into the coop. Something unusual lay on the ground in front of him. His eye brightened and he sprang forward and picked it up. It was a pocketbook. Flashed and with trembling hands he tore it open. Money! Money galore! First, ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred dollars! And, strange to say, the man who stole the chickens has not been back after the pocketbook.—South Bend (Ind.) Tribune.

No It Seemed.

The following conversation is reported by Good News. The city in which it occurred is not named. Unhappily it might be one of several.

"Where have you been?" said Dick. "Down town with papa," answered Henry. "We went into the Street Cleaning Department."

"What's that?"

"It's a place where they tell people why the streets are not cleaned."

The crazy people are not all in the asylum.