

# WOMAN AGAINST WOMAN.

BY MRS. M. E. HOLMES.

## CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"Laws, there's those two young women," he exclaimed, breaking off his conversation.

"I mean just go and wake them, to be sure."

The farmers nodded, and slouched away, all but one man, who was rubbing down his pony with some hay.

"Hi, landlors!" he cried, stopping the inn-keeper. "I want you?"

"What is it?" asked the other gruffly.

"Did you say two young women were here?" demanded the man in a low voice.

"I did."

The stranger nodded.

"What like?"

"Well, one's a poor, pale, weak thing, and the other's a bold, black-eyed wench, good to look at."

Count Jura's brow met; he thought for one second.

"The pale thin one is my wife," he said, boldly, at last, "and the other is her maid; she has enticed her mistress to run away."

"Laws, you don't say!" ejaculated the man in astonishment.

"Where did they say they were going to, my good man?"

"Lunnon by the first train."

"Ah, I thought so. Now listen to me. Go up and wake them. Let them get to the station. See here is five pounds; it shall be yours if you do as I ask. I must get my wife back, but she is in the power of that other woman. When the train is just going to start, call the maid back about some mistake in the bills, and I shall get my wife safely away. You understand?"

"Aye, sir, quite. I'll help you, and most willing. Laws, to think I let such a bold hussy into my house!"

"Be quick. I shall be at the station."

Count Jura led his pony across the road to the station. It was empty. He beckoned to a porter.

"Get me a carriage," he said, authoritatively, carrying the diamonds in his hand, the cloak hung over his arm; "and look here, a pale, thin, yellow-haired lady is coming; bring her to the same carriage. She is my wife."

"All right, sir." The porter touched his hat and pocketed the fee.

Count Jura put the diamonds safely under the seat and sat down peering behind the curtain to see the two women enter.

He saw Alice's slender form, the hood drawn over her golden hair, and behind her Myra's pale, revengeful face; the landlord following them, detaining them in arguing.

Alice shrank back frightened. The engine whistled; Myra motioned her to go; the porter lifted her into the carriage; Myra, white with anger, followed; but an arm was thrust out against her, she heard Alice's scream of terror; she saw Jura's triumphant face; there was a rush of shouting in her ears; then came the sound of a loud report, the sensation of sharp and awful pain, and Myra sank to the platform insensible, as the train with her betrayer and his victim steamed away.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

As the train moved away, Alice started to her feet and screamed wildly.

All that had passed had been so swift, she scarcely realized what happened; but the sight of Count Jura's dark face, and the revolver in his hand, roused her fear to its utmost.

"Let me go!" she cried wildly, struggling against his hold. "You have shot her! Coward! Let me go! I will—"

"Be silent!" hissed the man fiercely, pushing her down into a corner, and drawing her cloak across her mouth.

"Another word, and I serve you as I served her."

Alice shrank back, cowed by his brutal words and grew faint, and her eyes closed.

"Good!" muttered Jura as he watched her. "Now let us understand one another. You are in my power. I intend to take you abroad. You cannot resist me. I shall proclaim you as my wife, no one can deny it. You wear a ring. If you attempt to escape I shall say you are mad. So one will gainsay that. You comprehend me?"

Alice made no sign.

He bent forward, and took her hand. It was limp and still. Her fear was lost in a dead faint.

"So much the better," he muttered. "That was cleanly done. Myra will not trouble me much more, I think. Will they stop me at Uxton?" He bit his lip suddenly. "Great Heavens! I never thought of that. They will trap me like a dog! What shall I do—what shall I do?"

He gazed out of the window as they whirled along swiftly.

He saw they were approaching a small village.

In an instant his determination was taken.

He touched the signal to stop the train—again; then again.

In a few seconds the train came to a full stop just beyond the few scattered cottages, and in another instant the guard was at the door in alarm.

"My wife is taken suddenly ill," explained Count Jura, abruptly. "We must lift her out."

"What is it?" demanded the guard excitedly.

"She suffers from heart disease. This is a sort of faint. The action of the train will kill her. Help me to lift her. There, that's right. We have no luggage."

The guard bore away Alice's motionless form, and placed her on the incline of ground beside the lines, while the Count grasped the diamonds firmly, put them down, carefully covered with the cloak, then knelt beside the girl, and began to try and restore her.

"Do not let me keep you," he said to the guard. "She will be better directly. I will get help from the village."

"One instant, sir. Your name and address, I must have that."

"Frank Merdith," said Count Jura. "London's Inn Fields, London."

The guard nodded, and the cart moved slowly away.

The Count stared at the strange man standing at the entrance to the station, and feeling that he had been deceived, he turned and addressed a man who had just entered the station.

"Where do you stop next?" he asked hurriedly.

"Not until we reach Uxton—a good hour's journey on, sir. Sorry I can't stay to help you. Hope your good lady will soon be all right. Good-day, sir."

The guard blew the whistle, jumped into his compartment, and once more the train was in motion, and speedily lost to sight.

Count Jura watched it eagerly.

"That was a bold move," he muttered, "but it was the only thing. Now, what to do next? Let her faint out; it is the safest thing that could happen. She will scream, perhaps; if so, I must gag her."

An ugly look passed over his face, then he bent over Alice once again; he stood upright, and scanned the road.

The village seemed deserted, but while he was debating whether it would be wise to leave the senseless girl alone with the diamonds while he made inquiries, his eye caught sight of a cart coming leisurely along.

It was a miller's dray, drawn by three stout horses, going in the same direction as the train had gone.

Count Jura halted it, and in a very few minutes the driver was beside him.

"Dint of much eloquence he persuaded the man to believe his tale, and to consent to the traveling in the cart as far as the nearest town, and then lifting Alice easily between them, they placed her on some sackings at the bottom of the cart.

Count Jura placed his precious diamonds beside her, jumped in himself, and very soon they were lumbering along heavily.

He watched Alice like a lynx; the jolting motion soon began to oppress her, and he answered the driver's questions briefly while he kept his eye on her.

At the first look of returned consciousness, under pretense of making her comfortable, he bent over her.

"Scream or utter one word," he muttered fiercely, "and I shoot you like a dog."

Alice shrank away from his flashing eyes; all that she had undergone had undermined her strength; the fatigue and walking of the night before made every limb ache, she could not make any resistance to his cowardly threats; she had grown as weak as a child, but her brain worked wildly.

What was happening? Where was she going? Would no one come to her aid?

She sent up a prayer for help and release—if need be, for death, rather than be longer in this man's power.

Seeing her lie so quiet, Count Jura put it down to fright, and was well satisfied.

This girl was no spitfire, like Myra; he should be able to manage her well.

He talked to the driver leisurely and managed to extract the knowledge he required.

The town they were approaching was some forty miles from Moretown, and branched off the line that led to Uxton. There he could get a train that would take him to one of the big manufacturing towns, lie hidden there for a day or two, then creep cautiously to London, and from there abroad.

He reckoned at the rate they were going it would be quite mid-day before they reached the town, but he was well content.

If the stationmaster at Moretown had telegraphed at once to Uxton to stop him there it would be an hour and a half, or nearly two hours before the news that he had escaped would reach Moretown, and as, he thought contemptuously, there would be only one or two policemen handy, the chances were the whole thing would get into a good muddle, and he would get comfortably away.

Not one shred of pity was in his heart for the girl he was carrying away. He was lost to everything but love and desire. No woman had ever inflamed his heart as this fair, lovely, slender creature did, and he swore she should be his. As for Myra, the woman he had ruined, a sense of gratification that she was, perchance, dead was all her memory brought. He had long wearied of her, and sought to be rid of her.

He sat smoking comfortably as the cart joggled along, making his plans with calm minuteness, while Alice lay in an agony of fear, shame, and weakness. Her mind was peopled with many visions. She seemed to go back to her childhood, and saw once again the face of that lovely woman she had spoken of when Roy's mother had questioned her.

Then all the cruelty, the harshness of Aunt Martha, then that dark night, the ghastly murder in the woods, the memory of Roy's pale, handsome face, and then her hurried marriage.

Then her mind went over all the unkindness that followed, and yet strangely through it all ran the picture of her husband's tender face as he looked at her the last night they were together.

A faint thrill of happiness went through her heart as she recalled his gentle words; even Valerie's revengeful form melted away, naught remained but him; and he was lost now—lost to her forever! she should never see him again. Though he might not have cared for her, though he had been cold and unjust, she loved him, and would love him on through all time.

She was awakened from her dreams by Count Jura shaking her roughly.

"Get up," he muttered; "we are here. Now, remember what I have said. Give me your hand. One word—a murmur, and you are dead!"

Alice staggered to her feet, and he drew her cloak and hood carefully round her.

She was in the maze of fear and weakness again; the driver, catching a glimpse of her white face, exclaimed sympathetically.

"Laws, be she so bad as that, poor lass!"

"She'll be better directly. Many thanks, my good man; this way to the station, you say?"

The driver nodded, and the cart moved slowly away.

The Count stared at the strange man standing at the entrance to the station, and feeling that he had been deceived, he turned and addressed a man who had just entered the station.

grasping the diamonds tightly. "My wife is ill."

"One just here, sir," the man answered kindly. "Shall I give you a hand? It's only a step."

The hotel proved to be up a quiet court, and Count Jura slipped ashilling into the man's hand, put Alice into a chair while he ordered a room.

"We are going to Bournemouth," he said decisively; "shall only require it for an hour or so for my wife to rest. She is not strong."

The landlady and two sympathetic maids helped Alice upstairs, and he followed closely in case she should speak to them.

She made no effort to do this—indeed, she had lost all knowledge of what was passing.

The landlady was loud in her pity.

"You can't move her, sir," she declared; "she is just done—she is very ill."

"Pooh, nonsense! She is often like that; in fact—she hesitated an instant, then said boldly, "in fact, she is not quite right in her head, so, of course, she looks strange."

"Lor, sir! you do astonish me!" exclaimed the woman. "So sweet and pretty, too!"

"Yes—yes. Bring me something to eat, and a 'Bradshaw.' We must get to Bournemouth by to-night."

"I'll send you one at once, but the next train, sir, I know doesn't start till high evening."

Count Jura suppressed the oath he was uttering till she was gone.

"That's devilish unlucky, but it strikes me she's just about right in one thing—my Lady Alice is going to be ill. Have I frightened her too much? It will be a fix if she can't be moved. Anyway, we are safe here until to-morrow morning, and then, ill or well, she must go."

Valerie paced her room like a caged tigress. She could have torn her tongue out for the wild, foolish words she had uttered before Geoffrey Armistead, and now all was lost. Her revenge had failed; shame, disgrace, discovery, lay before her.

Paul, her brother, was below—a thief, a convict—an eternal humiliation.

She came suddenly to a standstill. Two of the gang had been taken; who was the other? Had Jura been caught? If so, what had become of Alice? She must know all.

She rang her bell, and her maid appeared.

"Bring me some coffee," she commanded, sinking in a languid attitude on a chair as the woman came in; "my nerves are quite upset."

"I'll bring it at once, miss," answered the maid. "I should think you was upset, miss. The castle seems turned topsy-turvy, and it's just horrid to think of them awful robbers being kept here."

"Keep here, Janet! What do you mean? Valerie started with well-feigned surprise.

"Why, they are in the treasure-rooms, miss, with two policemen guarding them."

"Bring me the coffee at once."

Valerie stood upright as the girl withdrew.

"In the treasure-rooms!" she repeated. "I must get down. Paul must escape. I cannot bear the degradation. Miserable wretch, he has dragged me deep enough into the mire! And Jura, I must see if he is there."

She mused thoughtfully till the maid returned with the coffee.

"Where is everybody, Janet?" she asked, indifferently.

"My lady is in her room with a strange gentleman, and the Earl, with two others and a policeman, has just ridden away to Moretown, I think I heard say."

"You may go, Janet. Don't come to me before dinner. My head aches. I shall try and rest."

She put down the coffee when alone, and with swift trembling hands changed her long gown for a black walking one.

She wound some black lace round her head and neck, then, unfastening her door, stole out.

The corridor was silent. She turned toward the wing in which poor Alice had lived in solitary grandeur. She concluded that in all probability the staircase and door down which Alice had been carried that night would be unlocked; she could creep down and in some way get Paul to speak with her.

She was right. The door was unlocked—the whole of the wing was deserted. Since Alice had gone no one had been near her apartments.

She stole down the steps; the treasure-rooms were to the right. A door leading into them stood at the bottom of the steps, and here she paused.

Outside in the grounds she could hear the two policemen chatting together, then the prisoners were alone in the room.

## [TO BE CONTINUED.]

### Longevity Among Federal Employees

The longevity statistics of Government employees gathered by the Dockery commission are interesting. It seems that there are 1,416 clerks 60 years old and over, 741 between 60 and 65 years of age, 376 between 65 and 70, 182 between 70 and 75, 66 between 75 and 80, 33 between 80 and 85, 6 between 85 and 90, and one who is past 90. There are 2,578 clerks between 25 and 30, the numerous-age class; 2,344 between 30 and 35, 2,033 between 35 and 40. Of the 17,076 clerks in the departmental service, 4,761 are under 40 years of age. Some of the older people have been many years in the Government service; 6,938 clerks have served for ten years, 1,380 from twenty-five to forty years and thirty for forty years or more, while one has worked at his desk sixty years.—Good Government.

### How "Tommy Atkins" Got His Name

I am much obliged to the many correspondents who from time to time enlighten me as to the origin of the name "Tommy Atkins." To save further trouble, however, I may as well mention once for all that I am in possession of what I believe to be all the information accessible on this important matter of history. I have always understood that "Thomas Atkins, private," was the name of a soldier's account issued by the war office many years ago, and more than this I don't know anybody can tell.—London Truth.

### GRETCHEN AND KATCHEN.

Gretchen and Katchen, the two little maids, were pretty white caps; their right faces I said; they're dead like twin sisters from her-bid to show. And both have round eyes of forget-me-not blue.

But Gretchen 's in motion from morning till night; she runs, and she skips, and she jumps with delight; while Katchen won't move, even when she's bid. Because she's a dolly of china and kid.

Said Gretchen to Katchen, "We're left all alone; we'll just have a quiet good time of our own; you'll ride on your wagon to call on the cat. To take her some cherries, and have a long chat."

"In the vine-covered arbor the table we'll spread, and lead it with cherries, all shining and red; I'll pick out the ripest from those on the shelf, for sleepy straw green-eyes, and you, and myself."

"I'll do all the talking for you and for her, since you, my poor Katchen, cannot even purr. I never eat cherries, I thank you says she, and then there'll be more for my Katchen and me!"

They called on Frau Green-Eyes, the sleepy old dame, and gave little Katchen rode back as she came. With never a spot on her kid finger-tips; but gay little Gretchen had purple-stained lips! —T. Nicholas.

## OVERREACHED.

Once in the course of a medical career of nearly fifty years I saved a patient's life. In other cases I have my doubts; but that one I'm certain of. You'll take another cigarette? What, no? Then black coffee! The patient was a lady—youthful, and not unpleasant. That gave me an interest in the case. She lived at Surbiton. I had never seen her before. I was called in for this particular illness; but one day her husband came to my house in Harley Street, and wanted me to go down post-haste with him to look at her. He was particularly anxious to get a first-rate London specialist's opinion. They had a general practitioner down at their own place, he said, but that wasn't enough for him, he distrusted G. P.'s. He insisted upon getting the very best advice for her.

A tall, dark man, the husband, with keen, deep-sunken eyes. He looked like a Spaniard, and might have been Grand Inquisitor. But what struck me most about him was the queer little fact that, though he expressed the greatest anxiety, and desire to show the deepest affection, I couldn't help feeling it was my opinion that he wanted far more than my assistance.

He laid great stress upon the point of my being an undoubted authority. Whatever I thought of the case he would know it was right. He didn't care about the diagnosis of these suburban doctors; he didn't trust their prognosis; but if I told him his wife would live, he could be sure she would recover; and if I told him—well, the worst—why, he knew he must accept it with resignation. (Cambria pocket-handkerchiefs.)

I went down with him and saw her. She was very ill indeed. A most pathetic woman. She aroused my keenest sympathy. But it was the queerest case I ever knew in my life. I could make nothing of it. I told her husband she was seriously ill; I doubted her recovery, she had sunk so low but I didn't understand it. His eyes had an inscrutable gleam in them when I told him that; but he answered very anxiously:

"Can't you put a name to it? It would be satisfactory at least to know what it is that's the matter with her."

"No, I can't," I replied. "In the whole course of my experience I never yet saw anything like it."

His face fell a little. Long medical practice has made me observe the quick shades of emotion that pass over faces.

"I was in hopes you would have understood it," he said, very slowly, with a hard look into my eyes, pointing each word with emphasis. "It was for that I went to the best London authority. I thought these suburban men might fail to make it out, but that I was sure of an opinion from a great London specialist. They told me your forte was diagnosis."

Clever of him. I felt at the time, to try thus to work upon my professional pride, and my professional susceptibilities. He fancied he could force or cajole me into giving it a name. That was decidedly sharp of him, but it over shot the mark. It gave me the first real clue to the real nature of her illness.

Next day, and next again, I went down to see my patient. Money was no object, the affectionate husband said often. All he wanted was to be sure his dear wife had the benefit of the very best medical advice and assistance. The third day I was puzzled; I took my assistant down with me without telling him why. I sent him in to see her. When he came out I said to him:

"Well, Harvey, what do you make of it?"

"I don't make anything of it," he answered. "I can't. It looks to me unique. I don't in the least understand it."

"Neither do I," I replied, stroking my chin. "That's why I brought you to see it."

We sat and stared at each other in silence for a minute. Then my assistant said very dubiously:

"The fact is, Sir, Everard, it appears to me—"

"Well, go on man. Out with it."

"Not a case of natural disease at all, but a case of poisoning."

"Precisely my opinion," I answered, giving a start. "I brought you here to confirm it."

I went into the sick woman's room again.

"I want to ask you a question," I said, in as soothing a voice as possible. "You may think it an odd one. Is there anybody who would benefit in any way by your death?"

She gazed at me sadly.

"No soul," she answered. "All

I have in the world I've left by will to dear Archie."

That settled the question. I felt sure I knew a prescription that would cure her. I went down again to the dining-room. The husband was there, sitting uneasily by the window. He looked at me with an anxious face.

"Well, I've formed an opinion on the case at last," I said, "and so has Dr. Harvey here, but perhaps it may distress you or annoy you to hear it."

He glanced nervously at my assistant, then at me in return. I had placed myself on purpose so that both our eyes were upon him from every angle. He shuddered in his chair.

"Oh, I'm prepared for the worst," he answered, with a sickly smile. "I know she can't recover."

"Then do you desire me to give you the honest opinion I've formed?" I asked, "at the risk of offending you?"

"Yes, I want your opinion," he answered; but his lips quivered faintly. "It's that I called you in for."

I stared straight in his eyes. I fixed him with mine. He couldn't avoid them without catching Harvey's.

"Then my opinion is this," I said, slowly and distinctly, "that if your wife dies you'll be hanged for it."

He never moved a muscle of his face, but his color went with a rush. He was white as a ghost in a moment. He rose with an effort.

"This is a mauvaise plaisanterie," he cried, "at such a time as this."

"No, it is not a mauvaise plaisanterie," I answered, very grim, "but a simple statement of my medical opinion. Look here, Mr. So-and-so, we are two, you are one. Now, I give you a fair warning. This lady up stairs is being slowly poisoned. Unless she recovers, we will hold you answerable. You wanted the best advice. Well, now you have got it. I don't suppose you can deceive me by using a little poison. I won't let you murder her. Your wife must recover. I have my eye upon you. If anything ever happens to her, now or hereafter, I shall take good care there is full inquiry; and so will Dr. Harvey. I say no more than that; and I wish you a very good morning. To-morrow, when I come, I shall expect to see a marked improvement."

And so I did. She was decidedly better. In three weeks she was well. In a month she was at Harrogate. I never deceived her. She loved the creature, and I allowed her to go on loving him. But I confess I was relieved when, four years later, he providentially broke his wretched neck on the Schreckhorn. It unburdened my mind of the responsibility of watching him.

In other cases I have my doubts; but in that one I am confident I really saved my patient's life—and I should think you agree with me.—Boston True Flag.

### HUMORED OR HUMBLED.

No Amount of Beating Will Make an Obstinate Camel Budge an Inch.

Camels are not like horses, says the Ashton Reporter. If a horse does not want to do anything we make him. If a camel does not want to do anything he leaves it undone. No amount of coaxing, no amount of cruelty will make him budge. He has the determination of a mule combined with the strength of an elephant. A camel is one of those aggravating brutes which will drive a hot-tempered man to distraction. Nothing will persuade him to listen to reason. He will oppose your will with a passive resistance that is absolutely unbreakable. The only way to treat a camel is to humor if you cannot humbug him. They will often lie down if you load them with the proverbial last straw, and you might beat them to death or offer up all the pleasures of paradise before they would get up. They are pig-headed beasts. Sometimes when they have quite a light load they turn nasty and throw themselves to the ground. But although they are obstinate, they are not cute, and an Arab, by pretending to submit, can generally get the better of the stubborn beast. The drivers will ostentatiously remove three or four packages from the load, and the animal with an inward chuckle of satisfaction, rises at once, without perceiving that the parcels have meanwhile been returned to their former place. As he flatters himself he has shirked some of his duty he swings away with a light heart, gratified beyond measure, like a spoiled child, at having it his own way. The camel is an unsociable beast. He is also habitually dull, except when he is sniffing the salt air of the desert. When he is treading the sands, with the burning sun on his back and the boundless waste before him, he feels himself at home. The immense heat makes him bubble over with pleasure and fills his frame with sublime intoxication. It has been stated on the best authority that he can go nine days without water. And if you had ever seen a camel drink water when he does get a chance of quenching his thirst you would not be surprised at this. They have been known to put away seven gallons and a half at a time.

Hard to Please.

Susy is a young lady of five years and also of a very difficult disposition. The other day a visitor at her father's house found Susy weeping bitterly in the corner.

"Why, what are you crying about?" she was asked.

"Cause all my b-brother and sisters have a v-v-vacation, and I don't have any! Boo-hoo!"

"And why don't you have an vacation?"

"Cause—I—I don't go to school!"

### CHLOROFORM IN EARLY DAYS.

A Student's Experience With the New Anæsthetic in 1841.

Your notice of the discovery of chloroform in 1841; recalls a curious experience in my Cambridge undergraduate life, say a writer in the London News. One evening in January, 1851, I went into a chemist's shop and ordered more photographic chemicals to be sent to my rooms hard by. I was loitering on the parade. Seeing an ounce bottle of chloroform on the counter, I bought it out of curiosity and took it away with me, leaving the chemicals to follow. In my own rooms,