

The Iron-Worker's Daughter

BY
HOWARD FORRESTER.

CHAPTER XI.

The furnaces in Star Mill were glowing. The heat-up fires in some reminded one of slumbering volcanoes, while the glare of others blinded the workmen. Scores of workmen were stirring the depths of the puddling furnaces. Workmen here and there mopped their faces, bare arms and shoulders.

The great rolls, glowing in the light of the furnaces, revolved continuously as the finishers tossed the hot bars between them, to be snapped up and whirled through their death agony. The clang of iron falling on the cooling plates, the shouts of the workmen, and the roar of the titan-like machinery, filled the air as the mill took in pig metal, weighed, broke and melted it, boiled it in the furnaces, vomited the metal out in huge balls, which were caught in the jaws of the "squeezers," squeezed into billets, which were reheated, and passed through great and small rolls, and tossed out and straightened on the cooling plates.

Mr. Meeker had just driven into the mill yard and fastened his horse, when the new manager approached him.

"What is it, Gummitt?"

"I want to speak to you."

"Come into the office."

He led the way into his private room, and awaited the manager's communication in silence. Gummitt cleared his throat.

"It's about Atherton. His furnace—"

"Sam," said the mill owner dryly, "if it is about Atherton—nothing else—make it as short as possible."

But Gummitt was a thick-headed and bull-headed man. He had conceived the idea since they had made him manager that he was a very valuable man, indeed, and one the owners could not easily dispense with, and he presumed upon this to express an opinion when he ought to have remained silent.

"I must speak. Unless I do, he'll think he can do as he pleases. He is cross this morning, and refused to repair—that is, he won't shut his furnace down to-day and let me have it fixed."

"Why not wait till to-morrow?"

"Because I want to put my best foot foremost, and get things in shape as soon as possible. The furnace ought to be overhauled, but Atherton wants to run the week out, and let the bricklayers do it Saturday. It's sheer stubbornness, Mr. Meeker, and a bad example to permit."

"O, I wouldn't notice Atherton. I have a reason of my own, Sam. Anything else?"

"Yes, but I'll wait until this gentleman speaks to you."

This gentleman proved to be Mr. Gripp. Mr. Gripp's manner was always deferential to his superiors and his equals. To his inferiors he was overbearing, tart, brusque, and often brutal. Now he was as smooth as oil. He stepped forward, rubbing his hands, as the manager turned to Mayberry, who looked curiously at Gripp.

"Are you prepared to take that lot of old rails I spoke of, Mr. Meeker?"

"I am not sure."

"That's a fine lot of tenants you have down there in the bottom," said one of Mr. Meeker's partners suddenly. The partner was sitting in a corner reading a morning paper.

"Why?" demanded Meeker, turning half round.

"When they have nothing else to do, they murder each other. Here's half a column in the paper about it. A very mysterious affair it seems to be."

Mayberry's eyes were fixed on Gripp's face. Gripp was as unconcerned apparently as though the news related wholly to the affairs of another planet.

"They are not my tenants," said Meeker. "That was never my property. It belonged to one of my brothers years ago. Who was murdered—and where was the crime committed?"

Again Mayberry's gaze was riveted on Gripp's face.

"In a house crowded with a rough lot of people—old offenders, some of them. Brick-stands alone—three-story. A woman either suicided or was murdered—case a little mixed. The coroner's jury will determine it."

"I may conclude it settled, then, I suppose, Mr. Meeker?" said Gripp in his oiliest tone.

"One minute, Gripp. How is that? A woman murdered. Who is she?"

"Why, that's the most mysterious part of it. She seems to have had two or three names—fine material for a dime novel in the account published."

"Any grounds for believing a murder was committed?"

"Rather vague, I should say. You can determine for yourself. Simply a chain of inferences."

"Well," said Mr. Meeker, with a sigh of relief, "I'm glad it's only inference. I never can read—or hear—of the murder of a woman, Gripp, without wishing I could lay my hands on her murderer and help to hang him on the spot."

"A very natural feeling—quite natural," said Gripp.

"Yes—I guess you may send the lot over. Mayberry, make out a check for the amount, and give it to Mr. Gripp."

And then the mill owner turned to the manager.

"What is it, Gummitt?"

"I'll see you later in the day. I must go into the mill now," the manager replied.

His face was very pale; his voice sounded strange to Mayberry and the mill owner. Mayberry wondered at the extraordinary change that had come over the new manager. If it had been manifested by Gripp, he could have understood it. But why the mill manager should betray agitation was strange indeed.

Mayberry turned to the desk again, made out a check for the amount due Gripp, and was in the act of handing the check to him when Gripp said:

"I had better receipt for it first."

Mayberry was so preoccupied that he had departed from his usual practice and the universal custom. But the manner in which Gripp received him of the unintentional oversight angered him. He was on the point of replying, when he remembered, returned Gripp's look with one that a gentleman altogether misunderstood, and passed him the receipt book.

"As Gripp bowed over the desk to sign the name, Mayberry's glance fell upon the length of a man's hair."

"Might they not be a woman's hair, broken?"

"It is possible, not probable. You can determine that to your own satisfaction. I have the hair with me. You and your friend, Mr. Mayberry, may pull a few hairs, break one or two, and compare them under my microscope."

Dunn produced a small pocketbook from an inside pocket, took out a small piece of white paper, opened it, and laid it on the table. Next he took from his coat pocket, in separate pieces, a powerful microscope, adjusted it, and stood aside.

The lawyer broke one or two hairs plucked from his head; Mayberry did the same, and both observed the difference between the perfect and broken hairs.

Then Dunn handed them the hairs he had found under the grate. Last of all, he showed them a woman's hair, lifted from the floor near where her body was suspended.

Then he pointed out the difference between the hair inclined to curl, the curly hair, and the straight hair. How some hairs were flat, others round, others with corners that made them look like small triangular tubes.

"I am satisfied any one can tell a broken hair from one torn out by the roots," said Mayberry.

"Especially when you can see the bulb at the root," said the lawyer. "Well—what next?"

There was a long pause. The lawyer and Mayberry felt that the next question was all important—that the answer would govern their future course.

"It is your opinion the woman was murdered—that she was choked to death, then hung by the neck to a hook in the wall; that the murderer was a man; that he was seen; that at least two persons can identify him; that this man committed the murder last night, and afterward swept the room, or the part near the fireplace; that he swept some of his own hair under the grate—the hairs you have here. The presumption is, the woman fought for her life—pulled the hairs out of the man's head?"

The detective nodded gravely as Nickerson ceased. "Have you any idea who the man is?"

CHAPTER XII.

Nickerson was the first to break the silence that ensued. He arose and paced the floor.

"You said there was a woman in the house, and a shoemaker across the way, who saw and even described the man?"

"I did."

"To whom does their description point?"

"Unmistakably to Atherton. Almost any one who knows him would recognize him from their description."

"Whatever is done," said Mayberry with resolution in his face and tone, "I want to have no share, no hand, in bringing Atherton into trouble. I can't believe he would murder any one. It is not like him to strike a woman, either."

"I have told you all I know," said Dunn, in a respectful but firm tone. "I never permit my feelings to interfere with my judgment."

"I believe you; but there is some terrible mistake here. Don't—don't let us blunder. It may cost a man more than life is worth; it may rob Atherton of his reputation."

"It is like to end in somebody losing life," said Dunn. "There hasn't been any hanging here for some time. The first bad case will serve for an example."

Mayberry shrugged. He imagined he beheld Irene Atherton's face looking at him. He beheld the reproachful look in her sad eyes. Then he recovered his self-possession and decision.

"Admitting it was a man's deed. Admitting that Atherton was in the house that evening, it does not follow that he committed the murder."

"Not necessarily," said Dunn. "It is a coincidence, and might be explained away."

Nickerson looked from the detective to his friend, then said, slowly and with rare deliberation:

"I see. We had better talk this matter over very carefully and quietly. We must make no mistakes—leave no room for misapprehensions."

"Exactly what I was going to say," said Mayberry.

"Mayberry, tell Dunn all you know."

Whereupon Mayberry briefly related the facts as they fell under his own observation, not omitting the marks on Gripp's neck. The detective paid due attention to the narrative.

"What do you think now?" the lawyer asked.

"It puts a different light on the matter, but it only confuses. It don't help to straighten things out. We are running off on another track, that's all."

"It may be the only track—the real track," said the lawyer.

"How are we to know which is the right track?"

"Why, by showing Gripp had an object in view; that he pursued a course of action warranting the belief that he had wronged one person; that he is a man who would not scruple to commit a crime—whereas Atherton has always borne a good reputation."

"You can do this?"

"We can," said Mayberry. "We had best tell Mr. Dunn the story of Atherton's patent."

Mayberry again related the facts in a concise manner. The detective listened with evident interest. When Mayberry ended, the detective said suddenly:

"This is the most important of all. It will help us to get at the truth. You say you beheld a woman across Gripp in the evening? Could you describe her general appearance—dress?"

"She was dressed in black, or something that looked almost black. She impressed me somehow as a middle-aged woman."

"When Gripp passed near the newsstand, he did not have any excuse for standing there?"

"He avoided observation, I thought, and made sure no one was near when he entered the house."

"You are sure he entered it?"

"Positive."

"Now—the shadows on the curtain—you felt there was something?"

"I could not leave the spot; for some minutes, I suppose six, or maybe more, I watched for the shadow."

"Gentlemen," said the detective, slowly, "I think the murder was committed then. I'll give you my reason. The woman, it is now pretty certain, was killed in the evening. The man whose hand Mr. Mayberry saw raised maybe only intended to strike her. Why? Because, if he had meant murder at first, he would have held something in his hand. After he

struck her, either her resistance made him furious, or she might have endeavored to cry for help, and be choked her to death."

The matter-of-fact manner in which Dunn spoke of the killing made his listeners shudder. They seemed to be looking on the tragedy. It was a reality, as Dunn described it.

"Then you incline to the opinion that Gripp is the murderer?"

"That is a thing none of us can determine until we know more. I see what you mean," said Dunn to Mayberry; "you think because the shadows were thrown on the curtain so soon after Gripp entered the house, that he committed the murder. That will not be deemed sufficient. We must have something more. Let us try the glass again. What sort of hair is Atherton's?"

"Brown," said Mayberry, promptly.

"And Gripp's, now. What color is his hair?"

"Black," said Mayberry.

Dunn pointed to the paper containing the hairs he had found in the fireplace.

"If the color of these corresponds with Gripp's he is the man. Let us determine the color of the hair."

Mayberry and the attorney awaited the result of Dunn's examination with extraordinary interest. He invited the others to look. The moment Nickerson's eyes were fixed on the glass, he exclaimed:

"They are Gripp's—beyond a peradventure!"

Then Mayberry looked at the hair.

"It is Gripp's hair."

"You are satisfied, gentlemen?"

"There is no doubt about it," said Mayberry.

"The next thing to do," said Dunn, "is to prove it in court."

(To be continued.)

DESTRUCTION OF WEEDS.

They Are Propagated Either by Root or by Seed, Which Must Be Killed.

There are two classes of weeds—those that come from seeds and those which are propagated principally by means of their roots. Weeds which spring up from seeds can be destroyed by successively bringing the seeds in the soil to the surface, where they germinate. The seeds of some weeds have great vitality and remain in the soil for years. Some are inclosed in clods and are retained for another season, but when the clods are broken and the weed seeds exposed to warmth near the surface, they are put out of existence by the harrow as soon as they germinate, for which reason it is impossible to clear a piece of land from weeds in a season unless every clod is pulverized. The oft-repeated inquiry, "Whence come the weeds?" may be answered: "From the clods."

The weeds that spring from roots are cut up, checked and prevented from growing by frequent cultivation, because they cannot exist for a great length of time unless permitted to grow. If no leaves are allowed on such plants they perish from suffocation, because they breathe through the agency of the leaves. The advantages derived by the soil in the work of weed destruction reduces the cost of warfare on the weeds, for every time the harrow or cultivator is used the manure is more intimately mixed with the soil, more clods are broken, a greater proportion of plant food is offered to the roots, the loss of moisture is lessened and the capacity of the plants of the crop to secure more food is increased. The cost of the destruction of weeds should not be charged to the accounts of a single year only, as thorough work during a season may obliterate the weeds entirely, or so reduce their number as to make the cost of their destruction during succeeding years but a trifle.

Operating The Marionettes.

"The ingenuity of some of the handlers of marionettes," said a showman, "is incredible. I know a man who conducts a marionette theater, wherein an orchestra of eight pieces plays under marionette leadership, while in the boxes a dozen marionette spectators laugh and applaud, and on the stage a marionette drama briskly enacts itself."

"The conductor of all this stands, exposed to the waist, at the back of the stage, and apparently he is motionless, though really each finger of both hands and the majority of the toes of both feet are working with unexampled rapidity. For each marionette is connected by a string with a toe or a finger of the operator, and this string sometimes has as many as ten or fifteen branches, joined to the marionette's face, body, arms, legs, etc., so that it may dance, smile, wave its arms and do a number of other lifelike things. One of these figures, indeed, is connected by thirty-two strings to the operator."

"It is bewildering to think of the number of strings there must be altogether," concluded the showman, according to the Philadelphia Record, "and really it is impossible to conceive of the dexterity and the thought required in the artistic manipulation of a band of marionettes."

Asphalt Pavements.

Though asphalt pavements are injurious to trees they are not invariably so, their influence depending upon the character of the soil. Where it is deep the roots find nourishment under the pavement, which keeps it from evaporating and holds it in supply for the trees. Where trees have been killed by asphalt pavements or cement sidewalks, it will frequently be found that it has been caused by cutting the roots in the process of construction.

Just a Slip.

Brady—Did old Fog see the joke in placing a banana skin on the pavement?

Broadbent—Oh, yes; he tumbled, all right.

It is surprising how good a competent cook can make a cheap steak taste, and how poor the finest steak tastes after an incompetent cook has handled it.

HANDSOME NEW SILKS

THEY ARE SO MUCH BETTER THAN WASH GOODS.

The Woman Who Must Economize Will Have to Ponder Well Before She Makes Her Investment in the Shimmering Silks—Fashion Notes.

New York correspondence.



AINTY tricks of introducing a glint of color here or there in an otherwise subdued gown constitute a noticeable feature of the new fashions. Now and then the methods resorted to are more ingenious than pretty, but for the most part they are effective and tasteful. Very often a tiny bit of color shows in only one place on a coat or suit, and in such way that it almost looks as if it did not belong to them, but these fancies certainly are more attractive than all black suits, which had such a run a short time ago as to result in somberness of attire.

New silks are the cause of much studying of ways and means by the shopper who must economize. She'll ponder their considerable cost, and find many offsets

of the accompanying pictured groups in, at the left, a pattern gown of light blue crepe de chine, venise lace applique and white silk cord and tassels, and beside it is a handsome house gown of white pease de sole and escurial lace, with front of white India silk. Both these silks proved their vogue finely, having provided well adapted both to lavish trimmings and to more simple arrangements. Of the latter was the gray crepe de chine at the right of this picture. Its trimmings were white net lace insertion and steel head embroidery and fringe. Embroideries on silk dresses are done with a very free hand, this point being impressed on the shopper at every turn. Gowns as lavishly decorated as was that sketched for to-day's initial are not unusual, the goods here being white silk, the embroidery white chenille, black velvet being used as indicated for contrast. Embroideries in summer silks are unusually heavy, and this, with the abundance of fringed veves, promises showiness for warm weather's silk dresses.

Shirt waists and dressy separate waists repay a visit to the stores. Many of these pattern waists and the manner of decorating them is so varied that there is a splendid chance for original designs. Fagotting is very stylish and it is done in countless ways. Sometimes medallions of lace are fagotted in, again squares of the waist material are used in this way. Some waists are entirely composed of strips of silk two inches wide held together with wide rows of fagotting, and it means lots of work to make such a waist. Think of the fitting, alone, for anything that is so uneven to hold makes a fine fit very hard. Black lace is used a great deal on waists and is very hand-



FINE SILKS AND A SIMPLE SHIRT WAIST SUIT.

thereof. They're so dressy, she thinks, and so cool, light and soft. Nor will they crush nor be affected by dampness as are wash gowns, organdies and the like. So the silks find many purchasers. Especially attractive are the new foulards that come in pattern gowns ready to be made into shirt waist suits. They are so nicely set off with the lace or applique of net that furnishes their decoration, that it is a very easy matter to make the suit fit, and save the dressmaker's charge. She who has a little ingenuity and can do this, can manage several handsome gowns for the price of one made by a good dressmaker. Skirts come all made but for sewing up the back breadth, where extra fullness can be arranged to make the skirt fit. Then there are two or three yards of plain silk and the embroidered fronts for the waist, so that a little variety is possible in making. But

some. The artist has put here three pretty waists; first, a fine white linen embroidered in white, then a white liberty satin with yoke of fagotted stripes, and with white guipure lace and white silk grapes for trimming, and last, a white linen trimmed with Hungarian embroidery.

Fashion Notes

Fascinating pongees have appeared that are charming for between seasons indoor gowns and later will be worn on the street.

All the poplar silks will be employed for the making of these dainty creations. Taffeta, peau de sole and liberty satin are the favorites, although lousine and fancy silks are not forgotten.

Fashion seems set against anything cumbersome-looking or overhasty in the way of trimming. Small flowers will



NEW SEPARATE WAISTS.

If one has a shirt waist pattern that fits it is very easy to do the whole thing and save a lot. A handsome pattern in dark blue foulard sprinkled with tiny white dots like at the bottom of the skirt an applique of white lace net. The embroidery on the waist appears on full fronts and sleeves. Such dresses, of course, are in a very different grade from simple shirt waists of inexpensive wash stuffs. Yet these have about them an unmistakable air of style. One of green linen slash is shown in to-day's first group. A host of equally simple designs is available.

Expensive pattern gowns of thin silks have the skirt yoke of heavy lace, the lace extending to the bottom of the skirt in points. This counts for elegance, but in considering the cost of such it is well to remember that an entire foundation of good silk must be included, for the opening is so open that a good quality of lining is an essential. Standard silks are plentiful among the stylish goods, and often give the shopper better returns since there's always increased price in really new weaves. Not a few of the older silks are irreproachable as to style—lousine, too, and not a few pattern dresses are found in them. In the first

have the preference over large blooms, and neat, compact-looking clusters will succeed the large, showy bunches.

Lace figures very prominently as a trimming for the spring hats—narrow scarfs of black Chantilly, deep cream and ivory-white lace draped around the rim of broad brims, the ends hanging down either at the back or side.

Evening petticoats are made of white silk with accordion flounces of silk gauze or mousseline de chiffon. Some very useful petticoats are of accordion nun's veiling. These are always made with a deep hip yoke and trimmed with lace or rows of satin ribbon.

Many hats still have most of their trimming on the underside of the brim, but milliners promise a complete change and predict the fall of a single drooping feather. In millinery decorations as well as in every other department of dress oddity is the keynote.

The newest sleeves are alarmingly ample, tucked or box-plaited from the shoulder to above the elbow or plaited on either side of lace insertion, or a band of embroidery which lies inside the arm of the wrist. The leg-of-mutton sleeve and the oriental sleeve are still in vogue.