

MY HALF SISTER

By ELTON HARRIS

CHAPTER I.

"It is not like going home at all," said Mollie L'Estrange disconsolately, looking round at the open trunks, the wearing apparel spread upon every available chair or bed in the school dormitory. "And I had no idea that I possessed so many things."

"You had been these four years here," said the German governess kindly, "and you spend much money, bad child! But they will be pleased to see you home—oh, yes!"

"I don't know who will be pleased, I am sure," returned Mollie, with a sigh, "for there is only my half-sister Kate."

"Ach himmel! Well, she is no doubt looking forward to your return. She is older than you—wiser?"

"She is ten years old," interrupted the girl, sitting down on the edge of the bed, and regarding the well-meaning Fraulein gloomily. "When I last saw her she was about six, and my stepfather spoilt her shamefully."

"What? With whom will you live then, mine Mollie? With the stepfather?"

"Oh, no; he died twelve months ago. I shall live at Chalfont House, the property of my half-sister, Kate, with her, and her aunt, Madame Dubois."

"Ach, a French lady!"

"No, but she married a Frenchman. She is now a widow with one son, and after my mother's death she went to keep house for her brother, Mr. Barlowe."

"Thy stepfather?"

"I never called him that." And a strange look of scorn and bitterness swept over the girl's pretty, glowing face. "It is wrong to hate any one—but I hated him living, and I find it hard not to hate him dead."

"So, so, the Bible tells us to hate no man," reproved the governess, with a placid shake of her head, as she began to fold up some of her favorite pupil's clothes.

"And I try not to do so; I pray every night to forgive him," burst forth Mollie in a shaking voice, "but he separated me from my mother; he did not make her happy—"

She paused abruptly, conscious how impossible it was to make the solid Fraulein understand that the wrongs that were ranking in her mind had grown with her growth, and become part of her life; and, as a rosy-cheeked German maid entered at the same moment and announced that she had been sent to assist Fraulein L'Estrange to pack, nothing more was said.

For four years Mollie L'Estrange had been left at Frau Seckendorf's school in Hanover, without once returning to England, without any one coming to see her. But she had been very happy, for she had naturally a merry, buoyant disposition, and was the pet and favorite of the school establishment, from the grave, kindly Frau herself downwards.

Then she was liberally supplied with pocket money by her father's trustees, generously paid for in every way, while Frau Seckendorf had carte blanche to do everything for her amusement in the holidays, and the time had gone so fast that Mollie could hardly believe she was nearly nineteen, and that a few days would see her once more in her native land. Ah, that dear native land! How often in her dreams had she seen it as it would be looking now, with the first faint breath of spring rustling through the bare, brown branches, the leaves sprouting in the heather, the violets peeping forth from some sheltered nook! Yes, though there was no one now in the house where she was born to welcome her home with affection, it would be something to be in England in the sweet spring time, to gather violets and primroses in the well remembered woods and fields around Reverton.

The packing was accomplished at last, more by the Fraulein's and Lisa's exertions than her own, for the girl was restless and excited, torn by conflicting feelings, sorry to bid farewell to quaint old Hanover, and all those who had been so kind to her since she came there—a pale, motherless child of fourteen—yet anxious to rush into the future, to see what it held in store for her.

So when the trunks were shut and Lisa had departed with her arms full of the gifts she had bestowed upon her, Mollie made her way with unusual sedateness to Frau Seckendorf's private apartments. Since the girls of her own age had left one by one, and she had outgrown the class rooms, she had been promoted to the use of these salons, and taken out to concerts, theaters, and coffee parties by the good Frau, who was secretly immensely proud of the pretty, well-dressed English heiress confided to her care, and watched over her with a vigilant eye; and Mollie looked round them with a friendly glance, and a sigh at the thought that after tomorrow she should see them no more.

The dusk was falling fast; it was difficult to see the houses across the wide street, and as she stood by the porcelain stove, warming her cold

little fingers, her thoughts went back to her childhood days as they had not done for a long time, and scene after scene seemed to rise before her.

Mollie could not remember her father at all, for he had died when she was but a few months old, but her pretty young mother had been her playfellow, and until her sixth year, her constant companion. Then came the days when a tall, dark man was always with her mother, and that dearly loved parent was somehow not the same to her, while the dark man used to bring her sweets, and smile grimly when she put her hands behind her back, and refused to accept them.

Yes, from the very first Mollie had disliked and distrusted Leonard Barlowe, and he had cordially returned the feeling. With her mother's second marriage all her troubles began, and the child would often sob herself to sleep at night, feeling neglected and forlorn, missing the tender voice, the lullaby ever since she could remember.

Afterwards Mollie grew to know that her mother had not forgotten her, but that her stepfather, jealous and morose, resented even the affection she bestowed to her own child, and timid and clinging by nature, she had not the strength of character to oppose him in any way. Mollie was sent to school soon after the birth of her half-sister, Kate, and though she spent the holidays at home, Chalfont House was never the same place again.

Looking at the past through the softening vista of time, Mollie knew that her woes had not been imaginary.

She would have been fond enough of the little usurper, who seemed to have pushed her out of her place, had she been allowed, for she was neither jealous nor revengeful; but Mr. Barlowe, while spoiling Kate until she was unbearable, resented the least attention shown to Mollie, and the holidays had been misery, school a refuge. She gradually grew to know that her mother was miserable, that she only dare caress her in private, and that she feared her handsome dark husband more than she loved him.

How well she remembered the last time she had any talk with her mother! It was the night before her return to school, and her mother came into her room as she was preparing for bed, and, closing the door, took her into her arms as if she were a baby again, kissed and cried over her in a passionate, heart-broken way, saying that whatever happened to the future, she must never doubt her poor mother's love, that save her dead father, no one was so precious to her, no one; and that her last thought and prayer would be for her own Mollie.

It was not until her death a few months later that Mollie understood what she meant, Chalfont and a good income had been Mrs. Barlowe's private property, and she left them to her husband for his lifetime, and then to her daughter Kate, no mention being made of her elder child, save that, falling them, she would be her heiress.

This had not been her mother's wish—Mollie knew as well as if she had been told—and the fierce anger burned in her heart, not for the loss of the property, but for what Mr. Barlowe had made her mother suffer. Oh, how she hated him as she saw his fine eyes roving with an air of proprietorship round her mother's room! In her childish heart she felt that he had got what he had schemed for, and it mattered little to him that he had ruined her mother's and her life to obtain it.

They lived at open warfare during the months before she was sent to Hanover; and it was an additional blow to find that he had constituted himself her guardian in her mother's place. His motive was not far to seek. Mollie was her father's heiress, and though he could not touch the principal, a handsome allowance was made for the care of Colonel L'Estrange's daughter.

And now he, too, was dead, and she was going back to live at Chalfont House with her little half-sister and Madame Dubois! Were brighter times coming, she wondered, as, in company with the English governess, she once more set foot on her native land, or was Madame Dubois but a repetition of Leonard Barlowe?

It was a bleak March day when the governess put her charge into a first class carriage at one of the great London stations, and reluctantly bade her farewell, after carefully ascertaining that two elderly ladies in the further corner were going the same journey, and Reverton would be reached in little over an hour, where Madame Dubois was sure to be at the station. So she kissed the pet and pride of Frau Seckendorf's school with tearful eyes, and hurried away to catch her own train, while Mollie sank back in the corner of her carriage, sorry to part with her last friend, yet excited at the prospect before her.

For a little while she occupied herself in watching one familiar object after another appear, as the express left the chicanery behind and rushed

through the given country. It even amused her to see the great open fires in the waiting rooms once more as they flashed through the stations. Then she suddenly became aware that the two ladies were talking very hard, and she heard her own name.

"You will find Reverton looking much the same, Louise," the elder was saying. "The people alter, but not the place. Why, you have not been here since the year poor Mrs. L'Estrange married Mr. Barlowe, have you?"

"No; how pretty she was! I know no one liked him; you thought him an adventurer. What has he done since her death?"

"Oh, he feathered his nest well; got the whole of her property for himself and his wretched little girl, to the exclusion of the elder child! Every one knew that his poor wife was horribly afraid of him, and he had it all his own way. Well, I must not say more, for he was hurried to his account with all his sins upon his head, and no time to repent him of his wickedness."

"What do you mean?"

"Did you not see it in the papers? It was the talk of Reverton! He was found murdered in his study nearly twelve months ago. Yes, I remember, it was on Easter Sunday."

"Murdered?" echoed the other blankly. "That handsome man? Who did it?"

"It has never been found out."

CHAPTER II.

Murdered! Could this awful word, so full of terrible meaning, apply to her stepfather, who she had last seen standing at the door of Chalfont House, full of life and health, holding the fretful Kate by the hand? Mollie sat up and turned hastily to the two ladies, the color fading from her face.

"My name is L'Estrange," she stammered nervously, looking from one to the other. "I am Mrs. Barlowe's eldest daughter. I thought I ought to tell you. I—I did not know that he died like that; no one told me. Are you sure?"

Mollie could see the ladies were gazes; but she was too eager to learn the truth to mind that, or anything else. Why had she been allowed to come home in ignorance of the tragedy that hung undiscovered over Chalfont House? In the pause before any one spoke she was not conscious of feeling any sorrow for her dead stepfather, nor had these ladies expressed any; but she did feel a thrill of horror at the thought of the crime that had been committed in the house where she was born—her mother's house—and could not repress a shudder. Then, the first lady got up, and, coming over, sat down heavily in the seat opposite to her.

"I am heartily sorry you have heard me, my dear," she said kindly. "It is a lesson to me not to talk of my neighbors in the train. But are you really Amy Barlowe's child? Yes, looking at you, I can see your dear father. Your parents were my dearest friends. You do not remember me, but surely you have not forgotten Reggie and Joyce?"

Mollie started, and, leaning forward, turned her beautiful, miserable grey eyes on the speaker with dawning recognition.

"Yes—yes, I do now," she cried. "You are Mrs. Anstruther; you live in that pretty white house near the church. Oh, Mrs. Anstruther, about this dreadful thing about Mr. Barlowe. Madame Dubois wrote that he died suddenly, and she was now my guardian; but how did it happen? Why was I not told?" And she glanced imploringly at the pleasant motherly face now regarding her with a troubled frown.

(To be continued.)

CRUELTY IN TONE.

Cross Words Kill a Bird in Its Cage.

A bird which receives a scolding is made as miserable and unhappy thereby as a child would be. To illustrate our Dumb Animals tells the following story: A Massachusetts woman had, a few years ago, a beautiful canary bird which she dearly loved, and to which she had never spoken an unkind word in her life. One Sunday the church organist was away, and she stopped after church to play the organ for the Sunday school. In consequence of this the dinner had to be put off an hour, and when she got home her good husband was very hungry, and he spoke to her unkindly. The things were put on and they sat down in silence at the table, and presently the bird began to chirp at her as it always had to attract her attention. To shame her husband for having spoken so, she turned to the bird, and for the first time in her life spoke to it in a most violent and angry tone. In less than five minutes there was a fluttering in the cage. She sprang to the cage—the bird was dead. Mrs. Hendricks, the wife of the late vice-president of the United States, says that she once killed a mocking bird in the same way. It annoyed her by loud singing. To stop it she spoke in a violent tone, and pretended to throw something at it, and within five minutes it was dead.

A Boy's Revenge.

The present German emperor, then a small boy, attended the wedding of the prince and princess of Wales. He was under the charge of his two uncles, the duke of Edinburgh and the duke of Connaught. As may be expected, young William behaved badly, and consequently received an occasional warning tap on the shoulder. But how he did revenge himself! His uncles were in Highland dress, and the future emperor slyly knelt down and bit into their bare legs with great earnestness. Boston Journal.

STEWART IS RIGHT.

HITS THE DEMOCRATS IN THE SOLAR PLEXUS.

Says that the "Anti-Imperialism" Plank of the Kansas City Platform is the Acme of Treason—Good Advice to Voters.

Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada called at Republican headquarters at New York August 20 and said he had decided to vote for President McKinley. He made a statement in part as follows:

"The United States went to war with Spain, urged on by the Democratic party. The popularity of the war was such that Mr. Bryan joined the army. The war was successful, a treaty of peace was entered into whereby the United States agreed to pay \$20,000,000 and accept the sovereignty and public property of Spain in the Philippine archipelago. There was opposition to the ratification of the treaty. Mr. Bryan came to Washington and persuaded his Democratic friends to vote for the treaty."

"The people of the United States, and particularly of the Pacific coast, became entitled to the vast commerce of the Pacific ocean of which the Philippines furnish the key."

"One Aguinaldo had raised a rebellion in Luzon against Spain before the commencement of the Spanish war with the United States. This adventurer had sold out or settled his rebellion with Spain for \$400,000 before Dewey set sail for Manila, and as a part of the bargain with Spain, Aguinaldo agreed to leave the island and never return."

"Dewey took the wily agitator back to the islands, supposing, of course, that Aguinaldo would naturally be an enemy of Spain and a friend of the United States. In this Admiral Dewey was mistaken. An organization was formed in the United States called the Anti-Imperialist League, which has for the last two years co-operated with Aguinaldo's Tagal junta, with headquarters at Hongkong, to supply literature and materials of war for Aguinaldo."

"The assistance and the encouragement he received from the Anti-Imperialist League and the enemies of the United States, both at home and abroad, made his barbarous and irregular war bloody and expensive."

"Mr. Bryan's unparalleled campaign for the principles of the Chicago platform, and his insistence upon the adoption of that platform at Kansas City, induced the people to suppose the campaign of 1896 would be conducted on the issues of 1896. In this it seems they were mistaken."

Senator Stewart then quoted Mr. Bryan's declaration of his intention, if elected, to call an extraordinary session of congress to give the Philippines freedom upon the same terms as Cuba. He also denounced the recent convention of anti-imperialists at Indianapolis. He also denounced Mr. Bryan for promising to attempt to "extend the Monroe doctrine to the Orient."

JONES THE SLAVE OWNER.

Many people have wondered why it is that, while the Republican party selects men of affairs from the great manufacturing and agricultural states of the Union to manage its presidential campaign, the Democratic party selects a man like Senator Jones, from a state like Arkansas, to be the head of its National campaign committee.

Senator Jones was formerly a slave owner and dealt in human flesh and blood. When abroad among his slaves with his old black snake whip, he acquired some experience relative to "imperialism," and the "consent of the governed." His conscientious regard for the "preservation of the liberties" of the people was so great that his deep concern over the liberties of the Filipinos is only excelled by admiration of the way that his dear friend Aguinaldo and his Tagal associates treat the other tribes of the Philippines, and held them in subjection.

But Senator Jones' principal qualification to head the Democratic national campaign of calamity, and which undoubtedly led to his selection as chairman, is that he comes from a southern state, and also that while all the other southern states are progressing in agricultural wealth, his state is steadily retrograding.

Arkansas not only has a greater number of illiterate people, according to population, and fewer savings

banks than any other state, but it is steadily losing in wealth. The following figures given out by the United States Department of Agriculture, Division of Statistics, relative to the number and value of farm animals of the United States, is interesting, in view of Senator Jones' deep interest in calamity. Bear in mind that Arkansas is an agricultural state.

Comparison is made between the last year of the Cleveland administration and the last year of President McKinley's present administration, and it gives the values of the farmers' possessions in stock. Swine are omitted because there are no figures given:

ARKANSAS.		
	Jan. 1, '96.	Jan. 1, 1900
Horses	\$ 7,719,845	\$ 7,817,204
Mules	6,313,361	6,348,660
Milch Cows	3,807,293	3,825,954
Other cattle	4,383,084	3,235,910
Sheep	244,662	181,795

Total

\$22,473,245 \$21,409,583

Thus in four years, while the United States has prospered and grown in agricultural wealth, Senator Jones' state has gone backward to the extent of \$1,063,662. It is to be regretted that no figures on swine are given for 1900. But as the value of swine in Arkansas according to the Department of Agriculture for 1892, was \$1,689,967, and in 1897 had fallen to \$3,196,361, there is no doubt that the omission of the figures for 1900 is a charity to Senator Jones' state.

On January 1, 1896, there were 233,616 horses in Arkansas, on Jan. 1, 1900, there were but 234,127. On January 1, 1896, there were 145,519 mules in Arkansas; on Jan. 1, 1900, only 142,594. On Jan. 1, 1896, there were 295,827 milch cows in Arkansas; on Jan. 1, 1900, they had decreased to 183,936. Of other cattle there were in Arkansas Jan. 1, 1896, 516,695; on Jan. 1, 1900, they had decreased to 230,486. On Jan. 1, 1896, Arkansas had 188,972 sheep. On Jan. 1, 1900 there were only 103,957.

It is well to remark here in passing that on Jan. 1, 1896, the value of milch cows in Ohio was \$18,420,227, and on Jan. 1, 1900, the value was \$25,224,330, and the number had increased from 759,597 to 780,939. In sheep Ohio had, Jan. 1, 1896, 2,754,613, valued at \$5,247,536, and on Jan. 1, 1900, she had 2,839,690 sheep, valued at \$10,835,250. The total value of horses, mules, milch cows, other cattle and sheep in Ohio, Jan. 1, 1896, was \$68,382,151. On Jan. 1, 1900, it was \$92,664,466, a gain of over \$24,000,000.

Looking at the above figures, seeing Arkansas, first in illiteracy, lowest in savings banks, steadily going backward in agricultural wealth, while every other southern state is wonderfully increasing, it is seen why Senator Jones of that state was selected above all others to lead in the Democratic presidential campaign of calamity and disaster to American industries, progress and prosperity. He is the fitting representative of the calamity howlers.

Good Things Coming Quickly.

The Southern farmer is in various sorts of trouble. The price paid by the oil mills for cottonseed has been so high—that is, \$18 or \$20 a ton—that the farmer has deprived himself of this customary fertilizer by selling it, and he has been obliged to buy commercial fertilizer at \$2 or \$3 a ton less. But there is other trouble. The southern industry is so booming in its lumber mills, railroads, mines, and other occupations, that it is difficult to get labor to work the farms, and so a great cotton crop cannot be looked for.

Peace at Any Price.

The plea that the United States ought not to govern the Philippines, says the Chicago Inter Ocean, does not conceal the cowardly argument that it is incompetent to do so, and the commercial argument that it will be expensive to do so. It will be "a pecuniary burden to the people," says Mr. Bryan, if the Filipinos are not given independence. Thus in 1861 it was argued by some lovers of peace at any price that the putting down of the civil war would be a most expensive undertaking.

The Democratic Kind.

Government by the dishonesty and duplicity of the minority is having a short run in Kentucky.

Colonial Trade Valuable.

The United Kingdom sells to her colonies \$123,212,102 worth of goods a year.

Horse Sense in Iowa.

Upon the occasion of recent visit to Iowa I asked a farmer in an interior county what the people of Iowa intended to do at the next presidential election, and his answer was as follows:

"Waal, I never argue politics, and never did, but if I give a man a job and he does his work well, what's the use of turning him off and getting a new man? Now McKinley does his work right up to the hancle, and no man could have done it better; though I didn't have no part in putting him there. So what's the sense in turning him out and putting a new man in his place?"

"He made a lot of promises about good times, and I can't see as he over-ated the facts, either, for certainly the times have been thundering good, there's no denying that."

"Now, Bill Bryan comes around here telling the boys if they didn't elect him the country would go to h—l, and he quick about it. Pears like Bill didn't know what he was talking about or was lying—likely the latter. Guess we can spare Bill a spell yet, so he can get his picture took. Maybe he'll learn something if he hangs around the house and keeps his head cool out there in Nebraska. If he runs agin you can easy get the fool census by counting his vote. He reminds me of a mule I owned once—the only time he used his head was at dinner time—rest of the time he was hunting around to find something to kick at. McKinley will go back for another term, leastwise, that's what the neighbors say, and I'm likewise."—W. C. H., in New York Sun.

A Nebraskan on Bryan.

"The greatest mistake Bryan ever made," says ex-Governor James E. Boyd of Nebraska, and the only Democratic executive the state ever had, "was to require the Kansas City convention to reiterate the 16 to 1 silver free coinage plank. He emphasized it beyond all others, thus doing what the Republicans would have him do. It will cause Bryan's defeat under heavier majorities than were given four years ago. It was sheer idiocy. Money was never so plentiful and the interest rate never so low. Prices of farm products were never better, and the producers are getting gold money for their products. Prosperity, everywhere in evidence, cannot be talked down. It may not be due to McKinley, but it is possible under the policy for which McKinley stands."

Bryan Has Deserted Silver.

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which he kicked Dave Hill into submission
And led free silver as a bride in triumph—
Within a month, our Bryan, even he!—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have been faithful longer!—But
Bryan! Bryan
Bashly deserts 16 to 1 and posts
With all dexterity to imperial sheets!
It is not, and it can't come to, good!
—Poet Laureate Cook County, Ill.,
Democracy in Chicago Inter Ocean.

Poor Grover.

A Tammany judge fined a New York man \$1 for wearing a button bearing a portrait of Grover Cleveland. Yet there are some people who never quite understood why Mr. Cleveland moved from New York.

Gone Democratic.

The Tammany ice trust has been vindicated by a Tammany grand jury and a Tammany judge. Tammany is always harmonious when the work of covering up Tammany crookedness is in progress.

A Piano Lesson.

About 130,000 pianos were sold in the United States in 1899, or 25,000 more than were ever sold in a single year before. They all played "Prestige abroad and Prosperity at Home" tunes.

Not a Live Issue.

Eighty-one per cent of the delegates to the Democratic convention recognized that 16 to 1 was no longer a live issue. But Boss Bryan wanted it, and Prince David voted for it, so that settled it.

Our Oils Exported.

Exports of mineral oils in the last two fiscal years compare as follows:

Year.	Value.
1899.....	\$56,273,166
1900.....	74,404,832

Lover's Mistaken Ambition.

The czar, in consequence of her beauty, had many admirers when she was simply Princess Alix of Hesse, and although some of them were of high degree, whom she might have married had she so chosen, others occupied less important positions, but were infatuated to the same extent. Among the latter was a young Hamburg merchant who thought his wealth would enable him to marry the lady he admired, but as subsequent events proved, he was mistaken. He transferred his business to others, and set to work to win the hand of the princess, but soon discovered how futile his efforts were when her betrothal to the present czar of all the Russias was announced. After her marriage he went to St. Petersburg with the characteristic impulse of a lover, and, through the instrumentality of a powerful and influential friend, obtained a position in the emperor's body guard. Whether he ever realized his folly or not is unknown, but it is quite certain of all the czar's soldiers none has served him so faithfully as he who unsuccessfully, and in all ignorance, tried to rival him in love.

DEMOCRATIC POVERTY

