



CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)  
"Father," cried the unhappy girl, sinking upon her knees, and once more clasping her hands. "Oh, will you not save me from this terrible doom? What have I ever done that you should thus consign me to shame and misery? How have I ever, by a single word or deed, merited this from you? Oh, have pity on me, spare me!"

The dark man stood for a few moments and gazed upon the child in silence. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her to her feet. His frame trembled, and his eyes burned that same look that had before made her shudder.

"You would be saved from Jilok Tude?" he uttered, in a quick, nervous whisper.

"Yes—Oh, yes!" the maiden replied.

She gazed up into his face as she spoke, but she shrank from the look she met there. It was not a kind look—it was not a threatening one. Oh, she could not fathom it.

"I have promised Tude," he whispered. "I have promised him; but, no! I will not speak yet!"

The man stopped midway in the room—he gazed upon the girl a moment—and then left the place. Irene stood there, crouching away in the corner, until she could hear the steps of her father no more, and then, with one deep groan, she sank down senseless upon the floor.

It was half an hour after this that Cassandra came into the room and found her young mistress lying upon the floor. She hastened to her side, and with cold water and salts soon managed to bring her from her swoon.

"What is it, my mistress?" the faithful girl asked, as she held the maiden's head in her lap.

"Cassandra," whispered Irene, gazing eagerly up, "is it you?"

"Yes, dearest mistress."

"Where is my father?"

"I know not; I have not seen him. Shall I call him?"

"Call him!" repeated the fair girl, starting quickly to her feet.

She gazed wildly about her, and finally, bending close to her attendant, she uttered, in a hoarse, frightened whisper:

"Oh, no—I have no father, Cassandra. Never, never more! On all the wide earth I have no father! Speak not now. Let me think."

Irene sank into a chair and bowed her head upon her hands. She remained thus full fifteen minutes, and when she raised her head again it was fairly dark.

"Shall I bring lights?" asked Cassandra.

"Not here—not here. Take them to my own chamber; I will go thither at once, and do you follow quickly with the lights—quickly, Cassandra; Oh, quickly! Do not leave me alone!"

The fair young attendant was surprised and most deeply moved, but she stopped not now to ask questions. Hastening at once to the steward's department, she procured candles, and then went up to the chamber of her mistress, where she found Irene already seated upon the bed.

The waxen tapers were set in the costly sticks, and then Cassandra sat down upon the soft divan which her mistress sometimes used for a footstool. Awhile Irene gazed upon her in silence, and then she went and sat down near her, and drew her head into her lap. This movement startled the young girl. For an instant the thought flashed upon her that her poor mistress might have her mind turned. Yet she allowed her head to rest quietly where it had been placed, and she moved not until she felt a warm tear drop upon her cheek. Another—and another. She turned her gaze upward, and Irene was weeping. Starting quickly up, she threw her arms about her gentle lady's neck, and in a low, eager tone, she cried:

"What is it, Irene? O, trust me, for this heart is all your own, even unto death."

The maiden wiped away her tears, and with an effort she was calm.

"Cassandra," she said, in a low, yet distinct tone, "I have no home. I have no home! I have no father any more, Cassandra. Never, never more! No father!"

"But he is not dead," whispered the maid.

"Dead to me—worse than dead," returned Irene, with a fearful shudder.

"But ask me no more of him. I cannot stay here, Cassandra; it is no more my home; this roof covers a pest-spot—a charnel-house! You will bear me company."

"Yes, yes, my mistress. You will not command me in this, for only bid me stay behind, and on my bended knee will I pray that I may accompany you. But when will you go?"

"As soon as possible. Oh, to-night if I could."

"Is there need of such haste?"

"As there is of the condemned man's breaking from prison. They have fixed upon Monday next as the day of my marriage."

"So soon?" uttered Cassandra, forgetting what had passed. "And will not your father save you from this?"

Irene St. Marc turned pale as death. She pressed her hands hard upon her bosom, and at length she said, in a voice fearfully distinct in its deep, moaning volume:

"He would save me from the pirate—as the ravenous wolf would save the lost lamb!"

Cassandra gazed fixedly into the speaker's face, and her own cheeks turned ashen, and her own frame shook. Once more she wound her arms about Irene's neck and drew her head upon her bosom. "I will ask thee no more," she said, speaking gently and soothingly. "Let us plan for our escape, and make our way off as soon as possible."

Irene made one more powerful effort, and thereby she threw off the terrible load from her mind, so that she could bend her thoughts to the subject in hand.

"Oh, we must be very careful," she said, "for I feel sure that I know why this move is taken. I have been too bold and assured. I have exposed my thoughts when I knew it not. From my utter coarseness when in the bad man's presence, and

from the deep contempt which I have allowed to exhibit itself toward him, he has rightly judged that I meant to make my escape. For no other reason would he have made such a change in our arrangements. So, once more, we must be very careful. You are quick of wit, Cassandra; oh, help me if you can!"

The young girl gazed her mistress steadily while she spoke, and when she had finished she bowed her head and remained for some moments in deep thought. At length she raised her eyes, and the very light that beamed therefrom told that she had gained something by her pondering.

"I think I can obtain the garbs of two priests, Irene—I am sure I can. I can do it this very night. You remember my father, lady?"

"Very well, Cassandra."

"Well, Gonzales Rondo was a poor boy once, despised and turned away by the wealthy because he was poor and friendless, and shunned by the lepers because he was of a caste above them. My father, poor as he was, and but a simple ranchero, fed him and clothed him, and by his own influence alone got him into the church. It was in this wise, Belovado, the bishop, was in a carriage, and his horses were running furiously away with him, having thrown his position off. Near to my father's house there was a frightful precipice; towards this the horses were dashing on in all their mad fury, when my father rushed out in front of them and seized them; they dragged him a short way and hurt him much, but he stopped them, and saved the bishop's life. The prelate forced a purse upon him, and bade him come for any favor he might want while they both lived. But my father never went but once, and that was to ask that poor Gonzales Rondo might be taken in to the holy orders; the good bishop was true to his promise, and he not only gave Gonzales a noble opportunity for advancement, but he also made him understand that he owed it all to my father. So now I know that Gonzales will help me. He is a good priest and of much influence. He was but a boy when he entered the college, and I think he told me he still kept his novitiate suit. If we can obtain the garb of priests we can easily escape. From the top of our house we can step directly upon the next, and from thence upon the roof of the chapel; and of course no one will think of questioning two priests coming from that direction."

"Oh, ten thousand blessings on thee, dear one!" murmured Irene, winding her arms about her companion's neck. "Already I begin to live once more, Cassandra, when can you see the priest?"

"To-night—now. I will go at once."

"But will they not suspect thee?"

"No, for I have liberty to go and come as I please; the distance is not far."

"Then go at once. But, oh, be careful. Should I lose you, my last and only stay would be gone."

"And is there not one other?" Cassandra asked.

"Whom do you mean?"

"The young and noble American captain."

Irene St. Marc started, and for a moment the rich blood mounted to her cheeks and temples.

"Alas!" she murmured, "once I might have hoped, but his people are now at hand with ours, and his duty now keeps him away. I must not think of him—perhaps he never—never loved me. He will never know how devotedly I have loved him! Oh, why was it so? why did I ever see him? Clarence—heaven bless thee ever!"

Words of hope were upon Cassandra's lips, but she did not utter them; she had no ground for them, and she left them unsaid. But she pressed her lips to Irene's fair brow, and then she said:

"Rest you easy here while I go to Father Rondo's house. I will not be gone long."

"Hurry, my good Cassandra. Leave me no longer than you can help."

And when the true-hearted girl was gone, Irene locked her door, and then she sank down upon her bed.

CHAPTER X.

During all the time that Irene was left alone she moved not. She lay and pondered upon the years that had passed, and upon the days that had passed. She thought of her father—and she wondered if any other child in all the country had a parent like him. She hoped not—she prayed not. Then she thought of the noble youth upon whom she had bestowed the whole of her pure heart's love, and she wondered if he loved her as she loved him. He had never told her of his love, though she had hoped that in his looks she had read the happy assurance.

"It is a strange tale of love," she murmured to herself, as she clasped her hands upon her bosom. "And yet, how could I help it? What to me was his nativity or his tongue? Heaven makes no nations, no castes. Oh, Clarence—Clarence—can the protecting love of thy noble heart—the shielding power of thy strong arms, be in store for me?"

At length the maiden was aroused by hearing a light creaking from the stairs which came down from the roof, and in a few moments more some one tried her door. She arose and went to ask who was there, and the soft voice of Cassandra was heard in reply.

"Are you alone?" the girl asked, in a very low whisper.

"Yes—no one has been here since you left."

Cassandra turned and picked up a bundle she had dropped by the side of the door, and then came in, and as soon as the door had been relocked, the two went back to where the candles were. Irene sat down, but she dared not ask a question; she had rested all her hopes upon her maid's success, and she was fearful of eliciting a fatal answer. But she was not long in suspense.

"Did you notice which way I came?" Cassandra asked.

"You came down from the roof, did you not?"

"Yes."

"But how?" queried Irene, whose mind had just caught the difficulty of the thing.

"Ah, my mistress, good Father Rondo has been more kind than I had even hoped. Not only has he given me the dresses I sought, but he also gave me a key to the chapel, which I am to return to him."

"Bless you—bless—!" murmured Irene, at the same time drawing the good girl's head upon her bosom and kissing her.

"We can escape now."

"Yes—easily," returned Cassandra, raising her head. "All we have to do is simply to put on the dresses. I have brought, and then make our escape. But we will not start yet; it will be safer to wait until after midnight, for then all will be safe here in the house. We had better retire now, for there is no knowing who may come to look in upon us. If suspicion is already entertained it will not do to excite more."

Irene saw at once the propriety of the girl's suggestion, and ere long afterwards she prepared to retire. The candles were extinguished after a small night-lamp had been lighted, and then Cassandra lay down with her mistress. It was not far from eleven o'clock when a light footstep was heard near the door, and immediately afterwards some one tried the latch. Upon the instant Cassandra commenced to snore.

"Who's there?" asked Irene, speaking as though she had just been awakened from a sound sleep.

"It's only me—old Bel," returned the applicant. "I thought I'd just stop and see if you wanted anything."

"No, I thank you—I want only sleep."

After this the woman went away. Cassandra listened until she was out of hearing, and then she said:

"Your father sent that old woman up, I am sure. I saw her in conversation with him as I passed his window this evening."

"I thought of that, when I first heard her," returned Irene.

Nothing more was said until the clock struck twelve, though neither of the girls had closed her eyes from drowsiness. All was quiet in the house.

"Now," said Cassandra, in a low whisper, "let us up and prepare. I will make sure that there is no one about the hall."

Thus speaking, she arose and walked softly to the door, and having opened it she passed noiselessly out and looked about. But she found nothing in the way. All was still and quiet, and the lights were all out; she returned, and having relocked the door she raised the wick of the lamp, and then proceeded to open the bundle she had brought with her from the good priest's. First she helped dress Irene. The black silken hose were drawn on; then the buckled shoes; then the close vest; and then the long robe. The latter garment was not an inch too long, and when the girl was round about the loins and tied, the garb fitted well. Next she put Irene's long, silken tresses snugly up on the top of the head, and having bound them up, she put on the tight skull cap. It only needed now the great-brimmed hat, and this the girl brought up from her bundle. Irene took the lamp and went to the mirror, and she was well pleased with the disguise, feeling sure that in the night, at least, she should not be detected.

As soon as this was accomplished, Cassandra proceeded to put on her own disguise, which was just like that of her mistress.

"Now," she said, "let us pack up what we shall most need, and then we will be off. We can take one change of dress, and that must suffice in that line."

The bundles were quickly made up, and then they turned their attention to such things as they wished to secure about their persons. Irene had quite a lot of valuable jewelry, besides about five hundred dollars in gold coin. All this she secured about her, and then she sat down upon the bed. The excitement of the occasion was almost overpowering.

"All is ready now," whispered Cassandra, placing her arm about the maiden's neck.

"Do not fear for me," Irene quickly returned; "it is only a momentary weakness—I was only thinking—"

She stopped here and burst into tears. For some moments she wept upon her companion's bosom, and finally she gazed up and brushed the tears away.

"It is past now," she said. "I could not help it, Cassandra; it was my last thought of the place that has been so long my home. But it is over. I am strong now—let us go."

The two girls took up their bundles and passed out from the room. Cassandra locked the door behind her, and put the key in her pocket, and then noiselessly led the way to the roof-ladder, and thence to the top of the house. Here she blew out her light, and having set the lamp down where it would not be easily seen, she started on towards the roof of the adjoining building. They walked very quietly here, for some of the servants slept beneath them. There was no moon, but the stars were all out clear and bright, and the fugitives picked their way very easily. Having passed the roof of the second house, they came to the chapel, on the top of which there was a cupola. Upon one side of this cupola there was a door, and this Cassandra opened by means of the key which the priest had given her. A few steps further and they were in the street, with the way open before them now to go as they pleased.

"—sh!" uttered Irene, drawing more closely to her companion, "there is a man!"

"Ah, Irene, you must be more careful than that. Let come what may, we must be bold and fearless, else our disguises will avail us nothing. But we have nothing to fear here, for I think this is good Gonzales."

And so it proved. The priest was the first to speak.

"Fear not, lady," he said, as he noticed Irene's tremulousness. "If you have a holy purpose in view, and I believe you have—go boldly on, but carefully. You have the key, Cassandra?"

"Yes, good father. Here it is."

"Now come with me," the man said, as he placed the key in the pocket of his gown. "I will go beyond the gates of the city with you, and beyond there you must trust to your own strength and wit. But within the city I may be of service, for if the sentinels halt us, my identity will be passport enough for you."

And he was fortunate for them that Gonzales went with them, for they were stopped by three different sentries, though no opposition was offered. Arrived at the gate, the real priest readily obtained egress, and in a few moments more they were standing without the walls of the town. There was a sense of dread and march which lay spread so darkly and gloomily beneath the night.

"Which way now?" she involuntarily uttered.

"There is but one way that I could recommend," returned Rondo. "I will go with you a little further, for I have no desire to return too soon; we must take the Jalapa road, for there is none other that would be safe. Among some of the—stop! By the mass, I know a native not far from the road who owes me a debt of gratitude. I saved him from the executioner's hands not two years ago, when a party of them were apprehended for highway robbery; his name is Jacar Xampa. I will send you to him, and there you shall be safe. But come—I can explain as we go on."

The trio now set forward as swiftly as the priest thought prudent.

(To be continued.)

Saved by a Cat.

Sir Edward Osborne, Lord Mayor of London in his time, bought an ancient house in Yorkshire, and sent his wife and children thither. There were two boys among them. The Pall Mall Gazette tells of a tragedy which occurred at the house soon after.

One of the boys, the elder, dutifully obeyed when summoned to his lessons one morning in a turret, but the younger, loitering, "happened to light upon a cat which he delighted to play with, and crept after her to catch her under a table in the room which was covered over with a carpet hanging down to the floor."

Thus he disappeared, and the next instant a terrible rush of wind overthrew the turret, in which his brother and the tutor sat at work, crushing them to death.

Supposing that both her sons were there, the mother fell into convulsions. One of the maids, running in a distracted manner from room to room, caught sight of the small boy peeping from under the table, with the cat in his arms, snatched him up and bore him in ecstasy to his mother, he only crying:

"I pray thee, I pray thee, do not whip me!"

His Reason for the Change.

The small daughter of a friend of mine has just had her first experience with the fickleness of the male sex. The little boys and girls in the neighborhood where she lives have all been going to the same dancing school, and one afternoon last week the teacher arranged for them a dancing party. There was to be a cotillion, and each little boy was to invite his partner beforehand. Charley N., who is quite a beau of the class, was selected to lead, and he invited my small friend Bess to assist him. Bess is the most obedient of daughters, and told the young gentleman she would have to ask her mother for permission to attend the party before she could accept his invitation. Mother was quite willing for her to go, and little Bess, radiant with joy at the prospective honor, wrote a neat little note of acceptance to Master Charles. Next day there was a ring at the door bell, and the maid who answered it found a note thrust under the door. It was from Charley, and it ran thus:

"Dear Friend Bessie: I am a-going to change my mind and lede with Lucy Davis her Brother has got a new air Gun."—Washington Post.

Catching Monkeys.

The fondness of monkeys for mischief makes them the ready dupes of a shrewder intelligence. The manner of entrapping them is explained by a South American writer, who is familiar with life in town and in forest throughout the equatorial belt.

One of the simplest methods consists in cutting a number of holes in a gourd, making them barely large enough to admit the monkey's hand. The gourd, thus prepared, is filled with corn and secured to the trunk of a tree. Then it is shaken violently, so as to attract the attention of the monkeys. A few grains of corn are scattered in the neighborhood of the trap.

The gourd is the dinner-bell of the monkeys. They no sooner hear the well-known sound than they descend from their aerial homes, and each in turn, seizing the gourd, grasps through one of the holes a handful of corn. Then they struggle in vain to withdraw their hands without relinquishing the prize. At this critical moment the concealed author of their mishap suddenly makes his appearance, and tying their hands, carries them off to his cabin in the woods.

True to the Name.

The group on the front porch was discussing the merits and demerits of the house dog, a magnificent animal that was basking in the sun.

"Have you any idea," asked one of the guests, "why he is called a 'Great Dane'?"

"Yes," slowly replied the owner of the dog. "It has always seemed to me that it must be because it is such a great 'delight' for him to notice any smaller animal."

A young woman with a pug nose turned it up slightly at this explanation, but there were no other signs of dissent.

The World's Newspapers.

The total number of copies of newspapers printed throughout the world in one year is estimated at 12,000,000,000. To print these requires 781,200 tons of paper. The oldest newspaper is said to be the 'Kin-Pau' of Peking, which has been published continually for over 1,000 years.

In Autumn.

Don't you welcome the golden glories of the autumnal season?" she asked.

"I do," answered the man with close-set hair. "It'll be a big relief to hear people talk about something besides the summer girl and the shirt waist man."

To Remove Ink Stains.

Tomato juice will remove stains of ink, fruit or wine.

More failures are due to lack of will than to lack of strength.

Challenge to Nebraska Girls.

The governor of Nebraska, who is a bachelor, wants to sell the executive mansion and turn the money over to the people. We shall lose our faith in the girls, declares the Chicago Times-Herald, if some of them don't step forward now and make the governor decide that he will need the executive mansion in his business.

Loyalty to His Employer.

That young man who consented to have a portion of his blood let out to save his employer, set a remarkable example of heroism. The incident shows what power there is in good blood. There is only one natural way to get good blood and that is from the stomach. If the stomach needs assistance, try Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. This wonderful medicine cures dyspepsia, indigestion, constipation, and makes rich, red blood.

Young Teachers for Manila.

Fifteen young women in the girls' normal school of Philadelphia have informed Prof. Atkinson, superintendent of education in the Philippines, of their willingness to accept the government's offer to become school-teachers in the islands.

The Blessings of Told.

Unfortunately, however, remarks the Chicago Times-Herald, Count de Castellane has not as yet been reduced to the necessity of looking around for a job.

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY.

Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. Grove's signature is on each box. 25c.

Justifiable Verboosity.

The congressional report on hazing at West Point contains 1,000,000 words, but, declares the Chicago Record, the subject seems to justify it.

In Luck.

Queen Wilhelmina is to make Duke Henry a prince now that they are married. He is a lucky man who can be promoted by his wife.

Human Eccentricities.

Mr. William C. Whitney has just paid \$60,000 for a horse announces the Chicago Times-Herald, in spite of the fact that he might have purchased one of the best automobiles in the market for \$2,500.

Ants Dependent on Slaves.

The curious fact has been demonstrated by Sir John Lubbock that certain kinds of ants are unable to exist without keeping other ants as slaves, though why this is so he has not found out. On removing the slaves from a nest of slave-holding ants he found that the latter immediately commenced to die off and were speedily reduced in number to six. When the slaves were returned the mortality ceased.

Some women seem to think that there was never a secret worth keeping.

Parent (severely)—You sat up with young Spooner until a most indecorous hour last night, Matilda.

Matilda—But I love him. He is the light of my life!

Parent (testily)—But you know my rule! He is a light that must be put out at 11 o'clock.—Tit-Bits.

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