MY HALF SISTER

XXX By ELTON HARRIS XXX

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"I toank you, monsieur, for your offer," Mollie said gently at length, "but I must decline it. I am very sorry if you feel hurt, but when you leave here I hope you will soon forget it."

"What, you refuse!" he exclaimed incredulously. "You will not accept my warning? You will be my enemy?" "I hope not, surely. But if you are my enemy I shall not be yours," she

answered steadily, backing away, yet keeping an eye upon the glass doors. For a moment the young man stood gazing at her with more feeling in his face than she could have believed pos-

Mollie little knew how pretty she looked, as she stood there in her white gown, with the soft dark night as a background, and the lights from the drawing room falling on her curly, ruffled head, nor the simple dignity of the grey eyes that regarded him so fearlessly. All at once his expression changed, and grew black and fierce,

distorted with evil thought. "So you decline," he hissed in her ear. "You think you will marry that long-legged, curly-headed soldier! But disabuse your mind of that idea. You will marry me, Henri Dubois. I swear it! Whether you love me or not, I will be your husband. Oh, you will soon be glad enough to escape from madame ma mere, and you can do it but the little sister her mother had by me-only by me. Ah! how quiet left to her, to be guarded and shielded

you are! Do you hear?" "Yes, and so will every one else," Mollie replied, standing very erect, and eyeing with haughty disdain his excited face. "I have listened to you patiently, but I decline to be threatened or coerced. It may answer with some people-it never did with a L'Estrange. Let me pass."

For a moment Henri paused irresolute, glaring at her; then he gave way a step, and she was through the drawing room and half way upstairs before he could realize that he had been baffled and refused by this girl of 19.

He had thought to reduce her to submission, and at the first threat she, usually so gentle, had turned upon him fearlessly; and he, a coward by nature, failed to recognize, what his mother dimly felt, that it was impossible to cower a spirit that rose higher whenever danger threatened.

As for Mollie, she was angry and darkening sky. indignant; yet, once in her room, she

could not help laughing. "So I am to marry Henri, who will devote his life to making me happy!" she murmured, as she brushed her hair. "It will not be a money-making profession for him. I have an idea that once he had my wretched fortune he would turn his devotion to his own

But from that night the life at

Chalfont became almost unbearable. Madame openly espoused her son's cause, saying it was strange Mollie could refuse one so handsome and devoted, for whom other girls were sighing in vain. Slowly and steadily she tried to force her into the hated engagement, implying that it would be a great relief to her mind to have her married to so estimable a young man, the only one she could countenance for her; and well Mollie knew what this latter remark meant-neither Mr. Anstruther nor any one else need expect her consent. As for Henri, he was worse than ever, following her everywhere, sullen or sentimental by Kate in their absence. turns, repeating his proposals whenever he had an opportunity; and the only friend she had in the house was her little half-sister, Kate,

For the strange child, ever since the Easter eve when she had flown to Mollie for protection, had attached herself to her with a quiet persistence that was both amusing and touching. Every night she found her rolled up in one corner of her bed asleep, or pretending to be, and the fear of losing this | might. privilege made her try to check this irritability that was part of her temperament, and be more amenable to the sorely-tried governess.

to enforce it, for the little one's nerves | you for a time. I can do nothing more were in a terribly strained state, and yet." Mollie's room seemed her haven of refuge. There she felt safe-there, ed her angrily. "It is easy to say, but dark or light, nothing could touch she will not have me. Truly, me mere, her; there she never had horrible I have a respect for her more than I dreams. Bad things could not come have felt for any woman before. When

about, at first with shy defiance, at have wanted no one else. Were she last with unconcealed affection and a | my wife I could trust her absolutely; funny motherly solicitude, and ere the I would even try to be a good husroses began to bloom there was no band," crime so great in her eyes as to hurt

"What is the matter?" asked Mollie

here," said the man helplessly, touch- Come to Paris." dered me to mark one."

tell Aunt Clare so;" she stormed.

"But I would teach you to play," Mollie said quietly.

It was no idle threat on Kate's part, she knew. Her father's will strictly enjoined that her wishes were to be indulged, and madame happened to be in a frightful temper that day.

"Would you like it?" demanded Kate, stopping abruptly.

"I think it would be nice." "You can go on, John," she said im-

periously to the man. "Anything Miss L'Estrange desires is to be done."

It was the same in everything. Her little face would grow haggard with anxiety when Mollie drove with madame, and she had no peace until she met her on the steps; while one morning, when Mollie awoke, she heard her murmuring away to herself, and a furtive peep revealed the little maid sitting up in her frilled nightgown, nursing her knees, her flaxen curls falling thickly round her shoulders.

"She is so pretty; look at her long, curling lashes!" she was whispering in a tone of satisfaction. "But I should love her anyhow, for she is my sister; she is my own Mollie, my very own Mollie!"

"My own Mollie!" Just what her mother had always called her. Mollie knew better than to move or disturb the child, but from that moment she was never "my half-sister Kate" again, by every means in her power, to be loved and taught all that Mollie, humble in her strength, could teach her, that together they might struggle along that narrow path which leads to eternal life.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a hot August evening, and after Mollie had heard Kate's hymns and prayers-for which purpose she always went upstairs after dinnershe took a book and sat at the wide open window in preference to returning to the drawing room. She often did this now, for lately things had been worse than ever, Henri more persistent. At first Kate tossed about, restless with the heat, but at length her regular breathing showed that she slept; and Mollie's book dropped unheeded, as she sat watching the harvest lightning flashing across the

She was thinking of Reggle, who had been obliged to rejoin his regiment in Ireland months ago, without saying good-by to her, though he had brought Joyce up to Chalfont to call for that purpose. Madame had never mentioned this. She only heard it from Joyce later, when it seemed too late to be angry, though she was very

She had missed him dreadfully. Reverton was not the same place somehow when there was no chance during their walks and drives of seeing his tall, upright figure swinging along, but he used to send all sorts of messages through Joyce. He would come back, and, meantime, she devoted herself to Kate, who daily grew happier and more childlike. Mrs. Anstruther and Joyce did their best for her; but madame cut her off from every one, and lately they had been away, which was a great matter of regret, for it was something to feel their friendly presence near, though she was free to wander in the woods and fields with

The scent of a cigar, chairs being dragged along the pantiles below, and the window. Madame and Henri were their voices were borne upwards in the still air-little they guessed how plainly! Mollie would have moved away, feeling that she ought not to listen had she not caught a few words; then she leaned forward with all her

"Kate's money cannot be touched. I have got all I can-every farthing. I literally do not know where to turn for a penny." And madame's voice sound-This much Mollie exacted, though ed harsh and weary. "You must

"Bah! Marry the girl!" He mimicknear Mollie, who was so sweet and I look into those beautiful eyes of hers, Day by day she followed her so young, so frank, I want her as I

> "You love her!" madame said jealously.

"There, now, you will upbraid me one morning, when she found her for that!" he sneered. "But she will prancing about the lawn 'n a fury, never have me, she adores that Anscolding like a young virago the gar- struther; they love in English fashion. You may give up all hopes of bend-

uncle's will I am obliged to live at regarded as a Japanese house, has effort it must have cost her. She un- close by, and then stole with cat-like is a little more "gentle" than our sav-"It is my lawn; I won't allow it! Chalfont with Kate. Oh, if I could its agencies in China and does a large derstood the firmly-shut mouth, the step to the back of the chair before age forefathers' custom of stranging He has no right to meddle, and I shall only get away from the place—get business with that land.—Los Angeles half-opened eyes; but, suave or not, the writing table, where the detectives female babies because they were an away!" And her voice rose with Times.

strange trembling intensity that was

"There, do not begin that!" he muttered, with callous impatience. "To continue from where we started, I must have money! You have large sums for both girls."

"You have had most of it." she retorted. "As also that large sum through your uncle's check."

"Hush! we need not speak of that. You have been ever the best of mothers, as also the handsomest."

"Ah, Henri, my son, you are my all!" she said, in a softened voice. "All I want is your love, and now you would care more for this girl. Now, listen, you must marry her, for in that way can assure your fortune. True, her fortune is not so large as Kate's, but did anything happen to the child she would have all. Kate is very delicate. Any one can see that. And it would surprise no one if, after your marriage, she did not live long."

There was a moment's silence. The listener above started and clenched her hands. A match was struck. Henri, was evidently lighting a fresh cigar. Then his high voice said lightly:

"Ah, ma belle mere, you are clever! That is certainly to be considered. I had thought of it also!"

They had moved into the drawingroom, and Mollie, white with wrath and dismay, crept quietly to the bed, and stood looking at the sleeping child. Poor little girl! Her whole life she had been made the center for the evil passions of others, and now a fresh danger threatened her. "Touch Kate!" thought Mollie, with beating heart, as she gently brushed the fair curls from the small thin face.

Touch her little sister! Not while she, Mollie, could protect her. And she would rouse all Reverton; she would fight them by every means in her power, before this nervous, excitable child should suffer further. Then she remembered that she herself was Kate's great safeguard, so long as she did not marry Henri. And she would die rather; for the child was madame's they." largest source of income, and would be cared for accordingly.

But as she sat in the garden the following afternoon she felt sick at heart. How could these people be so wicked. Lying back in an American chair, looking up into the great trees, she reflected sadly upon the terrible abuse

People would do anything for itnothing into the world, neither can they carry anything out."

She and Kate were very fond of this part of the garden. They spent all the hot afternoons there, and madame and Henri were out today, so it was very peaceful.

Suddenly a bird in the bushes sang a few notes, then a very clear whistle followed; but it came from no bird's throat-it was a tune she knew well, but never expected to hear in the garden at Chalfont, and she sat up eagerly and looked round.

There was Reggie, who ought to have been a hundred miles away. standing a few yards off, clad in riding clothes, whip in hand, and a smile on his good-looking young face.

"Well, what are you doing here?" she cried in amazement, with a decided access of color. "Why, your people are

"Oh, yes; but I have just run down about the horses, you see," returned he glibly, coming quite close. "No; bother the horses. That is not it at all. So you remember the old tune,

never whistle anything else."

"But I never sang the words for you, did I? They go like this"-and in a clear mellow voice, Mr. Anstruther softly trolled them out:

'Won't you tell me, Mollie darling, That you love none else but me? For I love you, Mollie darling-You are all the world to me.'

(To be continued.)

Democracy of the Press. The newspaper press is the most voices, made her lean further out of democratic institution on earth, says a New York writer. Within the pages evidently sitting there! How clearly of a daily journal all classes come together on the same level. Fayne Moore and Mrs. Astor are mentioned in the same column. William C. Whitney and Brown, the expressman, have their portraits published side by side. Toduel Sloane, the jockey, and J. Pierpont Morgan, the financier, divide oodles of space. The convict in the penitentiary is exhibited alongside of the Christian minister of the Gospel. The bloodthirsty Boxer and the peaceable peasant of Piedmont she would never have had the heart | marry the girl; her fortune will last | have their say in the same style of type. A Newport cotillon and a Texas lynching are equally displayed. The newspapers play no favorites. All knowledge is their forte, all news their capital stock. The red hat of the cardinal is no redder to them than the red gore that is spilled in the roped arena. The bluest blood of the revolution is treated with no more respect than the blue nose of a Cape Cod fish-

American Enterprise in China.

An American merchant in Hongkong spppiles the China coast with

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CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.) you? I love you awfully. I have just L'Estrange must be considered quite run over on the chance of seeing you, free. because I could not stay away any look at me? Do!'

A most persuasive voice was Reggie's; but Mollie's eyes were fixed on the point of her shoe, and she put her hands behind her when he attempted | ing you alone in my absence-" to take them.

"Give me time to think," she whispered in a subdued tone. "I can hardly believe that you are here. How did you find me?"

"Saw the Dubois in town, but they did not see me. Rode straight on and met the little kiddie, who brought me here. Told her that I wanted to speak to you very particularly alone; and she flew off and promised to keep watch for the return of the enemy," said Reggie briefly.

"Dear little Kittie!"

"Won't you say, 'Dear Reggle,' too, Mollie?" he suggested, eyeing her wistfully. "I have come all the way from Ireland to ask you." Then, as she flashed a quick, half-smiling glance at him, he added. "'She who hesitates is lost;' 'Silence gives consent.' How usefully these ancient copybook saying come in in one's old age, don't

"They certainly seem to," allowed Mollio hesitatingly.

And as there seemed no opposition offered to the arm Reggie had stolen round her, it stayed there, while, two not being able to sit with any comfort in an American cane chair, they repaired to the rustic seat, and were as happy and forgetful of the world as mortal lovers could be for the next half scheme, lie, and cheat; and what did it hour, as they sat in the sunshine, in come to in the end? for "They brought the springtime of youth, hope, and

> "Oh, Reggie-Madam Dubois!" exclaimed the girl at length. "She will never, never consent; she means me to marry Henri." "Then we will pay Henri's country

the compliment of taking French leave, my dear child," he returned gaily. But she shook her head.

"I shall be of age in 18 months," she said shyly.

"Eighteen centuries! Why, I hate to leave you here now!"

"And I could not leave my poor little Kittie," she exclaimed, raising her eyes to his deprecatingly. "By then I hope she will be better, stronger. Oh, Reggie, couldn't you bargain with them to give me Kittie? It would be so cruel to leave her; you cannot think how loving, how true to me the little pet is!" And she poured into his ear all that she had overheard that hot

evening at the window. Reggie's face grew very pale as he listened, and he gave a low whistle of dismay; but whatever he thought he was too wise to make his sweetheart more uncomfortable than she already was. But she had to promise that on "It would be funny if I did not. You | no account would she even listen to Henri, against whom Reggie's sentiments were far from peaceful, and that if matters became worse she would take refuge at the White house, whither his mother returned in a week's time. And then Kate came running back to announce her aunt's re-

> "Oh, Reggie!" ejaculated Mollie, rising, and turning very pink.

"Sit down, child," he said calmly, dragging her back to his side, and taking Kate on his knee, "Let them

Kate pushed back her curls and regarded him with a frown. She was very fond of Reggie, but- He understood the look, read the dawning jealousy of any one coming between Mollie and herself, in those sharp hazel eyes, which had already discovered the truth; and as this tall, merry young officer's heart was as tender as a girl's towards those he cared for, he hastened at the top of the stairs. to dissipate it.

"You are going to be my sister, kidling," he said gently.

"I know," she answered, with trembling lips. "You will take her away." "But she tells me she cannot be happy without you, so we shall have to manage for you to come, too," he continued. "Now if you think that will be jolly, and we shall be the best brother and sister going, never jealous of each other, signify the same in the usual manner by a kiss." And he was more touched than he liked to show when the little girl threw her glitter in her great black eyes-swept arms round his neck in a transport of | noiselessly past her and went straight relief, happily unconscious of the obstacles that might come in their way.

It was this group that madame, followed by her son, came in sight of, and great was her wrath. Nor was it in any way mollified when Mr. Anmasts, spars and other timber. His struther advanced politely, and, after that froze the blood in her veins and name and property appear in the Eng- the usual greetings, informed her that that she never forgot. For had she ing and importing. The American of his father's. Madame was very as this do great events hang! she spraged to convey plainly her de- said that Mr. Barlowe must have been incumbrance to the tribe.-Gunton's,

cision. She not only could not sanc-"Look here, Mollie, will you-won't | tion the engagement, but Miss

"I don't wish to be free," said Mollie longer. And I hate to think of you | bodly, over his shoulder. "I have given break it."

struther has taken advantage of find-

"I naturally wished to find Miss L'Estrange alone," answered Reggie, haughtily.

"Oh, yes!" sneered Heri, who had been standing biting his nails gloomily, in direful dismay. "It is well to pay court to the heiress, but she has protection. I-' He paused uneasily, yet Reggie had

only stooped to pick up the riding them!" whip which he had dropped, and then looked at him. But it was enoughhe said no more, while madame, going a shade paler as she watched the the grate, apparently holding them interview.

When Reggie left things were only what he had expected. Madame absolutely refused her consent, and declined to see him at Chalfont again, so far losing her temper as to utter innuendoes and insults, which she could say with impunity, as a woman, but which would certainly have brought Reggie's whip across the shoulders of her adored son.

Reggie, for his part, courteously repeated that the engagement was a fact, and would be known all over Reverton; he was sorry for her decision, but it would alter nothing, only cause a little delay. Then, after a few words with Mollie, he reluctantly tore himself away, and she heard the gate clang behind him and watched him down the road until she was blinded by her

CHAPTER IX.

"Mollie, it is so bad again!" "Is it, my pet? What can I do for

you?" said a sleepy voice, as Mollie roused herself from the slumber into | hand that the blow was struck. which she had fallen by the side of the bed. "Kittie, it is striking 12 by the hall clock; I had no idea it was so | termined to see what took this wretchlate! I will go down to the drawing | ed woman, whom she felt persuaded room and get the cloves; we left them there, and they may ease the pain a

Kate sat up in bed, looking as miserable as a child with teeth ache can look, and Mollie slipped off for the cloves, closing the door softly behind

It was Easter eve once more; not balmy and soft like last time, but cold and frosty, with a cruel east wind howling round the house, like the night two years ago when Leonard Barlowe had so mysteriously met his

The months that had passed had been full of trouble and anxiety to Mollie L'Estrange, and she looked paler and thinner; but the gray eyes were as fearless and sweeter than ever, for the trials had been bravely borne, and if she could not quite love her enemies, she had at least endeavored to follow that splendid precept and return good for evil.,

Henri had been away for some weeks now; at first much to her relief, but latterly she had almost wished him back, for his mother's sake. Ever since his departure she had seemed consumed with restlessness, growing daily more morose and gloomy, and breaking into fits of passion for the merest trifle, while she watched Mollie with auspicious eyes, never allowing her to see the Anstruthers, through whom alone she could hear from Reggie, for both knew that the ordinary post

would not be safe. Stealing quietry down the dark stairs, Mollie gained the drawingroom, and, possessing herself of the bottle of cloves, was returning, when as she got to the door she saw a faint light

Who was abroad in the house this night of all others, when no servant would stir alone, when they vowed that the ghost of Mr. Barlowe walked in his haunts and a light had been seen

Drawing back against the heavy plush curtains in the hall, she watched with beating heart as it came glimmering nearer, not exactly frightened, but with a curious awe and dread, a feeling that something was going to happen. A moment later, and madamea lamp in her hand, a strange, dazed to the study.

The girl's first thought was to steal up stairs again, her next to creep across the dark hall after madame, and look in at the half-open door, and so, unthinkingly, she witnessed a sight

sitting asleep at the time of the attack. Suddenly she raised her arms, holding them as if she had some heavy weapon in them, and went through the motion twice of bringing it down with terrific force on the back of some one's

It was awful to see her face as she stood there, wild, flerce, watchful, her features working convulsively as she eyed the empty chair as if it were occupied, her dark hair streaming down the light dressing gown she wore, her breath coming in heavy gasps. After a minute she began muttering to herself, and leaned over as if to examine what was in the chair; then she went to the table and turned over the papers in a strange, troubled manner, her eye ever returning to that empty chair.

"It is only what you deserve-what you deserve!" she muttered in a harsh, strained voice, addressing the chair. "You are a hard, bad man. I begged here with these people. Won't you Mr. Anstruther my word, and will not to you for mercy for my child-my son, my beloved-and you only laugh-"My sweet child, you are young, you ed. What if he did forge your name? do not know your own mind. Mr. An- It was not for much. You are rolling in wealth-your wretched wife's money -and we are poor, and Henri is young and extravagant. But you shall not punish him. I helped you in the past, but that goes for nothing with such as you. You have only yourself to blame that I have taken the law into my own hands. I would die a thousand times rather than that you should expose my boy. Now you cannot say a word, and I take the proofs of his guilt and burn

She went through the motionsphantomwise, yet strangely real-of taking papers and thrusting them into two young men, hastened to close the | down with the weapon she thought she held, doing it all in a strange, dull calm, which her twitching face belied. For some minutes she crouched over the empty grate moaning and wringing her hands; then, when she evidently thought the papers and weapons destroyed, she rose, appeared to drag what was on the chair to the window -which she threw wide open-and, before Mollie could move, she came swiftly out of the room, and, lamp in hand, went towards the kitchen.

To describe the feelings of the horror-stricken girl watching her would be impossible. As one act after another of this terrible drama was played out before her she felt powerless to move, almost to think. All her senses were bound up in the effort to keep her trembling knees from giving way under her, for well she knew that to make the least sound might cost her her life! No need to ask again who killed Leonard Barlowe. She had been how it was done; she had seen everything-knew it was by his own sister's

Yet frightened as she was Mollie's courage did not desert her. She dewas mad, to the kitchen; so, with chattering teeth, she gathered her skirts together, and crept silently through the dark passages after her.

The lamplight guided her to the butler's pantry, and there stood madame. holding her hands under a tap which she had not turned on, and muttering incessantly to herself. As she wrung the imaginary water off them and rubbed them on her skirt, it occurred to Mollie, with a cold chill of fear, that she was action by action following out just what she must have done that terrible night-that it was she whom the servants took for a ghost, who had frightened Kate by brushing past her in the dark, Suddenly madame's glance fell upon some knives lying on a table, and a gleam like fire flashed into her eyes, a gleam that had neither reason nor sanity in it, only cunning and flerce exultation.

"Why not kill them both?" she muttered, standing still with a meditative look. "They are no use to Henri; the girl will not marry him; the child had better follow her father. Yes, yes; that will be best!"

(To be continued.)

DISPOSAL OF IDIOTS.

Society Cannot Shirk Its Responsibility for Criminals.

Now, of course it is the easiest

thing in the world to pick out individual cases where this highly effective and economical plan would seem justifiable, but the obstacle which must everlastingly keep all such obstacles out in the realm of purely visionary and impossible propositions is the fact that no man, or group of men -no, nor that of angels, probablycould ever be trusted to decide that such and such a person could not be reformed, but must die. There is the crux of the whole matter. That little word "very" which is supposed to describe the kind of vicious and criminal persons who are to be "gently and painlessly" assisted out of this world. contains the whole range of subtle, unknown and unfathomable qualities of character upon whose possibilities no human wisdom is competent to pass the final word. With Dr. McKim declaring, for example, that John Jones, aged thirty, whom he has carefully examined, is incorrigible and should be executed, and John Jones' mother, who, presumably, also knows something about him, declaring that there is that within the boy which, bad as he is, can and may reclaim him to useful manhood-where is the judge or lish records, but he and his business Miss L'Estrange had promised to be followed her first impulse and gone jury that would venture to pass upon nevertheless are American. At least his wife, and he trusted that he should upstairs, neither she nor Kate would the awful issue? Oh, no! Society has ing la belle Mol-lee to our will unless ten houses in Hawaii do a remunera- have her consent; he was sure of that have been alive when daylight dawned long since passed the point where it "Misses says she won't have no court you can get her away from Reverton. tive business with China, both export- of the trustees, who were old friends that Easter day. On such slight things can shirk its share of original responing his cap, "and the gentleman or- "I cannot. You know by your Trading company, which usually is suave at first, though Mollie knew the Madame put the lamp on a table by killing them-no matter if doing it