

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END;

AN ENGLISH TALE.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

As each week rolled round, Will Brownly received a letter from Mr. Bedford notifying him that his assessment for the support of Mrs. Rose Hanson was due; and each week Will sent twenty-one shillings from his earnings.

One day just after Mr. Bedford had received this so-called assessment, and had placed it in his vest pocket, his partners entered the office and the messenger came in bearing a large sealed package in his hand.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford; "at last!"

Taking the package from the messenger, he said: "Please give me your attention, gentlemen, for a few minutes. You will remember that some time ago we had a conversation about the best way to retain the monopoly of the secret we have for preparing straw. I was fearing that this monopoly would slip away from us. You will remember we bought this secret from Mr. Hanson, who had a legal right to sell it. But the woman had obtained a divorce from him, and but for one unfortunate circumstance—a fortunate one for us, by the bye—would no doubt have commenced business again, of course using her peculiar method of preparing the straw."

"What was this unfortunate circumstance for her but fortunate for us?" asked Mr. Smith.

"I was about to tell you. Mrs. Hanson has lost her reason; she is insane. You left the matter in my hands. I went to see her, and found that she would probably recover her reason again. No time was to be lost, and something was done. I proposed to her friends to place her under the care of a physician—in short, in an asylum; and," he continued, exultantly, "I now hold in my hand letters patent granted to the firm of Bedford & Co. for the process of preparing straw. We are safe, gentlemen. I think I ought to be congratulated."

"Wait," said Mr. Smith. "Let me understand this, if you please. I left, you will remember, rather suddenly that morning, and I want the particulars now. You found that woman who discovered this process to be crazy, did I understand you?"

"That is what I said, Mr. Smith," said Mr. Bedford, stiffly.

"And for fear she would recover before your plans could be carried out, you assisted to place her in a lunatic asylum? And then, in the name of the firm, you patented her invention—the work of this woman's brain—and you want to be congratulated?"

The other partners were winking at each other, and preparing for the finale.

"Well, I congratulate you, Bedford. I congratulate you on having committed one of the most cowardly, dastardly tricks I ever heard of."

"Do you intend to insult me, Mr. Smith?" said Bedford. "Business is business."

"Insult you? No; congratulate you, sir! To go down there and pretend to sympathize with a poor demented creature, lay your plans to get her out of the way, and then rob a woman whose mind is shattered—is meaner than stealing a bone from a hungry wolf. I am ashamed to be called your fellow-man. You deserve congratulation!"

"It was pretty sharp practice, Bedford," said one of the other partners.

"Take my share of the cursed money and put it aside for that poor woman," said Mr. Smith. "I'll try and get out of the firm before this thing gets published, or I'll sink with shame. There, Bedford; I mean every word I have uttered."

And he left the office, slamming the door behind him.

It will be remembered that at the time Tom Thorn had accompanied Will home to the village to obtain possession of the picture of Bessie, Phil Hanson was very sick and was not expected to live. He did not die, however, but recovered very slowly. As soon as he was able, he visited his old haunts again. One evening he was accosted by the detective, who said:

"I am glad to see you able to be about again, Mr. Hanson. I went down to the village and obtained the information you wanted; but when I came back I heard you were very ill. Have you heard anything about the woman yet?"

"No," said Phil, "not a word. I have been keeping quiet, you see, and did not want to make any inquiries. I have never even seen her since the day of the trial. I suppose she is either weaving straw or living with Will Brownly—perhaps married to him."

"Nothing of the sort, sir," said the detective. "You remember when you took the child from her that she fell on the floor? She has not been in her right mind since that day."

"Gone crazy, has she? I am glad of it. Where is she?"

"She lived for a while in the little cottage, and then Mr. Bedford, the man that bought the factory of you, took her in his carriage to the asylum. Here is the address."

"Bedford! By Jove! that put a new idea into my head. Get me a directory. I want to look up the names of some of the straw manufacturers. I have a secret for preparing straw that is very valuable. I sold it to Bedford for a trifle. I am going to offer it to some others. They will pay a

good price for it; and then we will start a table and pluck all the pigeons we can get hold of."

"Don't know about that," said Andrews. "Bedford & Co. have just received a patent for a method of preparing straw, and I suppose it's the one they purchased from you."

"The infernal scoundrels! They put her in the asylum and then stole her secret, or rather my secret, for a man has a right to what his wife earns. That's the meanest trick I ever heard of. Perhaps she's only playing crazy. I'll go and see her in a few days, and if she's playing I'll find it out, and if she is really crazy, the sight of me will make her worse."

Under the care of Dr. Haseltine, Rose seemed to improve. She was not so thin as she had been; but her mind was still unsettled. She would wander about for hours calling for Bessie to come to mother, and would look in every nook and corner for her child, sometimes saying:

"Come out, Bessie. Mother sees you. Come and kiss mother."

And still of every one that she met she would ask:

"Have you seen my Bessie, my child?"

Doctor Haseltine was of the opinion that if she could see her child she would recover her reason. This good gentleman took an interest in his patients. He was naturally a kind-hearted man, and he had an ambition to stand at the head of his profession.

A gentleman called at the asylum and requested to see the doctor, and on being shown into the office, he said:

"I have called to inquire about a patient of yours. I am a merchant; my name is Cassey. I am much interested in this lady, Mrs. Hanson. We did business together some years ago. I have been away from England, and have only recently returned. I heard the facts concerning Mrs. Hanson by letter. Can I see her? Perhaps the face of one who was a friend to her—in fact, helped her to start in business—might benefit her. What do you think, Doctor? Tell me plainly. Of course I will be guided entirely by you."

"I don't think it would do any good," said Dr. Haseltine. "If you could bring her child with you it might benefit her. She would not know you. She never recognizes any one but Mrs. Stewart, who often visits her."

"Ah, Doctor, what a woman that is! A match for any one in business matters, able to give and take blows, yet withal a womanly woman."

"She is indeed a— I had almost said lady, but I dislike the term. A woman, I will say. The best friend in all the world to me was a woman—my mother," said the doctor.

"As it seems impossible to get Mrs. Hanson's child, allow me to make a suggestion. Get some little girl about her child's age, call it Bessie, and take the child to her. What do you think of that?" said Mr. Cassey.

"I had thought of that, and had made up my mind to try the experiment. And if I could find some little girl with flaxen hair, and of about the right age, I would try it."

"I have such a little girl, my daughter. I left her at the hotel, and if it suits you, I will bring her over to-morrow," said Mr. Cassey.

"Do you know how Mrs. Hanson's child was dressed on the day of the trial?" said the doctor.

"Unfortunately, I do not," said Mr. Cassey, "and I fear that will spoil everything. But hold! Mrs. Stewart is expected this evening, and no doubt she will remember."

"Indeed she will," said the doctor. "Dress your child and bring her to-morrow, and we will hope and pray that the experiment will prove successful."

"If it does, I will give her another start," said Mr. Cassey. "She is divorced from that scoundrel now, and you will see that in a few years she will be rich, and I hope happy. At all events, she will have means to fight that villain with. Besides, Mrs. Stewart is her right bower. I would give a hundred pounds to see those two women handle him."

"Yes, yes," said the doctor; "but I have little hope unless we can find her child. One word from 'Bessie,' as she calls her child, would do more good than all the medicine I can give her, or any treatment I can devise. But to-morrow we will try. Good-day, Mr. Cassey."

On arriving at the hotel, Mr. Cassey was informed that Mrs. Stewart had arrived during his absence. He immediately sent his card to her requesting an interview, which was granted.

"Ah, Mr. Cassey, I heard some days ago that you had returned to your native land. I am glad to see you," said Mrs. Stewart.

"And I am pleased to see you," said Mr. Cassey. "I have just been to the asylum, and I never needed any one's aid in my life any more than I need yours this moment. We want help—Dr. Haseltine and I—to carry out a plan in regard to Mrs. Hanson, which we hope will produce a happy result."

"Ah, then, you find the women useful sometimes," said Mrs. Stewart, laughing. "But, seriously, what project do you wish me to help you in?"

Mr. Cassey unfolded the plan. Mrs. Stewart listened with the greatest attention.

"I will assist all I can," she said, "but I have no hope of it's being successful."

"Do you recollect how her child was dressed?" asked Mr. Cassey.

"Yes, perfectly," said Mrs. Stewart. "Ah, that was a dreadful day. How my heart ached for her when she was fighting the officers who were trying to take her child from her, according to the

commands of the court. Do you know," she continued, "that I felt like taking off my bonnet and fighting too, and sometimes I feel sorry to think I did not. But what can I do to help you?"

"I would like you to dress my little girl for me, just like Bessie was dressed that day. And I want you to explain her part to her so she can represent Bessie."

"I will do so with pleasure, and make everything as nearly perfect as I can. But I would like to horse-whip that man. All over the country the people are thinking, thinking; and by-and-by they'll speak, and to the point, too!"

Drawing herself to her full height, she continued:

"Add the world will yet acknowledge that, although I am only a woman, that I have as much sense as a man, and as good a right to liberty!"

"The people are thinking, thanks to Mrs. Stewart," said Mr. Cassey, with a smile, "and some think you have more sense than the majority of men."

"Flatterer!" said Mrs. Stewart. "But now go, and leave the preparations entirely to me."

"Thank you. Any expense you may incur, please mention to me."

"I am not doing this for you, and you will not have any expenses to pay. I claim a right to do this in my own way. That is the part you wish me to perform. You can provide the conveyance, and pay for it, too. That is your gift to the woman; the rest is mine. Don't be annoyed at me, my friend. You cannot understand a woman's feelings, because you are not a woman," said Mrs. Stewart.

"I think I do, Mrs. Stewart. At all events, I know how a man feels about such things. I would like to help the woman, and if a rope was round that villain's neck I'd pull on it, I tell you I would."

"No, no, my friend. Help to amend the laws so that it will be no longer possible for a brute like that to oppress a gentle, loving woman, and you'll do a better deed than pulling a rope."

All was prepared, and the next day, accompanied by Mrs. Stewart and his little daughter Mary, Mr. Cassey went to the asylum.

The little girl was instructed to hide in a place prepared for her, and remain there until the poor woman came that way calling, as was her wont, for little Bessie; and then she was told to answer with one word only, "Mother."

All being arranged, and the hiding-place having been prepared for the child, Mrs. Stewart went to see Mrs. Hanson. The poor woman recognized her as usual, and seemed more rational that day than she had since her affliction.

"Do you know, Mrs. Stewart," she said, "it seems to me sometimes as if some one had stolen Bessie, or she would never stay away so long from me. But I cannot think of any one who would take her from me. Can you, Mrs. Stewart?"

"If you were to be seeking for her some day," said Mrs. Stewart, "and she should jump out of some hiding-place and put her arms around your neck, how happy you would be, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, yes," Rose answered, with a sigh. "I must go to the factory now and bring Bessie home."

She then left the room, and going down the stairs, went out into the garden, where the Doctor and Mr. Cassey had concealed themselves, but in such a manner that they could watch her every movement. She drew near to the place in which the child Mary was concealed, walking slowly, and calling in her low, musical voice:

"Bessie, child—little Bessie! Come to mother, dear."

Nearer she came, and still nearer, until at length she reached the place where the child was, but passed by without looking or saying a word.

She had gone but a few steps before the same old, old cry was heard again:

"Bessie—little Bessie! Come to mother!"

Ah, this time a sweet, childish voice answered: "Mother!"

With a cry distressing to hear, so full of pain it was, she turned like a startled deer and flew, rather than ran, to the place from whence the voice came. With eager, frantic haste she tore aside the leaves and moss that had concealed the child, and drawing little Mary to her breast, covered her face with kisses, saying:

"At last! Bessie! Bessie! Oh, my little darling child! Come closer to mother, closer yet, my own darling! God has heard my prayer! You are restored to me again!"

The Doctor and Mr. Cassey stood with streaming eyes watching the scene.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mr. Cassey.

The Doctor did not seem to hear him. He was dashing away the tears that filled his eyes, and kept them fixed upon his patient, watching her every movement.

"One more sweet kiss, and then we will go home together," said Rose.

Holding the child off at arm's length, the better to feast her eyes upon her face, a change came over her. Putting the child gently from her, she said:

"Little girl, have you seen my Bessie?"

Overcome with emotion and disappointment, Mr. Cassey beckoned the child to follow him, and went into the house. The plan had failed, and poor Rose Hanson was still insane.

The good Doctor had hoped for tears and bitter disappointment. There was neither. She continued her walk as if nothing had happened, ever and anon calling her child.

"It is a sad thing, Mrs. Stewart, a sad thing. I

fear that there is no hope for her," said Mr. Cassey, as they left the asylum.

"It is indeed," said Mrs. Stewart; "a sad thing for all her friends. I suppose you know the old grandma is dead?"

"Yes; poor soul! Do you know where Mrs. Brownly and her son are now?"

"I received a letter from Will Brownly a short time ago," said Mrs. Stewart. "The village is deserted. In fact, but one or two houses remain, and the coal mine is still burning. Will has charge of another mine; I have forgotten where. And he also wrote that Mr. Thorn is at present in France, still searching for Mrs. Hanson's child. You remember Mr. Thorn, do you not?"

"Yes," said Mr. Cassey. "Does he think Bessie is in France?"

"That is his opinion. But he is going to return to London and endeavor to get more definite information."

"Here is the hotel," said Mr. Cassey; and as he assisted Mrs. Stewart from the carriage, he continued: "I often think about the village and the misguided men who were so foolish as to leave their homes and then burn their roof-trees. I have but little sympathy for them, but my heart aches for the women and children."

A few days after this Dr. Haseltine received another visitor. This man did not send in a card, but when the Doctor entered the room he announced himself as Mr. Phillips.

"I am very desirous, Doctor, of seeing Mrs. Hanson, an inmate of your establishment. Will you allow me to see her? I will consider it a favor. She was a very dear friend of mine, and I think she would know me."

"I am afraid I must refuse you, Mr. Phillips. I think it best for Mrs. Hanson that she should be kept as quiet as possible. Under the circumstances, I am sure you will excuse me."

"Certainly, Doctor. But it is a great disappointment to me. I have traveled from London for the express purpose of seeing her."

"I am sorry to be obliged to disappoint you, Mr. Phillips. Still, in my judgment, none but relatives or very near friends should be allowed to see her at present," said Dr. Haseltine.

"I can assure you, Doctor, that Mrs. Hanson was a very near and dear friend of mine years ago, nearer and dearer to me than you have any idea of. And if there is any one in the world that she would recognize, I am the person."

"I think I understand you, Mr. Phillips. I will withdraw my objection and allow you to see her. She might recognize you. She has been improving since the day we tried an experiment in regard to her case. It was not as successful as we hoped for, yet I can see an improvement in her since then, and I have great hope for the future."

"It will be a great satisfaction to her friends if she should regain her reason."

"Come into this room," said the Doctor, "and I will send her to you. And if any assistance is necessary, just say, in an ordinary tone of voice, 'The Doctor is coming.' I shall be within hearing, although I would prefer she should see you alone."

"I will remember your instructions, Doctor. Is Mrs. Hanson ever violent?" he asked, nervously.

"Oh, no; not at all. She is the mildest, gentlest creature in the world. Just wait here for her a few minutes, please."

On reaching the room where Rose was, the doctor said:

"Come with me, Mrs. Hanson, if you please." She arose from her seat and followed him. On reaching the door of the room in which Mr. Phillips was waiting her, the doctor said:

"Go in, Mrs. Hanson. You will find there a friend who is both near and dear to you."

"A dear friend," she repeated. "Perhaps he has seen my Bessie. I will ask him."

The man arose to meet her as she entered. Rose went up to him and said:

"Have you seen—"

She stopped; her breath grew short. A look of terror came into her eyes. All color fled from her lips. And thus the divorced husband and wife stood gazing on each other, the one as if turned to stone, the other with a mocking smile upon his face.

[To be continued.]

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.—Judge Higley, of Cincinnati, has delivered a learned opinion upon the subject of corporal punishment, the case in question being one in which the pupil leaned his head on his hand in violation of school rules, and was ridiculed by the teacher. Again, the boy laughed when called to recite, and was struck on the head with the open hand. At tea, the same night, the boy had a poor appetite, and was delirious through the night, but able the following day to resume his school duties. By process of reasoning the Judge reached the conclusion, upon existing decisions, that whenever the punishment inflicted shocked the moral sense of the dispassionate and reasonable, it is illegal. The standard of the moral sense had, in his judgment, advanced to that extent that the defendant (the teacher) by employing ridicule, which was not commendable; by slapping the pupil on the head, which was not a proper mode of punishment, and by inflicting corporal punishment where there was no open insult or disobedience to justify it, had brought himself within the statute, and he should find him guilty.

THE FORCE OF POVERTY.—But for poverty, the handmaiden of philosophy, the midwife of genius, the founder of all arts of the Roman empire, Horace had probably lived like the Summer fly. What had the world known of his songs and his satires had he not been compelled, as he himself avers, to make verses in consequence of the loss of his hereditary estates at the battle of Pharsalia!