

# Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"ANNE JUDGE, SPINSTER," "LITTLE KATE KIRBY,"  
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

Sedge Hill was a stately edifice of considerable proportions, with an aspect of newness about it that fourteen years had not done much to soften. It had been built to the order of the present proprietor, who had made much money by cotton stockings, and had risen from twenty shillings a week at the loom to the splendor of his present life. It was a new house to suit the new man who had been lucky enough to get rich. There were spacious grounds beyond, and there was a big room at the side, that was new to Reuben Culwick since he had last stood in his father's house, and it was this that he pulled up his horse to inspect before turning into the carriage drive.

Then he went rapidly along the drive, drew up in front of the house, and stepped lightly and briskly from the trap, giving the reins to a rosy-faced young man in livery, who emerged from some stabling in the rear, to be of service to the newcomer.

"Old Jones has gone, then?" he said to the servant.

"Yes, sir. He's with Squire Black of Holston."

"And you reign in his stead. Well, we cannot all reign."

He knocked and rang, looking steadily through the glass doors the while. Another new face—a smart young housemaid, whom he had never seen before, to replace Mrs. Perkins, who was stout and sallow, came to the door and admitted him.

"Is Mr. Culwick in?"

"Yes, sir, but he's engaged just now."

"You will be kind enough to give him my card?"

The maid servant took the card and departed, and Reuben Culwick, like the merest stranger, and feeling like a stranger, very doubtful of his reception, walked up and down the spacious hall with his hands behind him, and his hat in his hands.

Presently the servant reappeared.

"Will you step this way, if you please, sir?"

Reuben followed the servant along a corridor to a door at the extremity—the door of the new room, he was certain,

What do you propose doing now that you are here? I suppose, after all that has passed, you have no intention of sitting down in the house and waiting complacently for my death and my money?" the father inquired.

"You told me that I should never have a penny of your money, if you remember, sir. I have never expected it after that day," said Reuben Culwick.

"Why should you?" said Mr. Culwick in a loud tone of voice, and yet without betraying any passion. "Have I been known in all my life to break my word? Has not sticking to my word, through thick and thin, in evil report and good report, made me what I am? I would rather break my own heart than break my word. You know it," said the father boastfully.

"Fifty hearts as well as your own—yes, I know it," answered the other, with an unflinching gaze at his father, "and hence I come to you—not for assistance, I don't want it; not for affection, I don't expect it—but with the simple motive, which I hope that my letter conveyed to you last week, to see you, to express sorrow for a long alienation, to feel glad that you are well, to tell you that I am not unhappy, and to go away again."

The son's tones seemed to impress the father, who subsided into his easy chair, from which he had leaned forward, as if cowed by the cold, clear-ringing tones of the voice which fell upon his ears, a voice which subdued him, and an arrogance that had always been difficult to quell—which touched him, though he never owned that—which made him even prouder of his son, though the time never came for him to own that, either.

The young woman in the background leaned forward with clasped hands until he caught her glance again, when she once more turned her eyes upon her book.

"Have you made your fortune?" asked the father, in a different voice.

"On the contrary, I have been somewhat unsuccessful."

"How do you live?"

"I write—a little," he added modestly. "It is a long story, that would scarcely interest you."

"It would not interest me in the least."

There was another long pause, during

which the son, still at his ease, still singularly hard, despite his respectful manner, glanced round at the pictures on the walls, admired them even, secretly but not obviously, wondered at their cost, and looked once more in the direction of the lady, whose pensive face and quiet grace he admired also, and at whose presence he wondered in a greater degree, though he repressed all exhibition of surprise. Suddenly the father said, with that singular abruptness characteristic of the man:

"You can stay here if you like."

"For how long?" asked the son, surprised at last out of his assumption of stolid composure.

"Till we disagree again," said the father, with a short, forced laugh; "that will not be many days, I suppose?"

"One moment, sir," said Reuben Culwick, with grave politeness. "A mistake parted us, and we are laying the foundation of another already, unless I explain the first."

"Go on."

"I was hardly twenty-one—a rash and foolish young fellow—when you wanted me to marry your friend's daughter."

"You would have been rich—you would have been respected—it would have been for the best."

"I refused to entertain the proposal, if you remember."

"Remember! remember it!" cried the father, turning pale with anger; "do you rake this up again to insult me?"

"No, to enlighten you," said the other; "at that period, Mr. Culwick, I had promised my mother that I would not marry the lady."



"WHO ARE YOU?" DEMANDED REUBEN.

from his old remembrance of the house. The door was opened and his name announced, and he felt that he was passing into a spacious apartment, the walls of which were bright and rich with many pictures, and the ceiling paneled and massive, with ground glass in the panels, for the proper transmutation of light on Mr. Simon Culwick's "collection." When Simon Culwick had lost his son Reuben, he had taken to the "masters," ancient and modern, and given them all the love that was in his heart.

But it was not at the paintings which enriched the walls that Reuben Culwick gazed with so much of curious earnestness, but at the big broad-faced man sitting before the fire in a capacious leather chair, and who was looking curiously and steadily at him. There was a pretty, fair-haired young woman, in gray silk, sitting at the table in the recess of a bay window, reading, and Reuben was conscious of her presence—that was all. She rose not at his entrance, only looked toward him with a certain degree of curiosity as he advanced, and then turned to the pages of her book as he held his hand out to his father.

"So you have thought of me at last, have you?" was rolled out in a gruff bass, as a large, white gouty-looking hand was placed in that of his son.

"So I have come back at last," answered Reuben Culwick.

"You can sit down," said the father.

"Thank you," said the son.

This was the meeting after five years' absence—the calm after the great storm which had happened in that house five years ago. This was the home that the son had never liked, and that he felt he did not like now, although he had come to it of his own free will. There was a pause, during which each man took stock of the other without any particular reserve.

"I got your letter," said the father, "and I might have sent the carriage for you had it not rained so much."

"The horses might have caught cold instead of me," said the son dryly; "but I didn't want the carriage. I was glad that I had not further to go last night than Worcester."

He looked toward the lady in the bay window at this juncture, and his father noticed the wandering gaze, and paid no attention to the hint which it conveyed.

"Well, what have you been doing?

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CHAPTER III.

The effect of Reuben Culwick's announcement upon his father was remarkable. The big man rose from his chair with his two large hands clenched, and his face of a deep purplish hue, and glared at his son in speechless wrath. Then he sank slowly and heavily into his seat again, and panted for awhile. The dark coloring left the face, but the bushy black brows retained their lower curves over the eyes, and the mouth was hard and fixed, until the lips parted slightly to allow a few words to escape.

"And this is the first time you tell me that you were in league with your mother?"

"Yes," answered Reuben, politely. "I

was a willful lad who had not been brought up well or looked after carefully, and I had been only taught to fear you. My mother, who had been separated from you for some years, I was learning to respect then. When we quarreled, I went to take care of her as well as I could. I was with her when she died."

"You know how I hated your play-acting mother—how she hated me. Why do you tell me that you sided with her, when it would be so much the better policy to keep this to yourself?" said the father, bitterly.

"Because I am not afraid of you any longer—because I see now where you were wrong."

"And you expect me to forgive this deceit, as old men do at the end of a play?"

"Or toward the end of their lives," added Reuben.

"Don't talk to me of the end of my life," he cried; "I dare say you have thought enough of it—have considered that it would be as well to sink your cursed pride and your cursed temper, and come here in prodigal-son fashion. But it won't do; I'm not a man to be hoodwinked in that way."

"I am not sorry to have seen you, father," said Reuben, rising; "I came out of my way—a long way out of it—to reach Worcester. I am glad to find you well. Good day."

He extended his hand again, but this time his father refused to take it.

"You have come out of your way to give me a fresh wound, that's all," said the father, sullenly, "and you have done it effectually. I don't want you to trouble me again. You will not come here again at my invitation. I can't forgive you—why should I? I never forgave anybody. I never forgave your mother. Your two aunts offended me years ago, you know. Have I ever forgiven them? One died last summer, and I wouldn't go to see her—wouldn't go near her—and the other one is in St. Oswald's almshouses, blind as a bat, and living on eight shillings a week. Eight shillings a week, and those pictures there cost me eighty thousand pounds."

"A good investment," said Reuben Culwick, coolly, and critically looking round the walls; "they will increase in value year by year, sir."

As he looked round he became aware, for the first time, that the lady in the bay window had disappeared. She had passed from the room silently, through a second door at the extremity of the picture gallery.

"And I never gave her a penny in my life," added Mr. Culwick, senior.

"Poor old Sarah—blind is she? and in the almshouse, too! I am sorry. I liked old Sarah," said Reuben; "she was one of the few friends I had when I was a boy, and when you were not rich. But I am detaining you, and I am pledged to reach London to-night. Good by again."

When he had reached the door, Simon Culwick called out his name, and Reuben paused and turned.

"I am not deceitful," said the father, "and I may as well tell you that I have made a penny the better for it. It is all left—all," he added, "away from an undutiful son."

There was a moment's pause, and then Reuben Culwick quitted his father's presence and closed the door after him. He went from the room into the corridor, and thence along its entire length to the dining room, where he threw himself into a chair with so thoughtful a mien that he was not for the moment aware that the young lady in gray silk whom he had seen in the bay window was stepping back from the big fleecy mat at the door, to allow of his egress. When he saw her, she put her finger to her lips, and he repressed an exclamation of surprise.

"Go back," she said, with an excitement that astonished him; "don't give up—don't leave him like that—it's your last chance."

"You have been listening," said Reuben, coldly.

"To every word," was the honest confession; "and you have not said a word to please him, and much to offend. Why did you come, if in no better spirit than this? Go back to him. Tell him how sorry you are for everything—do something before you go that will leave behind a better impression," she urged again.

"No, I can't go back."

"You are as hard as he is," she cried; "as if it mattered what you said to him—as if it were not worth a struggle to regain your position here!"

Grasping her wrists, while her hands covered her face to hide it from his fierce gaze, Reuben exclaimed in a wondering tone, "Who are you?"

"Only the housekeeper, sir," she said, quaintly; "keeping house for Simon Culwick—and in your place. You should hate me as a usurper already," she added, mockingly, "if you had any spirit in you."

"The housekeeper—yes—but—" he said wonderingly, and without regarding her strange taunts. "I was not aware—"

"Why should you be aware of anything about me, you who are as quarrelsome and strange as your father, and have kept away so long? There, go home and think of the best way to bring that old man to his senses."

"And interfere with your chance," said Reuben, lightly. He was in better spirits already, and the odd manner of this young lady interested him.

"I have no chance," she answered, "or I should not be very anxious for you to get back. I should be too selfish—I should try and keep you away, being as fond of money as your father is."

"I hardly believe this."

"Mr. Reuben Culwick can believe exactly what he pleases," said the young lady, spreading out her skirts and making him a very low obeisance, which he felt bound to return, after which he would have continued the conversation had she not darted out of the door and disappeared.

(To be continued.)

## A FRIGHT IN THE AIR.

Men who climb steeples and venture out on rickety cornices and up tremulous chimneys for a living have good control of their nerves, and at critical moments their self-possession does not fail them. But they admit, says the New York Sun, that they sometimes get frightened. One of these steeplejacks gives a recent case in point.

There was a pretty lively wind, he said. It wasn't much down on the ground, but up where I was, just below the big gilt ball on a Newark church spire, it was pretty bothersome. It was all the time trying to whirl me round and round the spire. The spire wasn't more than five or six feet in circumference up where I was. The paint was nearly worn off, and actually the winds had sort of scarred the spire in circles, belt-like, from the constant whirling round and round.

The wind pushed me and joggled me for an hour or more. I should not have gone up that morning, anyhow. I might have known it was too windy. But I was anxious to get through, and so I stuck to it.

At last this funny feeling, which I can't very well describe to anyone who hasn't felt it, came down on me with a rush. The blood went to my head and my ears buzzed. I knew I'd got to get out of that, so as carefully as I could I let myself down to the first window, about forty feet below.

I crawled through somehow and sat down on a cross-beam. I suppose I sat there half an hour, resting and trying to find myself. Then I went back and worked my way up closer and closer to the big gilt ball.

The scare was coming on again, when I happened to notice something odd in the ball, which took my mind off everything else.

I saw an odd-looking hole in the ball, a sort of longish hole, as if a big worm had burrowed into the wood; but I knew no worm ever got up there, and I could see that the hole had been made since the ball was put up. I found another, and finally a third.

I sat in my swing and examined them curiously for some time before I made them out. I knew something about the history of that church and its spire, and I could figure that that ball had been there at least seventy-five years.

Then I remembered that down in the green stretch beside the church the young folks of the city had gathered on the night before the Fourth of July during the last seventy-five years or so. They came with guns and pistols, and as I thought of this, I realized that these three holes were bullet-holes.

Well, thinking of this, I forgot all about my fright, and did not think of it again until I was down on the ground; and I don't know but that those bullet-holes saved my life.

## Oldest Family in the World.

Of the 400 barons in the British House of Lords about a dozen of them date back to 1400, the earliest being 1264. The oldest family in the British Isles is the Mar family in Scotland, 1033. The Campbells, of Argyre, began in 1190. Talleyrand dates from 1190, and Bismarck from 1270. The Grosvenor family, the Duke of Westminster, 1036; the Austrian house of Hapsburg goes back to 952, and the house of Bourbon to 864. The descendants of Mohammed, born 570, are all registered carefully and authoritatively in a book in Mecca by a chief of the family. Little or no doubt exists of the absolute authenticity of the long line of Mohammed's descendants. In China there are many old families, also among the Jews. But in point of pedigrees the Mikado of Japan has a unique record. His place has been filled by members of his family for more than 2,500 years. The present Mikado is the 122d in the line. The first one was contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar 686 years before Christ.

## A Quaint People.

The heart of Brittany never changes, but its face is rapidly losing many of its prominent characteristics with the leveling influence of the French republic. It is only far out of the beaten track, now, or on special occasions like fetes, that you see universally the costumes and customs of the old Armorican peninsula. Only an hour's journey from Quimper, the modernized chief town of Finistere, and you are among the Bigoudines, a people whose dress suggests the Eskimos and Chinese, whose faces are strongly Mongolian in type, and who in language, customs and beliefs seem to have no relation with the rest of France. More and more the picturesque problem they present is coming to attract attention. Artists, students and tourists alike are fascinated by it.—Century.

## Too High to Belong to Anything.

"He is worth \$100,000,000, the most of which he stole."

"Gracious! And he belongs to the church?"

"Oh, no, the church belongs to him."

—Puck.

After a woman gets on the shady side of 40 she speaks of herself and her female friends as "us girls."



Mrs. Anderson, a prominent society woman of Jacksonville, Fla., daughter of Recorder of Deeds, West, says:

"There are but few wives and mothers who have not at times endured agonies and such pain as only women know of. I wish such women knew the value of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It is a remarkable medicine, different in action from any other I ever knew and thoroughly reliable."

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The experience and testimony of some of the most noted women of America go to prove, beyond a question, that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will correct all such trouble at once by removing the cause, and restoring the organs to a healthy and normal condition.

"Does your daughter's husband love her as devotedly as ever?" "He does when I'm around," replied her daughter's husband's mother-in-law, grimly. —Houston Post.

It's no sign that stocks are feverish because they absorb water freely.

If a woman hesitates it must be owing to an impediment in her speech.

## Very Pleasant Electioneering.

In South Australia female suffrage has been in operation for some time. A member of the Commonwealth Parliament, anxious to ascertain the best mode of approaching the woman voters in his constituency, sought the advice of an experienced South Australian legislator. "How do you please them? Do you kiss the baby?" "No, sir," was the candid reply, "we kiss the elector."

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