

# Second Cousin Sarah

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

## CHAPTER XII.

The reputed wealth of Simon Culwick of Sedge Hill, Worcester, his position in the county or his opinion of himself, did not exercise any restraint upon the peculiarities of the young woman who confronted him; who leaned across the table, and unceremoniously snatched from his hands the painting that she had placed between them. There was no respect for persons in the mind of Lucy Jennings, especially when her blood was up.

"What do you mean by nothing of the sort?" she exclaimed, and at the ominous flashing of her eyes Simon Culwick's lower jaw dropped; "haven't you come in all humility, and kindness, and Christian charity to this house?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Culwick, making a stand for it.

"Sit down, please, while I talk to you," said Lucy very feverishly, and at the young woman's excitement Mr. Culwick glared in mute amazement. "Have you ever thought what is to become of you, old man, when you are closer to the grave than you are now? When you are dying, and all your pride and wealth are not worth that," she continued, with a quick snap of her fingers so close to his face that he winced and drew back his head with alacrity.

"You—wretched woman!" cried Mr. Culwick, finding breath to reply, and clutching the arms of the chair with both hands, and shaking them in his rage, "how dare you speak to me? Do you know that—that I have never been talked to in this way in my life—that this is an unwarrantable liberty from one in your position?"

"I don't care for your position," cried Lucy Jennings; "I wouldn't change my position for yours for twice your money—for fifty times all that you have hoarded together, and hardened your soul with. What are you but a selfish old sinner, who broke his wife's heart, and turned an only son out of doors, and who must stand before his God—aye, sooner than he thinks, perhaps," she added, with an angry bang upon the table that shook the whole house, and took Mr. Jennings downstairs with a headlong plunge, under the impression that his stock had exploded—"to answer for both crimes?"

"Look here," shouted Simon Culwick, "I have had enough of this." "You will hear me out," said Lucy, backing against the door with her chair, as he rose from his seat; "you have come of your own free will to this house, where no one is likely to be afraid of you. You are here boasting of your want of affection, bragging of the possibility of wounding one afresh whose life you have already darkened, and I will tell you what is to become of you hereafter."

"You are a fanatic. You're raving mad," said Simon Culwick, dropping into his seat again.

"I have no more to say," she exclaimed. "Now think of it, and do your duty, as I have done mine, before it is too late." There was a slamming of the door, and he opened his eyes to find that his tormentor had gone. He rose at once, and took his hat.

"What a horrible creature," he muttered; "I will not stop another moment." He was half way toward the door when the picture attracted his attention again, and he stopped. It was his ruling passion; success in business, present power, future happiness, were not upon his mind now in any great degree.

He went back to the picture, and knitted his brows at it, as a man might do intently puzzled with a problem of more than ordinary difficulty; he took it to the window; he placed it on the table, and hid himself in the curtain folds, behind the light to gaze at it; he put his hat on the floor, and sat down with the picture in front of him, and began rubbing it carefully with the palm of his hand; finally he thrust his hands into his pockets, and stared at it, forgetful of time and place, and of the main object of his visit. He was a man possessed of one idea.

There were feet ascending the stairs now, lightly and springily. There was a voice he should have recollected as belonging to old days. It was only when the handle turned sharply, and the door opened, that he awoke to the consciousness of where he was, and what figure had come into the room from the world that was so different to his own.

"Father," said Reuben Culwick, as he advanced toward him. "You have come to see me, and I am glad."

"You haven't much to be glad about at present," replied the father; "I was in the neighborhood, and I thought that I would call and see where you were lodging, and what you were doing. I haven't come from Worcester expressly to see you."

"It does not matter; pray don't apologize," said Reuben lightly, as he took his seat at the desk, opened it, and glanced carelessly at the letters and papers which had arrived.

"I have been thinking a great deal about you lately; you have bothered me."

"Indeed?"

"You came to Sedge Hill—you were the first to write to me—the first to make advances. And although calling on me only proved that you were as obstinate as ever—that we should never get on," he continued—"still I accepted it as an apology. And it struck me that there was some amount of respect for me in your heart, possibly some regret for all that has parted us."

"Well?"

"You remember what we quarreled about?"

"Perfectly."

"I wanted you to marry Miss Holland."

"Yes."

"That is the girl whom you saw at my house last May?"

"Yes."

"Then," he said, after a strange fighting with his breath, "marry her now, and I'll forget everything."

Reuben was prepared for many strange reasons for his father's presence in Hope street, but this one took him completely off his guard. He sat back and glared at his father.

"You don't answer me," said Simon Culwick, in his old sullen and aggrieved tone of voice.

"I must decline to marry the lady."

"You—you fool!" blurted forth the father.

Simon Culwick rose, buttoned up his coat, and set his hat firmly on his head.

"Good morning to you."

"One moment. Is Miss Holland aware of your proposition?"

"Certainly not."

"I am very glad of it."

"I don't see anything to be glad of," said Mr. Culwick, as he walked toward the door, where he paused, and looked at the picture. "I had forgotten that," he muttered, as he returned to the table, and where Reuben was standing the instant afterward with the picture in his hand.

"You will pardon me, but Mr. Jennings will not sell this portrait."

"He has already—"

"Mr. Jennings will not sell it, I assure you," said Reuben, with great urbanity of manner, as he bowed once more to his father, with the picture pressed to his breast.

Mr. Culwick, senior, descended the stairs with extreme care, and passed through the parlor and shop without bestowing any further attention upon Mr. Jennings or Sarah Eastbell. Standing at the shop door was Lucy Jennings. She stood aside and as she passed her, she said in a low tone:

"Try to remember how close you may be to your grave, before you leave this house as wicked a man as you entered it."

He glared at her defiantly; his fingers even closed upon the stick, as if the idea of striking her with it had suggested itself, then he stopped and put his face close to hers, eagerly and confidentially.

"A ten-pound note for that picture, and I'll take it away with me."

"You will take nothing away with you but our contempt," said Lucy, banging the door behind him, and shutting him out in the front garden, down which he proceeded slowly.

He turned in the direction of the Cambridge New Road, but altered his mind, and passing the house again, looking up at the window of the first floor, and even hesitated, as if the idea of re-entering had struck him; then he went on to Walworth Road, where he lost himself. He gave up asking the way to London Bridge after a while, and looked on in a purposeless fashion that was new to him, until he found himself standing by a lamp-post in a crowded thoroughfare, thinking of his son, and then of his dead wife—which was very strange indeed—and then of Mary Holland, down in Worcester-shire.

He stepped into the road and made for the opposite side of the way. There were wagons and omnibuses and carts coming in all directions, and their drivers shouted at him, and foot passengers screamed wildly at the danger which he had not seen for himself. His giddiness overmastered him, and he fell amid clattering, stumbling iron hoofs, and whirling, grinding wheels, and it was beyond man's help to save him.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. Eastbell waited very patiently for the return of her granddaughter to the almshouses. She was very happy in her nest, she said. Sarah wrote her letters; Miss Holland read them to her; everybody was kind, and her granddaughter would soon be home again. What was there to disturb her old head in any way? She was well in health, too, and wonderfully strong.

Suddenly the visits of Mary Holland abruptly ceased, although a message was sent to the old lady that Mrs. Muggoridge's niece had been telegraphed for to London, and would return in a few days. The niece would take that opportunity of calling upon Sarah Eastbell, and bring back to Worcester all the news—possibly Miss Eastbell herself, if she was strong enough to leave.

How long Mary Holland was away Mrs. Eastbell did not know, one day being very much like another, and time passed away smoothly and easily with this complacent specimen of age, and then, one afternoon, when the kettle was singing on the handful of fire which Mrs. Muggoridge had made, Mary Holland came softly into the room, and stood by the bedside of the woman.

"I have returned," she said; and the eyelashes of the listener quivered at the voice.

"Thank you, child," was the answer, as the thin yellow hand crept from beneath the sheets to welcome her. "Have you brought Sarah with you?"

"She will be in Worcester to-morrow."

"Now that's good hearing! Is that all you have to tell me?"

"Oh, no—I have brought a great deal of news with me—good and bad. I am afraid that you must have them both together, for they both affect you, Mrs. Eastbell."

"Go on, girl; let us have them in the lump, then. But," she added, quickly, "is it anything to do with Sarah?"

"It concerns yourself most of all. Can you feel what trimming is on my sleeve?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Eastbell, "crapel! You have lost some one?"

"I have lost one who was kinder to me than to any living soul. I shall be no richer for his death. I never expected anything. It was on the condition that I should never touch a halfpenny of his money that I became the keeper of his house, the watcher of his lonely life. His father and mine had been great friends, but they had quarreled at last, as everybody quarreled with this man."

"You must mean my brother Simon?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Is he really dead?" she asked in a whisper.

"Yes; he was run over in the streets, and he died in the hospital next day."

"Poor Simon; I fancied that I should outlive him, old as I was, though I didn't think he would go off in a hurry like this. I have been waiting years for him, making sure that he would come here some day, and say, 'Sister, I'm sorry that we ever had any words, and there's an end to it; and instead of this, there's an end of him! Well, he was a good man, with a will of his own, like the rest of the family.'"

Mrs. Eastbell had certainly received bad news with composure, as age will do very often, but still Mary Holland was astonished at her equanimity.

"You are not shocked?" she asked wonderingly.

"I am too near the end myself, child. To be surprised at Simon's starting before me—the right way, too, for he was an honest, straightforward fellow, wasn't he? And Reuben comes back to his rights at last, and all's well."

"All is not well with Reuben Culwick, so far as his rights are concerned. His father has cut him out of his will, as he said that he would." Mary explained still further, "and as I knew that he would."

"Then who has got the money?"

The young woman's hand touched the dry and withered one lying close to her own.

"You have," said Mary Holland, after a moment's silence.

"What's that you say?—who's got the money?—me?" she screamed forth.

"Yes, you are the heiress," said Mary Holland, somewhat satirically.

"How much money is there?" she asked, so keenly that Mary almost fancied that the old woman was peering at her from under her sealed lids.

"More than you will know what to do with."

"Not more than I can take care of," she added, with one of her low chuckles of satisfaction.

"For yourself, and for those who come after you," said Mary, in a low, thoughtful tone.

"Yes; but I must enjoy myself first. I haven't had much pleasure in my life, stuck here like a Guy Fox, goodness knows!"

"What do you think of doing?" asked Mary Holland.

"I shall take possession to-night," said the old lady; "I must get to Sedge Hill; I shall be able to welcome my granddaughter to her new home then. I am strong enough, if somebody will only dress me, and send for a conveyance. Why should I stop? Haven't I had enough of this prison and this poverty? I can't live here any longer."

Mary Holland thought it would have been wiser to have brought her news at an earlier hour than this. She endeavored to persuade Mrs. Eastbell to rest till the next day, but the old lady was obstinate and not to be turned from her intentions.

Mary Holland gave her tea, but although she went from the room, she did not proceed in search of a conveyance to Sedge Hill, but entrusted that commission to the old lady next door. She wondered if the old woman's strength would last to Sedge Hill, or if the reaction would come and leave her prostrate. She was not prepared for this sudden awakening to a new life; it bewildered her, shrewd little woman though she was in many things. She had wished to break the news to Mrs. Eastbell, and the task had been entrusted to her accordingly, but had it been done wisely, and was this a wise step, on the part of Mrs. Eastbell, to leave St. Oswald's in ungrateful haste?

"What a time the cab is!" said Sarah Eastbell suddenly.

"In your happier state apart from this life, you will not forget the man whose place you take, whose home is yours, whose father set him aside without fair cause," urged Mary.

"This isn't a time to worry me about him. I have no fault to find with Reuben—he's an excellent young man—but that's no reason why I should talk of him to-night."

"He is poor."

"I dare say he is," was the reply, "but I must think of my own family first. I can't be bothered with nephews just now."

Mrs. Muggoridge's head peered round the door.

"The cab's come," she said; "do you think you can walk to the outer gate, Mrs. Eastbell?"

"I could walk a mile. There's a teapot of mine on the hob, and it draws beautifully. Take it, tea and all, and don't forget me. Good-by. How very glad I am to get away from here! This way?"

"Yes, this way," said Mary.

"The night's cold, and though I am not used to night air, I can go through it to my new house and my new life as briskly as you can. What a change for me and Sally!"

"And for more than you two," added Mary Holland.

(To be continued.)

Was One at Home.

"Maria," said the man who was always complaining about his meals, etc., "when I was hunting up in Maine the papers had an account of me being mistaken for a bear."

"I don't understand it," replied the meek little woman.

"Don't understand what?"

"Why they should have called it a mistake."



Dude—They say cigarettes will turn the skin yellow. Mrs. Prim—That's so. Every time I catch my boy smoking he gets tanned.—Mail and Express.

"Do you think you could ever marry for money?" "No. But I'm sure I could soon learn to love a girl who had a million or two."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Sportsman—Any good hunting in this part of the country? Native—Lots of it. Sportsman—What kind of game. Native—No game at all. Just hunting.—Illustrated Bits.

Willie—Mamma, I told Aunt Helen she grew homelier every day. Mrs. Silmsen—You didn't tell her I said so, did you? "I had to, or she would have whipped me."—Brooklyn Life.

"What are they going to do when they get through tearing up the streets?" "Lay 'em down again, of course! How else would anybody be able to tear 'em up later on, silly?"—Baltimore News.

Reeder—Scott said a clever thing today; said that luck is a good bit like lightning, for it seldom strikes twice in the same place. Heeder—Yes, and as a rule neither of them needs to.—Pennsylvania Punch Bowl.

Hannigan—Shure, there scales is no good at all for me. They only weigh the left of two hundred pounds, an' Oo'm near to two hundred and fifty. Flannigan—Well, man alive, can't ye git on thim twice?—Philadelphia Press.

Playgoer—I suppose the leading lady is very happy after getting all those bouquets. Usher—Oh, no. She only got five. Playgoer—Gracious! Isn't that enough? Usher—No; she paid for six, I believe.—Philadelphia Press.

Kittie—Paul told me last evening I was the prettiest girl he ever saw. Bessie—Oh, that's nothing; he said the same to me last year. Kittie—I know, dear, but his taste may have improved since then, you know.—Boston Transcript.

"Prisoner, why did you strike this man?" "If you please, your Honor, he came to me suddenly and said, 'How old is Ann?' 'Well, what hurt did that do?' 'Why, you see, your Honor, Ann is my wife.'—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Volcano.—"What is a volcano?" asked the teacher. "A mountain with a fire inside," said one. A smile of comprehension spread over the puzzled face of the smallest scholar as she asked, surprisedly, "Is that a mountain range?"—Harper's Magazine.

She—I have two very dear friends—Agnes and Florence—He—Which is the more popular? "Oh, Agnes is much more popular than Florence—among the girls." "Introduce me to Florence. I am partial to good-looking girls."—Kansas City Journal.

Mrs. Kalling—You haven't got that splendid butler now—Mrs. Parvenu—No, he was a fraud. Mrs. Kalling—Indeed? Mrs. Parvenu—Yes, he forgot himself once and neglected to drop his "h's," so we discovered he wasn't English at all.—Philadelphia Ledger.

He—How did you enjoy the opera? She—Oh, it was just splendid. He—Really? But it was all French, wasn't it? She—Oh, no! Of course, some of the handsomest ones were unmistakably Parisian, but there were many pretty gowns that were evidently made here.—Philadelphia Press.

Launched on His Literary Career.—"I understand your son has decided to go in for literature." "Yes, and he's made a splendid start already." "You don't say?" "Yes; he went to auction this morning and bought a second-hand writing desk for only four dollars and ninety-eight cents."—Catholic Standard and Times.

"Now," said Mrs. Biggleson's cousin at breakfast on the morning after her arrival, "don't make company of me. I want to be treated just as if I were one of the family." "All right," replied Mr. Biggleson, helping himself to the tenderest part of the steak, "we'll try to make you feel right at home."—Chicago Record-Herald.

The squire's pretty daughter (examining the village school)—Now, children, can you tell me what a miracle is? The children look at one another, but remained silent. "Can no one answer this question?" the new curate asked, who was standing behind the squire's daughter. A little girl was suddenly struck with a brilliant idea. She held up her hand excitedly. "Well, Nellie?" the squire's daughter asked, smiling approval. "Please, miss," the small child replied, breathlessly, "mother says 'twill be a miracle if you don't marry the new curate.'"—London Tit-Bits.

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"I say," said the captain of bachelors' hall in the boarding school, "let's be swell and call our dormitory the Latin quarter."

"No! No!" shrieked the rest of the crowd.

"Because," ventured one of the protesting mob, "all the other fellows will be coming here trying to borrow the quarter."

And so it was that the dormitory went nameless.—Baltimore American.

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