

HERR STEINHARDT'S NEMESIS

BY J. MACLAREN COBBAN.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

I took this as a dismissal, and was going.

"Unwin, bide, lad," said Birley. "I want you to be witness of what I have to say: I may as well say it now; it's been bound to come for a long while. You see that man there—that foreigner, that German—that grinds our Lancashire folk small under his great clumsy boot, and that threatens now to ruin me—that's what he means by saying 'I'll repent this—I took him into my office when he was a raw lad, with no recommendation but that he was willing to work; I gave him a better place in my print works; I was his friend; I treated him like a brother.' The dear old man's voice well nigh broke; it was not pleasant to see the unrelenting, uncompromising malignity with which Steinhardt listened. 'I gave him money to get him a partnership with Paul—'

"Which I paid back," interrupted Steinhardt.

"Ay, lad," said Birley, "you paid me back more than that; you paid me back for all I did in your own way—you took my print works from me—"

"Your own mad extravagance did that."

"You met my friend Paul against me," continued Birley, waving away his interruption; "you've got my other shop now almost into your hands—"

"Your bad management has done that."

"You've done with Paul's money as if it were your own; and you've proposed to me that I should agree to your taking that 20,000 pounds of the lawsuit from his girl's fortune."

"Soh!" growled Steinhardt, becoming more German in his rage. "It is now done! There is an end! We are no more to each other!"

"I know that, Mannel, my lad. And you're glad of it, and so, I think, am I. And now you may finish me off—but you shall not beggar the orphan girl. Now my say is done. You're very proud tonight of having deceived an English court of law; but don't you holla so loud till you're out of the wood; you haven't done yet with law nor with Lancashire."

The old man turned and left the room, looking ten years older; he seemed to falter in his step, and the usually ruddy tints in his face had died out, leaving his cheeks and lips of an ashy hue. I followed him without a word. In the hall he took his hat; I did the same and accompanied him in silence from the house and through the village; I would have seen him home, but he insisted on my leaving him when my lodgings were reached.

I went indoors, but I could not stay. I was in the wildest perturbation of feeling which, I think, I had ever experienced. The close air of my little sitting room stifled me, and when I left it the air of the village oppressed me almost as much. I could not, strive as I would to turn my attention to other things, get rid of the burning impression of that painful scene in the dining room of Timperley Hall. My resentment of the brusque treatment I had myself experienced from Steinhardt was keen; but it was nothing compared with the indignation I felt at the terribly pathetic tale of ingratitude revealed by old Birley's words; and that again had to give place to a feeling of horrible dread and loathing of that unscrupulous, overbearing German ruffian. I had watched him closely, even with a certain fascination of intensity, and throughout the scene I had caught not so much as the wink of an eyelid or the movement of a single nerve or muscle indicative of anything but the most unwavering determination to assert himself and his will, no matter what came in the way. I was appalled. I may say frankly, terrified at the exhibition of such remorseless inhumanity—all the more so that I did not find it out of keeping with anything I had before known of the man. If another stood in his way, he would not merely tread on his toes with a crunch of his big boot; he would lift him in his strong German arms and fling him aside. He had "eaten up" his old friend Birley, from no small vindictiveness, it was evident, but from an all-devouring egotism. And what greater enormity would he hesitate to commit, so long as it brought him nearer his chief end? To what did all this vague dread and surmise tend? To my horror I found that the suspicion of what had been Lacroix's fate, and which had hitherto been whirling and curling in my imagination like a lurid vapor, was now assuming definite shape and settling upon Steinhardt! Why should he have done to death his partner? I could not tell; I could scarcely make a guess worth the name. If he had, was the method of it such as had been indicated in Dick's confession? If he had—how, where had he bestowed the traces of the crime?

CHAPTER VII.

Next evening I went to Freeman's, who was going away for his holiday the second morning after. I wished to remind Freeman of his promise to make inquiries in London concerning Mr. Lacroix, and especially to underline certain places for inquiry. The reader will understand why I advised Mr. Freeman to institute careful inquiry at the stations of the great railway lines that run northward from London—most careful inquiry at the station of the Great Northern Railway; but Mr. Freeman did not readily understand why I should urge these points.

"Come," said he, looking at me hard, and in evident surprise, "what's in your noddle now?—what new suspicion have you worked up?"

"Don't look so surprised at me," I was plucked into saying, when I felt his "lober scrutiny" would be turned upon my structure of evidence I doubted for the time its cogency and stability—and this doubt in "myself I resented: 'I am quite sane and serious. I have had 'borne in' upon me the impression—I can't quite say how it came—that Lacroix left London that night—'

"What night?"

"Thursday, March the sixteenth of last year. Miss Lacroix has told me

he was at his hotel, it has been found, on that day."

"I hadn't heard the date named before."

I then told him how, on turning over the pages of my Bradshaw, I had discovered the existence of a very late train from London.

"But," said he, "there are trains almost as late on other lines."

"But not so quick," said I.

"Besides," said he, "you don't know that the train you mention was running more than a year ago."

"No; I do not." I was a little put out. Still I urged, "I have, however, another strong reason—why I do not think I am quite at liberty to tell you at present—why I believe my speculation that he left London that night may turn out true."

"Left for home, I suppose you think? But why should he suddenly set off home late at night without intimation?"

"I cannot tell. But might he not, for instance, have heard somehow, or have suspected, that Steinhardt was still using the patent they had been fined so heavily for infringing? It is clear, surely, from this recent law affair, that Steinhardt has never left off using it."

"Of course," said he, looking very serious and meditative, "that certainly might be. But," he continued in a new tone of alarm, "what does all this speculation mean? You surely haven't let your suspicion go so far as to imagine poor Lacroix came home to—to find a violent death? Have you really let yourself think so morbidly of things as to suspect Steinhardt of causing it? He, I know, is without much scruple of conscience—but that, my friend, is altogether too horrible!—too incredible! Besides, why—?" he stopped, but I could see that he would say in the end, considering how he gave me.

"Yes," said I, "I know; you think you should imagine that this should have remained undiscovered—unsuspected, if you like—for a year, only for me to find out, or suspect—me, a man of no extraordinary perception or discrimination."

"Well, Unwin," said he, "I will confess I did think something like that. You must excuse me."

"Certainly. But I don't pretend to have lighted on the things that make me suspect through my own shrewdness of suspicion; I don't pretend to be the mover in the matter at all. Indeed, when I look back over the few months I have been here, I am surprised to see how the several points of my suspicion have been almost forced on my attention in ways that appear to me quite unusually providential."

Freeman turned and looked through the window, very grave and thoughtful. "It is perhaps," said I, now roused to a considerable pitch of feeling, "not a very Christian doctrine, but I believe, or I imagine, there is a conscious divine vengeance that broods upon the world, and that takes severe note of the perpetrator of evil deeds of evil doers, and marks them out for unrelenting punishment, secret or open, slow or swift, and that chooses its instruments, or agents, of punishment in a fashion of its own."

"Good gracious! Unwin—what a dreadful belief!"

"I don't think you would have much to say against it if you had been with me last night in the dining room of Timperley Hall, and seen our dear friend Birley moved almost to tears before that German ruffian, and then seen him leave the house a ruined and heart broken man."

He sat in silent amazement; and I related the scene I had witnessed.

"After hearing all that," I said, "and seeing how Steinhardt behaved and looked, I can believe any cruelty or wickedness of him. I do not think that even you now will consider my horrible suspicion so preposterous."

Freeman sat silent, pulling his big beard.

"I think," said he at length, with a big smile, "nature after all can't have intended me for a criminal investigator: I couldn't find it in me to think any human being capable of such a crime as that—then perhaps you would say Steinhardt is not a human being; he is only a foreigner sent for our sins to poison us with his diabolical chemistry."

"As I said, the instinct of detection, or suspicion even, is not very strong in me. But I will do my best for you in London."

"And," said I, "I think I can make particular inquiry at King's Cross easier for you. I used to be very friendly with an official there of high standing; I will write him."

I wrote to my old friend as soon as I returned to my lodgings; I related the circumstances of Lacroix's disappearance, and mentioned the suspicion, which "those who are interested in his fate entertain," that he really set out by train, probably from King's Cross, to return home, and asked him to be so good as to give such help as he could to my friend Freeman in his attempt to find out whether that were so or not.

It was very late next morning on returning along the Lacroix Lane from the little station to which I had accompanied Freeman and his wife that I met Louise near the pond again. She came toward me at once with a look of premeditation.

"I have been looking for you," said she. (How sweet those words sounded.)

"I knew you were gone to the station. I have something I wish to say—will you come with me into Uncle Jacques's cottage?—we shall be there safe from being watched."

What suspicion, I wondered, prompted that? I entered the little octagonal building for the first time, and was immediately in the presence of the old paralytic, who sat huddled and wrapped in blankets in a great arm chair, with his lifeless hands lying limp in his lap. It was with a strange feeling of pity and something like awe, that I looked upon this feeble, almost lifeless, remnant of a famous historic family, spending the last flickers of his existence in a humble cottage in a foreign land. A single flash of fancy was enough to show me behind him a long

line of warriors, statesmen, courtiers, and priests of the old French regime, from which stood out near the end the figure of the white-haired old soldier of the Bastille falling slaughtered amid the Paris mob—and that the glory, and honor, and courage of the past should end in this and here! Was it not sufficient to fill the heart with an unutterable sadness and despair of life? His eyes were bright, but there seemed to be no speculation in them; his toothless gums mumbled, but no sound was uttered.

"He cannot speak a word," said Louise to me; "and I do not think he can quite hear now;" but for all that she spoke in a low voice. "He looks better, though, since the summer began, poor Uncle Jacques. The old man who looks after him is gone out, so we may talk as if there were no one here."

She threw off her hat and jacket, for the air of the room was very close; a small fire burned in the grate. I felt impelled to sit so that I could observe the old man without turning, for his appearance fascinated me.

"I want to go away, Mr. Unwin," she began at once in a low tone of intense feeling, "out of this terrible place, away from the despot, Mr. Steinhardt; I want to go and find out what has become of my poor father, and I want you to help me to go, if you will be so good."

"Has Mr. Steinhardt, then," I asked, "been saying or doing something to you?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! Yesterday, you know, I saw Mr. Birley, and he said very sadly, almost with tears, that he must not come to see me any more. I asked him why—and then it all came out: he told me you knew it all—how Mr. Steinhardt has been so terribly ungrateful, how he has ruined him. His name, he said, would appear any day now in the Gazette. In the evening, then, I told Mr. Steinhardt that I wanted some of my money, or of my father's money, to help Mr. Birley. He laughed and said I had no money, and what little of my father's was left could not be touched till his death was proved. I then, I think, was angry and called him ingrate; and he was angry, in his way, and rude. He called me a rude, insolent girl. He said I thought of men before they asked me (I don't know at all what he meant). He told me I must make up my mind to marry Frank, as he wished and as my father had wished, or I should not stay long in his house. I said, my father would have never wished me to marry anyone without love. He answered, that was of no consequence; he was now in my father's place. I left him and went to my room, and, thinking it over, it came to me how he must have disliked my poor father, if he could speak to me so, and how he, perhaps, did not much wish to have father's death cleared up. Then I thought that it was likely he had not taken much trouble to inquire about him in London—all that, you see, was in his hands. But now I will go to London myself, away from his rudeness, and find out the whole matter for myself—if you will help me."

(To be continued)

For French Academicians.

The French Academy has appropriated a sum for the maintenance of an album in which three photographs of every immortal—one showing the full face and two the profile—will be carefully preserved. When an academicien dies it is usual to adorn what may be called the literary Hall of the Invalides with his bust, but occasionally the sculptor experiences difficulty in finding a trustworthy representation of the departed great.

Immense Output of Petroleum.

If all the petroleum produced last year in the United States was put in standard barrels, and the barrels placed in a row touching each other, the line would completely belt the earth. Enough coal was produced to give three and one-half tons to every one of the 76,000,000 persons in the United States, and enough gold to give every American a gold dollar.

Speedy Long-Distance Delivery.

The speediest long distance delivery of mail ever accomplished in the world was that of the consignment which left Sydney, Australia, October 15, for London, England, by the American route. A distance of 15,265 miles was covered in 31 days, a saving of four days over the Suez canal route.

The Way to Keep Good.

Brooding over the evil that you have done will never correct that evil. Rather will it make possible a repetition of the thing done upon. Set your mind the other way. Think honest, pure, kind, courageous thoughts all the time, and your mind will have no time for their opposites.—Success.

Flag Has Peculiar Interest.

General Eugene Griffin has in his possession the American flag made by the sailors in Lieutenant Gilmore's party out of patches and stripes of their clothing after their rescue from the insurgents in the wildest part of Luzon.

Value of Cotton Seed.

In 1900 cotton seed added 1½ cents to the value of each pound of cotton, or \$54,000,000 to the wealth of the cotton raisers. The return would have been \$80,000,000 if all the seed had been crushed for oil.

Work of Joel Chandler Harris.

Joel Chandler Harris, the author, lives in a little frame cottage in Atlanta, Ga. He writes from six to seven hours a day, turning out from 1,500 to 2,000 words, using a typewriter.

Denial from American Scout.

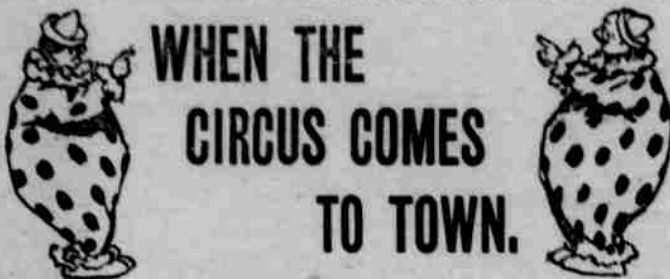
Major F. R. Burnham, an American scout, who served with the British cavalry in the Boer war, denies that he has applied for the place of instructor of scouts at Aldershot.

Sullivan's Truthful Remark.

John L. Sullivan has been recognized as a truthful as well as a fighting man. "I've made a monkey of myself again," he said the other day.

Whistle in Old Mexico.

The ancient Mexicans had a species of whistle which produced at least three notes. It had two finger holes and a mouthpiece on the side.



FOR three months the huge posters in red and blue ink have

flamed forth. There is the "Blood Sweating Behemoth of Holy Writ," with an open mouth six feet square; there is "Mme. Lisette, Gorgon Queen of the Hoops of Fire," clad in pink tights, leaping through billows of flame; there is the "Unsurpassed, Unparalleled, and Unequaled Union of Unique and Mighty Monsters" leering out through bars of iron; there are a hundred other marvels, any one of which is enough to throw the small boys into spasms of excitement.

When the first bill goes up they all begin to make plans for going to the circus. In divers ways they begin to get together the money needed for a ticket. They save rags and old iron; they cut lawns; they pick strawberries; they chop kindling and carry in wood. Every penny is saved. To the children the coming of a circus is the greatest possible incentive to industry and economy. It is a virtue which, strangely enough, the modest circus manager has been slow to claim. And then finally comes the parade—which is really better than the circus itself. The "show-let" is always on the flats at the other end of Main street. You get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and hurry down to see the circus "get in" and unload.

Perhaps if the fates are kind you get the curb, with their feet in the gutter. Behind them stand other rows reaching back to the front of the stores and then climbing to points of vantage on the tops of dry goods boxes. All the windows are full, anxious mothers clutching with nervous hands the waists of small children, who do their best to fall out into the crowds below whenever a stray strain of music comes floating up from the direction of the circus lot.

If you have earned a ticket or have an extra quarter in your pants' pockets you buy a big bag of peanuts, the shells of which you throw down from your high perch on to the heads of the people on the sidewalk. When the shells strike you turn your eyes away and look as unconscious as possible.

Now the town marshal emerges from the crowd on the other side of the street, dragging by the collar a young man who is denounced as "one of them city thugs." He starts down the center of the street with his prisoner, followed by a street full of excited men and boys, to whom an arrest is as exciting as a declaration of war. It is the marshal's day to shine. He gets to within a block of the lockup, under the engine-house, when a farmer's team, frightened half to death by the unusual noise and by the swift approach of the crowd, breaks away from the hitching post at the curb.



A Heaven-sent chance to carry buckets of water until your back aches for a ticket of admission to the show. That makes you an object of envy to all your fellows. You stay and watch the canvassmen drive their pegs, rig their poles, and build a canvas city while the ordinary man would be marking off the site. You see the animals fed and your eyes stick out like hard-boiled eggs when a beautiful young woman with red cheeks and a short white lace dress is let into the cage with the lions.

Finally the crisis comes. From the far end of Main street a wild strain of unearthly music sweeps up the packed street. It is the steam callopie in action—an instrument which sounds like a score of tug whistles blowing at once. At the sound all the horses in hearing rear and plunge and their owners rush frantically out to wrestle with them. Meanwhile the town marshal is running down to the street to have the callopie turned off before the town is torn to pieces.

Far ahead of the rest of the procession ride two men in a shiny victoria, drawn by two white and two jet black horses, wearing silver mounted harness with yellow reins. One of the men is a quiet looking person in a modest suit of black clothes and a black slouch hat. He owns the show, but he cuts no figure in the eyes of the populace in comparison with the gorgeous and glittering individual who rides with him. This latter wears a red waistcoat with blue polka dots, white spats, shining patent leathers, and almost white frock coat and a tall silk hat, in which the sun plays in splendor. His ample paunch is crossed by an enormous gold chain, which means also once or twice around his neck. In his big red necktie shines a diamond greater and more brilliant than the Kohinoor.

Twice in each block as he proceeds to his triumphal progress up Main street, this glittering personage rises to his feet and lifts his silk hat, revealing a bald head as shining as his hat. He opens his mouth and out of it comes a voice like the blast of a trumpet.

"Come one! Come all!" he bellows. "On behalf of the management I am authorized to announce that immediately before the performance under the large canvas Mme. Lisette will perform the unparalleled and stupendous feat of dancing the skirt dance while suspended in midair on a slack rope stretched between the top of the wagon factory and the roof of the gin-gar works. Entirely free, gratuitous, and complimentary. Without money and without price the gifted little lady will disport in midspace. Come one! Come all!"

Then he would make a bow and sit down, while the small boys gasped with awed admiration and envy.

Then you start on the dead run up Main street to get the seat in the second story window over Brown's grocery which has been reserved for you. Already Main street is packed with people. One row is sitting down on

the curb, with their feet in the gutter. Behind them stand other rows reaching back to the front of the stores and then climbing to points of vantage on the tops of dry goods boxes. All the windows are full, anxious mothers clutching with nervous hands the waists of small children, who do their best to fall out into the crowds below whenever a stray strain of music comes floating up from the direction of the circus lot.

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OUR BUDGET OF FUN.

HUMOROUS SAYINGS AND DOINGS HERE AND THERE.

Jokes and Jokelets that Are Supposed to Have Been Recently Born—Sayings and Doings that Are Old, Curious and Laughable—The Week's Humor.

The Man in the milliner shop—You see, my wife has told me a dozen times that I'll have to buy her a hat, and I've decided to do it, literally. See the point?

The Saleswoman—Of course! It's too bad there are not more husbands like you! What sort of a hat do you wish to buy?

The Man—Why, the latest spring style, you know; and—er—I'll be blown if I didn't forget to ask her what size she wears!—Puck.

The Man that Went Fishing. "What a fine string of fish!" they all exclaimed, as he exhibited his catch. "Did you get all you hooked?"

"No," said the man who had been angling. "There was one that got away, but I was rather glad of it. It wasn't half as big as any of these."

After Royal Game.



Old Gent—What are you hunting, my boy?
Gussie—I'm looking for one of those storks. If one of 'em sails over here with a baby I'll just wing him and get the kid.—Chicago News.

Valuables.

Witherby—That's a nice little safe you have for your home, old man. I suppose that is for your wife's use?
Plunkinton—Not much. She hasn't even the combination.

Witherby—You must keep something very valuable in it, not even to let your wife know the combination of it.
Plunkinton—You bet I do. I keep all my collar buttons and shoestrings in that safe.—Judge.

The Cook Lady's Favorite. Mr. Hauskeep—Here's the roast beef cooked to death again. Can't we ever have it rare?
Mrs. Hauskeep—I'm afraid not. The policeman on this beat likes his meat well done.—Philadelphia Press.

A Modest Maid.

Bobbs—Why did that Rjones girl blush so furiously at dinner?
Slobbs—She's so modest she doesn't even like to see the salad dressing.—Philadelphia Record.

An Interrupted Narrative.

The Soufrette—I met a man who saw you once in tragedy.
The Comedian—What did he say about it?
The Soufrette—Oh! I cut him short. I don't care for hard luck stories.—Puck.

Cause and Effect.

"Bunting is financially embarrassed."
"How did that happen?"
"His wife's Easter bonnet was sent home C. O. D."

In the Capital Rotunda.



The Bride—Why do Congressmen always write "Hon." before their names?
The Groom—You would not know they were unless they did.
The Bride—Not know they were Congressmen?
The Groom—No; honorable.

Her Taste.

Mr. Fussy (rearranging the things in the parlor)—You have wretchedly poor taste, my dear.
Mrs. Fussy (resignedly)—That's what everybody said when I married you, Henry.—Detroit Free Press.

For Economy's Sake.

Towne—I should think Peck would object to his wife posing as a new woman.
Brown—Not at all. He has induced her to wear the neckties she bought him for Christmas.—Philadelphia Press.

Charity.

He—Do you think men ought to be shot when they are 45?
She—No, I think most of them deserve it earlier—along about the time they go to college.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Doubtful.

Collector—When shall I call again to collect his bill, sir?
Dashaway—How do I know? I can't always tell ahead just when I am going to be out.—Life.

The Proud Father.

"He's a beautiful little boy," the visitor said. "You must be proud of him."
"I am," replied the father. "He never said a bright thing in his life."

A Severe Shock.

"Did the coroner's jury ascertain what caused 'Bowersox's' sudden death?"

"Yes; it appears that he received a plumber's bill in his morning 'at.'"

"But surely that did not kill him?"

"That wasn't it, but about noon the plumber himself called and said there was an overcharge in the bill that he wished to correct."

Candid Opinion.

"What do you think of this new photograph of Amy and myself taken together?" asked Miss Goldthorpe.
"Your sister takes a really handsome picture," replied Miss Sterlingworth, after an inspection.

The Remedy.

"No, sir," declared Gazam, as he warned up to his subject. "You'll never be happy so long as you are in debt. Pay your debts, Swayback, pay your debts."

"But I have no money," said Swayback.

"Then borrow it."

The Author's View.

Author's Little Boy—Papa, what is a magazine editor?
Author (of some repute)—Why, he is the man in the magazine office who prints the articles he ought to send back, and sends back the articles he ought to print.—Life.

At the Novel Play.

He—I suppose, before seeing one of these plays, one should read the book. She—Yes. Then, in some cases, one might avoid the play.—Puck.

Behind the Scenes.

Madge Trill—The manager seems to think that some day my voice will break the record.
Sue Caustic—Perhaps—if you sing in a photograph.—Chicago News.

A Master.

"Is he a master of English?"
"Yes, to judge by the liberties he takes."

Pessimistic View.

Smith—Can't this be a useless word. Jones—Oh, I don't know. It comes in handy to fill a gap in the conversation when a man asks you to loan him \$5.

Red, White and Blue.

"That must be a woodpile up to college, Maria."
"Why, I'll say it."
"Because Crawford's son writes that he sees our Silas pickin' up chips every night."

His Experience.

Singleton—Philosophy, it is said, will enable a man to endure almost anything.
Wederly—I don't doubt it. Most philosophers have been married.—Chicago News.

Hard to Please.



De idee! Dat new preacher er prayin' for rain—ah me, wife uv one ob de deacons, too, wid all dese close ter dry!

A Straight Tip.

Smith—Real estate is about the only safe investment nowadays.
Jones—Oh, I don't know. There are too many unscrupulous men who want the earth to make it a safe thing to invest in.

Barely Possible.

Softleigh—Is Miss Upton in?
Maid—No, sir. But she told me to say if you called that it was very kind of you.

Softleigh—Very kind of me! Now, I wonder what she meant by that?
Maid—I really don't know, sir, but I think she meant it was kind of you to call when she was out.—Chicago News.

His Experience.