

THREE PAIRS AND ONE.

Thou hast two ears and one small mouth!
And wilt thou grieve the day?
It is that very much thou'lt hear,
And little thereof say.

Thou hast two eyes and one small mouth!
And, think thou, 'tis not well?
It is that many things thou'lt see,
And keep thy secrets well.

Thou hast two hands and one small mouth!
Dost thou the reason know?
Just twice as much as thou shalt eat,
That thou must earn, I trow.

—From the German.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

A NOVEL.

By MARY ELOISE COMBS.

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CHAPTER III.

A young man was standing at the entrance of a fashionable café, looking absently up and down the street, evidently without any very definite idea of his next move. He had just finished his lunch, and, while yet undecided which direction to take, his thoughts were interrupted by a light touch upon his knee. Supposing it to be a dog, he looked down impatiently; but, instead of a canine intruder, he saw a little girl, a perfect dream of loveliness, with eyes like purple pansies, and hair like a cloud of spun gold. He gazed at the child in dumb admiration, without offering to speak or move. She looked up beseechingly.

"I want my papa! Do you know where my papa are?"

"No, my lovely darling, I do not."

The frown on the young man's brow disappeared as he stooped down and raised the child in his arms. When she heard his answer, a shade of disappointment passed over her fair face; but she was by no means discouraged.

"I'm come down here to see him, but I've not found him yet."

"Where did you come from?"

"Come from home, course. Where did you come?"

"What made you leave home?"

"To find papa, I told you. Can't you remember?"

Then, looking over his shoulder, she suddenly caught sight of the tables within. Evidently the place was familiar to her, for she spoke out in great glee:

"Papa comes here! Is he here now? I'm hungry, I am—awful!"

The man had not thought to look in there, where in all probability the sought-for "papa" was to be found. He carried her in and seated her, and looked around half guiltily, expecting his friends to pounce down on him for a kidnapper; but, though many glanced more than once at the handsome stranger and the beautiful child, yet none claimed her.

"I should think you'd ask me what I'd have, and not sit there so stupid."

Thus reproved for his inattention, the man provided for her wants, and was much amused at the air of superiority with which she gave orders to the waiters.

"Oh, won't Jeje be scared when she finds I'm but! Mamma will scold her—awful!"

And the child laughed with delight at the thought of Jeje's fright and the scolding she would get for allowing her charge to escape.

"Who is Jeje?"

"Nurse!—Why, don't you know? Jeje is cross, and mamma's got the headache, so I runned away. Mamma said I must be good, but it's hard being good—awful!"

She had acquired the knowledge early in life; but children of an older growth can also testify that "it's awful hard to be good."

"What does mamma call Jeje?" inquired the gentleman, hoping thus to gain some information as to the name of the child's friends.

"She calls her 'a troublesome old thing.'"

"Ah!"

"My name is Mena; but I don't know what yours is?"

The man drew a card from his pocket and silently placed it on the table before her. She picked it up, examined it attentively a moment, and then laid it down contemptuously.

"I don't like your name. It's too long."

"Well, then, you may call me 'Charlie.'"

"Charlie! I like that. I had a dog by that name once, but it got to be so mean that papa killed it."

A smile curved the corners of the haughty lips.

"What is papa's name?"

"Why, 'papa,' course. What did you s'pose?"

"What does mamma call him?"

"She calls him 'papa,' too."

This was certainly a very indefinite clue by which to find the missing parents.

When the child had finished eating her very generous lunch, the man stooped to rearrange her disordered dress, which was both rich and tasteful, proving that "papa" was a person of some importance. As he tied her bonnet, which in her haste to leave home she had put on wrong side in front, his hand touched a locket which was fastened on her neck by a heavy gold chain. He missed the costly bauble and opened it. On one side was the face of a young girl—a pretty, babyish face, all smiles and dimples; and on the oppo-

site side was engraved, "Mena Wycliffe, No. 333 Montgomery Sq."

"That is my mamma. Isn't she pretty? Oh, don't look that way, don't! You make me 'fraid.'"

"You are ill, sir. Let me bring you a glass of wine," said a servant at his elbow.

"No; I shall soon be better."

The man closed the locket, and made a motion to take the child in his arms.

"No! no! You must sit down. You look—awful!"

For once in her life, Mena used the word in the right place. The man did look "awful." His face was drawn, pinched and almost livid. His eyes were widened and darkened with horror; the veins in his forehead swelled and knotted; and his teeth nearly met through the purple under lip. He had obeyed the child's command and seated himself, and in a few moments she climbed softly into his lap, slipped her white arms around his neck, drew his head down, and kissed him repeatedly. In all her baby life she had never known this treatment to fail to bring relief to the darkest face or the heaviest grief; and this time was no exception. The rigid face relaxed, the eyes lost their stern, in-looking gaze, and there was no trace of his recent emotion, except the deadly whiteness of his face and the bitter, cruel smile on his lips.

"I don't like pictures. People always look like that when they see them. Papa looked like that once when I showed him a picture I found in a trunk. Such a pretty lady, too!—oh, so pretty! And he said, 'Child! Child! like that!' and the child drew her face into ludicrous wrinkles and lowered her voice in a dismal imitation of low bass.

"Come, Mena, we will go home now. Shall I take you to papa?"

Mena gave a willing assent, and the man carried her into the street, called a carriage, and gave the order:

"Number 333 Montgomery Square."

In a short time they reached the palatial mansion belonging to Mena's papa. They alighted, and, after dismissing the cab, ascended the steps and rang the bell.

"Won't Jeje be s'prised when she sees you with me?"

Before her companion could answer, the door flew open, and a woman, whom at a glance one would have recognized as Jeje, rushed out and made a clutch at the little truant. But Mena was too quick for the nurse, and, bounding lightly behind her new protector, she cried out in a tremor of excitement:

"Go 'way, Jeje! I don't like you—awful!"

At this moment the child caught a glimpse of a man, who, hearing the confusion, had entered the hall.

"O papa! papa! get me quick!"

The gentleman thus addressed hastily advanced and caught the naughty rebel in his arms.

"Mena, my child, where have you been?"

"Been with Charlie," waving her hand toward her waiting escort, who stepped forward and presented his card, which was received courteously by the gentleman as he said, pleasantly:

"Am I indebted to you, sir, for this child's return?"

"I was so fortunate as to find this fugitive from Jeje's authority out on the street, and, discovering from a medallion on her neck her name and home, I brought her back. I presume that I address Mr. Wycliffe?"

"Yes, my name is Wycliffe; and right heartily do I thank you, Mr. St. Claire, for accepting the trouble that the care of a lost child imposes."

"Say, rather, a pleasure; for this is one of those rare instances in which duty and pleasure are combined."

"I am not impervious to flattery, even when indirect. Excuse me for keeping you standing so long. Come in, and allow me to introduce my wife, Mrs. Wycliffe."

"Your wife will be too glad to see her child to wish to meet a stranger."

"Oh, no. She has not been alarmed. She has just discovered Mena's absence, supposing all this time that the child was with the nurse. She can tell you, better than I, how deeply grateful we are for your kindness."

St. Claire was on the point of again declining the invitation and withdrawing, when a woman entered the hall—a petit, blonde-haired, blue-eyed woman, who would have been pretty but that the regular features had no expression, the shallow blue eyes no soul. She came gracefully forward to where Mr. Wycliffe was standing, holding the child in his arms, and said, placidly:

"I thought that Mena was not lost."

"But she was lost, Mrs. Wycliffe; and to Mr. St. Claire are we indebted for her reappearance."

Thus introduced, Mrs. Wycliffe offered a little, white hand to St. Claire, and smiled her thanks—such a perfect, ornamental smile as it was!

St. Claire bowed low, but he did not seem to see the outstretched hand.

"I was just telling Mr. St. Claire how thankful you would be to him for the great favor he has done us."

"So thankful," murmured the scarlet, babyish lips.

At this juncture, a cat went running through the hall, and it required Mena's immediate attention; so she demanded to be put down, and then started in full pursuit of the fleeing kitten.

Wycliffe so urged St. Claire to enter that at last he did so, fervently wishing that he had sent Mena home under the care of a policeman.

During the course of conversation, Wycliffe said to his visitor:

"Your face and gestures seem strangely familiar to me. Have I ever met you before?"

"I am a stranger in New York."

"Merely a passing fancy on my part, then. If you are a stranger in the city, I can probably be of some assistance to you, as I am very well acquainted, having lived here a number of years."

"Thank you. I shall avail myself of your kind offer; for even with the best credentials, and the freedom of a club-room, I find it slow work getting acquainted without some one to introduce me."

"Are you intending to engage in business here?"

"No. I shall only spend the Winter here. I intend to go to Europe in the Spring, or in the Summer at the latest."

They talked on and on for hours, St. Claire making several efforts to leave, but his host insisting on his remaining. Mrs. Wycliffe had been with them but a short time, callers claiming her attention.

Mena ran in and out at will, till her father summoned Jeje, telling her to keep Mena out of the room and under her own care, saying after they were gone that if he could find a good, trustworthy girl, Jeje should be dismissed.

When, finally, St. Claire determined to depart, Wycliffe invited him to go to his place of business, and the two men left the house together.

Afterward, in conversation with a friend, Mrs. Wycliffe said that she never knew her husband to take such a sudden liking for anyone as he did for Mr. St. Claire. "It seemed as if they had been friends for years, instead of weeks, and the attraction appeared to be mutual."

In the days that followed Mena's return, Wycliffe kept his promise, and in a short time St. Claire numbered among his friends many of the wealthiest and most aristocratic people of the city. He soon became a very general favorite, and, to his surprise, soon found himself in the whirlpool of fashionable society. Among the first he met was one of Fashion's most zealous and devout worshippers, Mrs. De Guerry, a widow lady of small fortune and great family, whose chief ambition at the time was to find a suitable husband for her only child, her daughter Isabella. By "suitable" is meant, in this case, a man who would provide the one imperative need of life, the world's greatest good—money. The ancient name of her husband's family was Geary; but the plebeian cognomen harrowed their aristocratic souls, and they transformed it into a patrician patronymic, and this change was highly satisfactory to the esthetic tastes of Mrs. De Guerry.

St. Claire saw through the shallow pretences of the angling mother, and disliked her accordingly. But in his estimate of Isabella's character he was deceived. He thought her vain and frivolous—a worthy daughter of such a mother. He afterward knew that he had wronged her. He found her to be true-hearted and noble-minded; a little spoiled by her mother's ambition and the universal admiration she received, yet withal a woman who in time of trial would rise superior to petty tyranny. People called Isabella a double heiress—she inherited her father's sense and her mother's beauty.

A fashionable but illiterate woman described one of her daughters as a "bronze," and the word would apply very well to Isabella's soft, dark beauty. Her hair and eyes were a golden brown, and her skin was dark and richly tinted. Men fell in love with her immediately, and their only reward was her smile for a day, and then her scorn for their pain. It was not love that Bell wanted; it was universal adoration. She drank the fiery draught that scorches the heart till she reached the dregs; then she knew what women only learn by experience, that "that way madness lies."

One evening St. Claire met Bell at a dinner party at the house of one of her particular friends. It was one of those jammed affairs where everybody goes and nobody has any enjoyment. Bell wearied of the scene, and asked St. Claire if he would aid her in finding her mother, as she was tired and wished to go home. After making the tour of the rooms, and failing to find her, Bell suggested that probably she was in the library, and they went there in search of her. They found Mrs. De Guerry comfortably seated, discussing with a friend some disputed point in a game of chess. They listened in silence for a few moments, then joined in the debate, St. Claire siding with Mrs. De Guerry, Bell with her friend.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. De Guerry, in tones of dismay, "if Bell is against me, I may as well give it up. She is always right."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. De Guerry, but not always right. I think I can prove that she is mistaken now."

St. Claire explained at great length the reason for the ground he took; but, as is usual in such cases, the more he explained the more tangled they became, until at length they were hopelessly bewildered. They dropped the matter with a laugh, but Bell told him earnestly that she could not allow him to think that he could teach her anything about chess; that it was the one game she could play, and that no one could beat her.

"Are you in earnest? Are you a good player?"

"Yes. I am never beaten."

"Miss De Guerry, I think you would find in me a foeman worthy of your steel, as I am never defeated."

Miss De Guerry answered him petulantly, a half flush mounting her brow.

"Mr. St. Claire, I have always been so successful that I offered, many months ago, my photo-

graph to any gentleman who could win a game with me for an opponent. Several have tried; and all have failed."

A smile of contempt, a look of disgust, over the face of the listener came. But Bell was not looking at him; she only heard him ask, eagerly:

"Miss De Guerry, may I try for the prize?"

"Yes, you may try; and if you win, you will be the only man in the world who possesses my picture."

"You shall see, Miss De Guerry, how I shall value it."

There was something in the man's voice that grated on her ear; it sounded bitter and scornful; but there was no trace of displeasure in his face as she looked at him. It irritated her, nevertheless.

"I knew that I merited his disdain, I suppose, is the reason. I thought I detected it in his voice. If I only win this game, it is the last time I shall play for stakes." Bell was thinking it over with regret.

St. Claire was thinking, too. "She is a brainless flirt. I will teach her a lesson if I can win this game."

St. Claire requested Bell to name the time for the proposed contest, and she selected the following evening, if he was not otherwise engaged. He assured her that he was entirely at her command. Unconsciously their voices had a ring of defiance, and the dissatisfaction they felt toward themselves and each other was plainly visible in their constrained language. Mrs. De Guerry's smooth, even voice fell upon their ears.

"Isabella, my daughter, you do not speak to Mr. Raymond."

Isabella turned around and greeted the gentleman in her most charming manner.

Raymond had spoken to Mrs. De Guerry, and was passing on without even seeing her daughter, when the tones of gentle reproof compelled him to stop.

Mrs. De Guerry knew as well as Raymond did that he had not thought of speaking to Isabella—had not so much as seen her—but she had no intention of allowing him to escape so easily. He was too thoroughly well-bred to intimate that he had not been aware of Bell's presence; and that night, after they went home, when her mother told her that Raymond, in not speaking to her, was actuated by jealousy, she never thought of doubting it.

As a skillful diplomatist, Mrs. De Guerry requested St. Claire's escort to the drawing-room. Bell evidently forgot her intention of going home early, for when St. Claire left the house several hours later, she was the center of an admiring group, in which Mr. Raymond was a conspicuous figure.

Promptly at the time designated on the following evening, St. Claire appeared at Mrs. De Guerry's. He was conducted to the library, where Bell was waiting for him. A bright fire burned in the grate, throwing a soft glow over the furniture and draperies of the room, and lighting up Bell's dark beauty dangerously. She had felt a strange presentiment that she was going to lose this game; but she made a firm resolution that, if St. Claire won the game, he should lose his heart.

"We are to have the entire evening, Mr. St. Claire. Mamma has promised to deny any callers, so we will not be interrupted."

"And are you as confident of success as you were last night?"

"I always win," she replied, laughingly.

"I should like very much to have the prize brought to view."

But to this request she steadily refused to accede, and the game was commenced at once. They were both unusually good players, and for hours the game progressed slowly, neither gaining any perceptible advantage. At length Bell's thoughts wandered for a moment, and that moment was fatal. A false movement, a misplaced knight, was greeted by a triumphant laugh from St. Claire, who covered her lost ground. The mistake, the laugh, or the fear of defeat, unnerved her, and again she made a wrong move. Again that low, sneering laugh stung her to madness.

"A few more moves like that, Miss De Guerry, and I own the picture."

Bell made no reply, though the angry blood surged over her face to her very brow. She was too discomfited to play now, and in a few minutes St. Claire's voice rang through the room:

"Checkmated! Miss De Guerry, the picture is mine."

She pushed the board from her, arose without a word, went to a small cabinet on the other side of the room, and returned with a beautiful *carte-de-visite*, which she placed in his hands. He examined it critically.

"Do you think it like me?"

"Yes, it is like you, very. It is beautiful, heartless, and to me worthless. Miss De Guerry, things easily won are lightly held."

He rose up, went to the fire, and placed the picture, the beautiful face down, upon the smouldering, red coals.

A blue smoke, a sudden blaze, the game was finished, and Isabella had lost!

[To be continued.]

A new project is to be tried for diminishing the fogs of London. By the plan proposed, about 3000 cubic feet of gas would be extracted from each ton of coal burned in the city, the coal being thus rendered smokeless. The gas would be used for illuminating purposes. In this manner, the perfect combustion of both the coal and the gas would be insured, and Londoners would no longer have an atmosphere thick with particles of unconsumed carbon.