

THE BEGINNING OF THE END;

AN ENGLISH TALE.

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CHAPTER VII.

One day, about a year after the occurrence recounted in the last chapter, Will Brownly was visited in his office by a man dressed in the height of fashion, who held out his hand, exclaiming:

"Upon my soul, Mr. Brownly, I believe you have forgotten me."

"Your face is familiar," said Will; "but at the moment I cannot call you to mind."

"You have forgotten the fellow whose head you punched, eh? You see, I don't hold any animosity. I am Tom Thorn. I tried to do you a good turn once, and got thrashed for my pains. Did I not tell you the truth about Phil Hanson? He has left his wife to shift for herself, I am told. I saw him about a year ago in Baden-Baden at the gambling tables there. He was out of luck, and I offered him some money, just to cut him, you know. I pretended not to know him, and offered him a shilling as I would a penny to a beggar. You ought to have seen him look at me and throw the money on the floor and stamp out of the saloon like mad."

"Oh, yes," said Will; "I remember you now. You did tell the truth. I am sorry I struck you."

"Now, that's manly," said Thorn. "That's what I like to see. I hope you are doing well, Mr. Brownly."

"Yes," very well indeed," said Will. "I hope, if you will excuse me, that you have kept your resolution to do better and lead a better life."

"Oh, now come! You know a fellow gets those streaks sometimes, and of course gets over them again. It's all bosh, this reforming business. What's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh, you know. I tell you what it is—I have two things to live for. One is to enjoy myself, and the other is to have revenge upon Phil Hanson. I'm doing the first, and I'll do the second when the time comes. I have lost sight of him for a few months. Do you know where he is?"

"No, I do not. I hope I'll never see him again," said Will.

"I want to see him again," said Tom. "I never forget, and don't want to forgive. And when the time comes I'll have my revenge. As you cannot give me tidings of him, I wish you good-day."

During the past year, Rose and Grandma Hutton had been working hard weaving straw into hats and bonnets, and had saved money enough to buy household goods sufficient to make them comfortable. The rose-tint of health had once more visited the cheeks of the young mother, and, as in days gone by, her voice was heard as she sang the old songs, and the old lady's eyes would brighten as she looked upon her. The little one, just standing by a chair, was well and hearty, and to the mother's eye grew prettier every day.

It was the custom for them to go to the neighboring town to contract for their work, and as this was the time the merchant visited that town, Rose concluded to go and endeavor to engage hats enough to keep them busy for the half year coming.

On arriving at her destination, Rose was surprised to learn that several dealers were awaiting her coming, and after some deliberation she made a very advantageous bargain.

"And now, madam," said the merchant, "having agreed upon the price, I should like a hundred gross of these Summer hats in as short a space of time as possible."

"A hundred gross!" said Rose, in astonishment. "Oh, sir, it is impossible! There are only two to work, and we could not possibly get them ready."

"Only two of you? Of course you two cannot do it. But why not invest a little in the new weaving machine? I can assure you it works splendidly. They cost but twenty-five pounds each, and you can start business. I will contract with you for all you turn out, if the straw is prepared as well as you usually have it. There is a secret, I suppose, in the method you employ to prepare the straw?"

"Yes, sir. I had to work to earn my living, and, like everyone else, I thought about it, and even dreamed about it," said Rose; "and one day an idea came into my head, and I tried it, and you have result. Of course it's a secret," she smilingly added.

"Indeed I have seen the result. A good, energetic man would make a fortune out of it, too. It's a pity you are a woman, isn't it? We don't expect much in the way of go-ahead business qualifications in a woman, you know."

"I know that, sir. But you men never give a woman a chance. Men often say, after a young man is married, 'Oh, now he's settled down; he's got something to look after.' But you never think a woman with a child to support has anything to look after. Or, if you do, you never try to help her along. Now, sir, please answer me plainly. If a man had this secret of preparing straw as I have, and he wanted a machine to assist him in preparing it for the market, and you knew he was honest and industrious, would you hesitate about furnishing him with the means to go on with his business? You do not handle these hats without a profit. Of course it is to your interest to handle as many as you can. Now, would you refuse to advance to a man the, to you,

paltry sum of twenty-five pounds, if he agreed to sell to you all the goods he manufactured?"

"Why," replied the merchant, smiling, "I should jump at the chance of getting the monopoly of the straw, of course."

"Then, sir," said Rose, "advance me fifty pounds. I am honest and industrious. I will sell you each and every article I manufacture for a year. I will sign a contract to that effect."

"Ah, but madam, you forget. Married women cannot sign a contract."

"I will sign it," said Rose. "What's to prevent me?"

"You do not understand me, madam. The contract would be worth nothing in law, and if you were to fail to perform its conditions, I should have no way to protect myself from loss. Don't you see?"

"Well, then, I give you my word of honor not to fail," said Rose.

"Any gentleman would accept that, as a matter of course. But it's not business," was the smiling reply.

"Then we cannot talk business," said Rose.

"Still, I am much obliged to you for your information, sir. I am going to try and get some one who has more faith in women than you appear to have to advance me fifty pounds. While I am about it, I'll say a hundred pounds. And then I'll start business. And mark my words: I'll make it successful."

The merchant burst into a laugh, and replied:

"Upon my soul, I believe you will. You need go no further to look for some one with more faith in women, for I have more than you think. I wish Mrs. Stewart could see you now. It would do her good."

"Do you know Mrs. Stewart, sir?"

"Why, of course. She is a very dear friend of mine. She told me—but never mind. I will advance you seventy-five pounds, and send you a machine—let me see—on next Thursday, if you will promise to sell to me at the market price all the goods you manufacture for a year," said the merchant.

"Say the highest market price, and I agree," said Rose.

"Oh! oh!" said the merchant, laughing.

"You're a better business hand than I suspected. Well, the highest market price, then. Now, how much per cent are you willing to pay for the money—interest, you know?"

"All you can make out of a monopoly of the straw. And it's good interest, too, I think. Don't you, sir?"

The merchant laughed good-naturedly, and said:

"Here, sign this as a matter of form. And here is your seventy-five pounds. Sign this, too, for twenty-five more, upon the condition that I deliver to you the machine in good order. Now, fit up your workshop and hire your help. Give them so much for each piece. Don't hire by the day if you can help it. Don't board your help. Pay them, and let them board themselves. Treat them well. Pay all you can afford to, and leave a good margin. Keep strict accounts, and you'll be rich someday. Good-bye. I wish you every success."

Rose almost flew to her home, and rushing breathless into the cottage, told all to the old lady, who lifted her hands in horror that Rose should have dared to talk to a merchant in that way, and then have borrowed a hundred pounds.

"Rose! Rose! What will people say when they know you have borrowed a hundred pounds of a man? They will think ill of you, I am afraid, my child."

"Never you fear, grandma. Let them think as they please. I'm going to educate my child and try and make a good, true woman of her. Would people talk about a man if a woman had loaned him a hundred pounds? Let them talk. My life will give—shall give—them the lie!"

And so Rose started her workshop under favorable circumstances.

At about this time there came into the village an old white-headed man with a threadbare coat, who had, or fancied he had, a mission to fill. He walked around among the miners, and always had a smile for the children. "It is an index of character," some one has said, "to always have a smile for the children. If we could see the home of such a man, I know it would be a pleasant one; for he carries sunshine with him wherever he goes. The children run to meet him and climb upon his knees. When you see that, you may be sure a man has a great heart in his bosom." This old man had such a great heart, filled with charity and loving kindness. And, like One of old, he went about doing good. Some, however, called him hard names, for he was a Universalist preacher, and his doctrine at that time was unpopular one. Still he went about trying to convince others that the words in the Bible concerning hell were not to be taken in a literal but in a figurative sense. The pastor in charge of the Established Church hurled anathemas upon his poor white head. But the little leaven began to leaven the whole lump, and soon a church or chapel was established.

Among those who were convinced was Rose Hanson, although she refused to join the movement. The whole village was excited upon religious questions, and "hell" or "no hell" was the topic oftenest discussed. But the reader has nothing to do with these discussions, and only the fact of Rose having embraced that faith being known is necessary to my story.

Rose was successful in her business. Year after year passed away, and now little Bessie, a girl of

eight years of age, might be seen nicely dressed almost every day going to and from the village school. As the child was coming home one day, a man whose face was muffled in a scarf accosted her.

"Where are you going, little girl?"

"I am going home, sir," replied Bessie.

"Have you been to school?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you learn there? Do you learn to sing?"

"Yes, sir," replied the child. "We sing every morning and evening."

"You are a good little girl. What is your name?"

"Bessie, sir; Bessie Hanson."

"Ah! That's a pretty name. You live with father and mother, I suppose?"

"With mother, sir. Father went across the sea when I was a little baby. I never saw my father."

"Ah! That's bad. What does mother do?"

"Oh, mother has a factory. She makes hats and bonnets. She is getting rich. She told grandma so the other night."

"Well, good-bye, little girl. Run along home."

Bessie had indeed told the truth. The demand for goods of her mother's manufacture was constantly increasing. Rose had purchased all the newest and most improved machinery, the cottage was handsomely furnished, the garden was filled with choice shrubs and flowers, and at last, after having suffered so much, the deserted wife was happy.

The sun was showing brightly the next morning, although as yet the dewdrops trembled upon the leaves, and Rose, as was her custom, was in the garden culling flowers, singing softly to herself as she moved from bed to bed selecting her bouquet. Everything seemed quiet and peaceful. But alas!

"A bright sunny April day is darkened in an hour, And blackest grief o'er happy homes may lower."

Little Bessie came up to her mother, and said: "A man wants to see you, mamma."

And hastily putting her flowers together, and thinking it was one of the workmen, she passed into the house. Upon entering the parlor, a man rose to meet her, and she stood face to face with Phil Hanson.

For a moment she stood as one petrified. Then sinking into a chair, she covered her face with her hands.

"Well," said her husband, "you don't seem very glad to see me after I have traveled so far to find you. Why don't you rush up to me, throw your arms around my neck, and go into hysterics over your long-lost husband? I heard about you, Rose, and that you were working yourself to death, and that you had too much business to attend to for a woman. So I thought I'd come and take the care and worry off your mind, my dear. And understand I'm here, and here I mean to stay! So fly around and get me some breakfast, for I am deuced hungry. Those are nice flowers. Grew in our garden, did they? Oh, don't turn away. I'm going to have a kiss. You are my wife, you know. We were married in the old church, and what is yours is mine, and you are mine. Pull off my boots!"

"Oh, Phil, how can you be so cruel and heartless? If you want money, I'll give you all I can spare. But don't come here to trouble me. I don't wish you harm, Phil; but I can never love you again. You have used me so cruelly—you know you have—and I have worked so hard! I've toiled both early and late to support grandma and Bessie—to support your child, Phil Hanson—the little one you disowned, when you knew—in your heart it was your own flesh and blood. You deserted your child and me. I've worked for her, cared for her, and have lived down the shame you cast upon me. All the help I ever had was the loan of a paltry hundred pounds. Now, don't trouble me, Phil. Go your own road and let me go mine; and I'll bless you and forgive you for all the wrong you ever did to me."

"So you got the loan of a hundred pounds, did you? From Will Brownly, I suppose?" said Phil, with a sneer.

"I got the loan, but not from Will," said Rose. "I'll wager it was from a man, though. Oh, yes; I know it! Very easy for a woman to get a loan from a man! You paid it back, I suppose! And he comes to see how you get along pretty often?" said her husband.

"I borrowed it of Mr. Cassey, a merchant; and I did pay him back every penny. And it's unmanly to talk to me in that manner. You ought to be ashamed, Phil Hanson!"

"You talk about a paltry hundred pounds. You must have lots of money to talk in that way. How much will you give me to leave you alone and never bother you?"

"I'll give you five hundred pounds in gold if you will agree never to trouble me again, or come to see me unless I send for you," said Rose.

"Well, give me the five hundred and a kiss, and I'll agree."

The kiss was given.

Just at that moment Grandma Hutton came into the room, and seeing Phil, exclaimed, "All is lost!" and fell upon the floor fainting.

Rose flew to her assistance, and endeavored by every means in her power to bring her back to consciousness, and was at length rewarded by seeing the color come into the dear old face. After assisting the old lady to her room, Rose returned reluctantly to her husband.

"Well, this is a queer game I'm playing," Phil said to himself while Rose was gone. "Five hun-

dred in gold to take myself off and never return until she sends for me! Wonder if it would do to try the repentant, penitent dodge and stay a while with her? I might live an easy life. Let me think. No, this is my only chance. There is this infernal woman movement, as they call it. Why, it won't be long till a woman may hold property independent of her husband. If this should happen—and everyone that I've talked to says it will come to that—my chance is gone. Oh, no, Phil Hanson! You have the quarry at bay now. Bleed it to the last drop. You'll never get another chance, as sure as you're born. I'll get all I can out of her, and then start a private gambling-house. But I'll try the soft dodge first, just to see if it will work."

As he said this, his wife entered the room.

"Grandma is better, Phil," she said, quietly.

"I am glad to hear it. I hope it is nothing serious," said Phil.

"Breakfast is ready. Will you join me at table, and afterward we will talk business," said Rose, with a weary smile.

As they sat at the table, Phil remarked:

"It seems good, Rose, to be sitting with you once more. I have treated you very badly. Now I am going to reform; I am, indeed. And although you may not believe me after my rough words, the only reason I accepted your offer was because I know some day you'll send for me, and I need the money now to start into business. And then when I have reformed, and have a successful business, you'll send for me. I feel sure you will. If you ever want me, you must do that. I have treated you too badly ever to come to you uninvited again—you noble, forgiving woman."

"O Phil," said Rose, "do try and reform. Start a business as I did, and when you do, send me one of your business cards. I'm not hard-hearted, Phil. I thought I had cast you out of my heart forever; but, God help me, I love you still, and if I dared trust you, Phil, I would be glad to lay my head on your breast once more. But I cannot, Phil. You yourself cannot blame me."

"No, Rose, I do not; but I will win you back, with God's help," and the hypocrite smiled tenderly.

"Go, Phil; and show that you are worthy of my deep love. For it is deep—so deep that neither your unkindness—or—or—I must say it—your cruelty has cast it out. And you need not wait long. I'll not send; I'll come and beg you to love me once more; and I'll make your home so happy that both of us shall bless the day that we were reunited."

[To be continued.]

"BUT FOR THE NEWSPAPERS!"

One of the Malley boys is accused of saying, "But for the newspapers, there would have been no trouble." A hurried inquest on Jennie Cramer was held, suicide decided upon as the cause, and the body was about being turned over to the family of the dead girl, when the reporters rudely mixed in. They dug up facts the jury either had not heard of or whose importance they failed to recognize; unearthed the true history of the Douglas woman, the relation of the girl to the Malleys, and all the rest of the information which lead to a rehearing, and which, unless the stupidity of the jury has given time for the destruction of necessary evidence, will in all probability lead to some definite result.

The temper in which the Malleys took this newspaper investigation is shared by many other men both in private and public life. These impertinent newspapers meddling with other people's concerns have often made things very awkward and embarrassing for those who have exposed themselves to the equally inconvenient meddling of the law. Chastine Cox was put to great trouble and annoyance by the Boston reporter who discovered in him the murderer of Mrs. Hull. The Credit Mobilier statesmen have no reason to love the papers of their country. Brady and his star route partners hold the press in detestation—with the exception of the Washington weaklings they themselves own or have subsidized. When anybody says, "But for newspapers there wouldn't be any trouble," one may trust his instincts in believing that the author of that noble sentiment has done something which will not bear the light of day and is sadly in need of exposure.—Westchester Times.

HOW TO SHAKE HANDS.—Let the reader remember that there is a right and a wrong way of hand-shaking. It is horrible when your offending digits are seized in the sharp compress of a kind of vise and wrung and squeezed until you feel as if they were reduced to jelly. It is not less horrible when you find them lying in a limp, nerveless clasp, which makes no response to your hearty greeting, but chills you like a lump of ice. Shake hands as if you meant it—swiftly, strenuously and courteously, neither using an undue pressure nor falling wholly supine. You may judge of the character of a man from the way in which he shakes hands; there is the shake lymphatic, the shake aggressive, the shake supercilious, the shake imperative, the shake suspicious, the shake sympathetic, and the shake emotional.

Paris has more poor than any city in the world. The number of registered poor who have received relief during the present year reaches the number of 354,812, of whom 200,000 receive outdoor relief. The number supported wholly by charity is over 150,000. In 1789, every tenth person was a confirmed pauper. The annual poor rate of Paris is 114 francs per head, or \$125 per family. Paris supports 28,000 orphans and foundlings, pays the expenses of 15,000 mothers too poor to defray themselves, and has the names of 50,000 poor families on its official lists.

A remarkable clock has been set up in the municipal library of Rouen. It goes for fourteen months without rewinding, and shows the hour and the day of the month. It was originally constructed in 1782, but underwent some alterations in 1816.