

THE BEGINNING OF THE END;

AN ENGLISH TALE.

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CHAPTER X.

"Now, Mrs. Hanson," said Mr. Mink, "please don't smile so pleasantly, or you will turn my head, I'm afraid. Look me in the face, if you please. Where do you reside?"
"Is not Mr. Brownly an old sweetheart of yours? Come, don't blush."
"I think he was, sir."
"Don't think! Did he not want to marry you?"
"I object, your lordship," said Mr. Goodman. "As a witness, this woman is not obliged to criminate herself."
"But I want to show your lordship what kind of a woman she is. In our answer we say, 'She is not fit to be entrusted with the care and guardianship of the child.'"

"That will do," said the lawyer, taking his seat.
"Call Thomas Thorn," said Mr. Goodman.
"You are acquainted with the parties in this case, I believe, Mr. Thorn?"
"Yes, sir."
"Where do you reside?"
"I travel a great deal, but I live in London when in England."
"Did you ever see Mr. Hanson in London?"
"Yes, sir; about seven years ago. About the time, I think, that he was discharged from the overseership of the mines for misappropriating some eight or ten thousand pounds of his employers' money."
"Where was he doing?"
"He was hugging and kissing a woman—a fast woman."

personal knowledge under oath, to the best of your knowledge and belief, which you considered Mrs. Hanson to be a Christian or an Infidel—what would be your answer?"
"That she is an Infidel and an Atheist."
"That will do. Thank you."
In vain Mr. Goodman recalled his witnesses. It was proven that Mrs. Hanson was a good woman, kind, benevolent and chaste. But not one of the witnesses could say she was a religious woman, as she belonged to no church or religious organization. Rose herself was recalled, and told her story in a quiet manner—told of her struggle, of the state of her mind at the time of Mr. Stanley's visit, and sat down. Taking her child in her arms, she folded her to heart in an agony of fear.
"Your lordship, in my opening I shall not occupy much time," said Mr. Goodman. "The case is proven. The statute reads as follows:
'I claim we have proven what we set out to prove. Not one of our witnesses has been impeached, and your lordship is in duty bound to believe them and give a verdict for the plaintiff.'"

eye; and what was the business that was so urgent? He went, my Lud, with his boon companions to the St. George, at Richmond, as one witness testified—for this was the time as we have proven—and for days he left her alone. Then he came home and denied his own flesh and blood. She has not condoned this crime. She has not lived with him since. For what does he want the child, that he says is not his? He wants it to break that woman's heart, my Lud; to make her crawl at his feet and beg for a sight of the little one that she has suffered for. Then he would taunt her as only a fiend could taunt, and laugh her to scorn. What, give the child to that man, who has twice turned it out of doors! who has robbed the mother of all her hard-earned savings! who caused the death of his own father! who was only saved from a felon's cell by the poor old man paying back the money he had stolen from the company he was overseer for? A Christian gentleman, forsooth! A canting, lying hypocrite, my Lud! That man came to me to bribe me with two thousand pounds to prove this woman unchaste by perjured witnesses. Need I say what my answer was? Then, like a sneak, he professed religion to get that reverend gentleman to testify in his behalf at this trial. My God, is there no justice or mercy for this woman? Can a man by law rob his wife of her good name? rob her of her earnings? rob her of her child? Can he do this with impunity, only because she is married to him? What right has my learned brother to cast the mantle of shame upon her? What right has he to suppose she is unfaithful to that man? Oh, I know him, my Lud! A man that believes a woman is a something for the abuse of a man is a monster. I don't plead for the child. I plead for my client, who has toiled and suffered all through these years. To rob her of her child would be fiendish cruelty. Don't, your lordship, let it be said that a woman cannot get any justice in 'Merry England.' In yonder land across the water, millions of slaves have had their iron shackles taken off, and the only stain upon the Stars and Stripes has been washed out in blood. But I would rather live there with the stain still upon the flag; I would rather live there and hear the cries and groans of the enslaved as the heavy lash was laid on their naked backs, than stand here to-day and see that face and hear the cry of anguish that will well up from her mother heart if her child is taken from her. Rob her of her child, and when men ask me about my country, I'll hang my head and whisper its name with shame! But I will never give it up. I will use my earnest endeavors, so help me God! to free my country from slavery—to free the millions of wives and mothers who are slaves in this so-called land of the free, where the highest sovereign is a woman and the lowliest wife a chattel. You take from her everything she can earn—even the gifts of her friends—by law; and now, when a villain takes the cloak of religion and wraps it around him, you allow it to cover all his crimes; to have some pretext to still further crush a wretched woman, who said, in a moment of excitement, of anguish, that she did almost deny the existence of the Deity. My Lud, rob her of her child, and I am almost inclined to do the same myself. When I see a brute like that man plot against a woman to abuse and rob her, and the arm of the Almighty does not strike him dead, it almost time to doubt Him.
"'This child is contaminated by its mother's kiss,' says my learned brother. Oh, laugh if you please, Mr. Mink! It is a disgrace to manhood to make such an assertion. A mother do ought to contaminate her child! That mother contaminate her child that she has worked to support until the blood—the warm life-blood—has flowed from her finger ends, while that man was away acting the part of a blackleg, a gambler, not caring whether it lived or died! But as soon as he found she had used the energy and brain God had given her, and had acquired a little wealth, he came, armed with this monster unrighteousness, the Law, and took it all from her. And now, not yet content, he would take from her the child she alone has supported, whose face he has never looked upon except as a stranger, whose lips he has never pressed, whom he has never loved or cared for, just to wring her heart with anguish and have his unprovoked revenge.
" 'My Lud, I am nearly done. But let me plead a little longer for this poor mother. Remember your own childhood, your mother's love, her tears and prayers; and as you pass sentence, may her face rise even from the grave before you, and frown condemnation upon you if you would decide against her, or smile approval upon you if this poor mother's prayer is granted.'
Tears choked the lawyer's utterance, and the Judge was much moved. There was silence for a short time, broken only by the sobs of the women. Then his lordship began to pass judgment.
[To be continued.]
AN ODD INSTITUTION.—A boarding-house at Floyd, Ind., is kept wholly for the accommodation of persons temporarily residing there for the purpose of obtaining divorces. It now has twenty-nine inmates. In several instances marriages have grown out of companionship in this house. A wedding was lately held an hour after the couple concerned had received the decrees legally separating them from their formal marital partners.
Belle Harris was eloping at Virginia, Ill. Her father overtook the couple, and the swim was about to give up his sweetheart without a struggle, when she coolly drew a pistol and told her parent she would shoot him if he interfered. The elopement proceeded.