

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END;

AN ENGLISH TALE.

BY A. A. CLEVELAND.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1881, in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.]

## CHAPTER XV.

As the dealer drew in the hundred pounds, Phil Hanson rose from his seat, and touching the detective on the shoulder, said:

"Come outside. I've something to say to you." The man followed him without speaking. On reaching the street, Phil said:

"I have been looking for you for some time. What are you doing now? I heard you were on the detective force. Is it true?"

"Yes, Mr. Hanson. I gave a little information in a burglary case, and they offered to put me on the staff, and I accepted. It's surer pay than gambling."

"I am going to start a table of my own, and I wanted you to deal for me," said Phil. "But I suppose you would prefer to remain upon the force."

"Not if I could get a steady job," said the detective, "and a good percentage."

"I will give you thirty per cent of the winnings," said Phil.

"Well, I'll think about it," said the man. "I heard that you and your wife had separated. Is it true?"

"Yes. She got a divorce from me. But I have the child."

"I should think the young one would be an awful bother to you."

"Oh, no bother at all. I packed her off to France, and that's the end of it so far as I am concerned."

"Why, have you been to France, Mr. Hanson?" said the detective.

"No; but I ran across an old woman who took a fancy to the child, and I told her it's parents were dead, and that, although I had a large family of my own, I was going to bring up the child with mine. She swallowed it all down, and offered to take the brat, and I gave it to her."

"Don't you know the woman's name?" asked the detective.

"I don't now. I wrote her name on a card and put it in my pocket, and I lost it. But I don't care about it," said Phil.

"Was this woman a French woman or an English woman?" continued the man.

"Oh, come, now! I had forgotten for the moment that you were a detective. I believe you are trying to pump me. Who hired you to spy upon me?" exclaimed Phil, angrily.

"No one, sir; no one. When are you going to start your table?"

"In two or three weeks," said Phil.

"It is understood, then, that I am to deal for you for thirty per cent of the winnings?"

"Yes. I want you, for you are a good dealer."

"I accept your offer, Mr. Hanson; but I want to find out all I can about the child for that man," said the detective, handing him a card.

"Oh! oh! My friend Tom Thorn, eh? It is none of his business. He has no chance with Rose as long as Will Brownly is in the road. But I have nothing to hide, Andrews. The law gave me the child, and I have given her away. That's the truth. You can tell him that, or a lie, as you like. But, see here. Take this," handing him a ten-pound note, "and go down to the village and find out what that woman is doing, and let me know."

The detective returned to his employer and repeated the story Phil Hanson had told him, believing it to be the truth, and then went to the village to make inquiries concerning Rose.

Having satisfied himself on that head, he returned to London to report to Phil Hanson. But when he arrived, Phil was sick with a fever, and his life was despaired of. Of course the reader is aware that Phil Hanson had deceived the detective in regard to how he had disposed of the child; in fact, he had learned nothing of her whereabouts himself.

Jake had waited long and patiently on the night he was to receive an answer about the hundred pounds, and at last, his patience being exhausted, he returned home to where the child was, and taking Bessie in his arms, carried her to a woman, to whom he gave ten pounds, telling her that the child was an "illegitimate" whose mother wanted her kept out of her way.

"Make her get her own living, Granny," he said, as he left the house.

A whip soon made Bessie cease her inquiries after her mother.

"I am your mother now," said the old hag. "You mind what I say, or if you don't, I'll cut you into inch pieces with this whip. You'll have to get your own living, too. The world owes you one, and those who have plenty should be made to give to those that have none."

The next day an old man appeared at the old hag's house, and endeavored to win the affections of the child; nor did he try in vain. From the time the child was taken from her mother, she had never received any words of love and affection, and the little heart was hungry; and when this man came and patted her head and spoke kindly, the child's eyes filled, and there came into them a look that would make a good man long to fold her to his breast and shelter and comfort her. After talking with the child, the old man produced a doll, and after allowing her to play with

it for a little while, he returned it to the back pocket of his coat, saying:

"Now, little girl, we will play that I am asleep and that you are going to get this doll out of my pocket without waking me up. Granny will show you how to do it; and when you can take the doll out of my pocket so that I cannot feel you do it, I will give you this beautiful doll to keep."

Clapping her hands and dancing in her childish glee, she consented. And thus unconsciously the child took her first lesson as a thief.

Tom Thorn believed implicitly the falsehood the detective had told him of Bessie's whereabouts, and on meeting Will Brownly a day or two later, he innocently repeated the story.

"It is of no use, Mr. Brownly," he said, "to search for the child in England. I have not the least doubt that she is in France, and to France I am going. The only trouble is, I have no picture of the little one, and it is so difficult to find anyone by a description only. If I had a picture, I would have it copied and sent into every district in France, offering a large reward; and as the lady who received the child can have no object in hiding her, I am sure she would be produced."

"I am on my way to the railroad station," said Will. "I am going home. Come with me, Mr. Thorn. My mother has a picture of Bessie. I am sure she would loan it to you for the purpose you mention."

"I will go with you with pleasure. If I can only find the child, I have a plan in my head. I think I can get the child for the mother, spoil that villain's revenge, and enjoy my own."

"I hope it is not for revenge you will do this, Mr. Thorn," said Will.

"Well, not altogether. That woman's face haunts me. I would give half of what I possess to see her smile. I believe that would break the spell."

During Will's absence from home there had been great excitement among the miners. Men with faces grimy and blackened from working among the coal were going from village to village. The price of labor was discussed by these men, and loud complaints were made against the mine-owners.

"Why should we work and slave," they said, "to make these fellows richer? What do they care about us?"

"Hold on, fellow-miners!" exclaimed one, who was evidently looked upon as a leader. "I want to talk a little to you to-night. All meet here at seven o'clock."

Mrs. Brownly warmly welcomed the return of her son, and on being told of Will Thorn's wishes, gladly delivered Bessie's picture into his hands, saying:

"Take good care of it, Mr. Thorn, and if possible return it to me."

The two men talked together some time and then separated, one to go back to London and the other to attend the miners' meeting.

The time announced for the meeting had arrived. A large number of the miners gathered together to hear the word of the speaker who had requested them to meet there. The man took his station on a table, and commenced his wild tirade against the property-owners.

"I am a Cumberland man!" he shouted; "and if I do say it, the Cumberland men are as good workers (I will not say better, mind you), but as good workers as there are to be found in the United Kingdom."

"Hurrah for Cumberland!" cried a voice.

"Thank you," said the orator, bowing.

"What is the condition of the men down there?" he continued. "The owners have cut down the wages, and they have cut down the price of drifting so much that we cannot afford to lose time to come to the top but once a week. About forty men and their missuses are living in the bowels of the earth. I have a baby nine months old who never saw the daylight yet. What do we stand this for? We can stop it if we only hang together. We can make them pay us what is right for our labor. Just look at those men riding in their carriages, with their missuses and their youngsters all dressed in silks and satins. And there ain't a miner's wife in the village but what would look as well as they do—aye, and better—if they only had their clothes on their bodies. [Tremendous cheering.] Fine feathers make fine birds. [More cheers.] Now, we are not going to stand it! We are going to strike! And if there is any grit in you men, you will all strike together. Now, here's the paper! Come up like men—like Englishmen—and put your names down."

"I'll put my name down," said one of the women.

"No you won't, marm," said the speaker. "You had better attend to your babies, if you have any, and wash your husband's shirts, so that he can look clean and respectable."

At which remark the crowd laughed and cheered, and angered the woman, who retorted with:

"My man's shirt is just as clean as yours, and his face is just as pretty, too."

"Go in, old woman! I'll hold your bonnet!" exclaimed a rough fellow, whose remark created a general laugh.

Will Brownly had been listening to the words of the speaker. Was it not his duty to say a few words to these men? Would they listen to him in their present state of excitement? He would try, and taking off his hat, he advanced to the table and said:

"Men, will you listen to me for a few minutes?"

"Yes, we'll listen," said the speaker, supposing Will was one of the strikers. "We'll listen to any man that's got the grit to talk."

"I want to tell you some things about the own-

ers that I know to be true. You have known me long enough to know whether I speak the truth or not."

"Go on! Tell us the truth, Mr. Brownly. We can trust you," said a voice.

Thus encouraged, Will explained the condition of the mines, the cost of the coal, the cost of labor, hauling, freight, etc., and concluded by saying:

"The owners are making very little at the present time."

"Then, tell us," said the orator, starting to his feet, "how it is that all the mine owners are rich men? Tell us that!" and he looked around triumphantly.

"They were rich men when they started into the mining business—at least the owners of these mines were."

"You are the overseer of these mines, I hear," said the orator.

"I am," said Will.

"That's it, men!" the agitator said, turning toward them. "He gets so much per ton on all the coal you take out of the mine. Oh, it's no use shaking your head," he said, addressing Will; "you all deny it, but I know that it is so. It is to his interest to keep you at work. Don't listen to him."

"Stop," said Will. "Let me speak a word. You have known me all my life, men. You knew me when I was trap boy; when I was a drifter; and you know me to-day as overseer of these mines. Let the man that can say I ever deceived him step forward—I want to see his face."

Not a man moved. Will continued:

"This man says it is none of the women's business. I say it is. Do not the women remember the strike we had when the wages were cut down a few years ago? It lasted only three weeks, but you had to hush the cries of your starving babies crying for food while many of your husbands were away attending miners' meetings, and in some cases giving their last penny to pay the dues of the society. Is not this the truth? Let the women speak."

A little pale-faced woman, with a babe in her arms and another clinging to her dress, spoke out and said:

"It is the truth, Mr. Brownly. We don't want any strike."

At this remark the orator rose once more, and exclaimed:

"Are you going to stand that, men? If my missus was to disgrace me by speaking in public like that, I'd slap her face, just to show her I was a man. No man would stand that."

At these words one of the men, the husband of the pale little woman, propped he was "a man" by slapping his wife's face in the presence of all, and ordering her to go home.

Will's face flushed and his lip quivered when he saw this cowardly act, and taking his hat, he walked away.

After he had left, the orator had what he called a "full fling." The majority of the miners signed the roll, and the strike had commenced.

Will Brownly immediately communicated with his employers, telling them the circumstances.

"I fear that this strike will be a serious one," he wrote, "for it seems to be a general uprising all over the country. I shall anxiously await instructions from you."

The President of the company immediately called a meeting, and after considerable discussion it was decided to close the mines for one year, unless the miners returned to their duties within a week. The Secretary, in communicating this decision of the shareholders to Will, added:

"I am requested to inform you that the shareholders are well satisfied with your management, and wish you to consider yourself, at all events, in the employ of the company, who will require your services elsewhere. You will please post in conspicuous places notices of the determination of the company, and also cause notices to be served on all who are now occupying cottages to vacate them in two weeks."

When Will read this to his mother and Grandma Hutton, they were sorely troubled. The old grandma sat silent a long time. Will seemed to divine her thoughts, and said:

"You will not mind moving with us, will you, grandma? It will be hard for you, and for mother, too; but it is all that can be done."

"Will," said the old lady, solemnly. "I've had the warning! I shall never leave the village, and it is well for all of us. I have been a burthen and an expense to you for some time, Will, but if an old woman's prayers are of any avail, you will—you shall—be blessed. You have been a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow. Come to me, my boy."

And placing her hands upon his head, she prayed fervently:

"Father, the dark clouds have again fallen around me, and I cannot see my way. Thou gav'st thy servant a staff to lean upon, even this boy, who has tenderly helped me along the road that leads to the grave. Wilt thou not hear an old woman's prayer, my Father, and bless him in his basket and his store?"

"Will Brownly," she continued, with her hands still upon his head, "you have been good to an old woman. You have given her a home and food. And if friends are permitted to look upon and bless those they love from over there, the blessing of a childless old woman will rest upon you all your life. May you be happy, son of my old age, and may God bless you. Amen."

To the mother she said:

"God is blessing you every day in such a son,

my friend. Now take me to my bed, for I feel feeble to-night."

Will rose and assisted the poor trembling woman to her humble room. As he was leaving, she said:

"Will, if the call comes to me to-night, will you promise to look after Rose?"

"As long as mother is willing, I'll do it; or, if I can do so without mother suffering, I will anyhow, grandma."

"I am satisfied," the old lady replied, with a smile. "Let me kiss you before I die."

The sun, as it arose in the morning, peeped into Grandma Hutton's chamber window and saw a happy, peaceful smile upon her sleeping face and the hands crossed upon her breast. Higher and still higher rose the sun, until the room was flooded with light. Still she slept. What was she dreaming of? Ah, who knows? For her the dream of life was over. The reality was upon her henceforth. The messenger had arrived in the night. Grandma Hutton was dead. Many a tear has coursed down her furrowed cheek, but angel hands have wiped them all away at last. When Grandpa Hutton stooped to kiss away the last, her soul went out to him with a smile. Thou art a friend to all, O Death, and to the well-spent life thou bringest victory.

They buried Grandma Hutton by her husband's side in the village church-yard. Tears fell to her memory, little children brought flowers to her grave, and all was over.

The notices were served upon the miners to vacate their cottages, and notices of the determination of the owners to close the mine unless the men resumed work within the time stated were posted in conspicuous places.

The women were, as usual, the greatest sufferers. Alas! that those who suffer most should not be allowed to speak. The men met and talked long and loud over these notices. Many hinted about revenge, and a few talked of it openly.

"We have toiled and slaved," they said, "to make these men rich, and this is all the thanks we get. We'll get even on them yet." And they prepared themselves to leave the cottages in dangerous moods.

A short distance from the village was a piece of vacant land called "the Common." To this the miners went in a body, carrying their effects with them. They erected shelters out of what materials they had on hand, and prepared to pass the night in the open air. They did not lack for light that night, for in fifty different places the fire fiend leaped out of the vacated cottages, and while some stood gazing horrified, a loud explosion was heard. The earth trembled as if in fear. The forked tongues of flame burst forth. The pit was on fire.

[To be continued.]

## A TIMELY SERMON.

Some time ago a young woman, who had been abandoned by the man who should have been her husband, found herself homeless, friendless and about to become a mother, and the fact that she was in the City of Brotherly Love did not lessen her troubles in the least. After wandering about for days, rebuffed by those who were fully able to help her, she got a night's lodging and a few cents from a girl as friendless and almost as poor as herself. The next day another woman, who in one important essential of character was no better than she should be, displayed for the girl that human interest that more reputable persons had failed to show. She took her wretched companion to one institution after another, all of them professing to exist to befriend the friendless and help the helpless, but in every case the application was unsuccessful. As poor as the being she was befriending, the woman of the town plodded and starved with her wretched charge, but all to no avail. Finally she sold her ring for twenty-five cents, hired a room, and on a bare floor her child was born—dead, as she claims. The commonwealth sought to prove that the child was killed by its mother, but all the evidence given on the stand convicted the community instead of the mother. Fortunately, the Judge had a heart as well as a head, and in discharging the prisoner he arraigned mock philanthropy in terms that should compel all Philadelphia to hide in sackcloth and ashes, and should also show to many another community the hypocrisy of claiming to help the needy while those most in need are allowed to starve and die. Placing in full view of the audience the two women who had done what they could for the wanderer—the poor working woman and the woman of the street—he put the shame on the Christians and the rich men and women who allowed the prisoner to go starving and alone to an experience that even to women with happy homes and numberless friends is like going down into the gates of death. No wonder every one in the court-room unconsciously stood up with bared heads as the Judge arraigned the community for its inhumanity. Would that preachers everywhere would make the incident an opportunity to lay bare the hearts of their hearers, that there may be a beginning of the end of that form of benevolence that denies help to those who are most in need of it.—*New York Herald.*

An advertisement in a Berlin paper announces that "a young noblewoman, having a large fortune and holding a distinguished position, who is as lovely as Helen, as good a housekeeper as Penelope, as economical as the Electress Marianne of Brandenburg, and as spirituelle as Mme. de Staël, who sings like Jenny Lind, and dances like Cerito, plays the piano like Rosa Kastner, and the harp like Bertrand, but who is as austere as Lucretia, having no masculine acquaintances, seeks a husband."

When a Texas couple stood up to be married, the minister saw the handle of a pistol protruding from the bridegroom's pocket and suggested that, out of respect to the solemn ceremony, it be laid aside. The advice was heeded. Then the bride demurely drew a dagger from her bosom and tossed it beside the other weapon.