

FETTERED BY FATE

BY ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

"Jolette's Fate," "Little Sweetheart," "Lottie, the Sewing Girl," "Goldmaker of Lisbon," "Wedded to Win," "Diana Thorpe," "Nora's Legacy," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

In the days gone by Roger had not known that he possessed this mesmerizing power, and it had been long since he and this scapegrace cousin had met face to face, so that he had been unaware of the power he would have over him.

His excitement had increased his usual strength of mesmerism, while the consciousness on the part of the Captain as to his own weakness and inability to combat against Roger, even though he held the winning power in the shape of the revolver, had gone far toward vanquishing him.

They stood thus like two statues for a full minute, the one proud, commanding, and noble, the other cringing like a whipped cur, his hand trembling still as it clutched the weapon that might have been used with such deadly effect upon his enemy but for the cowardice that seized upon his soul.

At last the spell was broken. Raising his hand, Roger pointed to the forest on the left.

"Go your way, foul wretch, and have a care how you cross my path again, for if we meet once more and I find that you are still persecuting those whom I would protect, then all the powers of the master you serve so well cannot save you from my vengeance. I will say no more, but go."

His manner emphasized his words, and there was something about him that seemed to impress the doughty Captain with the idea that it would be better to show discretion than valor.

"Never fear," he hissed, "we shall meet again, cousin mine, when the advantage will not be upon your side. You say that my hand trembles, and you say well, for I have not yet recovered from a wound received in a duel. I go not because you desire it, but simply that I may do something rash if I remain here. Until we meet again, adieu."

Turning, he strode among the trees, without once looking back, and Roger drew in a long breath as though free from the presence of a serpent that poisoned the atmosphere.

When the Captain had reached a certain point, where he was still hidden from the sight of Roger, should the other still be bending his gaze in that direction, he came to a halt, and was in a few seconds looking once more upon the man he hated so bitterly.

His face was a perfect picture of ungovernable fury, fire flashing from his eyes, and his white teeth gleaming cruelly.

"Curses upon your head, Roger Darrel, for this last insult. All my life you have stood ahead of me, the favorite of fortune, while I had to be content with groveling in the shadow cast by your high mightiness. The time has come when I can bend no longer. Something is going to break. It may be you, it may be me; but this world is not big enough for us both. You have found me out, but it will be a bad thing for you. Things are getting mixed here, and I must force a way through."

To tell the truth, things were getting a trifle mixed. To far as his personal safety was concerned, he had upon his track, all the gypsy girl, the very thought of whom sent a cold chill through his veins, and whom he half expected to see behind every tree and bush that he passed.

Besides, the ghost of the man whom he thought he had murdered, and whose body he had hidden away in the chimney flue of the old mill, seemed to rise up and haunt him, pointing a bony finger at him and laughing in sepulchral mockery. Although not given to superstition, the doughty Captain had often shivered at the bare contemplation of such a meeting.

Besides this, he secretly feared lest the woman he had so fearfully wronged, and who was even then secured in the private insane asylum of Doctor Grim, might again escape, as she had done once before, and finish the work commenced upon that dueling field in the graveyard. A man with such matters as these weighing upon his mind, and the furious enmity of a man like Roger Darrel added to them all, must in truth be possessed of unusual grit to be able to set his teeth hard together and defy outrageous fortune, yet this was just what the Captain did.

He saw that all was lost unless he made a bold stroke, and to this end he set himself to work, resolved to win or lose all upon the casting of a die.

CHAPTER XXV.

When Carol came face to face with her father she paused, thunderstruck.

No wonder her eyes expressed such great surprise, for he was holding her mother in his arms—the woman whom he had wronged so terribly in the past, and between whom and himself there had seemed to lie a chasm that was without a bridge.

There could be no mistaking the looks of both, for happiness was written upon their countenances, and beamed from their eyes.

"Carol," said the white-haired gentleman, his voice vibrating like the string of a harp, and as he spoke he held out his arms, as if longing to enfold her in their shelter; "my child, can you ever forgive me for the wrong I have done you? I advance no plea; I was crazy to do as I did. Can you ever look upon me as your loving father again? By the memory of the love you bore me, by the love of this dear woman, your mother, who has forgiven all the cruel wrongs of the past, I implore you, my child, to have mercy upon me, to come to my arms and forget the dread past in contemplating the near future."

For the first time in her life Carol saw her father's pride humbled, and he stood there, with outstretched arms, his face showing the pleading of his heart.

She was overcome by the spectacle, and with a little cry she rushed into his arms. Fiercely, as might a lover, the old gentleman strained her to his heart. She had been lost to him, and was now found again. He had suffered much during his eventful life, but it seemed to him now that he was fast nearing the harbor of peace.

Reconciled to these two—wife and child—what had he to fear in the world? For the time being he forgot that Captain Grant held a secret over his head—the motive of much of his action in regard to forcing Carol into the union she abhorred—and, when he did let his mind rest upon the subject, with that easiness common to human nature, he kept putting the dread responsibility away from him, hoping that in the meantime something would occur to relieve him of this danger altogether.

Carol was happy for the time being in the consciousness of the fact that those she loved so well had, by the interposition of Providence, as it were, become reconciled, but she could not long forget her own troubles, and her heart seemed to sink like lead as she suddenly realized how fate had parted Roger and her forever.

She let a wan smile, such a ghost of her former bright looks, creep over her face when her father, in something of his old cheery way, told her not to fret, that he would fix all matters with Roger.

Ah! there was a time when this could have been done, and all would have been as merry as a marriage bell; but now she had placed a barrier between them as high as the Rocky Mountains, as vast as mighty Niagara.

What would she not have given to have undone the events of the past few hours? If the heart tears could have blotted out the record, surely she wept enough to have done it.

He had been so close to her, his brave arms outstretched, and she had repulsed him, had driven him from her with charges that it made her cheeks burn to even remember. While she drew breath she would never forget how he looked, standing before her with his white face, from which her insulting words had driven every vestige of color.

She felt like one who had given the death blow to the man who loved her best on earth, as if she had wounded fatally some dumb animal that still crept to her feet in its dying agony.

Remorse preyed upon her until she could have cried aloud in her agony, and yet she suffered in stony silence. Would he be merciless when he confronted her with the evidence of his innocence? How his cutting, scathing words rank in her ears!

"Some day shortly I will seek you to show you the proofs of my innocence; seek you to prove all that I ever claimed to be; seek you to show that it was the taint on my family name that I feared, not because I had ever done aught that could bring disgrace upon myself or the one I loved; and, having done this, I will throw your love from me like a tattered glove, for it was false—false!"

Terrible words! To her they were the sentence of death declared by the judge upon the condemned prisoner, and she shuddered when recalling them.

Sadly she reflected upon it, and then, shaking her head, realized that such a step once taken could never be recalled. All now rested with Roger. Would he forgive? Ah! had it been herself would she not forget all when he asked it? Then the burning blush crept into her face again as she remembered that she had shown anything but a forgiving nature when she accused her lover of such fearful things.

She was paying the penalty of her doubting, and yet hers was a trusting nature, only the evidence had been too powerful, even Roger himself contributing his share to the quota.

How was she to know what he meant when he admitted that he had done wrong in wooing her, that there was a mysterious something that cast a shadow over his prospects? Surely he could not blame her so much when he learned all. She would put pride aside, and plead with him. If he was the man whom she had loved, he would listen and forgive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The acceptance of the Captain's challenge had been written by Jack, and Nora Warner had been utterly ignorant of the name of the man whom the one she hated had been about to fight.

She had only known that he was a wealthy young Virginian whose estate adjoined that of Lawrence Richmond, so that when she warned Carol against Roger Darrel she had not the slightest idea of the great harm she was doing one who had ever been exceedingly kind to her, as the unfortunate victim of his cousin. When she learned of the mischief that had been done, she would not rest until the wrong she had unconsciously done had been righted, for she felt very different toward the Roger Darrel we know than he who had been the bane and curse of her life.

Roger, on his part, when he rushed away from Carol, had no idea of the vastness of the temptation and overpowering evidence that had been placed in her way, nor could he realize how circumstances, even his own words, had united in the effort to deceive the trusting young girl. While not comprehending the nature of her questions, he had as much as admitted that it was all true, and look-

ing at it in the light she did, what a terrible thing this must have been to hear a man condemn himself of such terrible crimes.

The memory of that night, when she came to him in the avenue of elms and put the question to him, was as fresh with him as though it had happened but yesterday, and he began to realize the horror that must have entered into her soul, when, immediately after acknowledging that it was all true in relation to Nora Warner—and Carol understood him at the time to be acknowledging the fact that the woman in the mad house was his own wife, not his cousin's, as he supposed she knew—he had pleaded with her to be the same to him as before.

His self-pride had been terribly wounded by the fact of Carol's believing he could be guilty of such fearful acts. In his anger he gave her no credit for her fearful struggles against such a belief, and the overwhelming evidence upon the matter, but seemed to be seized with the insane idea, quite beyond reason, that, if she loved him as well as she professed to, she should have believed in him, even when his own words condemned him.

Roger had very exalted ideas on the subject of human love, but he was yet to learn the lesson that we are all weak, even the strongest among us, and that love can yield to facts as well as any other emotion.

This was how he deceived himself, however, and in so doing kept up his anger. Had he allowed himself to sit down and calmly think over the matter, his good sense would have soon won the victory, together with his love for the young girl; but he kept the fire burning by repeating to himself the words he had used in that last interview with Carol, when she had horrified him by disclosing the fact that she had—and even then—believed him to be the evil man who had ruined the life of the gypsy girl, Barbara Merries, and shut his wife up in the mad house when she was as sane as he himself, simply because he wished to be rid of her.

"Yes, I will bring proofs to her, proofs that will convince her of my innocence beyond all doubt; and having done that I will throw her love from me like a tattered glove, for it is false. She never really loved me, else she could not believe such a terrible thing of me."

Thus he allowed his thoughts to run on in the same channel. He would not let his mind dwell upon the other side of the case, and in this way he was unjust to Carol and to himself. It was not like Roger Darrel to thus be ungenerous; but there are times in a man's life when for awhile his whole nature seems perverted, though generally it swings into place again ere long.

He was paying the penalty of his anger toward Carol, and soon he would enter into the second stage, when he would find himself so miserable, cut off forever from her love, that death itself would seem a relief.

When this time came, Roger would be rapidly nearing a state when he would be in a fit mood not only to forgive Carol but to sue for pardon himself.

He now understood the game his cousin was playing, though of course there were parts of it entirely veiled from his eyes; for instance, he did not know that Nora Warner had escaped from the mad house and that it had been her vengeful hand that had given his cousin the wound that prevented the duel between the two Roger Darrels. Then, again, he was ignorant of the fact that Nora was not insane.

Before his cousin had been confined in the mad house he had been enabled to do her several favors, without his identity being known to her, as he thought at the time; but when he heard that she had gone crazy he did not doubt the truth of the report, although he felt sure it had all come through the man who bore his name, and such was his shame for the dishonor put upon the Darrel family by this foul act, that more than ever he felt disgraced and wished to be alone.

This was his state of feeling when he came home from abroad and met Carol Richmond for the first time.

His fine inner sense told him that he ought not woo her for his wife, but he became angered at the idea of his whole life being ruined because of this reproducible cousin, and he had put aside all foolish scruples.

When Carol denounced him on that night in the avenue of trees, he naturally thought she was speaking of the disgrace that hung over him because of his cousin's doings when she declared that "Nora Warner stood between them."

His cousin was so excellently disguised that he did not recognize him any more than on the former occasion, when traveling in Europe, and he met him as the Russian count, the man with the black glove.

What schemes the scoundrel had in view it would be hard indeed to tell, but most certainly his designs upon his cousin at that time had been frustrated through some cause.

On the next night after the one on which he had held that interview with Carol, when fate had parted them never more to meet, as it seemed, some powerful motive drew Roger's footsteps in the direction of the old mill. He knew not why he went, yet some magnet drew him on.

(To be continued.)

A Feast of Reason.

"I was at a luncheon the other day," said a North Side woman, "where the hostess was a graduate of Smith College, three of the guests were graduates of Wellesley, two went through Vassar, two had been Bryn Mawr girls and the other women present were graduates of Northwestern, the University of Chicago and Wells, respectively."

"Well," one of her hearers said, "it must have been very interesting. How I wish I could have been there. What did you talk about?"

"Let me see. Oh, yes. About how hard it is to keep help."—Chicago Record-Herald.



Physician—Your ailment lies in the larynx, thorax, and epiglottis. Hooligan—Indade? An' me afther thinkin' th' trouble was in me throat.—Judge.

How he is known: Wife—Before marriage a man is known by the company he keeps. Husband—And after? Wife—By the clothes his wife wears.—Town Topics.

Goodman—Do you ever think of the good old saying that it's more blessed to give than to receive? Pugsley—Yes, when I've got the boxing-gloves on I do.—Vogue.

An alternative: Mahoole—Nixt toime Oi pass wid a loidy, Mulligan, ye've got to remove your hat! Mulligan—And suppose Oi refuse? Mahoole—Then, bedad, ye've got to remove your coat.—Chicago News.

Juvenile reasoning: Sammy—Going to move soon, Tommy? Tommy—Yes. Sammy—How do you know? Tommy—Ah! How do I know! Didn't me mother lemme break a winder t'other day and didn't say nothin'?—Tit-Bits.

Kitty (to Bertha in her new frock)—Why, darling, how becoming your gown is! Absolutely any one would think it quite new! Bertha—So kind of you to say so! And yours, dear, looks every bit as well as it did years ago.—Boston Transcript.

The doctor's orders: Dedella—Phat are yez doin' takin the lock off the cupboard door, Pat? Are yez crazy? Pat—No, darlint; th' dochtor tould me to-day that I must quit boltin' me food—and I'm goin' to obey instruthions.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

Mother—Why don't you behave better to your teacher? Tommy—Why, I'm as kind to her as I kin be. Mother—You are? Tommy—Yes'm. Every time she licks me I cry as loud as I kin so's to make her believe she's hurtin' me.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Hardupp—I tried to sell those diamonds I bought of you, and was told they were not genuine. Jeweler—Did you sell them? Hardupp—Yes, for almost nothing. Jeweler—Well you go back and try to buy them, and you will find out that they are genuine.—Exchange.

Rosalie—Have you chosen any of your bridesmaids yet? May—Yes—Fanny Lyon. Rosalie—Why, I thought you hated her? May—No, not exactly; but the bridesmaids are to wear yellow, and you can imagine how that will go with Fanny's complexion.—Bazar.

First impressions: "The first time I saw you I thought 'how lucky I should be if I could induce that delicious little angel to be my wife.' And what did you think?" "I thought, 'Oh! dear me! I wonder if I shall ever have to marry such a homely looking man as that!'"—Puck.

He had promised: The fair bride wept copiously. "Boo-hoo!" she screamed; "you are a mean old thing; so there! You didn't eat one of my biscuits!" "But, darling—" "There is no excuse, sir! Didn't you tell me when you married me—boo-hoo!—that you would die for me?"—Baltimore News.

Obviously: Benevolent old gentleman—Don't you think fishing a cruel sport? Fisherman—I should just think it was. I've been sitting here five hours and never had a single bite, and I've got three wasp stings, and been eaten up with flies, and the sun's taken all the skin off the back of my neck!—Pick-Me-Up.

Her conclusion: "Do you think your father has any idea that I have serious intentions concerning you?" "I heard him telling mother, the other day, that he didn't think it would cost any more to have you at the table regularly than it does for me to feed you from the pantry shelves every night."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Walter Scott liked to tell the story of his meeting an Irish beggar in the street who importuned him for a sixpence. Not having one, Scott gave him a shilling, adding with a laugh, "Now remember, you owe me sixpence." "Och, sure enough," said the beggar, "and God grant you may live till I pay you!"—Youth's companion.

A preacher at the conclusion of one of his sermons said: "Let all in the house who are paying their debts stand up." Instantly every man, woman and child with one exception, arose to their feet. The preacher seated them and said: "Now every man not paying his debts stand up." The exception noted, a careworn, hungry looking individual, clothed in his last summer's suit, slowly assumed a perpendicular position. "How is it, my friend," asked the minister, "that you are the only man not to meet his obligations?" "I run a newspaper," he meekly answered, "and the brethren here who just stood up are my subscribers, and—" "Let us pray," exclaimed the minister.—Joplin News-Herald.



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