

DOOMED.

By WILLARD MacKENZIE

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

"It is useless for you to attempt to brave it out," he said; "I have too strong proofs, and could produce witnesses to identify you. Miss Constance Grierson—"

A look of intense hatred sparkled in her eyes at that name. "Oh, it is Miss Constance Grierson who has set you on to make this accusation against me," she said, between her teeth. "The young lady who eloped."

"Before I leave this house, you must give me a written confession of your share in the abduction of Miss Grierson, which shall completely exonerate her."

"Anything else?"

"You have, by your arts, entrapped Mr. Arthur Penrhdyddyn into an alliance. If you desire that he should not know the woman you are, leave him now at once, and never let him look upon your face again."

A burst of mocking laughter was her answer.

"Now, listen to me, Mr. Stafford," she said, calmly; but her glittering eyes, and white, quivering face greatly belied her voice. "I will make a bargain with you. I will give you a paper that shall fully exonerate Miss Grierson on condition that you make no public use of it; that you use it only among her relatives; and, above all, that you breathe no word against me to Arthur."

"I refuse such conditions. Do you suppose that I would leave my friend in your hands, ignorant of whom you are?"

"And I defy you!" she cried, rising, and hissing out her passion between her gleaming teeth. "Beware how you drive me to extremities. I have resources at my back that you little dream of; I have it in my power to crush that yellow-haired doll."

"You!" interrupted Stafford, contemptuously.

"I tell you that your denunciation of me will not only crush this woman, but the friend whom you fancy you are preserving. He is encompassed by embarrassments from which I alone can save him."

Her vehemence and intensity began to stagger his firmness. Would it, after all, be politic to drive this woman to extremities without some further reflection?

"But what an idiot I am to plead to you!" she went on, perceiving him begin to waver; "what would your word weigh with Arthur against mine? Do you suppose that he would be ready to swallow the first calumny that could be brought against the woman he adores? I back my love and his against your puny friendship—do you worst?"

There was too great a probability in all this; he must decidedly temporize with this woman.

"I will accept your confession on the terms you named," he said, after a pause.

"I now require another condition," she said, haughtily. "The paper must be shown to no person except Miss Grierson until after the first of December."

"Why?"

"Because there is now a crisis in the affairs of my husband, and I must be fully assured that it shall not be used in any way detrimental to me or him previous to that time. Give me your word, and I will be satisfied, for I believe you to be a man whom I can trust."

Arthur had hinted more than once at some impending crisis. Sir Laurence was coming to town; perhaps she spoke truly. After all, what could he do? Arthur was married; to provoke this woman would only lead to exposure.

"I consent to this second condition," he said.

She minutely repeated the conditions, and made him solemnly pledge his word of honor to observe them. Then she wrote a brief, but particular, narrative of those events with which the reader was made acquainted in the last chapter, but in a well-disguised handwriting, and signed the name of "Ellen Jenkins."

When he was gone, she sank into a chair, utterly exhausted by the scene she had gone through.

"That paper in no way compromises me," she thought. "Even were he to show it to Arthur, the handwriting is not mine, neither is the name. You were merciless to me, Mr. Stafford," she went on, bitterly; "for it was not mercy, but the knowledge that you were defeated, that made you come to my terms. I will be equally merciless to the woman you love. I thank you for removing my last scruple of conscience."

CHAPTER XXV.

Great was the consternation in Harley street upon the receipt of a telegram which announced the disappearance of Constance from Lindon Grange. Mr. Grierson repaired thither at once. The police were set to work, detectives brought down from London, inquiries started in every direction; but not one atom of information could be gleaned.

Business compelled Mr. Grierson to leave again on the next morning, and he returned to London in a frame of mind that can be easily imagined. To add to his annoyance, Mr. Wylie paid him a visit of pretended condolence in the evening.

"After all, it is no more than we might have expected," said that gentleman, with a shrug of the shoulders. "A great pity you did not insist upon her accepting one of the many offers made her. Depend upon it, it's an elopement. A penniless

girl must be glad to get any husband."

"A penniless girl! What do you mean?"

"Come, come, Grierson, put aside all acting—it does not go down with me," said Wylie, with a hideous attempt at jocoseness. "You know as well as I do that on the 1st day of December, to which it wants only four days, she will, according to the stipulations of her mother's will, forfeit her fortune."

"The 1st of December twelvemonth, you mean!"

"What! do you mean to say that you really do not know that Constance is twenty next birthday! I can prove that she is, from the registers; and here are the copies," cried Wylie, triumphantly.

In much agitation, the old man put on his spectacles and minutely examined the paper; then fell back in his chair, with a groan.

"But you will not, surely, insist upon that cruel, unnatural will being carried out to the letter?" he said, after a pause.

"My dear Mr. Grierson, I thought you too good a man of business to talk such nonsense. The young lady has had every opportunity of keeping her fortune, and I think to lose it is a just punishment for her folly. I shall not forego a farthing of my just claim."

"Then," cried the old man, "you are a villainous scoundrel, and if you ever dare to set foot in this house again, I'll kick you down the stairs."

"You are not polite, sir; but the house will not long be yours to lord over. Good day. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again on the first."

"To think of this!" muttered Mr. Grierson, as soon as his visitor had gone. "How could such a mistake have occurred? Perhaps it is only a forgery of the scoundrel's. I'll go and examine the registers for myself."

He did go, and found that Wylie had spoken the truth.

"I would sooner have seen her married to the greatest rascal unchanged than that villain should have got hold of her money," he thought. "But where is the poor child? Here am I, groaning over the loss of her money, when I am ignorant of what might have befallen her."

From the first he had had a suspicion that she had eloped with Stafford, and he resolved to at once pay a visit to the artist's studio.

Stafford was at home. He had written to Constance to tell her of the extraordinary success that had crowned his efforts to clear up the mystery, and was surprised that he had not received a reply that morning.

Imagine his consternation and terror upon hearing that she had disappeared. His suspicions instantly reverted to Eleonore. But he could trace no motive for such an act.

Mr. Grierson at once perceived that his suspicions had wronged the young artist, who, in his terror and agitation, disclosed that Constance was his affianced wife. The old gentleman received the tidings in a very different spirit to what he would have manifested a few hours back, and Stafford was quite surprised at his warm congratulations. But there was no time now for conjectures. With his usual promptitude, he started at once for Waterloo station. When he arrived at Guildford it was too late to proceed to Lindon Grange that night. But he did not pass the time idly; he at once put himself in communication with the police, and made searching inquiries into all that they had done and proposed to do.

To avoid unnecessary mystery and future explanations, we will at once put the reader in possession of the facts of Constance's disappearance. It will be remembered that Eleonore and Wylie were concocting a scheme to prevent the heiress from drawing the sum of money she had intended to use for the salvation of Penrhdyddyn. The plot proposed was to the following effect: Eleonore was to write a letter to Constance to say that if the young lady would meet her quondam friend, Ellen Jenkins, on a certain day, with a certain sum, she should be furnished with certain written confessions, signed by her, Ellen, and by Parsons.

Being thus decoyed to an appointed spot, she was to be carried off and kept in a place of confinement until after the 1st of December. Means, time and place were all fixed.

Mr. Wylie, knowing how eagerly Constance had always desired that mystery of her girlhood to be cleared up, never doubted that she would fall into the trap. The place of appointment was the Guildford railway station, at 5 o'clock the next day.

Constance might not so readily have fallen into the snare had not her recent conversation with Stafford, which had revealed to her how her resemblance to Ellen Jenkins had compromised her in a manner she had never dreamed, rendered her doubly anxious to clear up the mystery.

The plan as arranged by Wylie for her abduction was as follows: Lindon Grange was scarcely more than a mile from the Guildford station. It lay off the Farnham road, which, passing over a hill, terminates just at the entrance to the station, and preserves its character of a country road, with houses only here and there, almost unto that point.

Now, it was calculated that, as Constance would certainly be desirous of

keeping such an appointment a secret from her friends, the probabilities were that she would walk. At the point where the bye-road debouched a brougham was to be placed, in which would be stationed two of Wylie's emissaries, who would seize, gag, put her into the carriage and drive her to a house on the outskirts of London—in short, to the residence of Mr. Fig, the confidential clerk.

Mr. Fig's residence was situated in a lonely wayside place. Every precaution was taken to prevent her forming any idea of the neighborhoods that she passed through; the blinds of the carriage being kept up the whole way, and the horses driven at a furious pace, without once stopping until they reached their destination.

When, half dead with terror, one of the men carried her into the house and removed the gag from her mouth, he told her in a firm but respectful tone not to be under any apprehension of ill treatment; that her confinement would be only for a few days. To her indignant demands to be told the name of the author of this outrage, no answer was returned. But the sight of a respectable looking, middle-aged woman somewhat reassured her.

On the evening of the 1st of December she received the joyful intelligence that she would be restored to her friends on that night. She was again placed in the brougham; the same precautions were taken as before, and in less than an hour she found herself standing free in the Regent's Circus. The whole affair was now more strange to her than ever, as she could not form the slightest idea of what motive it could have served. In great delight, however, at her happy deliverance, she engaged a cab and drove to Harley street.

Sir Laurence had come to town to endeavor to raise the money to pay off the mortgage. The meeting between father and son was a gloomy one.

For a time Arthur's absorbing passion for Eleonore distracted his mind from all other things. But now a reaction set in, and the future was before his eyes in all its darkness. What would his father say to the marriage he had contracted?

Eleonore did not see him for two whole days. It was a great relief to her when he did return, to find no change in him beyond a deeper sadness. She also had been very anxious during those two days. She eagerly inquired how matters stood, for Arthur had now confided to her his true position. "All hope is over," he said; "every effort my father could be induced to make has failed, and it wants now but four days to the thirtieth."

Instead of seeing her face fall, as he expected, he was greatly surprised to see it break out into smiles. "All hope is not over," she said, kissing him; "I have the means of saving Penrhdyddyn yet!"

"You?" he cried, amazedly.

"Yes, I! I have a paper in my possession; but I forgot—before I tell you I must make certain conditions; you must not ask me how I became possessed of it. Will you trust me so far?"

Arthur having assented in much astonishment, she produced that anonymous letter which had been so frequently mentioned, and which she had procured from Wylie on the previous day.

"Why, this was enclosed in a letter of mine that was lost in its passage through the post," he cried.

"What do you say?" she exclaimed, flushing.

He told her how he had received this communication, and had forwarded it on to his father, whom it had never reached. This set her thinking. How, then, came it into Wylie's possession? She felt uneasy; there was something suspicious about this circumstance.

"At present," she said, after a few moments' reflection, "I cannot tell you how it came into my possession. But do not lose a moment in putting it into your father's hands, and impressing upon him to see to it instantly."

He went; and, after some difficulty, prevailed upon Sir Laurence to promise that he would see the lawyers in Bedford Row next morning, and to inquire into the particulars.

Eleonore's mind became wracked with fears and suspicion lest Wylie should have deceived her. "But he would not dare," she thought; "he would be afraid of my revenge."

Arthur returned that evening and told her that Sir Laurence had yielded to his persuasions. Although the intelligence somewhat relieved her, she felt feverishly anxious for the result.

After an almost sleepless night, she rose next morning, pale, ill and dispirited. As the fatal day drew nearer and nearer, her hopes began to falter, and a feeling of despair to sink into her heart. But love was purifying her nature. Never before had she been brought into contact with so noble a nature as that of Arthur Penrhdyddyn, and she began to cling to him with an almost unselfish affection.

"This is a sad beginning to your married life, my darling," he said, looking at her pallid face and sunken eyes.

"Oh, if we can but save Penrhdyddyn," she murmured, "I care not what I suffer."

(To be continued.)

A Strong Tip.

The Bay Mare—Say, Sorrel, don't you sometimes get awful weary of our hard way of living?

Sorrel—No, indeed; in fact, I can say that since I got my new harness I am more strongly than ever attached to my work.—Toledo Blade.

Somewhat Garrulous.

"The more dollars you get together the louder they talk," remarked the thoughtful thinker.

"Same way with women," rejoined the man who had been married three times.

No thoroughly occupied man was ever miserable.—Italian.



"Did I understand you to say that my appearance had improved?" "No, I said you looked more like yourself."—Life.

"Dear Robert, I intend to share all your cares." "But, my pet, I have no cares." "I mean after we are married."—Fliegende Blätter.

Briggs—My wife had a birthday yesterday, and we took a day off. Griggs—When mine has a birthday she takes a year off.—Cassell's Journal.

Hadsun—I want a good revolver. Dealer—A six shooter? Hadsun—Better make it a nine shooter. It's for a cat next door.—Ally Sloper.

"Do you know, my husband, had a terrible habit of sleeping in church, but he broke himself of it!" "How?" "Gave up going!"—Sketchy Bits.

Teacher—What is a coal magnate, Tommie? Tommie—I don't know, madam; I only thought those things come in cheese!—Yonkers Statesman.

Missionary—And do you know nothing whatever of religion? Cannibal—Well, we got a taste of it when the last missionary was here.—Cleveland Leader.

Roberts—Poor Williams died and left a wife and three children. Jones—That's nothing. He was too mean to take them anywhere when he was living.—Life.

Friend—I suppose the baby is fond of you? Papa—Fond of me? Why he sleeps all day when I'm not at home and stays up all night just to enjoy my society!—News.

Mrs. Backpay—Good morning, sir. Will you take a chair? Installment House Collector—No, thank you, ma'am. I've come to take the piano.—Philadelphia Record.

First Thespian—And the audience, my boy, you should have seen them. They were glued to their seats. Second Ditto—Ah, a good way of keeping them there.—Bystander.

The Coming Guest—I see you charge five shillings for a room. When I was here in December you only charged three shillings a day. The Landlady—Ah, but the days are longer now.—Sketch.

First Man—How do you do? Second Man—Beg pardon, but you have the advantage of me. First Man—Yes, I suppose I have. We were engaged to the same girl; but you married her.—Tit-Bits.

Suburban Host (to unexpected supper guest)—Now then, Miss Hobson, will you have a little of this rabbit pie or—er—or (looking round and discovering there is no other dish)—or not?—The Tatler.

"When I was coming home last night," said Miss Skeery, "I saw a man skulking along in the shadow. Oh, how I ran!" "An' couldn't you catch him?" inquired her little brother, innocently.—Cleveland Leader.

The Eldest Hope—Who's that, ma? His Fond Mama—'Ush, 'Orace, that's the gentleman that married me. The Eldest Hope—Then, if that's the gentleman wot married you, wot's pa doing in our house?—The Sketch.

Visitor (to artist's young wife)—Whatever were you two laughing over so just now? Wife—Oh, it was such fun! My husband painted and I cooked, and then we both guessed what the things were meant for.—Tatler.

A man who was charged at the Williesden police court with intoxication and using bad language pleaded guilty to the first part of the charge, adding: "As to the language, I know nothing about that because I'm deaf."—London Express.

"That young student upstairs must have a tremendous correspondence, postman; you always have letters for him." "Yes; I quarreled with him once, and ever since he sends himself a post card every day, so I have to mount five flights of stairs to deliver it."—Tit-Bits.

Miss Withers—You are blushing, Coys! Was that clumsy partner of yours saying? Miss Knisely—Oh, nothing; only that before he met me life seemed a desert to him. Miss Withers—That is no reason why he should wait like a dromedary, is it?—Town and Country.

"Don't take it so hard, Mr. Playman," said the young woman, mockingly. "There are other girls, you know. There's Lil Grumplins, Sallie Plimbourn, Kate Isnoggles and Fau Billwink. Any one of them would make a better wife for you than I would." "I know it," he said, swallowing a lump in his throat and turning to go. "If any one of those four girls had said 'Yes,' do you suppose I would ever have thought of coming here for a wife?"—Answers.

NARROW ESCAPE OF A SINGER.

Had a Sore Throat and Dentist Wanted to Pull Tooth.

When Mdile. Arta, the dramatic soprano of the Manhattan Opera House, first went to Paris to study music she could not speak French, says the Bohemian. One day, being troubled by a throat affection, she complained to her teacher, who advised her to see a specialist, giving her a name and address.

The specialist had his office in a large building where were many other doctors and dentists. Unable to read the French signs upon the doors, Mdile. Arta sought simply for the name of the physician, whose card she held in her hand. At last she found it—the name. She was received by a gentleman who bore all the ear marks of the medical fraternity and at once she felt reassured.

Pointing to her throat she tried to indicate what the trouble was. With a knowing nod, the doctor, who seemed very quick to grasp the situation, escorted her to a chair, and inclining the chair to an acute angle he left the room. Presently he returned, gently urged her mouth open as if to gain a good view of her throat and began a critical examination. The next thing Mdile. Arta realized was that a pair of forceps was being brandished dangerously near her mouth.

She tried to explain, realizing suddenly that she was in the hands of a dentist, but he held her firmly in the manner of one believing that the sooner an operation is over the better, and that explanations are much more satisfactory after a thing is done with. She struggled up from his grasp as well as she could, he trying to tell her that he would be very gentle and that he would not hurt, she endeavoring to expostulate in guttural grunts that it was her throat and not her teeth which needed attention. Still he did not understand and insisted upon extracting the tooth. It was only upon the timely arrival of an English-speaking patient that matters were cleared up, the dentist discovering that the singer wished treatment for her throat and not for her teeth, and the singer discovering that both dentist and throat specialist had the same name. Yet while she glowered and trembled at her escape, the dentist followed her to the door, protesting that she should at any rate have the tooth extracted.

GOOD FURNITURE CHEAP.

New Movement in Europe for Improving Dwellings of the Poor.

The movement for improving the dwellings of the poor has reached a secondary stage in Europe in taking up the question of tasteful furnishings, says the New York Sun. Of what use is it to give a family a sanitary house, the leaders ask, if you do not help to make it attractive to live in.

To further this object several exhibitions of cheap but durable and attractive furniture have been held. The purpose is a double one. First, the interest of the manufacturers is to be stimulated by the offer of prizes and diplomas for the best outfits offered at certain standard prices to suit the needs of various classes from small shopkeepers down to laborers.

The second aim is to get the people themselves interested. It is hoped that by visiting the exhibitions their ambitions will be excited and they will be brought to realize that their homes can be made attractive within the limit of their means.

The first exhibition was held at Dusseldorf. The second was at Liege. Both were successful, considering the size of the places.

Then Paris took up the idea and the departmental committee on cheap habitations was placed in charge. The circulars to manufacturers invited them to send in complete outfits for small apartments combining comfort, solidity, beauty and economy. Above all, it was enjoined that all vulgar pretense and false luxury should be eliminated from the designs.

The exhibition was opened in February. There were several hundred exhibits of all classes and more than 60,000 persons visited it. It closed at the end of March and fourteen prizes were awarded by a jury composed of senators, artists, manufacturers and an official of the department of labor.

Now the subject has been taken up by the Society of Popular Art and a preliminary report has been prepared looking to the co-operation of architects, hygienists and social economists in supervising the plans for all cheap dwellings hereafter to be erected in the capital and also to forward the cause of aesthetic furnishing by lectures, tracts and more exhibitions.

The Man Is All.

"What does you do w'en Trouble knocks on de outside do?"

"Tell him I ain't home."

"But a'pose he calls you a liar?"

"In dat case, I'd tell him ter prove it."

"He could do dat by yo' voice."

"No, sir! Dat's des whar I'd git him. In his worl' en de nex' worl' nuthin' counts fer anything but de man hisself."—Atlanta Constitution.