

DOOMED.

By WILLARD MacKENZIE

CHAPTER XXVI.—(Continued.)

She pressed her hands upon her head, and there was incipient madness in her eyes, as she muttered, "Oh, thou who hath my fate in thy hands, spare my reason, that I may have vengeance upon that wretch!"

"There was not a crime that the villain did not lay to your charge."

"And you could listen to it all?" she said, sadly.

"Not without twice striking him to the ground."

"Bless you—bless you for that!" she cried, fervently. "Oh, that you had killed him! But no; I would not have had that, for then you would have robbed me of my vengeance."

"Unhappy woman! Do not talk of vengeance," he answered, reprovingly. "This man said that but for your machinations the mortgage money would have been forthcoming. Oh, Eleonore, this cannot be true!"

"I would have laid down my life to save Penrhuddyn," she cried. "Oh, do not think me such a wretch as that! But I feel that he has woven such a mesh round me that I know not what I may have done unwittingly. The anonymous letter I gave you I obtained from him. I now see it was a snare—I saw it the instant you told me he was interested in the mortgage; and it was that which threw me into the fits last night. I have been to his office this morning, trying to see him. I can feel that he has made me a tool in bringing about this ruin; but I do not know how—but, oh, do not think me knowingly guilty!"

"I do not," he answered, solemnly. "I must make one more confession. I am the child you saved from the wreck. But I did not know it until I heard the story from your lips; and it was the awful fatality that was enshrouding us that made me fly from you. I am Eleonore de Soissons, the namesake of that picture."

"I have felt that it was so all along," he answered, sadly; "but I never dared to ask of you a confirmation. Poor child, why should I blame you? You have been no free agent; you have been but an instrument in the hands of a resistless destiny. When, in John Trevelthick's cottage, we were pledged to each other, and I pronounced the words, 'Death alone can separate us,' death was at our side. As we left the altar, death was the first object our eyes fell upon; and death is about us now in this our last meeting. Before I go," he went on, "let me warn you that this Wylie has threatened to have you arrested upon some charge. You had better at once seek some other abode."

"Have me arrested!—for what?" she cried. "But you are right, and I will act upon this caution; for there is no extremity he would not go to take away my liberty."

"Seek no revenge upon him, for my sake; avoid everything that may lead to exposure. My lawyer, Mr. Briggs, will have instructions to pay over to you on application such sums as I can send you out of my earnings abroad; and here are four five pound notes."

"I shall never go to him for money—do not leave me any!" she answered through her sobs.

But he placed the notes upon the table, and once more moved towards the door. "Let me kiss your hand," she said, entreatingly.

He held out his hand. She took it, gazed upon it for a moment, kissed it passionately, and bedewed it with tears.

Even then, spite of all, so powerful was the old love within him, that he could scarcely refrain from raising and pressing her to his heart, in one last wild embrace. But he conquered the weakness.

His hand slides from her grasp—one lingering look—their eyes meet for the last time on earth—and then he is gone, and she lies senseless upon the floor!

"Freeman," said Eleonore, after she had revived, "I must not sleep in this house to-night. Wylie has threatened to have me arrested upon some trumped-up charge, and he dare not let me be loose. If he can help it, after what has passed. We must go to our old home until morning, and then think of some better place of concealment. The servants must be discharged, and this house shut up."

Mr. Wylie did take out a warrant, as he had threatened. The charge being the abduction of Miss Constance Grierson; the proof produced by him the very letter which had been written in his office under his dictation. But the policeman who came to execute it found the bird had flown.

CHAPTER XXVII.

In a dimly lit bed chamber in a remote district of London, towards the close of a dark December day, sits a woman at needlework—a middle-aged, placid-looking woman. Upon a table near at hand are medicine bottles, cups, glasses and other paraphernalia of a sick chamber. After a time, there is a movement within the closely drawn curtains of the bed, and Mrs. Freeman rises and pulls them aside. "Is that you, Freeman?" asks a faint voice.

"Thank heaven, you are conscious once more, Eleonore! I never thought I should hear you speak again."

"Arthur—what of him?"

"He is supposed to have left the coun-

try. Nothing has been heard of him, that I can learn, since the day of his father's funeral."

A stifled sob came from the bed. "And that vile wretch, Wylie, is now the master of Penrhuddyn, where I had once hoped to be queen."

"If ever a man sold himself to the Evil One to obtain all his wishes, that man is Wylie!" said Mrs. Freeman, emphatically. "For every one of his vile schemes have turned up trumps."

"How about Constance's fortune?"

"She has lost every penny of it."

"I am glad of that. I am glad that almost the same day that blighted my life blighted hers too!"

"Do not be so malicious, Eleonore! Besides, you have no reason to be in this case, for Miss Grierson would have lent Sir Launce the money to pay off the mortgage if she had not been carried off just at the time. She had arranged it all with some lawyers. But as soon as she was out of the way, Wylie went to them, and said that Miss Grierson had changed her mind, and the money was not to be paid."

"And it was I—I who contrived her abduction—who was the means of preventing this; and he made me the tool to work my own destruction. From whom did you hear all this?"

"From Mr. Stafford. As soon as Miss Grierson was released and came home and told how your letter had led her into the ambush, he rushed down to Brompton in a terrible rage, and I happened to be in the house."

There was a long silence, and then Eleonore said, "I shall sell off my furniture—everything at Brompton—turn it all into money; and I want you to see to it at once for me."

She was naturally very exhausted after this conversation, and fell, soon after she had spoken those last words, into a deep sleep.

"Where can the nurse be?" muttered Mrs. Freeman to herself. "She ought to have been back long ago. I must go out before the shops shut, and I shall have to go at once. She seems very sound asleep; I think I might venture to leave her."

She had not left the room more than ten minutes when Eleonore awoke. All was still, the nurse had not returned, and the patient was alone. The room was very dim and shadowy, illumined as it was only by a rushlight.

She called "Freeman," and when no answer came, she raised herself upon her elbow, and looked round the room. Even that effort was too much for her.

How strange her face felt! She put her hand across it. A thrill shot through her. Was she in a dream, or had her sense of touch deceived her? The skin was no longer smooth and soft, but rugged and uneven. She looked at her hands; they were reduced to skin and bone; and, by the dim light, she could just perceive some spots upon them. What sickness had she been attacked with?

"Ah! great heavens, could it be that?" Excitement gave her strength, and she struggled out of bed and staggered to the dressing table. There was no looking glass upon it—none to be seen anywhere.

Trembling and nerveless, she sank upon a chair. She looked at her hands again. There was no mistaking the marks this time. Oh, for a mirror of some kind, that she might know the worst!

The toilette glass must be hidden somewhere. Holding on to the walls and furniture, she looks about the room. At last she finds it concealed beneath the bed. She drags it out, and sets it upon the table.

With trembling hands, she swings the face of the glass towards her. One look—a shriek of horror—an unearthly cry—a horror more than human upon her quivering face—and shuddering from head to foot, she gazes upon her own reflection.

The fell disease has concentrated all its ravages in her face, which is blotched, seamed, scarred and ploughed by it.

It cannot be her face—the face that was the god of her idolatry—the face whose fascination no man ever could resist—this hideous thing fills her soul with terror! She strikes at the fearful reflection, and the glass falls shivered upon the floor.

After this she is seized with delirium; has to be watched night and day, and held down forcibly, to prevent her dashing her head against the wall, or rending herself with her nails.

There is one name ever upon her lips—Wylie. He is omnipresent to her madness—ever standing at the foot of the bed mocking her; and then she shrieks, and struggles to seize upon him, until exhaustion paralyzes her; but she still mutters threats as she lies back upon her pillow.

All this time her life hangs upon a thread. The doctor says that it is impossible for her to recover. After a while the delirium exhausts itself, and then she lies for upwards of a week in a state of coma.

After this she slowly begins to rally; the crisis is past. She will live. But no shadow of her former self remains. She is gloomy, morose, seldom speaks, never looks in a glass, seem to be ever brooding upon some one thing.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mr. Wylie had attained the summit of all his hopes; he had inherited his portion of Constance's fortune, and he was Lord of Penrhuddyn. The estate had

been put up to auction; but he gave so short a notice, and so little publicity, that there was scarcely a bidder, and he bought it in for himself at his own price. And just at this time the Griersons were too much occupied with their own difficulties to think of thwarting him.

Before he had resided at the Castle a month, there was not a man upon the estate whom he had not made suffer by some act of oppression or petty tyranny. Notices were served upon the tenantry that rents would be raised; laborers and fishermen were expelled from cottages that they and their ancestors had inhabited for scores of years. All was confusion and discontent.

Poor old Daniel, from the time of his expulsion from the Castle had gradually broken; but he still continued to haunt the precincts, and on the very day that it passed away from the old family, he was found lying dead in the shrubbery—most probably he had fallen down in a fit, and no help being at hand, had thus expired. From his childhood every thought and feeling had been devoted to the Penrhuddyns, and he did not survive their downfall, even by a day.

About the end of February, just before the time appointed by Mr. Wylie for the commencement of his improvement scheme, a strange female might have been seen loitering about the woods and grounds of Penrhuddyn, and, as often as she could do so unobserved, reconnoitering the Castle upon all sides. It would have been difficult to guess her age by her face, it was so terribly pitted and seamed. She might have been twenty or forty, but the glossy black hair, worn in the plain, old-fashioned bands, and the light, graceful figure, would have inclined the observer in favor of her youth—more especially as her face was usually covered with a thick black veil.

This woman had arrived in Bodmin from London on the sixteenth of February, and had taken up her quarters at a small inn on the road between Bodmin and Penrhuddyn. She never rose until midday, and then, having partaken of a substantial breakfast, left the house and did not return until long after dark.

This went on without interruption or variation for upwards of a fortnight. One night—it was the first of March, and it had been rough and tempestuous throughout the day—she did not return at the usual hour. The landlady sat up until midnight, and still she did not return.

The next morning came—mid-day—and still no news. Weeks, months, years passed away, but Miss Freeman was never seen again within the walls of the "Pilchard Inn," and to this day her mysterious disappearance is a subject of conversation over the winter fire.

The first of March. At about half-past 5 on the evening of that day, one of the side doors of Penrhuddyn Castle stood wide open. It was an unusual circumstance for any outward door to be open since Mr. Wylie had been master, for bringing his cockney suspicions down to that remote district, he "feared in every bush a thief," and had visions of area sneaks stealing the skins and mats out of the hall as acutely as though he were living in Belgravia instead of Cornwall. It was the wind, however, and not a servant, who was to blame for the open door.

Through this entrance, after looking carefully around her, stole the woman of the "Pilchard Inn," and closed it after her. It was quite dark in the long stone passage in which she now stood. It was a disused part of the Castle, and there was little fear at present of her encountering any of the inhabitants. Pausing every moment to listen, she crept along until she came to a narrow window. By the dim light she perceived a little in advance of her on her left hand a winding staircase; she considered for a moment, and then crept up the stone steps in the same noiseless manner as before.

At the head of these steps was a spacious corridor, lit, at the end at which she stood, by a large window; there were doors on each side opening into different chambers.

After a little consideration and hesitation, she entered a chamber on the right hand. There in the great, old-fashioned armchair, in which she had brooded over the fire scarcely more than three months back, in all her youth and glorious beauty, she sat herself down, with her scarred and hideous face; her life a wreck, shattered and hopeless; not to dream of love, but to brood over one awful purpose, for which alone she consented to live.

The Castle clock struck eleven. That was the hour, she had ascertained, at which the servants and all, save Wylie, retired to rest. She lit a dark lantern which she took from about her person. After which she divested herself of bonnet and cloak and boots. From large pockets in her cloak she produced, first, a short, thick, heavy looking stick; secondly, two small coils of thin but strong cord, a gag, and, lastly, a long, glittering knife. All these various objects she transferred to other large pockets about her dress; except the knife, which she stuck in her waist belt.

She stole along the corridor, and at a certain point, branched into a narrower passage, that led into the picture gallery. She threw the rays of the lantern upon the pictures, until they fell upon the stern beauty of Eleonore de Soissons. Before that she paused, and gazed for a moment in deep thought, then again pursued her way with redoubled caution.

(To be continued.)

Charm of Uncertainty.

"There is a lot of excitement in running an automobile," said the cheerful citizen.

"Yes," answered the man who smells of gasoline, "it gives life the charm of uncertainty. You never know whether you are going to be late for dinner or early at the emergency hospital."—Washington Star.

CZARINA AND HEIR TO RUSSIAN THRONE.



THE CZARINA OF RUSSIA AND HEIR

FOR THE GRAND DUKE ALEXEI NICHOLAIEVITCH

Russian terrorists, it is stated, are making greater efforts than ever before to carry out their plot to blow up the Czar's palace and kill the royal family. Dissolution of the duma has added to their hatred. The latest pictures of the Czarina and the Czarevitch, who was born Aug. 12, 1904, are shown above. The heir to the throne has four sisters, the eldest 12 years old.

Popular Science.

The oddest newspaper in the world is one named the Wochenblatt, which is published in Grunlügen, a small town of some 1,200 inhabitants in the canton of Zurich, in Switzerland. It is the only newspaper in the place, and is at one and the same time the organ of the liberal-conservatives and the social democrats. Pages one and two belong to the liberals, and pages three and four to the socialists, and the two parties abuse one another heartily in its pages.

We have scarcely recovered from the surprise of one invention for transmitting portraits and writing by telegraph before there is a rival in the field. The inventor is a Belgian of Antwerp, named De Groot, who claims for his instrument that it works much more rapidly than that invented by Prof. Kunen. The characteristic feature of the new apparatus is that it produces at the receiver an ordinary metallic "block," which can be sent direct to the press. A drawing eight inches square can be "telegraphed" on to this block in one minute.

When an automobile is running at high speed, the rubber tires are rapidly warmed, and the heat sometimes becomes very great, with resultant injury to the rubber. The cause of this accumulation of heat in the tire is ascribed to the kneading of the rubber, which generates heat faster than it can be radiated away. For this reason manufacturers have found it to be an advantage to have metal parts in the tread, such as the ends of rivets, in contact with the tire, because the metal, being a good radiator, helps to carry off the heat to the outer air.

Microscopic study is adding much to our knowledge of the properties of steel. It has recently been shown, for example, that there is an important difference between steels rolled, or annealed, below a temperature of about 750 degrees Centigrade and those annealed at higher temperatures, which are thought to have been overheated. They do not endure "fatigue" so well as those annealed at the lower temperature. The permanent and injurious microscopic strains are more minutely subdivided and more uniformly distributed in the less heated steels, and this fact is regarded as explaining their superior ability to endure "fatigue."

During the earthquake in Jamaica in January four statues in the public square, all within about 100 yards of one another, underwent remarkably varied experiences. The statue of Queen Victoria, on the south side of the square, was turned slightly to the left;

another statue, in a corresponding position on the north side of the square, was turned to the right. A statue facing northeast was thrown to the ground and broken in pieces; and one facing west was snapped in two in the middle, and the bust dropped upon the base of the pedestal without being overturned. Streets running north and south were filled with fallen walls, but those running east and west were less obstructed, mainly because the earth movements were in that direction.

TROPICAL PLANT THAT COUGHS.

Way of Freeing Itself from Coating of Desert Sand.

"I heard a cough and looked behind me nervously," said a huntsman in the New Orleans Times-Democrat, "for I was stalking gazelles in that lion-colored waste, the Sahara desert, and having got rather too far south, I expected at any moment to become a pin-cushion for the poisoned darts of the dread Touaregs."

"But there was no one there. The flat desert quivered in the sunshine, and here and there a dusty plant stood wearily. But though I commanded the landscape for a radius of fifty miles, not a living creature was in sight."

"Another cough. I swung around quickly. The same plant, yellow with dust, drooped in the dry heat. That was all."

"Hack! Hack!"

"On my left this time. I swung around again. A like plant met my eye. The thing was growing rather ghastly."

"As I regarded this last plant a caught came from it. Believe me, the plant coughed. It shook all over and then, tightening up as a man does when he is about to sneeze, it gave a violent cough, and a little cloud of dust arose."

"I found out afterward that the plant was the coughing bean, which is common in many tropical countries. In the long, dry heats this weird growth's pores become choked with dust, and it would die of suffocation were it not that a powerful gas accumulates inside it, which, when it gains sufficient pressure, explodes with a sound precisely like the human cough. The explosion shakes the plant pores free of their dust and the coughing bean is in good health again."

A Mere Mental Phase.

Bronson—What is a winter resort? Woodson—A winter resort? Well, any place you go where you don't let yourself think it is as cold as it is at home.—Broadway Magazine.

Wouldn't Get a Chance.

"No," said Miss Geit, "I would not marry you if you were a millionaire." "You bet you wouldn't!" replied her impecunious suitor, fervently.—Houston Post.