

BY MISADVENTURE

BY

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CHAPTER VII.

I did not anticipate any serious consequences from that evening's amusement. It seemed to me that Miss Dalrymple was entirely occupied with the music, and doubtless no thought of anything else could have entered her head without being suggested to her. But that was not the case with Lynn Yeames. He was carried away by the good looks of Miss Dalrymple, and perceiving that she was the best woman of the throng, both in appearance and family connection, he magnanimously resolved to sink the consideration of her being poor and resolved to secure her at any price, no matter how rich he might be by the death of his uncle.

Somehow or other he proposed to her that night—between the parts, perhaps, when he led her into the adjoining room for refreshments, though more probably the old woman, his mother, shammed sleep in the brougham to give her son the opportunity as they were taking Miss Dalrymple home.

Two mornings after the concert Dr. Awdrey called on me, looking as yellow as an old title-deed.

"You must go up to Flexmore House at once," he said, without asking me how I was, or any other preliminary civility. "Flexmore is in a critical condition—there's not a moment to spare."

"What does he want me for?" I asked. "He wants to see you about that fool of a will you drew up for him. Get into my trap. I tell you there is no time to waste."

"Aren't you coming with me?" I asked, as he put the reins in my hand.

"No; I have another case to attend. I can do nothing for Flexmore at present; Miss Dalrymple has my instructions, and I can rely on her carrying them out."

I drove over to Flexmore House, suspecting mischief. I found my old friend in bed, but perfectly calm and collected. Miss Dalrymple was in the room with little Laure, who clung to her hand as though she felt that soon there would be but that to protect and befriend her. Flexmore took my hand with a smile—a silent greeting that was more touching than words.

"My dear," he said to Miss Dalrymple, "you must leave us for a few minutes, please; we have a little matter of business to discuss, my old friend and I."

"Well, what is it, George?" I asked, going to the bedside.

"Tony, you must alter that will or draw up another at once. You thought right to tell Dr. Awdrey of the provision I had made. He refuses to be Laure's guardian or trustee for her fortune."

"He won't get out of it if you let the will stand; we shall see."

"But the will must not stand; he has shown me that. For the child's sake, for that dear girl Gertrude's sake, it must be altered. They must not be separated. The money must be left in trust, and her guardian and trustee must be my nephew, Lynn Yeames."

"Nonsense! As soon as Lynn Yeames finds he has nothing he will cease to persecute Miss Dalrymple; he'll never marry her if he gets the money; and then how is your little Laure to live with her? A proof that he doesn't mean to marry her is that he has been hanging about her for months, but has carefully refrained from binding himself to any engagement."

"You are wrong, Keene. He proposed to her night before last."

This took my breath away, and left me no ground to stand on.

"And she accepted him?" I gasped, after an interval of silence.

"She did. Yeames told Dr. Awdrey yesterday morning. He came at once to me, and arrived at the very moment I was seized with the attack—otherwise I might not have survived it. He was with me all night; and this morning, finding me sufficiently recovered to listen to argument, he had this out with me. He has the highest opinion of Lynn—so has Miss Dalrymple, or she would certainly not have accepted him. I myself see no reason to disbelieve in him. In fact, it's only you, Tony, who stick out so obstinately against him; and you, as every one knows, are a man of strong prejudices—very strong prejudices."

"I a man of strong prejudices?" I gasped. "I, a lawyer, whose business it is to weigh both sides of the question and decide impartially? I, an old man of the world—"

"I don't care what you may be; I know you are an obstinate, pig-headed old fellow. But you must let me have my way—I know I am right. No argument will change me—I must have my way."

"Good," said I; "I'll draw up another will. It shall be just as you wish."

As I left the house I spied Lynn Yeames coming down the road; but I had no patience to speak to him, and jumping in the doctor's gig, I drove off as quickly as I could. I kept the gig at the door; and then, going into my office, I fetched out the draft of the old will and a sheet of foolscap to write the new one upon. Just at that moment my housekeeper came in to say that my lunch was served. I had an hour's work before me; it would take another hour and a half to carry it over to Flexmore, get his signature, and return.

Just as I was finishing, there was a ring at the bell, and my housekeeper brought in word that Mr. Lynn Yeames wished to see me. "Ah, ah!" thought I, "he wants to pump me again, does he? All right; so he shall." So I bade the

housekeeper show him into my office, and say I would be with him in a minute or two. I emptied my cup, and rose to join my visitor in the next room.

In that moment it struck me that I had left the draft of the old will on the office table beside the sheet of fresh foolscap. I went on tiptoe to the door and peeped through the green taffety blind. Lynn Yeames was standing by the table, looking round him curiously; I could see him distinctly, but he could not see me, by reason of the light from the office window falling on the blind. Quickly he caught up the draft, and ran his eye down it.

Now this, being only a draft, had neither date nor signature, and he must have jumped at once to the conclusion that it was the copy of a will I was about to draw up; and seeing that by this draft all Flexmore's money was left to Awdrey, it must have convinced him that this instrument was intended to revoke that will which I had led him to believe was made in his favor.

The sheet fell from his hand; he stooped hastily, picked it up, and replaced it on the table. I moved a chair, made a clatter with an empty plate as if I were just rising from my lunch, then I opened the door and entered my office briskly. Lynn Yeames was seated at some distance from the table, looking pale.

"How do you do, sir?" said I. "You don't look quite yourself this morning."

"I am upset; my uncle is in a critical condition—I don't know whether you know it. I came over to tell you—I thought you ought to know, in case there was any legal matter to arrange."

"As it happens, there is a very important matter to arrange. I have just come back from Flexmore House—you heard nothing there? Well—of course I can place confidence in you, Mr. Yeames?"

"I give you my word of honor that—you may depend upon my secrecy," he hastened to assure me.

"Good, sir. I trust to your honor. Your uncle is about to revoke his will." And I glanced significantly at the papers on the table. "I assure you," I continued, "I have done all in my power to persuade him to the contrary."

"Of course you have, in your own interest," said he savagely.

"One must consider one's own interests sometimes; and after having had the management of the estate for so many years—"

"What on earth has induced him to revoke it?" he asked, taking very slight pains to conceal his chagrin.

"I believe he has been considerably influenced by Dr. Awdrey."

"Dr. Awdrey?" he exclaimed. "What has he been talking about?"

"Well," said I, still with a good deal of sham hesitation, "I believe you were indiscreet enough to inform him that you had proposed to, and been accepted by, Miss Dalrymple."

"To what use has the rascal put that knowledge?" he asked.

"We must not call Dr. Awdrey a rascal, sir," said I. "All of us have our own interests to look after. And really Dr. Awdrey's case is plausible enough."

"I don't understand you; what do you mean?" he asked sharply.

"You see it's almost an open secret; at any rate the fact has for some time been known to Dr. Awdrey, that my old friend Flexmore wished Miss Dalrymple to marry the doctor—one of those curious fads that invalids occasionally take up. I don't know if you have ever remarked—"

"Go on, go on, for goodness' sake!" he exclaimed, interrupting me impatiently.

"Well, sir, lately it has been obvious that Flexmore's daughter Laure has formed a very strong attachment for Miss Dalrymple—a most extraordinary attachment."

"Yes, I know all about that. Go on."

"Well, you see it is obvious that Miss Dalrymple cannot marry both you and Dr. Awdrey; while, at the same time, it is equally evident that were you the child's guardian, and from any unforeseen accident you might alter your intention with regard to matrimony, Miss Dalrymple could only marry Dr. Awdrey by separating herself from the child Laure."

"But then I could be trustee to the child's fortune, and leave her guardianship to Miss Dalrymple, couldn't I?"

"Oh, certainly, if there were time to persuade your uncle to such an arrangement, which," I added, with a profound sigh, "I fear there is not."

He turned his back upon me and going to the window, looked out into the thick grey mist, while I, with two or three little coughs, seated myself at the table, and began laboriously to draw up the new will, my spectacles low down on my nose, and one hand on the old draft, which I frequently consulted.

"How long will you be before you take that thing up to the house to be signed?" asked Lynn Yeames, who as I lifted my eyes, I found was regarding me attentively.

"Dr. Awdrey was good enough to lend me his gig that no time should be lost; and, if all goes well, I shall be at Flexmore's house at half-past two—near as possible."

He drew his hat a little lower over his brows, and quitted my office without a word. As the door slammed, I laid down my pen, put my hands on my knees, and had a good chuckle, for I felt I had played that game of cross-purposes very well.

But how would it end? That I could not foresee. That he had gone off with some definite and immediate purpose I was convinced. Would he in the next hour undo himself completely by throwing off Miss Dalrymple and making his uncle understand that he had no intention of marrying her? It would be sharp work; but men lose no time when their fortunes are at stake. "We shall see," said I, returning to my work, for which I hoped there would be no need when I went up for Flexmore's signature.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was two o'clock when I got into the doctor's gig with the new will. My house was just on the outskirts of the town; Flexmore's was two or three miles beyond on the other side of Beagle Woods.

The mist had been thick all the morning; but it was thicker than ever when I started, so that I could not see three yards ahead with my glasses on. However, I knew I could trust to the intelligence of the doctor's nag, who took that road every day in the week, and nights as well sometimes; and with my collar well up, and my nose well down in a comforter, off I started.

I jogged along pretty comfortably until we got into the Beagle Woods; there the mist seemed to have settled down into a solid block, and the big trees that skirt the road on either side increased the obscurity. However, the nag kept on her ambling trot—till presently, smash! Down she went, without any kind of warning, up dashed the seat of the gig, and out I flew, as though I had been shot from a catapult.

I was on my legs in a moment, for my first thought was of the will I had stuck under the seat cushion, and I feared the nag would start up a nabolt with it. I could hear her breathing heavily; she did not attempt to move. I ran back in that direction, when—bang! over I went again, flat on my nose. I had felt something strike against my shins, and as I rose to my feet once more, I discovered the cause of both falls—a cord was stretched across the road.

It slackened as I touched it, and the next moment was whisked out of my hands. Was this the wanton mischief of boys, or the sinister design of some one bent upon plunder?

"My name's Anthony Keene, and you shall suffer for this, you vagabonds, whoever you are!" I shouted, as I groped my way to the gig. I am well known in Coneyford, and I knew that if they were boys they would scuttle off on hearing my name.

There was no sound of voice or footfall—only the old nag gasping on the ground. Then I felt sure it was the work of a man; but I was not fearful of any further mischief, for the thief must be foolhardy indeed to attack an old lawyer, who is more likely to get him into trouble than yield much in the way of booty.

Feeling about the poor old horse, I found that both the shafts were broken, so there was no thought of going on in the gig even if the horse's legs were not broken as well. The will was just where I had stuck it, under the strap of the cushion; I clapped it in my pocket, and, after a moment's reflection, started off to walk the remainder of the journey, leaving horse and trap in the road to take their chances.

A nice walk I had—tumbling into a ditch on the right, and then into a ditch on the left, running flat up against a brick wall, and then pitching on to a pile of flints by the roadside, all the time in such darkness and impenetrable fog, that for all I knew I might have been walking half the time in a circle. To make matters worse, I found my nose was bleeding from the fall I got over the cord. It seemed to me I should never get to my journey's end. However, after a time it grew less obscure, which made me think I must have got clear of the Beagle Woods, which was a comfort; and shortly afterwards I heard footsteps approaching.

"Who's there?" I called when I felt it was time to speak, lest I ran into something fresh.

"Sam Martin. Be that you, Muster Keene?" replied a well-known voice.

"Yes, it is. How far am I from Mr. Flexmore's house?"

"About half a mile—keep straight on by the paling. Thought it were you, Mr. Keene, by your little squeaking voice. Shall I turn back w' ye?"

"No. Go straight on. I've left the doctor's trap in the road—horse down—see what you can do with it, Sam Martin, and take care no one else comes into mischief over it."

(To be continued.)

The Riot Act.

What is commonly meant by "reading the riot act" is better known than the origin of the phrase. The historical riot act was passed by the British Parliament in the reign of George I. in 1714. It enacts that felony is committed when twelve or more persons unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assemble together to the disturbance of the public peace, so to continue together for an hour after being commanded to disperse by the sheriff or undersheriff or a justice or the mayor of the borough.

In the "reading" of the British riot act, which is a necessary preliminary to its being put into operation, it is not customary to recite the whole of the statute, which is rather a long one, but only the following proclamation, which it contains: "Our sovereign lord the king chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business upon the pains contained in the act made in the first year of King George for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies. God save the king!"—Chicago News.

SUN-WORSHIP AMONG THE INDIANS.



INDIAN SUN-WORSHIP.

Among the remnant of the Blackfoot Indians, who once ranged over the territory of Montana and Wyoming, on the east side of the Rockies and between the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, and who were one of the most ferocious tribes that the white race has encountered on the continent, the worship of the sun still survives. Among the Blackfeet, as among the more settled and civilized Incas, sun worship was the central part of their religion. They believed themselves to be the children of the great luminary, and it was the custom of mothers to hold up their children to be blessed by the beams of the rising sun. Our illustration depicting such a scene is by the "cowboy artist," Charles M. Russell, and is reproduced from the Illustrated London News.

CHARACTER IN OLD SHOES.

Cobbler Studies as He Peps and Develops Unique "Ology."

"Ologists" have for years been telling people's dispositions by the bumps on their heads, the lines on their hands, the contour of their faces, their handwriting and a dozen or more other methods. Now a new "ology" has come into the field, called "shoology"; and by it the cobbler to whom you take your shoes can tell whether you are "square" or "crooked," level-headed or rattle brained, shiftless or painstaking, fickle-minded or stubborn and so on ad infinitum, says the Columbus Dispatch.

Columbus has one "shoologist." He is David Cassidy, a cobbler who also owns a small shoe store. Just as a man's handwriting or his eyes or the way he wears his clothing betray some characteristic part of his nature, so does the way he wears his shoes out also tell its story.

Why it is so, even to a certain extent, Mr. Cassidy doesn't pretend to explain. The shape of the foot has something to do with the way the shoe wears out; the way a man walks has a great deal more. But why the honest man walks one way and the dishonest man walks another, or why the heels of changeable men are inclined one way and the heels of stubborn men inclined the other, is a question yet to be solved.

The man who wears his sole off across the toe will steal," said Mr. Cassidy.

"But just think of the women's shoes that come in here worn out that way?" said another.

"Well, what of it? Won't women pilfer little things quicker than a man? They take little things where a man wouldn't take the chance, because he knows the value isn't enough to risk the chance of being caught. Look at the shoplifters."

"Now, a man who wears his shoes off evenly across the bottom is a pretty level-headed sort of a chap. He doesn't go off half-cocked and when he says a thing you can pretty generally bank on it." He thought it over before he said it.

"But when the shoe wears out on the outside of the sole look out for that man. He isn't a man of his word. Don't extend any credit to him, because you're liable not to get paid. He's liable to be a pretty slippery customer in a deal."

"How about these shoes?" asked another listener as he held up his for inspection.

"I can't tell anything about the soles, because you've just had them mended. But I can tell by the counter that you're changeable in your nature. You're not as steadfast as you should be. Pull your shoe off," and as it was handed to him he said: "Now if you'll look down on that shoe from the top, or from the back, you'll see that the counter is swung inward. The man who breaks his counter down toward the inside of his foot is changeable in

his nature. It isn't very marked in this shoe, so you're not so bad."

"What about the man who wears his heel off on the outside?"

"Every one does that. It doesn't mean anything in 'shoology.' But there are men who wear their shoes out squarely on the back of the heel—come down so hard they break the counters down. All I've seen have belonged to successful men."

"Is there any difference between the way fat men and slim men wear out their shoes?"

"Not that I've noticed. They wear them about the same as other people."

In Self-Defense.

It is fortunate that the various theories in regard to the training of the young do not make so very much difference, after all, and that the little individual grows up, somehow, into the man or woman it was intended to be. The Washington Star has a story, told by a well-known instructor who holds to the old-fashioned ideas. He says:

I place little dependence upon moral suasion. Good healthy boys under moral suasion have too easy a time of it. They get out of hand.

There is a friend of mine who is rearing a family of six boys with the help of moral suasion. The mild little chap argued the matter the other night at the club.

"And do you believe," said I, "that moral suasion is better than corporal punishment for big, lusty boys like yours?"

"Yes," said my friend. "And do you mean to say you have never whipped your boys?" I asked.

"As true as I sit here," answered my friend, earnestly, "I have never struck one of my children except in self-defense."

The British Breed.

British bred animals, whether they be horses, cattle, sheep or even pigs, are superior to all others in quality and stamina. There is some strange and admirable power in our soil which puts a stronger fiber and a more enduring stamp of excellence into the live stock bred in our islands than are found in the same breed or species in any other part of the world.—London Times.

A City of Happy Homes.

Dublin took a walk in the cemetery, where he noticed on the tombstones, "Good Husband," "Good Wife," "Good Son."

"It is evidently here that the happiest homes are found," he reflected.—Nos Lolsirs.

It Wasn't Much.

Diggs—You evidently don't smoke much.

Biggs—Why do you think I don't. Diggs—I inferred as much from the cigar you're smoking now.—Illustrated Bits.

Some politicians have long fingers and short memories.