

THE QUICKENING

—BY—
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CHAPTER VI.

One purple and russet afternoon, when all the silent forest world was steeped in the deep peace of early autumn, Thomas Jefferson was fishing luxuriously in the most distant of the upper pools. There were three fat perch gill-strung on a forked withe under the overhanging bank, and a fourth was rising to the bait, when the peaceful stillness was rudely rent by a crashing in the undergrowth, and a great dog, of a breed hitherto unknown to Paradise, bounded into the little glade to stand glaring at the fisherman, his teeth bared and his black hairs bristling.

"Oh, please! Don't hurt my dog!" said a rather weak little voice out of the rearward void.

"You come round here and call him off o' me."

"He is not wishing to hurt you, or anybody," said the voice. "Down, Hector!"

The Great Dane passed from suspicious rigidity and threatening lip twitches to mighty and frivolous gambolings, and Thomas Jefferson got up to give him room. A girl was trying to make the dog behave. So he had a chance to look her over before the battle for sovereignty should begin.

There was a little shock of disdainful surprise to go with the first glance. Somehow he had been expecting something very different; something on the order of the Queen of Sheba—done small, of course—as that personage was pictured in the family Bible—a girl, proud and scornful, and possibly wearing a silk dress and satin shoes.

Instead, she was only a pale, tired baby in a brier-torn frock; a girl whose bones showed brazenly at every angle, and whose only claim to a second glance lay in her thick mop of reddish-brown hair and in a pair of great, slate-blue eyes two sizes too large for the thin face. A double conclusion came and sat in Thomas Jefferson's mind: she was rather to be contemptuously pitied than feared; and as for looks—well, she was not to be thought of in the same day with black-eyed Nan Bryerson. When the dog was reduced to quietude, the small one repaid Thomas Jefferson's stare with a level gaze out of the over-sized eyes.

"Was it that you were afraid of Hector?" she asked.

"Huh!" said Thomas Jefferson, and the scorn was partly for her queer way of speaking and partly for the foolishness of the question. "Huh! I reckon you don't know who I am. I'd have killed your dog if he'd jumped on me, maybe."

"You are Thomas Gordon. Your mother took care of me and prayed for me when I was sick. Hector is a—an extremely good dog. He would not jump at you."

"It's mighty lucky for him he didn't," bragged Thomas Jefferson, with a very creditable imitation of his father's grim frown. Then he sat down on the bank of the stream and busied himself with his fishing-tackle as if he considered the incident closed.

"What is it that you are trying to do?" asked Ardea, when the silence had extended to the third worm impaled on the hook and promptly abstracted therefrom by a wily sucker lying at the bottom of the pool.

"I was fishin' some before you and your dog came along and scared all the perch away," he said, sourly. Then, turning suddenly on her: "Why don't you go ahead and say it? Is it 'cause you're afraid to?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"I know what you're going to say; you are going to tell me this is your grandfather's land and run me off. But I ain't a-minn' to go till I'm good and ready."

"You are such a funny boy," she remarked, and there was something in her way of saying it that made Thomas Jefferson feel little and infantile and inferior, though he was sure there must be an immense age difference in his favor. "I think you are mean, mean!" she sobbed, with an angry stamp of her foot. "I—I want to go ho-ome!"

"Well, I reckon there ain't anybody holdin' you," said Thomas Jefferson, brutally. He was intent on fixing the sixth worm on the hook in such fashion as permanently to discourage the bait thief, and was coming to his own in the matter of self-possession with grateful facility. It was going to be notably easy to bully her—another point of difference between her and Nan Bryerson.

"I know there isn't anybody holding me, but—I can't find the way."

"You want me to show you?" he asked, putting all the ungraciousness he could muster into the query.

"You might tell me, I should think! I've walked and walked!"

"I reckon I'd better take you; you might get lost again," he said, with gloomy sarcasm. Then he consumed all the time he could for the methodical disposal of his fishing-tackle. It would be good for her to learn that she must wait on his motions.

She waited patiently, sitting on the ground with one arm around the neck

of the Great Dane; and when Thomas Jefferson stole a glance at her to see how she was taking it, she looked so tired and thin and woebegone that he almost let the better part of him get the upper hand. That made him surlier than ever when he finally recovered his string of fish from the stream and said: "Well, come on, if you're comin'."

He told himself, hypocritically, that it was only to show her what hardships she would have to face if she should try to tag him, that he dragged her such a weary round over the hills and through the worst brier patches and across and across the creek, doubling and circling until the easy mile was spun out into three uncommonly difficult ones. But at bottom the motive was purely wicked. In all the range of sentient creatures there is none so innately and barbarously cruel as the human boy-child; and this was the first time Thomas Jefferson had ever had a helplessly pliable subject.

The better she kept up, the more determined he became to break her down; but at the very last, when she stumbled and fell in an old leaf bed and cried for sheer weariness, he relented enough to say: "I reckon you'll know better than to go projectin' round in the woods the next time. Come on—we're most there, now."

But Ardea's troubles were not yet at an end. She stopped crying and got up to follow him blindly over more hills and through other brier tangles; and when they finally emerged in the cleared lands, they were still on the wrong side of the creek.

"It's only about up to your chin; reckon you can wade it," asked Thomas Jefferson, in a sudden access of heart-hardening. But it softened him a little to see her gather her torn frock and stumble down to the water's edge without a word, and he added: "Hold on; maybe we can find a log, somewhere."

There was a foot log just around the next bend above, as he very well knew, and thither he led the way. The dog made the crossing first, and stood wagging his tail encouragingly on the bank of safety. Then Thomas Jefferson passed his trembling victim out on the log.

"You go first," he directed; "so 't I can catch you if you slip."

"Oh, you please go first, so I won't have to look down at the water!"

"No; I'm coming behind—then I can catch you if you get dizzy and go to fall," he said, stubbornly.

"Will you walk right up close, so I can know you are there?"

Thomas Jefferson's smile was cruelly misleading, as were his words. "All you'll have to do will be to reach your hand back and grab me," he assured her; and thereupon she began in inch her way out over the swirling pool.

When he saw that she could by no possibility turn to look back, Thomas Jefferson deliberately sat down on the bank to watch her. There had never been anything in his life so tigerishly delightful as this game of playing on the feelings and fears of the girl whose coming had spoiled the solitude.

For the first few feet Ardea went steadily forward, keeping her eyes fixed on the Great Dane sitting motionless at the farther end of the bridge of peril. Then, suddenly the dog grew impatient and began to leap and bark like a foolish puppy. It was too much for Ardea to have her eye-anchor thus transformed into a dizzying whirlwind of gray monsters. She reached backward for the reassuring hand; it was not there, and the next instant the hungry pool rose up to engulf her.

In all his years Thomas Jefferson had never had such a stab as that which an instantly awakened conscience gave him when she slipped and fell. Now he was her murderer, beyond any hope of future mercies. For a moment the horror of it held him vice-like. Then the sight of the great Dane plunging to the rescue freed him.

"Good dog!" he screamed, diving headlong from his own side of the pool; and between them Ardea was dragged ashore, a limp little heap of saturation, conscious, but with her teeth chattering and great, dark circles around the big blue eyes.

"I'm awfully sorry!" he stammered. "If you can't make out to forgive me, I'm going to have a miserable time of it after I get home."

"It will serve you quite right. Now you'd better get me home as quick as ever you can. I expect I'll be sick again, after this."

He held his peace and walked her as fast as he could across the fields and out on the pike. But at the Dabney gates he paused. It was not in human courage to face the Major under existing conditions.

"I reckon you'll go and tell your gran'paw on me," he said, hopelessly. "Why should I not tell him? And I never want to see you or hear of you again, you cruel, hateful boy!"

Thomas Jefferson hung about the gate while she went stumbling up the driveway, leaving heavily on the great dog. When she had safely reached the house he went slowly homeward, wading in trouble even as he waded in the white dust of the pike. For when one

drinks too deeply of the cup of tyranny the less are apt to be like the little book the Revelator ate—sweet as honey in the mouth and bitter in the belly.

That evening at the supper-table he had one nerve-racking fear dispelled and another confirmed by his mother's reply to a question put by his father.

"Yes; the Major sent for me again this afternoon. That child is back in bed again with a high fever. It seems she was out playing with that great dog of hers and fell into the creek. I wanted to tell the Major he is just tempting Providence, the way he makes over her and indulges her, but I didn't dare to."

And Thomas Jefferson knew that he was the one who had tempted Providence.

CHAPTER VII.

From the grave and thoughtful vantage-ground of 13, Thomas Jefferson could look back on the second illness of Ardea Dabney as the closing incident of his childhood. The industrial changes which were then beginning, not only for the city beyond the mountain, but for all the region round about, had rushed swiftly on Paradise; and the old listless life of the unchanging period soon receded quickly into a far-away past, rememberable only when one made an effort to recall it.

First had come the completion of the Great Southwestern. Diverted by the untiring opposition of Major Dabney from its chosen path through the valley, it skirted the westward hills, passing within a few hundred yards of the Gordon furnace. Since business knows no animosities, the part which Caleb Gordon and his gun crew had played in the right-of-way conflict was ignored. The way-station at the creek crossing was named Gordonia, and it was the railway traffic manager himself who suggested to the iron-master the taking of a partner with capital, the opening of the vein of coking coal on Mount Lebanon, the installation of coking-ovens, and the modernizing and enlarging of the furnace and foundry plant—hints all pointing to increased traffic for the road.

With the coming of Mr. Duxbury Farley to Paradise, Thomas Jefferson lost, not only the simple life, but the desire to live it. This Mr. Farley, whom we have seen and heard, momentarily, on the station platform in South Tredegar, the expanded, hailed from Cleveland, Ohio; was, as he was fond of saying pompously, a citizen of no mean city. His business in the re-awakening South was that of an intermediary between cause and effect; the cause being the capital of confiding investors in the North, and the effect the dissipation of the same in various and sundry development schemes in the new iron field.

To Paradise, in the course of his goings to and fro, came this purger of other men's purses, and he saw the fortuitous grouping of the possibilities at a glance: abundant iron of good quality; an accessible vein of coal, second only to Pocahontas for coking; land cheap, water free, and a persuadable subject in straightforward, simple-hearted Caleb Gordon.

Farley had no capital, but he had that which counts far more in the promoter's field; namely, the ability to reap where others had sown. His plan, outlined to Caleb in a sweeping cavalry-dash of enthusiasm, was simplicity itself. Caleb should contribute the raw material—land, water and the ore quarry—and it should also be his part to secure a lease of the coal land from Major Dabney. In the meantime he, Farley, would undertake to float the enterprise in the North, forming a company and selling stock to provide the development capital.

A company was formed, the charter was obtained, and the golden stream began to flow into the treasury; into it and out again in the raceway channels of development. Thomas Jefferson stood aghast when an army of workmen swept down on Paradise and began to change the very face of nature. But that was only the beginning.

For a time Chiawassee Coal and Iron figured buoyantly in the market quotations, and delegations of stockholders, both present and prospective, were personally conducted to the scene of activities by enthusiastic Vice-President Farley. But when these had served their purpose a thing happened. One fine morning it was whispered on 'Change that Chiawassee Iron would not Bessemer, and that Chiawassee coke had been rejected by the Southern Association of Iron Smelters.

Following a crash which was never very clearly understood by the simple-hearted soldier iron-master, though it was merely a repetition of a lesson well conned by the earlier investors in Southern coal and iron fields, Caleb's craft was the making of iron; not the financing of top-heavy corporations. So, when he was told that the company had failed, and that he and Farley had been appointed receivers, he took it as a financial matter, of course, somewhat beyond his ken, and went about his daily task of supervision with a mind as undisturbed as it would have been distraught had he known something of the subterranean mechanism by which the failure and the receivership had been brought to pass.

(To be continued.)

A Discouraging Theory.

"Why do those critics say such disagreeable things?" asked the unhappy actress.

"You mustn't blame them," answered the manager. "Probably they want to avoid being overlooked in the struggle for attention."

"But can't they attract attention by saying pleasant things?"

"Not so much. When I was roughing it I learned that the man who pulls a gun on you is remembered twice as long as the one who offers you a cigar."—Washington Star

FASHION HINTS



A lingerie evening gown has a deep "skimpy" flounce of heavy embroidery, which also forms the waist and sleeves. Very sheer mull is used for the upper part of the skirt and the waist folds. It is worn over a light blue silk slip, and there's a crushed girdle of the blue.

THE PARIS APACHES.

How They Deal With Their Unlucky Victims.

The floods in Paris afforded golden opportunities to the thieves and hooligans—the dreaded "Apaches"—of the French capital. A Paris correspondent sends an interesting account of these reckless men and their methods and weapons.

"The desperate criminals who make a specialty of night attacks are a bloodthirsty, cowardly set of ruffians, and as they are always armed to the teeth and hold human life cheap, a solitary citizen going home late, or a policeman on a lonely beat has very little chance against them."

"When they have once made up their minds to rob a passerby—which one does not matter much—it is more than likely they will decide to begin operations at once. That means that three Apaches will take up a position on the pavement and pretend to be engaged in innocent gossip. The street is deserted. A solitary pedestrian comes into sight. In a moment he is measured up by the three scoundrels on the lookout for their prey. There is not a policeman in sight. The moment is favorable."

"He has a gold chain," says one.

"He'll do," says the chief of the criminal trio. "Get ready."

"They continue to converse until the stranger reaches them. Involuntarily he glances at them as he passes. That is sufficient."

"What do you mean by looking at us like that?" asks the chief in an insolent tone. Then, turning to his companions, he remarks, "Hasn't he got an ugly mug?"

"The pedestrian, however little he may be inclined to quarrel with the evil-looking ruffians who have accosted him, is unlikely to take their insults in silence. But at his first word of protest one of the group advances on him with a menacing air."

"What!" he exclaims, "I'll show you who you've got to deal with!"

"The stranger stands on his guard but immediately another member of the trio bounds upon him from behind, seizes him around the neck with his arm and lifts him off the ground. His cries for help are stifled in his throat, and if he succeeds in making a sound the arm which presses against his throat is tightened and he loses consciousness."

"While this is going on another of the accomplices goes through the victim's pockets, while the third keeps watch for the police. Then, when everything worth taking has been appropriated, the wretch who has almost strangled the victim releases his arm, gives him a violent push and sends him headlong to the pavement where he will lie senseless for half an hour at least."

"But things do not always pass so easily. Sometimes the victim shows more resistance than was expected, and then the Apaches have to modify their plans. He must either be stunned with a blow from a mutton-bone or given a stab with a knife or dagger. The mutton-bone used by the Paris Apache is a terrible weapon. In appearance it resembles a small hatchet, without a handle, is about six inches long, and comes from the shoulder of the sheep. This and the knife and the knuckle-iron are the favorite weapons of the Paris hooligan. They are effective and noiseless, whereas the use of the revolver is likely to attract the police."

"Among the more recent methods invented by the Paris Apache for rendering the passing citizen incapable of resistance is the lasso. At the favorable moment a cord from 15 to 20 feet in length and ending in a running knot is thrown by an expert hand. As it falls over the victim's head it is jerked tight, and, half strangled, he is thrown to the ground. The rest is easy."

ALPHONSE MISREAD THE SIGN

Ticket Agent With Little Regard for Superstitions Points Out Mistake of Dreamer.

When Alphonse presented himself, breathless, at the ticket office of the steamship company, from behind a pair of large spectacles there gazed down at him two keen gray American eyes. The clerk, whom Alphonse knew, was away on his vacation, and for a moment Alphonse was embarrassed. Then he spoke, confidentially.

"Oh, monsieur, I wish a stateroom on your next steamer sailing for Havre," he said, "and I wish above all to secure for my passage the room number thirty-three."

The clerk shook his head.

"Too bad you've set your heart on it," he said, "for it's been engaged over a fortnight by people that wouldn't like to change. Won't any other stateroom do you?"

"But, monsieur, it was in a dream I saw the number," said Alphonse, sadly. "My grandfather, dead now twenty years, appeared to me, well and hearty, and on each cheek was a figure three, so—" and Alphonse illustrated freely.

The agent had not much regard for superstitions, but he knew his man.

"Look here," he said, "was your grandfather's mouth open or shut when he appeared to you?"

"But, monsieur, it was open slightly, thus," and Alphonse again illustrated.

"You're all right, then," said the clerk, cheerfully. "Three hundred and three is what you want, and I have it right here for you. See?"—Youth's Companion.

Sheep Bone in His Arm.

A patient in the charity hospital at New Orleans has become part sheep through the highly efficient work of the attending surgeons at that noted institution. The forearm of the patient undergoing the novel operation had been shattered by the discharge of a shotgun.

When he was brought to the hospital the surgeons shook their heads and looked wise, for it seemed like a case where the only way was to use the knife and the saw. Their skill was in question, however, so they took another look, fondled their Van Dykes, and after due deliberation announced that if the sufferer would stand for it they would resort to heroic measures. They had banked on the patient's inability to fight and his natural desire to have the arm saved to help feed himself with.

Of course they won—the "Docs" are quite wise at times. So a sheep was run down, sheared, shaved, treated to a bath in some sort of bug killer, and in a trice they had transferred to the suffering man's anatomy the genuine foundation for a "leg-o'-lamb" with mint sauce.

As usual, the operation was pronounced thoroughly successful.

A Saving Grace.

Emerson says there is always time for courtesy. Pat, in the following anecdote, might respond that there was never time for anything else. Robert Boody Coverly tells the story in the "Annals of the Coverly Family."

In the rebellion a bombshell whizzed toward an Irishman's head. Pat dodged it with a low bow, and it went by, taking off the head of a man behind him.

"Faith," exclaimed Pat, "ye nivir knew a man to lose anything by bein' verlitle!"—Youth's Companion.

Two of a Kind.

"Dear," she said, tremblingly, as she nestled against him on the moonlit beach on the first night of their honeymoon, "I have a secret to tell you."

"What is it?" he hissed tragically.

"Can you ever forgive me for deceiving you?" she sobbed. "My left eye is made of gl-glass."

"Oh," he murmured, with a sigh of relief, "don't say no more, dearest; so are the diamonds in your engagement ring!"

Our Increasing Longevity.

Although at the present time no one ever attains the marvelous old ages credited to some people of past centuries, the length of the average life is increasing. Investigators in the United States and in England have discovered that in 1880 5.6 per cent. of all persons were over sixty; in 1890 this class constituted 6.2 per cent., and in 1900 the number comprised nearly 6.5 per cent. of the population.

Probably Insane.

"A man on our side of the river," remarked the Ohio man, "recently emptied a pint bottle of whiskey at a single drink, and died from the effects."

"That man, huh," rejoined the Kentucky colonel, "must have been crazy. Any sane man, huh, ought to know there is at least two drinks to a pint bottle of whiskey."

Love.

Sometimes love flies out the window when hubby comes in at the door.—Life.