

Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"ANNE JUDGE, SPINSTER," "LITTLE KATE KIRBY,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

She had gone deeper than this into thought before the prudent man above stairs had finished the last will and testament of Sarah Eastbell. She had forgotten all danger in her love-dream, but she awoke suddenly to it at finding a figure standing at her elbow, wan and ghost-like, a something from the other world she verily believed in her first surprise and horror. Two years ago this being had lived—only to-night she had heard that she was dead—and she sprang up and went back with hands spread out against the wall, too terrified to scream.

"Hush! don't make a row—don't you know me?" croaked the haggard figure huskily.

"Sophy—Tom's wife!" ejaculated Sarah Eastbell.

"Yes—but not dead yet—oh, dear, no—black as Tom's coat is!" she whispered back.

Sarah glanced at her. She had not yet recovered from the shock, and the woman was terribly forlorn and ragged, with a death's-head gleaming from a battered black straw bonnet.

"How did you obtain admittance to the house?"

"Through that window—it was unfastened."

"You have come in search of Tom?"

"No, no—to warn you of a danger—of an awful danger, as I live, Sally, to you and your grandmother! I can't tell you who I don't dare to be seen by Tom," she whispered still, "he would kill me if he found me at his heels. Outside in the garden I can breathe a bit."

"I will come with you."

Sarah followed Mrs. Tom Eastbell, who walked very feebly into the garden, where a little while ago she had seen Miss Holland and Captain Peterson together. Was this a further installment of the mystery about her—or in the shadows of the night would she approach closer to the truth? In thinking of Reuben Culwick, and forgetting everything else, what valuable time might she not have lost?—she who should have been watchful at all hazards of the men who she knew were dangerous.

Thus from one mystery to another passed Second-cousin Sarah.

CHAPTER XIX.

The will of Sarah Eastbell was completed, and Hartley, the maid, and a second servant were introduced into the room to witness the old lady's effort at a signature.

"It's a good thing done, after all," muttered Mrs. Eastbell as she lay down wearily.

"It's brief and un lawyer-like," said Reuben, contemplating the will, "but I think it sets forth your intentions clearly, aunt. What shall I do with it?"

"Lock it in that iron box; the key is under my pillow," said Mrs. Eastbell.

Reuben found the key, and locked up the will, restoring the key to its place beneath his aunt's head.

It had been a day of more than ordinary fatigue and excitement to Mrs. Eastbell, and she was tired out; sleep was life to a woman of her age, and he would not trouble her again concerning the granddaughter, or ask her any questions respecting the engagement. There would be time enough to-morrow to consider that—and Sarah was waiting for him.

Reuben went downstairs thoughtfully. He had almost resolved to proceed to the gallery in the first place, but the temptations were too strong to seek out his second-cousin, who would surely be in the drawing room awaiting him. He had a great deal to tell her now, and a little to explain concerning his past misanthropy, which had grown more strongly developed as she at last seemed to fade away more completely from him. A real heroine had his Second-cousin Sarah proved herself to be; he wished that he had been more of a hero to match, that he had more bravely endured the inevitable. She did not know yet what an obstinate and bad-tempered man he was, and how he had quarreled with everybody in turn after his father's death. He went into the drawing room full of these odd resolutions, and found Mary Holland there.

"Where is Sarah?" he asked, after a glance round the room had assured him of the absence of his second-cousin.

"Sarah?" said Miss Holland, springing to her feet. "Has she not been with you in Mrs. Eastbell's room?"

"She left it half an hour since."

"Wait an instant."

Mary Holland left the room; and Reuben remained, with a new perplexity to battle with, and rising doubts and fears to beat down.

Mary Holland entered the room again, and was standing at the door, a paler and more affected woman than when he had seen her a few minutes since.

"Gone!" she said at last.

"What do you mean?"

"That—that Sarah Eastbell is not in the house," explained Mary.

"It can't be true!" ejaculated Reuben.

"Stay, let me think still. For heaven's sake give me a distracted woman time to think!"

Reuben, in the midst of his excitement, remembered afterward that the demeanor of Mary Holland aroused in him for an instant a half-wondering interest, as in a dream of vague beliefs and startling inconsistencies; and then the trouble of Sarah's absence took away all thought of everything else.

"Her brother and the man he brought with him," said Reuben, "where are they?"

"They are in the gallery still; they could not have left the room without my being warned."

"They are in this plot, if plot there can be," said Reuben.

Mary Holland ran to the window and looked back at Reuben.

"Open!" she cried.

ed, and directed Mary Holland in a different direction. When they met again a quarter of an hour had passed, and they were no nearer the discovery of Sarah Eastbell. She had vanished away completely, as by a miracle; and Reuben stood discomfited by the drawing room window.

"This is beyond all guessing at," he said, with a half groan.

"The window of the picture gallery is closed and barred," said Mary Holland, "but they are there still."

"I will see them at once," said Reuben; "meanwhile send out the servants to search the country. There has been foul play here."

"No, no!" exclaimed Mary Holland. "He said—he promised—"

"Who promised?" asked Reuben quickly.

"Sarah's brother," answered Mary, after a moment's silence.

"Well—promised what?" said Reuben fiercely.

"That he and his friend would not in any way disturb the peace of this house—that they were here in all sincerity—that—"

"Do you ask me to believe in that vagabond, Tom Eastbell? Send the servants abroad, and leave these men to me," said Reuben, passing from her into the drawing room, and proceeding through the room into the hall, and along the corridor toward the picture gallery. He turned the handle sharply and entered.

The two men were there. In the man lolling in the armchair there was no difficulty in identifying Thomas Eastbell; but he who bent closely, and in near-sighted fashion, over a music book propped against the lamp, was a stranger he had never met before. It was at him that Reuben gazed, distrusting him more at first sight than Thomas Eastbell.

"I am Reuben Culwick," said our hero sternly, looking from one to the other.

"I don't bear you ill will, mind," said Tom; "when I was in trouble once in Potter's Court, and the police came, and you might have made mischief out of a little bit of inessential chaff we had together, you stood by me like a trump, and I'll shake hands with you, if you ask me, just for my sister's sake."

"Which of you two men will save himself from jail by telling me where Sarah Eastbell is?" thundered forth Reuben Culwick.

Thomas Eastbell's lower jaw dropped at Mr. Culwick's vehemence, and his semblance of astonishment was admirably feigned, unless he was astonished in real earnest. Captain Peterson sat down with his hands upon his knees, in the attitude of one who anticipated a narrative of great interest to follow.

"Where Sarah Eastbell is!" said Peterson; "why do you put such an extraordinary question to us, sir, and accompanied by such a threat as the jail?"

"She is not in the house, and you two know where she has gone."

"Miss Eastbell was in the drawing room a quarter of an hour ago, when I stepped in for my violin," said Peterson; "surely she has not left the house since? There must be some mistake, Mr. Culwick, and, mistake or not, you will excuse me for protesting against your manner of addressing Mrs. Eastbell's guests."

Captain Peterson spoke with a faltering voice, and with considerable warmth, as a man might do whose feelings had been unnecessarily wounded, and Reuben Culwick regarded him with graver interest.

"Here was a being to be wary of, if this were acting."

"May I inquire your name?" said Reuben.

"My name is Peterson, sir—Captain Peterson, of the merchant service—a friend of Thomas Eastbell's, and if not an old friend, still one who does not feel disposed to allow him to be browbeaten without a word of protest."

"Peterson," muttered Reuben, half aloud. The name was wholly unfamiliar to him—it had not been mentioned on that night in Potter's Court, and only some days afterward by Lucy Jennings, when it had not lingered in his memory. Captain Peterson's dark eyes peered from under his brows at Mr. Culwick, as he repeated his name in a low tone, and there was the faintest smile of satisfaction flickering over his fresh-colored face at the discomfiture expressed on Reuben's.

"You both deny all knowledge of my cousin's disappearance?" said Reuben.

"We do," said Peterson, with grave politeness; and Tom took his oath upon it at once, by way of adding force to his denial. "And now, sir, perhaps you will tell us what has happened."

"And relieve a brother's anxiety," added Tom. "She's the only sister that I have got in the world, and we have always been very fond of one another."

"You overdo your anxiety," said Reuben, dryly, "and I am still suspicious of you. Sarah Eastbell has disappeared suddenly from this house—within the last half-hour—and you are the men of whom she has been in fear. To that fact I swear before a magistrate to-morrow. To-morrow the police will search the house and grounds for traces of her. I telegraph to-morrow to Scotland Yard for one of its ablest officers to meet us here."

Thomas Eastbell was heard to mutter a malediction of the most violent kind upon his second-cousin's promptitude, but his friend turned quickly to him, and said:

"Don't give way, Thomas. Don't let your sensibilities get the better of you, and lower your character before this man of many threats. You have been unfortunate, in your early days—you have had the frankness to confess it to me, and the generosity to atone for it to others—but your later life is without stain or blemish. Let the police come; you can face them in your aunt's house—where this gentleman is more an intruder than yourself—without a blush upon your honest cheek."

"At your peril be it, if she is not found," said Reuben; then he strode from the room, doubtful in his own heart of these men's complicity with the mystery of Sarah Eastbell's disappearance.

As the door closed, Tom leaped to his feet and went across to his friend, whom he clutched by the shoulder nervously.

"Has she really gone?"

"Yes," said Ned, coolly; "fortune has favored us, and she has left your grandmother's establishment."

"There must be no harm done to her," Tom said, trembling; "I won't have her hurt, I swear."

"You left all to me, Tom Eastbell," said Captain Peterson; "it's too late to complain, whatever happens."

CHAPTER XX.

Only one person slept that night in the big house at Sedge Hill. While Mrs. Eastbell slumbered, the inmates were astir, and not a few of them abroad, beating right and left for scraps of information, and failing in their object miserably. Sarah Eastbell had disappeared, leaving not a trace by which she might be followed.

As Reuben rode to Worcester he scanned the hedge rows, and the dry ditches, for a trace of her; he turned into yawning lanes where all was of an indistinguishable darkness; he reined in his horse fifty times to listen to the noises of the night—the shriek of a distant engine, toiling on with its luggage through the country to some bustling center; the rattle of the train, the rustling of the trees, the whirring of a night bird in the long grass of the meadows, the yelping of dogs in the farm house yards, as he dashed by. He found his way at last to Worcester, and went slowly, hopelessly along its deserted streets in the direction of the police station.

It was seven in the morning when he was at Sedge Hill again. He rode back in hot haste, as if something unforeseen were to be thwarted by his quick return; and he was prepared for evil tidings, as he passed into the hall and found Miss Holland, pale as he had seen her last, awaiting him with eager eyes.

"What news—what has happened since I have been away?" he exclaimed.

"Nothing has happened," answered Mary Holland; "and you? Have you heard or seen—"

"There is not a trace of her."

He sat before the fire where his cousin Sarah was surprised by her sister-in-law, and endeavored from his bewildered brain to shape out a scheme for her discovery, when the maid Hartley entered with breakfast on a little tray, and set it down on a coffee table at his side.

There was a letter lying on the tray, addressed to himself. The superscription was in a strange hand, a fine bold handwriting, characterized by too many flourishes to be wholly satisfactory, and he took up the letter curiously, broke the seal and read the following epistle:

"Sir—After your discourteous behavior of yesterday evening, I cannot, with satisfaction to myself, remain a guest in your aunt's establishment. I feel compelled to withdraw from a position which is incompatible with my dignity to remain. I have intrusted Mr. Thomas Eastbell with my kind regards to his grandmother, to whose hospitality an invariable kindness I am forever deeply indebted. My servant will call for my violin in the course of next week. I beg to remain, sir, your obedient servant,

"EDWARD PETERSON."

There was a deep furrow on the brow of Reuben Culwick when he had finished the perusal of this letter.

"Why was this man allowed to leave the house?" he asked. "He who calls himself Captain Peterson."

"I didn't know that he was gone, sir. Not that I could have stopped him, Mr. Culwick, as all the servants were away when I saw him last."

"When was that?"

"At five o'clock this morning. He was talking to Miss Holland—here, just where I stand, sir—and I think that they were having a few words. I don't know for certain, but I think so."

"You suspected them?" said Reuben quickly.

"No, no, sir, I don't say that," was the quick answer, as the woman flinched before his steady gaze; "but I was curious, of course. It's all in such a muddle, sir, just now, and Miss Holland's very kind; she's been always very kind to all of us, but I wanted to hear what they had to say, because poor Miss Sarah was angry at those two being together in the garden last night."

"Those two—which two?"

"Miss Holland and the Captain."

"Sarah was angry," repeated Reuben—"with whom?"

"With Miss Holland, just before you came. She said she couldn't trust her. I heard that as I was passing with my mistress' gown, quite by accident."

"That will do," said Reuben, moodily; "don't say any more. I will wait for Miss Holland."

The Llama of the Andes.

What the camel is to the people of the deserts of Asia and Africa the llama is to those who dwell in the Andes, says W. E. Curtis in his book, "Between the Andes and the Ocean."

The llama is a faithful, much-enduring beast, sure-footed and speedy, without the services of which the inhabitants of some parts of the country would be utterly helpless, for mules and horses cannot endure the great altitude and the rarefied atmosphere.

It costs nothing to keep llamas; they pick up their food by the wayside, although this seems almost incredible to those who know the barrenness of the terrible deserts.

Although the llama is naturally docile and obedient, he has a furious temper, and duels sometimes take place in the herd which continue until one of the combatants is killed, if both are not.

When frightened, the llamas scatter over the desert, but when cornered they huddle in groups, with their tails together and their heads out to meet the enemy. Their only weapon of defense is their saliva, which, when they are angry, they squirt through their teeth in showers, as a Chinese laundryman sprinkles clothes.

A drop of this saliva falling in the ear or eye or on any part of the body where the skin is broken will produce a painful irritation, and sometimes dangerous sores, like those that result from the venom of a serpent.

A Man of Family.

"Are you a man of family, sir?"

"Heavens, yes! My third son-in-law moves in to-day."

Doubt is brother evil to despair.—O'Reilly.



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That Will Interest and Entertain Young Readers.

Trick Played with Dominoes.

Here's a jolly trick you can play with dominoes, boys and girls.

Place twelve of them in a circle (see picture) and tell one of the players that you can point out any domino he thinks of.

This is the way to do it: Tell him you will count around the circle, touching various dominoes, each touch counting one. He must count your touches, and when the number of spots on the domino which he has thought of equals 20 he must say "stop." The domino last touched is sure to be the one he had in mind.

Here is an example: Suppose he selects the double-two. You begin touching various dominoes with your finger, silently counting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 as you go. When you come to "8" be



HOW TO PLACE THE DOMINOES.

sure to touch the double-six domino, and then count to the right without skipping a single domino.

The six-five domino will be "9," you understand; the double-five "10," the five-four "11," and so on until you reach double-two. There you will be told to "stop," for the number of times you have touched various dominoes (16 times) plus the number of spots on the double-two domino (4 spots) equals 20, you see.

Now all you have to do is to say, "This (the double-two) is the domino you thought of."

He will say, "You're right," and he will wonder how you guessed it.

Be sure not to count aloud nor even to look as if you were while you are doing the touching.

Johnny Applesed.

Before the days of the Civil War every country boy and girl had heard of Johnny Applesed. He was a queer character wandering from place to place, and as he played his fiddle very well and did not beg for money most people were glad to see him. In these days we might have called him a tramp, but Johnny was no idle good-for-nothing, as you will see. Whenever he entered a village every one gathered to hear him play merry tunes, and though he often accepted lodging and clothing, he never passed the hat for money.

He never talked about himself nor told where he was going, but used to recite the most wonderful tales in rhymes. Children loved to hear him, and interested people used to write down some of his verses. Applesed was only a nickname which was given him on account of a singular habit he had of planting seeds. Whenever he ate an apple, peach or pear, he saved the seeds, and while tramping across the country used to stop and plant them in places where he thought they would grow. Years afterwards many a family taking up land in the wild Western country chose a spot where that had been planted by Johnny Applesed. This is one of the songs that he used to sing:

I love to plant a little seed,
Whose fruit I never see;
Some hungry stranger it will feed,
When it becomes a tree.

I love to sing a little song
Whose words attune the day
And round me see the children throng
When I begin to play.

So I can never lonely be,
Although I am alone,
I think of future apple trees
Which help the men unknown.

I sing my heart into the air,
And plant my way with seed,
The song sends music everywhere,
The tree will tell my deed.

Looking His Best.

A certain boy of about sixteen years, whom I know, is very careful about his personal appearance, and yet I do not believe he has a trace of vanity in his make-up. He is not the least "dudish." He does not affect startling neckties, nor fancy waistcoats, nor canes with great, bulging heads on them, nor anything at all striking in appearance, but he sees to it that his clothes are free from dust or soil of any kind. His boots are always carefully polished, his hair neatly combed, his linen clean, his nails in the same condition. Moreover, his mother does not have to beg and implore him to wash the back of his neck and his ears. He always has an appearance of freshness and neatness that is good to look upon.

Tastes Differ.

"If you would only be gentle and kind," said our little kitty one day,
"And always speak low,
And move rather slow,
How pleasantly then we should play!
For cat rimes with mat,
And with afternoon chat,

And a little love-pat;

So don't forget that
If you would only be gentle and kind,
And smooth my fur just the right way,
And call me some pet name, you'd certainly find
How pleasantly then we should play!"

"If you were only a livelier child," said our puppy, Ravens—called Rav—"And would hop, skip and jump—Over bush, snag and stump,
What a glorious time we should have!
For dog rimes with log,
And with loud-splashing frog,
Or a twenty-mile jog
Through a nice, muddy bog;
So if you were only a livelier child,
And would call out, 'Here, Ravens! Come, Rav!'
And then dash off and prance through the wilderness wild,
What a glorious time we should have!"
—Youth's Companion.

The Little Princesses.

The Czar of Russia has four little daughters who may some day be sorry they are not boys. That is strange, indeed, isn't it? The reason is because the Russians are anxious that there should be a prince as heir to the throne. So these poor little girls are not loved as dearly as they might be by their own people. The Russians are sorry for them, but think they cannot love them because they are not boys.

The Wanderer.

A little cloud hung on its mother's breast,
And quivered and sobbed, in the deep blue sky;
"I must go to the earth, but I will not rest—
I'll fly back to you in the sweet by and by."

The Youthful Idea.

"Papa," said small Edgar, "I know what makes people laugh in their sleeves."
"Well, my boy, what makes them?" asked the father.

"'Cause that's where their funny bone is," was the logical reply.

FACTS ABOUT THE BANANA.

When Ripened on the Plant It Is Not Suitable for Food.

There is a vast amount of ignorance prevailing among intelligent people of the North concerning the growth, production and marketing of bananas. Many people imagine that the natives in tropical climes step out of their huts in the early morning and pluck and eat bananas fresh from the plant the same as they would oranges and other fruits. Bananas ripened on the plant are not suitable for food and would be much the same as the pith which is found in the northern cornstalk or elder. Bananas sold in the United States, even after traveling 3,000 miles in a green state, are every bit as good as bananas ripened under a tropical sun. This is probably true of no other export fruit. The plant of which bananas is the fruit is not a tree nor is it a bush or vine. It is simply a gigantic plant, growing to a height of from fifteen to twenty feet. About eighteen feet from the ground the leaves, oftentimes eight feet long, come out in a sort of cluster, from the center of which springs a bunch of bananas. These do not grow with the bananas pointing upward, naturally, and if the stem grew straight they would hang exactly as seen in the fruit stores and grocers' windows. This, however, is not the case; the stem bends under the weight of the fruit and this brings it into directly the opposite position, with the large end of the stalk up and the fringes pointing toward the sun.

A word of explanation concerning some banana terms. Each banana is called a "finger" and each of these little clusters of fingers surrounding a stalk is called a "hand"; the quality and value of each bunch depend on the number of hands it has. Some may wonder how the fruit is cut from the top of a plant fifteen feet from the ground. The native laborers cut the stalk part way up its height, the weight of the fruit causes the stalk to slowly bend over until the bunch of bananas just nicely reaches the ground, then the bunch is cut off with the ever-ready machete and carried to the river or railroad for shipment. The plant at the same time is cut close to the ground. The banana is a very prolific producer of itself and at every cleaning of the land it is necessary to cut down many of the young plants, or "suckers," as they are termed, in order that they may not become overcrowded up to a certain limit; the fewer suckers on a given area the larger the fruit they will produce.

Latest Demand of the Cook.

Mistress to servant, who has just given notice: "What inducement can I offer you to remain?"

"I want an asbestos curtain before the kitchen range."—New York Sun.

Easily Acquired.

Hyker (reading)—A physiognomist says that men who are impulsive and aggressive usually have black eyes.

Piker—That's right. They are reasonably sure to get 'em sooner or later.

Only after repeated failures to catch on does a girl announce her decision never to marry.

Dogs and porous plasters are frequently attached to mankind.

A MISTAKEN INFERENCE.

Of all the "hunting judges," "sporting parsons," and other professional men of the last generation who loved the field and the cry of the hounds above any indoor duty, one of the best known was a certain Irish jurist who inspires reminiscences published in the People's Friend, of Dundee, Scotland. During the Fenian times he had a clerk who was liked, minded, says the contributor, and a joyous pair they made.

"Yer honor," whispered the clerk, one fine morning, "there's a meet to-day at Ballykilmulligan, and they've a fine dog-fox."

"How many's in the dock?" asked the judge, excitedly.

"Twenty, for rioting and breach of peace, yer honor."

"Tim," said the judge, "do you think you can get the first fellow to plead guilty without a jury trial—me to let him off with a week in jail?"

"The easiest thing in the world," answered the faithful clerk.

"Make haste, then, and bring the whole gang, and I say, Tim, tell Jerry to saddle the mare meanwhile."

The twenty Fenians were brought into court—nineteen of them prepared to fight with counsel and jury to the bitter end. The twentieth had been interviewed by the clerk.

"Guilty or not guilty of the crimes charged?" demanded the judge, with a propitious smile.

"Guilty, yer honor," said the crafty prisoner.

"Well," said the judge, glancing benevolently about the room, "I fancy I can let you off with a week."

The man thanked the judge, and stepped down to the bailiff. There was a terrific sensation among the other defendants. Why, none of them expected to get off with less than five years in limbo. Here was a chance to profit by his honor's pleasant mood. One and all manifested an earnest desire to follow the example of their comrade and acknowledge their crimes at once.

"Do you all plead guilty?" demanded the judge, eagerly.

"We do!" shouted the enthusiastic nineteen in chorus.

"Fourteen years' transportation apiece!" exclaimed the judge, with a click of his jaw. "Jerry, is the mare saddled yet?"

COINS THAT ARE OUT OF USE.

Some Money Issues of the Government Have Disappeared from Circulation.

There have been more than a score of coins issued by the United States that are no longer in circulation, and even collectors find difficulty in securing specimens to complete the various series.

Recent mention of the disappearance of the \$2.50 gold piece from circulation and the premium this coin commands as a curio have set many to rummaging in old pocketbooks and the bottoms of cash boxes and drawers in search of odd or out of date coins. Some have found a \$2.50 piece, but not many.

The \$3 piece, once quite common, but always a sort of curiosity, is oftener found, and many have specimens of the little gold coins representing 25 cents and 50 cents each, which were not minted by the government, and probably have not so much gold in them as they represent. They used to pass as coin, but were never in general circulation, being so easily lost that they soon became scarce. One of the handsomest coin relics seen is a \$10 gold piece bearing the mint stamp of 1799. It is larger than the present \$10 gold piece. The owner has it hung on a band and wears it as a charm on his watch chain. The owner says he has refused an offer of \$150 for this relic.

The old octagonal \$50 pieces were quite common in California in early days, when gold dust was largely used as a circulating medium. They were made of pure gold, and while they had not the elegant finish of the gold coins minted by