

Second Cousin Sarah

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

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

She left the door ajar, and walked across the room, littered with many volumes, toward a desk heaped high with papers. The whole place was a true author's den, when authors worked hard for their daily bread, and none knew what became of the profits of their scribbling, and no one cared save the thieves who sold books.

In the midst of the chaos on the desk there lay a little dainty note, stamped and sealed and unopened, which had been placed there by the landlady during his absence from home; and it was in a lady's handwriting, of that Sarah Eastbell was assured.

She was not particularly reserved about examining it; indeed, her impulse toward it did not allow time for those finer feelings to develop themselves which two years' training had striven to produce. She pounced upon the note like a hawk, in fact, and took it up with trembling hands, and with her big dark eyes dilating.

"Mary Holland!" she exclaimed. She examined the letter attentively. The handwriting was large and characteristic, and clear; the monogram on the back of the envelope was M. H.; the postmark was Worcester—there could be no possibility of mistake.

"Why has she written?" exclaimed Sarah; "how dare she write to him?" At the same moment a hand touched her arm, and Reuben Culwick's voice said politely:

"When you have quite done with my letter, Miss Eastbell, I should feel obliged by its return."

Sarah Eastbell gave a little scream of surprise, and turned to greet her cousin. She extended both her hands toward him, and he did not check the impulse, but received them in his own, and shook them warmly, winding up proceedings by taking his letter gently and delicately from her.

Reuben very unceremoniously cleared a chair of about half a hundredweight of books, by tilting the volumes forward to the floor, and Sarah sat down and looked timidly and yet scrutinizingly toward him. He did not speak to her again; he gave her time to collect her ideas, or to observe the effect of two years' change, of two years' trouble and hard work and worldly drudgery upon him. This gave him time also to note how years had remodeled Second-cousin Sarah—how the gawky girl had grown into a handsome young woman, whom he could only identify with past familiarity by her large, dark, wistful eyes. And she saw, with a strange heart-sinking for which she could not account, that there was a startling change in him who was facing her.

"I am very sorry," she said at last, and in apologetic fashion.

"I am in my right place," he said, with a little laugh that was hardly natural, "an individual totally undeserving of your sympathy."

"Why have you never written to me or grandmother? Why have you come to Sedgely Hill? Why have you kept away from those who would have been always very proud to help you?"

"That is why I have kept away, Miss Eastbell—because I am proud enough to be above all help. You must not mind what I say; I am more irritable than I used to be—I have grown to like my own company, and to dislike visitors of all degrees. I am a sour kind of fellow now, who prides himself upon saying hard things, and so the less you see of him the better."

"You are not offended with me?" she inquired softly. "You take it as an insult that my blind grandmother and I are in your father's house, and possess your father's property, but we—"

"I will not hear," cried Reuben, fiercely interrupting her. "When I know that my father kept his word with me, I became less of a philosopher than I had bargained for—more human, more selfish, more of a coward—and I am only slowly getting over the sense of disappointment which followed the disinheritation. I was vain enough to think myself a hero, when I was only a poor money-loving pig."

"I—I—hardly understand," said Sarah, bewildered at this confession.

"No, no—probably not," he said quickly, "and why should I trouble you about my feelings, even if you did?"

"A word would have saved you from this cruel drudgery."

"A word to Mrs. Eastbell, who—but there, I have nothing to say against the old lady. She is still well, and enjoys her affluence?"

"No," said Sarah, shaking her head energetically.

"So I have heard," responded Reuben. He glanced at the letter in his hand, and Sarah said at once:

"Why does my grandmother's companion write to you?"

"Out of pity," he added dryly.

"How is it that she is acquainted with your address, while I have had to scheme and search for it—why has she not told me?"

"I must leave that for Miss Holland to answer for herself."

"Will you ever come to Sedgely Hill?"

"As soon as I can afford it," he answered; "when I have a decent coat on my railway fare to Worcester—and coal and cash are both earned by the sweat of my brow—I will pay you a return visit."

"I have not done any good," she murmured, "but I am glad I have seen you—very glad. Good by."

He shook hands with her, opened the door and allowed her to pass from his room. He stood on the landing place and watched her descend the murky stairs; as she glanced up at him and smiled, he could see that the light was shining through her tears.

"Time has not spoiled her yet," he muttered; "I am glad that I have seen her."

Sarah was in the street then, looking up and down Drury Lane, and doubtful which way to turn. She was still hesitating when Lucy Jennings suddenly stood before her.

"Well—what did he say? What have you been talking about all this time—what good have you done?" she asked with great eagerness.

"I have done no good."

"He would not accept assistance? He was hard and uncharitable—he taunted you with all his heart's bitterness?"

"He was kind. I—I think that he was glad to see me."

"Did he—did he speak of me?"

"Not a word."

"Not one! I am glad of that," she answered moodily.

Before another syllable could be exchanged, she had turned into a narrow court and disappeared, and Sarah Eastbell was left to proceed upon her homeward route.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sarah Eastbell went back to Sedgely Hill with her maid, in a disconsolate frame of mind. She had left home full of confidence in the result of her mission, full of faith in being of service to Reuben Culwick, and of Reuben being grateful for her efforts in his behalf, and the result had been an ignominious discomfiture. She had left home against the wishes of her grandmother, and in opposition to the advice of her grandmother's companion, Mary Holland. Still the granddaughter was not sorry that she had been to London, although she had failed in being of service to Reuben Culwick. She had seen him; he had promised to come to Sedgely Hill some day; he was not altered so terribly as Miss Jennings had asserted; he had spoken kindly to her; he was not jealous of her position in his father's house; he had suffered more from his own ventures in life than from his disinheritance; it was not the one misfortune, but the many, which had altered him and aged him, and he would be the same frank, warm-hearted fellow presently, she prayed.

She reached Worcester in safety, and a hired fly took her the rest of the way home. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock of that autumn evening when the great front door was opened to admit her. The staid man servant wore so grave an expression of countenance that Sarah said quickly:

"All is well, I hope, Willis? Mrs. Eastbell is upstairs, I suppose?"

"She is downstairs this evening. In the drawing room."

"She has been ill—advised to go there. The place is large and cold, and—"

Sarah Eastbell paused in mute astonishment, for the sound of a violin, not unskillfully played, came from the direction of the room in which she had been told her grandmother was. Music had filled the house with harmony of late days, for Mary Holland was a fair pianist, and Mrs. Eastbell was fond of music; it had been ascertained; but violin-playing had not been one of "the companions' accomplishments."

"Who is it?" she cried.

"It's Captain Peterson, Miss Eastbell. If you will allow me to explain how—"

But Sarah Eastbell was of too excitable a nature to wait for an explanation, when the mystery was to be cleared up first-hand, and she swept by the servant and went at once to the drawing room.

There were four persons in the room besides herself, and she looked from one to another with a keen watchfulness that hardly died away when her appearance was observed. Her heart sank a great deal, but she had the self-possession to keep a bold front to the enemy—for surely it was the enemy who had appeared at Sedgely Hill in the unlucky time of her absence, and whose coming she had feared before that day, although not expecting it in this fashion.

Half sitting, half reclining by the great coal fire burning in the steel grate, was the old blind woman, her spare form draped in heavy ruby velvet, over which meandered a gold chain thick enough for a door fastening. On her gray hairs had been set a turban kind of headpiece, but it had slipped sideways, and presented a grotesque appearance. Mary Holland sat quiet and grave over her wool work, and near her were two visitors.

The younger of the two was her brother Tom, glossy as a raven in a brand-new suit of black, and the stranger was a middle-sized, good-looking, highly colored, dark man of eight or nine-and-twenty, who at the moment of Sarah's entrance was playing a violin fantasia for the benefit of the company.

It was Mary Holland who first perceived our heroine, and rose as if to cross the room toward her, subsiding into her seat again as Thomas Eastbell sprang from his chair with a shout of welcome that nearly scared his grandmother into the fire.

"What, Sal—Sally—Sarah?" he exclaimed, correcting his address to her as he proceeded, "to think that you weren't at home to say how I've done to your brother after all these blessed years! Kiss me, gal—how are you? Shiver my timbers, what a beauty you have grown to!"

"Keep back, please—wait a moment," she said in a low, suppressed voice.

But Thomas Eastbell was impetuous like his sister. He flung his arms round her, and clasped her to his bosom, crushing her hat and fall in the process.

"I'm delighted to see you, Sarah—you don't know how glad I am to see you again," said Tom; "we were always such chums like. Why, you and I scarcely ever had an angry word—we agreed to—"

"You came here—when?" asked Sarah, listlessly, as she got away from him, and removed her hat and cloak. The fantasia had ceased, and the violinist was standing looking down at the carpet in a highly decorous manner.

"Saturday evening last, after you had gone," answered Tom. "Grandmother was awfully pleased, I can tell you. Captain Peterson, my sister Sarah—Miss Eastbell, my particular friend, Captain Peterson."

Sarah bowed, and looked hard at the Captain, who made a grave obeisance in return.

"It affords me great pleasure to have the honor of an introduction to Miss Eastbell," he said in a low tone of voice, which died away in a whisper as he sat down again.

"And to think that you and Tom are both together in this great, grand, windy house," said Mrs. Eastbell, "both taking care of me in my old age! you used to tell me all the good news of Tom, Sally, and how he was getting on in the world, and"

prospering, and that used to keep my heart light."

"Ay—it did," said Sarah, sorrowfully. "And I'm very much obliged to Sally."

said Tom, with a sudden grin that was as spasmodic as a clockwork figure's; "some sisters would have backbited a brother while he was away, and set his relatives against him; but you didn't, Sally?"

"No."

"Not that you have been talking much about me lately, I understand," said Tom, "since the dear old lady has come into a fortune. But you did once—and I'm grateful to the last day of my life."

He leaned across the table in order that he might peer more closely into her face, and Sarah answered slowly:

"We will talk of the past—and of the future—at a fitting time."

"As you please. Take your own time, Sarah," was the reply; "you will find me and the Captain in the picture gallery presently. The Captain is a follower of the arts himself."

"Oh, Thomas!" said the Captain, raising both hands deprecatingly, "an admirer of them—that is all."

"A composer, a genuine composer!" cried Tom Eastbell, slapping his hand unceremoniously on his friend's music book.

"I beg pardon, grandmother; I am in good spirits to-night—that's all," said Tom, deferentially; "Sarah's back, and for a moment I had forgotten my bereavement."

"What bereavement? ah! your wife," said Sarah; "is she dead then?"

"Dead and gone, poor soul. Don't you see how deep my mourning is?"

"Don't give way, Tom—don't give way," said Captain Peterson, as he took his friend's arm and led him sobbing from the room.

"Hasn't he left the door open?" asked Mrs. Eastbell. "I thought so by the blowing down the back of my neck. It's a pity he doesn't know better than to leave all the doors open, but I suppose they're used to wind at sea, Sally?"

"Yes, grandmother."

"Now that they've gone, I want to know about your wild-goose chase—to send you for it—to ask after that suck-up fellow Reuben, who—"

"Presently—presently—I must see those men at once," cried Sarah, starting up, with eyes gleaming and hands clenched.

She lost not many minutes in following her brother and his friend to the picture gallery. Thomas Eastbell, sprawled in Simon Culwick's chair, with his legs ungracefully dangling over the left arm. Captain Peterson, reserved in the presence of his particular friend, sat with his chair tilted against the marble mantelpiece.

"Come in, Sarah, don't be bashful," said Thomas Eastbell. "You are very welcome, I assure you."

Sarah shut the door at this invitation, and walked quickly toward the visitors, taking a seat close to her brother, and looking sternly and fixedly at him.

"Why do you come? What do you want? You are here with a purpose," said Sarah persistently; "state it, if you please."

"It is very simple," her brother said, coolly.

"I am not the child I was; I have learned to know the world, and to take my part in it. I know you, Thomas Eastbell. I know of no good or honest action that you have ever done. Knowing that, I will not have you and your friend in this house. You play a dangerous game in your defiance of me, for I am mistress here."

"Oh, indeed!—that's it, is it?" said her brother with a sneer; "I am to tell my grandmother that she's a cipher in her own house—that she's nobody, and want to grab all her money when she died?"

"Tell her what you will," said Sarah; "the answer which strips the veil from your bad life will be sufficient to drive you from us."

(To be continued.)

The Voice of Experience.

The bride's mother was visiting her and together they sat in the sewing room. The bride was fixing the sleeve lining of her husband's overcoat.

"Well, I think that's a neat job," remarked the bride, as she finished her task.

The mother examined it and shook her head solemnly.

"You don't like it?" suggested the bride.

"It's too well done," was the reply. "Too well done!"

"Yes; it's a tailor's job."

"But if I can do it as well as a tailor—"

"Why, then, of course, you'll have to keep on doing things of that sort. Oh, I know all about it. I tried it myself when I was first married, and later I had to ruin two coats before I could break your father of the habit of bringing everything to me. Just listen to the voice of experience, daughter, and make a bungling job of that, even if you have to tear it all out and do it over again. It's no trouble at all to discourage him now, but it will be a year or so later. It is of the utmost importance that a woman should begin married life right."—Brooklyn Eagle.

So Saith the Proverb.

Old Lady—So we are to have a new minister, eh? What's his name?

Daughter—Stone, I believe.

Old Lady—Well, now, that's good. They do say there are sermons in stones.

Overheard in the Kitchen.

"I don't like the way that coal scut-the acts," said the range. "He appears to be full."

"Well," consorted the shovel, "we will have to excuse him. You know, he hasn't been full for so long."

At the Football Game.

Fullback (after the last tackle)—Where am I? Where am I?

Quarterback—Most of you is here on the ten-yard line, but I think your nose and right ear are in the center of the field.

Conditions Reversed.

Kidder—The proverb, "Every dog has its day," doesn't go in Algiers.

Easily—Why?

Kidder—For the very good reason that there every day has his dog.—New York Times.

There are 9,999 boys in the British navy, including 8,200 under training.

JUDICIAL DECISIONS.

As between a surviving partner and the executor of the deceased one, the firm name is held, in Slater vs. Slater (N. Y.), 61 L. R. A. 798, to be an asset of the partnership which the executor has a right to have sold for the settlement of the partnership affairs.

A tenant of land, not merely of a room or apartment, is held, in Arbenn vs. Exley, Watkins & Co. (W. Va.), 61 L. R. A. 957, to be liable to pay rent for his term, though a building on it, included in the lease, is totally destroyed by fire without fault on his part, unless the lease otherwise provides.

Violation of a statute forbidding the employment in factories of children of a certain age is held, in Marino vs. Lehman (N. Y.), 61 L. R. A. 811, to be evidence of negligence which will support a civil action for injuries resulting therefrom, although it is punishable under the statute as a misdemeanor.

The owner of a structure to be used as a toboggan slide at a bathing resort is held, in Barrett vs. Lake Ontario Beach Improvement Co. (N. Y.), 61 L. R. A. 829, to be liable for resulting injuries in case a person attempting to use it falls from it by reason of insufficiency of the railing, although it is in possession of a tenant.

Under a bequest to one or more persons living, and to the children of another who is dead, it is held, in Collins vs. Feather (W. Va.), 61 L. R. A. 600, that the legatee will take per capita unless it appears from the context or some clause in the will, or from the circumstances in view of which it was made, that the testator intended a stirpital distribution.

The right to work convicts in private chain gangs controlled by private individuals is denied, in Simmons vs. Georgia Iron and Coal Company (Ga.), 61 L. R. A. 739, and a convict confined on such a chain gang is held to be entitled to be released from the custody of the individuals controlling it, and remanded to the custody of the authorities lawfully entitled thereto.

A sale by an officer of a corporation of stock therein, nominally made to other officers, but in reality made, as he knew, to the corporation itself, and paid for, as he knew, out of the assets of the company, is held, in Hall vs. Henderson (Ala.), 61 L. R. A. 621, to be void as against the corporation's creditors as a gift to him of the company's assets, whether it is insolvent or not.

Notice of protest of a bill of exchange, to a drawer who has executed an assignment for benefit of creditors, is held, in Taylor vs. Citizens' Savings Bank (Ky.), 61 L. R. A. 900, to be sufficient to bind its estate in the hands of the assignee. The other cases as to whom notice of protest or non-payment should be given after appointment of receiver, assignee or other representative of insolvent are collated in a note to this case.

WOMEN USE MAGIC MIRRORS.

Japanese Lucky Glass Is the Simplest and Best Example.

A magic mirror is now a part of every well regulated London household. The belief that certain bright substances can be so impressed with the magnetism of a person as to reflect to the clairvoyant gaze that person's thoughts and feelings is almost as old as a woman's vanity which first prompted the mirror.

Perhaps the Japanese lucky mirror is the simplest and best known example. One side of this is very highly polished, and the other is chased in low relief with figures of clouds, birds and talismanic ideographs. Its mechanism is such that when a beam of light is thrown upon it and reflected upon a dark wall a luminous figure or portent appears within the luminous circles. This, of course, is achieved by means of a slide slipped into the center of the mirror.

There is another kind of magic mirror which at certain oblique angles will disclose figures which at right angles are invisible. Another kind set at the bottom of a cylinder reflects from the base in the ordinary way, but the waved and fluted inner surface of the cylinder twists the reflections into all kinds of fanciful shapes and produces focal circles at various points. The gazer here sees from one point of view a strange, shadowy face beside his own, and from another misty, radiant halo about his head, while from a third a face is seen clearly in his own reflected eyes.

These are all mechanical contrivances. The more psychic kind of magic mirrors depend for their efficacy upon their power to absorb physiologic magnetism, although many of the floating or revolving variety produce their effects by hypnotizing the gazer.—De troit Tribune.

Genius and Housekeeping

"John, the coal's out."

"I know it."

"Nothing in the flour barrel."

"Of course."

"Well, what on earth are you doing there?"

"I am writing a poem, my love, or the beauty and brightness of this glorious old world!"

Money Lost in British Mails.

The income of the British postoffice from money in envelopes having no or insufficient address is \$30,000 or \$35,000 a day.

Our idea of an original man is one who can tell how long he has been married without adding that it seems longer.

A bald-headed man can't lose anything by trying a new patent hair restorer.



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"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I heartily recommend Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound as a Uterine Tonic and Regulator. I suffered for four years with irregularities and Uterine troubles. No one but those who have experienced this dreadful agony can form any idea of the physical and mental misery those endure who are thus afflicted. Your Vegetable Compound cured me within three months. I was fully restored to health and strength, and now my periods are regular and painless. What a blessing it is to be able to obtain such a remedy when so many doctors fail to help you. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is better than any doctor or medicine I ever had. Very truly yours, MISS EASY WHITTAKER, 604 39th St. W. Savannah, Ga."

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"Mais oui. I see the blood in your eye."—Harvard Lampoon.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Hadn't Heard of It.
Mr. Clifton—Do you think the North Pole will ever be found, Miss Lakeside?
Miss Lakeside—Why, I didn't know it was lost.

Not Natural.
"I suppose the prisoner refused to talk—referred you to his lawyer, eh?"
"Oh, no; the prisoner is a woman."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

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The INTERNAL REMEDY
No Case Exists it Will Not Cure
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"I wonder why it is they always call the doctor's business a practice?"
"Ha! I see what it is! You've never been under one!"—Exchange.

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