FETTERED BY FATE

BY ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

"Jolette's Fate," "Little Sweethear'," "Lottie, the Sewing Girl," "Goldmaker of Lisbon," "Wedded to Win," "Diana Thorne," "Nora's Legacy," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

In all her life Carol Richmond had never seen such an expression of wild, ungovernable joy as swept over the features of Mrs. Randall when she uttered those four words, so simple, and yet containing a wonderful amount of knowledge of the poor lady.

First of all she could trace amazement and incredulity upon the face of the widow, but this quickly gave way to other feelings as her mind began to comprehend the true state of affairs.

Then a cry broke from her lips, a cry so full of delirious joy that it pierced Carol's heart, and she realized then what was the relationship between them.

"My child! my child! Oh, how could they be so cruel as to tell me all had died? I see it now! He would not let me have even one little grain of comfort and hope, but must doom me to complete despair. But the Comforter came—he could not keep Him away—and I found peace. You have looked on your mother as dead, and few there are who know different, but she stands before you, Carol, seeking your pity, your love. Will you come to me, or have you learned to hate the mother that bore you? Speak to me, my child; my heart trembles in anticipation. Heaven help me."

There was not the least hesitation. With a low, exultant cry of "My mother," Carol sprang forward and clasped her arms about the neck of the widow. The strange feelings she had experienced at sight of Mrs. Randall were all explained now, and could be accounted for on very natural grounds.

They embraced with all the fervor of those who loved, though they had been parted so long that it was as if Carol had never seen her mother.

Then they sat down to talk, first of the strange chain of fate that had led to this meeting, and then of the past. Carol heard her mother's story as told in the simplest manner, and then she found no blame could be attached to her. That her father had been blinded by jealousy there could not be the least doubt in the world.

Of late Carol had begun to see her father in a new light that was not as agreeable as it might have been. Formerly she had loved him, and been petted by him as one would expect an only child to be, but all had changed on that day when he found her seated by the side of Roger Darrel in the forest.

He had then shown what an ungovernable temper he possessed, and this had not improved since. Then had come his strange conduct in relation to her marriage with Captain Grant, who also had a hold upon him for some act done in the past.

Last of all she now heard of his contemptible conduct in the past, and her sympathy was wholly with her mother, whom she exonerated from all blame.

These two had each looked on the other as dead for many years back, and to think of their meeting here and recognising one another by means of the picture of him who should have been the connecting link between them, but who, instead, was the source of misery and discard!

The world would never again look so dreary to the lonely woman, and Carol had found one whom she could confide in, now that even her father had turned against her.

The time passed quickly, and midnight had come almost before they were aware of it. They were still talking about the past and present, and even the future, when they were astonished by a knock at the door.

Instantly all was alarm, for they could conjecture nothing else than that pursuit had been made by the enraged bridegroom and some of the wedding guests, and that they had finally come to the very place where the missing bride had been hidden away.

The elder lady proved herself fully equal to the emergency. She sprang up and hastily placed a large crock over the candle. Then Carol felt herself hurried into a closet.

A minute later she heard the widow boldly open the front door. Before doing so the lady had armed herself with a pistol, for she knew not what desperate need there might be.

The moon had arisen since the time of their arrival at the mill, being in its last quarter, and it was easy to see the figure of a young man standing outside.

"Well, sir, what is it you wish?" demanded the widow, with some severity, and at the same time managing to show the weapon with which she was armed, without appearing to do so intentionally.

The other seemed in no wise abashed, and but for the fact that the moon was at his back she might have seen the smile upon his face, as though he readily recognized the little device so extremely feminine.

"I seek Carol Richmond, but do not think I come from her father. I have no love for him in the first place, for he bitterly wronged my father, though my mother paid him back in full, and made him curse her name. I am not what I seem. Will you tell Carol that Nora Warner is here, and would speak with her."

"Nora Warner? Surely I should know that name; and are you her child? Will strange things never cease? Never mind who I am or what I know, but your mother was once a bosom friend of mine. How did you know Carol was here?"

"That matters not at present. I knew it, and I must see her upon matters of vital importance concerning her happiness. Since last I met her I have found out many things that will alter the whole of her life, and probably bring peace and happiness where wretched sorrow now lives. Do not keep me from her, I entreat you, madam. That fiend has set the hounds from the asylum on my track again, and at any minute they may spring upon me. Then it would be too late, and she must suffer."

There was wild entreaty in the tones of the girl, and, although the reference to the asylum had startled the lady for a moment, she believed the other to be sincere, and turning, took several steps toward the closet in which Carol had been shut.

At this juncture her ears were saluted with savage oaths and a cry of alarm from the disguised girl, followed by the sharp report of a pistol.

Two brutal looking men had sprung from the neighboring bushes upon her.

They were the keepers of the mad house.

CHAPTER XI.

After his duel with the wife he had so foully wronged, Captain Grant had written to Doctor Grim, and in answer the madhouse doctor had gone, with a couple of his men, to recapture the patient who had so miraculously escaped, and whose flight fortune had undertaken to hide in several ways, for the very girl with whom she exchanged clothes either committed suicide or else was accidentally drowned.

Nora Warner had hastily drawn a pistol and fired, but her aim was rendered uncertain owing to the excitement and the deceptive moonlight, so that her bullet only inflicted a flesh wound upon one of the men's arms instead of ending his life. Before she could do more they were upon her, like a coupde of mad panthers.

Both of them were brutal men, as might be expected from the business they carried on. They knew that the person against whom they were pitted was but a weak woman, yet their orders had not been of a merciful nature, and in the bushes near by stood a gaunt figure clad in a long cloak and slouched hat—the infamous mad-house doctor himself—who would discharge a man from his employ should he show a sign of mercy when he had received no orders in that line.

When, therefore, Nora Warner struggled in their fierce grasp, as though she would break away, the men used violent measures. One of them clutched her delicate throat in a fiendish manner. Her hat had come off, and the long ringlets, which had been suffered to remain on her head during her long confinement in the asylum, blew about in the night breeze.

"Carol, where is Carol?" she huskily cried; "I must see her before they take me away—see her and tell her."

"Shut up!" cried one of the keepers.

A form clad in white came bounding out of the mill door.

"I am here, Nora Warner. What would you say to me?" she asked, eagerly.

"I came to see you—to tell you that it was all—that he—Roger Dar—good—find out. Help me—I am choking—dying!"

"In the name of heaven take your hand from her throat, you wretch. Don't you see you are killing her? Help! help!" and in her excitement Carol sprang at the keeper, seeking to release the one whom he was choking into insensibility.

"Keep back!" he roared, thrusting her aside, "and thank your lucky stars it ain't you we've come after."

By this time Nora Warner had completely lost her senses, and lay like a log in the arms of the keeper.

Both Carol and her mother were too much horrified to say a word more. Doctor Grim now advanced.

He was one of your smooth-tongued villains—a scoundrel of the first water—and yet he was always pretending to be so tender hearted that he often deceived those who did not know him.

It was second nature with him, and, while torturing the poor souls committed to his fiendish care, he was wont to apologize to them because the red-hot iron was so cold, the end of the lash worn off a trifle, the thumb screws aged, and all such cold-blooded attempts at ferocious wit.

This was the wretch who stood before the two women, and suavely begged their pardon for their having witnessed such a spectacle.

"My men have generally to deal with such desperate madmen that they dare not give one-half a chance for fear of their lives. They know, also, that this woman is a desperate character. Perhaps they have gone a little too far, but better that than that she should have been struck upon the head, which is the way we often have to deal with them."

"But Nora Warner is not mad. By what right do you drag her away from here?" demanded Carol, recovering her voice when she found she had at least a polished scoundrel to deal with.

"You are no judge of that, Miss. Learned men have so decided. These insane creatures could deceive anybody. They have deceived me for fully three weeks at a time, but in the fourth, at the full of the moon, they proved themselves as mad as March hares. I would stake something that this one now has been gaining your sympathy by relating a long rigmarole about a cruel husband. There, I can see by your face that it is the truth. She tells every one that, when in truth she has the best of husbands, who provides her a princely home and all the comforts of life. But I must tear myself away, ladies. There is my card. If ever you should wish a place of retirement for some poor demented relative who is better there than in the world, remember yours sincerely, Timothy Grim, M. D."

He turned to his men, and gave them some hurried orders, upon which they picked up the senseless form of Nora Warner and strode away.

The affable doctor lifted his hat to the ladies, and Carol responded by tearing his card in halves and hurling it from her, which was a plain way of showing her dislike of the doctor, who smiled in his grim way.

She and her mother went in again, and the door was barred. The young girl was lost again in a new whirl of amazement and nameless horror. Was Nora Warner really insane, as the doctor had said? Somehow or other she could not believe it, even though many things seemed to point that way.

Even if Roger Darrel were ignorant of the cruel, heartless manner in which his wife was treated, would that lessen his responsibility any?

He must surely have been aware of the nature of the place in which she had been put, and even a simple mind ought to be able to read the character of the villainous mad-house doctor.

Neither of them seemed to think of rest, and it was near dawn when some noise in the unoccupied part of the ruined mill reached their ears.

A few minutes later, while they stood listening, in dread suspense, and half suspecting that the insane asylum doctor had returned to bear them away to his den of infamy, so as to hide all evidence of his iniquity, the widow drew Carol to the window.

There they could plainly see a man walking rapidly away from the mill. What had he been doing there? Once he turned and looked back, but they had no light in the room, and, besides, his attention seemed directed toward the main part of the old mill.

Carol recognized Captain Grant, and her heart beat rapidly as she wondered whether he sought her.

Whatever mysterious errand brought the duelist captain to the mill at that strange hour, he had no idea how close he had been to his missing bride.

CHAPTER XII.

Lawrence Richmond was thunderstruck when he saw Captain Grant walk into the room alone.

Had he been given any chance to stake his belief to the others, he would have sworn that the soldier duelist would come back no more; that his words of parting and promise to be with them again in a few minutes after he had convinced the foreign detective—if such the stranger was—of the mistake he had made were but empty braggadocio, and that in reality he was in the power of a man who had hunted long for him, and would not be apt to have the wool pulled over his eyes by his game.

Fancy the old man's consternation and amazement, therefore, when, after the lapse of a short time, the adventurer coolly stepped through the open window leading out upon the veranda.

There was a look upon his face that none of them could fathom, for it seemed to be a mixture of triumph, cunning and dread.

"You see I convinced the fool he had made a big mistake, as I told you I would, and he has gone on to Richmond. Some one misled him, but it is all right now," said the Captain.

Lawrence Richmond noticed several things that excited his curiosity. In the first place the Captain was whiter than he had ever seen him before, and seemed to be trembling somewhat. Then again he had a handkerchief bound around his left hand, and it seemed to have been bleeding too much for him to have scratched it on a thorn in passing.

The Captain did not seem disposed to renew his assault upon the old man. Indeed, what had passed since then seemed to have quieted his spirits in a wonderful manner, and he was even ready to believe the story of Lawrence Richmond in regard to his suspicion that Roger Darrel had been the one who had committed this daring abduction.

The news seemed to affect the Captain, for apparently he hated Roger with an intensity such as is given by the tiger for its prey or its foe, but he did not remain at the house more than a couple of hours.

"There is no use of our lingering here, crying over spilt milk. When we are ready for the ceremony again we will meet once more," and with this the valiant Captain left the house.

(To be continued.)

Each Has His Playhouse.

A little boy with heart so light
Built for himself, with his blocks so bright,
A castle, and left it to stand all night;
But, ah! when he came to look next morn
All the joy from his heart had flown.
His house was wrecked and I heard him mourn:
"Somebody tored my playhouse down,
Somebody throwed my blocks around,
Just as I got the work all done—
Somebody tored my playhouse down!"

Mother spoke to her baby low:
"Hush, little dear! Don't you cry so!
This is the rule of life, you know;
You'll find as you travel the world around
Just when you get your work all done
Somebody'll tear your playhouse down.

"Somebody'll tear your playhouse down;
Somebody'll throw your blocks around;
Just when you get your work all done
Somebody'll tear your playhouse down."

This is the old world's way with us all;
Often we've seen our castles fall,
Sweet dream castles, fair and tall,
Weary we toil and plan alone;
Just as we think to claim our own
Somebody tears our playhouse down;
Somebody throws our blocks around;
Just as we get the work all done
Somebody tears our playhouse down.
—Puck.

Bemoaned His Prodigality.

A negro criminal condemned to hang in North Carolina sold his body for $10, which he invested in ginger cakes. The cakes he finished the night before the execution was to occur. The next day the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. One man then wished that he had saved his $10 and another that he had made his cakes last longer.

Do Not Sleep On the Left Side.—When a patient complains of a bad taste in his mouth every morning on waking up, says a physician, the first question I ask him is as to the position he assumes when going to sleep. An immense number of people sleep on the left side, and this is the most common cause of the unpleasant taste which is generally attributed to dyspepsia. If a meal has been taken within two or three hours of going to bed, to sleep on the left side is to give the stomach a task which it is difficult in the extreme to perform. The student of anatomy knows that all food enters and leaves the stomach on the right side, and hence sleeping on the left side soon after eating involves a sort of pumping operation which is anything but conductive to sound repose. The action of the heart is also interfered with considerably, and the lungs are unduly compressed.

Drink at Meals.—In an interesting and somewhat historical article Dr. C. A. Ewald, of Berlin, discusses the mooted question of drink at meals. He considers soup, because of its small percentage of nourishing material, merely as fluid; he states that, aside from what is directly taken as drink, much fluid reaches the stomach during a meal, through the sauces and from the water percentage (both natural and by cooking) of the meats, vegetables, etc. Most persons feel the necessity of adding more fluid to the meal by drinking either ordinary water, carbonated waters or alcoholic beverages. The more one eats, generally, the more one drinks, and the greatest eaters are generally the greatest drinkers. If drink be prohibited, the amount eaten is less; indeed, on the above very greatly depends the secret of the "Schweinfurt" for obesity.

It is a well-known fact that if the appetite is weak and the mind and nerves are somewhat relaxed, a drink of water will excite the appetite and stimulate both brain and nerves; and that is due directly to the fluid and not to alcohol, for we find the results to be the same in abstainers. The more fluid in the way of gastric juice, the greater is the quantity secreted; hence the greater the tax upon the gastric glands.

Under normal circumstances, however, the stomach, without detriment, accommodates itself to a range of large quantities of fluid. Ewald says that much of the fluid passes into the intestines, another portion is absorbed; hence there never is in the normal stomach a stagnation of large quantities of liquid.—German Paper.

Superstition.

The peons of Mexico are superstitious and credulous to the last degree. A writer in the New York Tribune recently had a curious proof of this last characteristic. He writes: "The planter with whom I was staying wanted to take me out for a day's hunting expedition. But he was afraid that the minute he left the plantation all his laborers would knock off work. Now it happened that he lost one of his eyes in an accident, and the missing optic had been replaced by a glass eye. When all was ready for the hunting trip he went to the field where the peons were working. 'I shall be away to-day, my children,' he said to them in fatherly tones, 'but I will leave my eye on guard in my absence. All the day it will watch you, and at night when I return it will tell me if any have failed in their duty.' After this little speech he carefully extracted the glass eye and left it on a stump, where it could apparently overlook the field. To say those natives were amazed is stating it mildly. They simply gasped, and one and all solemnly promised they would work with the utmost faithfulness until sunset. So my friend and I started on our hunting trip, confident that the peons would work even better than if he was there to watch them."

An Opinion.

"So you think," said the good-natured monarch, "that it is absolutely necessary to humbug the people with ostentatious display and false promises?"

"I do," answered the cold-blooded adviser. "If there is anything that men seem to resent it is taxation without misrepresentation."—Washington Star.

Making Sure in Advance.

First Statesman—What are you writing there so busily?

Second Statesman—Oh, this? This is a denial of the interview I am going to give this evening to a newspaper man.—Boston Transcript.

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