

DOOMED.

By WILLARD MacKENZIE

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

"It is useless for you to attempt to brave it out," he said; "I have too strong proofs, and could produce witnesses to identify you. Miss Constance Grierson—"

A look of intense hatred sparkled in her eyes at that name. "Oh, it is Miss Constance Grierson who has set you on to make this accusation against me," she said, between her teeth. "The young lady who eloped."

"Before I leave this house, you must give me a written confession of your share in the abduction of Miss Grierson, which shall completely exonerate her."

"Anything else?"

"You have, by your arts, entrapped Mr. Arthur Penrhayddyn into an alliance. If you desire that he should not know the woman you are, leave him now at once, and never let him look upon your face again."

A burst of mocking laughter was her answer.

"Now, listen to me, Mr. Stafford," she said, calmly; but her glittering eyes, and white, quivering face greatly belied her voice. "I will make a bargain with you. I will give you a paper that shall fully exonerate Miss Grierson on condition that you make no public use of it; that you use it only among her relatives; and, above all, that you breathe no word against me to Arthur."

"I refuse such conditions. Do you suppose that I would leave my friend in your hands, ignorant of whom you are?"

"And I defy you!" she cried, rising, and hissing out her passion between her grinding teeth. "Beware how you drive me to extremities. I have resources at my back that you little dream of; I have it in my power to crush that yellow-haired doll."

"You!" interrupted Stafford, contemptuously.

"I tell you that your denunciation of me will not only crush this woman, but the friend whom you fancy you are preserving. He is encompassed by embarrassments from which I alone can save him."

Her vehemence and intensity began to stagger his firmness. Would it, after all, be politic to drive this woman to extremities without some further reflection?

"But what an idiot I am to plead to you!" she went on, perceiving him begin to waver; "what would your word weigh with Arthur against mine? Do you suppose that he would be ready to swallow the first calumny that could be brought against the woman he adores? I back my love and his against your petty friendship—do you worst?"

There was too great a probability in all this; he must decidedly temporize with this woman.

"I will accept your confession on the terms you named," he said, after a pause. "I now require another condition," she said, haughtily. "The paper must be shown to no person except Miss Grierson until after the first of December."

"Why?"

"Because there is now a crisis in the affairs of my husband, and I must be fully assured that it shall not be used in any way detrimental to me or him previous to that time. Give me your word, and I will be satisfied, for I believe you to be a man whom I can trust."

Arthur had hinted more than once at some impending crisis. Sir Launce was coming to town; perhaps she spoke truly. After all, what could he do? Arthur was married; to provoke this woman would only lead to exposure.

"I consent to this second condition," he said.

She minutely repeated the conditions, and made him solemnly pledge his word of honor to observe them. Then she wrote a brief, but particular, narrative of those events with which the reader was made acquainted in the last chapter, but in a well-disguised handwriting, and signed the name of "Ellen Jenkins."

When he was gone, she sank into a chair, utterly exhausted by the scene she had gone through.

"That paper in no way compromises me," she thought. "Even were he to show it to Arthur, the handwriting is not mine, neither is the name. You were merciful to me, Mr. Stafford," she went on, bitterly; "for it was not mercy, but the knowledge that you were defeated, that made you come to my terms. I will be equally merciful to the woman you love. I thank you for removing my last scruple of conscience."

CHAPTER XXV.

Great was the consternation in Harley street upon the receipt of a telegram which announced the disappearance of Constance from Linden Grange. Mr. Grierson repaired thither at once. The police were set to work, detectives brought down from London, inquiries started in every direction; but not one atom of information could be gleaned.

Business compelled Mr. Grierson to leave again on the next morning, and he returned to London in a frame of mind that can be easily imagined. To add to his annoyance, Mr. Wylie paid him a visit of pretended condolence in the evening.

"After all, it is no more than we might have expected," said that gentleman, with a shrug of the shoulders. "A great pity you did not insist upon her accepting one of the many offers made her. Depend upon it, it's an elopement. A penniless girl must be glad to get any husband."

"A penniless girl! What do you mean?"

"Come, come, Grierson, put aside all acid—it does not go down with me," said Wylie, with a hideous attempt at jocoseness. "You know as well as I do that on the last day of December, to which it wants only four days, she will, according to the stipulations of her mother's will, forfeit her fortune."

"The last of December twelvemonth, you mean?"

"What! do you mean to say that you really do not know that Constance is twenty next birthday? I can prove that she is, from the registers; and here are the copies," cried Wylie, triumphantly.

In much agitation, the old man put on his spectacles and minutely examined the paper; then fell back in his chair, with a groan.

"But you will not, surely, insist upon that cruel, unnatural will being carried out to the letter?" he said, after a pause.

"My dear Mr. Grierson, I thought you too good a man of business to talk such nonsense. The young lady has had every opportunity of keeping her fortune, and I think to lose it is a just punishment for her folly. I shall not forego a farthing of my just claim."

"Then," cried the old man, "you are a villainous scoundrel, and if you ever dare to set foot in this house again, I'll kick you down the stairs."

"You are not polite, sir; but the house will not long be yours to lord over. Good day. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again on the first."

"To think of this!" muttered Mr. Grierson, as soon as his visitor had gone. "How could such a mistake have occurred? Perhaps it is only a forgery of the scoundrel's. I'll go and examine the registers for myself."

He did go, and found that Wylie had spoken the truth.

"I would sooner have seen her married to the greatest rascal unchanged than that villain should have got hold of her money," he thought. "But where is the poor child? Here am I, groaning over the loss of her money, when I am ignorant of what might have befallen her."

From the first he had had a suspicion that she had eloped with Stafford, and he resolved to at once pay a visit to the artist's studio.

Stafford was at home. He had written to Constance to tell her of the extraordinary success that had crowned his efforts to clear up the mystery, and was surprised that he had not received a reply that morning.

Imagine his consternation and terror upon hearing that she had disappeared. His suspicions instantly reverted to Eleonore. But he could trace no motive for such an act.

Mr. Grierson at once perceived that his suspicions had wronged the young artist, who, in his terror and agitation, disclosed that Constance was his affianced wife. The old gentleman received the tidings in a very different spirit to what he would have manifested a few hours back, and Stafford was quite surprised at his warm congratulations. But there was no time now for conjectures. With his usual promptitude, he started at once for Waterloo station. When he arrived at Guildford it was too late to proceed to Linden Grange that night. But he did not pass the time idly; he at once put himself in communication with the police, and made searching inquiries into all that they had done and proposed to do.

To avoid unnecessary mystery and future explanations, we will at once put the reader in possession of the facts of Constance's disappearance. It will be remembered that Eleonore and Wylie were concocting a scheme to prevent the heiress from drawing the sum of money she had intended to use for the salvation of Penrhayddyn. The plot proposed was to the following effect: Eleonore was to write a letter to Constance to say that if the young lady would meet her quondam friend, Ellen Jenkins, on a certain day, with a certain sum, she should be furnished with certain written confessions, signed by her, Ellen, and by Parsons.

Being thus decoyed to an appointed spot, she was to be carried off and kept in a place of confinement until after the last of December. Meantime, time and place were all fixed.

Mr. Wylie, knowing how eagerly Constance had always desired that mystery of her girlhood to be cleared up, never doubted that she would fall into the trap. The place of appointment was the Guildford railway station, at 5 o'clock the next day.

"Constance might not so readily have fallen into the snare had not her recent conversation with Stafford, which had revealed to her how her resemblance to Ellen Jenkins had compromised her in a manner she had never dreamed, rendered her doubly anxious to clear up the mystery."

The plan as arranged by Wylie for her abduction was as follows: Linden Grange was scarcely more than a mile from the Guildford station. It lay off the Farnham road, which, passing over a hill, terminates just at the entrance to the station, and preserves its character of a country road, with houses only here and there, almost unto that point.

Now, it was calculated that, as Constance would certainly be desirous of

keeping such an appointment a secret from her friends, the probabilities were that she would walk. At the point where the bye-road debouched a brougham was to be placed, in which would be stationed two of Wylie's emissaries, who would seize, gag, put her into the carriage and drive her to a house on the outskirts of London—in short, to the residence of Mr. Fig, the confidential clerk.

Mr. Fig's residence was situated in a lonely wayside place. Every precaution was taken to prevent her forming any idea of the neighborhoods that she passed through; the blinds of the carriage being kept up the whole way, and the horses driven at a furious pace, without once stopping until they reached their destination.

When, half dead with terror, one of the men carried her into the house and removed the gag from her mouth, he told her in a firm but respectful tone not to be under any apprehension of ill treatment; that her confinement would be only for a few days. To her indignant demands to be told the name of the author of this outrage, no answer was returned. But the sight of a respectable looking, middle-aged woman somewhat reassured her.

On the evening of the last of December she received the joyful intelligence that she would be restored to her friends on that night. She was again placed in the brougham; the same precautions were taken as before, and in less than an hour she found herself standing free in the Regent's Circus. The whole affair was now more strange to her than ever, as she could not form the slightest idea of what motive it could have served. In great delight, however, at her happy deliverance, she engaged a cab and drove to Harley street.

Sir Launce had come to town to endeavor to raise the money to pay off the mortgage. The meeting between father and son was a gloomy one.

For a time Arthur's absorbing passion for Eleonore distracted his mind from all other things. But now a reaction set in, and the future was before his eyes in all its darkness. What would his father say to the marriage he had contracted?

Eleonore did not see him for two whole days. It was a great relief to her when he did return, to find no change in him beyond a deeper sadness. She also had been very anxious during those two days. She eagerly inquired how matters stood, for Arthur had now confided to her his true position. "All hope is over," he said; "every effort my father could be induced to make has failed, and it wants now but four days to the thirtieth."

Instead of seeing her face fall, as he expected, he was greatly surprised to see it break out into smiles. "All hope is not over," she said, kissing him; "I have the means of saving Penrhayddyn yet!"

"You?" he cried, amazedly.

"Yes, I! I have a paper in my possession but I forgot—before I tell you I must make certain conditions; you must not ask me how I became possessed of it. Will you trust me so far?"

Arthur having assented in much astonishment, she produced that anonymous letter which had been so frequently mentioned, and which she had procured from Wylie on the previous day.

"Why, this was enclosed in a letter of mine that was lost in its passage through the post," he cried.

"What do you say?" she exclaimed, flushing.

He told her how he had received this communication, and had forwarded it on to his father, whom it had never reached. This set her thinking. How, then, came it into Wylie's possession? She felt uneasy; there was something suspicious about this circumstance.

"At present," she said, after a few moments' reflection, "I cannot tell you how it came into my possession. But do not lose a moment in putting it into your father's hands, and impressing upon him to see to it instantly."

He went, and after some difficulty, prevailed upon Sir Launce to promise that he would see the lawyers in Bedford Row next morning, and to inquire into the particulars.

Eleonore's mind became wracked with fears and suspicion but Wylie should have deceived her. "But he would not dare," she thought; "he would be afraid of my revenge."

Arthur returned that evening and told her that Sir Launce had yielded to his persuasions. Although the intelligence somewhat relieved her, she felt feverishly anxious for the result.

After an almost sleepless night, she rose next morning, pale, ill and dispirited. As the fatal day drew nearer and nearer, her hopes began to falter, and a feeling of despair to sink into her heart. But love was purifying her nature. Never before had she been brought into contact with so noble a nature as that of Arthur Penrhayddyn, and she began to cling to him with an almost unselfish affection.

"This is a sad beginning to your married life, my darling," he said, looking at her pallid face and sunken eyes.

"Oh, if we can but save Penrhayddyn," she murmured. "I care not what I suffer."

(To be continued.)

A Strong Tip.

The Hay-Mare—Say, Sorrel, don't you sometimes get awful weary of our hard way of living?

Sorrel—No, indeed; in fact, I can say that since I got my new harness I am more strongly than ever attached to my work.—Toledo Blade.

Somewhat Garrulous.

"The more dollars you get together the louder they talk," remarked the thoughtful thinker.

"Same way with women," rejoined the man who had been married three times.

No thoroughly occupied man was ever miserable.—Italian.



Crop Rotation and Root-Aphis.

From the fact that in the midst of the corn belt, and where the root-aphis is known to prove destructive under certain conditions, almost complete immunity is secured where a system of crop rotation has been carried out for many years, involving but one corn crop in the cycle of rotation, it is self-evident that this measure offers the greatest protection from the ravages of this pest, says a government report.

Indeed, it is only where such a system of crop rotation is not practicable that the root-aphis need be considered in farm practice. To the eastward, where there is more general rotation of crops, this pest does but little injury.

Unfortunately, local conditions, often extending over large sections of country, will not permit of crop rotation being generally adopted, and some other plan more feasible must be put into practice. Two other methods may be followed. One of these is practicable throughout the corn-growing section of the country in seasons of not more than normal precipitation during the time intervening between the first plowing of the ground and the first cultivation of the young corn. The other is perhaps best adapted to the southern portion of the country on account of the milder winters.

Good Variety of Plum.

The Lincoln plum here shown is described by the Ohio experiment station as being of a variety of rare

Growing Pumpkins.

Growing a lot of pumpkins in the field of corn is an old practice, but it is doubtful if pumpkins so grown are as profitable as when grown as a separate crop from corn. The pumpkins will prevent the proper cultivation of corn, as working the corn destroys the pumpkin vines, the result being that late weeds get a chance to grow and mature. It is urged in defense of growing pumpkins in the corn field that they do not interfere with cultivation until the corn is "laid by," but much depends upon the land, rainfall and thoroughness of cultivation. Corn should never be "laid by" as long as weeds and grass can have an opportunity to grow, cultivation being given it if it is possible for a horse to pass along the rows.

Radishes.

Radishes are hardy plants, and the seed germinates and starts in a few days after being planted. They can be grown now in a cold frame, provided it is covered at night and contains enough fresh manure to create slight warmth underneath. The best radishes are those that are forced from the start, as they will be then crisp and tender. They can be had on the table early in the year and until late in the fall.

Convenient Turkey Coop.

This coop may be of any preferred size, but not smaller than four by six feet, thirty inches high. The posts may be of two-by-three-inch strips, with one-by-two-inch strips fastened thereto, to which lath or wire may be nailed, as preferred. The sides are of cut lath, the top being of wire. Boards or

To Protect Trees from Borers.

Mix cement with skim milk and apply with a stiff brush. Mix only a small quantity at a time, as it may "set." Apply it somewhat in a thin condition, and then make a second application. First remove the earth from the trunk of the tree and apply the cement mixture six inches below the surface of the ground and a foot above. It will also protect against the gnawing of rabbits and mice if put on two feet above the surface, as it becomes stone.

Care of the Lawns.

Be careful in mowing the lawns during very dry weather. If the grass plot is kept too close the grass may die out should there be a lack of sufficient moisture. The cutting of grass weakens the plant at first, as every successive growth is in the direction of producing seed. Any plant can be destroyed if kept cut close to the ground. It may make new growth several times, but sooner or later becomes exhausted. When moisture is abundant, however, the plant has better opportunities to renew its growth.

Hens in Summer.

The cheapest way to keep a flock of hens in summer is to turn them on a range, and let them pick up all the food required, as they will fill their crops several times a day with bugs, grass seeds, worms, etc. When fed grain during warm weather the fowls are liable to become too fat, in which condition the hens do not lay and are then also more liable to disease. Eggs may not be high in summer, but they can be produced at a very small cost at that season if the hens are made to seek their food.

Plan for Turkey Coop.

tarred paper may be used as a covering over a portion of the coop, as a protection against sudden showers, under which portion a box open at one end only to the coop, as the turkeys should be on the ground during the day.

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Latch Key Suffrage.

Over in England the possession of a latchkey has lately been held in the courts to have an important bearing on the electoral rights of a man claiming to be a householder. With us the latchkey has grown so universal as to be no indication of a man's status, or a woman's either, for that matter. Not so very long ago the American woman's right to the latchkey was subject for jocular argument pro and con, but women's latchkeys are now as common as men's. For an institution that dates back only about seventy years the latchkey has stepped with some suddenness into its place of a universal necessity.—Boston Herald.

Family Pride.

Tommy—My papa's automobile is a nicer one than your papa's.

Dicky—Bein' nice ain't nothin'. You can smell my dad's machine a mile away.—Chicago Tribune.

Example in Full Sight.

Teacher—There is a proverb, "All is not gold that shines." Give me an example.

Scholar—Your nose, sir.—Meggs-Gorfer Hlaetter.

Liberal Deduction.

Unsophisticated Stranger—Officer, you get a discount on your purchases at the fruit stands, don't you?

Officer Googan—Wan hundred per cent.

Enthusiasm.

A well-known New York golf enthusiast said: "When I first learned the game I did not care very much for it. One day I was out with my caddy and was making a miserable attempt at playing the game. I said to the caddy: 'I suppose you have been around the links with worse players than me, eh?'"

Unreasonable.

The milkman scowled.

"You people make more fuss about your milk than any customers I've got," he said.

"All we ask," said Mrs. Ferguson, "is that the bottles shall look clean, and that there shan't be any fifth on the stopper."

That's exactly what I'm talkin' about.

Nobody else kicks about little things like that!"

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