

BY MISADVENTURE

BY

FRANK BARRETT

CHAPTER VII.

I did not anticipate any serious consequences from that evening's amusement. It seemed to me that Miss Dalrymple was doubtless occupied with the music, and doubtless no thought of anything else could have entered her head without being suggested to her. But that was not the case with Lynn Yeames. He was carried away by the good looks of Miss Dalrymple, and perceiving that she was the best woman of the throng, both in appearance and family connection, he magnanimously resolved to sink the consideration of her being poor and resolved to secure her at any price, no matter how rich he might be by the death of his uncle.

Somehow or other he proposed to her that night—between the parts, perhaps, when he led her into the adjoining room for refreshments, though more probably the old woman, his mother, shammed sleep in the brougham to give her son the opportunity as they were taking Miss Dalrymple home.

Two mornings after the concert Dr. Awdrey called on me, looking as yellow as an old title-deed.

"You must go up to Flexmore House at once," he said, without asking me how I was, or any other preliminary civility. "Flexmore is in a critical condition—there's not a moment to spare."

"What does he want me for?" I asked. "He wants to see you about that fool of a will you drew up for him. Get into my trap. I tell you there is no time to waste."

"Aren't you coming with me?" I asked, as he put the reins in his hand. "No; I have another case to attend. I can do nothing for Flexmore at present; Miss Dalrymple has my instructions, and I can rely on her carrying them out."

I drove over to Flexmore House, suspecting mischief. I found my old friend in bed, but perfectly calm and collected. Miss Dalrymple was in the room with little Laure, who clung to her hand as though she felt that soon there would be but that to protect and befriend her. Flexmore took my hand with a smile—a silent greeting that was more touching than words.

"My dear," he said to Miss Dalrymple, "you must leave us for a few minutes, please; we have a little matter of business to discuss, my old friend and I."

"Well, what is it, George?" I asked, going to the bedside. "Tony, you must alter that will or draw up another at once. You thought right to tell Dr. Awdrey of the provision I had made. He refuses to be Laure's guardian or trustee for her fortune."

"He won't get out of it if you let the will stand; we shall see—"

"But the will must not stand; he has shown me that. For the child's sake, for that dear girl Gertrude's sake, it must be altered. They must not be separated. The money must be left in trust, and her guardian and trustee must be my nephew, Lynn Yeames."

"Nonsense! As soon as Lynn Yeames finds he has nothing he will cease to pester Miss Dalrymple; he'll never marry her if he gets the money; and then how is your little Laure to live with her? A proof that he doesn't mean to marry her is that he has been hanging about her for months, but has carefully refrained from binding himself to any engagement."

"You are wrong, Keene. He proposed to her night before last."

"This took my breath away, and left me no ground to stand on."

"And she accepted him?" I gasped, after an interval of silence.

"She did. Yeames told Dr. Awdrey yesterday morning. He came at once to me, and arrived at the very moment I was seized with the attack—otherwise I might not have survived it. He was with me all night; and this morning, finding me sufficiently recovered to listen to argument, he had this out with me. He has the highest opinion of Lynn—so has Miss Dalrymple, or she would certainly not have accepted him. I myself see no reason to disbelieve in him. In fact, it's only you, Tony, who stick out so obstinately against him; and you, as every one knows, are a man of strong prejudices—very strong prejudices."

"I am a man of strong prejudices?" I gasped. "I, a lawyer, whose business it is to weigh both sides of the question and decide impartially? I, an old man of the world—"

"I don't care what you may be; I know you are an obstinate, pig-headed old fellow. But you must let me have my way—I know I am right. No argument will change me—I must have my way."

"Good," said I; "I'll draw up another will. It shall be just as you wish."

housekeeper show him into my office, and say I would be with him in a minute or two. I emptied my cup, and rose to join my visitor in the next room.

In that moment it struck me that I had left the draft of the old will on the office table beside the sheet of fresh foolscap. I went on tiptoes to the door and peeped through the green taffety blind. Lynn Yeames was standing by the table, looking round him curiously; I could see him distinctly, but he could not see me, by reason of the light from the office window falling on the blind. Quickly he caught up the draft, and ran his eye down it.

Now this, being only a draft, had neither date nor signature, and he must have jumped at once to the conclusion that it was the copy of a will I was about to draw up; and seeing that by this draft all Flexmore's money was left to Awdrey, it must have convinced him that this instrument was intended to revoke that will which I had led him to believe was made in his favor.

The sheet fell from his hand; he stooped hastily, picked it up, and replaced it on the table. I moved a chair, made a clatter with an empty plate as if I were just rising from my lunch, then I opened the door and entered my office briskly. Lynn Yeames was seated at some distance from the table, looking pale.

"How do you do, sir?" said I. "You don't look quite yourself this morning."

"I am upset; my uncle is in a critical condition—I don't know whether you know it. I came over to tell you—I thought you ought to know, in case there was any legal matter to arrange."

"As it happens, there is a very important matter to arrange. I have just come back from Flexmore House—you heard nothing there? Well—of course I can place confidence in you, Mr. Yeames."

"I give you my word of honor that— you may depend upon my secrecy," he hastened to assure me.

"Good, sir. I trust to your honor. Your uncle is about to revoke his will."

"I glanced significantly at the papers on the table. 'I assure you,' I continued, 'I have done all in my power to persuade him to the contrary.'"

"Of course you have, in your own interest," said he savagely.

"One must consider one's own interests sometimes; and after having had the management of the estate for so many years—"

"What on earth has induced him to revoke it?" he asked, taking very slight pains to conceal his chagrin.

"I believe he has been considerably influenced by Dr. Awdrey."

"Dr. Awdrey?" he exclaimed. "What has he been talking about?"

"Well," said I, still with a good deal of sham hesitation, "I believe you were indiscreet enough to inform him that you had proposed to, and been accepted by, Miss Dalrymple."

"To what use has the rascal put that knowledge?" he asked.

"We must not call Dr. Awdrey a rascal, sir," said I. "All of us have our own interests to look after. And really Dr. Awdrey's case is plausible enough."

"I don't understand you; what do you mean?" he asked sharply.

"You see it's almost an open secret; at any rate the fact has for some time been known to Dr. Awdrey, that my old friend Flexmore wished Miss Dalrymple to marry the doctor—one of those curious fads that invalidate occasionally take up. I don't know if you have ever remarked—"

"Go on, go on, for goodness' sake!" he exclaimed, interrupting me impatiently.

"Well, sir, lately it has been obvious that Flexmore's daughter Laure has formed a very strong attachment for Miss Dalrymple—a most extraordinary attachment."

"Yes, I know all about that. Go on."

"Well, you see it is obvious that Miss Dalrymple cannot marry both you and Dr. Awdrey; while, at the same time, it is equally evident that were you the child's guardian, and from any unforeseen accident you might alter your intention with regard to matrimony, Miss Dalrymple could only marry Dr. Awdrey by separating herself from the child Laure."

"But then I could be trustee to the child's fortune, and leave her guardianship to Miss Dalrymple, couldn't I?"

"Oh, certainly, if there were time to persuade your uncle to such an arrangement, which," I added, with a profound sigh, "I fear there is not."

"He turned his back upon me and going to the window, looked out into the thick grey mist, while I, with two or three little coughs, seated myself at the table, and began laboriously to draw up the new will, my spectacles low down on my nose, and one hand on the old draft, which I frequently consulted."

"How long will you be before you take that thing up to the house to be signed?" asked Lynn Yeames, who as I lifted my eyes, I found was regarding me attentively.

"Dr. Awdrey was good enough to lend me his gig that no time should be lost; and, if all goes well, I shall be at Flexmore's house at half-past two—near as possible."

He drew his hat a little lower over his brows, and quitted my office without a word. As the door slammed, I laid down my pen, put my hands on my knees, and had a good chuckle, for I felt I had played that game of cross-purposes very well.

But how would it end? That I could not foresee. That he had gone off with some definite and immediate purpose I was convinced. Would he in the next hour undo himself completely by throwing off Miss Dalrymple and making his uncle understand that he had no intention of marrying her? It would be sharp work; but men lose no time when their fortunes are at stake. "We shall see," said I, returning to my work, for which I hoped there would be no need when I went up for Flexmore's signature.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was two o'clock when I got into the doctor's gig with the new will. My house was just on the outskirts of the town; Flexmore's was two or three miles beyond on the other side of Beagle Woods.

The mist had been thick all the morning; but it was thicker than ever when I started, so that I could not see three yards ahead with my glasses on. However, I knew I could trust to the intelligence of the doctor's nag, who took that road every day in the week, and nights as well sometimes; and with my collar well up, and my nose well down in a comforter, off I started.

I jogged along pretty comfortably until we got into the Beagle Woods; there the mist seemed to have settled down into a solid block, and the big trees that skirt the road on either side increased the obscurity. However, the nag kept on her ambling trot—till presently, smash! Down she went, without any kind of warning, up dashed the seat of the gig, and out I flew, as though I had been shot from a catapult.

I was on my legs in a moment, for my first thought was of the will I had struck under the seat cushion, and I feared the nag would start up an adroit with it. I could hear her breathing heavily; she did not attempt to move. I ran back in that direction, when—bang! over I went again, flat on my nose. I had felt something strike against my shins, and as I rose to my feet once more, I discovered the cause of both falls—a cord was stretched across the road.

It slackened as I touched it, and the next moment was whisked out of my hands. Was this the wanton mischief of boys, or the sinister design of some one bent upon plunder?

"My name's Anthony Keene, and you shall suffer for this, you vagabonds, whoever you are!" I shouted, as I groped my way to the gig. I am well known in Coneyford, and I knew that if they were boys they would scuttle off on hearing my name.

There was no sound of voice or footfall—only the old nag gasping on the ground. Then I felt sure it was the work of a man; but I was not fearful of any further mischief, for the thief must be foolhardy indeed to attack an old lawyer, who is more likely to get him into trouble than yield much in the way of booty.

Feeling about the poor old horse, I found that both the shafts were broken, so there was no thought of going on in the gig even if the horse's legs were not broken as well. The will was just where I had stuck it, under the strap of the cushion; I clapped it in my pocket, and, after a moment's reflection, started off to walk the remainder of the journey, leaving horse and trap in the road to take their chances.

A nice walk I had—tumbling into a ditch on the right, and then into a ditch on the left, running flat up against a brick wall, and then pitching on to a pile of slabs by the roadside, all the time in such darkness and impenetrable fog, that for all I knew I might have been walking half the time in a circle. To make matters worse, I found my nose was bleeding from the fall I got over the cord. It seemed to me I should never get to my journey's end. However, after a time it grew less obscure, which made me think I must have got clear of the Beagle Woods, which was a comfort; and shortly afterwards I heard footsteps approaching.

"Who's there?" I called when I felt it was time to speak, lest I ran into something fresh.

"Sam Martin. Be that you, Muster Keene?" replied a well-known voice.

"Yes, it is. How far am I from Mr. Flexmore's house?"

"About half a mile—keep straight on by the paling. Thought it were you, Mr. Keene, by your little squeaking voice. Shall I turn back w' ye?"

"No. Go straight on. I've left the doctor's trap in the road—horse down—see what you can do with it, Sam Martin, and take care no one else comes into mischief over it."

(To be continued.)

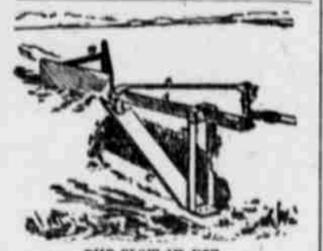
The Riot Act. What is commonly meant by "reading the riot act" is better known than the origin of the phrase. The historical riot act was passed by the British Parliament in the reign of George I. in 1714. It enacts that felony is committed when twelve or more persons unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assemble together to the disturbance of the public peace, so to continue together for an hour after being commanded to disperse by the sheriff or undersheriff or a justice or the mayor of the borough.

In the "reading" of the British riot act, which is a necessary preliminary to its being put into operation, it is not customary to recite the whole of the statute, which is rather a long one, but only the following proclamation, which it contains: "Our sovereign lord the king chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business upon the pains contained in the act made in the first year of King George for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies. God save the king!"—Chicago News.

FARMS AND FARMERS

Improved Ditching Plow.

A recent invention provides an improved ditching plow, especially adapted for digging tiling sewer ditches or draining ditches. The device is of very simple construction, and capable of effective service in any character of soil. It is especially adapted to be drawn by a traction engine or capstan, says Scientific American. As shown in the engraving, it comprises a beam A, which extends forward and with an upward inclination from the cleaner B. The latter is triangular in shape, being provided with two diverging wings. The purpose of the cleaner is to travel over the surface of the ground and remove the excavated material from the edges of the ditch. The beam A is hinged to the cleaner, so as to provide for a certain amount of vertical motion. Below the beam and forming an angle therewith is a blade C, provided with a cutting edge at its lower end, which serves

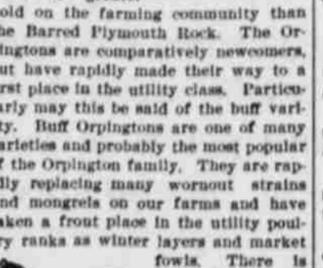


THE PLOW IN USE.

to enter the earth more or less deeply as the plow is drawn forward, and carry the excavated material to the surface. At its forward end this blade is braced by means of a support D, which is fastened to the beam A. At the forward end of the beam A is a clevis bar E, which is secured at its upper end to draft bar F, extending to the rear of the beam A. In this clevis bar are a series of apertures adapted to receive a link to which a pulley block is connected. This block serves to receive the cable that is passed to the windlass or drum of the traction engine, for the purpose of drawing the car forward. Owing to the lightness of this plow, it may readily be loaded upon a truck and transported from place to place.

Buff Orpington Fowls.

No varieties of fowls are better suited to the requirements of farmers and others than Barred and White Plymouth Rocks, White Wyandottes and Buff Orpingtons. Both Barred Plymouth Rocks and White Wyandottes are to be found in every locality, and eggs from them may be had at reasonable cost. No variety seems to have a greater hold on the farming community than the Barred Plymouth Rock. The Orpingtons are comparatively newcomers, but have rapidly made their way to a first place in the utility class. Particularly may this be said of the buff variety. Buff Orpingtons are one of many varieties and probably the most popular of the Orpington family. They are rapidly replacing many worn-out strains and mongrels on our farms and have taken a front place in the utility poultry ranks as winter layers and market fowls. There is great demand for eggs and fowls of this breed. They have light-colored legs and white flesh. Chickens are hardy and grow rapidly. Eggs are of medium or larger size, according to strain.



BUFF ORPINGTON.

White Orpingtons are a most promising variety and are likely to become popular on account of their merits as layers and table fowls.—Exchange.

Study of Blackhead Disease.

The blackhead disease which has become so destructive to turkeys in the past few years has been under investigation by the experiment station at Kingston, Rhode Island. A small parasite, microscopic in size, is the cause of the trouble. It lives in the tissues of the turkey and causes irritations that result in the death of the affected bird. The Rhode Island experiments showed that more than four-fifths of the young pouls exposed in infected yards die before they are six weeks old. The disease has been popularly supposed to be confined to birds over six weeks. It is notably a disease affecting young turkeys, but one from which the older turkeys do not escape.

Of the one-fifth that do escape or survive its ravages at least ten to twenty-five per cent may die throughout the year at almost any age.

The eradication and prevention of the disease is somewhat difficult but no reliance can be placed on any drug to cure a bird that is already infected. Since the blackhead disease is less prevalent in dry situations it is apparent that sandy, well-drained lands are better for raising turkeys than the heavier moist clay soils.

The Cat Under the Hat.

According to the report of the State Game Commission of Pennsylvania for 1907, song and insectivorous birds in that state are increasing and game birds becoming scarcer. Bear and deer are rapidly increasing.

Bears are now protected in Pennsylvania by a legal close season during the spring and summer months. During the season of 1907 there were killed in the state 230 deer.

Dr. Joseph Kalbfus, chief game protector of the state, recommends the placing of a bounty on the scalp of the domestic cat as well as on those of the wildcat.

"There is no greater destroyer of bird life," he declares, "than the house cat."

The legislative appropriation for bounties on noxious animals and birds was insufficient to meet the demands upon it last year. A much larger appropriation is called for, and the addition of the great horned owl and the goshawk to the outlawed class is requested.

Starting Seeds Indoors.

Any one who intends to start seeds indoors needs a knowledge of various facts concerning each variety—the length of time needed for germination, the time required for the plant to reach the blooming or fruitage stage, and whether it can be transplanted to the open ground with safety in early spring, or not until considerably later. For instance, says Suburban Life, chrysanthemum seeds will germinate in from five to ten days, but the plants require a very long season of growth before flowering, and the person who gets ahead of Jack Frost must sow the seeds not later than March 1—and earlier, if possible. With varieties which germinate quickly, grow rapidly and bloom early, the sowing should be delayed at least a month, to avoid the trouble of repeated transplantings, to prevent the seedling plants from getting "leggy" and weak.

A Queer Pet.

In a country town in northern Pennsylvania there lives a little old man who sells milk, carrying it from house to house morning and evening in a small handcart. There is nothing strange about that, but his companion on these daily trips is the very strangest you ever heard of—an old gray goose, who follows him about in the most dignified manner and stands watch over the cart, letting no one near it in his master's absence. His name is Major, and his master says he is just as useful as a dog would be.

Farm Facts and Fancies.

Hogs need clean, pure water as much as the rest of the stock. See that they get it.

Perhaps you do not realize it, but the dearest animal on your farm is the cheap scrub.

Which do you keep? The cow that makes more than she eats or the cow that eats more than she makes?

It is impossible to plant an orchard or a windbreak in the winter time, but it is possible and profitable to plan one or both.

Fungous diseases and insect pests can be kept from taking the profits of the orchard this next season by faithful, judicious spraying.

The five to eight quarts of milk a day cow will never return the farmer an adequate profit, unless the percentage of butter fat is high.

An argument in favor of the open head in fruit trees is that the fruit on such trees does not rot so badly as that on trees with dense heads.

First the framework, then the trimmings. So with stock-raising. Feed to get the biggest kind of growth, then lay on the fat as fast as possible.

The conditions under which the pigs are kept has as much to do with determining the quality of pork which will be produced as has the quality of the food.

If there is anything that makes a disreputable outfit it is an old flea-bitten horse hitched to a rattletrap of a buggy, when the occupant of the buggy uses for a robe a patched quilt.

In cultivating the plum and cherry orchards remember that it must be shallow enough to avoid breaking the roots, for the broken roots send up shoots that suck the life of the tree.

Habitual Constipation

May be permanently overcome by proper personal efforts with the assistance of the one truly beneficial laxative remedy, Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna, which enables one to form regular habits daily so that assistance in nature may be gradually dispensed with when no longer needed as the best of remedies, when required, are to assist nature and not to supplant the natural functions, which must depend ultimately upon proper nourishment, proper efforts, and right living generally. To get its beneficial effects, always buy the genuine

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Syrup the best remedy to use for their children
during the teething period.

The mineral water produce of the
United States during 1906 was 48,518,
305 gallons, valued at \$1,574,500—a very
considerable increase over the previous
year. These figures contemplate only the
natural mineral waters taken from
springs having some medicinal qualities.

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As to Yipsley.
Mrs. Chugwater—Josiah, this paper
says a man named Birkan has sued the
city as Jared Yipsley's next friend. What
does that mean?

Mr. Chugwater—Hub! It doesn't mean
anything in this case. No man alive ever
really got next to old Yipsley.

Deafness Cannot Be Cured
by local applications, as they cannot reach the
diseased portion of the ear. There is only one
way to cure deafness, and that is by constitu-
tional remedies. Deafness is caused by an in-
flamed condition of the mucous lining of the
Eustachian Tube. When this tube is inflamed
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