

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 Penrhuddyn 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, raising and blinding off her passion between her gleaming teeth. "Hear me now 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 puny friendship—"

"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 name," 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 she 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 merciless to me, Mr. Stafford, you 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 merciless 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 Lindon 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 acting—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 twelfth month, 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 forgo 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 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 unaged 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 Lindon 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 Penrhuddyn. 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 deceived to an appointed spot, she was to be carried off and kept in a place of confinement until after the first of December. Means, 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: Lindon 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 whereabouts 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 Penrhuddyn 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 lest 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 faith. Never before had she been brought into contact with so noble a nature as that of Arthur Penrhuddyn, and she began to cling to him with an almost unselfish affection.

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

"Oh, if we can but save Penrhuddyn," she murmured, "I care not what I suffer." (To be continued.)

Prerequisites of Bank.

The Brauberville postmaster looked out with a frown from his barred window at the returned traveler who was questioning him. "I can't get out of this pen or mine till the mail's distributed, he said, with resentment. "The new rules and regulations don't hardly let a man breathe. What was it you asked me about the fire department?"

"No, Jed isn't chief any more. That's all owing to the city folks that come here now and try to run our whole village."

"There was a little spark of a fire down in one of their cottages, an' because our fire department didn't get there quite as quick as they expected they 'instituted inquiries,'—I'm giving you their own words,—and when they found the two ladders had been in Jed's orchard, an' that had made a little delay, they raised such a lot of talk that Jed resigned."

"As he said, if the chief of the fire department hasn't got the right to borrow a couple of ladders from the engine house when he needs 'em to pick his fruit, who has?"

"But you can't reason much with these city folks. They're a kind of a high-handed lot."

Perhaps He Meant It.

P— is usually a self-possessed young man; but the other day when dining out he was unexpectedly called upon to say grace, and the best he could do was to deliver himself of the following:

"O Lord, bless our sins and forgive this food. Amen."—Lippincott's.

A Strong Tip.

The Bay 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.

COME ON, FELLERS!



A NEW DECLARATION.

The old Declaration which Jefferson wrote in the resonant accents we treasure and quote:

The old Declaration whose truth is as true as in seventy-six, when its phrases were new.

Let us linger again on its message and read To see if our actions accord with our creed.

Let us look and behold how in practice we play With the rights of the lives of our fellows to-day.

Mired deep in our cities are infamies where The new-loan are stifled for lack of God's air;

Where the feeble unfortunate, ground by Of their fellows, are berded in equator and night.

In the height of the light of this noon of our day Is liberty his who has nothing to pay?

The Law-breaker, high in our council of state, Passes on to reward which is greater than great;

But the beggar who gasps out a prayer for relief, "Without means of support"—let him herd with the thief!

And happiness, What shall we mock at him, too?

What happiness, pray, is that man's to pursue Who is worn to the bone by our monsters?

Who suck out his marrow, who prey on his life? Lo! one gives his life for a grave at the end And another holds kingdoms no mortal might spend.

Arise again, Jefferson! Take up your pen And draft a renewed Declaration again!

Men are equal and free, born with rights which decay King Great whom Monopoly raises on high By the deeds of this day! Let the old bestry ring.

A new Declaration against the new King! —Edmund Vance Cooke.

A FOURTH OF JULY DIARY.

THE morning of the Fourth—got up at 3 o'clock and hurried.

Got my brother out of bed, and we hurried for Washington, Gates, Green, Putnam, Ethan Allen and Gen. Stark.

Fired our young cannon. Shot our toy pistol. Fired off a bunch of firecrackers.

When daylight came we had all the cats and dogs in the neighborhood on the run. If we could have found a Britisher we would have had him on the run as well.

Lemonade with breakfast. Lemonade after breakfast. Lemonade every little while all the forenoon. If our forefathers had drank more lemonade they would have gained their independence all the sooner.

Firecrackers and torpedoes all day. Burned my thumb, got something in my eye and lost half my hair, but what boy won't go through perils for the sake of Liberty? Johnny Green said that George Washington didn't amount to so much much, and I gave Johnny a licking.

Big pieces of coconut and lemonade and oranges after dinner. With the British would pitch into us again, so that we could have two or three Fourth of July in one year. The more I see of this business the more I like it.

Father says there's a good deal of nonsense about it, but as he has been through two wars himself I know that he is talking through his hat. I've heard him say that he once shot off 30 packs of firecrackers one Fourth of July.

When evening comes I am chock up to the chin with good things I have eaten and drunk, but I am a patriot still. Still whooping for Bunker Hill and Valley Forge—still cheering as Washington crosses the Delaware.

Night and fireworks. Yum! Yum! Skyrockets, Roman candles, pinwheels, serpents and a dozen other things. I cheer, I yell, I bubble.

Then the show is over and Sammy and me go home and get into bed and are asleep in about two minutes, and as we sleep we dream that we are sailing around

THE SKY ON THE MOON, AND THAT THE REDCOATS DOWN BELOW ARE SHOOTING SKYROCKETS AT US AND CALLING US YOUNG REBELS AND IMPUDENT RASCALS.

Fourth of July Don'ts.

DON'T— Be too brave. Hold exploding crackers. Take any chances on its not being loaded.

Pick up a lighted cracker to find out why it does not go off. Be too certain that the cannon fuse is not burning.

Point any explosive at your little sister. Fall to treat powder burns instantly—they cause lockjaw.

Try to see how much powder you can pack into a toy cannon. Leave smoldering crackers near inflammables.

Shoot skyrockets into curtained windows—your father, probably, needs the house.

Forget that the careless use of fireworks may change what should be a joyous day into one that will be remembered with sadness for a lifetime.

THE FOURTH OF JULY.

Stop and Consider What Independence Means To-day.

The signing of the Declaration of Independence was a deed to commemorate, without doubt.

But is it not well to stop and consider just what independence means to-day?

Every boy who helps to make the Fourth of July hideous with noise can tell you that he is celebrating the birth of liberty.

But is he not also accenting the growth of license? Why should he awaken his neighbors at 3 in the morning with sounds of the Inferno because he dwells in a free country?

If he's free to celebrate, why should not his neighbors be free to sleep until a reasonable hour in the morning?

It was this forgetfulness of the rights of others which made King George of England a tyrant from whose persecutions America declared its independence on the original Fourth of July.

We talk much of our glorious liberty in America, but we are rapidly developing a tendency toward a tyranny as great as that which once compelled us to rebel against a king.

It might be well for each one of us to ask himself on the birthday of American Liberty just what he is doing to make liberty a universal possession.

American independence is becoming a good deal like American business enter-

prizes—a thing of trusts and monopolies.

Before you decorate your house with flags and send off your fireworks upon this Fourth of July, like good American citizens, you would better make a little mental analysis of your motives, habits and methods of life, and find out just what you are daily contributing toward the freedom of all Americans.

Are you doing everything you can in your social, business and political orbit to give wider liberty, leisure and prosperity to humanity at large?

Are you thinking how to lessen the hours of labor for the hordes of people who toil twelve and fourteen hours out of the twenty-four in this glorious land of liberty? Or are you planning ways to get more work out of them, and to increase your own fortune and leisure?

Are you helping to teach the law of brotherhood, or are you widening the breach between the employer and employee by your arrogance and selfishness?

You have no right to celebrate the birth of American independence or to talk of the beauties of freedom until you are ready to aid by thought, word and deed all mankind to the benefits of liberty.—Ellis Wheeler Wilcox.

The American Flag.

The American flag has been the symbol of liberty, and men rejoice in it. Not another flag on the globe had such an errand or went forth upon the seas carrying everywhere, the world round, such hope for the captive and such glorious tidings. The stars upon it were to the plining nations like the morning stars of God, and the stripes upon it were like beams of morning light. Let us, then, twine each thread of the glorious tissue of our country's flag about our heart-strings, and, looking upon our homes and catching the spirit that breathes upon us from the battlefields of our fathers, let us resolve, come weal or woe, we will in life and in death, now and forever, stand by the stars and stripes.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Why He Objected.

"None us of glorious Fourth for me," said Tired Timothy, as he stretched himself out on a bed of new-mown hay.

"Wot's wrong with de Fourth?" asked his friend, Weary William.

"Why, even de fire works den," exclaimed T. T., with a large, open-faced sigh.

That's Different.

It takes a shower of thumps and kicks To rouse a boy at half past six. But when the glorious Fourth's begun He's up and dressed at just 12:00.

—L. A. W. Bulletin.

AN INTRODUCTION NEEDED.



Chicago Record-Herald.