

His Heart's Desire

By SIR WALTER BESANT

CHAPTER V.

At half-past four exactly Mr. Leighan, of Graton, commonly called Daniel Daniel Leighan, or Old Dan, or Mr. Daniel, according to the social position of those who spoke to him, awoke with a start from his afternoon nap.

He was the rich man of a parish in which there was no squire; he was the village miser; he was the terror of those who owed him money; he was the driver of the hardest bargains; he was the strong and masterful man; he was the scourge of the weak and thriftless; he was the tyrant of the village. He knew all this, and so far from being humiliated, he enjoyed the position.

The girl who sat working at the open window was his niece, Mary Nethercote. She lived with Daniel, and took care of him. He railed at all the world except her; he quarreled with all the world except his niece; and those persons who averred that he was kind to her because he had the keeping of her money and took all the interest for himself, and had her services as housekeeper for nothing, were perhaps only imperfectly acquainted with the old man's motives and his feelings. Yet the statement was true. He did have the keeping of her money—a good lump of money; and he did give himself the interest in return for her board and lodging; and he did have her services as housekeeper for nothing.

Daniel Leighan awoke suddenly with a cry, and sat upright in his chair, clutching the arms, his eyes rolling in horror and amazement.

"Mary!" he cried, "I saw him; I saw him—the man who robbed me. I saw him plain—and I have forgotten—I have forgotten! It was—oh, I knew just now—I have forgotten, Mary!"

"Patience, uncle, patience." Mary patted and smoothed the pillows into their places. "Another time you will remember; you are sure to remember, if the dream only comes again. Lie down again and think."

He obeyed, and she covered his head again with his silk handkerchief. He had started from his sleep, as if stung into wakefulness by the recollection of something horrible and painful; and his dream had vanished from his memory, leaving not a trace behind. But the terror was left, and the foreboding. Mary saw the terror, but she knew nothing of the foreboding. Yet her uncle's mind was filled with anxious fears. She saw the rolling eyes, the clutching of the chair arms, and the look of bewilderment; but she only thought her uncle was startled, like a child, in his sleep, and crying out, like a child, for help when there was no danger. He lay still for a few moments while she stood beside him and watched. Then he tore off the handkerchief and sat up again.

"It is quite gone," he said, in despair. "I have lost the clew. Yet I have him—oh, I saw him, clear and distinct—the man who robbed me. And while I was going to cry out his name—just as I had his name upon my lips—I awoke and forgot him."

"If it comes again," said Mary, incredulous in spite of her words, "you will be sure to remember. Perhaps it will come again. Patience, uncle."

"Patience! when I had the clew? Patience! when I could follow up the robber, and tear my papers out of his hands? Patience!—don't be a fool, Mary!"

"Well, uncle, if it has gone, you can't bring it back again, try to forget that it ever came; that is the wisest thing to do. You shall have your tea, and then you will feel better."

"Mary!"—he turned to her piteously—"It is cruelly hard. Can't you remember? Think. Perhaps I talked in my sleep—some men do. Have you never heard me say anything—call some one by name? If I had only the least little clew, I should remember."

"Why, uncle, how should I remember?"

"It came back to me—all so clear—so clear and plain. And I have forgotten. Oh, Mary, my money! my money!"

"Yes, uncle. But it is six years ago, nearly, and you have done very well since. And it is not as if you had lost all your money. Why, you have prospered while all the rest have been doing badly. You must think of that."

"Lost all my money?" he repeated testily, "of course I've not lost all. As if a man could bear to lose a single penny of the money that he has spent his life in saving. Do you know what I have lost, girl?" She knew very well, because he told her every day. "There were bonds and coupons in the bag to the sum of near upon a hundred and fifty pounds a year—nearly three thousand pounds they meant. As for the share certificates, they didn't matter; but coupons—coupons, Mary; do you hear—payable only to the bearer—a hundred and fifty pounds a year—a hundred and fifty pounds a year!—near three thousand pounds!" His voice rose to a shriek, and suddenly dropped again to a moan.

"Three thousand pounds! Payable to the bearer, and I haven't got them to present! If I were a young man of thirty, I might recover the loss; but I am old now, and can never hope to make it up—never hope to make it up again!" It was six years since that loss had occurred; but this wall over the lost money was raised nearly every day, and almost in the same words, so that the girl felt little sympathy.

"It was six o'clock when I left Ash-

burton." The girl had also heard this story so often that her interest in the details had become numb. "Six o'clock when I started to ride home. I had seventy pounds in gold upon me—fifty pounds in one bag and twenty in another; my tin-box in a blue bag was round my neck, and it was filled with securities and bonds and share certificates. At half past seven—it was dark then—I rode into Widdicombe. After that I remember nothing. Why have I forgotten the ride through the lanes? Why don't I remember passing through Howdstone Gate to the open down? Yet I remember nothing more. Mind you, I won't have it said in my hearing that I ever gave anybody anything, or that I left my bag lying about like a fool. Yet when George Sidcote picked me up the bag was gone, and twenty pounds had gone too—twenty pounds!"

"Well, but, uncle, consider: you had seventy pounds in gold in your purse and only twenty were taken. If it had been a thief he would surely have taken the whole, and your loose silver, as well as your watch and chain. Why, all those were left."

"I don't know. Perhaps he thought the bag of papers would satisfy him. How do I know? What made me fall off the pony? I never fell off the pony before."

"Well, uncle, but think; every day you trouble your poor head about it, and nothing comes of it; why not try to forget the loss? Think what a prosperous man you have been in all your life. You should be thinking of what you have, not what you have lost."

"Go on; go on. Easy for a girl like you to talk. There's the difference with a woman that she only enjoys the spending; while the man—he heaved a deep sigh, and did not complete the sentence. "Oh! Mary!"—he reached out his long bony fingers and made as if he were raking in the gold—"to think—only to think!—of the pleasure I have had in making the money! It was little by little, not all at once. No, no; I saw my way, and I waited. I laid my plans, and I had patience. Be sure that not a field have I got but I worked and planned for it. The world is full of fools; weak men who have no business with property; men without grip, men who just hold on till somebody comes and gives 'em a shove off. Your cousin David was such a fool, Mary."

CHAPTER VI.

Mary said nothing. Her cousin David was doubtless a great fool, but people said unkind things about her uncle's conduct toward him.

"If I had not secured his property, some one else would. It is still in the family, which ought to be a great comfort to him, wherever he has gone. George Sidcote is another—well, he isn't exactly a fool, like David; but he doesn't get on—he doesn't get on. I fear very much—"

"Uncle, spare him!"

"Because he wants to marry you, child? Is that a reason for interfering with the course of business? When the pear is ripe, it will drop—if not into my mouth, into some other man's. Business before love, Mary."

"If I could give my fortune, he would be out of his difficulties."

"Your fortune, Mary? Where is it? What fortune? You have none unless you marry with my consent. Your fortune? Why, it depends on me whether you ever get it. I don't say that I shall never consent. Show me the right man—not a spendthrift, Mary."

"George is no spendthrift."

"Nor a man in debt."

"If George is in debt, it is not his fault."

"A substantial man, and one who knows the worth of money; bring that man along, and we will see. If not—well, Mary, I am getting on for seventy, and I can't last forever, and perhaps—perhaps, I say—I shall leave you my money when I die. You can wait till then. Six thousand pounds is a tremendous big lump to part with, when a man is not obliged to part with it. And I am not obliged to give my money. No, no; and after I've lost three thousand—three thousand! Besides, your comfortable here; what do you want to marry for? What's the good of marrying? Better stay at home and save money. I give you your board and your lodging, Mary, while you are here, for nothing; and your clothing, too—yes, your clothing." He spoke as if many young people had to go without.

"Yes, I know." She laughed thinking how much her uncle had given her for dress in the last year or two. "Well, uncle, but if I do marry without your consent you will have to give the money to my cousin David."

"Yes, yes; of course. What's the good of telling me that? But David is dead, no doubt, by this time, and then the money must remain with me, of course. But you won't do that, Mary; you'll never be so wicked as to do that. Besides, if you did, David's accounts with me have never been made up, and I don't doubt that when we come to look into them it will be found that he owes me a great deal still. I was very soft—foolishly soft—with David."

Mary made no reply. Her uncle had been, indeed, soft with David; so soft that he had sold him up and turned him out, and now possessed his land.

Mr. Leighan sighed heavily, no doubt

over his foolish softness, and became silent. It was not often that he talked so much with his niece.

Six years before this, about half-past nine one evening in the autumn of the year 1880, George Sidcote, walking home, found Mr. Leighan lying in the middle of the road on Heytree Down. His pony was grazing quietly beside him, and he was lying on his back senseless, with an ugly wound in his head, the scar of which would never leave him. He had fallen, apparently, from his pony. No suspicion of violence or robbery was entertained; first, because no one ever heard of violence at Challacombe, and secondly, because he had not apparently been robbed. So, at least, it seemed to those who carried him home, for his pockets were full of money, and his watch and chain had not been taken.

For three days and three nights Daniel Leighan lay speechless and senseless, and but for a faint pulse he seemed dead. When he recovered consciousness, the first questions he asked were concerning a certain tin box containing papers which he declared was hanging in a bag from his neck. Now of that tin box no one knew anything. Presently, when he counted his money, he swore that he was twenty pounds short.

Perhaps it was the agony of mind caused by this loss, perhaps the blow upon his head, which caused the paralysis of his legs. This affliction fell upon him a month or so after the accident. Then they put him in his chair beside his table, and propped him up with pillows, and he went abroad no more. But his brain was as clear as before, his will as strong, and his purpose as determined.

CHAPTER VII.

When Mary had given her uncle his tea and cleared away the "things," she left him to his papers and his pipe, took her hat and went into the porch, where she stood for a moment dangling her hat by its strings and shading her eyes with her hand.

Then, with a little flush upon her cheek and a brightening of her eye, she passed through the garden to the back of the house, where she knew George Sidcote waited to take her to the choir practice, for 'twas Saturday evening.

When Mary came through the garden he took both her hands in his, bent over her and kissed her gravely on the forehead, as if to seal her once more for his own. There was little of the sweet love language between these two; they belonged to each other; they were so well assured of the fact that there was no need to renew their vows.

"George!" said Mary, softly.

"Mary!" George whispered.

They sat down together on a wagon shaft, side by side.

"I saw him this morning," he said, slowly—Mary knew very well who was meant by "him"—"and I told him what I told you the other day, my dear."

"What did he say?"

"He said that he knew it beforehand. He had calculated it all out on paper, and he was certain, he said, that this season would be the last. 'Very well,' he said, 'the law provides a remedy when the interest or the principal cannot be repaid. Of course,' he added, 'I am not going to lose my money.' This is what he said first, Mary."

"Oh! and what did he say next?"

"I told him that if he would give his consent, your fortune would nearly pay off the mortgage."

"What did he say then?"

"Well, Mary, then we had a little row—not much. He said that it was clear I only wanted your money, and he should never give his consent. I said that it was clear he meant to make any excuse to refuse his consent, in order to keep your money in his own hands."

"I am sorry, George," said Mary. "He told me nothing of this."

"It was not likely that he would tell you. He heard what I had to say in his dry way, and then asked me if there was anything more that I wished to say. Well, Mary, I was roused a bit by this, and I reminded him that, if you did not receive your aunt's fortune, David would be entitled to the money. Well, he was not the least put out. He only laughed—his laugh is the sort that makes other people cry—and said that you were a good girl, but silly, like most girls, and if you chose to throw away your fortune he was sorry for you, but he could not prevent it. Well, Mary, I came away. So that is done with, and this is the last year there will be one of the old stock in the old place."

"Courage, George," she said; "we will do something; we will go somewhere—somewhere we will live and prosper yet."

"Somewhere?" he echoed, "and 'somewhere'! Well, I have a pair of hands and a pair of broad shoulders—yes. But you, Mary, and my mother?"

"Courage," she said again, "have faith, George. Even if we have to go away, we shall be together. I was reading yesterday a story about settlers in Canada. It had pictures. There was the wooden house and the clearing, with the forest all round; I thought it might be ours. I read how they worked, this pair of settlers, and how they gradually got on, clearing more land and increasing their stock till they became rich in everything except money. I thought of ourselves, George; we shall not want money if we can live on a farm of our own somewhere, and if we can work for ourselves. You are so strong and brave; you do not mind hard work; and—and—let us have faith, George. God is good. If we must go from here, we will go with cheerful hearts, and leave my poor uncle to his lands and wealth."

He threw his arm round her neck and kissed her again—an unusual demonstration from him.

(To be continued.)

Polite.

"So you have invited Brown to dinner? I am afraid he won't think much of my cooking."

"Oh, well, you mustn't let that trouble you; he is too polite to say anything."—Houston Post.

TWO NEW CANADIAN PROVINCES

With Saskatchewan and Alberta the Dominion Will Have Nine "States."

The word province in Canada has the same significance as the word State in our country. When we say, therefore, that the Dominion has organized and is about to take in two new provinces it means that the seven States are about to be increased to nine. The seven provinces are Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia. The two new provinces are Alberta and Saskatchewan. The interior department at Ottawa has issued a map showing the boundaries of these two enormous new provinces, and the map printed here has been made from it.

It is thirty-eight years since the Dominion of Canada was formed by the confederation of the provinces then existing. That was the birth of Canada as a nation. Two years later the British Parliament passed the Rupert's land act, which provided for the acquisition by the Dominion of the vast prairies of the West, which were called the Northwest Territories. It had already been discovered that wheat was a wonderful crop in the southeast part of this region, and so many settlers flocked into the little corner called Manitoba that in 1870 this territory was admitted into the confederation as a province. As a State of the Dominion, Manitoba is just one year older than British Columbia.

But none of the other four big territories has ever had a government of its own, Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Athabasca were simply lumped together as the Northwest Territories. They had a common capital at Regina, Assiniboia, and have always been ruled, under the Dominion Parliament, by a Lieutenant Governor and an Executive Council. Out of these four territories the two new States have been formed and the

vide that each shall be represented in the Senate of Canada by four members and in the House of Commons by five members, the number in the lower house being readjusted from time to time according to population. Each shall have a Lieutenant Governor and a Legislative Assembly, to be composed at the outset of twenty-five members.

The government of Canada is to pay to each province the sum of \$50,000 a year for the support of its government and legislature. The Dominion lands will continue to be vested in the crown, but the Canadian government will compensate the provinces for them by a series of annual payments. The present estimated value of the public lands is \$1.50 an acre.

The map shows that the two provinces take in all the territory of the four territories excepting a little of the eastern parts of Athabasca and Saskatchewan.

The time will probably come when it will be deemed best to divide these provinces again into smaller ones. Each of them is about four times as large as New York State, and their total territory is about as large as Central Europe.

This is a great region, which, with Manitoba, is estimated by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture to be destined within ten years to produce annually 350,000,000 bushels of wheat, 200,000,000 bushels of oats, and 50,000,000 bushels of barley, and this without cropping more than about one-third of the tillable area.

The two provinces divide the vast area nearly equally. Regina will be the capital of Saskatchewan; the capital of Alberta will be temporarily at Edmonton until the Legislature of that province decides upon its permanent situation.—Washington Post.

Little Lord's Plain Dress.

Both of the best-known American duchesses are becoming increasingly economical in the selection of their



CANADA'S TWO NEW PROVINCES.

In the map the two new provinces are shown by the black lines; the dotted lines indicate the territories out of which they are formed.

Northwest Territories will now disappear from the maps.

The fact is that territorial government for them is no longer suitable, because their interests are becoming large and complex. In 1901 their population was 158,940. No census has been taken since, but the Canadian government estimates their population today at about 500,000.

Over three-fifths of the large immigration that began to pour into Canada in 1901 has settled in three of these territories. The tide of pioneers is pouring over these wheat and cattle lands of Canada.

It has not yet reached Athabasca, but farmhouses and hamlets have been spreading over the three southern territories, and the country will keep filling with people for years to come, for the lands still unoccupied are almost boundless. As yet, the newcomers have hardly more than touched the outskirts of the wheat lands.

Manitoba is only one-fourth as large as the old territories of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but she had over 2,000,000 acres in wheat last year, while the territories gathered a wheat crop from only 575,697 acres. This acreage in the territories was a mere bagatelle compared with their enormous area of fine farm lands.

The government, after careful investigations, has reached the conclusion that the amount of desirable farm lands still unappropriated in Assiniboia is 19,000,000 acres; in Saskatchewan, 17,000,000, and in Alberta, 16,000,000 acres.

It will take hundreds of thousands of farmers to cut up all this land into homesteads, but the process is going on, and when these lands are all parceled out settlers will begin to move into Athabasca, whose agricultural capabilities have just been investigated in a comparatively thorough manner, and, it is said, with astonishingly favorable results.

The bills creating the provinces pro-

children's frocks, says the New York Press. Time was when their graces of Manchester and Marlborough thought the sheers of fabrics not good enough for their youngsters; when neither thought of paying less than \$100 apiece for their infants' robes and when the rest of the baby attire carried the total of every day's apparel to an absurd figure. But the Princess of Wales, noticing a tendency on the part of wealthy women in England to overdress their young hopefuls, began putting the simplest of clothes on her own children and the Duchesses of Marlborough and Manchester were not slow to copy her sensible example.

Any one seeing the Manchester and Marlborough juniors in their wams abroad would not dream they were the children of parents with duchies and ducats. Duchess Helena even goes to the extreme of putting her pets in gingham at mornings, and Duchess Consuelo has been seen looking at ordinary prints in London bazaars.

He Fixed Him.

In the course of an open-air revival meeting in a Georgia town a man in the audience interrupted the leader with the question: "Where would religion be if you took the devil out of it?"

The leader looked the man over and replied:

"Ask the devil yourself. I judge, from your looks, you're on speakin' terms with him."—Atlanta Constitution.

Saved.

"So your daughter graduated?" said Dudson. "I suppose she saved the country on commencement day?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Briscoe, "she saved the country a great deal. She was taken ill suddenly and couldn't read her essay."—Detroit Tribune.

To the man working in the sun: The man lying in the shade isn't having as good a time as you think he is.