

His Heart's Desire

By SIR WALTER BESANT

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)
"What was his accident?"
"He fell from his pony coming home at night. Some say he was in drink; but then he was always a sober man. Mr. George Sidcote it was that found him lying in the road. He was insensible for three days. When he came to he couldn't remember nor tell anybody how the accident happened; but he said he'd been robbed, though his pocket was full of money, and his watch and chain hadn't been taken. Papers they were, he said, that he was robbed of. But there's many thinks he must have put those papers somewhere, and forgotten because of the knock on his head."

"Oh!" the stranger rubbed his hands. "I'm better now," he said; "I am much better. Out in Australia I caught a fever, and it gives me a shock now and again. Much better now. So—Old Dan Leighan fell from his pony—he had an accident and he fell—from his pony—on his head—and was senseless for three days—and was robbed of papers? Now, who could have robbed him of papers? Were they valuable papers?"

"Well, that I cannot say."
Did you ever see a man in an hysterical fit? It is pretty bad to look at a woman laughing and crying with uncontrolled and uncontrollable passion, but it is far worse to see a man. This strong, rugged man, seized with an hysterical fit, rolled about upon the bench, rolling his shoulders and crying at the same time, but his laugh was not mirthful and his crying was a scream, and he staggered as he laughed. Then he steadied himself with one hand on the table; he caught at another man's shoulder with the other hand; and all the time, while the villagers looked on open-mouthed, he laughed and cried, and laughed again, without reason apparent, without restraint, without mirth, without grief, while the tears coursed down his cheeks. Some of the men held him by force; but they could not stop the strong sobbing or the hiccupping laugh or the shaking of his limbs. At last, the fit spent, he lay back on the settee, propped against the corner, exhausted, but outwardly calm and composed again.

"Are you better now?" asked the landlady.
"I've been ill," he said, "and something shook me. Seems as if I've had a kind of a fit, and talked foolishly, lately. What did I say—what did I talk about?"
"You were asking after Mr. Leighan. Who are you? What do you want to know about Mr. Leighan? You asked about his health and his accident. And then you had a fit of hysterics. I never saw a man—nor a woman, neither—in such hysterics. You'd best go home and get to bed. Where are you going to sleep? Where are you going to?"

"Where's your husband, Mrs. Exon? Where's Joseph?" he asked, unexpectedly.
Mrs. Exon started and gasped. "Joseph's gone to Bovey with the cart. He ought to have been home an hour ago. But who are you?"

"William Shears"—he turned to one of the men—"you don't seem to remember me?"

"Why, no," William replied with a jump, because it is terrifying to be recognized by a stranger who has fits and talks about live men's ghosts. "No; I can't rightly say I do."

"Grandfather Derges"—he applied to the oldest inhabitant, who is generally found to have just outlived his memory, though if you had asked him a week or two ago he could have told the most wonderful things—"Grandfather Derges, don't you remember me?"

"No, I don't. Seems as if I be old enough to remember everybody. But my memory isn't what it was. No, I don't remember you. Yet I should say, now, as you might belong to these parts, be 'use you seem to know my name."

"I remember you, Grandfather, when you used to cane the boys in church."
"Ay, ay," said the old man. "So I did, so I did. Did I ever cane you, master? You must have a wonderful memory, now, to remember that."

"Don't you remember me, William Clampt?" he asked a third man.

"No, I don't," replied William, shortly, as if he did not wish to tax his memory about a man so ragged.

"I've been away a good many years," he said, "and I've come back pretty well as poor as when I left and a night more ragged. I didn't think that a beard and rags would alter me so that nobody should know me. Why, Mrs. Exon, does a man leave the parish every week for Australia, that I should be so soon forgotten?"

He did not speak in the least like one of themselves. His manner of speech was not refined, it is true; but there are shades, so to speak, which differentiate the talk of the masters from the talk of the rustics.

"I have come back without anything except a little money in my pocket. Now, Mrs. Exon, give me some bread and cheese for supper; I've had no dinner. Being ill, you see, and shaken more than a bit, I didn't want any dinner. Then I'll have a pipe, and you shall tell me the news and all that has happened. Perhaps by that time you will find out who I am."

When he had eaten his bread and cheese he began to smoke, showing no trace at all of his late fit. He talked about the parish, and showed that he knew everybody in it; he asked who

had married and who were dead; he inquired into the position and prospects of all the farms; he showed the most intimate acquaintance with everybody and the greatest interest in the affairs of all the families. Yet no one could remember who he was.

A-out 9:30 o'clock the door was opened again, this time to admit Harry Rab-jahns, the blacksmith, who had been finishing the choir practice. He stepped in—a big, strong man, with broad shoulders and a brown beard. His eyes fell on the stranger.

"Why?" he cried, "it's Mr. David Leighan come back again, and him in rags!"

"So it is—it's Mr. David," cried Mrs. Exon, clapping her hands. "To think that none of us knew him at first sight! And that you should come to my house, of all the houses in the parish, first, and me not to know you! and you in this condition! But you'll soon change all that; and I'll make up the bed for you—and your uncle and Miss Mary will be downright glad to see you, Mr. David! To think of my not knowing Mr. David!"

CHAPTER X.

It was exactly 12 o'clock Sunday morning when Mr. Leighan was suddenly startled by a man's step. He knew the step somehow, but could not at the moment remember to whom it belonged. The man, whoever he was, knew his way about the place, because he came from the back and walked straight, treading heavily, to the room where Mr. Leighan was sitting and opened the door. It was David coming to call upon his uncle on his return. There was some improvement in his appearance. Joseph Exon had lent him certain garments in place of those he had worn the day before; the canvas trousers, for instance, had gone, and the terrible felt hat with the hole in the crown. His dress was now of a nondescript and incongruous kind, the sailor's jacket ill assorting with the rustic corduroy trousers and waistcoat.

He threw open the door and stood confronting the man whom he had last seen dead, as he thought, killed by his own hand. He tried to face him bravely, but broke down and stood before him with hanging head and guilty eyes.

"So," said Daniel Leighan, "it is David come back again. We thought you were dead."

"You hoped I was dead; say it out," said David, with a rosy voice.

"Dead or alive, it makes no difference to me. Stay; you were in my debt when you went away. Have you come to settle that long-outstanding account?"

David stepped into the room and shut the door behind him.

"You have got something to say to me first," he said in a husky voice. "Have it out now, and get it over. Something you've kept dark, eh?"

"What do you mean?"
"Outside they knew nothing about it. That was well done. No occasion to make a family scandal—and me gone away and all—was there? Come, let us have it out, old man. Who robbed me of my land?"

His words were defiant, but his eyes were uneasy and suspicious.

"Say, rather, who fooled away his inheritance with drink and neglect?"
"Robbed me, I say!"

"If I had not bought your land some one else would. If you've come home in this disposition, David, you had better go away again as soon as you please. Don't waste my time with foolish talk."

"David's gone," you said. "When he comes back, we'll have it out. We won't have a family scandal! Well, I am back. I thought you were dead."

"I am not dead, as you see."
"Well, go on. Say what you've got to say. I'll sit and listen. Come; we owe you so much. Pay it out, then."

"David," said his uncle, quietly, "drink has evidently driven you off your head. Family scandal? What was there to hide? Good heavens! do you suppose that the whole of your family, with its profligacy and drunkenness, was not known to all the countryside? Why, your history is one long scandal. Things to hide? Why, the whole parish was so ashamed of you that it rejoiced when you went away. That is all I have to say to you, David. What are you staring like a black pig for?"

"Oh," cried David. "Is it possible? What does he mean? Come, old man, don't bottle up. You can't do anything to me now, and I might do a great deal for you; I might, if you didn't bottle up and bear malice. Come—you and me know—let's have it out."

"What do we two know? All I know is that you have been away for six years, and you come back in rags, that you had a fit of some kind last night up at Joseph Exon's. Have you got any account to give of yourself?"

"Don't bottle up," David said, feebly. "There's nobody here but you and me. I'll own up. And then I can help you as nobody else can—if you don't bottle up. If you do—but why should you? What's the good? There's nobody here but you and me. What is the good of pretending that there's nothing? Did you ever forgive anybody in your life? Do you think I believe you are going to forgive me—you of all men in the world?"

"Leave off this nonsense about hiding and pretending and inferring. One would

think you had been murdering some body."

David sat down, staring with the blankest astonishment. He had by this time succeeded in impressing upon his brain the fixed conviction that his uncle kept his murderous assault a secret out of regard for the family name, and he came prepared to be submissive, to express contrition, and to offer, in return for the secret being still kept, to give back to his uncle the long-lost box full of papers. And now, this conviction destroyed, he knew not what to think or what to say.

"It can't be!" he said, "it can't be! Uncle, you are playing some deep game with me. You are like a cat with a mouse. You are old, but you are foxy; you've got a game of your own to play, and you think you'll play that game low down. Come," he made one more effort to ascertain if the impossible really had happened—"come. It's like a game of bluff, ain't it? But let's drop it, and play with the cards on the table. See, now, here's my hand—I heard last night that you were alive and hearty, though I had every reason to think you were dead. I was quite sure you were dead—I knew you were dead. You know why I knew. Every night I was assured by yourself that you were dead. Come, now. Well, when I heard that you were alive and hearty, I said to myself, 'To-morrow I'll go and have it out with him when all the people are at church and there's nobody to listen;' because they told me you could not remember—you know what."

"Couldn't remember? I'd have you to know, sir, that my memory is as good as ever it was."

"Oh!" said David, "then you do remember everything?"

"Of course I do."

"Then, uncle, have it out. Let us talk open. I've never forgotten it. I have said to myself over and over again, 'I'm sorry I don't.' I wished I hadn't done it, especially at night when your ghost came; who ever heard of a live man's ghost?"

CHAPTER XI.

"The man's stark, staring mad!" cried Daniel Leighan.

"Come, now. Either say, 'David, I forgive you, because there was not much harm done after all; I forgive you if you'll help me in the way that you only can help me,' or else say, 'David, I'll bear malice all the days of my life.' Then we shall know where we are."

"I don't understand one word you say. Stay!" A thought suddenly struck him. "Stay! The last time I set eyes on you it was on the morning you left Challa-combe, and on the same day that I met with an accident. The last time I set eyes on you was in this room. You cursed and swore at me. You went on your knees and prayed the Lord in a most disrespectful manner to revenge you, as you put it. Do you wish me to forgive those idle words? Man alive! you might as well ask me to forgive the last night's thunder. Reproach yourself as much as you please—I'm glad you've got such a tender conscience—but don't think I am going out of my way to bear malice because you got into a sper six years ago!"

"Then you do remember, uncle," said David, with a sigh of infinite satisfaction. "Well, I thought you would remember, and bear malice. It was the last you saw of me, you see—and the last I saw of you."

David laughed, not the hysterical laugh of last night, but a low laugh of sweet satisfaction and secret enjoyment.

"Well, uncle, since you don't bear malice, there's no harm done. And now we can be friends again, I suppose? And if it comes to foxiness, perhaps it will be my turn to play fox."

"Play away, David—play away."

"I've come home, you see"—David planted his feet more firmly and leaned forward, one hand on each knee—"I've come home."

"In rags."

"In poverty and rags. I've got nothing but two or three pounds. When they are gone, perhaps before, I shall want more money. The world is everywhere full of rogues—quite full of rogues—besides land thieves like yourself, and there isn't enough work to go around. Mostly they live like you, by plundering and robbing."

"Kind work, then. In this country if you don't work you won't get any money. Do you think you are the more likely to get money out of me by calling names?"

"Well, you see, uncle, I think I shall find a way to get some money out of you."

"Not one penny—not one penny, David, will you get." There was a world of determination in Mr. Leighan when it came to refusing money.

"It's natural that you should say so to begin with." His manner had now quite changed. He began by being confused, hesitating and shamefaced; he was now assured, and even braggart. "I expected as much. You would rather see your nephew starve than give him a penny. You've robbed him of his land; you've driven him out of his house; and when he comes back in rags, you tell him he may go and starve."

"Words don't hurt, David," his uncle replied, quietly. "I am too old to be moved by words. Now, if you have nothing more to say, go."

(To be continued.)

Helpful.

Mrs. Nexdore—My daughter had her first opportunity last night to play the new piano we bought for her. Did you hear her?

Mrs. Pepprey—Yes, and we had company last night; we were delighted.

Mrs. Nexdore—Er—really?

Mrs. Pepprey—Yes, we didn't like our callers at all and were glad they left early.—Philadelphia Press.

Don't be surprised if love that feeds on beauty should die of starvation.

DESPOTISM OF POWER

Avery C. Moore, editor of the Weiser (Idaho) World, delivered the principal address at the Portland Labor Day exercises, September 4. The address in part follows:

"Each American, whether he works with his head or his hands; whether he is an employer or a wage earner; no matter where he was born or what creed he professes, is entitled to be judged by his fellows on his worth as a man. In return he is bound in honor to do his best to give to every man a fair deal, for no man deserves more and no man should receive less."

Mr. Chairman, and friends: I have chosen these words from a recent public address of a prominent member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen—Theodore Roosevelt. In their spirit it will be my endeavor to speak to you today.

It is in the nature of man to follow example when he will not give heed to precept, and it rejoices me today to know that the American citizen has continually before him—a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night—the life and character of the noblest among living men—the president of the United States. He it is who says, "Each American is entitled to be judged on his worth as a man." He it is who says, "Every man deserves a fair deal—neither more nor less." These are the truths that power is denying in practice, but which over a million American workmen are banded together to defend.

It was the "Bard of Avon" who said: "Oh, it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." The power which gold confers does not possess the character of benevolence. True, there have been instances wherein men have acquired power and used it gently, but they are rare—and as refreshing—as the showers that come in summer. The abuse of power is the rule, and it is the abuse of power which is giving the people concern.

The quarrel is not so much with the man who has power as with the conditions which bestow it. The system which makes the happiness and well-being of thousands subject to the caprice of an individual, or an association of individuals, is wrong, and to diffuse this power among the people should be the ambition of every man, whether in private or in public life.

My brothers, I have not come to you with a message of pessimism. One cannot breathe the free air of Idaho's glorious valleys and not catch the sunshine in his life; so when I say to you that there are great wrongs to be righted in this land we love so well, I would have you know that I believe they can be and will be righted—righted by the genius, and in the wrath if need be of him who is greater than all the crowned sovereigns that have been or are—your brother and mine—the American citizen.

Ours is a government designed to establish man in the fulness of liberty, and its people will not be shackled in mind or in industry, because shackles strong enough for that purpose have never yet been forged.

But they are a patient nation, the American people. Conscious of the strength of a race of giants, they have elected to remain gentle under provocation to strike, and strike hard. But he who says they are afraid does not read their history aright.

There are five men in this country today who, acting in concert, could stop the wheels of industry and bring about the desolation that follows panic. True, they don't do it—it wouldn't pay in dollars and cents just now; but the power is theirs—the power that the people must regain. It does not alter the condition any to say that one of these men is a prominent member of the Baptist church; the church long ago found him a burden. It does not subtract anything from the danger to say that another of these power enthroned men is erecting free libraries of marble and granite. In the eyes of labor these are but the monuments offered by a stricken conscience to the martyred toilers of Homestead and Latimer—martyrs to the despotism of power.

From servile courts they have wrung the brutal injunction, and with the fruits of labor's toil purchased legislation to keep themselves in power—then asked applause for erecting schools that the children of the poor are not permitted the leisure to attend, and for filling libraries with books that they do not know how to read.

I rejoice that the despotism of power does not rest so heavily upon the men and women of the golden west as upon the toilers of the eastern states. Life in this Eden-land gives an interpretation to liberty that they have not experienced and therefore cannot understand; but in the great struggle that engages them they have the right to expect help from you.

And the time will come, and come quickly, when you will need their help to preserve America for the American people. It has long been one of the unholy ambitions of the despotism of

power to throw open the portals of the republic to the pagan hordes of the Chinese empire.

You all have reason to know what that would mean to American labor and to American institutions. Yet under the hypocritical pretext that to continue to exclude Chinese from this country will be to forfeit our trade with China, the despotism of power declares that the bars must come down.

It spoke through a national gathering here the other day—spoke cowardly and to the shame of the states represented.

But the time will soon be at hand for American labor to speak and when it comes it will say in thunder tones that will reverberate through every corridor of the nation's capitol, that the republic's sacred soil shall never become a haven for a race of men who do not want to call it "home;" that because manhood, and not the dollar, is the standard of value in measuring greatness—we do not want, and will not have, the trade of China, if it must bring the labor of China with it.

Do you ask me how the despotism of power must be overthrown? Brothers, I believe in the ballot—the easiest weapon to use, and the one weapon of which power stands in deadly fear. Use it, workers of Oregon, but first join hands.

And I believe that the ballot should be in the hands of every American woman. There is no phase of existence that woman has not brightened, and the American political system will become free from tarnish and take on lustre whenever woman is established in the elective franchise. Years ago we struck the word "man" from the constitution of my state, and every election day since then has seen the husbands and wives, the fathers and mothers of Idaho traveling hand in hand in the steadfast ways of citizenship. And we would not return these wives and mothers of Idaho to subjection any more than we would take the other steps backward into barbarism. The happy experience of the past few years has rendered us proof against ridicule—and the false doctrine of the superiority of man. When men say to us that that the ballot degrades womanhood—but they don't say that to the men of Idaho; it wouldn't be well with them if they did.

Yes, the workers of this country will come into their own through the ballot box, and through the ballot box alone. They will obey the laws as they find them but change them when they are wrong. Power prefers to obey the laws it pleases to obey—and break the others at will. But examples set by power will not remain very long. Each day is developing strong men in the public service—men so strong that they are demanding obedience to the law alike from the hovel and the palace. The proper employment of the ballot will develop more of them. Then the despotism of power will pass forever. This is the last word of counsel that I would leave with you today: Do not let the superficial things of life blind your eyes to the things substantial. Men with the reins of power in their hands will try it, either directly or through their minions in congress. Don't be deceived. When your congressman talks to you about a larger navy or the dual tariff, remind him that a national employer's liability will be on the calendar as "unfinished business" the coming session and ask him what he intends to do about it. He may be endeavoring to keep a sinking bark afloat on the comfortless ocean of political eminence by stopping the leaks with the doctrine of class hatred.

When he lies to you about your home being in danger of Mormon invasion, tell him that you are quite willing to take care of your own homes—and remind him that he will find a national 8-hour measure pending in congress which is designed to give you two hours more each day in which to do it. Then if he fails to perform your will, replace him with some one else. There are men among your citizens who are brave enough and eloquent enough to stand up on the floors of congress and fight the battles of the people; send them to represent you.

Shall I add a word of testimony regarding the institution of labor unionism? During the years that I have held membership in organized labor I have always found patriotism to be its invigorating principle. It delights me to contemplate the splendid work for human society that it has done and is continually striving to do. In every struggle to place the race of man upon higher ground labor unionism has been in the vanguard, battling with courage and devotion as honor shows the way. It has not always won—but all of its victories have been for civilization and for peace, and the good that it is doing today we can neither measure nor comprehend. We do know that it is speeding the coming day when the despotism of power shall be "as a tale that is told" and the rights of man forevermore established.

This is the whole of the mission of man and the only excuse for government. It may not be in our generation, but we will live in the faith that the time will come when the citizen shall be judged, not by his goods, or his lands, or his dollars, but "on his worth as a man." And when that day comes, a review of the ages that have gone, or a forecast of those that are to be, shall not tell of a people so righteous in their practice of justice—so happy in their homes.