

Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"ANNE JUDGE, SPINSTER," "LITTLE KATE KIRBY,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

Reuben turned and looked toward the gateway, where from the shadows into the warm sunshine beyond stepped the young lady whom he had seen first in his father's house. Her surprise was great, but the young lady's surprise was still more strongly marked. She stopped, clasped her hands together, and then came on again, with two large clear gray eyes distended.

"Mr. Culwick! you in Worcester? You have returned; you are going to your father?"

Reuben shook his head and smiled a little.

"You are a foolish fellow," she said, "and almost as strange a man as your father is. Are you still living down that wretched street in Cambridge?"

"I can only afford to live in wretched streets," was the reply.

"What has brought you to Worcester?"

"To see Aunt Eastbell," he replied, "and to discover, if possible, the mystery of my second-cousin Sarah. They are my relatives; I am more interested in them than I can explain. May I ask in return what Aunt Eastbell and my second-cousin has to do with you?"

"I am interested in them more than I can explain," was the arch answer; "that's all."

"I wish you would explain something. Who are you, to begin with?"

"Ah, that's not worth elucidating," she said. "If you tell me that my name is Holland, will that make the position any clearer?"

"It might," said Reuben, quickly. "My father wished me to marry a Miss Holland once, a young lady whom I had never seen, and whom I was to take upon trust. Are you the lady?"

"Yes, sir."

"And have you married my father instead of me?" he asked, satirically.

"I would not marry either of you for twice your father's money," she said, frankly. "I am simply his housekeeper, at a housekeeper's wage. My father was his best friend, and your father has been kind to me, in his odd way, since my father's death."

"And now," said Reuben, "will you explain why you are interested in Aunt Eastbell, why the girl who has deserted her corresponds with you? why you pass yourself off as the niece of that old woman who has left us?"

"I'll work backward, if you will allow me," she said, "call myself Miss Mag-geridge because the name of Holland is familiar to your aunt. The girl corresponds with me because she knows that I read her letters to her grandmother, and that I am the grandmother's friend while she is away. I am interested in Mrs. Eastbell, and for the other reason, the lines in which she is left by her friends. I have been interested in Mrs. Eastbell for some years now, for the matter of that."

"Indeed! and her granddaughter, Sarah Eastbell, also?"

"Of late days—a little. She was not very gracious to me—she never cared to see me there. When she got into trouble, she thought that she would make me her confidante, but it was too late."

"When she got into trouble," echoed Reuben, "what trouble was that?"

"Come with me, and I'll show you."

She led the way out of St. Oswald's into the Tithing, crossed the road to the corner of the street leading to the prison, and pointed to the wall, in which several bills were posted. One was to the effect that a reward of five pounds was offered for the apprehension of Sarah Eastbell, late of Worcester, who had conspired with others for the unlawful issue of spurious coin.

Reuben stared with amazement at the placard.

"It is well that the old woman is blind," he murmured. "I did not think it so bad as this."

"Neither is it."

"Rain always keeps the people away; no matter what you offer them in the way of attraction—they won't come, sir."

Here the eyes remained so long in the corners next to Reuben's that he was afraid that Mr. Spind's vision had become permanently fixed.

"I have seen you somewhere, and that is what bothers me a bit," said Mr. Spind, by way of apology.

Reuben did not tell him that he was lodging next door but two, and that they had passed each other in the street with tolerable frequency; but the idea had suggested itself to put a few questions on his own account, when a third person joined them. The newcomer was a small, spare man, in a long, seedy great coat with big horn buttons, extending from his chin to his heels, and who wore a dirty yellow handkerchief tied loosely round his throat. He was a man of an unsteady gait, and a glaze of sweat on his forehead that one wondered how he had ever struggled out of his malady alive.

"You don't want me to-night, I suppose?" he said to the proprietor.

"Yes, I do want you. Because I pay you," said Mr. Spind, abruptly, "you don't want your money next Saturday, I suppose?" he asked, with so much biting sarcasm.

"Yes, I do—and I'll take care I get it," said the other, far from civilly, "along with last week's. What's the use of dressing up and performing in the legs here, there's nobody coming, and it's a beastly shame on me."

"If I have the honor of addressing Signor Vizobini, I may add that I have come here this evening expressly to witness your performance," said Reuben.

"Have you, though?" said the acrobat, surprised in an extraordinary degree.

"Well, if you can't let a fellow off, I'll go and dress," and he walked away in deep thought.

"He is a vagabond not up to his work," said Mr. Spind. "I took him by advertisement, of his faith, of his recommendations. He has fallen off three times this week, and if he breaks his neck one of these fine days it will be a happy release to the profession."

"What is that man's real name?" asked Reuben.

"I haven't the slightest idea; Jack Sheppard, perhaps."

"You know his address, surely?"

"Oh, yes. No. 2 Potter's court, Walworth road."

"Thank you. Good night."

Reuben knew nothing of Potter's court; but he muttered, "Poor Sarah!" as he went down the cavernous entry in arch of No. 2. He knocked at the parlor door with the handle of his stick, and a grim-looking individual in his shirt sleeves answered the appeal.

"What's up?" he said, in not too civil a style of address.

"Do you know a Mr. Vizobini?" said Reuben.

"He performs at the Saxe-Gotha gardens on the slack rope."

"Oh," said the parlor foot, disparagingly; "top of the 'ouse—front room."

Reuben went up the dark stairs, reached a front room door with his stick, and tapped gently.

"Who's there?" said a faint, weak voice, which Reuben did not recognize.

"I come from the Saxe-Gotha."

"From Tom?"

"The door was cautiously opened, and there streamed through the aperture, through which a woman's face was peering—white and wan and pined—a rush of hot air as from a furnace mouth.

"Is he locked up?" said the woman, somewhat apathetically.

"No. He will be back presently, I think."

"Come in if you like, then; we don't charge any more," said the woman, with a somber flippancy, and glided back noiselessly to the side of a big fire that was blazing in the grate, sat down in the chair she had quitted, and leaned her head against the wall like a woman tired out.

But it was not her at which he gazed so intently as at the figure of a girl in striped cotton dress, who lay face-foremost on the patch-work counterpane of the bed. It was a figure of despair that thrilled him; it was surely second-cousin Sarah covering from him in that hour of her discovery.

"I say, what's your message?" asked the woman. "What have you got to say about Tom, and what has Tom to say?"

"Are you Tom's wife?"

"Yes, I am."

"And that's Tom's sister?"

Here the woman burst into a paroxysm of weeping, for the cessation of which Reuben waited patiently, keeping his eyes upon the figure on the bed, and doubtful still if it were sleep that kept Sarah so dumb and passive. It was a violent cough, that of Mrs. Eastbell's, which was sending away all the life that was left in the sufferer, who carried consumption in her every look and fitful breath.

"You have come for her," said Mrs. Eastbell, in a husky voice.

"Yes, I have come for her, if she'll trust me."

"You're just the chap for the likes of us to trust," said Mrs. Eastbell, ironically, "and poor Sally is sure to be uncommon glad to see you. Not that she'll mind much which way it is, for she's been awfully lonesome."

"If it ain't Worcester prison, it'll be the Surrey canal. Here—hi—Sally!" screamed the woman, "you're fetched, my gal! Here's a cove says he wants you particular."

The girl lying on the bed sprang up on her hands at once, and glared toward them both, shaking her long black hair from her head as she did so. Her face was flushed with sleep, but the pallor rapidly stole over it as she recognized Reuben Culwick standing by the fire place observing her.

"What can you want?" she murmured, "what has made you come in search of me?"

"To help you," was the answer, "for I am afraid that you are in bad hands, and I wish to take you from them."

"There's no getting away," answered Sarah; "ask her."

"Tom wouldn't like it," said Mrs. Eastbell, thus appealed to, "Sally's handy."

"And Sally knows too much," added the girl, scornfully, "and if she moved one step away from home they would tell the police where to find me."

"I wouldn't," Sally, said the woman, raising her head from the wall, and inclining it forward in her self-defense.

"You know who would?"

"Ah! I can't answer for him," replied Mrs. Eastbell, leaning her head back again; "when his back's up he don't mind much what he does, certainly, and misfortune has sours him awful."

"I saw your grandmother yesterday," said Reuben.

"You did?" exclaimed she—"at Worcester?"

"I hope she was well—that she didn't know anything."

"No—she lay there just as I saw her weeks ago, very patient, very gentle, and very full of love for you. She was waiting for her granddaughter to come back. Couldn't she come to you? I don't mean at once," he added, as Sarah recoiled at the suggestion, "but after you had left here and got some situation, which might enable you to hire a room for her. A friend of mine has found you a situation already, and I will be security for your faithful service, until they learn to trust you for yourself."

Sarah broke down at last. The thin little hands went up quickly to the face, and she sobbed forth:

"God bless you, sir; but don't—oh, don't say another word."

But Reuben, carried away by his theme, seized his advantage and went on. He had one object in life now—to get Sarah Eastbell from that house.

"Why, you are my cousin," he said, earnestly, "and I shouldn't I help you for your own sake, as well as for the sake of that old woman grieving for you down in Worcester?"

"Sally," said her sister-in-law, slowly and emphatically, "I've been a thinking it all over."

"Well?" said Sarah Eastbell.

"And if you'd like to go, I'll not blab a single word against you, even if he kills me, and he's often said he would. He might find you out, and if he does he'll think twice about doing you an ill turn. He's not so bad, you know, take him all together. Go—run away—look it, he exclaimed Mrs. Eastbell, with increasing excitement evidencing itself along with her slangy phraseology, "while there's time!"

Sarah wavered, for she turned quickly to her sister-in-law.

"You—you mean this? You will not tell Tom or Tom's friends—you will let me pass from this place unwatched—you will give me time to get away?"

"Of course I will."

"I came here of my own free will, sir, not knowing where to go in my despair and fright," she said, turning to Reuben; "but, oh, if I could get away again, if you only knew that!"

Her hands fell helplessly to her side, and she went backward step by step, until she reached the door, and sat down with a new horror on her countenance.

The door had opened and Tom Eastbell, with his long great-coat buttoned round him, was standing in the doorway regarding them. Over his shoulder loomed the forbidding countenance of the woman, which, by the jarring and clanging that seemed through the house, was evidently being bolted and barred.

(To be continued.)

GOLDEN GATE CITY LEADS.

San Francisco Shows the Largest Percentage of Suicides.

The number of people who voluntarily shuffled off this mortal coil in American and other cities during last year has been investigated by some delver in statistics and the following figures indicate the results: San Francisco leads with the largest ratio, 39.1 per 100,000 population. Next comes another Pacific coast city, Los Angeles, with a ratio of 29.8. The reader has naturally been looking for Chicago, and that city does in fact come next, with a ratio of 24.0, followed by the neighboring city of Milwaukee, whose ratio is 22.2.

New Orleans was next with 20.9, and then comes the borough of Manhattan with 20.9, though greater New York as a whole is well down the list with a ratio of only 13.6. This is less than Rochester, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, Omaha and Louisville, besides all of those specifically enumerated above.

As to the foreign cities, Paris leads the list with a ratio of 42, followed by Berlin 36, Vienna 28 and London 23. There were more suicides in Saxony than in any other country, 31.1 per 100,000. In Denmark the ratio was 25.8, in Austria 21.2, in France 15.7, in the German empire 14.3, and Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, the United States and Spain followed in the order given.

The table referring to American cities is somewhat difficult to explain. Why the city of the Golden Gate, and California, with its gloomy climate, its fogs, its sun, its fruit and its flowers, should show the greatest number of suicides seems a mystery, unless the presence of a large Chinese population explains it. The high suicide rate of Chicago is, perhaps, accounted for by the rush and struggle of that great city and the large foreign element it contains—a foreign element, moreover, the same is perhaps true of Milwaukee and Cincinnati. The high rate at New Orleans may possibly be attributed to its relation to France and the ideas and traditions brought here from Paris, the suicide capital of the world. But New York City casts a cloud over some of these explanations. Here are the large foreign populations, the stress and strain of living and working, the poverty, the excitement. Yet Philadelphia, the sleeping city of the humorous parographers, has a higher ratio of suicides than greater New York. And how is it to be explained that New Haven leads all the other New England cities in the number of suicides? St. Paul and Minneapolis lay side by side, but in Minneapolis the ratio was 11.4 and in St. Paul it is but 6.5. It seems that the conclusions must be that there is no method in suicide madness and that the effort to reduce it to rule is doomed to failure.

Youth's Unrestraint.

"Don't you sometimes long for your childhood's happy days?" said the sentimental woman.

"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne, "there are times when I would enjoy hanging on the fence and making faces at people I don't like, instead of having to say, 'How do you do, dear?' So glad to see you!"—Washington Star.

Legitimate.

She—So you lost all your money in speculation?

The Urgent Case—Yes'm.

"But, beside that, didn't you have any legitimate business?"

"Oh, yes, I was a dealer in straight tips."—Life.

Decidedly So.

"Have that newly married couple set up housekeeping yet?"

"I should say so! They're so set up they won't notice their neighbors."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

TO ST. VALENTINE.

"Valentine! Saint Valentine!
A pilgrim to thy holy shrine,
Behold I come!
Forsake, and leave me here,
Because of love for one small maiden.
My lips are dumb."

O Valentine! Saint Valentine!
Thou knowest this little maid of mine,
This dainty sweet,
So pure and fair that when she passes
Our gray old world grows green with
Beneath her feet:

That everywhere her dear face shows
The west wind takes it for a rose
O grant, sweet Saint, that to her know-
ing
Thou fragrance soft and bloom be showing,
Give me the thorn!

Oh, Phyllis fair! Oh, Phyllis young!
I would mine were a poet's tongue
That I might say
That I might sing the golden numbers—
To wake your heart from out its slumbers—
My love for you.

Yet—no, dear heart! The years will bring
A sweeter song than this I sing:
So gather on,
My love for you.

When he shall see the happy lover,
And I am gone.
—New York Independent.

Aunt Madeline's Valentine.

AND the girl clings to this silly notion? It's preposterous! If you don't make her give up this fellow and accept Rufus Clark, I'll have no more to do with any of you. I go to-night unless the girl gives in. She's your daughter; make her obey!"

And Aunt Madeline walked out of the room, leaving her niece—gentle, helpless Mrs. Price—in despair, for well she knew that her persuasions were powerless with loyal Kitty Price.

Kitty, the eldest of the widow's four children, had been Aunt Madeline's protégée for years. Ever since her father's death the child had been clothed and educated by the aunt of Mr. Price's, a child that her father, who, to be more her darling Kitty, had for the last three years boarded with Mrs. Price, her liberal payment and well-chosen gifts helping out the widow's straitened income in a way all of them appreciated. That Aunt Madeline's "should go" meant, in fact, that the little ones could have no new suits that winter, that only bare necessities could be bought, perhaps not even these. Yet Mrs. Price felt afraid to interfere further with Kitty's choice of a husband. It was true that the rich Rufus Clark, who had never married, was not a child, steady and devoted, as Herbert Huntley, who had a small salary and no bright prospects. But Kitty unfortunately loved Herbert for Rufus appeared on the field, and she did not believe her aunt Madeline, who assured her that her support herself and her family after a few years.

Aunt Madeline had made a love match herself, and it had not turned out well. She, too, had been loved by a rich man, and by one who was not poor, was not never married, and just when Mrs. Price persisted in marrying her choice, reversed had come, and he, a weak character, could not bear trials, resorted to stimulants to cheer him up, and at last was for years dependent upon his wife for his home and support. The rich neighborly city of Milwaukee, whose ratio is 22.2.

Just because I choose to love, in love was perfectly dry outside, but the old lady was hard put to it, "to take it for granted I am going! And as for Rufus Clark, let him go, my child, let him go!"

"I suppose you want Herbert, for better or worse, and if it's for worse, dear," she said, "I'll give you my blessing, but I can't," the girl was just repeating, when her gentle mother knocked at her door. Mrs. Price was one of those women who never entered a child's room without knocking. "Come in, my dear," she called, "I've a good mind to tell her so."

"You won't have a chance, my dear; your aunt is going to leave to-night."

"Leave for good? O mother! and I have done this when you need the help she gives so much! I wish—"

"Kitty, dear, it is a sacrifice, and one I cannot ask of you, but if you make it of your own free will you are doing a great and unselfish thing. Rufus Clark would take Jim into his employ, your aunt would have a luxurious home with you, moving in the best society, if anything happens to me—and Rufus is as good as Herbert—I cannot but think your liking would soon grow as warm for him as for your early love."

The girl's face was white and fixed. She loved her brothers and little sister devotedly, and then, too, had not her joyous father begged her to be a true elder sister to them? He might have foreseen some trial like this, for only a day or two before he died he had said to her, "My girl, you have a hard lot before you—the eldest daughter of a poor widow—you may have to sacrifice a bright future for the sake of your orphan brothers and sister; but do it cheerfully, bravely, and unselfishly, and God will make such sacrifice work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

These words seemed ringing in the poor girl's ears. She must not drive Aunt Madeline from her mother. She must not deprive her brothers of Rufus's aid, or Minnie of the safe refuge she could command for her if she gave up Herbert. With pale lips, the girl said: "Wait a moment, mother; I'll speak to Aunt Madeline; only let me sit alone a while."

The mother, frightened at the girl's looks, yet knowing how good and true a man Rufus Clark was, left the room, though longing to uphold her girl in her first decision, and Kitty sat alone, not bravely, but unselfishly, until it should grow dusk that her face might not betray her.

Meanwhile Mrs. Joyce was packing her trunks and boxes, for she was a determined woman, and meant to keep her word. A friend had repeatedly urged her to come and "see old maida's hall" with her, and sometimes when the boys were particularly quarrelsome and noisy Aunt Madeline had felt inclined to accept, and had hinted as much to Miss Mills, who often said she would expect her "at any time." So now she telegraphed to Boston that she was to come by the night train, and went to work at her packing to keep down the feelings of regret and compunction that threatened to overwhelm her. She decided to send a postcard to her father or come for the rest, and thought with relief that she need

"Government of the People, by the People, and For the People Shall Not Perish from the Earth."

Lincoln's Law Partner.

Hiram W. Beckwith, from 1856 to 1861 a partner of Abraham Lincoln, died recently at St. Luke's hospital in Chicago, aged 72. Mr. Beckwith's father was one of the pioneers of Illinois, having helped to found the town of Danville in 1819.

Young Beckwith studied law under Ward H. Lamon, who was marshal of the District of Columbia during Lincoln's administration.

He was a close friend of Lincoln and later became his resident partner at Danville, while Lincoln was a circuit lawyer.

From 1867 to 1902 Mr. Beckwith was president of the State Historical Society. He was compelled to resign in the latter year on account of illness. He left a widow and two sons.

Stories of Lincoln.

Anecdote Giving a Pen Picture of the Great President.

In Fairfield, Iowa, lives Mrs. William Prewitt, who is a sister to Ann Rutledge, the early love of Abraham Lincoln. In speaking recently of the youth of the great President, Mrs. Prewitt said: "I was only a little girl when Ann died, but I remember seeing her and Mr. Lincoln together much of the time. She and Abe had a grammar in common and took it in studying it. After Ann's death he returned the book to our family and we still have it. Her death was caused by brain fever and I remember the last time Mr. Lincoln saw her. She had been delicious, but toward the end became rational and asked to see her lover. He talked with her for a long time alone and when he came out of the room I remember that he looked broken hearted. At that time we never thought of Abraham Lincoln as a lawyer, though he may have been studying in secret. He was a great story teller, even then, and when at the Hampton Roads conference, Feb. 2, 1865, Mr. Hunter, the Confederate Secretary of State, referred to the correspondence between Charles I. and Parliament as a precedent for a negotiation between a constitutional ruler and rebels, Lincoln replied: 'I must refer you to Mr. Seward, for he is posted in such things, and I don't profess to be; but my only distinct recollection of the matter is that Charles lost his head.'"

A clergyman of some prominence was one day presented to Lincoln, who gave the visitor a chair and said, with an air of patient waiting:

"I am now ready to hear what you have to say."

"Oh, bless you, sir," replied the clergyman, "I have nothing special to say. I merely called to pay my respects."

"My dear sir," said the President, rising promptly, his face showing instant relief, and with both hands grasping that of his visitor, "I am very glad to see you, indeed. It is a relief to find a clergyman, or any other man, for that matter, who has nothing to say. I thought you had come to preach to me."

On one fierce winter night during the war Mr. Lincoln emerged from the front door of the White House, his link figure bent over as he drew tightly about his shoulders the shawl which he employed for such protection, for he was on his way to the War Department as the west corner of the grounds, where in times of battle he was wont to get the midnight dispatches from the field. As the blast struck him he thought of the numbness of the pacing sentry and, turning to him, said:

"Young man, you've got a cold job to-night; step inside and stand guard here."

"My orders keep me out here," the soldier replied.

"I have been stationed outside," the soldier answered, and resumed his beat.

"Hold on there!" said Mr. Lincoln, as he turned back again, "it occurs to me that I am commander-in-chief of the army, and I order you to go inside."

Unnoticed.

"You say you saw my sister at a recent wedding?"

"Yes, it wasn't very long ago."

"But I don't remember that she mentioned seeing you."

"Very likely, I was only the groom."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

One Advantage.

"There's one good thing about being sick," remarked the philosopher.

"What's that?" asked the cynic.

"A fellow feels so much better when he gets over it," replied the philosophical party.

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