

Second Cousin Sarah

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

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

What did it all mean? If Mary Holland was not to be trusted, if this strange girl had for years deceived him, if his mother's warning were after all correct, what was to be done at the very hour when he was in great trouble? The door opened, and Mary Holland came into the room.

"You sent for me?" she said.

"Yes," he said, "in misery and fear I sent for you. Sit down, please," he said; "I am anxious to ask you many questions."

The old pillar which Sarah Easthall had perceived stole to Mary's face as Reuben spoke, but she took the chair which he had indicated, and which was at a little distance from the couch, and sat down facing him.

"Though we have not seen a great deal of each other in our lives, Mary," he began, kindly and earnestly, "tell me, is it through you that your change of life has occurred—that I have lost my father's love, and home, and fortune?"

"Yes," said Mary sadly, "that is true."

"I lost the three without losing confidence in you. As I learned to respect you, so I began to think of the possibility of many past mistakes on my side and my mother's. Of late days I have considered you the friend of all in this house."

"I have done my best to be the friend," she answered.

"Last night, and for the first time in my life, a suspicion seized me. I hardly know what it was. It would have passed away, but that it came again to-day, accompanied by new doubts. You see this letter? Are you aware of its purpose?"

"No, save that it was written in my presence by Captain Peterson. Dare he—dare he refer to me in that? He cried, with the color coming to her cheeks, 'a woman, a woman, and then dying away into the old gray twilight.'"

"You say that. He is as silent as respect. But your relations between you and that man—oh, how they are!"

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his first idea when he began to remember that he was in the picture gallery which Simon Culwick had built. What a heavy sleep his must have been, to be sure! He stood up, and tried to pierce through the darkness, and a sudden chill seized upon his veins, and turned him sick as he fancied that he might have woken up blind like his grandmother! Why not?—It was in the family—and all before him was awfully black and thick and unpenetrable. It was raining outside, too—that accounted for the blinding in his ears which he had awakened with, and which he had thought was his brain.

Finally he groped his way toward the door, keeping his hand on the wall, and the varnished surfaces of the paintings with which the wall was hung. He had made up his mind, he would seek Grandmother Easthall, and tell her the truth, and more than the truth if it were possible. He was being imposed upon. People of no principle had taken advantage of his stumblings, and were setting his nearest and dearest relation against him. Reuben Culwick was at the head of affairs, poisoning the public mind. From the servants had turned upon him, and brought him no dinner, and left him in the dark. He came to a full stop, and fell against the pictures, scratching them with his trembling hands, in his alarm, for the door behind him in the distance—the side door leading away from the corridor—had opened suddenly and sharply, and was shut again as he glanced towards it. A faint light of light which narrowed and then passed away. In that fleeting moment he had seen enough to scare a stronger nerve than his—his white figure had glided into the chamber, and was vanishing toward him, he was sure! He remained silent and trembling till the rustling of garments assured him that something was approaching him with noiseless steps, that reminded him of the ghost in the "Dante's Specter," which he had seen once from the gallery of a theater. He made a swift plunge for the door in his horror.

It was his sister's spirit, he was sure—she had been murdered by those from whose clutches he had made an effort to save her—and she had come for him! His last hope had expired, and it was all over with his dreams of glory.

"Tom Easthall," said a sharp voice in his ears, "you are here! Why don't you speak to me?"

"Grandmother!" he ejaculated, "is it you?"

"Come here and sit down—we can talk here in the dark, and I want to talk to you."

"I'd rather have a light, thank you," said Tom, who still had his suspicions that all was not right. He found his way to the principal door, and opened it, letting in a stream of light from the corridor. He looked back at the door which he had just opened, and a strange phantom enough in her white night dress, and with a countenance wrapped round in a ghastly smile, and trailing on the ground behind her.

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"Thanked, I won't," said Tom, approaching the table.

He took a printed form from his pocket, and began writing in great haste, blotting and crossing as he went, being clumsy with his pen, and unsteady of hand that day. He and the Captain, prepared for business, had brought down a form of will, praying for a chance like this, and, lo! it had come in the hour of depression and incertitude. It didn't look a nice will; but it would stand its ground, he hoped, being a natural sort of testament in its way, and leaving all things fair and square.

The old woman was standing by his side, with two cold hands pressing heavily upon his shoulder, and—great heaven!—the gray eyes were unseeing and staring at him!

"Don't go on with it," she whispered, "Sally wouldn't—wouldn't go away—for good."

"I tell you—"

"I tell you that—you—lie!"

She turned, as if to totter feebly to her chair again, and he sprang up with a shout of horror as she fell back heavily. "Grandmother!" he cried.

"Tell me—Sally—that I—"

It was all over, and tragedy took a deeper shade into itself from that hour. Grandmother Easthall was dead!

(To be continued.)

CROWS LEARN TO FISH.

Taught by Gulls, They Have Now Become Experts.

"See those crows flying low over the water out there?" said a Santa Fé railroad conductor the other day, as his train was speeding along near the Delaplaine river, below Joliet.

"They are the smartest birds you ever saw. I've been watching them for a year, and all others will have to take a lower perch when they are around."

"Maybe you think those crows are just flying about for the fun of it. Fact is, they are very busy. They're fishing, and they have the petrels, gulls, and hawks beat at their own game. Never heard of crows that fish? We can't stop and watch 'em, but if we could you'd see I am right."

"It's a new industry, as to speak, with them. Two years ago a crow didn't know a thing about the piscatorial art. But when the drainage canal was opened the gulls followed it from Lake Michigan, and they have taught the crows how to catch a fish."

"Now the river along here is almost black with crows, as you can see for yourself."

"When the gulls first appeared hereabouts and flew over the water looking for fish the crows sat on the trees and waited until the lake fowl had made a catch. Then the crows would swoop down from the trees and chase the gull until it dropped the fish. Very often the gull would get away, and the crows would have to fly back hungry. They are wise now, and not only do they catch fish, but they have driven most of the gulls away."

"I've seen crows by the dozen sitting in these low trees watching the gulls skim slowly down the river. Every time a gull would dip into the water the crows would strike after it and rob it of the prey."

"When the gulls left the valley the crows began fishing for themselves. The only trouble with them was they couldn't fly slow enough, and they didn't seem to want to take to the water when they saw a fish. They have got braver over that now. They sit on floating boards or logs and keep an eye on the water, and will catch two fish while a gull is catching one."

"Some people say that a bird learns only by instinct to do a thing like this, but this is a case where the crows have been taught by other birds. They are the champion fishers of the Delaplaine valley, and I wouldn't be surprised if they would teach all the other crows until they will become known as water fowl. It'll be pretty hard to teach 'em to swim, but they've got the fighting art down to a fine point."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

THE SHOE RACK IN LONDON.

The Only One of Its Kind in the World.

New Yorkers who go to London are always surprised at the elementary methods of the street bookkeepers who still carry the traditional box and expect their patrons to lean against a wall until their shoes are cleaned. This kind has practically disappeared in New York, but London is still ignorant of any better.

But progress is not altogether unknown among the London bookkeepers, and they have recently taken to what is regarded as an American innovation. This is the rack with which the final polish is given to shoes. Only the most enterprising of the boys have taken to this improvement, which they proudly describe as an importation from America.

"I have often thought that there would be ample return for any man with the courage to establish book rooms in London," said a New Yorker, who has just returned to this country. "At present there are no such conveniences to be enjoyed there. Situated in the right part of London, a bookkeeping room, in my opinion, would make a fortune for its proprietor."

"To-day the average Londoner who has been brought up with the idea of having his shoes cleaned by the chambermaid at home or a small boy in the street, has no conception of the comfort of the American bookkeeping methods."—New York Sun.

Roasting Coffee.

In Norway, where superb coffee is made, a bit of butter is added to the beans while they are roasting in the covered shovel used there for that purpose. In France, as well, a piece of butter the size of a walnut is put with three pounds of coffee beans, and also a desiccated spoonful of powdered sugar. This brings out both flavor and scent, and, moreover, gives the slight caramel taste which will be remembered as a pleasing part of French coffee.

Despite laws against adulteration, "olive oil" is secured from the cotton plant, marmalade from the turnip, and cherry jelly from the foot of a calf.

If you have a bad headache rub slices of lemon along the temple. The pain will not be long in disappearing, or at least in growing easier to bear.

Tell neither of your own faults nor those of others.

Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF
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CHAPTER XXII.

It is time that we follow the fortunes of Second-cousin Sarah, whom we left with her shabby sister-in-law in the apartment at Sedge Hill. Taken into her room by Mrs. Thomas Easthall's sudden appearance, disturbed by the events of the night, and over conscious of the danger which the presence of the two ladies in her room would have involved, she followed the woman in good faith some distance along the garden paths and in the direction of the high road.

"We will go no further," said she; "tell me what I have to fear from your husband and person, and I will reward you handsomely."

"Listen then as well as you can. I ain't a-going to speak loud for anybody."

"I am listening."

When Sarah looked her head more closely to the woman, who began whispering about her husband in a rambling fashion that was difficult to follow, until she was suddenly back three steps, at her husband's surprise, and stood gazing at her, or at something near her.

"What is it?" exclaimed Sarah; "what?"

"There was no opportunity to any more, to scream, or to struggle. Two strong men were in her chair, and finding her sister-in-law could not get up, they were stuck with drugs was pressed to her mouth and nostrils by a merciless hand, that seemed to smother her at once from active life to oblivion."

"Was she conscious?"

It was a life apart from Sedge Hill, and those who loved her there. She was lying on a bed, with Sophy Easthall dozing by the side of a neatly furnished chair. There was a narrow window in one side of the room, and a bolt was nailed across it to keep the light of an spluttering candle from betraying itself to the night.

Suddenly Sophy woke up, and gave a nervous jump in her chair at finding her sister-in-law lying on the bed, with her great dark eyes staring at her.

"Where have you brought me? Why am I in this dreadful place?" Sarah asked in an eager voice.

"You're coming round, have you?" said Sophy. "Well, I am glad of that. Bless if I didn't think they'd overdone it with their kerry-whats-it-name, and sent you bang off afore they meant it."

"You're certainly not a prisoner, close at the edge of the bed now, regarding her jailer with eager attention. She was scarcely back from dreamland yet.

"Why have I been brought here?" she asked anxiously.

"You'll know in good time, gal. There's no 'causal for a hurry, or a hurry. Take it cool. You're safe enuf."

Sarah Easthall was standing at the door of the room when she had recovered herself. It was locked, as she had suspected.

"It's no use your thinking of getting out, Sally," said Tom's wife; "don't build up that, or harm will happen to you. We're both locked in here, close at the edge of the bed now, regarding her jailer with eager attention. She was scarcely back from dreamland yet.

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"You'll know in good time, gal. There's no 'causal for a hurry, or a hurry. Take it cool. You're safe enuf."

Sarah Easthall was standing at the door of the room when she had recovered herself. It was locked, as she had suspected.

wall, and crossing his gloved hands, one with a very glossy hat in it, "and to preserve a hope that you have suffered no inconvenience from your temporary withdrawal from a home which you are accustomed to adore. I, for one," he added with a low bow, "should regret very much to hear one word of complaint."

"This is your work then," said Sarah bitterly; "it is as I suspected. Tell me what my brother wants?"

"I would say a fair address for the injury which you have done him. Your grandmother is rich, and will leave you all her money. And your only brother, a man of many admirable qualities—will be left to drag on his life in indigence, and to die in utter abjectness of spirit, without your assist him as fairly and liberally as a fond sister should do. Thomas, who is in difficulties, wants fifteen thousand pounds."

Sarah drew a sudden and deep breath, but did not reply. The thin face of the woman stooping over the fire peered round her, horrible in its eagerness and greed.

"Fifteen thousand pounds only from that immense fortune which must come to you when old Mrs. Easthall dies, the simple conditions being that the sum must be paid at once, as your brother is very poor, and there is a balance of sixteen thousand three hundred and twenty-eight pounds lodged at your banker's, in your name, for the convenience of a current account."

"How do you know what money is lodged in my name at the bank?"

"Thomas tells me—that is all. He sent me here with your check book—has that in your desk, too, he tells me. You have only to draw a draft for the amount, and you are free, Miss Easthall. I promised a friend of yours that you should be at Sedge Hill this evening. Miss Holland will tell you everything to-night," he said, as he drew the check book from his pocket and pitched it carefully upon the deal table that was there. "I have left everything for that young lady to explain. It is a story apart from crows, and suits not my style of narrative."

"This money is held in trust for another," she said; "it belongs to her mother, and she is a widow."

"If to Mr. Culwick, was I should say, your brother Thomas objects to the title."

"Let him!" cried Sarah with a