

as I had read of in the newspaper about someone else, who, by the way, was recaptured in three days' time as he still wore prison clothes."

"You should have desired his punishment," said Ronald sternly. "It would have been far better for him to have served his term."

"Should I desire your punishment whatever you did?" she asked reproachfully. "I did not desire it. Besides I knew that he was not a strong man. I do not believe he would have survived his sentence. It is always supposed that criminals are liberated should their health demand it, but notwithstanding a great many die under prison discipline. We arranged matters as far as we could. I drew out what little money I possessed, and I had a friend who helped me. We found out where Horace was and his number, and we bribed one of the warders very heavily to convey an occasional letter to him. At this time my father turned me out of my home, because I declared my intention of remaining true to Horace."

"Your father was naturally angry, although he was unduly harsh."

"FROM that time I resolved to live only for Horace. I felt leaving my home most bitterly, for I love my mother dearly, but she had not strength to stand up for me against my father. I determined to sink my name, my station, everything, until I had achieved my purpose. I took lodgings in London for a time in a quiet neighbourhood, and I arranged further details for Horace's escape."

"With your friend?" asked Ronald jealously.

"Yes; he was very good to me. He—"

"He was in love with you."

"Into that matter ye will not enter. He had means of knowledge that no one else of my acquaintance possessed. But it was entirely my own idea to go to Willowbridge and get work there. I chose it because of its being near the Moor, and I chose the work because it was almost the only kind I thought I could do which would leave me free. You recognized me for a lady, but I scarcely thought any one would do so in my humble position."

"You might as well expect the sun not to give light. But why did you at once secure work for him?"

"Because no one had any ground for thinking that an escaped prisoner could at once get work in a respectable factory without even the delay of asking for it. If he had come to me when I was at home in town, or in our country place he would have been traced, for his antecedents were well known."

"Why did you cross the Moor in such a fashion?"

"Before leaving London I procured a suit of Horace's clothes, everything complete, and removed all marks from them. Then I bought a red wig, a beard and moustache, and made all up into a parcel, adding a hand-glass and his make up box. It was this parcel that I carried," and she gave details of the manner in which she had disposed of it to the labourer, and the large payment she had made.

Ronald listened, even more astonished at the wonderful forethought she had displayed, and the bravery she had shown.

"But why have gone across the Moor with such a heavy weight; for a suit of clothes and boots and accessories would have tried a strong man."

"I went because I wanted to see if it would be possible for him to find his way across it alone. I came to the conclusion that it would not. The warders also would be less likely to suspect a man going on the beaten track than of taking to the pathless moor. The bicycle was a marvellous help. When I reached Princetown a warder spoke to me a moment by arrangement; he conveyed a letter to Horace, and it was agreed his escape was to be made during a fog. That is why I was so nervous that night."

"When I was such a brute to you," said Ronald warmly.

She smiled, and continued. "He acted in exactly the same way as the prisoner we read about who did escape—only to be recaptured. He managed to file through the bars of his window, and got out during the

fog. He obtained a ladder from a storehouse near, and climbed the outer wall of the prison grounds, descending with the help of a rope made out of his sheets. Then he felt his way along the wall in the fog until he reached the high road. When he had gone, as he judged, some half mile he waited behind a stone wall until he could discern the labourer's cottage I had described—we wrote in German. The rest was easy. He called up the labourer and in a few minutes' time was completely transformed. Then he mounted the bicycle and rode for his life to Moretonhampstead, getting there before his flight was discovered. He took the train to Exeter, sold the bicycle, and came here at once. How they have discovered him now I cannot imagine, but I recognized the pleasant faced warder I had seen at Princetown at once, and felt sure he was looking out for Horace. Oh, Mr. Westlake, since I have lived this dreadful life of fear, and anxiety, and concealment, I have appreciated as I never did before the blessed lot of those who go through life with nothing to conceal, nothing to be ashamed of on their part, who can speak freely of all their concerns. Would that it were so with us!"

BUT Ronald barely heard the last sentence. There was a dangerous light in his eyes as he turned to her and said, "If a woman were to do for me one tenth part of what you have done for Cornwallis, I would kneel before her and kiss the hem of her garment."

Their eyes met, a flash of intelligence passed between them.

"Tell me," he said in a voice of intense, fierce feeling, "do you wish to marry him?"

He had asked her if she wished to marry Cornwallis. She made no reply. Alas! she had discovered, and the knowledge had been pain and grief to her, that the man for whom she had dared and suffered so much was unworthy, and that it was to Ronald she had now given her heart.

There was a long pause, then she said. "If I were to desert him now I should feel as if I were a soldier who had betrayed his country, or a mother who had wilfully failed to rescue her child from danger. He needs me. No one on earth needs me so much. And—and I care for him." And so she did, but it was with a pitying love in which was neither passion nor ought save compassion.

They had now reached the foot of the Tor known as the Dewar Stone. They ascended the steep path in silence, pausing every few minutes to admire the lovely views beneath them of wooded hill and dale, until they reached the summit and she saw beyond portions of the well loved Dartmoor ranges in their solemn beauty.

"I am glad you brought me here," she said. "I shall like to remember this scene when I am far away. Look at the ruined mill below, and the hills fading away into the distance."

She sighed as she spoke; at this moment she felt that she could have stayed on here indefinitely with this good and true man at her side.

"I hope there will no hitch in the arrangements to-morrow," he remarked at length. "Why did not you arrange to marry and leave England sooner?"

"Because every port was watched. I thought mine the safest plan. Now I am sure we ought to return."

He acceded reluctantly. They said little on the return journey, both were glad yet sorry when it ended. The busy streets of Plymouth were thronged with people; cabs, trams and omnibuses were running, it seemed to Mary as if she were in London.

"I do not like leaving you alone in these crowds," said Ronald, "but it will be best for me to do so. You will no doubt spend the rest of your day in buying what you require. Do not spare money; Cornwallis will repay me everything some day. I have already told you where to meet us to-morrow evening. And now good-bye."

He found Cornwallis pacing up and down the room impatiently.

"I was wondering how many more hours I was to be alone," he said querulously.

(To be continued.)



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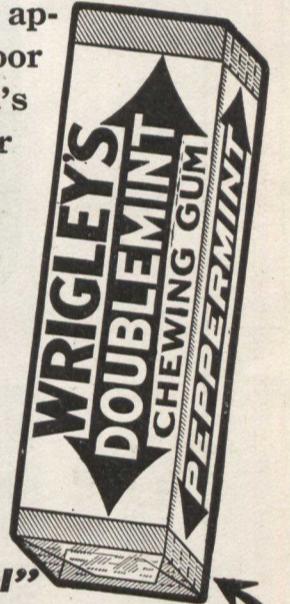
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