

UNDER A CLOUD.

CHAPTER LIV.

BARRON-DALE HAS A RELAPSE.

Brettison's progress was slow, but he refused to sit down and rest.

"We must get there," he said, "we must get there."

"Is it much farther?" said Brettison at last. "I am weaker than I thought."

"Seventy or eighty yards; just beyond those rocks," said Stratton.

"Hah, then I am strong enough," cried Brettison, with a sigh of relief.

"Come along," he whispered quickly.

They were hurrying along, when there was a joyful cry, and the sturdy Breton woman chosen for Dale's attendant cried out:

"Ah, monsieur; quick! quick! Here—help!"

Dale was holding Myra's wrist with his left hand and struggling violently with the admiral and Guest, who were afraid to exert their strength for fear of injuring Myra, who was supported by Margot with one arm, while with her strong fingers she grasped her patient's wrist in turn.

"Quick, monsieur!" cried Margot; "it is a fit. He is half mad."

Forgetting everything but the fact that Myra was in this scoundrel's grasp, Stratton sprang at him, catching him by the throat to try and make him quit his hold.

"Mr. Stratton!" cried Sir Mark in angry amazement.

The name acted like magic. Dale shook himself free of the admiral and Margot, loosening Myra's wrist in the act, and with an angry snarl, like that of some wild beast, fixed his hands on Stratton's throat.

Twice over as they swayed here and there he caught sight of Myra's face convulsed with horror while she clung to her cousin, and her look unnerved him so that it would have gone hard with him but for the arrival of a party of four men who had landed from the boat that had kept pace with them along the shore.

One of these was the fisherman, the two others were a couple of gendarmes and another fisher, and the two officers threw themselves into the fray, with the result that the next minute Dale was firmly secured and held.

"This is the man, then," panted one of the officers.

"Yes," said the fisherman from the cottage. "I say he tried to strangle this gentleman in the night at my place. Look at his throat."

"It is quite true," said Brettison.

"And you told us, monsieur," cried the fisherman reproachfully, "that your friend was imbecile, and that we need not fear."

"Yes," said Brettison sadly. "I was wrong, but I have been punished for my sin. Malcolm Stratton," he continued, turning to his friend, "I call upon you for the sake of all here to denounce this man to the officers."

"I cannot," said Stratton, with a quick look from Myra to Sir Mark and back. "That task shall never be mine."

"Will monsieur say those words in French?" said the officer who had spoken before. "I understand English a little, but I cannot trust myself at a time like this."

"Forgive me, then, Sir Mark," said Brettison firmly, and speaking now in excellent French, and you, too, my child," he said, taking and kissing Myra's hand. "I have tried for your sake and that of the man I love as a son to spare you pain, but the time has come when this must end. Officers, this man, an imbecile save at rare intervals, when he has these violent homicidal fits, is James Barron, or Dale, a convict escaped from one of the English prisons—"

Myra uttered a wild cry and hid her face on her aunt's breast.

"Brettison!" roared Stratton.

Mr. Brettison, have you taken leave of your senses?" cried Sir Mark. "James Barron!"

"Bah!" said the convict, "the game is up. Henderson's my name, Sam Henderson, James Barron's fellow-prisoner and mate. Poor old Dandy Jen was shot dead that night! Where's Stratton?" he cried, with a curious change coming over him.

"Ah! there. Now, man, no shuffling. The game's in my hands, you know. Come, pay up like a man. They're waiting for you—at the church—my wife—what's her name—pretty Myra—my mate Jen's widow—gentleman James, sir—all the swell—but I did it—I engraved the notes."

He smiled and chuckled.

"Proud of them. Puzzled the clever ones. The Rothschilds hardly knew, eh, Jen? Well, you always were a swell, and so you mean to marry the gal? Well, I warn you; it's getting too hot. Better cut off together till the scent's cold. There, I've warned you. I thought so: nabbed. All right, gentlemen, I'll come quietly. Easy with my mate. Going to be married this morning. Do you hear Stratton? married this morning! My wife, you can have her. My little widow. Hush! quiet, will you. We shall never do it. Oh, yes, I'm game. Ugh, hard work. They're after us, and we shall have to rush 'em. Right, Jen. I'll stand any risk. Hold together, and then down the rocks!"

"Now, then," he whispered, "ready. Off. Ah!" he shrieked, "don't shoot—don't shoot. Cowards! Ugh! the water—a long swim—but it's for life—for life; and poor old Jen—handsome Jen, shot—"

The man's whole manner changed: the twitching of the muscles, the excited playing of the nerves, and the wild look in the eyes gave place to the vacant, heavy stare, and his hand rose slowly to his neck, and played about the back of his ear.

"Shot," he said, "shot," looking up at the admiral and smiling. "A bullet—behind the ear—never found it yet—never found—"

"Quick!" cried Stratton, stepping for-

ward so as to hide the ghastly contortions that crossed the man's face from the ladies clinging together in a frightened group.

"Yes," said Brettison, with a sigh of relief, "for Heaven's sake, officers, take him away."

They bore him instantly toward the boat, just as Myra uttered a low sigh and fainted dead away.

It was some minutes before she came to again, to find Stratton kneeling by her side holding her hand, while the others stood a little aloof.

For a few moments there was a wild and wondering look in her eyes, but it was softened directly by her tears, as she whispered:

"I don't quite grasp it all, Malcolm. Only tell me that is true—that you really love me, dear?"

"As true as that I can hold your hand in mine, clear from all stain, and that you are free—my love, my wife."

"But," cried the admiral in the further explanations which ensued, "do I understand, my lad, that you all along took this man for Dale?"

"Of course."

"But you had surely seen him at my house?"

"I saw from a distance the man arrested on the wedding morn, but he was surrounded by the crowd, and I never caught his face."

"But you were present at the trial," said Brettison.

"No. I never entered the court. I could not go to gloat over my rival's fall. I merely waited for the result."

"I remember now; I saw you waiting there," said Brettison thoughtfully. "And I, of course, saw the prisoners side by side, but from the gallery, right behind and far above. I never caught a glimpse of either face until they turned to leave the dock, and then it was this man's only—the other prisoner went first."

"And I could not see in this wretched madman's altered features the scoundrel I had seen in court!" cried the admiral.

"Who could have dreamed it was the same?" cried Guest. "Poor wretch! his face was like an old well-worn shilling till that fit came on. Here! Mal, old fellow, quick!"

"It is nothing—nothing," said Brettison faintly as Stratton saved him from a heavy fall. "My encounter last night—a little giddy still. Your arm, my boy; I'm better now. Well; for have I not saved you both—brought you full happiness and joy?"

CHAPTER LV.

THE LAST CLOUD.

"Jules, you are a bad—a naughty!" cried Margot angrily. "You and your wife never tell me of what takes place while I sleep; you send me out with my patient, and never tell me he is dangerous; and then you rob me of my bread by getting him sent away. It is ruin, and I must go back to the town and starve."

"Never," cried a pleasant little voice behind her; and she turned sharply round to see Edie and Guest, the former smiling through her tears. "Have no fear about that, my poor Margot. Come up to the house and help, as my poor cousin is very weak and ill."

"My faith, dear miss, I will," cried the sturdy Breton woman.

"Ah! bah, madame," she said, looking up from her knitting. "What do I do? Nothing. The beloved miss grows better and more beautiful day by day, and is it I? Is it the good physician come from St. Malo? Name of a little cider apple! no. Look at the dear old monsieur there."

"He says to me, 'You must go up on the cliffs this morning, Margot, and bring me every flower you can find,' I go, madame, and—"

"One moment, Margot; you always forget I am mademoiselle, not madame."

"The greater the pity, mademoiselle. You so young looking still you should be the mother of many children, or a widow like me. What of the monsieur? I take him every morning all the flowers, and there, see, he is as happy with them as a little child. Of my other sick one—look at her—"

Aunt Jerrold looked through her half-closed eyes, smiled and nodded again.

"Faith of a good woman!" said Margot, "does she want a nurse, does she want a physician? No. The good doctor is by her side, and ever since the day when the bad man was taken I have seen the beautiful brown of the sea air and the roses of the sun come into her cheeks. It is a folly my being here now, but if mademoiselle and the great sea captain will keep my faithful services till they marry and be happy; and oh, mademoiselle," cried Margot, turning her eyes up toward the sky, and displaying her white teeth, "the way that I adore the dear, dear little children!"

"Margot!" cried Miss Jerrold austere, and she rose and walked away.

"Faith of a good woman! what have I said?" muttered Margot, looking now at where Guest and Edie had gone down to a rock pool in which they were fishing with their hands for prawns, but catching each other's fingers instead deep down under the weeds. "They will all marry, and very soon. Ah! those old maids!"

The one to whom she specially referred had gone to sit down now by her brother, who was scanning a vessel in the offing with his glass.

"French man-of-war, Rebecca," he said. "Fine vessel, but only a confounded imitation of one of ours."

"Yes, dear, I suppose so," said his sister.

"Are you getting tired of the place, Mark?" she said suddenly.

"Eh? Tired? What for? It's beautiful and calm, and there's water and a bit of shipping, and every one seems to be happy and comfortable. Tired? No! Are you?"

"Oh, no, dear, only I thought we could not go on much longer like this."

"Let fate alter it, then," said the admiral gruffly. "Don't catch me at it. Myra hasn't suggested such a thing."

"She? No," said Miss Jerrold quickly. "O Mark!" she cried, "I am so glad to see her happy once again."

"God bless her, yes. I think she must have had all the trouble meant for her life in one big storm, so that she may have a calm passage right to the end."

"I pray that it may be so," said Aunt Jerrold fervently. "How happy she looks."

"Yes," said Sir Mark, closing the glass through which he had watched her while his sister spoke.

On this particular morning, when all was bright and sunny, there yet was one cloud

near, for a servant came out to say that monsieur was wanted.

Stratton sprang up, and Myra rose and clung to his arm, her eyes dilating with the dread of some new trouble. But he at once calmed her.

"There can be no trouble now that we could not meet," he whispered.

The officer who had arrested Henderson was standing in the little room Stratton used, and with him a thin, earnest looking man in black, who seemed to wear an official uniform as well as air.

"I have come, monsieur, respecting the man Barron-Dale," he said in very good English. "As you know, monsieur, we have been in communication with the English authorities, and as we have reported to you from time to time, there has been a reluctance on their part to investigate the matter."

"Yes, I have heard all this," said Stratton, trying to be calm.

"They were supposed to treat him as an impostor, and at last sent us word definitely that Barron-Dale and Henderson certainly died in their attempt to escape from your great prison. The correspondence has gone on, monsieur, till now, and I believe that the English authorities were about to send an officer to investigate the matter; but, as you have been informed, the man has been growing worse and worse while ill in the infirmary of the prison at Barville. Yesterday he had a bad attack—a fit."

He paused a moment or two, looking gravely at Stratton.

"The difficulty is solved now, monsieur," said the officer gravely. "He did not recover from the fit. Our doctors have found the cause of those attacks—a pistol bullet was imbedded close to the brain."

"The bullet from his own pistol," thought Stratton. "The shot meant for me."

A few minutes after Stratton left the officer, and went straight to where Myra was waiting, trembling with excitement.

"There is some fresh peril, Malcolm," she cried as she caught his hand.

"No, dearest," he said slowly; "the last cloud has passed away."

[THE END]

WARNED TO EAT SPARINGLY.

Every housewife has experienced that delightful pleasure of being caught scantily prepared at meal time and a number of unexpected guests on hand to provide for.

Recently such a situation presented itself to a lady in this city. Turning over in her mind the condition of the larder, she decided that the supply was sufficient if the members of her family would curb their appetites and the unbidden guests were not ravenous.

Taking her seven year old son aside she said: "Now, Johnnie, I want you to be a good boy and remember this, eat sparingly, and don't ask for a second help of anything. Mind that, and I'll see if your father won't buy you that bicycle."

At dinner the lady was so busily engaged in measuring things and figuring out whether the quantities would be sufficient that little Johnnie was entirely neglected. For a long time he struggled between his craving for food and his fear for losing the bicycle.

At last nature obtained the ascendancy and he walked out, to the shame of his mother and the information of the guests: "Say, mamma, how can I eat sparingly if I don't get nothing to eat at all?"

WANTED—A CURATE!

The rector of a hundred years ago had somewhat peculiar ideas as to the qualifications of a curate, if one may judge from the following curious advertisement, which appeared in the St. James' Chronicle of May 4, 1795:

WANTED immediately, a good, strong, bony man to act in the capacity of curate. He must be subject to the following particulars, viz.: To have no objection to act as gardener, husbandman, and occasional whipper-in. Any gent whom the above may suit, on application to Mr. B., at the Gray's Inn Coffee House, Holborn, may meet with immediate employ. N.B.—Character will not be so much required as equestrian skill, and none need apply who has not undergone a complete stabularian (sic) education.

The curate of 1795 was evidently intended more for use than ornament. It is often the other way about with the curate of 1895.—Tit-Bits.

PACK OF CARDS IN HIS COFFIN.

At the little village of Nempes-au-Val, near Amiens, a curious ceremony has been seen at a funeral. The deceased was a card-playing enthusiast, piquet having been his favorite game. By the terms of his will, a pack of cards had to be placed in the coffin with his body, and certain of his card-playing friends were to have a legacy of about a hundred pounds apiece on condition that they bore him to the grave and stopped on the way to drink a glass of wine at a small tavern where, to quote his words he had "spent so many agreeable evenings at cards."

The instructions of the will were strictly carried out, and a considerable crowd assembled to see the last of the piquet player.—London Daily News.

Variation Suggested.

Judge—This makes the tenth time you've been here in the past six months, and I've given you a sentence every time.

Prisoner—Yes your honor.

Judge—Now, I don't know what to do with you.

Prisoner—Suppose, your honor, you vary the monotony by letting me off once.

The Candid Nursemaid.

Mistress—Do you believe in ghosts?

Nursemaid—I do, indeed, ma'am; there's nothing like 'em for keepin' little Roy quiet when you are away.

China's Need

What China needs
To remove the tarnish,
Is a few dabs more
Of Japan varnish.

MRS. GALLUP'S WOES.

When Mr. Gallup brought out the tin lantern and lighted the low candle and started off down town to buy seventy feet of clothelene, a cake of shaving soap and two pounds of tenpenny nails, Mrs. Watkins had just entered the house to tell Mrs. Gallup that she might possibly have to borrow two flatirons and a cup of sugar next day. Mr. Gallup took things easy and did not return for an hour. He entered by the kitchen door, blew out his candle and hung up his lantern, and after warming his coat tails at the stove for three or four minutes he entered the sitting-room. He had neither seen nor heard from Mrs. Gallup, but he suspected what had happened. He found her in the big rocking chair, a towel tied tightly over her head and the camphor bottle in her hand. As he entered the room she looked up through her half-closed eyes and moaned:—

"Samuel, I was afraid you wouldn't get here in time to hear my dyin' words and kiss me for the last time on earth! Thank heaven, you hev cum! Samuel, kiss me farewell!"

Mr. Gallup looked up at the clock and saw that it was twenty minutes to 9. Then he went out into the kitchen, pulled off his boots with the aid of the bootjack, and, putting on his slippers, he re-entered the sitting-room and sat down to his newspaper.

"Samuel," continued Mrs. Gallup, after several hearty sniffs at the camphor bottle, "do you know what Mrs. Watkins told me after you went away? She didn't mean to let it out, knowin' how nervous I am, but she told me without thinkin'."

Last night at midnight she thought she heard the cat in the pantry, and she got up to see. She looked out of the window in this direction and she saw a blue light move from our barn to the hog pen, then to the smokehouse, then to the house and run along the roof and disappear. She was so overcome that she couldn't speak for five minutes, and when she got back into bed her feet didn't get warm for an hour. Samuel, do you know what that blue light means?"

Mr. Gallup was right there within five feet of her, and it was reasonable to believe that he heard her words, but he had nothing to say in reply.

"It means," said Mrs. Gallup as she wet the palm of her left hand with the camphor and held it to her nose, "that I shall never see another sunrise. That was a warnin', Samuel. It was an angel flitting around to warn me that my time had come at last, and it was all arranged for Mrs. Watkins to see it and tell me. Yes, Samuel, you will soon be a widower, and I will be at rest. Are you sorry?"

Mr. Gallup was reading an item about a cucumber nine feet long grown in California, and while his face wore a smile it was doubtful whether he was smiling over Mrs. Gallup's prospective demise or the cucumber.

"I don't s'pose you are," she went on as she drew the towel a little tighter around her head. "You'll get a second wife in less'n a year, and that won't be no end to the way you and her will gad about. You'll go to spellin' beer and picones and temperance lectur's, and if she wants a tablecloth costin' seventy-five cents for a two shillin' dishpan you'll break your neck to git it for her. It's been thirteen years sence you painted the kitchen floor, but I'll bet you'll do it for your married wife within a week arter you're carried."

Mrs. Gallup put the camphor bottle on the table and unpinned the towel that she might use it to wipe her eyes and then began to weep. Mr. Gallup didn't know of any reason why she shouldn't weep if she wanted to, and about that time also he struck a very interesting item about a new catarrh snuff and wanted to finish it.

"But I'm not complainin'," said Mrs. Gallup after she had got the best of her emotions. "I'm a Fuller and the Fullers would die afore they would complain. I did want to live until I had saved soap grease 'nuff to make a full bar of soft soap, but if I'm called I'm not goin' to hang back. If I need any soft soap in heaven, I s'pose it'll be furnished, and you and your second wife kin buy bar soap down here or go without. Samuel, do you think you'll be lone some the first night or two after I'm gone?"

Mrs. Gallup had another fit of weeping as she asked the question, and Mr. Gallup kicked off one of his slippers and scratched his heel and looked up at the clock and hunted over a whole page of his newspaper before he found another item to extract his attention.

"You may be," said Mrs. Gallup as she pulled at her nose with the towel, but you kin go and see the hogs, count the hens and pop corn and eat apples. I don't expect you'll do any weepin', but for the looks of things you'd better look rather solemn and not go to the trained hog show which is to be held next week. All the naysures will cum in to console you and when they speak about what a hard-workin' wife I was, and how patient I have been, bin under all my sufferin's you'd better purtend to wipe the tears away. You accoutn't really break down, but it'll look better to shed at least three tears. Samuel, when you see my shoes and dresses and stockin's around and know that I'm gone for good and won't never return will—"

Just then the clock struck 9. Mr. Gallup got up and proceeded to wind it, went out into the kitchen to see that the door was locked and everything all right, and as he returned to the sitting room and carried the lamp into the family bedroom Mrs. Gallup wearily rose up, took the towel in one hand and the camphor bottle in the other, and followed him, with the remark:—

"I guess, I'll go to bed, too. As long as I'm goin' to expire I might as well die as comfortably as I kin, and it will save you liftin' 'me out of the cheer and strainin' your back. I won't take up much room, and I'll perish as gently as possible, and if you wake up and find me gone you'll remember that I was a wife who tried to get threw this world without making doctor bills or trouble."

In all, it has been estimated that over two million acres are devoted to the maintenance of deer in Scotland, and that about 5,000 stags are annually killed.

YOUNG FOLKS.

Manners.

"Gilbert Carroll always takes off his hat to me," said Agnes to her mother, as they sat together on the front porch. "I wonder why he does it?"

"I suppose, dear, it is because he is a gentleman and thinks you are a lady."

"A lady! It had never came into the girl's head to think whether she was a lady or not. But she knew that Gilbert Carroll—a particularly nice fellow who had lately moved near them, and to their school—had begun bowing politely to her, she had felt more concern at her own manners."

How could she fail to walk with propriety along the street after receiving graceful tip of the hat from a well-bred boy? The feeling had extended to dress, too. She did not like to meet her or indeed any of the Carrolls, with her hair tumbled and her hat hanging down her back.

"He's just so in everything," went on Agnes. "If you drop anything he runs to pick it up for you. And if he's sitting down and any one else come along, he's up in a minute."

"Pshaw—that doesn't amount to anything, does it, mother?" asked her brother Tom, who sat near studying, probably thinking the holding up of Gilbert Carroll's manners a reproach to his own carelessness.

"That's all outside doings. It doesn't make a boy any better because he's always bowing and scraping and twisting himself to wait on folks. There he is now."

Gilbert came along, stopping before the gate to lift his hat with a smile and the grace which showed it his everyday habit. As he paused for a moment's chat, it might have been observed that Tom straightened himself from his lounging position.

"Come in," he was urged, and as he sat down on a step of the porch, laying his hat beside him, Tom quietly slipped his off.

The visitor remained but a few moments, but during that time he, without interrupting his talk, intercepted a spool in its roll along the porch from Agnes's work and held out his hand to hold a tangled skein of silk.

"I like his ways," said Agnes, as with another little touch of his hat Gilbert went on.

"Well enough, if a boy's built that way," admitted Tom, "but not of any importance—is it, mother?"

"Yes," she said, "I think it is."

"Why?—it doesn't get better lessons; Gilbert isn't a crack scholar at all. And it doesn't do any work. You can help a body just as well without getting a bow in."

"Well," said mother, "I think it is something like this. Anything which makes us more pleasing to others is worth while. It is something like the making of your clothes. Your coat would keep you just as warm, Tom, if it hung like a bag on you, but you wouldn't like it. And you like your clean white collar. Agnes likes the bit of lace and bow of ribbon on her dress."

"I like it," said Tom's brother, joining in the talk. "They're all just that way at Mr. Carroll's. When Gilbert took me in to tea with him the other evening he introduced me all proper, and Mr. Carroll got up and bowed to me as if I had been somebody."

"I hope, Phil, that you remembered your manners," said mother in some anxiety.

"To be sure I did, mother. I was a little flustered, but I held up my head and bowed equal to any of 'em."

"I generally let my head down when I bow," put in Tom.

"When has that been?" asked Agnes, with a mischievous smile.

"Well," went on Phil, "they all, somehow, do just the things you're always telling us to do, mother. If anybody passes before anybody they say 'excuse me' as if it were company."

"I've had a very busy life, dear," said mother, with a sigh, "and perhaps I haven't been firm enough in such matters."

"What's the matter with our behaving ourselves without expectin' mother to be always at us?" said Phil, with an affectionate stroke of her cheek.

"That would be the way for you, dear," she said. "You all know what nice manners are. Why shouldn't you practice them?"

If boys and girls could realize how great an advantage, as they go through life, they could win by the cultivation of a grace of manner, they would surely do it of themselves—as they can without money or price. Many a success is largely due to charm of manner and the true politeness growing out of the honest soil of real regard for the rights and comforts of others.

Queer Feats on Wagers.

Two eccentric feats are shortly to be attempted by Frenchmen for a wager. In one case M. Durand, a gentleman residing in Marseilles, has undertaken to pose as a statue in a public place in that city for no less a period than 28 days, the intervals for rest to be enjoyed by him in the meantime not to exceed 48 hours in the aggregate.

A pedestal is being prepared for the accommodation of this strange person, who has been nicknamed in anticipation by the French papers Durand Statylique.

The other feat referred to has been undertaken by M. Wisemsky, a gentleman well known in Parisian fashionable circles. M. Wisemsky has made a considerable wager that he will ride all the way from Paris to America on horseback. The thing sounds impossible, but he declares it is so. He proposes to ride right across Siberia to the point where Behring Strait, which separates that country from Alaska in North America, are narrowest, and then to ride across upon the ice. He will be glad, he says, of a companion.

A Domestic Siege.

Mercy I. Goodness! exclaimed Mr. Watkins, dropping his pipe in consternation, what is that awful riot in the kitchen?

That's the war with China, answered his wife placidly, going on with her book.