

MAGGIE TULLOCH

OR,
The Paisley Mill Girl.

CHAPTER XIV.

For a moment or two he read on, noting nothing special. Then his eye was suddenly arrested by a paragraph which ran as follows:

It would seem as if the mystery of the Leigh Mill would remain a mystery to the end of the chapter. It is now tolerably certain that Mr. Graham M'Bain, who was supposed to have been murdered by his brother, is not dead at all. The utmost secrecy is at present preserved by all concerned, but there appears to be little doubt that he is indeed still in the flesh, and that his mysterious disappearance was due to a sudden and curious illness. The authorities were visited by Mr. Graham M'Bain last night, and the information of his return to the active world duly communicated to the press. We may therefore take it for granted that it is no case of mistaken identity or willful personation by somebody else. It is further stated that the body supposed to be that of Mr. M'Bain was really that of a young bank clerk of very similar physique who had been missing from home for a fortnight. At present the whole affair is still enshrouded in mystery, but it is certain that whatever may be the final upshot of the matter the episode will have proved the most romantic and sensational of its kind which has happened not only in Paisley but in the United Kingdom during the present century. Paisley itself is in a state of intense excitement over the event. Mr. Graham M'Bain—for we may assume that his identity is established—received many visitors yesterday, and no single caller expressed the slightest doubt as to his personality. The congratulatory nature of their remarks, however, was necessarily tempered by an embarrassing sense of the injustice which has apparently been done to Mr. Donald M'Bain by the warrant for his apprehension on a charge of murder issued by the police authorities. Here, again, we are confronted by another curious feature in the case—the disappearance of Mr. Donald M'Bain. We feel that the affair is still too thickly surrounded by paradoxical and mysterious details to permit us to do more than comment thus briefly upon these strange and apparently contradictory elements in the strange story. If Mr. Graham M'Bain would but give a full account of the occurrence from his point of view it would be more satisfactory to the public, but up to the present time he has firmly refused to open his lips upon the subject beyond stating that the warrant for arresting his brother on a charge of murder would of course, now be instantly withdrawn, as it was obviously unjust. We await the denouncement of this remarkable affair with the greatest interest. In the meantime the question of paramount importance is, Where is Mr. Donald M'Bain? His reappearance may do something more to solve what is still to most of us an absolutely incomprehensible enigma.

Donald M'Bain felt as if his brain would give way with the intense wave of relief which flooded his mind as he learned that Graham was alive, and that, had as had been his own intentions, his soul was still free from the stain of a brother's blood. Taking the paper in his hand he went to his room and read it all through again, with tears of gratitude and remorse streaming from his eyes. Then, for the first time for many years, he flung himself upon his knees, and commended himself to God's guidance in this great crisis of his life.

An hour later he left the coffee house and posted a letter marked "Private" and addressed to Mr. Graham M'Bain, Leigh Mill, Paisley.

CHAPTER XV.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER.
Never, perhaps, in the life story of any human being had so strange a situation occurred as that in which Graham M'Bain found himself upon his restoration to life—for it was little less.

To have been the subject of so gross an outrage, so nearly committing in death, was bad enough; that the outrage should have been committed by a brother was worse; but, worst of all, eclipsing all known tragedies in horror, was that that brother should have disappeared in order to avoid a prosecution for murder, and by that not virtually admitted at least his guilty intent.

The town rang with the news; but the circumstances were so peculiar that very few persons beyond intimate personal friends called upon Graham. It was so embarrassing to feel that while Graham was to be congratulated on his escape and restoration, he was to be condoned with upon the terrible scandal brought about by the conduct of his brother.

Graham sat at his desk, brooding sadly enough over the strange events which had so strangely overshadowed his life.

The one ray of light which illuminated with pure radiance the gloomy outlook was the love of Maggie Tulloch. He had speedily learned the truth and strength of her affection and the nobility of her character. He was horrified by the revelation of Donald's plot—for it was nothing less—to ruin the character of her father, and use the threat of exposure as a whip to drive Maggie into his arms; and he appreciated the rare delicacy and fidelity with which she had at once hidden her love for himself and yet remained faithful to him through all—even when her love seemed hopeless.

As he sat in his room, thinking moodily over many things, a tap came at the door and Maggie entered.

She was no longer dressed as a mill hand. Now that it was definitely understood that they were to be married, Graham insisted upon positioning of old Tullach upon terms which removed the necessity of work for his daughter, and, with her fair young face and graceful bearing, Maggie Tulloch looked as charming a girl as any in all Paisley, and fit to be the wife of any man.

"May I come in?" she asked gently.

"Come in, Maggie, dear. I am glad you have come, for I was not very happy, and you will cheer me up, and he drew her to him and kissed her fondly and proudly.

"I cannot bear to see you unhappy," she replied, and her tear-filled eyes told how true her words were.

"And I want your advice, too," Graham said, "for you are so much wiser than I am."

Maggie smiled and shook her head.

"But you are, dear. I never flatter—there is no occasion in your case, Maggie," he added, fondly.

The girl blushed and laughed—a pleasant, unaffected laugh of pure happiness free from the faintest suspicion of vanity or coquetry.

"Maggie," continued Graham M'Bain more gravely, a troubled expression clouding the depths of his beautiful eyes; "I don't know what to do about Donald."

"What can you do," said Maggie, "but wait?"

"But I do not want to wait indefinitely," said Graham looking at her with tender warmth.

The girl blushed hotly. She knew well enough the reason why Graham was so anxious to hear tidings of some sort from his brother.

"It is terrible to continue in this uncertainty," she continued; "I should like to know the truth, whatever it may be."

"He may come back now that he knows—then the girl paused. She did not know how to express the idea which was in her mind.

Graham sat silent a few moments, thinking deeply, then he said, "I can scarcely hope that, Maggie. You see, although I am here, alive and well, it is not his fault that I am not dead, as I was believed to be a week ago. Not that I bear him malice," he added quickly, "but there is the law to reckon with. No, Maggie, I do not think that even if he knows I am here he will return—and one cannot tell what may have happened even to him."

"I cannot think but that he will come back," said Maggie, adding, "but of course if he thinks the law could touch him he may yet stay away."

"That the law could touch him is certain," said Graham; "but for my part I should do all in my power to prevent it. He is my brother after all."

A soft light burned in his eyes as he said this. His thoughts went back on the wings of memory to the days when Donald and he were schoolmates together—farther back yet, even to the time when they knelt at their mother's knee and prayed God to "bless dear brother." The thought that the brother who had said this had so far changed as to make an attempt upon his life filled Graham's soul with an unspeakable sorrow and his eyes with tears.

"I wish he would come back, Maggie. Don't you?" he said, meditatively.

"If it would please you, Graham," answered the girl, hesitating a little as she came to her lover's name.

"It would. At all events it would relieve my mind immensely if I had some news of him. I would give anything to hear what he is doing at the present time, and where he is."

"Will you try and find him?" asked Maggie.

"I will try, for his sake and my own," answered Graham, sentimentally.

At this moment a postman came to the door with half a dozen letters. Graham M'Bain found five of them full of the usual quotations for special parcels of cotton, trade reports, and similar dry but useful matter. When he came to the sixth, however, although it was evidently written on the cheapest and flimsiest paper, he looked up quickly at Maggie with a ray of amazement and half dubious delight.

"From Donald!" was all he said. Then he cut the letter open and read it with eager eyes. It ran thus:

Johnson's Coffee House,
Nineveh Street, Bloomsbury, 18—,
Dear Graham,—I don't know what you will think of receiving a letter from me, and I don't know what to say to you, and yet, God knows there is much I could say to you if I could. I thank God, Graham, that I am not your murderer. I dare not ask you to forgive me that such an intention every crossed my mind. I was mad, Graham, as men will go mad when their vile passions are thwarted, and although this is no excuse for the brutal and unnatural conduct of which I was guilty, it may enable you at all events to think of me a little less hardly than you would had I been master of myself at the time of my great crime.

I never thanked God for anything in all my life, as I did when I read in the paper that you had reappeared at the mill. It was as if a huge burden which had been crushing my body and soul had suddenly been lifted, and I was free once more—free at least to look the world in the face as something less terrible than a murderer. Graham, I can never tell you how I had repented of my crime long before I saw that it had been completed. I would lay down my life for you now if I could atone for all that is past.

I don't know how I stand as regards the law, and I can honestly say that now

that I know that I am not guilty of my brother's blood, I feel almost indifferent as to what may or may not become of me.

Still, I would, if I could, begin a new life, if only in the hope that in its course some opportunity might arise of proving that my remorse for the terrible crime which I attempted is sincere, and that the love which we had for one another as children in the old home has never died, although for a time it was so terribly forgotten. Be my good angel, Graham, and tell me what to do, and above all, tell me that you forgive your unhappy brother,

DONALD M'BAIN.

"Shall I forgive him, Maggie?" asked Graham.

In answer, Maggie returned, her bright eyes looking up to Heaven—"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Graham bowed his head in silent recognition of the sacred source of her inspiration, and then determined to see his brother, pardoning him fully and freely for himself, but warning him of the law, and offering to provide funds for him to go abroad if he would, and so forget, in a new life and a new land, the sins and sorrows of the dead past.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARDOR AND PEACE.
Six months passed away, and the mystery of the Leigh Mill—a mystery no longer—was seldom referred to, save amongst the professional gossip.

An impression got abroad that the whereabouts of Donald M'Bain was known to his brother, but no one cared to raise the question, and by degrees it came to be regarded as a settled thing that nothing more would be heard of him.

As a matter of fact, Graham had quickly followed up his brother's letter by a personal visit to him in London.

He found Donald utterly cowed and broken, but full, too, of a genuine remorse and horror for the terrible crime of which he had so nearly been guilty. The interview between the brothers lasted more than an hour. Both were greatly moved; but Graham thought it better even at the cost of immediate pain, not to let any detail of the strange story remain longer a mystery to him.

So little by little the whole sad story of passion and pain was unfolded, and Graham was glad that it was so, for he found it easier to pardon his brother when it was so evident to him that a not dishonorable love for Maggie was at the root of the whole matter. He loved her so fondly himself that it seemed not altogether incomprehensible to him that a man should be willing even to lapse into crime for her sake; so with a heart full of conflicting emotions, but in which the ties of blood asserted themselves most strongly, he left his brother pardoned and at peace.

He arranged that, although the graver peril of the law was passed, Donald should sail immediately for Australia, as there were many reasons why he should never again return to his native land, and why it would even be wiser and better that he should put a wide stretch of ocean between himself and all associations of past life. So it came about that one morning two men went together to London Docks, and one took his passage for a world where, in the midst of new surroundings, a new and happier life might yet be hoped for. Graham mourned him awhile, almost as one dead, but his heart told him that what had been done was really best for both.

In the meantime things had changed at the mill. Donald's share had been realized, and, by an arrangement with Graham, Angus M'Gillie had been admitted into partnership, and his energetic habits and wide experience soon promised to more than reinvigorate the fortunes of the concern, which had inevitably rather waned because of the enforced neglect during the tragic incident of the disappearance of the two brothers, and now, that it all was over, it seemed as if the sad events were to have a good effect, and enlist the interest of many who had not hitherto done business with the firm.

Nor was old Tullach forgotten. He was loth to live an idle life, so Graham found him an easy and honourable post about the mill, where he could spend the evenings of his life in happiness and peace.

Maggie was, by her own wish, at school for a few months, as she was anxious to come to Graham sufficiently well educated to care for his wife, and her natural ability was so great that, with love an additional spur, she soon made sufficient progress to justify her taking her place in any circle.

Graham M'Bain himself was very happy in a quiet way now. Never before in his experience had so black a cloud proved to have so bright a silver lining. Since his brother had gone to Australia, he felt as if a great burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

One evening as Maggie and Angus and himself were all talking pleasantly in the office at the mill of things present and to come, of the tide of prosperity which seemed to have set in so strongly, and of the change which would soon be made by the marriage of Graham and Maggie, they were all suddenly reminded of the past by the advent of a postman with a letter bearing the Australian postmark.

Amid a grave silence Graham opened it and read:—

"Koorings, South Australia, 18—.

"My dear Graham,—Hasten to tell you that I have reached here safely, and to thank you as I never could have found words or courage to thank you when we stood face to face on the deck of the Emu, for all that I owe you, Graham, you have done more for me, surely, than brother ever did for brother before in the world's

history—and for such a brother! But by God's help the past will be a lesson to me that I shall never forget, and I am starting upon my new life full of hope for better things of myself than has ever been in the years that are gone. I dare not write more, and I am sure you will understand how full my heart is as I think of all that you have done for me, of all from which I have escaped. If there are any in the old country besides yourself whose hearts are not entirely hardened against me, give them my love, and tell them that they will never be forgotten by me. For yourself, Graham, I can find no words to tell you what I think, or how glad I would have laid down my life for you, if by it you could be made happy. I shall keep you fully informed of my movements, and I am not without hopes that the day may yet come when you may be able to think without pain of your affectionate and devoted brother,

DONALD M'BAIN.

Graham folded the letter in silence, and great tears stood in his eyes. Maggie's tears overflowed fairly, and even Angus M'Gillie was obliged to take a pinch of snuff and blow his nose with a suspicious violence.

"He is not all bad," said Angus, quietly.

"No man is all bad," said Graham.

"And he is very repentant," said Maggie.

"I hope and believe that he is on the verge of a new life," said Graham, "and that we may now believe that the last cloud upon our own happiness has passed away."

Angus M'Gillie now suddenly remembered an appointment that must be attended to without delay, and, with a mischievous glance at Maggie, left the room.

Left to themselves, the lovers first went through a form of overture very popular with such couples, Maggie's curly head frequently disappearing for a moment, only to emerge with blushing cheeks and sparkling eyes.

Then, after a while, Graham said in a voice of intense affection, "And when are you going to make me quite happy, my darling?"

Maggie blushed a little, but without any ridiculous affectation of super-sensitive nervousness answered quietly, "When you please, Graham."

So in another minute it had been arranged that in one week their love should be crowned and they should become man and wife.

The sun shone brightly upon a modest little wedding party at Renfrew a week later, and a handsome pair had never been joined for better and for worse.

Never, either, had so much happiness been born of so much sorrow and such strange and tragic events.

But the sun shone radiantly with promise of perfect happiness to come, and that good omen proved to be fulfilled to the uttermost.

Years have come and gone since the mystery of the Leigh Mill bewildered and horrified the whole civilized world. It has never been quite forgotten by any who were living at the time, but never, also, until now was the whole truth of the matter known, save to the one or two most immediately concerned.

The firm of M'Bain Brothers—for the new partner would not hear of any change in the title of the firm—flourished exceedingly, and is now entirely in the hands of Angus M'Gillie—Graham having retired a year or two ago, devoting himself to the cultivation of the Muse at his pretty country house, where many passers by often stop to admire the group on the trim lawn, where a beautiful woman romps with a curly-headed boy and girl, and a man with a refined, intellectual face paces to and fro, book in hand, with an expression of happiness and peace which tells the story of a life such as is given to few in this world of sin and shadow.

THE END.

Important to Salesmen.

A Denver, Col., mercantile firm issues a valuable little pamphlet to their salesmen, from which the following suggestions are taken:

Toward customers, be more than reasonably obliging; be invariably polite and attentive; whether they be courteous or exacting, without regard to their looks or condition; unless, indeed, you be more obliging and serviceable to the humble and ignorant.

The more self-forgetful you are, and the more acceptable you are to whomsoever your customer may be, the better you are as a salesman. It is your highest duty to be acceptable to all.

Cultivate the habit of doing everything rapidly; do thoroughly what you undertake; and do not undertake more than you can do well.

Serve buyers in their turn. If you can serve two at once, very well, but do not let the first one wait for the second.

In your first minute with a customer you give him an impression not of yourself, but of the house, which is likely to determine whether he becomes a buyer of the house or a talker against it.

If you are indifferent he will detect it, before you sell him, and his impression is made before you have uttered a word. At the outset you have to guess what grade of goods he wants, high priced or low priced. If you do not guess correctly, be quick to discover your error and right yourself instantly; it is impertinent to insist upon showing goods not wanted. It is delicately polite to get what is wanted adroitly on the slightest hint.

Do not try to change a buyer's choice, except to this extent: always use your knowledge of goods to his advantage if he wavers or indicates a desire for your advice. The worst blunder you can make is to indicate in a supercilious manner that we keep better goods than he asks for.

Show goods freely to all customers; be as serviceable as you can to all, whether buyers or not.

Sell nothing on a misunderstanding; make no promise that you have any doubt as to the fulfillment of, and, having made a promise, do more than your share towards its fulfillment, and see that the next after you does his share if you can.

To sum up, and put the whole matter in a few words:—Attend strictly to business when on duty; be invariably polite and obliging to everyone, not only for the benefit of the company, but for your own good. Remember that civility, while it may be one of the cheapest articles in the market, is also one of the cheapest, and the net profit to you in the end will be greater, not only from a social and moral point of view, but in dollars and cents, than anything else you may have to offer a customer.

June Snow Storm in Scotland.

The Aberdeen Free Press and other papers give accounts of a serious snow storm in Scotland in the beginning of June. A correspondent writing from Strathdon, Aberdeenshire on the 4th of June says:—"This is the third day of a snowstorm in the month of June, to which no living person in this country has ever seen any companion. Up to Saturday the weather was for some days very cold and frosty. Upon Saturday the atmosphere assumed a very ugly tin like color, and about mid-day hail and snow began to fall, continuing up to the present date. The snow upon the highest range of hills cannot be under two and a half feet deep. Down in the low grounds the depth is not under nine or ten inches. The woods and shrubs wear a very weird and sad like appearance, and in many cases great destruction has been done to all sorts of bushes and trees from the densely packed quantity of snow falling upon the branches. The condition of the animal world may better be imagined than described. The cattle were, as a rule, all newly out upon the grass, and had a night of cold starvation upon the Saturday. Yesterday bundles of hay and straw were despatched to the fields, but as the storm was still increasing towards evening, all the cattle had to be removed and housed up. Some were driven into sheltered woods, where indoor accommodation could not be had. Shepherds who were out all day upon Sunday looking after the sheep in the glens had their beards literally covered with tangles of ice. The state of the flocks is deplorable. In many cases the loss must be serious among the lambs, where, for the last three days the hill sheep have been isolated in sheltered corners to keep them from being smothered, but as yet no information has come to hand whether or not any are sealed up under the large snowdrifts, where in many cases the men on the lookout yesterday after the sheep were going through up to the shoulders. As to the feathered tribe, their condition is truly pitiable. Black birds lay dead in our garden; and a robin redbreast has come to our doors with his young family, flying hither and thither, picking up fragments and giving them to the little ones. The curlew, plover, swallow and all the other migratory birds are gone away again (the lapwing excepted). The young broods of grouse were in some cases seen coming up above the snow now fledged, and the shepherds put one or two broods under juniper bushes to give them shelter. The landscape, as far as the eye can see, is one of pure white—not one black spot to be seen."

Perfecting Artillery Firing.

The control by England of Major Watkins' invention of a position finder is a matter whose importance is not easy to exaggerate. The Government has given him £25,000 and £1,000 a year for ten years. They bought the invention cheaply at that. The inability of the human eye accurately to measure distance covered by rifle guns has long been recognized by artillery men. The invention to meet the difficulty have not been few, but never have they more than half filled the gap in artillery science. The Watkins' invention, however, which was first announced in 1872, has been steadily perfected until it now enables 20 guns to do the work of 320 under the old system. It triples or quadruples the power and rapidity of fire of heavy guns in forts and earthworks. It makes a good artilleryman of the rawest gunner, since it reduces him largely to a machine and increases the proportion of hits on a moving target a mile or more from shore from 20 to 80. The invention is operated in a directing station removed from a battery, and the simple laying of a telescope in this marks on the dial in front of the gunner the exact training and elevation. Consequently an artilleryman need not look out of the port, does not need to see the object, and can shoot as accurately over a hill as in any other direction. One important result of the adoption of the invention is the increased service ability of the old muzzle-loading cannon. It is proposed to fit them with the position finder and loaded with melinite shells, making them highly valuable up to 4,500 yards.

The quinine habit is gaining strength every day. Dizziness, that you can hear innumerable people complaining of in these days, can be traced to excess in the use of quinine. The good effects, that it is nearly always certain of, are lost by excessive doses. Too much quinine will also produce congestion of the ear and vibration of the auditory nerve. The growing habit of taking quinine for neuralgia and other like ailments, without consulting a physician, is altogether reprehensible, and may lead to very serious results. Many cases of deafness are produced by overdoses and long continued use of the drug.—St. Louis Globe Democrat.