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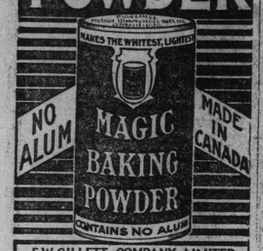

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CHAPTER XXXI.

PRIDE BEFORE A FALL.

"Well, well, lad," he said; "we shall see—the old man's always done his best for you; he meant it all for the best. You've always been happy with me, haven't you, lad?"

Reuben stared at him. "Why, of course, Gran—always. You can't tell what a weight it is off my mind to think I have found you like this."

As he spoke, his thoughts turned back to Polly, and he told the pitiful story to Wynter, who struck the table with his hand.

"She shall be avenged; by Heaven, she shall."

It was then arranged that Wynter should accompany Reuben on his mission of vengeance; and here it was that Reuben blessed the lucky stroke of Lord Cravenden's pick. Gold is an all-powerful weapon, and will move the very mountains if only sufficient is at hand. Reuben suggested that the entire company should take a holiday of a week or more at his expense, and, having provided himself with plenty of ready money previous to his railway journey, he proved a veritable blessing to the little company.

Accordingly, having seen that none would suffer by Wynter's absence, the two set off on their way and traveled by road, as in former days. Old Wynter, though he dropped many a mysterious hint, would give no clew as to how he was going to help Reuben; and the younger man, little guessing the changes that awaited him, was content to let him do as he desired.

Wynter had the precious proofs with him, but he meant to put off parting with his "lad" to the very last minute. He felt that, the secret once known, things would never be the same between them; and then, too, he feared Reuben would blame him—perhaps hate him, for thus having defrauded him of his inheritance. Indeed, so gloomy were the thoughts that passed through the old man's mind, that more than once the temptation assailed him to keep silent even now; but his love for Reuben was strong enough to overcome it.

Their way took them past the Grange, and the evening was fast drawing in. In the lane in which Reuben had been accused of poaching, they heard voices from the seat on the other side of the hedge; and Wynter placed his finger on his lip, as he grasped Reuben's arm tightly. The two stopped short; their footsteps had evidently been unheard on the soft, clayey road, and Reuben immediately recognized the speakers. They were old Griley and Morgan Verner! He could hear every word distinctly.

"Master Morgan," said old Griley, in his harsh, creaking voice, "I've been speaking to your father! You don't know what a mess we're in."

"I ought to by this time," snarled Morgan. "You've talked about nothing else ever since you met me."

"Yes, yes, I know," said old Griley soothingly. "It's not your fault, Master Morgan, though you have flung the money about, too. It's the squire's speculations are the worst. Anyhow, between one thing and the other, there's not another penny to be got till you've married Miss Olive."

"I tell you she won't marry me for another two months," growled Morgan.

Reuben's heart leaped within him as he heard this, and he looked at Wynter with shining eyes.

"We shall be sold up, stock and barrel, if money is not forthcoming at once. Marry Olive, and you can raise money on the fortune which she will have from her mother as soon as she is twenty-one—only a matter of a year from now," said Griley.

"Well, how's it to be done?" asked Morgan. "I'm sick of your schemes. I declare I never slept a month after we broke into that riding fellow's cottage and the library. I can't force her to marry me, can I?"

"Why not?" asked his companion, with a chuckle, for which Reuben could have choked him. "Run away with her and marry her by special license. You'll save all the expense of the wedding, and, what is more important, there will be no settlements made. Her money will be yours."

"But how can I run away with her?" said Morgan. "I can't pick her up and carry her off by force."

"No, no," said the other. "You'll have to trap her. To-morrow night Sir Edwin will be over at the Grange on business; I've seen to that. About an hour afterward, I'll send her a note saying her father is taken ill; that'll fetch her, all right, I know. You have the carriage waiting——"

"Well," said Morgan, with a sneer, "and what then? How do you think I am going to get her, even then? She'll fight like a tiger—I know her—and I'm no match for her either."

Reuben clenched his hands and seemed about to spring forward, but Wynter restrained him.

"Not she," went on the old steward, with a wicked chuckle. "You'll manage her right enough. She won't know there's anything wrong till you're well past the Grange. Then tell her that you're determined to take her away, and that, if she goes quietly, you'll marry her; if not—well, you know what you said to the other—pretty Polly."

"Leave her alone!" said Morgan, with an oath.

"Well," continued Griley, with a cruel note creeping into his voice, "then, if she's not quiet, you can threaten that you won't marry her. She'll come down quick enough then, I'll warrant you, when she thinks of her good name being trailed in the dirt. Oh, she'll give in, right enough."

"What am I to do then?" asked Morgan, evidently impressed with the other's villainous scheme.

"Why, I'll arrange with the coachman to drive you to a friend's house—a parson, though as poor as myself; a special license will do the rest; and, then you'll have her money in your pocket, and no dirty settlement to trouble you."

"It's a good plan," said Morgan, thoughtfully. "Yes, it will do, I think—as long as she gives in."

"Oh, she'll give in," said old Griley confidently. "You tell her you know she means to give you the slip, and you've done it for love of her!" He laughed hideously. "Though, 'pon my word, Master Morgan, I believe she would run away from you, too, for she hates you, the unnatural jade! You show her you're determined to have her; it won't be the first time you've deceived a woman—nor the last, eh?"

"Hold your tongue!" retorted Morgan. "Don't rake up old times; I don't want to remember anything about Polly, poor little fool. As if I could marry her—a man in my position!"

"Well," continued old Griley, "the coachman will drive you to Sedley, where the old parson lives—Davis is his name; and when you're spliced, take my advice and carry her off to Paris. Luggage can follow, and you can write a pretty letter to the old man, telling him how much you love her. D'ye see, Master Morgan?"

Morgan laughed with malicious enjoyment.

"'Pon my soul, you're a genius, Griley! You'd have made your fortune as director of a city company."

"I leave that to the squire," grunted the old rascal. "You say 'done,' Master Morgan, and leave the rest to me—only no more drinking, mind—or everything'll go to smash!"

"Not another drop," promised his companion; adding, in the next breath "but I have to drink, Griley; I'm haunted—haunted by ghosts!"

His voice had a new dread in it—almost a horror—that even impressed Griley.

"Ghosts!" he echoed.

"Yes," said Morgan. "Come, let's get home; I feel as if they are all around me—that girl and that riding fellow; they haunt me!"

Griley muttered some soothing reply, and the two men walked away. For the minute, Reuben and Wynter stood transfixed, then Reuben turned almost fiercely on the elder man as he whispered:

"Good heavens! What brutes! What's to be done?"

"Get to Bingleigh first," said Wynter, practically. "We can either warn Sir Edwin not to go—or Miss Seymour herself. The scoundrels!" he muttered, as they plodded along. "Not satisfied with getting the estate into their clutches, they mean to insult that poor girl. Thank Heaven, we heard them!"

"Perhaps we shan't be believed," Reuben said moodily, as they neared the village.

"Impossible," said Wynter. "We both heard. It will nearly kill Sir Edwin."

Reuben stopped short; he had forgotten the baronet's state of health.

"It can't be helped," he said, "unless——" He broke off as a sudden thought flashed through his mind.

"Unless what?" asked Wynter.

"Unless we let Morgan do it," replied Reuben, his eyes flashing bitterly.

The old man stared at him. "What!" he cried. "Let the poor young lady be deceived and insulted by that rascal! Why, Reuben, of what can you be thinking?"

Reuben laughed. "I'll convince them one and all," he said; "or, rather, Gran, we'll let them convince themselves. They won't believe our words, perhaps, but they'll believe their own eyes and ears. The villains have done one good thing, anyhow; they've told you the truth of my wrongdoing."

"Oh, Reu, lad," said Wynter, "don't reproach me; the plot was a deep one."

"Yes, yes; forgive me, Gran," said the young man remorsefully. "These brutes have stirred up every bitter feeling in me. You leave this to me, Gran, and I'll attend to my affairs afterward. This is the last plot Mr. Morgan will ever make."

The two had by this time reached the village inn, where they put up for the night. Nothing could be gained by troubling the Seymours until the last minute, and Reuben and Wynter, both thoroughly tired out with the excitement of their meeting and their long day's journey, were soon overcome by sleep.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ABDUCTION.

ON the following morning, the day on which Olive was to be torn ruthlessly from her home, Reuben was up with the dawn, and drove over to Sedley. From there he went back to Bingleigh Hall, but what plans he had made he refused to disclose till later in the day, saying that he wanted to see what would happen first.

Wynter was inclined to be hurt at his reticence; but, knowing his own secret, he soon got over his ill humor, and waited patiently for the night to come.

Meanwhile, Olive was happily enough employed at Bingleigh Hall. She had resolutely put aside all thoughts of the dark future which still lay before her, however much she might endeavor to delay its advent.

Neither Sir Edwin nor Olive had come into contact with the Cravendens, for when the Seymours had returned to Bingleigh, Viscount Cravenden, with his wife and mother, had already gone to town. So few were the servants at the Hall, that the gossip of his marriage and return had not yet filtered through.

Sir Edwin had received an urgent message to come to the Grange, and, feeling much better, had accepted the invitation to dinner which accompanied it. Olive's name was not mentioned; and, being only too glad to escape the company of Morgan, who, she knew from the faithful Topsy, had arrived at the Grange on the preceding day, she had persuaded Sir Edwin to go alone. When the time came for him to leave, the old man was seized with a strange reluctance.

"A foolish fancy, my dear," he said, as he kissed her, "but I wish you were coming, too. Are you sure you won't change your mind?"

"Quite, dear," returned Olive. "Why, father," she went on playfully, "I should think you've been tied to my apron strings quite long enough. You ought to be glad to get out alone for a change. Mind you have a good time."

She went with him to the head of the steps; and the last thing he saw, as he looked back, was her graceful figure against the light.

(To be continued.)

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Adams, Miss Mary, Victoria St.
Ash, Mrs. Stephen, Hamilton St.
Andrews, Annie, Queen's Road
Andrews, Fred
Abbott, Albert
Andrews, Miss A., Forest Road

B
Barry, Miss May, Military Road
Baird, Martin, Freshwater Bay
Bartlett, Miss,
care Dr. Smith, Cochrane St.
Bryne, T., Long Pond Road
Bavies, A. E.
Bradbury, Miss R., Meth. College
Barrett, George, George St.
Bragg, Miss Annie,
care Mrs. Mitchell, Barnes' Rd.
Bellman, Miss Mary, Plymouth Road
Bennett, Miss Mildred,
care Mrs. Taylor, South Side
Bennett, Mrs. T., care G. P. O.
Bellman, Miss M., Merrymeeting Rd.
Byrne, Miss Alice, Circular Road
Boyd, Miss G., South Side
Barnes, Miss K.
Buddon, Miss M. card, care G. P. O.
Butt, Wm. T., George's St.
Buckley, John
Butler, Harold, Cornwall Avenue.
Button, J., Adelaide St.
Butler, Joseph, Spruce St.
Butler, Edward, East End
Bursey, Miss G.
Bragg, Edward, James' St.
Brett, S. A., King's Road
Barnes, Mrs. B.
Bolen, Sandy, Springdale St.

C
Chaulk, Master J., late Grand Falls
Carter, Miss L., Cochrane St.
Carter, Miss Winnie, card
Campbell, Mrs. John, Belvidere St.
Cook, Mrs.
Crocker, Patrick, 17 —— St.
Corbett, James, care G. P. O.
Collins, Mrs. H., Monroe St.
Coady, John, Newtown Road
Cook, Harold
Cooper, Wm., Hagerty St.
Canning, Mrs. A., Gilmore Street
Connell, Mrs. John, Flower Hill
Carroll, Miss Bessie, Queen's Road
Curtis, Miss M.

D
Dawe, Mrs. L.,
care Mrs. Taylor, South Side
Dawe, Edgar, care G. P. O.
Davis, Fannie L., late Gen. Hospital
Dwyer, Miss M., Patrick St.
Delahunty, F., care Gen. Delivery
Daymond, Mrs. E., card
Downey, Miss Blanche, Adelaide St.
Donovan, James
Dunn, Miss Annie G., Patrick St.
Dunphy, J. A.

E
Ethelridge, Miss L. B.,
King's Bridge Road
Efford, W. John

F
Francis, Mrs. Robert, care G. P. O.
Flinn, Mrs. Mary
Fennessey, Mrs., Pine Street
Flynn, Mrs. Patrick, Flower Hill
Flynn, Mrs. Wm., Sebastian St.
Fifield, F. F., (late Tilton) Cabot St.
Ford, James C.
Foote, Miss Maud
Forsey, Miss Mabel, Quidi Vidi Road
Francis, Catherine

G
Grace, Miss A., card, Casey St.
Gale, Miss Florrie, Duckworth St.
Green, Mrs. Jane, Fleming St.
Gillett, Miss Mary Ann, George St.
Griffen, Miss M., King's Bridge Road
Gibbons, Michael, McFarlane St.
Goss, Miss Lizzie, Queen's Road
Gough, Mrs. John, Hamilton St.
Gosling, Mrs. Violet (Card R.),
Prince's Street
Good, Mrs. Elizabeth
Gordon, Mrs. Allen, Casey Street

H
Harris, Miss E. M., card, c/o G.P.O.
Hallerin, Miss M., Newtown Road
Harnum, Jonas, Queen's Road
Hart, William
Halliday, Wm., Mount Scio
Hewitt, Mrs. Stephen, Allandale Rd.
Hiscock, Miss Ethel, Hamilton St.
Hiscock, Miss Francis, Cochrane St.
Hobbs, Miss Sarah, Cochrane St.
House, Miss M.
Hynes, Miss B., Water Street
Hunt, Mrs. Jack
Hustins, Miss Blanche,
Duckworth Street
Halley, Hubert, LeMarchant Road
Hebbard, Mrs. F., Hamilton St.

J
James, P., care Gen. Delivery
James, Percey, care Gen. Delivery
Janes, Joseph, New Gower St.
J——, James, 12 Quidi Vidi Road

K
Kelly, Frank
Kane, Alfred, care Gen. Delivery
Kavanagh, Mrs. Lizzie
Kent, Miss Annie, care Dr. Mitchell
Kenny, John, card
King, Miss Mary F., Gower St.
Knight, S., Forest Road
King, Wm. S., care Gen. Delivery
King, Thomas, George's St.
King, Miss Mary, Gower St.

L
Lawlor, Miss L. (Card R.)
Long, Henry
Lane, Lewis, Young St.
Lawlor, Mrs. Thomas, Bannerman St.
Leonard, Miss Isabella, 26 —— Hill
Lewis, F., Hagerty St.
Long, Mrs. Edward, Cabot St.
Liskim, John, New Gower St.

M
Martin, Henry, Bannerman St.
Marshall, Miss D.
Mahoney, Miss Ellen, Military Road
Mansion, J., Beaumont St.
Mercer, Miss Jean, Charlton St.
Mercer, Mrs., retd., Casey St.
Mylis, W. R.
Miller, Amos, card
Michlin, Miss Emily, LeMarchant Rd.
Moore, Miss Annie, Prince's St.
Morris, Miss Pearl
Murphy, Mrs. James
Mumford, George

Mc
MacDiarmid, Mrs. A. A.
McClalland, Lee
McGrath, Miss Mary A., Queen's Road
MacDougall, Miss, LeMarchant Road

N
Nettin, Mrs. R., Parade St.
Noseworthy, James
Noseworthy, H., Hayward Avenue
Noseworthy, Miss Lizzie, Patrick St.
Nugent, John
Nugent, Mrs. Ed. P. M.
N——, Miss Mary, card
Noseworthy, Thomas, Military Road

O
Oates, Miss Fannie,
care Gen. Post Office
Oates, Walter, care Gen. Post Office
O'Leary, Joseph
O'Keefe, Miss Mollie, 15 —— St.
O'Neil, John, King's Road
O'Neil, Henry, Carter's Hill
O'Brien, Mrs. Michael
O'Brien, Bell, care Gen. Hospital

P
Parsons, Mrs. S., LeMarchant Road
Parsons, Mrs. F.
Parrell, Mrs. Wm., Allandale Road
Parsons, Mrs. T., Freshwater Road
Pearcey, Albert, Allandale Road
Penney, Miss L., Carter's Hill
Prendergast, Miss Nellie,
Duckworth St.
Penny, W. A.
Powers, John T., Duckworth St.
Powers, J. J., Water St.
Power, Miss M., Bannerman St.
Piercey, Jas. E.
Power, Patrick, card, Hamilton St.

Q
Quinton, Miss Annie

R
Ralph, Mrs. Mollie, card, James' St.
Ryan, Miss K. (Card R.),
Monkstown Road
Ryan, Anthony, King's Bridge
Reader, Miss W., Brazil's Square
Riggs, Miss Nellie,
care Mr. Butler, Water
Rideout, Mrs. H., card, York St.
Roberts, George, Allandale Road.
Roberts, E. W.
Rose, John, care Gen. Delivery
Rowe, Garland, South Side
Ross, John
Rogers, Miss Eliza, Spencer St.
Ross, Miss G., Military Road
Rodgers, John, 26 —— Road
Rogers, Wm. J., Spencer St.
Rose, Hugh A.
Rowe, Miss H., Maxse St.
Ross, Mrs. George, Nagle's Hill
Russell, G., Casey St.
Roberts, George, Freshwater Road
Rideout, Harrison, York St.

S
Sparks, N., late Clarke's Beach
Spracklin, Mrs., 8 Carter's Hill
Shaw, Miss Mary, James St.
Smart, Mrs. J., card, Newtown
Sparrow, Miss Minnie, Gower St.
Smart, Mrs. John, Willow St.
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Sears, Wm., care Gen. Delivery
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Sullivan, Miss K, Queen's St.
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Taylor, Mrs. B., care Miss A. Parsons
Thompson, A. J., card,
late Port aux Basques
Thompson, W. F., care Gen. Delivery
Tuck, Miss
Tucker, Mrs. J. J., Central St.
Tucker, Wm., Cookstown Road
Tucker, Miss M., care J. A. Tucker

V
Vicars, J. R., Circular Road

W
Walsh, Mrs., retd., Brine St.
Whalen, E., Water St.
Whelan, George, Freshwater Road
Walters, Harry H., Barters' Hill
Walsh, Miss Ellen, Prospect St.
Whalen, Mr. F., Henry St.
Wells, John, South Side, East
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