

ROLFF HOUSE

G. H. BENEDICT.

naught vainly sought to encourage him.

"No, no, Ralph," he said, as they were discussing the matter in the office, "I can see no gleam of hope in this matter. I tell you our case is completely riddled. There isn't a ghost of a show. Everything depended on there being no direct witnesses against us. Owing to my cursed recklessness and want of the most ordinary forethought, that infernal traitress not only has knowledge of all our plans, but has been the means of furnishing other clues against us. Everything has worked wrong. I put too much confidence in the war shutting off Claude, and in his weakness of character. I never expected to see him show such vigorous fight. It's too bad—too bad! We are doomed to be beaten. I can see it. I dare not contemplate the consequences. Unless something more hopeful turns up—but, no, there can be no hope. It is idle for us to delude ourselves. Fate is against us. If it hadn't been for that devil-haunted house—Ralph, I am growing superstitious. Yes, yes—popular legend is right. None but a Rolff can ever inherit that property. Don't tell me—look how every plan we have set in motion has been foiled in some strange and mysterious manner. I have been too sceptical. Some occult power is leagued against us. We must give up the fight. We must save ourselves, if we can."

"But what are we to do?" demanded Ralph.

"I don't know yet, Ralph. I must think—I must think. We can run away, I suppose."

"What, and give up everything, without a single manly blow? I would rather do anything than that. How do we know but that, by making a good fight, there is hope for us yet?"

"No, no, Ralph; my spirit is hopeful—too hopeful generally; but it is madness to deceive ourselves on this point. They can send me to prison. It's a criminal offence. Halstead is too sharp not to see the point he has got against me. He'll institute a criminal suit—see if he don't."

"And must we abandon everything—sacrifice all we have got—and go out in the world like beggars? Hang it! I'd rather shoot myself."

"So would I, Ralph. But we won't have to. You are not really concerned in this, and the responsibility cannot be made to lie against you. Matters can be arranged so that you will be all right. In fact, if I was to abscond and allow the suit already begun to go against me by default, I think that would be the end of the matter. All my property would be put in your hands and disposed of at your leisure, and we could make a new start in some other section. It's a hard choice, but I am not disposed to stand the chances of ending up my days in a penitentiary."

Disgusted and disappointed as Ralph was at the total collapse of the plans that had promised such brilliant fortune, he was unable to combat his father's fears successfully. At times the lawyer would show a temporary return of spirit, but it would be quickly succeeded by a fit of depression. In fact, Anthony Saybrook was like many a keen rogue, bold to plot and execute so long as success smiled on him, but easily worried and frightened under misfortune. Convinced that the lawyer Claude had secured to press his suit was skillful and determined, and had held of very dangerous testimony against him, he had no heart to await the issue, which he felt sure Claude was in a mood to push to the utmost extremity.

However, he made a show of carrying on a vigorous fight; boasted on the streets that he would win an easy victory; and apparently was prepared to contest every inch of ground in defending his character and holding on to the property he had so strangely acquired.

Finally the day arrived when the great suit of Rolff vs. Saybrook was to be opened. There was much public excitement over it, and the court-room was thronged. But, when the case was called there was no response from the defence. Inquiry was made, and it was found that Ralph Saybrook was at home; but he stated that his father had saddled his horse and ridden from town the previous night and had not returned. He did not know where he had gone or how soon he would return. For himself, he could only say that the management of the estate was entirely in his father's hands; he knew little or nothing of the matter; and he was not prepared to put in any answer till his father's return.

The case was postponed; but, as days passed by, and Anthony Saybrook did not reappear, it became evident that he had run away to escape the consequences of his crooked acts, and so judgment went against him by default.

Ralph Saybrook had not been sued jointly with his father, as suggested by Claude's lawyers, for the reason that the young man considered the father the instigator and manager of the

renowned scheme of fraud, and possessed too fine a sense of honor to allow it to be said of him that he desired to injure anybody out of mere spirit of jealousy. Having asserted his right to his patrimony, and secured a reversal of all the wrong attempted against him, he was not disposed to be revengeful. His hatred vanished, and, in its place, came a dull apathy and melancholy. He had succeeded—but to what purpose? He abused himself to make another appeal to farmer Bruyn; but only to be rudely rebuffed. The old man was of too obstinate a nature to yield easily in a matter where he had committed himself so strongly and Claude made the mistake of showing too great eagerness, and going to him before the disgust and disappointment at the failure of the schemes he had set such great store by had worn off. Farmer Bruyn did not lack in a certain coarse kind of conscientiousness. He had really trusted and suspected Claude's character, and flattered himself that his efforts to control Rosa's future had been actuated by a fatherly regard for her welfare. Though surprised, and almost

BACK-ACHE

If you have Backache you have Kidney Disease. If you neglect Backache it will develop into something worse—Bright's Disease or Diabetes. There is no use rubbing and doctoring your back. Cure the kidneys. There is only one kidney medicine but it cures Backache every time—

Dodd's Kidney Pills

summed up the asseveration of Anthony Saybrook, the flight of that individual and the consequent derangement of the plans he had cherished, he was too honest not to see that these events did not affect the least the opinion he had held of Claude. To change his attitude now was to convict himself of hasty and unreasonable judgment, and to lay himself open to the suspicion of being merely mercenary, and the bluff, wrong-headed old fellow was not in the least disposed to make such admissions, and, as has been stated, rebuffed Claude's approaches with even more than his former curtness.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The events detailed in the past chapters had occupied the fall months, and winter had again arrived.

For awhile, Claude found occupation enough to keep himself from total despondency. He had much to do to straighten his affairs, but under the advice and with the assistance of lawyer Halstead, he was enabled to meet obligations falling due by issuing new mortgages and disposing of outlying portions of the estate.

Claude went through with all this business wearily and mechanically. His health had been restored in a measure; and, feeling himself once more master of Rolff House, his pride and spirit returned, subdued only by the experiences he had passed through. The career of study and travel he had marked out for himself had come to a sudden end; he could not interest himself in the business and pleasures of the little place, and his ardent spirit fretted and soured under the ill-fortune that seemed to baulk his chief desire. There was but one object that now absorbed his hopes and ambition—and that object was sweet, patient, faithful Rosa Bruyn. The young man's short experience as a student of art abroad, and the knowledge that he was shut out for the time from all hope of carrying out his ambitious projects, had dulled the edge of his enthusiasm for travel and study, and it was natural, at his years, that, folled in every other outlet to his abundant energy and spirit, he should surrender himself completely to the beguiling passion of love.

He could dream only of Rosa Bruyn. He caught a furtive glimpse of her occasionally, and saw she was growing fairer, though paler than of yore, and with a meek of settled sadness that cut him to the heart. How willingly could he now resign every other thought of ambition or happiness to throw himself at her feet!

Claude could not resist once more communicating with her. He wrote her a long, passionate letter, bewailing the fate that separated them, declaring his unchanging love, and vowing that he would be faithful forever, and would wait while life lasted for fortune to smile on their happiness and crown their union. He wished her to give him a like pledge for he had in view that might take him from the place for years; indeed, he might never return; but, whatever fate overtook

him, he wished to leave with him the assurance that she could be his, and only his, while life lasted. This letter he entrusted to old Carl to deliver and bring him an answer and in the course of two or three days the old fellow handed him the following brief reply from Rosa:

My Dearest Claude: It was not wrong for you to write to me, nor can I think it wrong for me to reply this once without my mother's knowledge for I think she would give her consent most readily. My heart bleeds for you, and my life is very, very sad; but my duty is plain. It is very good and noble of you to be so considerate, after all the ill-treatment you have suffered. Do not despo. Do not be unhappy. Do not do wrong to yourself by being misanthropic. These clouds will yet depart. We shall yet be happy. I shall love you always, and be true till death; and should you wait for me, live till the day that makes me free to be the mistress of my own heart. You speak of going away. I cannot control or advise you; but remember how unhappy I shall be not to see you even at a distance occasionally; and do not do anything reckless. Believe me, ever fondly and faithfully, your own Rosa.

These sweet words came like a blessing and a prophecy of hope to the young man. But he was resolved on not staying longer than he could help in the little village. He felt that the only thing that could enable him to bear the sorrow and disappointment wringing his heart was excitement and action. His country was in the throes of a terrible war; disaster had fallen upon her arms; the call for help from all patriotic sons resounded through the land. His generous nature, of a generous nature in which the spirit of patriotism would find easy root. He felt that his country needed his services, and his restless eager nature, finding under disappointed hope, was ready to face any danger or bear any privation that would supply stimulus to his moping spirits. He put himself in communication with the military authorities of the State, and, having the opportunity to take a position as orderly, in which he surmised he could render efficient service, he resolved to do so, and give his services to his country.

With this resolve he made hurried preparations to settle his business affairs. He determined to install old Carl and Margaret in the great house again, made careful arrangements for the disposition of his property, if he should never return; and, on the approach of the New Year, was ready to join the army at its winter headquarters.

But he recollected his promise to be at the old vault on New Year's day, and so delayed his departure for a few days.

The first day of the New Year soon arrived, and Claude proceeded to the old house to observe whether the expected sign had appeared on the door of the old mansion before since his departure for Europe.

It was with a beating heart, and many recollections crowding upon him, that he again traversed the old hall, and procuring a light, proceeded down to the old cellar.

Entering it, he was quickly at the door to wait. Here the traces of Leeb Sackett's abortive attempt to break into it attracted his attention for a moment. Then, casting his eye scrutinizingly over the door, he noticed in the center of the four corners a small white cross, plainly painted on the dark stone.

It was the sign his aunt had told him to wait for. At that time, the vault had arrived when the secret of the old vault was to be removed. The prohibition had ended. He recalled to mind the mysterious roll his aunt had given him, and resolved to proceed at once to learn its contents.

To be Continued.

DISTRICT DOINGS.

CHARING CROSS.

Miss Eliza Walker left on Monday for a week's visit with her sister, Mrs. L. McBrien, Berlin, Ont.

Rev. W. R. George, of Granton, is visiting friends here.

Wm. Feltton and family, of Cleveland who have been spending a few days at Mr. Arthur Walker's, left today to visit relatives in Toronto.

Miss Cora Meloche entertained a few of her friends at a birthday party recently.

Fred. W. Shearing, who has been M. C. R. night operator here for two years, leaves Friday for Dartmouth, Ont., to accept a similar position.

Miss Lydia Broadbent, of South Buxton, is visiting her cousin, Miss Eva Hunter.

Wm. Walker was in town today. Rev. W. R. George, of Granton, will occupy the pulpit at St. George's church next Sunday morning.

JEANNETTE'S CREEK.

Rev. Mr. Down preached his introductory sermon on Sunday to a large congregation.

Miss Annie Rath, of Crompton, is a guest of her sister, Mrs. R. Venning.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Howe and daughter, Miss Ida, of Barbarton, are guests of Mrs. Howe.

Mrs. Whitehead, of Bay City, Mich., is visiting her niece, Mrs. Milton Shaw.

The drainage pump is running night and day.

The G. T. R. will build four new houses for their section men here.

Mr. Batz, of New York City, spent a few days here last week the guest of his cousin, Mrs. Koniz.

Miss Hamlin, of Detroit, was a guest of her sister, Mrs. G. Reams, from Thursday until Monday.

Cherry pickers are numerous in our village just now.

S. Garbett has found his horse.

Local Orangemen will go to Windsor to celebrate the 12th.

Mrs. Frank Ouellette and daughter, Miss Kathleen, of Stoney Point, were guests of Mrs. C. F. Ouellette last week.

Minard's Liniment for sale everywhere.



LOSS OF APPETITE

If your stomach is upset or in any way out of order—if food seems distasteful to you—if acidity, burning or fullness of the stomach prevents you from having an appetite—if you wish to eat and eat well—take, before each meal, a wine glassful of

VIN ST. MICHEL

(ST. MICHAEL'S WINE)

It will create an appetite and restore to the palate that lost relishing taste for food.

It will make the digestive organs act naturally and properly digest the food eaten, whether your stomach is in good order or not. No matter if you are young or old, sick or healthy

MAKES YOU EAT



"All coons look alike to me!"
So do most teas, but none taste like
Blue Ribbon Ceylon.

Put up Black Mixed & Ceylon Green

Geo. Stephens & Douglas

Buy a...

Massey-Harris

Binder
Mower
Rake
or
Tedder

And you get the best
Machine in the world.
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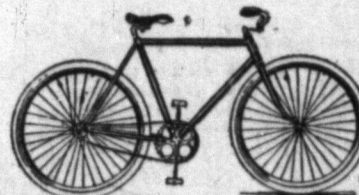
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General Hardware and
Implement Merchants.

P. S. A splendid Map of Western Ontario given away with every purchase of "Our Superior" Binder Twine. No other twine at the price on the market works so satisfactorily.

Talk
About

Wheels



This is the time when the new wheels are creating a great deal of talk. No enthusiast has better foundation for claims for the excellence of his favorite than those who talk of the

"Hyslop"

It's a wheel made for service and easy riding. The price is lower than first-class wheels have sold for in the past.

Wm. Gray & Sons Co'y., Limited

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Meet Me at Somerville's

For a Glass of

Ice Cream and

Soda Water

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Town.

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