Sweet Norine

"Oh, Clifford, do not speak so unkindly to me, or I shall die," wailed Norine, wringing her hands. "Grandfather is not here. I—I did not send him here; I did not know he was coming here to talk with you. I had kept everything a secret, as you desired me to do, and—and I betrayed my love for you to him to-night quite by chance. They were speaking ill of you, Clifford, and I could not bear it. It was like plunging a sharp knife through my heart, and I told them so."

An impatient imprecation broke from her companion's lips.

"I will walk with you as far as the post office, where I am going to mail some letters, and you shall tell me about it," he said, taking her arm in a not very pleasant mood.

With faltering voice Norine told him truthfully just what had occurred. She expected him to vigorously refute the charge that he did not love her, but instead, to the girl's great astonishment, he broke into a sneering laugh—a laugh that made the blood run cold in her veins.

"Well, whatever comes of the affair, you have brought it on yourself, Norine," he declared. "It would now be a rather difficult matter to take you with me when I go East; the opportunities for getting off are so perilous."

"Not if we were—were married," she faltered, timidly, "and—and I will consent to marry you and go with you, Clifford."

He laughed a harsh, grating laugh, answering sneeringly:

"I am sure I ought to be very much obliged to you for your kindly intentions, Norine, but the fact of the matter is, I cannot marry you under the terms of the will just yet, until I reach New York and transact some business that remains to be attended to there. Do you comprehend?"

"Oh, Clifford!" moaned the girl, "I cannot part from you; I should surely die! You cannot mean to go away without marrying me, and—and taking me with you, as you have so often told me you would if I would consent to go with you, dear."

He bit his lip in vexation. He had been very careful not to use the word marriage in talking with Norine in the past; and now to hear her pin her faith to his promise of making her his wife annoyed him exceedingly, to say the least.

"You must listen and heed what I have to say, Norine," he replied, doggedly and evasively. "I cannot marry until I reach the East, and come into full possession of this fortune. Now do you understand the position I am placed in? If you wish to go with me under these circumstances, well and good; if not, I must leave you behind me. I leave you free to make your own choice. I don't want you to ever have it to say that I ever persuaded you in this matter."

Norine was so much of a thoughtless, innocent child that she did not realize the drift of his carefully selected words. She only understood one thing, and that was, that he wanted her to marry him when he should get the great fortune that had been left him. That was all that she understood clearly.

Even while they were talking Clifford Carlisle was telling himself that he was tired of the girl. He had enjoyed the love-making while she had been content to say nothing, hear nothing, of marriage; but now that that subject filled her mind he was beginning to tire of it. He knew, too, full well that he would never dare make any other woman than Florice Austin his wife. Florice held him in her power too completely for that.

And yet Norine Gordon was so exquisitely lovely he could not bear the thought of giving her up.

If he could have managed to have grasped the fortune without Florice Austinn having such a damaging hold on him, he might have been tempted on the spur of the moment to have married Norine. But as it stood, there was no possibility of it; not the slightest.

Still, he did not quite have the heart, cool rascal that he was, to tell the girl who was clinging to him with such passionate sobs the plain truth; and it was very pleasing to him, too, to see how completely the pretty creature was in love with him.

"Do not weep, Norine," he whispered. "I have changed my plans about leaving Hadley for a fortnight yet; or I may be detained still longer in this confounded hole, so we will have ample time to talk this matter over. These very letters in my hand must go east, and be answered, ere I shall know my future plans entirely. So let us not think of this unpleasant subject any longer. A man likes a girl who laughs and is merry with him, Norine, not one who falls into tears at his approach, so call forth the smiles to your pretty lips, kiss me, and swear never to fall into such weakness again when I am about. I do not fancy it, Norine; I assure you I do not."

Still, the girl was not to be appeased. He could feel through the darkness that she was looking up in his face wistfully.

"Tell me, assure me that you love me, Clifford," she murmured, tremulously, her voice quivering.

"Can you doubt me, beloved?" he answered, melodramatically. "My heart beats only for you, fairest of all prairie flowers."

The lightness, carelessness of his tone jarred upon her.

"Then my grandfather misunderstood your words and meaning, Clifford?" she interrogated, gravely.

"Certainly, if he has come to any other conclusion than that I adore his charming granddaughter," he replied, gathering the girl up in his arms and kissing the words trembling on her lips into silence.

"Of course I love you, Norine," he declared. "Why, I love you so well that I would give my life to save yours, if necessary. You know they are still in hopes that that rascally thief, Joe Brainard, who stole all that money from the express company, will come back some day, and that they will marry you to him; that is the reason they are so bitter against me, and are doing their best to part us by telling you that I don't love you. I wonder that you do not see through it."

"I never thought of that. Perhaps you are right," declared Norine, with a little gasp in her voice. "How strange that I did not think to look at it in that light, Clifford. Will you ever forgive me for letting a doubt creep into my heart?"

"Yes, if it never occurs again," he answered, lightly. "Let me also add, if you do not come to Barrison Hall again [illegible] me. That would never do, you know, my dear. The servants, indeed, any of the villagers, would talk if they knew that you came here at this time of the night to see me. It is nearly 10 o'clock. What if your grandparents were to miss you, and find that you were out of the house, and on such a night as this, and, furthermore, that you had come here? Why, they would be apt to lock you up, and make it frighty unpleasant for both of us. Can you not realize that?"

"Yes," answered the girl. "But I am not sorry I came, Clifford, for you have removed such a heavy pain from my heart."

And she added after a moment's pause: "No matter what is said after this, I shall not believe it, for, my love, to doubt you would be death."

"What an earnest little thing you are, anyway!" he cried. "Why, I thought you the kind of a girl who would make a delightful comedy of love, and lo! you are trying to make a tragedy of it."

"It is because I love you with all my heart, Clifford," she answered. "My grandfather always said of me, looking at me with an expression which puzzled me exceedingly: 'I dread almost to think of the time when your heart shall awaken to the dreams of love, my lass; for if your choice should fall on any one save good, honest Joe, I fear it might go hard with you.' And when I would ask why, he would answer, slowly and thoughtfully: 'With your race, true love was never known to run smooth. I shall say no more now, but perhaps I may at some future time.'"

"He was simply trying to work upon your fears, Norine. You must not believe such nonsense as this old superannuated grandfather seems determined to put into your pretty little head. Hark! What noise was that?" he exclaimed, pausing abruptly and listening intently.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"What sound is that?" repeated Clifford Carlisle, stopping short.

"I hear nothing. What was the sound like?" queried Norine.

"Like stealthy footsteps," he responded. "I could almost swear that someone was following us. Do the Indians ever come to the village?" he asked, suddenly.

"No," responded Norine. "The treaty they have with the Government provides that they shall never set foot in Hadley. That was because they laid the place in ashes on two different occasions."

"Norine, there is some one following us," whispered Carlisle, in great trepidation. "And as I have no relish for an encounter with one of those fellows, I propose that we take to our heels and make a run of it toward the village. You will have to be fleet of foot to keep up with me."

"I—I cannot run. I get short of breath so quickly," faltered Norine, pantingly, clinging in great affright to his arm.

"Nonsense!" he cried, sharply. "You must run if you want to keep up with me, I say. I don't like the sound of those stealthily approaching footsteps."

Ere Norine could reply, a burly figure sprang directly in the path in front of them, and a voice, which she instantly recognized as belonging to the half-breed who had recently been turned out of the express office, exclaimed, gruffly:

"So, so, my pretty pair. A nice find I've made this time, to be sure! A pair of lovers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go quietly along, my good fellow, and I will see that you have enough to get yourself a glass of something good and hot and strong at the village tavern," said Clifford Carlisle in a voice which certainly betokened fear, despite his attempt to speak carelessly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the fellow, coarsely. "That's good! Sorry I can't accept your wonderful generosity. The fact is, I must have all the cash that you have about you, and after you have complied with that consideration, why, then I'll tell you what else I want of you."

"For shame!" cried Norine, turning indignantly upon the fellow. "I know you, and I shall lose no time in reporting this disgraceful conduct to my grandfather, Daniel Gordon, and he will take means to punish you severely, as you deserve."

"Oh, ho! So your companion is little Norine, the little beauty of Hadley village, eh?" he cried, with a brutal laugh, turning to Clifford Carlisle. "Well, this is luck. Now, look here," he added, "Turn over what money you have about you, and leave the little beauty with me peaceably, and you can go on your way unmolested. If you try to resist, I'll have your scalp dangling at my belt inside of a minute. I've sworn that the little beauty of Hadley village shall be mine—ay, the bride of Jack, the half-breed. No one living shall thwart me in my desire."

The effect of these horrible words upon Norine can better be imagined than described. With an awful cry of terror, she threw herself into Clifford Carlisle's arms.

She tried to frame the words: "Save—save me!" but no sound issued from her white lips; her limbs refused to bear the weight of her body, slight as it was, and she slipped to Clifford Carlisle's feet all in a heap.

"She has swooned!" exclaimed the half-breed, with a muttered curse.

"So much the better!" retorted Carlisle, "for now we can talk unrestrainedly."

Both Carlisle and the half-bred had made a fatal mistake. Norine had not swooned. It would have been better for her, perhaps, if Heaven had but been thus merciful to her. She lay there, still as death, in the snow, listening to every word that fell from their lips, unable to utter the slightest sound.

Even as she was gathering her scattered senses together, Clifford Carlisle was saying, in a voice which betrayed great perturbation:

"There! now you have every red cent that I have about me, I assure you; now let me go, will you?"

"You can go as quickly as you like after you have given me one little bit of further information. I must know in what portion of the village the people keep their firearms. I might as well inform you that our people intend making a raid upon Hadley within twenty-four hours. After that time, not a roof will be left standing in the place."

A cry of dismay broke from Clifford Carlisle's lips. He was an arrant coward, and he stood in mortal terror of a threatened massacre by the furious Pawnees.

"Hear me out," exclaimed the half-breed, "and if you are willing to fall in with my plan, you will have nothing to fear, for your life will be saved by my people."

"Name the conditions!" cried Carlisle, hoarsely. "I have no relish for being massacred out here in this heathenish wild west."

"We need a leader who knows thoroughly the ways of the white men in battle—one who knows where their stronghold is, and will guide us to it. Do you understand?"

"You ask me to give my own race into your hands—to aid you in assassinating them?" muttered Carlisle, ponderingly.

"Yes; and you are the very man whom we expected to find to do this for us," replied the half-breed, coolly. "Do you want to know why?"

"Yes," assented Carlisle, the fear still in his voice.

"Because we have seen you accomplish one or two daring hold-ups on the mountain road. Do not attempt to deny it, stranger, for we are sure of our ground. We followed you to your home—the big stone house that is down the road. We admire your daring, and the Pawnees want you. Will you come to us as I have described, or will you be massacred along with the rest? Make your choice here and now. Shall we add your scalp to the rest, or will you save yourself?"

(To be continued.)

BANDIT IN MAIL CAR.

DARING ROBBER'S WORK ON THE GREAT NORTHERN.

Bound Two Mail Clerks, Robbed the Car and Delivered Way Station Mail for Hundred Miles—Then Dropped Off Train and Escaped.

Spokane, Wash., March 15.—A bandit boarded the mail car on the westbound limited of the Great Northern Railroad at Penner's Ferry, Idaho, before daylight to-day, bound the two mail clerks, robbed the mail car, and delivered way station mail for one hundred miles. Then he dropped off the train and escaped. The robbery was not discovered until the train reached Spokane, five hours after the bandit boarded it.

The train carried the through mail, and much of it was registered. The amount stolen will not be known until the registered mail has been checked up.

When the train arrived at Spokane at 9.20 o'clock to-day the mail car was closed. Employees at the station opened the car and found one of the mail clerks lying bound on the mail sacks. The other clerk was locked in a closet.

SHOT HIS WIFE.

THEN FORT WILLIAM MAN TURNED PISTOL ON HIMSELF.

Elderly Couple of Fort William, Married Twenty Years, Victims of Tragedy—Husband Dead; Wife Can Hardly Live.

Fort William, Ont., March 15.—After living together for over twenty years, a petty quarrel of an old couple of this city ended in a terrible tragedy on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Wm. Garton being dead by his own hand and his wife lying in the McKellar Hospital in a critical condition, as the result of a bullet wound in her head, the wound having been inflicted by Garton before he turned the weapon on himself. The couple were in the back yard at the time, and the tragedy was started by a war of words, which was suddnely ended by Garton whipping out a revolver and committing the insane deed.

Neighbors who were attracted by the shots found both lying apparently lifeless on the ground, but a closer examination showed that Mrs. Garton was still alive, and she was hurried off to the hospital, where medical aid has, so far, been able to keep life in her, although the final outcome is very doubtful.

No reason for the rash act is known. Garton was apparently sane, and was not a user of liquor. The couple have resided here for many years, and have a family of grown-up children.

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY
Take LAXATIVE BROMO Quinine Tablets. Druggists refund money if it fails to cure. E. W. GROVE'S signature is on each box. 25c.

BLACKMAILING A DUKE.

How Bavarian Farmers Got Money from Nobleman.

Munich, March 14.—The hearing of the suit brought by Duke Francis Joseph of Bavaria against a farmer named Hoffmaier, who recently was successful in blackmailing the duke when his highness was automobiling in the vicinity of Bambery, has been fixed for next Monday.

The duke considers that the blackmailing was prearranged. Hoffmaier, seeing the duke's automobile approaching, detached his horse from a farm wagon and purposely inflicted a serious wound upon the animal. When the duke came up Hoffmaier accused his highness of having collided with his wagon, and causing the injury to his horse. A crowd of about one hundred peasants then appeared and refused to let the duke depart until he had paid over to Hoffmaier all the money in his possession and promised to forward the farmer an additional sum of $40.

The duke related the incident to the Prince Regent of Bavaria, who advised him to bring suit against Hoffmaier, particularly as there was reason to believe this method of blackmailing was becoming popular, there having been several other similar attempts in Bavaria recently.

CASTORIA.
Bears the Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher. The Kind You Have Always Bought

HINDOOS TURNED AWAY.

A Party of Twenty Refused Landing at Wrangel.

Vancouver, March 15.—A despatch from Juneau, Alaska, states that the people of Wrangel assembled on arrival of the steamer Cottage City from the south and prevented the landing of twenty Hindoos. Word from Douglas Island says they will not be allowed to land there.

The Juneau City Council at a special meeting decided not to allow the Hindoos to come ashore. Hindoos already in Juneau supported at the public expense will be required to leave on the next boat south.

Robert Robertson, one of the best known building contractors in Toronto, died on Sunday.

AT R. McKAY & CO'S, TUESDAY, MARCH 17th, 1908
HAMILTON'S MOST PROGRESSIVE STORE

Immense Two-Days Sale Of Linens

It's Just Your Opportunity to Buy High Class Table Cloths and Napkins at Marvelous Reductions

To-morrow morning we start positively one of the greatest clearing sales ever attempted by us, including 800 Fine Table Cloths and 200 dozen Napkins. This is the result of a splendid purchase from a leading manufacturing concern in Belfast, who needed the ready money worse than he did the goods. We made a good bargain, secured the entire lot at our own prices, so now, in short, that's the history of this great purchase. These Table Cloths and Napkins will be passed out to you to-morrow immensely below regular. It's just your opportunity, and shrewd buyers should take advantage of this great sale. READ.

TABLE CLOTHS

2 Yds. by 3 Yds.
Regularly $7.50, for $4.70
Regularly $5.75, for $3.75
Regularly $4.25, for $3.00

2 Yds. by 2½ Yds.
Regularly $7.00, for $4.35
Regularly $6.00, for $3.75
Regularly $3.50, for $2.25
Regularly $2.50, for $1.89

2 Yds. by 2 Yds.
Regularly $5.00, for $3.15
Regularly $4.50, for $2.65
Regularly $2.25, for $1.40
Regularly $1.75, for $1.25

Napkins $2.50 Dozen
50 dozen three-quarter size Napkins, pure linen, slightly imperfect, worth $3.50 and $4.00 dozen, special ... ...$2.50 dozen

Napkins $3.60 Dozen
25 dozen three-quarter size Napkins, heavy double damask, slightly imperfect, worth regularly $5.00 and $6.00 dozen, for $3.60

Indian Head 20c Yard
Indian Head Suiting, round, even thread, launders like linen,
36-inch ... ...20c yard
45-inch ... ...25c yard

Irish Linen 50c Yard
Fine, Round Thread Irish Linen, for blouses and suits, pure linen, regularly 60c value, for ... 50c

SPECIAL NOTICE
Our grand Spring Opening will take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and will embrace one of the most elaborate displays ever attempted in Hamilton.

Women's Suits, Dresses and Rubberized Silk Coats

$25 Suits for $19.50
Two distinctly new models in strictly Tailored Suits, made of excellent quality Chiffon Cloth, in navy, brown and black, one style is a short jaunty, single-breasted jacket model, snug fitting. Handsomely trimmed, pleated skirts, with one and two folds, make your selection early. Regular $25 Suits, very special at $19.50

$25 Silk Suits $17.50
Silk Jumper Princess Dresses, made of fancy Taffeta Silk, excellent quality, one piece model, kimona sleeve, waist and belt piped with silk in contrasting shades. These dresses are worth $25, specially priced at .. ..