

NAOMI, THE GIPSY GIRL.

BY M. E. O. MALEN.

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

Lord Mereworth took his hat then, and went out. The garden was pleasant and sheltered, and the wind drove hoarsely across the marshes. Why should he not take his walk along the trim paths, brightly bordered with crocuses of every hue, and clusters of delicate snowdrops?

The river was here too, if he must needs seek that—a fiery thread of the broad line of water farther off, with a fainter ripple, and a quieter tone. But it seemed as if this could not satisfy him.

There was a tree, standing out bold and brown against the pale horizon, which stretched out its bare arms, and beckoned him near, leaving him no power to resist its mandate. He knew that tree. He had seen it again and again in his dreams; he had even seen it, on his cousin's canvas, still beckoning as it beckoned now.

It seemed as if he was never to be his own master. He gathered all his strength to defy this influence. He even made a faint effort of hurrying back to the house, but in another minute he had turned, in spite of himself, and was walking swiftly to meet the bitter wind and the beckoning arm.

As he neared the tree he saw something he knew not what, huddled out at its foot—something which the blast buffeted and tormented struggled with in its passion, as if it recoiled the stupified immovability with which it met its assault.

Lord Mereworth's heart stood still for a second, and then began to throb fiercely and wildly. With the courage of desperation, he went forward to confront this something, which, on closer view, seemed a mere bundle of rags, dragged out of the river, may be and left there for the time to disperse at its leisure.

He touched it with his foot, and then out of the heap rose a pale, patient old face, seamed with wrinkles, and wasted with hunger and despair. Their eyes met, and the poor creature's suddenly brightened.

"It's you, mate, is it?" he said, in a faint, hollow voice, as he gathered his tattered garments about him, and struggled to rise to his feet. "But I thought I am perished with want and cold. It seems as if you was to have all the luck; for little enough has ever fallen to me!"

Lord Mereworth drew himself up, and looked at the miserable creature with a haughty stare. "What do you mean? I have never seen you before."

"No, no; come, mate, that won't do!" returned the other, with a spark of resentment in his faded eyes. "I'm not because you're up in the world, and I'm down, that you're a-going to throw me over. I've had a bitter hard time since I saw you last, but I set my heart on coming home to die; and here I am, back in the old country again, but without a farthing in my pocket, or a morsel of bread to put within my lips. But when you was down I helped you, and now it's your turn to help me. I'd rather lay down and die in a hedge than go to the work-house, for it's worse than prison; although the rich folks think us so lucky to have a beautiful place like that to live in when we're past work, and past feeling, too, or we shouldn't be here."

"All this is no affair of mine," said Lord Mereworth coldly. "If you want relief, why not ask for it at once, without this long preface, which can not concern me."

"If you're afraid of my telling on you, and putting you back just as you're making your way up," he said, fearfully, "you're mistaken in me. I've had such bitter hard times, they've took all the spirit out of me. I started honest, and I'd kept honest if the world hadn't been so spiteful. But I never stole except when I was starvin'; that I swear, and I never asked you no questions when you wanted help."

"I don't understand you," replied the Earl, with stony defiance. "You must mistake me for some one else. I never was in a position to require your help, and do not see any prospect of falling quite so low as that, whatever misfortunes Fate may have in store for me."

"Don't be hard upon me, mate," murmured the old man, imploringly, thinking, no doubt, that it was only his piteous state made the other fidget not to recognize him. "I'll draw out of your way as quick as I can. For to tell me to harm any one who's more honest than myself, I would go to the workhouse rather—I would, indeed!"

"I tell you I am not the man you think," said Lord Mereworth, impatiently. "You and I was mates a whole year; and you won't say you wasn't called George in those days?"

"I was never called George." "That mightn't have been the name you was christened in; but so you was called in my time," persisted the man. "Not as I want to remind you of any thing so bad as to be forgotten," he added, humbly. "I know when to hold my tongue, and I ain't been much used to the sound of it o' late. But don't be so hard on me, mate. I sha'n't be in your way long."

"You are not in my way now," was the reply, in a tone that robbed the speech of any approach to gentleness. "I have no back just as you're making your way up. I suppose you are a professed beggar, and this is one of your tales; but you've over-reached yourself this time, for I never assist any one who attempts to threaten me." "Threaten you?" exclaimed the miserable wretched creature. "Threaten me!"—and he held up his shaggy arm to the light. "What's that be the use of my threatening, even if I wanted to?—a little child could master me now."

"Then why do you try and make out I am somebody very different to the way I am?" "The coming that comes of great need, and bitterness, and daily work, drives me to the last degree, and I beg your pardon, sir, I am sure; but the likeness was very deceiving. Now I go to look close, sir, there's a difference about the eyes, and a certain air, you know, sir, no more but real gentleness have, with my mate had'n't, of course. I am sure I do

humbly beg your forgiveness, sir; and if you'd bestow a trifle on a poor, famishing fellow creature, excusing the liberty of my being torned of the same flesh and blood as yourself, you'd be doing a real Christian act, sir, and one as would be a comfort to you to remember in your declin' days."

He had relapsed into a regular professional whine, and with a very little encouragement would have substituted "my lord" for "sir," although he was fully convinced in his own mind that this was really the man who had been his yoke-fellow at Williamstown.

"You are quite sure that I am not the man for whom you took me just now?" said Lord Mereworth, standing in front of him, and looking menacingly into his dim eyes.

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir, I can't think how it was I came to make such a mistake." And then getting professional again: "I am not accustomed to begging, sir, I do assure you; but great misfortunes have been my lot, and we never know what we are coming to, which emboldens me to ask for your kind assistance, to help me on my way."

"Certainly," replied the Earl, treading him a penny; and then he added, with a rapid change of tone, "Let me give you a word of caution, my friend. The police have orders to arrest all vagrants who are caught begging in this neighborhood; and if I see or hear any more of you, I'll just give them a hint of the accusation you made against me just now. Do you know what libel is?"

"Is it the same as forgery?" inquired the man, with dull resentment. "I don't know about that; but I know you'll repent it if you stay here," replied Lord Mereworth, as he turned on his heel and walked away.

"If I am a worm, I won't be trod upon!" muttered the old man to himself; and he went limping along in the direction of the river.

Every time Lord Mereworth looked back, he saw the man, patient, and slow, and persistent, like a halting but relentless Nemesis, following behind; and though the former made a feint of leaving the direct road, the other was evidently prepared for this manoeuvre, for instead of wasting his strength in pursuit, he calmly leant on his staff and waited.

Of course, Lord Mereworth could have taken to flight, but there are men of nervous temperament, whom pursuit agitates and irritates beyond measure, and he was evidently one of these.

He actually trembled at last; and though to have turned and threatened the man with summary punishment might have settled the matter at once, he had not the moral courage to encounter any repetition of the past scene.

Rather than this, he preferred to run, and, of course, he distanced his pursuer in this way, at the sacrifice of his dignity. He dared not enter the grounds at any point which might be visible to the sly, lest he should follow him to the house, and tell his wild, foolish tale to the gaping servants; but, by making a detour, he got into some meadows close to the peachery, and making the hedge that intervened at one bound, was once more in the garden.

"Dear me, Cousin Bertram, have you seen a ghost?" The voice that uttered these words was soft and airy, and sweet as the ear like low music, and yet Lord Mereworth would rather have heard any other at this moment.

He made a desperate effort to recover himself; as he answered, breathlessly, "I have seen nothing spiritual, I assure you, until I had the pleasure of seeing you."

"I fancied I was substantial enough, too, although you did not appear to notice my presence until I addressed you. You have your own bent running so fast! You are quite out of breath."

"You have le a vanity than any woman I know," he said, with a courtly bow. "You certainly did not see me until I spoke."

"In that case, there would have been no need to hurry, Alicia."

"That is just precisely what I am trying to prove. It is surely waste of time to 'try and prove' an undisputed fact."

"Do you know, Cousin Bertram, properly suits you. You are growing absolutely cleverer," she said, with an air of insolent criticism.

"Am I to infer that you thought me a fool before?" "There is no harm in confessing now, that I gave you credit for more heart than intellect in days gone by."

"And now, I am afraid, you have reversed your judgment?" "You are so fond of extremes," she replied, with that strange smile of hers he never liked, because it was so incomprehensible. "I may think you have improved in respect without degenerating in another."

Hard on Beecher. At the dinner of the Chamber of Commerce, Henry Ward Beecher made some remarks which are deeply significant, coming from his lips. "Speaking the truth," he said, "is an artificial matter. Everybody knows that it is not natural to some eminent persons in Brooklyn. 'Speaking the truth,' Mr. Beecher goes on to say, 'requires that a man should know what is truth. Well, it requires that a man should speak it, too. There are certain matters about which Mr. Beecher knows the truth; he has never seen fit to tell it. It is hard to see why the merchants received with laughter Mr. Beecher's remark that 'we part with our consciences, and call that truth.' A confession like that should have been received in silence. Another painful but appropriate sentence in Mr. Beecher's speech is: 'No man knows what he will do according to the nature of the temptation adapted to his peculiar weakness.' The striking points of Mr. Beecher's speech nowadays are the commentaries which they furnish upon his acts.—N. Y. Sun.

The forty saloon keepers of Danville, Ill., fought against the increase of the annual license of \$993. The temperance folks at once set to work to have the price raised to \$1,000, and that put the liquor men to retreating; the opposition was soon abandoned, the \$993 license accepted, and peace restored.

Locked in With a Maniac.

A quiet looking man of seeming intelligence lies in St. Vincent's Hospital suffering and perhaps dying from a terrible wound inflicted by a fellow prisoner in a cell of the Jefferson Market Prison. The man's name is L. D. Vincent, and he was a book canvasser. Recently he was arrested for intoxication and was temporarily committed to the Jefferson Market Prison where he was locked up in a large cell with about twenty-five other "ten day" men. Among these prisoners was James Rielly, who was serving out a five day's sentence for drunkenness. Rielly appeared to be on the verge of delirium tremens, and acted so queerly that his companions became afraid. The night keeper of the prison, Scully, and Kierman, summoned an ambulance surgeon, Dr. Kendall, declined to remove Rielly, saying that the case did not amount to anything. There were separate cells in which the man might have been confined, but the keepers chose to put him back among the other prisoners, and some of the latter claim they were instructed to "knock him out of him" in case he attempted to molest them.

Just before daybreak Rielly made things lively for his fellow prisoners. He cursed, gibbered and swore he would kill them. So terrible was his frenzy that they retired to one corner of the cell and left him in undisputed possession of the remaining space. About five o'clock, the man, now thoroughly demented, drew a large jack-knife from his pocket, and uttered wild threats as he opened it. Then he sprung upon Vincent and bore him to the ground. Before anyone could interfere, Rielly had, with a single blow, ripped open his victim's thigh in a horrible manner. The other prisoners charged in a body on the assailant, and for two or three minutes there was a pitched battle. Some of the men were armed with clubs, which, it is said, they improvised from the light woodwork of their benches, and these weapons were piled with a vigor born of terror. At last Rielly was overpowered and the knife was taken from him.

A call for an ambulance was received in St. Vincent Hospital about half-past five o'clock, and when the surgeon, Dr. Harold, got to the prison a minute or so later he says that from the condition of Vincent and the amount of blood on the floor he believed that the wounded man must have been at least twenty minutes without assistance. Several clubs lay beside the pool of blood, and Rielly glared from one corner at the prisoners crouching in the other. The wounded man was very much exhausted, but was conscious, and said that he thought he must have bled for half an hour before he was rescued by the attention of Dr. Harold removed him to the hospital and offered to take Rielly, but the keepers said that they had again telegraphed to the Bellevue Hospital, and would send him to that institution.

Vincent was committed to the prison under the name of George E. Brooks, but at the hospital he gave his real name to Dr. Benedict, who attended him. The prison keepers, after the combat, put Rielly in a strait jacket and sent him to the asylum. It was the same time sending word of the affair to Warden Finn, of the Tombs, who arrived on the scene within an hour. He took down the statements of the keepers in writing and sent them to St. Vincent's Hospital to learn the condition of the wounded man.—New York Herald.

Short-Sighted Germans. The extraordinary, it might be said appalling, prevalence of short-sightedness among German children is again made strikingly apparent in the facts recently collected by Professor Pilgner. Of 48,000 children in schools of all grades lately examined, more than half were found to be suffering from short sight, while in some schools the proportion of the short-sighted was 70-80 per cent; and in one—the Gymnasium at Heidelberg—there was actually not one scholar without good sight. The number of naturally short-sighted students, on the other hand, is only 10 per cent., so by far the greater part of the mischief is due to mismanagement. Among the causes of the evil on which Professor Pilgner lays most stress, are badly-lighted school-rooms, ill-contrived desks and forms, and, above all, excess of study and too little exercise. In the upper grade schools of Germany, where the work is much the heaviest, the proportion of short-sighted students is far the greatest. It has been said that the almost universal use of eyeglasses by German university students was in a measure due to a silly affection, and the students themselves have acknowledged that this was formerly the fact. But by this time affection has doubtless been superseded by necessity, for the rapid increase of the visual defect has been its most striking feature.

He Was Politely Bowled Out. A young Parisian journalist found himself the other day in a very awkward position. The paper to which he had been attached had proved a failure; the cashier had bolted, the proprietor was ruined, and our friend's landlord had positively declined to allow him further credit for his lodgings, and forthwith turned him into the street. What was he to do? Whither to go? A happy thought struck him. A few days back he had published an article upon night refugees, extolling the admirable manner in which these institutions were managed. He would seek shelter in one of them. He arrived and presented his card. The superintendent was charmed; he had come, of course, to see how the thing worked in practice, and the official had in hand, conducted him all over the establishment, showed him the sleeping-rooms, eating-rooms, everything, and then with immense ceremony bowed him out into the street! The unhappy journalist looked the moral course to disclose the actual state of affairs, and that bitter night was passed, after all, under an archway.

The London Economist calls attention to the fact that Italy has now a higher credit than Russia or Austria, and is steadily gaining a reputation for sound management and good business ability by its public men.

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