

WILL PROVANT'S REVENGE.

By W. T. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER II.

Bessie's fears that the attentions paid her by the handsome American would reach her sweetheart's ears proved to be well founded. One of Steve's friends, who was engaged to Bessie's fellow assistant in Mrs. Fountain's shop, happened to be over in Egginton one day, and did not fail to enlighten him as to everything which had come to his ears, thereby raising a little tempest of jealousy in the young engine-driver's usually placid breast. It was not often that Steve went over to Scargill between one Sunday and another; but at nine o'clock the following evening he knocked at Denny Ford's door. Bessie, who knew his knock, admitted him, and her first glance at his face warned her that something was amiss. Scarcely did he give her time to shut the door before he began. "That's this I hear, Bessie, about your letting that American chap go walks with you, and about his making you presents of flowers and I don't know what beside?" demanded Steve in what for him might be called a white-hot.

Bessie could not keep back the tell-tale colour from her cheeks, and for a moment her heart sank within her. "He's never walked out with me but twice, and then it was by no choice of mine," she answered. "He met me as I was coming home by the canal; and if he chose to walk by my side and talk to me, how was I to help it? After the second time, I took to coming home by the bus, on purpose to keep out of his way."

"But he must have been on pretty familiar terms with you, or he would never have taken to meeting you of an evening," remarked Steve sardoniously.

"Indeed, then, he was nothing of the kind," answered Bessie with spirit. "He used to come often to the shop, and he got to know me in that way."

"And used to time his visits so as to have you all to himself when the others were at dinner."

"This Bessie was not prepared to deny. "How was it possible for me to tell him when he should come and when he should stay away?" she demanded.

"But you needn't have accepted flowers from him time after time, and worn them in your dress. If you had been engaged to the fellow you couldn't have done more."

"If I had seen any harm in it, I shouldn't have done it. And, pray, where was the harm?" she added next moment.

"When did you see him last—I mean, see him to speak to?" asked Steve without heeding her question.

"To-day," answered Bessie, looking at him a little defiantly, and with a bright spot of colour on either cheek. "He came into the shop when I was by myself—and he asked me to marry him."

Steve sprang to his feet, muttering something under his breath. Then he sat down again. "Perhaps you won't mind telling me what answer you made him?" At that moment he looked for all the world as if he would like to strangle Mr. Will Provant.

"I told him that I was already engaged, and could have nothing to say to him."

"Are those some of his flowers?" demanded Steve, indicating by a nod of his head a vase on the chimney-piece in which were the orchids Will had that morning left behind him.

Bessie quailed a little under her lover's scornful gaze. "He brought them for me this morning; but I refused to take them. Then he forgot all about them and left them behind."

"And you brought them home to cherish and look at and keep you in mind of the giver!" exclaimed Steve passionately. "Curse both him and his flowers! So long as you are engaged to me, you have no right to take presents from any man. Let his flowers go where I would jolly soon fling him if he were here," he added as he rose, crossed the room, and snatched the orchids out of the vase. He was on the point of throwing open the window, when Bessie sprang to his side and arrested his hand.

"You shall not, Steve—you shall not!" she exclaimed indignantly. "What have the poor flowers done that you should treat them in that way? They were forgotten and left behind, as I told you, and it would have been both childish and stupid of me to fling them away."

Steve let her take the flowers unresistingly, but he turned very white as she did so. "Oh, well, if you set such store by them, you must care something for the man they belonged to," he said in his quietest tones. "In that case, there's no more to be said. It seems to me that I'm not wanted here, and that I was a fool to come. The best thing for me to do, Miss Ford, will be to wish you good-night, and to trust that your dreams may be pleasant ones."

He had possessed himself of his hat while speaking, and he now turned and left the room without a word or a look more. A second or two later the front door closed behind him. Bessie had made no effort to detain him.

But both Stephen Garside and Bessie Ford were far too fond of each other not to be made unhappy, after the fashion of lovers' unhappiness, by their little misunderstanding. Steve blamed himself for his foolish jealousy, feeling assured in his mind that Bessie's love was all his own; while Bessie blamed herself for her tacit encouragement of Will Provant, and for having taken his flowers home after the scene which came round Steve found his way to Denny Ford's house as usual, but it was with somewhat of a sheepish feeling at his heart that he knocked at the door. As soon as he was inside, Bessie held up her mouth to be kissed, which Steve accepted as a token that everything was to be forgiven and forgotten on both sides. For any mention of his name that day there might have been no such person as Will Provant in existence.

A week passed without Bessie seeing anything of Will, and she began to hope that he had taken her words to heart, and that she would be no more troubled with his attentions. Sunday had come round again. After calling on Bessie, Steve set off for Warley, a village three miles away, to visit a friend who was dangerously ill. It was arranged that he should come back by the footpath which wound along by the bank of the Wandle, and that Bessie should go part of the way to meet him. It was a favourite walk with our lovers.

The September sun was hanging low in the west when Bessie set out. She had got

more than half-way to Warley without seeing anything of Steve, and had reached a point where the path she was following crossed the river by means of a high wooden footbridge with a flight of ten or twelve steps on either side of it. Bessie, busy with her thoughts, had climbed the steps and reached the level of the bridge before she was aware of Will Provant advancing from the opposite direction. Her first impulse was to turn and go back, but next moment she asked herself what she had to fear; still, it was with a lightened colour and a fast-beating heart that she went forward. They met midway across the bridge, which was only just wide enough to allow of their passing each other. Then Will came to a sudden halt so as to block the way.

"Good-even, fair damsel. Prithoe, whither away so fast?" he demanded, in the mock-heroic style he sometimes affected, as he swept her an ironical bow.

"Good-evening, Mr. Provant.—Be kind enough, please, to let me pass."

"Anon—anon. You have not responded to my question. What art thou going to meet a friend.—Will you please make way for me?" She saw that he was smiling, but for all that there was something in his expression which made her blood run cold.

"To meet a friend!" he sneered. "Why not speak the truth, and call him by his right name? You are on your way to meet your lover—the man who smells of oil and waxes his hands with greasy rags. Faugh!"

Bessie's temper flamed up at this insult to her lover. She gave a quick glance round, but not a creature was in sight. "Will you let me pass, or will you not?" she demanded, staring Provant defiantly in the face as she did so.

"Not till you have paid the toll—not till I have stolen a kiss from those dewy lips," he replied as he made a step forward and put out his arms to seize her. A cry broke involuntarily from Bessie, which was answered in a way the most unexpected.

Steve, when about a quarter of a mile from the bridge, on his way back from Warley, had seen and recognized Will Provant in the distance, and half a minute later had made out the figure of Bessie as she advanced along the footpath on the opposite side of the river, evidently on her way to meet him as arranged. Acting on the impulse of the moment, and without asking himself why he did so, Steve turned off into a belt of broken shrubbery which skirted the river a little farther inland than the footpath. Here he was invisible to any one at a distance, and thus it was that Bessie failed to see him when Will met her on the bridge and barred the way.

Steve, advancing quickly through the shrubbery, could hear the sound of voices even before he reached the bridge. For one moment a flaming thought shot through his brain that, maybe, the two had met just by appointment, only to be dismissed the next as utterly unworthy of the girl he loved. Besides, had they been so minded, there was nothing to hinder them from meeting times out of number when he himself was out of the way. Still, as he came to a stand at the foot of the bridge, his heart seemed to cease beating, and all the landscape became blurred before him as he strained his ears to catch the words of those who were so close to him yet unseen. The first sentence he could clearly make out was Bessie's question: "Will you let me pass, or will you not?"

A great torrent of rage surged through Steve's heart as Provant's answer fell on his ears, and he was half-way up the steps before Bessie's cry broke from her lips. Then it was that, an instant later, Provant felt the grip of a mighty arm round his neck, his head was wrenched violently back, following on which came a blow, as of a sledge-hammer, between the eyes, so that it seemed to him as if a ball of fire had suddenly exploded inside his head. With a yell of rage he let go his hold of Bessie and turned on his assailant, whose name he felt that he had no need to ask; but strong and wiry though Will Provant might be, he was no match for the stalwart engine-driver, who was noted as one of the best wrestlers in the country-side. Despite his desperate struggles, his arms were presently pinned to his sides and there he held in a vice; then he was twisted round, his back was jammed up against the hand-rail of the bridge, and his body bent over till he felt as if his spine must surely snap. Then his feet were suddenly knocked from under him, and while his legs described a semicircle in the air, his assailant let go his grip, and Will Provant, falling clean backward into the water running fifteen feet below, sank out of sight as if he were a stone. The struggle had not lasted more than a couple of minutes.

"Oh Steve, he will be drowned!" cried Bessie with aghast lips. She had been watching the encounter as though it were some scene in a nightmare which she was powerless to interrupt.

"No fear," responded Steve grimly. "The man that's born to be hanged won't be drowned." Steve had occasion to remember his words later on.

As a matter of fact, Will was a capital swimmer. After coming to the surface, he dashed the water out of his eyes, and then striking out, swam slowly down stream till he reached a point where the shelving bank allowed of his landing without difficulty. After hastily wringing some of the water out of his clothes, he plunged into a plantation of fir close by and was lost to view.

About eight or nine days later, as Bessie was on her way home in the dusk of evening, she was aware of stealthy footsteps coming up behind her, which some instinct told her were those of Will Provant. A moment later, a voice which seemed to tremble with concentrated passion whispered in her ear: "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, my proud Lady Disdain. I wouldn't order my wedding gown yet awhile, if I were you."

Then the footsteps turned abruptly down a side street, and Bessie, without daring to turn round, hurried trembling home.

Scargill is situated on the Egginton and Swallowfield branch of the London and Western Railway. About three-quarters of a mile beyond Scargill station, going towards Swallowfield, the line crosses the Wandle by means of a wooden bridge. Here there is a narrow gorge, some forty or fifty feet deep, at the bottom of which runs the little river on its way to join a much larger river a dozen miles farther on. The foundations of the bridge at the date of this narrative consisted of huge balks of timber,

Some Words of Fashion.

The general outlook in shapes of both waists and skirts shows the firmly established favorites still in possession of their place. Cloth gowns have the princess front fastened on the left side, under the arm. The back may be either round or with a belt brought down in a point, as seen in our late patterns. With such dresses the sleeves are often quite conspicuously large, as all talk of abandoning the high sleeve has died away.

Then, again, we find a tendency to adopt gored skirts and round waists. The ends of such a waist may either be concealed all round, or be hidden at the back only, under the belt of the skirt. The front is pointed where this is the case, and a princess front may be adopted, having a wide back in which no seams are seen, the skirt being sewed on in very large gathers. Sometimes a narrow belt is used, which is begun at the side seams, and is crossed at the back and not displayed at all in front. Such a belt decreases the apparent size of a large waist, as seen looking at the back.

The round waist is more becoming to a slight form than to a full one, as also is the gored skirt. Where this shape is preferred, there will be no more fullness at the top of the skirt breadth at the back, but at the foot the skirt will be round. A seam of sloping form in the centre of the back makes this shape, as it reduces the back breadth to half their width at the top; the front edges are simply straight selvages.

It is unnecessary to make the rest of the skirt after this shape by the two back breadths, by using two straight half-breadths with panels of a combination fabric on each side, each one of which should have a width of nine or ten inches.

Large collarettes continue to be worn, and are frequently embroidered, the shape being flared and often double. Both edges are wired.

Blue, which for a time gave way to tan, dark green and gray, is reestablished as a stylish favorite for street costumes. Many different shades are worn in dresses for the promenade as well as in wraps. Imperial blue is one of the shades most liked.

Coat bodices, as they are called, are seen in cloth suits of high fashion. These waists have seams which cross the hips or corselet fronts.

In dresses of camel-hair which fabric is much used this season a ruffle is seen at the foot, or fur which is cut into a leaf-shape at the top, thus beautifully trimming the lower edge by its straight portion, and further adorning it by this cutting-out of the top of the wide band of the fur, while the weight of such a trimming keeps the skirt well down, and undisturbed by the motion of walking, or by the winds so prevalent at this time of the year.

The back breadths of camel-hair skirts should be draped on the edge of a bodice slightly pointed as to its front. The skirt had best be of the much-liked habit shape. Your sleeves may be entirely of the fashionable passanterie, or your vest only.

For dresses of Bengaline, which stylish people have now accepted, the trimmings are of jet, gold, or steel. There is a very novel style of gold beading, which gives a pretty medieval effect. With black Bengaline many dressmakers make the sleeves and vest of the superb and novel brocades, having a black ground on which brilliant flowers are displayed. It is much more elegant, when using brocade as the combination, to have its ground-color match the main fabric than to use an entirely contrasting material.

But with a large majority of black dresses, black velvet for the bodice effect is the great favorite. There will be seen a yoke in black velvet, and high sleeves, of which the lower part of the puff sleeves over the elbow, and the rest of the sleeve is tight. With this yoke is associated a waist pointed both front and back, over a gored skirt, or one of which like that of a small bustle in the middle of the back.

At the large stores it is now possible to purchase collarettes of velvet which are separate from the dress itself, and can, therefore, be worn with more than one costume. By ripping one apart, a lady can model several of these pretty articles upon the pattern, and make them in various fabrics.

Jackets of brilliant colors, for wear at home, are made in the Figaro and Zouave shape, both of which are short. Many have a fringe falling around the bust, and are richly embroidered. A high flaring collar is the latest addition to these graceful jackets, though many are seen without it at the gatherings at which, in many houses, tea is still served at five or at six, but almost all show the pointed wing puff on the top of the sleeve. Such jackets are very convenient, as they make a "top" of sufficient warmth to a waist that is cut low. Some ladies have adopted as a convenient article for a narrow band of velvet with lace puffed between, and which forms a deep point back and front, and is also applied with a full ruff or collar, and bristling butterflies of jet, or a couple of blackbirds perched upon puffs of jet, not too large to be added, without producing an effect of exaggeration, over the high sleeve of a low dress.

Tea-gowns retain the loose back in most of the elegant models but in some, as in the negligees, the back fits in a half tight effect. Nothing is too costly for the trimming of some of the imported tea-gowns, while this pretty garment has the advantage of being if properly shaped, effective and graceful in a great variety of simple fabrics. Fur, as well as lace, ribbons, tulle, metal beads of all kinds set upon bands, and silk passanterie, are displayed as well as hand-work and velvet upon the latest tea-gowns. In some elegant examples the passanterie forms a deep yoke as on a dress. On others there is a corselet effect, and passanterie is again displayed up the sides or the front only, of the gown.

Visiting toilettes are in Bengaline or faille, and show bars, stripes and large oval spots. These, last, in some examples show the spots running from the edge of the portion to be used for the skirt, and gradually decreasing in size toward the knee, where they stop. At the edge of the skirt they are as large as an egg. On the waist fabric the yoke shows large spots, but no so large as on the skirt. With such a yoke a corselet of velvet, which may be embroidered in jet, or gold and black together, or the color of the fabric with gold, or ruby beads, if the fabric be either blue or red, and sleeves of velvet, on which a leaf or flower is wrought matching the corselet, but sparsely scattered.

A little praise is good for a shy temper; it teaches it to rely on the kindness of others.—London.

Incursive people are the funnels of conversation; they do not take in anything for their own use, but merely to pass it to another.—Steele.

Hypnotism in a Murder Case.

The recent murder trial in Paris, France, which resulted in the conviction of Michael Eyraud and Gabrielle Bompard for the murder of Toussaint Gouffe, and the sentencing of the murderers, one to death the other to twenty years penal servitude, is not without interest from a scientific point of view. The plea of such a revolting and diabolical part in the awful tragedy, that she acted under hypnotic influence and that for the time being she was simply a tool in the hand of her partner in crime, has brought into prominence once again this new science, of which much has within the last few years been explained. That hypnotism can be used in the service of crime is the very general opinion of those who have most fully familiarized themselves with the remarkable phenomena embraced under that term. In both the French schools, the one at Paris and the one at Nancy, where the subject has been most thoroughly investigated it has been shown that during the period of hypnosis the hypnotized practically renounces his will, and obeys implicitly the will of the hypnotizer. Moreover at the school at Nancy it has been shown that a suggestion or command given during the hypnotic state generally results in the hypnotized performing the suggested act in the manner and at the time indicated by the hypnotizer, even though the latter is no longer present, and though the former may be wholly unaware of any such instruction having been given. Of course the suggestions made by the scientists have not been suggestions to commit crime, but instructions to go here or there at unseasonable hours, and such like. It is still an open question, therefore, how far the will of the hypnotized can be affected by suggestions of a criminal character, or whether a person without thoughts or purposes of crime could be induced by this means to commit crime, especially if the hypnotizer was no longer present. The presumption, however, is that in matters without moral character the hypnotized follows out the suggestion already received, even though by so doing they realize that they are making themselves look ridiculous, so in matters of a criminal nature they would likewise be led by an impulse which they could not resist. Once this is made clear the duty of governments to closely guard the new science can no longer be questioned. Indeed, with the knowledge already possessed it would be no tyrannical exercise of authority if governments should forbid the practice of hypnotism to all but licensed physicians, not allowing even these to use it without having authorized witnesses present. And inasmuch as it has been discovered that persons once hypnotized are more susceptible forever after, and that the susceptibility increases with each succeeding operation, all public exhibitions of hypnotism should be prohibited as at once degrading to the persons concerned and dangerous to the best interests of society.

The "Times" on Sitting Bull.

The London Times treats the late Sitting Bull to a full-sized editorial, in which it compares him with some of the Indians of fiction. Among the latter it includes Tecumseh, without apparently, a suspicion that, though used in "to point a moral and adorn a tale," he was also a real personality and helped to fight England's battles in the New World. "But we must not expect," says our contemporary, "to find the Red Indian—of all savages the most unteachable and the most impervious to civilized influence—endowed with Christian virtues. It would even be unfair to compare Sitting Bull and his athletic son, who headed his father's rescue and shared his father's fate, with Tecumseh, and Uncas, or any other of Fenimore Cooper's redskin heroes. There is a tolerably general opinion among those who have studied Indian character in later days that Tecumseh and Uncas were impossible Indians. If the Times were to read the life of Brook, by Tupper or Stone's Brant, not to speak of Peter Jones, the Johnsons and other types of the civilized and Christianized Indian, it would, perhaps, be less emphatic in giving over the native tribes of North America to irreclaimable barbarism. They are certainly hard to tame, but the faults of their teachers have been largely responsible for their failure to become amenable to civilizing influences.

Closer Trade Relations.

For several years past it has been becoming more and more evident that the neighborly feeling between the United States and Canada has not been as carefully cultivated as it should be. A number of schemes have been proposed to improve this feeling, but none of them have attracted much attention. But United States Senator Carlisle seems to have his a responsive chord in the matter that promises well. The resolution he has introduced into the senate at Washington has attracted attention in this country. Sir John Thompson, minister of justice, regards the suggestion of Mr. Carlisle favorably and as the most feasible of the many resolutions which have yet been introduced into congress on the subject. The appointment of a commission having power to deal with the question of reciprocity in all its phases would enable the commissioners as a result of their investigation to lay before their respective governments features regarding reciprocity which, under other circumstances, would not present themselves. Sir John, with other members of the cabinet, repudiates the assertion that the Dominion government does not want reciprocity. They want, he said, a fair measure of reciprocity where the advantages will be mutual. What that is or might be cannot be determined, he said, in a day. The resolution of Senator Carlisle, he thinks, is a reasonable and fair one, and should advance the movement favoring closer trade relations between Canada and the United States if carried into effect.

The honest and law-abiding citizens of Mexico and of the West Indies are greatly troubled these days by gangs of bandits who have sprung up in various parts of the country. In Cuba the desperados display unusual energy and do not hesitate at times to defy the troops sent in their pursuit. Notwithstanding the vigorous attempts on the part of the authorities to prevent their lawlessness they still continue to kidnap unprotected citizens for whose release they demand heavy ransoms. The New York Sun suggests that as the present military force appears to be insufficient to cope with the robbers and as Spain is now at peace, it might be well for the Madrid Government to send the whole Spanish army to Cuba for a few years.