

THE BATTLE WON.

CHAPTER IX THE GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS.

Mrs. Redmond had followed her husband to the door, and from the threshold seen the doctor disappear in the distance, and Redmond, after a moment of indecision, drop his gun, and make hastily for the path that cut through the wood. Had it been his intention by taking the short path to intercept the doctor and kill him in the road, he would not have left his gun behind. No; she knew the man's character too well to doubt that his only object was to save himself, leaving her to face the consequences of discovery.

Cursing him, and herself for having trusted such a treacherous and cowardly ally, she returned mechanically to her room with the perception that she also must fly. The doctor's evidence and her husband's flight must damn her inevitably. It was useless now to repent the course she had taken: she must pack, and save herself while Nessa's fate was yet unknown.

At her door she stopped with a gasp of joy, hearing Nessa's second cry. It came from above, she was sure. Snatching the light from her table she flew to the rescue. And surely had she been a good woman she could not have been more fervently grateful when she discovered that the girl had escaped destruction.

With eager haste she sought restoratives; and when at length Nessa opened her eyes, she caught her in her arms, and kissed her with genuine emotion; but an emotion which sprang from purely selfish considerations.

"My dear, dear Nessa—alive and safe—your sweet, sweet girl," she exclaimed between her kisses.

"Where am I?" asked Nessa, bewildered by these caresses, by the dim perceptions of awakening consciousness.

"Where are you?" echoed Mrs. Redmond, fiercely. "Look!"

And raising the candle from the floor, she held it in the doorway over the black pit, where it flared and fluttered in the current of air.

Nessa, resting against Mrs. Redmond's breast as she knelt beside her, looking round in wonder—at the floor, the walls, the ceiling, the open door, and the black void beyond; then, suddenly recollecting past events, she shrunk closely to Mrs. Redmond, with a cry of horror, and looking agape at the opening beyond the sill.

The next moment she burst out laughing, and by an imperceptible transition fell to crying, and sobbing, until, exhausted by the outburst of emotion, her head dropped back on Mrs. Redmond's arm, her eyelids dropped heavily, and her breath faded away in a long, fluttering sigh. Either she had fainted again, or was falling asleep.

"Wake! wake, dear Nessa! for Heaven's sake, wake!" cried Mrs. Redmond in a new agony of fear, as she remembered what Dr. Shaw had said about the possible action of chloral. No mother over her child could have shown more earnest solicitude.

When she succeeded in rousing the girl to a state of semi-consciousness, she tried what fright would do to overcome her lethargy.

Taking the candle, she held it again in the dark shaft of the tower, and purposely let it fall from her hands. The light went out instantly, leaving them in complete darkness, and a hollow ring, like the fall of a stone in a deep well, came up as the metal candlestick struck the bottom.

"That is what you have escaped," she said.

The poor girl moaned in horror, cramping her hands upon the floor, as if to save herself.

"Help me! save me!" she murmured.

"You must save yourself," said Mrs. Redmond, retreating from the open door, herself terrified by the darkness.

Nessa caught at the skirt that touched her, springing to her feet, clung convulsively to the woman's arm, as she made her way rapidly along the passage and down the stairs.

In the hall faintly lit by the light from the sitting room, Mrs. Redmond pointed to the open door.

"He went out there. I saw him. He may come back to finish the work he began. We must shut the door," she said.

Her dramatic tone and gestures, her pallid face and d d sordid hair, were well calculated to stimulate Nessa's alarm and overcome the effects of the narcotic. Indeed, the girl, who had never before known fear, was now wrought to such a pitch of nervous excitement that her trembling fingers were powerless to push home the bolts when the great door was slammed to.

"We are safe for the present," said Mrs. Redmond, turning the key. "Now come in here. There, sit down and be calm; we have no time to lose. We must settle what we are to do at once. He's not likely to half do his murderous work if he gets another chance to murder you."

"Murder me! who would do that?" asked Nessa, with piteous quaver in her voice.

"Who!—my husband. Who else would?"

"Why should he?"

"To save himself from ruin. He must go to the workhouse or the gaol if you live. A man would kill himself to avoid that fate: do you think he would hesitate to take the life of a girl instead, if he found a safe opportunity?"

It seemed to Nessa impossible—incredible. She had read of such things; but she could not realize that she had been destined to such a fate.

"Don't you believe me?" asked Mrs. Redmond, with sharp impatience.

"It all seems so strange," faltered Nessa.

"He came into my room, and asked about you. I told him what had happened to you last night—like a fool. I repented it the moment he left me, for I know what he is. I was uneasy about it, and after lying awake an hour I slipped on my clothes, and came down here to see if it were true that he had letters to write, as he told me. The lamp was here, where it stands now, but there was no sign of his having written letters, and he was gone. While I stood over there in the shadow, he passed on tip-toe through the hall, and went out by the door as white as a ghost. Then I knew he had been doing wrong, and I went up to your room. You were gone, but just outside your door—toward the door in the tower—your shoes lay on the ground. At that moment I heard your cry. As you know, I found the door bolted upon you. Now have you any doubt?"

Nessa shook her head.

"He had not the courage to murder you outright; but he put you where you could not move without destroying yourself. He went away that he might not hear your cry,

intending to come back and open the door when all was over, that it might appear you had opened it and passed through in your sleep. I told him of our visit to Dr. Shaw yesterday; that would have supported the conclusion, and freed him from suspicion. He'll come back presently, when he thinks the thing is done. If you want any further proof, you can open the front door, and watch him from here go up those stairs to the passage again."

She rose as she spoke. Nessa caught her arm and held her, glancing at the window, almost expecting to see a white, sinister face looking through at her.

"No, no," she faintly articulated under her breath, "don't—don't open it!"

"Not I! He'd kill me to hide his crime—kill us both to save himself. Why shouldn't he shoot us through that window? He took his gun. Who is to save us? What is there to prevent him?"

Nessa snatched at the blind and pulled it down. Mrs. Redmond, whose dread was not all simulated, moved the lamp that their shadows might not betray them on the window.

"What shall we do?" asked Nessa. "What can we do?"

"That's it—what can we do? Two women against a fiend like that?"

"Where is the gardener?"

"He sleeps in the outbuildings—over the stables, and he's deaf. I dare not cross the courtyard. Will you?"

Nessa shook her head and sank into a chair, her trembling limbs failing her.

"One can't expect much from you," said Mrs. Redmond. "You look half dead—and no wonder! If the girl were in the house, she might send her; but she sleeps out there. Perhaps by calling from a back window we might make her hear; but it's scarcely worth the risk of exposing oneself. If the chaise were out I should not like to go down that avenue in the dark."

"Are you going away?" Nessa faltered.

"I should think so! Why, you don't suppose I'd stop another day—to say nothing of another night—in this ghastly place with a murderer. My life's as much in danger as yours now."

"You won't leave me here?"

"It isn't likely. Do you think I'm as bad as my husband?"

"Oh, forgive me! I don't know what I say; I am quite unmoved. It was wicked to think you would abandon me—you whom I owe my life to!"

"That's all right, don't cry. We've got to think. As soon as it's light we'll wake the servant and get the trap out. We shall be safe enough then. Once outside this devilish place I shall feel safe. But what am I to do with you? You can't go back to the school. He won't find you there. You'll never be safe where he can lay hands on you."

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, I shall go to London."

"Will you let me go there, too?"

"What money have you?"

"None. But I could earn my living there surely."

"That's all you know about it. Who would employ you without a reference? Why, no one would take you as a servant without a character."

"But if I explained how it was I came to need a situation—"

"If you came to me with such a story, I should say this good-looking young woman has done something foolish, and run away from her friends to escape the consequences. I should ask for the name and address of your wicked step-father, and tell you to call again to-morrow. Then I should telegraph to him, under the impression that I was doing you a kindness in restoring you to your family; and when you called on me for a reply, you would be met by Mr. Redmond, who would whisk you off to Graham Towers by the next conveyance. Why, you poor, simple child, without some sort of protection you would find yourself alone in this house with your worst enemy, and at his mercy in less than twenty-four hours from the time you escaped. It isn't a day or a week or a month that you must keep out of his reach; you must keep out of his reach for three long years if you value your life. And you may reckon on this, every day of those three long years will be employed by him to getting you back—back into the grave you have slipped out of."

"What shall I do?" murmured Nessa in despair.

"Three years," said Mrs. Redmond, turning her back on Nessa, and speaking in a slow meditative tone, that encouraged the anxious girl to hope—"three years: it sounds a long while, but three years soon pass. At the end of three years, we could snap our fingers at him!" She stood silent a moment, keeping the girl in feverish uncertainty of hope and fear, and then, turning abruptly on her, she said, "Nessa, if I give you three years of my life; if I abandon house, home, position—all that a woman values; if I jeopardise my own existence to preserve you from such a fate as this you have escaped from—perils that must beset you till your fortune is beyond the reach of that wretch—may I depend on your gratitude for ever?"

"Oh, if you knew me!" exclaimed the girl, clasping her hands, unable to find words for her feelings.

"But I don't know you. I know nothing about you. You look as if you were to be trusted, but when the danger is past, will you feel as you feel now?"

"If you never do anything more for me than you have done to-night I must yet be always—always grateful."

"And will you be obedient to my direction?"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes! In all things."

"I will believe you. You shall go to London with me; you shall share all I have. I will save you."

"And you shall share all I have—when I have anything to share."

"That is fair. For without me you would surely have nothing. It is a bargain between us, Nessa."

"We shall see," said Mrs. Redmond, moving towards the door. "Come up with me. We must pack what we have to take with us. As soon as it is light we will go."

Her manner chilled Nessa for a moment, but no longer. The girl's heart warmed quickly in the rush of generous sentiment that sprang from her soul.

Darting forward she threw her arms about the woman, and pressing her burning lips upon the soft, pallid face she murmured her love and gratitude in foolish, broken sentences.

"You are a little goose!" said Mrs. Redmond, patting her shoulder playfully. "A little goose," she added to herself, "that shall yield me many a golden egg."

And recalling the fable she blessed her stars that she had not succeeded in killing her goose.

CHAPTER X. A PRIVATE INQUIRY.

"No one has received so many rewards and commendations from her Majesty's judges, magistrates, and bankers as F. Griffiths!" He has said so himself, and his statement has appeared daily in the news papers without being disputed by any other private detective.

F. Griffiths was seated in his highly-respectable office on the second floor of No. 1, Dean's Yard, Westminster, writing a letter with the laborious care of an inspector making out his charge sheet, when the door opened, and a gentleman entered, with a certain reluctance that characterises the person who seeks help for the first time at a private inquiry agency.

F. Griffiths rose to his feet, and stood bolt upright behind his desk with his hands by his side, as if to the call of attention at a general inspection. He was a square man, with a military cut of hair and whiskers, a trace of the policeman in the redness of his neck, and a suggestion of the lawyer in the twinkling depths of his eyes. He looked capable and honest, and the visitor, favourably impressed by his appearance, closed the door and cut off his retreat.

"Mr. Griffiths," he said, with a little difficulty over the *Mr.* that showed he was a foreigner.

"Yes, sir: that's me. Take a seat, sir."

Griffiths made one step forward, and placed a chair; one step backward, and seated himself.

His visitor was a tall, elderly, gray-haired gentleman, with a shaven face, a fair skin, and blue eyes, dressed with particular neatness in a well-fitting travelling suit of grey. Griffiths would have taken him for an Englishman but for his pronunciation—a gentleman in easy circumstances from the country, possibly in the medical profession.

"My name is Petersen. I live in Copenhagen, and I am in great trouble," said the gentleman, giving his card with a sigh.

"People generally are in trouble when they come to see me," said F. Griffiths cheerfully. "It's my business to get 'em out of it."

"You have a great deal of experience."

"Experience! Lord, sir, if I could show you all the cases I've got in this book," laying his hand on a thick folio with a locked clasp before him, "you'd be surprised. There's no sort of trouble that ain't got its history here. A general practitioner doesn't get a greater variety of cases to deal with than I have; and though I don't pretend to do impossibilities, I may say there's scarcely anything in the private inquiry line that I find it impossible to do. Now, I daresay it's something in that way you want me to do for you, sir?"

"Yes; it is that. I will tell you all."

"That's right, sir. Don't be afraid of giving me too many particulars. Look upon me as a kind of doctor, who must know all about his patient before he can do him any good."

"That is so," Petersen said, gaining confidence. "I am a widower, and I have one daughter and one son—one son, Eric. He is very dear to me, for he is a good son in all things. He is twenty-one; and we three have been travelling through Europe since the spring, because my son has come to manhood and it is well he should see something of the world and people. It was the dearest wish of his heart and of mine that we should make this journey together."

"See a bit of life like, yes, sir."

"We have been staying in London two weeks—it is the end of our journey; and to-morrow, we were to go back to our own country. I was glad, for my son has been unlike himself since he came here, and I could see he had some trouble in his heart that he dared not tell me. He has left us often to go out alone, and when with us his thoughts have been away from us."

"Altogether he's been carrying on sort of mysterious."

"Yes; he has carried on so. This morning when I said to him, not without fear in my heart, 'This is the last day of our holiday, Eric. To-morrow we go home,' his face became quite white, and coming to my side, he took hold of my hand, trembling very much, and said, 'Father, you must leave me here. I cannot go home; and then he told us what had made him so strange; he has fallen in love with an English girl. My son is no longer a child: I cannot make him go back with us; yet, in many ways, he is so simple that I dare not leave him in this vast city alone."

"You don't feel like settling down here yourself?"

"I have my business. I must return very soon."

"You don't see your way to taking the young female?"

"I do not want my son to marry yet; he is too young. But that is nothing. If she is a good girl, and fit to be my son's wife, he shall marry her, even if she refuses to come to our country. But I must know that: I must be sure that she is good before I leave my poor boy—"

"Ah, now I'm getting into it. I see what you want, sir: you want me to find out what sort of a character this young party is."

"Yes; I must know that," said the old gentleman, emphatically. "I must know if she is good or bad. If I can show my son that she is not good, then I think respect for himself—respect for his sister and me—will lead him to break away from this terrible infatuation."

"Quite so, sir. You shall have a full and true account of her. All you have to do is just to tell me her name and address." Saying this, Griffiths fished out a note book, and prepared to write in it with business-like alacrity.

Unfortunately I do not know the name or the address," said Mr. Petersen.

"Well, I suppose we can get the information from your son."

"No. He knows no more about her than I do, except that he has seen her more often, and settled in his mind that she must be good because she is beautiful. But a girl may be beautiful and yet not good."

"I should think so. But am I to understand, sir, that the young gentleman has fallen in love with the party to this extent without knowing her name or where she lives?"

"It is so. He has never spoken to her."

In order to conceal his astonishment, Griffiths had to bear in mind that this old

gentleman and his son were "Germans or something," and that to people of that kind nothing in the way of sentiment is too extravagant.

"You have seen her, I suppose, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. We sat beside her at a theatre. I noticed her when we rose to go. She dropped her fan, and my son picked it up. She smiled on him. That is the only time I have seen her."

"What part of the house were you in?"

"The stalls."

"Which row?"

"The third from the front, I think."

"Was she alone?"

"No, she was with a woman: a woman old enough to be her mother. I noticed her, too, because she looked at me as no lady would look at a man with white hair."

"I understand, sir. That's what makes you uneasy—seeing this young female in the society of the unpleasant party."

"Yes; it must be that. I did not see anything in the girl that I disliked."

"Were the stalls well filled?"

"Yes; I did not see one empty seat."

"Then they paid for their seats. Orders would have gone in the back row. That shows they must be pretty well off."

"I have no doubt about that. They were dressed magnificently. Besides they have a carriage, and ride fine horses."

"How did you learn that, sir?"

"My son has seen them in the park since that night."

"Many times—in the afternoon."

Griffiths started to his feet.

"Come along with me, sir," said he. "We may be there in time to catch sight of 'em to-day. Only just point out the female and I'll undertake to find out her name and address all the rest before the week's out."

The cab that had brought Mr. Petersen to Dean's Yard was standing outside the door.

"That cab won't do," said F. Griffiths, at a glance. "The horse is no good, and the man a fool. Pay him, sir. Where did you come from?"

"Charing Cross Hotel."

"Shilling fare, sixpence waiting—give him two shillings."

At the cab rank he found a hansom to his taste—rubber tires, good horse, and a driver as spry as a terrier.

"I may want you to go sharp, and I may want you to go slow," said Griffiths in an impressive undertone to the driver as Mr. Petersen got in.

"Yussir," replied the driver, bending down attentively, with the perception that he had a good job in hand.

"When I shove the trap up sharp, go like blazes; when I shove it up slow, slacken down till it closes, and keep up that pace. Don't stop till I sing out. Understand?"

"Yussir. Where to?"

"Straight before you. Take your direction from my walking stick, and keep a sharp look-out for it. Understand?"

"Right you are, sir; I'm fly."

Following these directions the cabman drove like a whirlwind to Buckingham Palace Gate, and thence at a walking pace through the park to the Marble Arch. There he turned round, and returned the same way at a smart trot, turning at the corner, and pulling up by the side-walk within a hundred yards of the Piccadilly entrance.

They had passed scores of carriages, but up to this point Mr. Petersen had failed to detect the ladies they sought, though he had followed several with his eyes uneasily.

"Are you pretty certain you'll know the parties if you see 'em?" asked Griffiths, observing the painful anxiety in the old gentleman's face with misgivings.

"I have seen three or four women like the elder of the two, but none like the younger. There is not amongst them all one so beautiful."

"We've seen some clippers, too. Pears to me, sir, there's more riders than drivers to-day. Sort o' day that I should take to the saddle if I had the choice. We'll have a look at the Row."

He got out and nodded to the driver as a signal to wait; he also cast a glance at the constable on duty in the road, who recognising him, acknowledged the glance by raising his hand in salute. In the Row he stationed himself with Mr. Petersen at the railings.

"Who have you got your eye on, sir?" he asked presently.

"My son's my poor Eric. He is over there in the light suit like mine."

A tall, well-built young man, with a fair face and a light moustache, was looking eagerly up the Row.

"I should have taken him for an Englishman—a young gent from college," F. Griffiths soliloquised mentally. "He don't look like a fool—anyways not such a cursed fool as to go mad about a female he's never spoke to."

"I do not see them here," said Mr. Petersen despondingly.

"Praps not, sir, but they're here. Don't you see how the young gentleman keeps his eyes turned one way, and takes no notice of anybody passing before him. Keep your eye that way too, sir—never mind Mr. Eric."

They waited five minutes; then Mr. Petersen in hushed excitement murmured, "Those two, I think. I am not sure. Yes, I think the graceful lady on the outer side is the one."

"I am sure of it," said Griffiths, emphatically. "Look at your son."

The young man had drawn back from the rail, and his face, transfigured with an ineffable joy, was gazing on the young girl passing before him.

Whilst the old gentleman turned his eyes with tender anxiety upon his son, Griffiths was taking in the two ladies in a penetrating, comprehensive glance. One was of a type that he recognized in a moment—a shapely woman of the world with a very white nose, dark eyebrows, and a knot of loose, soft golden hair; the other a young girl, radiant with health and happiness, her white teeth gleaming through her parted lips, her large dark eyes sparkling with innocent enjoyment, was certainly not of the kind generally seen with such a companion. And though she sat her horse as if she had been used to the saddle from childhood, she had not the distinctive look of a girl long accustomed to exercise in the Row. "She'd keep her lips shut, and look as if nothing was good enough for her if she was used to this sort of thing," thought Griffiths, and then he shot a glance at the groom that followed them.

"Come on, sir, I've got 'em!" he said, exultantly.

"Do you know them?" asked Mr. Petersen.

"No, but I know their groom. They're hired horses, and the groom comes from

Dyer's livery stables. However, I shall make sure," he added, as he sprang into the cab and signalled the driver. "Drop in on me to-morrow morning, sir."

The next morning Mr. Petersen presented himself early at Dean's Yard.

"It's all right, sir," said Griffiths. "The elder lady calls herself Mrs. Merrivale—a widow."

"I noticed she wore some white inside her black bonnet when she left the theatre."

"Yes; it goes with her yellow hair, black. But she ain't a widow, and her name ain't Merrivale. Her name's Redmond, and she's run away from her husband."

"And the young girl—"

"Said to be her niece, but she ain't that. Her name's Grahame."

"Impostors both."

"Yes, sir. But you needn't worry about your son. They'll be up before the magistrate before a week's out."

"They have done something wrong?"

"I should think they had. Embezzlement: that's what they'll be had up for; and they'll go to prison for it, as sure as my name's Griffiths!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Will he enter the Reichstag?

Whatever economists may think of the movement—and there are few who look upon it with unqualified approval—the fact is beyond gainsaying that Socialism has made wonderful strides in Germany during the last twenty, and especially the last ten years. Numbering 124,655 votes in 1871 they have grown to 1,341,587 in 1890, and claiming one social democrat in parliament at the former date they now have thirty-five. As might be supposed this success has greatly encouraged their leaders and inspired them to work the more vigorously for the final victory. That the movement should have made such progress is doubtless owing to the burdens which the laboring classes, who constitute the majority in the empire, were compelled to bear. These unredressed grievances have been rendered more oppressive by the indifference of the rich on the one hand and the disregard of the Church on the other. But the vote of February 20 was an eye-opener for those who had no eye to pity or heart to feel. From the Emperor through all classes of society the social questions are now studied as never before. The international congress to consider the problems of labor and the protection of laborers was of the Kaiser's doings, while he still shows himself intent on securing the best means for meeting the just demands of the workingman. The church, too, is becoming aroused. The religious journals are full of discussion of socialistic problems. Religious authorities appeal to Christians to avoid every thing which tends to promote class distinctions and bring into marked contrast the difference between rich and poor. In Berlin the rented pew system is vigorously attacked because it is a discrimination in favor of the rich. A significant order has just been issued by the Consistory of Berlin. Pastors are ordered to inform the girls who are to be confirmed that they must appear in a black dress on the day of confirmation.

Some of the daughters of the rich here-tofore appeared in white which the poor could not afford. If any now appear in white at confirmation the pastor is ordered to refuse to confirm them. The aim is to wipe out all distinctions between rich and poor in the house of God. It is feared, however, that the church's effort will fail in accomplishing any great good, seeing that her motive is suspected. This sudden zeal is attributed to selfish considerations, to a fear of the dangers which threaten the church and society rather than to a love for the poor and suffering. The Socialists complain that the church has been leagued with the wealthier classes against them and that she has left them in their suffering until they arose to help themselves. They are disposed to look upon Christians as the priest and Levite who passed by the stripped and wounded man who had fallen among thieves, while socialists are the Samaritans who come to his help. Though it is possible that the church has really become conscious of her sins and that these are genuine works of repentance, it must be admitted that the circumstances of her reform are such as give color to the imputation of unworthy motives. It is doubtful, no matter what zeal she may now display, whether the church in Germany will ever regain the ground she has lost or take that part in adjusting the difficulties between capital and labor, which owing to the nature of the message she bears and the lofty and withal practical character of her principles, she is so eminently qualified to play. Through her indifference or unholy alliance she has lost her grand opportunity of acting as mediator and peace-maker. The moral of the German situation is plain and ought not to be lost upon other Christian nations. Even Canada might profit by the experiences of the Fatherland. Though Socialism in its European guise has not appeared among us, the contest between labor and capital has already begun. The hour has struck for the Canadian Christian Church to declare her position, to be true to her mission. With unflinching voice she must denounce all wrong-doing, injustice and oppression, no matter whence their source. Not that she must of necessity take sides with the poor and condemn the rich, for the former are quite as likely to be unjust in their demands as the latter, but she must make all feel that the principle of her action is expressed in that law which sums up all others, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and which has for its foundation the two-one fact, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of the race.

It would seem that Edison and Bell are