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The Imprisoned Heiress -OR- The Spectre of Egremont.

CHAPTER X.

"But where are you going, lad?" cried his bewildered parent. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," replied he, carelessly. "And I don't care. I'm sick of this state of things, and there are some reasons, which you know nothing of, which compel me to leave this place. I may go this very day. I'll step over and say good-by to Jessy now."

He arose from the table, took his hat, and went out, without another word.

It was perhaps well on toward noon when, as the dame sat knitting near the fire, Lord Ashcroft lightly hastened to the cottage door. He entered in response to the woman's timid invitation, and said that as he had walked from Egremont, he would like to rest himself a while.

Lord Ashcroft praised her cheerful home, referred to the books he saw arranged in the book-rack, and thus encouraged Mrs. Kepp to speak freely of her son.

"He is much given to reading," she said; "but recently he has not seemed himself; his books, mayhap, have made him strange and discontented."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, my lord," declared the dame, with inward delight at his lordship's apparent interest in her son, and a wild hope springing up in her heart that he might do something for Gosman, or at least bring about her son's marriage with Jessy Kay. "He hasn't seemed at all like himself for a day or two, and this morning he actually frightened me with his strange actions."

"How so?" questioned Lord Ashcroft.

"Why, my lord, he was out in a storm last night, and never came home at all. His bed hadn't been slept in, and when he came in he looked as though he hadn't slept a wink, poor lad."

"Unconscious that her words were likely to fasten a horrible crime upon her son, and imagining that she was enlisting her noble visitor's sympathies in Gosman, the dame described the young man's wild appearance that morning, his unusual roughness of manner, and his repeated desire that she should cease to annoy him with questions."

Lord Ashcroft could not fail to interpret her words to Gosman's disadvantage.

"Then you do not know where he spent the night?" he asked.

"No, my lord, and no more does any one else, poor lad. And he's going away to-day, my lord, to Glasgow, to ship for some place on the other side of the world. He has gone now to say the last word to Jessy. Poor fellow, he's that wrought up, my lord, that he said he could almost commit any crime, though, of course, he didn't mean it."

"But what can be the cause of this trouble?"

"I don't know, unless it's want of money, my lord. Donald Kay says he shall not have Jessy, and Gosman says if he had money Kay would consent directly."

Here, then, thought Ashcroft, was motive enough for a robbery.

Could there be another motive for the attempted assassination?

But no other motive was revealed by the garrulous dame, who prattled away of her son, his talents, his ambition to be head forester some day, his love for Jessy, his disapproval of Donald Kay and various other matters that went far to confirm the visitor's suspicions of Kepp's guilt.

The result of her remarks was to induce in Lord Ashcroft a belief that Kepp was partially demented, and he resolved to seek him out and hold a personal interview with him before returning to Egremont.

He expressed his regret at the unfortunate mental state of the under-forester, and the dame delighted at his condescension, summoned all her courage and begged him to do something for her son.

"If your lordship only would," she said, prayerfully. "I cannot bear to lose him; to have him go away and leave me husbandless and childless. Oh, my lord, if you would only get him to stay here. A word from your lordship would make Donald Kay consent to the marriage, and then everything would be all right."

"I will see your son," he replied, kindly, pitying the unsuspecting woman, who reposed such confidence in his power and goodness.

"Thank you, my lord, thank you a thousand times! I know now that everything will be well," said the dame, with a hopeful look.

Lord Ashcroft longed to tell the simple creature of the perilous position in which her son was placed, and prepare her for the fate that must overtake him, but he could not bear to change her suddenly conceived hope to awful grief.

Besides, there was still a doubt in Gosman's favor.

The knife might prove not to have been his.

His lordship had brought the weapon with him, but he hesitated to produce it and put the question to the woman if it were her own.

The doubt influenced him to the act at length, and he carelessly drew out the knife and laid it upon the table at a moment when Grace Kepp's face was averted.

It was not long before her wandering gaze discovered it.

"Why, where did that come from?" she exclaimed, in surprise, taking it up. "Did your lordship bring it in?"

"Yes, I found it. Have you ever seen it before?"

"Seen it before, my lord?" smiled the dame. "I should think I had. I had the knife when I first went housekeeping."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Yes, my lord. There's the very crack in the handle I remember so well. I suppose your lordship picked it up in the forest? I never knew Gosman so careless before. He took the knife a month ago to use somewhere, and lost it. I've asked him about it a dozen times, but he never could find it. It's been well sharpened, I see."

She laid the instrument down, smilingly, unconscious that her words had sealed the fate of her unhappy son.

Lord Ashcroft had a guilty feeling as if he had treacherously caused the mother to condemn her son, and mentally resolved that her words should never be repeated by him.

Such unconscious confidence as hers should be held sacred and inviolate.

"As I found it, I'll keep it for the present," he said, taking it up from the table. "I think I will now go in search of your son."

"Your lordship will do all you can for him, will you not, my lord?" cried the dame, anxiously.

"I will do all I can for him," answered Lord Ashcroft, solemnly, as he arose from his seat; "but there is one higher than any mortal to whom you should plead for your son."

With these words, uttered in a tone that struck the woman with a deadly fear, Lord Ashcroft quitted the cottage, secreting the knife on his person, as he lingered a moment in the porch, and set out for the chalet of Donald Kay.

He struck into a narrow wood-path, instead of the wide avenue, and walked slowly along, wishing and hoping that Kepp had already fled the country, and wondering over the mystery of the attempted assassination.

But his wishes and hopes were alike vain, for, as he came nearer to the center of the forest, where Kay's cottage was situated, he heard the sound of sobbing. He paused and looked around him, beholding, in a sheltered glade at no great distance, prostrate upon the ground, the form of the suspected under-forester, Gosman Kepp.

CHAPTER XI.

As Lord Ashcroft looked upon the prostrate form of the under-forester, groveling in utter misery and wretchedness upon the bare, cold earth, a feeling of consideration for him sprang up within his breast.

Quitting the path, his lordship sought the side of the unhappy young man, his approach being unheard, and said, in a not unkindly tone:

"Come, come! This cold, wet ground is no place for you, Kepp. Get up. I wish to talk with you."

At the sound of his voice, the under-forester lifted his head and regarded his lordship vacantly, showing a face so pale, worn, and full of misery, that Lord Ashcroft pitied him, even while believing him guilty of attempting an awful crime.

"Get up," repeated his lordship, seeing that Kepp, while hearing, had not comprehended his former words.

"Can't you take me somewhere where I can have a long talk with you—some sheltered place?"

Kepp muttered assent, without evincing the slightest surprise at the request, arose languidly, and shook himself unconsciously, as a dog might have done, and then turned on his heel, striding into the deeper shades of the forest.

Lord Ashcroft followed him in silence.

A few minutes' walk brought them to a pretty little pagoda, which nestled in a tiny dell, looking like a fairy's palace. It had been erected as a shelter for wanderers in the forest during a storm, and besides being exquisitely ornamental, was extremely useful, it having a tight roof and flooring.

It was furnished with a bench and two or three chairs, and its one small window was half covered with a silk curtain.

Into this retreat Kepp conducted his lordship, who seated himself upon the bench and motioned the forester to a chair.

But the young man flung himself upon the dry, clean floor, and silently and without curiosity awaited Lord Ashcroft's communication.

(To be continued.)

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Good Recipes

Lima Bean Loaf.

This is a most excellent meat substitute and may be used as the main dish of a simple home dinner. Either the canned, dried or fresh cooked beans may be utilized in its making. It also is extremely good sliced cold and used as a sandwich filling. Put one and a half cups of cheese and three cups of cooked lima beans through the food chopper and add half a teaspoon each of onion juice and paprika, a scant teaspoon of salt, one tablespoon of tomato catsup, three tablespoons of melted bacon fat, and one-eighth of a teaspoon of dry mustard. Mix well and add sufficient stale bread crumbs to mix the ingredients into a roll. Place in a buttered pan, sprinkle with dried bread crumbs mixed with melted butter and bake in a moderate oven, basting occasionally with melted butter dissolved in a small cup of hot water. Serve with a tomato sauce.

Quick Baked Frosting.
One cup sugar, three tablespoons cold water, one egg white, one-half teaspoon flavouring. Put the sugar, water and egg white in the top of a double boiler or bowl that will fit into the top of a kettle. While the water boils briskly in the lower kettle beat the mixture steadily for seven minutes, using a Dover beater. Remove from the heat, add the flavouring and beat with an open spoon until right consistency to spread.

Apple Sauce Cake.
Two cups flour, one cup sugar, two teaspoons soda, two teaspoons spice, three tablespoons chocolate, one-half teaspoon salt, one-half cup raisins, one and one-half cups apple sauce, medium thick and unswetened, one-half cup melted shortening, one table-spoon corn starch. Sift all dry ingredients.

Soup Stock in Quantity.
Strip off the fat and meat from twenty pounds of beef hocks, joints and bones containing marrow. Crack bones with a hatchet or cleaver. Reserve meat and fat for other use. Put the broken bones into a thin cloth sack and place in a large kettle containing five gallons of cold water. Simmer (do not boil) for six or seven hours. Do not salt while simmering. Skim off all fat. This should make about five gallons of stock. Sterilize in hot water bath 90 minutes or sterilize in steam pressure cooker forty-five minutes at fifteen pounds pressure. Pack hot into glass jars, bottles. Partially seal glass jars.

Oatmeal Cinnamon Biscuits.
Sift one and one-quarter cupful of white flour and one and one-half teaspoonful of baking powder, one-half teaspoonful of salt and two tablespoonful of sugar together. Add one and one-third cupful of raw oatmeal, six tablespoonful of melted shortening and enough water to make a soft dough. Roll out thin on floured board, sprinkle with mixed sugar and cinnamon and roll up, then cut in slices. Bake in a greased pan in a moderate oven about twenty minutes.

Potato Supper Dish.
Two cups milk, four tablespoons shortening, four tablespoons flour, one-half cup grated cheese, cold boiled potatoes cut in cubes. Make a cheese sauce, using shortening, flour, cheese and milk. Put a layer of potatoes in a buttered baking-dish. Add

a layer of sauce and repeat these layers until the dish is full. Cover with buttered bread crumbs and cook in oven until crumbs are brown.

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The Tiger in Retreat

Clemenceau recently refused an offer of 50,000 for ten articles on the political situation. "There is enough trouble now," he is quoted as saying. "Why cause more?" . . . Now comes the word that he is working on his autobiography. He will not say anything about the present, but perhaps no man living has as much to say about the past, particularly as it affects France, and though 88 years old, he hopes to finish the story of his troubles and victories in ten years' time. What a task to set for oneself after the allotted span has been passed. Three large volumes filled with the events of eighty-three strenuous years! It is as heroic as Von Ranke attempting to write the history of the World after he was 90. Clemenceau's opinion of current conditions may be left unexpressed without loss to the world. Not so Clemenceau's story of his life and work. As his great life is drawing to a close a great autobiography should be in the making.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

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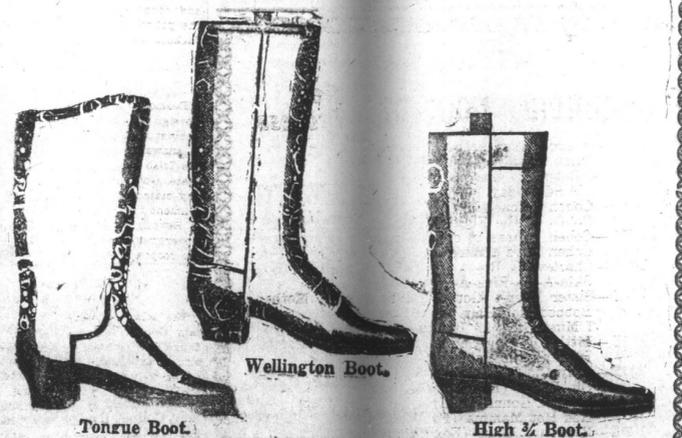
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