

WANTED—A COMPANION.

(Concluded.)

She gave a little cry.

"My love! my love!"

Those words followed the wordless cry. Yes, he was sure he heard the words.

For a second she stood gazing as the train puffed along more quickly; then, with a quick clasping of her hands over her eyes, she sprang to the low wall and was on it.

Her foot slipped; she sprang again. But then she only failed because strong arms were around her, and a strong, low, pained voice was calling her by her name.

But, when that moment had passed, Ellen knew nothing. Her intended sin, the wild weakness of her despair, the misery of her lost love, had driven the life out of her. Blessed unconsciousness rested on her.

She had to awake, poor troubled child! to tell her troubles. They were heavy ones, troubles that disgrace one.

But love does not die through any such telling, and John Newsom's love was of the right manifold sort that is faithful unto death.

Miss Scott was pitiful; she had taken Ellen to her heart, and she blamed her not at all for the evil which the early days of her life had set about her.

These three were happily the only intimates of the little hotel. The landlord of Les Trois Pelerine declared that he had never had so much that was dreadful happen in his house before. He was glad the two other ladies had left.

They had said they must go because they were terrified about the robberies, and the loss of the English lady's ring showed that dishonest folk were about.

"And such a vile slander had never been spoken before!" said the sprightly landlord. "Then let such suspecting customers go!"

CHAPTER XIII. MISS SCOTT AGAIN SPEAKS.

That journey of mine was an eventful one, and no mistake! I am back again at Urchester trying to fall into my old ways; I never shall do that. Does a mother ever feel that her home is the same when her daughter has left it for a home of her own? Does not the mother yearn vaguely after that second home, which in a way is hers?

Crude imaginings! I am but an old maid with no chick nor child. No, I have my daughter Ellen—Ellen Newsom.

I have just read over those chapters which had to be put into a storyteller's hands; my orders have been obeyed, and no word has there been written which put into plain English the terrible facts which had surrounded Ellen's young life.

How she kept herself pure and clean-handed no man can ever tell; one can only say that a merciful Providence was her protector.

Now she is safe.

But still I feel I must say what the terrible evil was.

She was an orphan, the child of a long-dead brother of the elder Miss Travers. Really that was the name, but that lot of truth was the only truth in the whole concern. Strange that falsity itself had seen fit to let Ellen keep her own name, come to me with her own name, and in some sort of way show the truth by saying that the girl had her own way to fight in the world. It must have been Ellen's own innate purity which so guarded and armed herself.

For the rest all was falsity.

The clergyman father was a myth, the aunt was the Miss Gill who had applied for my situation; you remember a likeness I detected between the old photograph and Ellen's own young one. She, the aunt, was the Madame Gavill who was one of the group of queer folks seen at Les Trois Sirenes in Brussels; she was also Madame de la Maure who took me in at Sainte Maree.

The girl Isabelle was no invalid, she was only a cat-spaw for her companion to carry out her vile trade. The trade was a thief.

There you have it. You read in the papers of what are called "long firm frauds." I had never heard of the thing before, but know them now, and these people were part of one such firm.

How many made the firm one knows not; one branch did get taken up in Paris for one of those big hotels jewel robberies that have been spoken of, but of those only one man, a fat German called Christian, got a severe sentence.

The woman who I must still call as I knew her, Madame de la Maure, was the soul of the firm: she always had two or three girls in her train—generally dull girls like Isabelle.

She did her best, or rather her cruellest, in forcing Ellen into obedience, and she simply sent her off as "companion" to me because the girl would not obey her.

She had her plans for terrorizing the girl so that she should rob me and rob anyone she could in the hotels we went to, but Ellen would not do this.

You are thinking as I thought—what about that hundred franc note I lost in Paris?

Ellen did not take it.

She saw it taken as she rushed out to the staircase, and the thief was a lame man slowly going down the staircase. She did not know the man, but the man knew her—he made her a sign. She had been forced to learn the signs of the vile brotherhood. But, again question. How did I come to know all this?

Simply because Ellen was thrown into a fever by the events of those days at Sainte Maree.

She talked incomprehensible things in her raving, and when clear sense came back to her she wished to know what she had said. Also, with her lover facing her—I need not say he never turned his back upon her—and her hand in mine, she told the sorry tale of her life.

"So you see," she ended, "it is best I should die. I could not live."

"Nonsense! you've got to live," I said with a lump in my throat.

Newsom got up and walked across the room. Bright sun was shining in, the air of the southern winter was soft, the sea sparkled blue and bright below the garden of orange trees.

Stupid old idiot that I was, I began to cry.

"Dear, don't. It is good to die like this. Do not wish me to live; if I lived I must be lost——"

"Never!"

Newsom must have thought she meant by "lost" a going back to that vile life.

"Oh! not that." Ellen's face was uplifted, clear and radiant. "No, no. I meant I must go as girls go for religion into a convent. Would they take me? Ah no. Let me die."

Here something seemed to have carried her so far away from earthly love that she drew Newsom to her and kissed his hand.

But we meant her to get well, and she did get well. When the golden primroses came first into that sweet garden of the south, Ellen was well enough to be moved, and I took her to Cannes.

There I knew there would be plenty of life, and I got rooms at the hotel where Newsom's cousins were staying. Those four girls immediately fell in love with my Ellen. No wonder!

After that I had no nursing; but then, Ellen was swiftly getting well.

She and Newsom were married at the English church at Cannes. They took a journey for a few weeks into Italy, and then they called at Cannes for me. Now I am back at Urchester, and I have seen them settled in the dearest home in Kensington.

I shall not go abroad again just now, and when I do I shall have no lack of "companions." I never need advertise again for one, for those cousins of Newsom's are, as yet, not married, and they, any one of them, would start anywhere with me.

Newsom's people—office people, I mean—have got the contract for making some South American railway. He may have to go out.

Now would that not be the very thing for Ellen? A thorough break of—say five years from English life?

I would try not to be sorry over it.

BEATEN BY A SHORT HEAD.

To stand in a comfortable warm stable eating the best food, and drinking the clearest water, and having my health studied and my wants attended to as if I were a favorite child, is not what can be called a hard lot in life for a broken-down old racehorse such as I am.

Although I am of no use now for racing purposes, it is not many years ago that I managed to win the highest honor on the turf, namely, The Derby. I was foaled about two o'clock one winter's morning on Mr. Clarence's Highflyer Estate, and that gentleman, God bless him, is still my master.

As a yearling I showed great promise of being able to gallop, and I often heard my old trainer, Mr. Purton, remark that I was a "clinker"; and when I became a year older I was put alongside several stable companions and tried for speed. The distance was a little over a mile, and I had the satisfaction of showing the other horses a close pair of heels all the way.

This performance so raised me in the estimation of my master and the trainer that they gave orders I was to be carefully looked after and every effort made to keep my excellence a secret. I further gathered from Mr. Clarence's remarks to Mr. Purton that I was to be quietly prepared for the Derby. But secrets will leak out in the best regulated stables, and it came to my master's ears that the sharps knew all about my form, and that they were backing me for large sums of money.

As my master had not invested a penny on my chance at the time, he was very much annoyed at seeing the best prices in the betting market swallowed up by outsiders; and both he and my trainer were at their wits' end what to do to put my would-be-backers off the scent.

After much deliberation, it was decided that I should only fulfil my minor engagements and miss the more important ones; some excuse being made for my absence from the post on each occasion.

This was to be done in order to give the "talent" the impression that a great mistake had been made in my trial, and that I was not so good as I was first thought to be. The ruse was successful, and I gradually receded in the betting. When I stood at the quotation suited to my master's purse he supported me to win a big stake at most remunerative odds.

By listening to the conversation between the head stable-lad (a man about fifty years of age) and an apprentice named Shaw, I learned that the Derby was near at hand. I also heard, to my sorrow, that Mr. Clarence was in financial difficulties and looked to me to get him out of his trouble. I could not help thinking at the time that if he had relied upon me alone since I was born he would not have been a loser by it, as I won all the races (small as they were) which I contested. But Mr. Clarence was young and reckless, always ready to bet on anything, and in consequence of this rashness he lost lots of money, and brought his fortune to such a low ebb that, if I did not win the Derby, matters would become very serious indeed for everyone connected with the Highflyer establishment.

A few nights before the great race my slumbers were broken by hearing the sound of men's voices; and on looking round my stable I saw the