

Diamond Cut Diamond

OR,
THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER X.—Continued.

"You have heard news?" he asked her quickly, with a look of apprehension, half raising himself in his chair.

"No, no—nothing," she answered soothingly, passing her hand caressingly upon the sleeve of his coat; "it is only—as before."

"Ah—dear amants!" he said, with a smile. "My poor, poor! And it is thy misfortune, never thy fault, my daughter."

She was silent, looking away from him, for this time she knew that it had been her fault.

"It is that young man—did you not say his name was Dane? A name of ill-omen, my child, that should have warned you from admitting him within your doors. Of course, he is no relation!—I think you told me that."

She had never told him. He had taken it for granted, and she had not cared to undeceive him. It was only after they had settled themselves down at Hidden House that the name of the clergyman had started her, and it was long before she discovered that he was in truth, a brother of Matthew Dane, the head of the great merchant house of Dane and Trichet. Why disturb the old man's rest by revealing such an unwelcome and unexpected coincidence to him?

She knew that a Protestant clergyman was not likely to enter their house; as a friend, he would not be received, and as priest, their religion protected them from his possible visits. She had not meant to deceive him, only to shield him from annoying ideas.

When Geoffrey had been introduced to him, it had been merely as the Anglican clergyman's son, that he was the nephew of his uncle had never been revealed to him.

Yet there was a certain sense of treachery upon his soul, as though she had tampered with the natural enemies of her race. Was that why she was so bitterly punished? she asked of herself in her remorse.

To Monsieur de Brefour the notion that Rose had admirers, was an amusing one. He even chuckled over it a little to himself, it did not occur to him that to Rose herself there could possibly be any tragic complication in the situation.

Old Martine entering with the tray for his dinner—little delicacies which she had cooked herself of sweetbread and daintily fried potatoes—was greeted by an unwonted outburst of hilarity from her old master.

"See here, Martine," stretching out his long, lean finger playfully at his daughter-in-law, "Madame has lovers—impertinent young donkeys, who want to pay court to her. We must leave, I am told, because of Madame's admirers! She breaks their hearts by the dozen, the heartless one, and much she cares! Ah! what it is to be young and beautiful!"

Martine threw a swift look of terror at Madame's flushing face. It might be a joke to the old man, but was it one to her? Martine knew better.

As for Rose, she bore it bravely, as she bore all things. Though the hot color, partly pain, and partly shame, had flooded her beautiful face, yet she joined faintly in the laughter, kissed the old man on the forehead, uncovered the dainty little silver dishes, and stayed to help him to them.

Only, without, in the narrow passage, her heart failed her, when Martine clutched her convulsively by both hands.

"Ah, my poor treasure," said the faithful creature brokenly, "is it never to end—never! And this one—such a beau jeune homme! Grande dieu, but it is hard!"

"Hush, Martine, you must not talk like that; Monsieur is right to laugh, it is ridiculous, you know for me, quite ridiculous."

And then the tears burst forth, and Rose turned and fled into the sanctuary of her own bedchamber.

A week later—the east winds still blew cold and keen over the Downs; the daffodils and primroses still bloomed in a blaze of yellow in sheltered corners under the hedges and along the tangled border of the drive; there were a few more little bright green buds upon the sycamores and the lilac bushes than a week ago, a little further into life in spite of adverse circumstances—no other change; when a young man came springing up the hill with that light, buoyant step which youth, and hope, and happy love alone can give. His face was bright with a glad expectancy, his brown eyes shone, his lips were curled into a smile as he came. She had not sent to meet him at the station, but that was nothing; he gave his bag to a porter and hurried on foot, eager to look once more into the face that was so dear to him. When he came in sight of the grey gateway, he wondered perhaps a little that the familiar graceful figure was not standing there to greet him; wondered a little too, that the sharp bark of her little dog did not ring as usual upon his ears. It was only a small, mild wonder, nothing more, no apprehension, no anxiety was in his mind; perhaps she was out driving, perhaps the old man was ailing, and she was in his room. What did it matter? In a few minutes, a few seconds indeed, he would be with her.

When he got within sight of the house, something strange and unexpected in its appearance struck upon him with a cold chill. There was a stillness as of death itself upon Hidden House. The windows, no bright flower-pot filled with daffodils upon the library window sill, and in one of

the upper rooms the shutters were closed; no smoke came from the chimneys, and not a sign of life was to be seen or heard. Fairly alarmed at last, Geoffrey hastened forward and rang the door-bell; it clanged loudly at his touch, and the echoes went ringing on and on in a ghostly fashion within, dying away by degrees into the perfect silence from which they had been awakened.

He waited, perhaps three whole minutes, then, sick with a horrible dread of the unknown, he rang again. This time, distant sounds from the further side of the house responded to his call. Heavy steps came stamping along the passage, and were followed by a great unbarring and unchaining and unlocking within. Then the door opened wide, and a very dirty-faced, rough-haired woman, with her sleeves tucked up above her elbows, and her gown gathered up about her waist, confronted him, with a dustpan in her hand and a look of much astonishment in her grimy face.

"Law, Mr. Geoffrey, fancy it's being you! I couldn't think whoever it could be aring so."

It was a woman out of his father's parish who earned her living by the homely process known as "going out charring."

"Where is Madame de Brefour?" was all that Geoffrey could find voice to say, and he said it with a gasp, with a face as white as death.

"Them furnishing people you mean, sir? Oh! they've left—turned out bag and baggage last Tuesday as ever was, and a good job, says I, to get rid of a lot of Papias and jabbering furrin servants as never do no good in a decent English parish. Yes, they was off quite sudden like, and Mr. Wright he telegraphs to me—quite give me a turn, that tallygram did, sir—but knowing as how I'd minded the place before, Mr. Wright he telegrams, that I am to go and clean it down, and that I and my old man can stop in it if so be like till it's let again. But I says to my old man, says I—

"Never mind," broke in Geoffrey impatiently, "tell me where they have gone."

"What, them furnurers, sir? Lord knows, I don't."

"Have they left no address, no orders about forwarding letters—nothing?"

"Nothing as I knows on, sir."

He pushed past her into the house, and entered the library.

What a dreadful thing is a room we have loved and been happy in, when shorn of the presence that has beautified it in our eyes. A woman's room most especially is utterly desolate when she who had made it her own, and lived in it daily, has left it for ever. Geoffrey looked round the familiar place with a sort of despair. The books were all gone, the book-shelves standing bare, and empty, like yawning caverns out of which jewels have been taken; gone, too, was the litter of magazines and papers upon the table. The vases that were wont to be always filled with fresh flowers, the cushions that used to pillow her lovely head, the footstool upon which her tiny slippers were wont to rest—gone the litter of nick-nacks from the writing-table and the mantelshelf, and all the small trifles with which a woman's daily life surrounds itself. The room was empty and void, silent and cold as the grave; it was like looking upon a dead face. A bitter misery flooded his soul as he looked at it. All at once he remembered, with a sudden rush of painful memory, how she had said to him, only a week ago, that she would go away and leave no trace behind her by which he could follow her. This, then, was what, she had done to him!

But why had she done it; had he not kept his bargain with her? Had he not been true to his promised word? He had done as she had asked him—and kept his love back out of her sight, so as to preserve her friendship—had crushed away his own feelings so as to respect and consider hers—and this was his reward! He had been faithful to his part of the covenant between them, but she, she had broken hers!

And he was very angry with her. Angry with that anger against those we love, that is so terrible in its cutting anguish.

Ah! better a thousand times is the coldness of indifference than that sharp pain of wrath that stabs with knifethrusts into our very hearts!

Hot tears, that almost burnt him as they welled up from within, blinded Geoffrey's eyes—he turned his back upon that sad empty room, strode past the still gaping charwoman into the open air, and away down the daffodil-bordered way.

Ah, cold blast of spring! Ah, cold winds that cut with nipping keenness through the bones. Cold as you may be, you are nothing to that bitterest sorrow of a man's young life, when his first love has betrayed his trust, and, for all her sweet beauty, he can find no dearer nor fonder word than a curse.

CHAPTER XI.

Angel Halliday stood leaning somewhat disconsolately against the lace window curtains of Lady Lessiter's smart house in Pont Street. It was a new, red brick abode of the latest Queen Anne pattern, more Queen Anne, in fact, than any edifice ever erected within the reign of that Gracious Sovereign of happy memory. It was great in red gables and white woodwork, in small colored window panes, and in quaint projecting balconies. Inside it was a miracle of Wardour Street furniture and blue china—with Burne-Jonesian wall decorations that were draped with the

latest novelty of textile fabrics from Maple's. Lady Lessiter had had once a mania for furnishing and decorating—for six months she had gone mad over it—she had tried fifty different experiments in every room in the house, had fitted up her drawing-room successively in the Moresque, the Earl English, and the Japanese styles, had flown about to every second-hand dealer in London, "picking-up" what she called bargains, but which were in truth but bad bargains for poor Sir George, who was required in time to pay for them. She had held committees of art and taste in her house, wherein everybody had suggested something different, and she, in a fine Cosmopolitan spirit, had endeavoured to carry out the ideas of all, and finally, after she had spent a small fortune, suddenly she got sick of it; some new fancy had cropped up, and the High Art House was left to itself, a standing monument of half-finished incongruity and inconsistency. Yet it cannot be denied that, although strictly speaking, it was false in art and meretricious in decoration, it was, nevertheless, exceedingly effective as a whole. Lady Lessiter's friends always told her, either that her house was a paradise, or that it was a museum—the frivolities of the one being presumably tempered by the solidity of the other.

Whether Angel Halliday, in her week's sojourn with her friend, had enjoyed it as a museum is uncertain, but very decidedly she had not looked upon it as a paradise.

Lady Lessiter had, nevertheless, done her duty as a hostess to the pretty girl whom she had invited to stay with her. She had taken her about to concerts and exhibitions—she had taken her to dinner at Hurlingham, and to supper at the New Club. She had driven her down to Sandown Races, and had invited a great many smart young button-hole bouquets, to dine and to lunch at the house in her honour. Yet all these delights had totally failed to satisfy her.

When a young woman's soul is set upon one particular young man, then, not all the joys of the whole earth nor yet the entire male population of Christendom, can render her happy if that one particular young man is missing. Now that is an incontrovertible truism, quite as old as the hills is quite as unchangeable, and yet it is constantly being left out of our calculations in our dealings with young women.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asks a mother of a sad, languid daughter, whom she is vainly endeavouring to render happy.

"Nothing, mamma," answers the young lady, and the mother rests satisfied with the unsatisfactory answer.

"Why does Edith look so pale, or Maggie eat nothing, or Florence sit so silent?" enquires John Bull of his wife, with affectionate solicitude; and Edith is forthwith taken to the seaside, and Maggie is ordered horse exercise, and Florence is taken more into society. But neither father nor mother remember that briefless barrister who has been civilly dropped, or that disreputable though fascinating young captain, who has not had an invitation to dinner for ever so long, or the penniless younger son of the country vicar, considered expedient to ignore,—and so the girls pine after the "one man," until they are tired of pining, and by and bye they get over that misery—for girls do not often die of broken hearts—and they marry somebody else because there is nothing else left for them to do, and they settle down contentedly into a quiet, common-place sort of happiness, which, perhaps, is the best thing in the long run for love's young hopes has very little to do.

Thus it was that Angel Halliday pined for the unattainable, and that all the joys of the London season failed to satisfy her.

For Horace Lessiter had not been once to his sister-in-law's house since she had been in town—he was in London she knew, and yet he had never been to see her—surely he could not love her.

To-day, Dulcie was coming, up to join her, and to-morrow they were both to go on and stay with old Mr. Dane, in Cromwell Road. It was not likely that Captain Lessiter would find her out.

Diamond Cut Diamond there. All hope, therefore, seemed to have come to an end to-day. No wonder that Angel had declined to go out driving with her hostess, and now stood sadly, in her loneliness looking vaguely and miserably out into the sunny street.

The room behind her was a litter of confusion and disorder. Her ladyship was going to hold a stall at a fancy bazaar, and was hard at work dressing dolls—all day long she was flying about buying expensive materials for the costumes of her dolls—it was her latest mania. Every doll on her stall was to be differently attired. Much more amusing work, than finding a husband for pretty Angel Halliday, which she had assured her husband a few weeks ago it was her solemn mission from on High to do. To make more money at her doll stall for the "Out-of-Work Labourers' Orphan Society," than that horrid Mrs. Jenkins, who painted her face and ogle the men, and who boasted to all her friends that she would take the wind out of her, Lady Lessiter, sails at the bazaar—that at present was the end and object of Venetia's existence; from morning till night she thought of nothing else. She was not at all sorry when Angel made Dulcie's arrival an excuse for not going out with her as usual.

"Oh! all right, dear; then I can take Mrs. Vere out in the Victoria—she will have the next stall to mine, you know, on the 10th; she is, going to sell flowers and ferns, and wants me to drive her to that pottery shop to get some little pots and vases; and then I can go again to Liberty's for the gold embroidery—and do, like a dear thing, finish dressing that Circassian slave for me whilst I am out."

But Angel did not address herself

to the garments of the Circassian slave when her hostess had left her. She only stood in a melancholy mood by the window, and looked listlessly into the street.

Everything looked gay and sunshiny—flower boxes of geraniums and white daisies bloomed at the open windows of the houses opposite; carriages flashed by filled with smartly-dressed women; children ran gayly along the pavements; and everybody looked happy and busy in the sweet summer afternoon, but Angel only felt miserable. Then all at once her heart beat, and there was a sudden revulsion of joy within her, for a hansom had dashed up to the door, and somebody sprang out of it and ran lightly up the steps below. He had come at last, then! Oh, why would her cheeks burn so hotly, and her heart flutter so wildly!

"All alone, Miss Halliday?" cried Horace Lessiter, in his cheery voice, as he entered; and then he cast a hurried glance round the room, as though he was looking for something. "My sister-in-law out? Good heavens! what is all this about?"

He was confronted by a row of twenty dolls, all in different costumes, that were propped up in a line on the end of the grand piano, while at least as many more, in all states and conditions of incompleteness of toilet, were scattered about the room, on the sofas and tables.

"Is Venetia starting a toyshop?"

"Not exactly," answered Angel, laughing and recovering her composure and her cool pink cheeks at the same time by a wonderful process of self-control; "but she is going to keep a stall, you know, at the bazaar; and she has settled upon dolls, in the dresses of every nation on the face of the earth. We are hard at work dressing them. It makes rather a mess in the room, I must confess."

To Be Continued.

WINTER WRINKLES.

Irishly Speaking.—She is rather wan-faced, think you not? Bedad, she is two-faced.

She—It requires money to get into society nowadays. He—Yes, and it requires brains to keep out of it.

Pa, what is a scheme? I can't define it, my son; but it is something that will fall through quicker than anything else on earth.

I'm sorry the golf season has closed. Why? It is better to have people go and play the game, than to have them sit around and talk about it.

Just Filled the Bill.—The Heiress.—The man I marry must be the very handsome, afraid of nothing, and clever. Money's no object to me. Mr. Broke.—Doesn't it seem like fate that we should have met.

Wise Father.—And remember this, my son, that the race is not always to the swift.—The Son, who has had some experience.—I should say it wasn't—especially in a professional sprinting race.

Young man, said the investigating philanthropist, you are an interesting puzzle to me. You are too proud to beg, too honest to steal, and too lazy to work. How in the world do you manage? I get trusted.

Old Lady.—Now, porter, you're quite sure you've put all my luggage in the big portmanteau and— Porter.—All right, mum. Old Lady.—And you're certain I've not left anything behind? Porter.—No, mum, not even a copper!

What would our wives say if they only knew where we are to-night? remarked the captain of a vessel beating about in a thick fog. I wouldn't care what they said, replied the mate, if we only knew where we were ourselves.

A Field Day for Both Parties.—She—People talk of Sunday being a day of rest, and yet look at the way the poor women have to work to get their husbands to go to church. He—Yes, and yet look at the way the poor husbands have to work to get out of going.

Wyseman—I make it a rule never to ask a gentleman to return money he has borrowed of me. Pratt—Then how do you manage to get it? Wyseman.—Oh, after I wait a reasonable time if he fails to pay up, I conclude that he is not a gentleman and I ask him.

Sunday-School Teacher.—Who was the shortest man mentioned in the Bible? Bright Pupil.—Peter. Teacher.—Why, I wasn't aware of any reference being made to his stature. Bright Pupil.—He spoke of it himself, when he said, "Silver and gold have I none." Could any one be shorter?

Getting Through the List.—What does your Majesty intend to do next? inquired the German Emperor's friend. I don't know, was the answer with a suppressed yawn. I'm afraid the field is pretty near exhausted. When you get time I wish you'd try to think up something more for me to excel in.

Hadn't Forgotten It.—Mr. Peck.—For years I have suffered in silence, but you should remember the old saying that even the worm will turn. Mrs. Peck.—Well, I hope you don't call yourself a worm, do you? Mr. Peck.—Possibly not—and yet on the day of our marriage I have a distinct recollection of hearing some one refer to you as a hairy bird.

SOLICITOUS.

Doctor.—Your wife, sir, is suffering from general functional derangement. Mr. Farvenu.—I knew it. Maybe she'll give me credit with knowing a few things after a while. I told her to quit gadding around to all these swell functions or she'd be sick. Now she's deranged. Is she liable to be violent, doc?

STRANGE REMEDIES.

Lizards are Good for Cancer and Water in a Red Glass Cures Eptlepsy.

In the old medieval days the strangest and most remarkable things were used as drugs for the amelioration and cure of disease. Even to-day we may still find curious cures. One of the strangest in this latter category is the use of precious stones for the cure of disease. The diamond is considered one of the most useful of all gems, and is especially indicated in certain diseases of the nervous system. Its successful application in long standing cases of feminine irritability has long been known to the average husband and lover, but its prosaic use as a substitute for asafetida or other objectionable substances will no doubt come as a surprise to everybody. Novel as is the idea, it, however, finds a parallel in the case of certain nations, who believe that a diamond placed in a glass of water communicates many virtues to the fluid, making it exceedingly valuable in the cure of disease. In Jamaica the natives believe resolutely that people with warts can get rid of them provided they use a piece of pork fat to rub the excrescences, and then bury the fat immediately after using it, a new piece being used for each application. For the cure of warts, indeed, a somewhat similar remedy is in vogue in certain parts of England, the excrescences being rubbed with a piece of beef, which must, however, be stolen before it is used, and must then be carefully buried. Breathing on a wart nine times at the time of the new moon is also declared to be very effectual in removing them. Among other remarkable methods of curing must certainly be mentioned one which is much used in certain parts of the Tyrol for cancer. This consists in decapitating and skinning lizards, the flesh of which is cut up into pieces and swallowed by the patient without cooking or any modification. After a few doses of this "drug" have been swallowed they are said to produce a profuse perspiration and gradually a sloughing off of the cancerous growth which is repaired by perfectly healthy tissue. Scarcely less potent is a mode of healing which is much vaunted in certain quarters of India. This may be called "color healing." It consists of administering water in glasses, of different colors, from which color the draft obtains its properties, which are magical in their effect—provided the patient is endowed with sufficient faith. Water in a red glass will cure epilepsy, insomnia, nervous diseases, the plague, fevers and agues and half a score of the other diseases which mortal flesh is heir to. In a blue glass it is a sovereign remedy for the palsy, for falling sickness, for typhoid and for numerous other allied and non-related complaints, while in a green glass, it is a specific for other complaints, and in yellow for yet another batch.

WHITE MEN AS SLAVES.

In Hungary Peasants Are Harnessed to the Plough Like Beasts of Burden.

Stephen Varkonyi, the leader of the peasants' revolution which convulsed Hungary during the early months of the year, has just been sentenced to one year's imprisonment for high treason.

The movement which was inaugurated by Varkonyi, was a revolt against the remnants of serfdom, which still exist in some parts of Hungary. In these districts each peasant is compelled to work fifty days in the year for the landowner without pay.

These fifty days of compulsory labour are not successive, or at fixed intervals, but when the landowner has work to be done he sends a drummer through the village, and every male inhabitant is obliged to respond to the summons.

Thereupon so many men are selected as are required. The landowner almost invariably exacts this labour in the summer when the peasant's time is most valuable to him.

In summer the peasant can earn as much as one shilling a day; in winter not more than fourpence or sixpence. In winter the peasants are compelled to act as beaters in the magistrates' hunts for a wage of twopence a day. The occupation is a dangerous one, and the time is not counted in the annual fifty days' compulsory labour.

The wives of the peasants are required to sweep and scrub the local manor house once a week without pay. Finally, many landowners, use the peasants as beasts of burden, harnessing four men to the plough instead of two oxen.

Stephen Varkonyi, who instigated the revolt against these degrading conditions of labour, is a sort of Hungarian Wat Tyler. He is the son of poor peasants, was educated in the farmyard, and graduated in the field.

He is quite a typically horny-handed son of toil, is physically tall, stoutly built, with plenty of character, in his shaggy head and small eyes, with their suggestion of the Mongolian slit, and has that rough kind of natural humor which appeals to the simple, peasant mind.

Varkonyi, whose power over the agricultural population of this country is unbounded, is one of the most interesting figures in modern Hungarian life.

Author, after completing a new book—There, that will make me more immortal than ever.