At the Eleventh Hour!

CHAPTER XV.

Myrtle's Resolve.

She wondered, too, what possible business had taken him to Cincinnati on the eve of his marriage. It must cdrtainly have been of signal import ance, she thought, and her curiosity was almost irrestrainable.

Vida took considerable interest in Jason Ball also. She believed that he testified falsely in saying that he had seen Stephen Belcourt shoot Madge McDonald. She had a private conviction that the poor girl had committed suicide. She suspected that Graham Prentiss had bribed the man, Jason Ball, to swear the false charge against Belcourt in order to prevent that match with Lynette. She fancied that Jason Ball had been well paid for his perjury, for the man's worldly circumstances had seemed very much improved of late. He had entirely given up work, although wretchedly poor, and his wife and two daughters had new attire. The two daughters, who had lived out as servants, had left their places and had come home to stay. To the neighbors who were curious about the change, the Balls announced that they had come into a legacy from a rich relation in Ireland.

Ball's wretched cabin was situated on the side of a hill near Ronceverte, and he spent his time loafing about the town, smoking, drinking and gossiping. But of the celebrated case, in which he was the chief witness, he was always disinclined to talk.

'Don't ask me about it. You'll hear it all told when the trial comes off. That's soon enough,' he was wont to reply gruffly to his questioners.

At the Ronceverte hotel the old woman, mother of the murdered girl, was detained, waiting for the trial at which she was to be the chief witness, after the identification of Stephen Belcourt as her dead daughter's husband. It was said that the woman spent all of her time weeping and mourning. Some curious people had endeavored to interview her, but she had refused to see anyone, secluding herself in her own room. At first she had not denied herself to anyone, but since her visit to the prison, she had changed, becoming morose and tearful, refusing to converse with even the servants who waited on her in her room.

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WRITE for specimen of new divided page. G. & C. MERRIAM CO., Publishers, Springfield, Mass. Mention this paper, receive FREE a set of pocket maps.

'I have a curiosity to see and talk with this woman, just because she acts so strangely,' said Myrtle.

'She would not see you if you called!' exclaimed Mrs. Dare.

'I know that, but I've determined to waylay the selfish creature in her walks, and force her to converse with me on the subject of that locket,' declared Myrtle firmly.

Myrtle Dare had a good deal of executive ability, and when she made up her mind to do anything, she often accomplished it by sheer force of will. Having determined to interview old Mrs. McDonald, she set herself to accomplish her wish. She learned that the old woman was in the habit of taking long rambles over the country roads, in order to enjoy the mountain scenery, which she declared was the most beautiful she had ever beheld.

One morning, after Mrs. McDonald had walked several miles, and was beginning to feel weary enough to start on her homeward way, she heard the light roll of wheels close behind, and, turning her head, beheld a beautiful young girl seated in a light-yellow dog-cart drawn by a spirited pony.

As her eyes lingered admiringly on the charming vision, the pretty vehicle came abreast of her. The young woman drew rein and exclaimed, with an ingratiating smile:

'Good morning, madam. You look tired out. Jump in, and let me give you a lift on you way.'

The old womon cast a longing glance at the luxurious little cart, then hesitated.

'I thank you kindly, miss, but I—I was just about turning back.'

'So then you were just out for a walk?' queried Myrtle affably.

'Yes, miss.'

'Why, then, I'm going back presently also, and can drive you home as well as not, if you will come a little way with me first. I only came for a drive, but the morning is so pleasent I want to go amile or so farther. The scenery is beautiful just about that turn in the road. But perhaps you are familiar with it?'

'No, miss;' and there was a longing note in the old woman's voicc.

The woman's life had been spent on a lonely farm just above Washington, and in her toilsome years there had never been a break of travel until now, but there was a vein of romanticism in her nature that responded to the wonderful beauty of nature as shown in the West Virgisia hills. She never wearied of the splendid panorama of changing scenery spread before her eager eyes, and found new sights daily in her long, lonely rambles. So, at Myrtle's words, temptation seized on her soul, and she faltered in her refusal.

We are all conversant with the fate of the woman who hesitates. She eventually yields. Our charming Myrtle soon persuaded the weary old woman to become her companion in the dog-cart. At once in the seat she drove off in triumph, secretly rejoicing at the success of her ruse.

Myrtle drove two miles farther, delighting her companion with the scenery along the route, and not saying a word—oh, no, for uor little general in petticoats was much too clever for that—of the subject uppermost in her mind. She reserved that for the homeward trip.

Mrs. McDonald was shy at first, but seeing that Myrtle did not trouble her with questions, she became more at ease, and timidly expressed her unbounded admiration of the beautiful country.

"You must be a stranger, madam. The beauties of this mountain State grows tame to us who live here that we seldom enjoy them as you appear to do," remarked Myrtle guardedly, as she turned the pony's head toward Ronceverte again.

Mrs. McDonald cleared her throat timorously, and admitted that this was her first visit to West Virginia.

"So then you really are a stranger. I must introduce myself—Myrtle Dare of Lewisburg," said the girl in her frank way.

"I'm glad to know you, Miss Dare, and I'll always remember you for the nice ride you've given me. My name is McDonald."

"McDonald?" and Myrtle gave a little start; adding: "Why, you must be the mother of that poor little girl who was murdered?"

"Yes, miss, I am," sighing.

"Oh, that poor, poor girl, how cruel was her fate! It must have almost broken your heart!" exclaimed Myrtle, gazing at her with looks of sympathy.

"Ye-es, indeed, Miss Dare; but—please do not let us talk about it. I cannot bear it," protested the woman, with a frightened air.

"Poor dear, I don't blame you. Forgive me for mentioning the subject. Still it must be a comfort to you to know that you have been instrumental in bringing her murderer to justice."

"Me, Miss Dare! Why, I had nothing to do with it."

"Oh, yes, you did. You identified him as the original of the locket."

She saw the woman by her side turn pale and tremble. She cried out, as if in self-defence:

"Yes; but that didn't bring him to justice. He was already in prison, accused of the crime."

"Accused, but not convicted, Mrs. McDonald, and many believed him innocent till your evidence riveted the chains of circumstantial evidence."

The woman shivered as if with cold, and reiterated weakly:

"Oh, no, miss, not me. He was bound to hang, anyway, they told me, because Mr. Ball saw him commit the crime, and would swear to it."

Myrtle cried indignantly:

"Jason Ball is a low-lived wretch, whose bare accusation could not convict anyone unless supported by corroborating evidence. No other evidence had been found until you came, Mrs. McDonald, with your story of your daughter's locket, and your identification of the prisoner as your daughter's husband. Of course that gives color to Jason Ball's charge, and if Stephen Belcourt is hanged for your daughter's death, madam, it will be you that brought him to the gallows!"

The words burst from Myrtle's lips with startling force and intensity, and produced a corresponding effect on the woman who rode by her side.

Mrs. McDonald's faded blue eyes no longer followed the wearying scenery but fixed their gaze on Myrtle with an expression of horror. Her form shook like a reed in the wind, and her face waxed deathly pale, though no word issued from her pale, drawn lips.

Myrtle watched the effect of her charge with keen satisfaction, and her secret conviction that the woman had been bribed was confirmed.

"She is in the pay of the wretches who have conspired against Stephen Belcourt, and her conscience is ill at ease," she thought quickly; and continued:

"It is a terrible thing to lie on one's conscience—the conviction of having caused a man's death by testifying to his guilt. But, of course, you were quite sure of the picture. You had seen it often, had you not? You are perfectly certain you made no mistake?"

The woman's parched lips opened and shut twice before a sound came from them. She was thoroughly frightened now, and she began to sob quietly.

"You are sure that Stephen Belcourt's face was the original of the one in your daughter's locket, are you?" persisted Myrtle, with what calmness she could, holding her terrible agitation well in check, though she longed to pounce on the old woman and shake her as she sobbed piteously by her side.

"Oh, Miss Dare, you frighten me! You talk like a whole judge and jury!" whimpered the woman.

Myrtle gave a short, mirthless laugh.

"Pardon me, but I felt strongly, and I only asked you a simple question. What was there in that to frighten you?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, it was awful, throwing the whole responsibility of a man's death on me like that! I couldn't help it if I had to tell the truth, could I?" weakly.

"No, not if you told the truth. Did you?"

"Miss Dare, what do you take me for? Let me out this minute! I'd rather walk, I tell you! You've made me miserable!"

To be continued.

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A
Adams, Emma, card Wills' Range
Adams, Mary, card, George's St.
Adams, Mrs. James, card, Pennywell Road
Ahy, Mrs. Charles
Ames, J.
Antle, Andrew, retd.
Andrews, Joseph, card
Atkins, A. H., care Post Office

B
Bragg, Mrs. George, care Post Office
Buman, Miss B.
Bennett, Miss C., card
Bennett, Miss Mollie, Cross Roads
Benson, James
Benson, Miss Belinda, George's Street
Brien, Toney, Brine St.
Byrne, S.
Boland, Mrs. J., Water St.
Bonavisky, Jos.
Brosseau, Mrs. Wm.
Brown, Miss A., card, Water St. West
Brocklehurst, George, care G. P. O.
Butler, E. J., Mount Scio Rd.
Bungey, Sarah, card
Butler, Bella, card
Blunden, James, care John Dunn
Burke, Miss Mary, retd.
Butler, Miss Annie, retd.

C
Clarke, John
Crane, Archibald, care Newman Benson
Carroll, James, Blackhead, St. John's
Carroll, Mrs. Kate, card
Campbell, Miss K., card, care P. Office
Christian, Miss Maria, Monkstown Road
Cheasson, Flora P.
Carter, Mrs., card, Mount Scio
Carew, Mrs. John, South Side
Corbin, W. A.
Conron, Tessie, Water St.
Congdon, Mrs. Ellen
Collett, Mrs. Albert, John Street
Cook, Miss Lillie, retd.
Connors, Miss Alice, LeMarchant Road
Cornell, Miss Ila M.
Coady, Mrs. J., card, Bond Street
Collins, Miss Bessie, Freshwater Road
Condon, Mrs. Ellen, LeMarchant Road
Coefield, Miss A.
Curnew, Wm.

D
Dunne, Lizzie, Cochrane Street
Dawe, John, Gower St.
Dawe, Miss, late Toronto.
Diamond, Ell, care G. P. O.
Diamond, John
Driscoll, Thomas, Monroe Street
Doody, Miss Mary
Doody, E. M., card

E
Eddy, George
Eadie, Mgt. F., card
Eldridge, Harding
English, May, No. 7 —— St.

F
Farrell, Mary, Riverhead
Farish, S. W.
Freeman, H.
French, Walter, late Gen'l Hospital
French, John, St. John's
French, Miss Mary, Water Street
Fisher, Mrs. Esther
Fitzgerald, Miss Eliza, care G. P. O.
Fitzgerald, Mrs. John, late Hopewell, N.S.
Foster, Miss Alice, Pennywell Road
Fahey, Wm., card, care G. P. O.

G
Gammon, K. H., Hamilton Street
Greene, Miss Bride, card
Greene, Eliza
Green, Louis
Gillet, Arthur, George's St.
Gossney, James, care Michael Culleton
Guild, Chaster, card

H
Hannon, Margaret, retd.
Horwood, R. G.
Hayse, Michael, Bannerman St.
Harnum, Hedley, card
Hayden, Laurence
Hancock, Florence, late Brooklyn, B.B.
Hannon, Mrs. Jas., card
Hamilton, Mrs. Joseph, P. O. Box 356
Heuradine, Miss Bella, George's Street
Hennessey, J. H.
Healey, Nicholas, Job's St.
Hepburn, Wm.
Hewitt, Stephen, late Bonavista Branch
Hiscock, Jessie, Theatre Hill
Hignes, E.
Hillyer, Wm., Power's St.
Higgins, Patience, retd.
Hiscock, Mrs. Carolina, The Village
Hinted, Thomas
Hiscock, John W.
Holloway, Eli John, care G. P. O.
House, John, Albert St.
Howey, A.
Huey, James

J
Jessen, Mrs., No. 1 —— St.
Janes, Mrs. H., Water Street West
Johnstone, Robert G.

K
Kenny, James, card, Cabot Street
Kelly, Thomas, card
Kerrivan, Wm., late Trepassey Branch
Kelloway, Miss Emily, Pennywell Road
Keating, M., card
Kenway, George
Keating, M. J.
Kelly, John J.
King, John, care Wm. J. Tilley

L
Lapp, Chas J.
LeDrew, John, Bond St.
Lee, Miss Bessie, Pleasant Street
Lyon, H. J. H.
Loveless, Miss Lizzie, LeMarchant Rd.
Lowe, Moses, Water St.

M
Marsh, Miss Josie, West End
Marshall, Mrs. Wm., card
Maden, John, Cabot St.
Mayer, Lizzie, Hall's Hill
Milley, Mrs. Wm. M., Pennywell Road
Milley, Josiah, late Cape Breton
Mitchell Mrs. James
Miller, Nellie, Gilbert St.
Molloy, John T.
Moist, Mrs., Cornwall Avenue
Morris, E. H.
Moore, James, card
Moran, Mrs. John
Moore, Francis, card
Moore, Lilly, Moore St.
Murphy, Mrs. M., Young St.
Mullins, Wm., late Hospital
Murphy, Michael, Cornwall Avenue
Moore, James, card
Murphy, John, care W. H. Taylor
Mulcahey, Mrs. Mgt., Blackhead

Mc
McNally, Dan
McMinn, Miss
McCulla, Harold H., care P. Office
McInnis, Mrs. Dr.
McDonald, Wm.
McGrath, Michael, Pennywell Road
McMillan, Mr.

N
Nadeau, Jos., care P. Office
Neal, Henry
Norman, E. J., card
Noseworthy, Mrs.
Noseworthy, Miss Annie, Carter's Hill
Noel, Gipsom S.
Norris, George, care Gen'l Delivery
Norris, John
Nurce, Miss Annie, Balsam Place

O
O'Brien, Mrs. Wm., care JJ. J. McCarthy, Gower Street
Oldfield, F. B.
O'Neill, Miss Mary
O'Leary, Ellen
O'Brien, Frank, care G. P. O.

P
Parsons, Mr. & Mrs. Herb't, Monkstown Road
Palmer, Ira J.
Parsons, Mrs. A., retd.
Pratt, E. J.
Pater, Miss L.
Pheney, C. T.
Peddle, Arthur, Water St. West
Perrin, Richard, Long Pond
Penney, Wm. H., care G. P. O.
Penney, Mrs., The Parsonage
Perrin, Miss Annie
Pittman, F. J.
Pike, E. W., Pennywell Road
Pittman, Miss Francis, Prescott Street
Power, Miss Martha, LeMarchant Rd.
Power, Ed., Nagle's Hill

R
Ransom, John
Ryan, P. J., late Grand Falls
Ryan, Miss Bridget, Military Road
Ryan, Frank, card, Water Street
Ready, Bridget, Adelaide Street
Richard, N. F.
Roberts, James, Cabot St.
Rose, George F.
Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Paul
Ross, Mrs. Chas.
Rogers, Wm. J.
Rodgers, Miss Nellie, New Gower Street
Robinson, Jennie, slip

S
Sparks, W. R.
Stanford, Benjamine
Stapleton, Patrick, Lime St.
Starks, Roland Geo.
Sparks, T. W., Water St.
Snelgrove, Patrick, Power's Street
Shea, James, New Gower Street
Seviour, Mrs., Hamilton Avenue
Steed, Miss Nellie, McFarlane St.
Smith, D. T., Long's Hill
Smith, P.
Smith, David
Simmonds, Mrs. George Hamilton Street
Scott, Miss Annie D.
Scott, Miss Provie, care Samuel Miller

T
Try, Thomas, Notre Dame St.
Tamble, Ester, Castle Ray
Taylor, Miss Ellen, Military Road
Trainer, M., card
Tuner, D., Pleasant St.
Tierney, Matthew, Water Street
Tobin, Mrs. K., Gower St.
Thomas, George
Thompson, Catherine J., card
Thomas, J. A.
Tucker, Mrs. Catherine, Cross Roads

W
Walsh, Miss K., Field St.
Walsh, J. A., card
Wagg, Albert, Queen's St.
Wallen, Ethel, card
Wakefield, Miss M. Y.
Way, Archibald
Wells, John, Murray St.
Whelan, Miss Lena, New Gower Street
Wells, Ernest, care Gen'l P. Office
Willson, Whitworth
Wiseman, Miss Julia, LeMarchant Road
White, C. J.
White, Mrs. L.
Williams, Mrs. Martha, Atlantic Avenue
Wilson, R. D.
Willson, Wm., late Millertown

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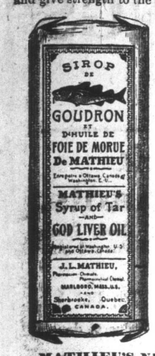

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The Evenin

By RUTH

"Aren't you too hard on your own sex, Miss Cameron?"

So one of my reader friends questions me.

I wonder.

It is a new point of view on myself, to me.

But really I don't think I am.

To be sure I may point out feminine foibles more frequently and forcibly than I do the masculine, but that's only as a man could tell you the the weak points and inconveniences of the house in which he lives better than those of a neighbour's house.

I assure you, I do not find more fault with my sex, because I think they have more faults.

Not by any means.

Please attend, Mrs. Critic, while I try to vindicate myself from your criticism.

I know five obstinate men to one obstinate woman.

I know ten overweeningly conceited men to one extremely conceited woman

The very pretty, unusually attractive girl may think that every man is ready to fall in love with her, and not be so very far out of the way either.

But almost every man, however homely, however stupid, however un-

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