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FOUR A MONTHLY REVIEW

By Arthur W. Marchmont.

(Continued.)

"You do not care for him, or you would not sit there so calmly when he is in danger like this. I have always had my doubts. If you loved him as I do, you would be in tears as I am."

"It is not my way to weep. But tell me where I can go to tell the others, and whom I ought to tell, and I'll go at once."

"No," cried Anna, angrily. "You shall not go. You may have done this on purpose. We do not know who you are. You came with a tale, and you won't round Karl because you are pretty; but pretty looks are not everything. You shall stay here until someone comes, and then we can tell them."

"This hint of treachery was very disconcerting and the intention to prevent her leaving angered Olive and rather alarmed her."

"You are foolish, Anna," she said, checking her anger. "If I had done what you hinted, should I have come back here? I do not wish to go. But do not repeat such things to me, or Karl will be angry."

"Ah, you think that you can twist him around your finger, eh? But they are not all in love with you, remember that. If Karl gets into any trouble, you have done it, and you will answer for it."

"Wait then! I will wait until someone comes as you say, and I had better wait without more talking," and when Anna retorted angrily Olive refused to reply.

She was extremely uncomfortable none the less. If any of the men took Anna's view of the matter, it was quite possible that awkward consequences might follow. The situation threatened to develop into one very like that at Cromwell Gardens, where she would be questioned by her godfather, and any examination under such circumstances would be fraught with much more danger and embarrassment than had she remained to face Jack and his chief at Ross Kensington.

An hour or two passed in this way, and then Rosestein and a companion arrived. Karl had asked him to come, there was likely to be news.

Anna told him what had occurred, giving not only the facts but her own opinions interspersed with copious tears.

"Why did you not let some of us know at once?" he asked, looking very grave at the ill tidings.

"I would not leave her and could not bring her with me," she said, growing more and more bitter with Olive as the time passed and no word of her brother came to ease her mind.

"You are stupid, Anna," said Rosestein. This appeared to be a sort of accepted maxim with them all. "If you had any reason for your thoughts would the Freuden have come back here?"

"I asked that very question and offered to go anywhere and do anything I could," put in Olive, who had been silent for some time.

Without replying, Rosestein took his companion out of the room, and presently returned with him, and he went to Odeon Mawford, and he announced, "I will wait here until he returns."

Meanwhile get news from Karl."

Anna immediately commenced a voluble re-statement of the facts, and, rather, emphasizing the fact that they did not know anything about Olive except her own statement, and he was beginning to question Olive closely, when Karl himself returned.

Anna knew her arms round him, hugged him tearfully, and fussed over him as a hen over a returned chick; and then, in a curiously nervous manner, told him what she had feared, and a garbled story of her suspicions of Olive.

Karl was very angry with her, and would have cursed Olive, but she was quick to see her chance to evade this. "No, Karl," she said, drawing back. "Anna has shown that she hates me; she has abused me for a traitor, and has kept me as a prisoner, when I could have got out to help you. I will not come between brother and sister."

Rosestein was meantime eager to learn what had occurred, and spoke in this point. "Tell us what happened, Karl."

But he was too furious with Anna for her treatment of Olive to listen, and a hot wrangle ensued, in which Olive had a glimpse of the real nature of the man, almost brutal in his selfish ferocity.

An in the midst of the quarrel, the reply to Rosestein's message to Merri-dew arrived.

At this Karl's wrath was turned against Rosestein, that he had dared to interfere and accuse her to the leader. They would have actually come to blows, indeed, had not Olive herself intervened.

"I do not mind, Karl," she declared. "Why, then, should you? You must not quarrel on my account. Let us hear what Mr. Mawford says."

The message was then delivered, and Olive listened with a chill of dread and foreboding.

She saw at once the significant danger it threatened to her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Crisis!

The message which Merri-dew sent in reply to Rosestein was that there was evidently treachery somewhere; that the matter must be sifted to the bottom; and that there was a meeting that night to consider another instance of the same sort. Rosestein was to see that Rosebaum attended also.

Olive had presence of mind to affect indifference, and to agree willingly to attend the meeting, but she did not hide from herself the virtual certainty that Merri-dew would recognize her under such circumstances.

Her one chance now was to find an opportunity of escaping, but Rosestein made this impossible. He was bitter words and fierce threats had changed a tendency to believe in Olive into a set resolve to make matters as unpleasant as he could for her. He would make her feel the anger he was rather afraid to vent on Karl.

On hearing the message Karl broke out into a fresh passion, and loaded Rosestein with abuse. But the latter made no reply. He sat with arms

folded, leaning back in his chair, a block of impassive obstinacy.

"Tell us what happened at Cromwell Gardens, Karl," said Olive, after a time, to stem the torrent of his anger. She began to fear that there would be bloodshed unless he was in some way checked; and, after a last burst of indignant vituperation of Rosestein, he told them.

"Nothing, of course. What did they think? That I am a fool?" and he glanced fiercely at his sister and Rosestein, and laughed very angrily.

"Did they think I should just walk up to the house and ask for you? Fools! I waited about near the house, and soon perceived that something was amiss. I suppose I have eyes!" And again he turned on the others.

"I walked, perhaps two hours or three hours, and watched. I guessed the reason of all the commotion, and my fear was that you had been discovered. After a long time I saw the police go to the house—a detective inspector from Scotland Yard. I knew him—Inspector Johnson—I looked every moment to see him bring you out in custody, Rosa. But the time went on and nothing happened. Then, when I left the house in the company of that young fellow from the Foreign Office, Mr. Fenwick, and they drove away together. And still I waited, and next the Minister himself left in his carriage; and then I knew I could safely go to the house."

"Did you venture that?" asked Olive.

"There was no risk. I asked to see the housekeeper, that silly woman, Mrs. Grimston; you know how she talks and talks and talks until you head swim. Well, I asked her for the character of a servant, saying 'I was Lord Potterbury's butler.' I gave her a name at random; she declared, of course, that no such girl had been here, and in a few minutes I had the whole story about you, Rosa. She is a fool, that woman. And then I found all this silly trouble made here."

"It was very clever, Karl," said Olive; and then described what had passed at the house before she had run away.

All the time the two were discussing this, Anna was not silent. She was a single remark; but when Olive concluded, Anna went to her and wanted to kiss her and make it up.

"I am sorry, Rosa. I have done you a wrong. Forgive me. I was beside myself on Karl's account."

"No, Anna, I cannot forgive like that. I should not mean it, and I will not say it," Olive was resolved to keep the breach open between them.

"I will stay here tonight, but I shall go tomorrow I shall go away."

"You see now what you have done," he cried fiercely to his sister. "If you do not persuade Rosa to stay, I will never forgive you. And at this Anna burst out again into a torrent of tears.

Karl did his utmost to reconcile the two, but Olive remained only to order to get away from the unpleasant scene, and also to carry out her plan of escaping from the house, she declared she would go to her room and wait there until the time of the meeting.

"She cannot leave the room," said Rosestein, breaking his long silence.

"Am I a prisoner, do you mean?" she asked angrily.

"You cannot leave the room," he repeated dogmatically.

"I should like to see who will stop her," put in Karl. "Of course you go to your room."

She turned to the door, and Rosestein rose to leave with her. Karl faced him at once. "Christian, we have been friends and comrades for a long time, but I won't allow you to do this."

"They are Odeon Mawford's orders, Karl. You know the penalty of disobedience."

It was an awkward plight. The worst she had yet to face. She would have to attend the meeting, unless she could find some means of slipping away while they were all on the road to the place.

Her only chance, if that failed—and it would succeed—was the desperately thin one that Gilbert Merri-dew would be able to give such an account of herself as would satisfy him of her good faith.

To this end she went carefully over every detail of the fictitious history of Rosebaum's life which she had before thought out, and sought to arm herself at every point.

It was the worst she was the child of poor parents in Eisenach; that her father had died there, and that her mother had taken her to America.

He had tried to get work as a laborer in New York; had failed, and had been killed in a street fight, committed for dogged, sullen man, and Karl's bitter words and fierce threats had changed a tendency to believe in Olive into a set resolve to make matters as unpleasant as he could for her. He would make her feel the anger he was rather afraid to vent on Karl.

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there, and had mentioned the name of the Hartmanns.

This was the weak link in the chain and try as she would she could think of no way of strengthening it without bringing in Selma's name, a course she was altogether unwilling to take, unless driven into extremity. The only thought which occurred to her was to declare that the people on the vessel had forbidden her to give their names.

Having resolved to make the most of that excuse, in default of any other, she turned to consider the story she should tell about the events at Cromwell Gardens. This was comparatively easy. She had heard of nothing of consequence, even if she had been witness to it. There could be no harm in saying that the Minister lay in bed late in the morning and that Jack brought papers to him, which were dealt with in the room adjoining the great man's bedroom; or, again, that no papers of any consequence were kept at all.

But there was the terrible alternative to be faced—that Merri-dew recognized her, she sat, with pursed lips, and a frowning brow, as she thought of it, and tried to form some plan of action. She saw the peril ahead of her quite clearly, and it frightened her. Her very life would be at stake.

She had seen for herself that these men were resolute, desperate, and very dangerous. They were staking their safety and perhaps their lives on the issue of the conflict, they carried on against Society and the law. Treachery was the one great capital crime they would never pardon. Their own security made it impossible for her to betray the great man's bedroom; and an act of the kind should be punished to the utmost. And if Merri-dew recognized her, a single word from him would be her death sentence.

That he would gladly speak that word, it was impossible for her to doubt. Her death meant everything to him in regard to her father's fortune. He had already planned it, indeed, she believed, in the attack upon her on the journey to Sheffield.

Nor could she look for one single syllable to be uttered in her defence. While Karl Hartmann believed in her, he would stand by her. But when he heard that she had not only betrayed the rest, but had fooled him in order to get the opportunity, hate would take the place of friendship, and he would become her worst enemy and the loudest in demanding her punishment.

"How could you be so to me, Rosa. How can you be? And after we have been parted."

"I have never been and now I can tell of nothing but this miserable business. What are they doing in there?"

"It is all over between us, Karl," she said, and turned away with an air of apprehension of losing her. "Anna shall not part us. You must not heed what she says."

"I could never forget it, Karl; never forget this day as long as I live," said Olive earnestly. She meant every syllable of the statement, too, although not perhaps in the sense he understood it.

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yond, with which it communicated by a pair of large doors.

As soon as they were inside, he closed the door, and Olive observed that the other man remained in the room all day. He was dead set upon showing her that she was a suspected person, at all events, in his eyes.

Olive had expected to come at once face to face with Merri-dew; but the place was empty, and his voice was coming from the room beyond which Rosestein entered, leaving the big doors very slightly ajar.

She had a curious feeling of dim disappointment at the delay in meeting Merri-dew. She had braced her nerves for the ordeal, and the further suspense told her.

The room was very meagrely furnished. Just a few plain wooden chairs against the wall, a square deal table with no cloth in the centre, and some pipes and tobacco on the bare mantelpiece. A single gas jet half turned on, served to add to the gloom rather than to relieve it.

All these details Olive took in at a glance, and then she turned to the stiff, uncomfortable wooden chair.

Karl took a seat beside her. "You mustn't be nervous, Rosa," he whispered. "I shall see that no harm comes of this meddler's folly."

She smiled. "I am not nervous," she said confidently. "It has been trying to be treated as a prisoner, but I have finished with him after this," he growled angrily.

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in another fashion."

Another pause, filled by some rustling movement as the gas was removed. "Now what have you to say?" asked Merri-dew.

"It's all lies, lies!"

Olive started at the voice. Frenchman? It was the voice of the man who had attempted her life in the train. She rose and stole of the door and peered in to catch a sight of the man. For a moment she was unsuccessful, but the instant her eyes fell on his face she recognized him.

Overwhelmed by the discovery, she lost the first words which Merri-dew spoke and the fellow's answer. What had been a nervous quiver before was now moved beyond question. It had been Merri-dew's work, that attempt. He had employed this wretch for the purpose.

"You are lying, Perigord," came in Merri-dew's voice, as hard as steel. "Your only chance is to tell the truth. And now the tone was full of authority she called on the man he named to give particulars of the other's offence."

This man was one Olive had never seen before. He told his story in a voice rich with American slang. He had always suspected Perigord, he declared, and had therefore spied upon him. He had seen him in company with the police, had watched him closely, and had succeeded in over-hearing his conversation in a public-house in which the man had betrayed them, for he had distinctly heard him murmur to the housemaid that he had been made. He had told his comrades and precautions had been taken. He had seen him in company with the police, and had watched him closely, and had succeeded in over-hearing his conversation in a public-house in which the man had betrayed them, for he had distinctly heard him murmur to the housemaid that he had been made. He had told his comrades and precautions had been taken.

"That'll do, Andrews," interrupted Merri-dew sharply. "We don't want your opinion of him yet. We have to form our own. Well, what do you say? In his chair and looked searchingly at Olive."

"I have done well for you," was the reply. "Didn't I—"

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might the more thoroughly test her sincerity. The long delay, with its inevitable certainty, the object had in part been suspense and racking anxiety, had tried her sharply; and to her dismay, she found herself trembling and nervous as she stared at those about the long table.

Merri-dew was, of course, directing the proceedings, and he left her standing by Karl's side without even looking up at her entrance, while he sat consulting with Franks and Rosestein, whispering and occasionally making a note or two on the paper in front of him.

After a moment or two, Karl put a chair for Olive, and she sat down. As she moved to the chair, Olive caught a swift side glance from Merri-dew in her direction. But not a sign appeared on his face to show whether or not he suspected her identity.

Presently he beckoned Karl to him. A sharp gesture eloquent of his consciousness of authority and leadership. The action of one who meant to be obeyed without question, and on the instant.

Olive read it so; and not without satisfaction. The greater the influence he exercised over the rest, the more certain would be her success. If she could in some way baffle and beat him. Every word he spoke to the others, every gesture he made, tended to show his complete ascendancy over them. And then it occurred to her that this parade of authority on his part was calculated, and his object was to impress her with a sense of his power in order to frighten her.

But it had precisely the opposite effect. It was just what she wanted to know. Thus the delay which was designed to confuse and embarrass her really helped to reassure and strengthen her.

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