



**"Flatterers"**  
—OR—  
**The Shadow of the Future.**

CHAPTER XIV.  
AND THE FRUITS THEREOF.

"Oh, if you'd like to see 'em—or leastways see the man, miss," said Mrs. Davis, the young lady's desires just finding their way to her slow brain, "why, you can do that easy without trackin' after where they live. I know him jest by sight; an' see him go by not half an hour ago, an' he turned in at you gate—the piece there where they be cuttin' green stuff for the cows."

This sounded better. With a cheerfulness "Thank you," Sydney took the route indicated. A running stream on one side she had dipped her toes in many a time, a bank with huge primrose leaves drooping in the heat on the other, greeted her like some long laid-by picture. Nothing lacked but wanting that a chill of loneliness crept over her, when she passed the stile she had often climbed, by a swift thought of that other so far greater loneliness, which had crossed her road, as it were, a moment that same day, and then gone by, lost in a twilight solitude.

"While I have everything!" she chid herself, half aloud, and, with the abundant measure of these good gifts upon her mind, turned in at the green acre to which she had been directed.

Two men at the extreme end were reaping fodder. One had the other's burly figure well into years, working with a will, not in the easy-going one-and-eightieth day style of the ordinary laborer. That looked like Lewis, she fancied. He had always been the very soul of industry. Probably he had prospered. Had got a dairy now besides his market-garden. Yes, certainly, that must be Lewis. But she would wait to claim him till he drove his nearly laden cart up to the gate by which she stood. Then she would stop him; puzzle him at first; afterward tell him who she was. Perhaps he would take her off proudly to some finer home than his old one. And it was just within the range of possibility the "Taffy" of old times might yet be there with a "Who is it? My child, little Sydney? Has she come again, bless her!"

Meantime, while her youth was thus making light of Mrs. Davis' wise saw, the sun was beating down strong upon her; the air was getting sultry, vibrating now and again with sounds as of a distant storm.

Castling about for shade, she found it beneath a wide-spreading elm, whose mossy trunk offered a pleasant resting-place, whereupon she gladly seated herself, a pretty enough picture as of typical June, spring lingering in the bright anticipation of her eyes and on her smiling lips, while the soft sweeping lines of her form spoke the early summer of her sex.

A few yards from her sat some one else; a man terribly bent by toll or sickness. Very poor, evidently; for, as he raised himself with difficulty, and, leaning hard on his ash stick, came toward her, she saw his threadbare tustian was darned and pierced like veritable patchwork. A stubby growth of hair about his face, very sunken cheeks, and an aspect of suffering appeal, made him a painful, pitiable object, and Sydney's hand naturally sought her purse as he drew near.

But he was not begging. He only asked her civilly if she were wanting to speak to the master yonder, and should he go and fetch him.

"No, I thank you," Sydney answered, "I can stop for him here, or go across myself. I am afraid moving about hurts you."

He looked such an appropriate object for a shilling, she opened the way thus intentionally to his asking for it.

"Hurts! You're right, miss. I get crippled and crippled every day. My aches and pains have come atop of one another till they've nigh bent me double, and—with a nasty rough cough that seemed to rack him—"this winter's bout was worst of all."

"What was it—rheumatism?" questioned Sydney, used enough to this, the cottager's arch-enemy. "Don't keep standing," she added; "I wish you had not disturbed yourself for me."

"Thank you, miss, kindly. No"—lowering himself cautiously on the bank at a respectful distance—"it weren't that this time. It were bronchitis. That kept a hold of me from Michaelmas till May. And it have left me as weak as water, I haven't done a day's work not for nine months, and I dursn't look to do no more as long as I've got to live."

"But this warm weather ought to do you good," suggested Sydney, hopefully. "Perhaps you will get stronger before next winter."

He shook his head. "Tain't likely. Get bronchitis follerin' after three seasons of rheumatism such as twist a man's joints about like wax, and set him out of shape like mine, why, you can't pick up strength in a hurry."

"No, indeed. It must be dreadful. So your pains and trouble began with that?"

"My pains began so—in my joints, miss; but my troubles—good heart alive, they begun different enough, and times before!"

(The workers yonder had cut another strip of rye. Sydney knew full well what delight it is to the poor to hold conversation on their own woe, so lent her few minutes' leisure to gratify this ailing laborer.)

"Ah! if you have had other troubles, they make you less able to bear 'em, do they not?"

"Right again, miss—right. Give a man a good stout heart, and he can hold his own against wind and weather, and physic and worries. But you take that away, and everything seems to rub him on the raw. There's nothin' can make up for a good stout heart—nothin'! I lost mine white's ago, and my labor have been nothin' but heaviness ever since."

"Poor fellow!" (He touched his worn old hat to her compassionate tone.) "How came it all about?" (Could she spare half a sovereign if his tale seemed as truthful as sad?)

"Why, the same way, miss, a many has met their downfall. I worked and worked from the hour I could hold a rake or plant a spade; and I stored and saved where others lived free and spent; and I was as thrifty as an ant,



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as far as I knew how; and I got a bit of property like together in solid pounds; and then I took and trusted the whole, the scrapin' and screwin' of fifty years, to one man, and he lost 'em for me! All!

"Oh, how hard! How hard!"

"Oh, how hard! How hard!"

"Ay, hard it was, I took him for sure as the bank itself—that man. I wouldn't believe my own ears when word first come to me of what he'd done. But I'd got to believe it, and I'd got to bear it. And that's what took the heart out of me. And this here's what it have brought me to."

"But had you no friend, no son, nor any one to help you then?"

"I never had a son. I'd girls. And I'd trusted this man so sort of stupid-like—for I'd worked for him close on forty years—I'd even give him my lasses' few shillins as they'd earned then, along of mine. And another body's too—older than me by a score. Here went with the rest. And, thank the Lord, she soon went after it. And she slept herself out of her sorrows. I know just where she lays, poor old soul, though we hadn't enough among us to put a head-stone over her."

As yet Sydney had not recognized, not dreamed of putting together these scattered links. But now a monitory shudder ran through her.

Was it the tempest, drawing near in splendid masses of leaden and silver cloud, that set her trembling? And was the fate tender or harsh which impelled her to draw the story out to its cruel end?

"Was there no one belonging to your debtor who could give you back anything? You, only a poor man!"

"No; none that would."

"Now that does seem a shame."

"Ay; we all said so. I don't stand alone. There was others lost the same as me. And though there just belongin' was gone, why, for very likin' of the man that lost 'em they'd have said, 'Thank you' for a few pounds back, and they'd set to and made another start—such as could. Just my rent would 'ave put spirit into me. A tithing of what was gone would 'ave set a mummy on their feet again. But none of us got it. There come the shame. For look you, miss!" (Sydney leaned forward, listening intently, with parted lips. No mirth in her eyes now)—"him that ruined us went clear away—clean out of sight and nobody here set eyes on him no more. Word come round among us that he took ill and never held his head up till he died. The thoughts of that has shut my mouth up many a time, else I'd have curse—"

"No, no! Don't say it! Don't say it! For—for—he's dead, you know!" cried Sydney, covering strangely.

(To be continued)

**Saint Anthony.**

Saint Anthony who is mentioned in all the Calendars and is as famous in the East as in the West, was born of Christian parents in Egypt. When about eighteen years old, his parents both died and left in his charge, a little sister, so he took care both of his house and of her for a time. But the thought of his wealth troubled him so greatly that after placing his sister in a nunnery, he sold everything he had and gave it to the poor. He then became a solitary hermit, living just outside of his native village.

Not content with the already stern rigor of his life, he finally went to live in one of the tombs. Satan fearing, it is imagined, the effect of Anthony's example, made many attacks upon him but always Anthony triumphed.

When he was thirty-five years old, he set out to cross the desert and to find a mountain to dwell upon in solitude.

On the way across the desert, the devil again tempted him with much gold which he spread upon the sand. But Anthony was too many for him, and rushed on up to a mountain where he found a cave in which he took up his abode.

Here he endured for twenty years, living alone and training himself in self-sacrificing godliness, remaining in absolute seclusion for long periods of time.

Then as many admirers of his determination longed for him, and wished to benefit by his example and teaching, begging him to return to the world, he came forth. When his friends saw him they wondered. His face was transfigured and his body, quite unaffacted by the fasting he had undergone, was as well nourished as a foretime's.

Anthony had great grace in speaking, and persuaded many young men. He had become almost a rule for pious people to forsake the world altogether, to choose the solitary life. Soon his cell was surrounded by many other cells which were like "tents filled with divine choirs, singing, discoursing, fasting, praying, rejoicing over the hope of the future, working that they might give alms and having love and concord with each other."

It was curious, and fortunately only a passing phase of Christianity, which thus neglected the Master's supreme command to evangelize the world, as yeast leavens the flour.

At last feeling the need of more solitude, Anthony again closed the door of his cell. Crowds came to ask his aid in getting healing for their ailments; and very rarely did he open his door; he called through the door telling them to pray for cleansing and usually following his advice they were healed.

At last he set out for the desert whither he journeyed with a party of Arabs. Coming to a mountain he took up his abode on it, living on dates and bread, which the Arabs joyfully brought him.

Anthony's fame reached even to kings, for Constantine and his son, Constantius and Constans, wrote to him begging for advice and help. But Anthony said he had no knowledge of how to answer such exalted ones.

At times Anthony is declared to have foretold the invasions of the Arians and the plunder of the churches, when they captured the holy vessels by violence; and made the heathen carry them; and how they would force the heathen from the prisons to join them.

But when he actually saw this sight, he exhorted those about him, saying, "Lose not heart, children; for as the Lord has been angry, so will He again be appeased, and the church shall soon again receive her own order and shine forth as she is wont to."

At that time, the Egyptians did not bury their dead, but wrapping the corpses in linen they kept them in their houses.

Anthony often exhorted the people about this and in like manner, he himself rebuked the lazy and terrified the women; saying that it was a thing neither lawful, nor in any way holy; for that the bodies of the patriarchs and prophets are to this day preserved in sepulchres and that the very body of our Lord was laid in a sepulchre, and a stone placed over it to hide it, till He rose the third day.

Being afraid lest they should do the same with his body, he bade farewell to the monks in the outer mountain, and hurrying to the inner mountain, where he was wont to abide, after a few months, he grew sick, and calling those who were by, there were two of them who had remained for fifteen years, he said to them, "I indeed go the way of my fathers, as it is written, for I perceive that I am called by the Lord. Promise to bury me secretly, so that no one shall know the place, save you alone, for I shall receive my body incorruptible from my Saviour at the resurrection of the dead, and distribute my garments thus: To Anthanasius, the bishop, give one of my sheep-skins, and the cloak under me, which was new when he gave it to me, and has grown old by me; and to Sirapion, the bishop, give the other sheepskin; and do you have the hair-cloth garment, and for the rest children farewell, for Anthony is going, and is with you no more."

Saying this he died and was buried

and so carefully was his body hidden that no one knows to this day where it lies.

In art Anthony appears with a hog which has a bell attached to its neck. Sometimes, St. Anthony holds the bell. He was regarded as the patron of the Hospitaliers; and when ordinances were passed forbidding the poor from allowing their swine to run loose about the streets, as they were often in the way of horses, an exception was made in favor of the pigs of the Hospitaliers, on consideration of their wearing a bell around their necks. Some think that the pig represents the flesh which St. Anthony controlled and the bell is a common symbol of hermits. The cross of St. Anthony is a crutch, or the Egyptian cross, like the letter T.

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**Not Quite What He Meant.**

They were engaged, and in one cozy armchair they were discussing, when they were not busy with other things, arrangements for the future. After a long period of silence, she said:

"Supposing you lost your position after we were married, how would you keep the wolf from the door?"

"Darling," he exclaimed, "no wolf will come to our door. The mere sight of your face would keep the wolf away!"

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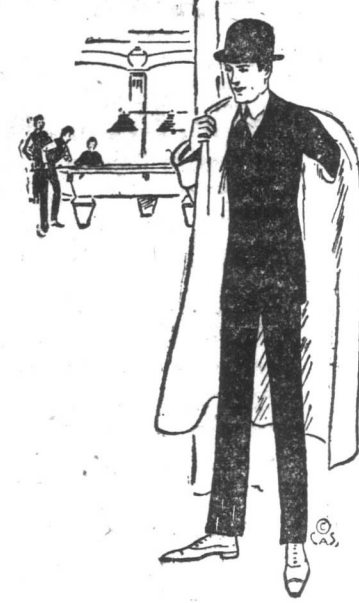
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