

FOR LOVE AND BIRTHRIGHT

—OR—

PLOT VS. PRINCIPLE.

Before replying she lifted her keen eyes and searched his face. Evidently she was satisfied that he was trustworthy, for she said:

"If you will kindly assist me to the ladies' room I will thank you."

She spoke composedly, but her very lips were white now, and Walter could see that it was only by a mighty effort of her will that she concealed the agony she was suffering.

"Certainly," he said, and supporting her by the arm, for she was unable to take his, he led her into the ladies' room and seated her in a chair.

"You are very kind," she murmured; "and now have you a sharp knife?"

"Yes, madam." And he drew it quickly from his pocket and opened it. "Please cut off my gloves," she said; "my hands are swelling rapidly and they are painful."

Walter knelt before her, and, taking the hand that he had noticed was bleeding, quickly cut the glove away, revealing more plainly the livid and mangled flesh and bruises beneath.

He then turned to the other arm, which still hung limp and helpless at her side.

"Lift it into my lap. It is broken, I fear, for I have no power over it; but the glove must come off immediately," the woman said, as he hesitated to touch it.

He did as she commanded, but the sight that met his eyes when he had removed the glove nearly unmanned him; for the bones of the wrist were broken and almost protruding through the flesh, while he was sure there was still another break farther up.

But she was very brave and self-possessed, thanking him for his aid, and she even smiled upon him as he lifted his own pale face to hers, saying:

"Let me go for a surgeon."

"No, not yet," she replied, "I must get home first. I expected my carriage to be here to meet me, but I saw nothing of my coachman, and fear my telegram was not received. If you will get me a public conveyance and help me into it, I will trouble you no further."

"Have you baggage?" Walter inquired, springing to his feet to execute her commission, and thinking she was the bravest lady he had ever seen.

"Yes, and I shall need it, too. You will find my checks in the pocket of my travelling-bag."

He found them, and darted from the room.

He secured a carriage, and then assisted the man in transferring the baggage to it, noting that the trunks were marked "Mrs. M. E. Howland," and that they had come from St. Louis.

This accomplished, he returned to the waiting-room for the injured woman, whom he assisted to the coach, where he made her as comfortable as it was possible to do, and then asked her address.

"No. 6 — avenue," she told him, and would have thanked him for his kindness, but he quickly closed the carriage door, and, springing upon the box with the driver, told him to get her home with all possible despatch.

Arriving at No. 6 — avenue, Mrs. Howland appeared somewhat surprised when Walter again presented himself at the door to assist her to alight. But she looked gratified, too, in spite of her pain, which was every moment increasing.

Very gently he helped her into the house, which, a single glance was sufficient to tell him, was a most luxurious one, and when in less than three minutes she had as many servants about her, eager to give her the care and assistance she so much needed.

Her first order was for her coachman to go for a surgeon, and then she calmly gave directions for certain remedies to be brought and applied to relieve her until he should arrive, and was so brave and cheerful, in spite of her helplessness, that Walter was filled with admiration for her.

He helped the driver get the trunks into the house, paid and dismissed him, and then went and asked if there was anything more he could do.

"Yes, my young friend; tell me your name, that I may know to whom I am indebted for so much kindness," Mrs. Howland answered, while she studied his fine face earnestly.

"My name is Richardson — Walter Richardson," the young man replied. "Walter Richardson?" she repeated, in a peculiar tone. "Where do you live?"

"In Philadelphia, usually; but just at present I am engaged upon a building contract in this place."

"Where do your parents reside?" "I have none; I was born in New York city, where both my father and mother died. But, madam, pray do not let me trouble you with my affairs while you are suffering so. I had better leave you now," Walter concluded, feeling how very ill she suddenly seemed to have grown.

"Yes," she returned, leaning wearily back in her chair, while her face was ghastly white, though her eyes were fastened with a look of eager inquiry upon his face, "yes, go now, but promise that you will come to see me again soon; I must see you again, for—for you have been very kind."

"I will come," Walter promised, and then went away, just as the surgeon came bustling in, and repaired to his place of business.

But all day long, and for several days, his thoughts were with that grand woman who had displayed so much nerve and courage at a time when almost any one else would have been prostrated by the painful ordeal through which she had passed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

An Arrest.

Madame Howland, as she was known in the suburban city where she resided, was a very proud and wealthy woman—or so considered by people who only knew her in a general way.

She had belonged to one of the oldest families of Baltimore; had been regarded as a beauty and a belle in her early life; had been married twice, each time to a rich and cultivated gentleman, and had naturally held herself with all the pride which usually attends such unexceptional birth and position.

She had no children—though report said that she had lost, years ago, one idolized son—and lived alone in her grandeur, with only her servants about her; was considered exceedingly exclusive and cold-hearted by society, though it was whispered among the poor that her purse and heart were always open to their needs and supplications.

Walter called at her door every morning during the week after her accident, to inquire for her, and was glad to learn that she was doing very well, although her injuries had been of a very serious nature. Her right wrist and arm had been broken in two places, besides being badly bruised, while the left hand had been shockingly lacerated, though no bones were broken in it.

At the end of a week Walter was invited to enter, being told that madam desired to see him.

He was conducted to her private parlor—a beautiful room in the second story of the house, where he found her sitting in a huge invalid-chair, both hands bandaged and helpless, and looking somewhat worn from the pain that she had suffered, but still bearing herself proudly, and with the distinguished air that had so attracted Walter when he first saw her.

She glanced up as he entered, in a bright and animated way, saying:

"Well, young man, you find me still crippled, and I imagine it will be some time yet before I shall be able to shake that good right hand of yours that did me such efficient service. However, I wanted to see you. So draw a chair near to me, and talk to me for a little while."

Walter obeyed, remarking as he sat down, that he was glad to find her so much more comfortable than when he saw her last.

"Yes, if you call it comfortable to be a literal example of what it is to have your hands tied," she responded, laughingly.

She was a charming old lady, and entertained her young guest brilliantly for half an hour, and ignoring herself, gradually led him to talk about his own life, questioned him about his business, and at last adroitly managed to draw from him something of his history.

He was very much attracted by her, and was surprised at the earnest she manifested in him.

"What can I do to reward you for your kindness to me?" she asked, with a benignant smile, when he finally arose to leave.

"Pray never mention the matter again in that way, madam," Walter responded, flushing, and drawing himself up a trifle proudly. "I am only too glad that I was able to be of service to you, and I hope if there is anything that I can do at any time, you will command me."

"Thank you, and I will take you at your word instantly," madam replied, smiling. "You can be of use to me, for you have cheered me wonderfully this morning, and I shall command that you come to see me often."

"That is a very agreeable order, and one which I am sure I shall take pleasure in obeying," Walter returned, smiling also.

She looked at him earnestly a moment, then said:

"I like you, young man; you make me think of—of some one whom I used to know; and it will do me good to have a young face in the house. So please drop in frequently, while you remain in the city."

"I will, thank you," he replied, heartily, feeling that it would be delightful to have the privilege.

He approached the door as he spoke, but it was opened before he could reach it by a servant, who came in, looking pale and startled.

She cast a frightened look at Walter as she passed him, and going to her mistress said, in a low tone:

"Madam, there is an officer below who wants—"

"An officer!" interrupted Madame Howland, in a tone of surprise. "What can he possibly want in this house?"

"He says he has come to arrest—"

The girl began, then stopped, confused, while her glance wandered apprehensively toward Walter.

"What are you talking about, Sarah?" demanded madam, excitedly.

"An officer to arrest some one here?"

"Yes, madam."

"Whom? Tell me instantly, and end this suspense."

"The young gentleman, madam," Sarah faltered, with a deprecating look at Walter.

The young man looked astonished.

"Did I understand rightly—that there is an officer below who asserts that he has come here to arrest me?" he asked, turning to the girl.

"Yes sir; so he says."

"Madame Howland," Walter continued, turning to his hostess, and speaking regretfully. "I am very sorry to have you so annoyed, and there is surely some mistake. It cannot be that I am the person for whom the officer is searching, since I have done nothing to be arrested for. I will go

at once and have the mystery explained."

"No," said madam, making a little authoritative gesture; "stay where you are, if you please."

Then, turning to the girl, she added:

"Sarah, go down and ask the officer if he will do me the favor to come up stairs."

Walter protested against this, for he could not endure the thought of her being annoyed on his account; but she insisted.

"Of course it is all a mistake," she said; "but it may be a mistake that may cause you some trouble, and I should not rest until it was explained. Go, Sarah."

The girl retired, but soon returned, accompanied by an officer, who, the moment he saw Walter, approached him and arrested him "in the name of the law."

"What does this mean?" the young man inquired, looking greatly disturbed.

"It means that I have orders to take you into custody, and I am simply performing my duty," the man returned, reading his prisoner's face with a searching glance.

"What is the charge against him?" demanded Madame Howland, haughtily.

"I regret to say, madam, that it is—robbery," the officer returned, respectfully.

"Robbery!" exclaimed both of his listeners, in one breath, while a vivid crimson shot over Walter's face, then quickly receding, left him pale as death.

"Yes, that is the charge," the man answered.

"Whom have I robbed?—what am I accused of having taken?" cried the young man, proudly.

"Money and jewels."

"Money and jewels! I have no money but what I have honorably earned, and as for jewels I have no use for them," Walter replied, with a scornful curl of his lips.

"That may be, my young friend, still I must do my duty, and you must prove your innocence before a judge and jury," the officer answered, but not unkindly.

"Pray, Mr. Officer, explain what this proceeding means?" madam now interposed, looking flushed and anxious.

"This young gentleman has been very kind to me, and I am interested in him; he has been coming to my house nearly every day for a week, and he certainly does not appear like one who has committed so grave a crime."

"That is true, madam," the officer returned, studying Walter's frank, manly face, and beginning to feel more favorably disposed toward him.

"But quite a sum of money and some valuable diamonds were missed a week ago to-day by a lady, Mrs. Robert Gordon, who is at present living in the house of Mr. Edmund Carpenter, of Philadelphia. A thorough search was at once instituted for the missing valuables—the servants and housekeeper were questioned and examined, but no clue could be discovered, and at first no one could account for the robbery, since the house did not have the appearance of having been forcibly entered, and nothing else was taken, though there was much in the house that was valuable which a practiced cracksmen would surely have made away with. Several days passed, and then it was remembered that this young man had passed the night in the house, having been detained there by a severe storm, and having left the place very early in the morning before anyone was astir, suspicion naturally fell upon him. If, however, the man added, in conclusion, 'he can prove his innocence, he will be released immediately.'

"This is very disagreeable," said Madame Howland, turning to Walter, and regarding him with a troubled look.

He was still very pale, and his face wore an anxious expression, for it had suddenly flashed upon him, as he remembered Mrs. Gordon's treatment of him, and all that Ruby had told him regarding her wishes, that she should marry Edmund Carpenter, that this might be a plot to entangle him and to ruin him in the eyes of the world, and thus blast every hope of ever winning Ruby for his wife.

"Mrs. Howland," he said, lifting his troubled eyes, and meeting her gaze frankly, "what the officer has told you is true—I did pass the night in Mr. Carpenter's house a week ago last night. I went there to call upon Miss Ruby Gordon, the lady to whom I am betrothed, and who is the sister-in-law of Mrs. Gordon, who, it is asserted, has been robbed. A severe thunderstorm came up while I was there, and I was prevailed upon to remain all night. I left very early, as Mr. Carpenter's residence is quite a distance from the city, and I wished to catch the early train for Chester in order to be on hand here when my men began their work. I did not leave my room after entering it until I left the house, and you can testify that I came directly hither, as that was the morning on which your accident occurred. More than all this," Walter added, with a disdainful look, "it is not likely that I would be guilty of robbing the sister of the lady whom I hope to marry."

"Of course not," replied madam; "and, Mr. Officer, what he says is all true; the train in which I was coming from St. Louis reached the station just about the time of his arrival here. I met with a severe accident just after alighting from the car, and he came at once to my assistance. He had not the slightest appearance of having done anything wrong then, nor since, for he has been coming here nearly every day, and I believe I could vouch for his integrity under any circumstances."

"No doubt, madam, no doubt," returned the official, blandly, "and it will probably all come out right; but my orders are imperative. I have a warrant for the young man's arrest, and I must do my duty."

"But he can be released on bail; I will be responsible to any amount," cried Madame Howland, looking both excited and distressed.

"That is very kind of you, madam, and doubtless the young gentleman appreciates your kindness; but he will

be obliged to go before the court for explanation first."

"Where will he be examined?"

"In Philadelphia, of course."

"Do not be troubled on my account, Mrs. Howland," Walter here interposed; "I have no doubt that Mr. Conant, my employer, will do all that is necessary. I thank you very much for your kindness, but please do not allow this to excite you."

"You will let me know the result of your examination at once," pleaded the invalid, with a tremulous voice, "and if you need help of any kind do not fail to inform me. Oh, if my hands were not tied I would go with you now."

"Pray do not mind it so much," Walter begged, deeply moved by her evident interest in his case.

"I cannot forget that I owe you a great deal," she said.

"You owe me nothing, but you are very kind," he answered, smiling, and trying to assume a cheerful air. Then turning to the man, he added: "Officer, I am ready now to go with you; I hope you will not consider it necessary to make me conspicuous as a prisoner."

"No, sir, if you'll give me your word that you'll make me no trouble, I am free to confess I should hate to put the bracelets on you."

Walter colored crimson, but lifted his head proudly.

"I give you my word: I will go quietly with you," he said, briefly; then with a courteous bow to his hostess he turned and followed the officer from the house.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"I Will Not Believe One Word Against Him."

In order to understand more fully the events of the preceding chapter, we must go back to the morning that Walter left Edmund Carpenter's house after having once more passed a night in his old room.

He had slept very soundly; not even the fierce conflict of the elements had served to disturb him, and no thought of treachery or foul play had entered his mind as, in the dim light of the early dawn, he hurriedly dressed himself and then crept quietly down stairs, letting himself out by a back entrance so that he need disturb no one in the house.

He had noticed one thing, however, while dressing. It was a trivial circumstance in itself, but it returned to his mind afterward when his trouble came upon him.

It was his custom, and had been taught him by his mother in his early boyhood, to arrange his clothing in an orderly way over a chair before going to bed, so that everything would be convenient when he arose.

But on this morning he had found his coat lying on the floor, instead of hanging upon the back of the chair, where he was sure he had placed it.

Still, he attributed it to his own haste or carelessness, if he gave the matter any thought at all, and went on his way, all unsuspecting of the vile scheme that was soon to bring him into the direst strait that he had ever known.

At eight o'clock on Monday morning, and just before breakfast was served to Mrs. Coxon's boarders, Mrs. Gordon came hurriedly down stairs, looking startled and anxious. She encountered Ruby upon the veranda, and asked, excitedly:

"Ruby, have you been to either my jewel-box or my purse?"

"Of course not, Estelle," the young girl returned, looking astonished and a trifle indignant at the question.

"But someone has been there, for my solitaire diamond earrings are gone from the box, and a hundred-dollar bill from my purse."

"Why, Estelle, you must be mistaken; you have probably mislaid them and forgotten about them."

"Indeed I have not; there is no mistake about it," retorted Mrs. Gordon, flushing with excitement. "I received the bill only Saturday, when I folded it and placed it in a side-pocket of my purse. The purse I put in my upper bureau drawer under some handkerchiefs, but this morning it lay open and on top of the bureau, and the money gone from it. My diamonds were in their case in my jewel-box; the box was also open and the stones missing, though the case was left."

"How strange! And was nothing else missing?"

"No, and that is the queerest part of it. I have other diamonds and nice jewelry, as you know, but nothing was touched save what I mentioned."

"Did you lock your door last night?"

"No, I never lock it. I have never had a thought of danger since we came here," replied Mrs. Gordon, with a clouded brow, for her diamonds were very valuable, and almost the last gift she had received from her husband.

"It would be well for you to go and look after your own things," she added, "you may have been robbed also."

No one could get into my room, for my door was locked, and everything was all right when I came down stairs," Ruby asserted, confidently.

Mrs. Coxon was immediately informed of the mysterious loss, and the general inquiries were made. The servants were closely questioned, and the coachman examined, but they all appeared so innocent, and were so frightened at the mere thought of a burglar, that Mrs. Gordon was finally convinced that no one belonging upon the premises had been guilty of the theft.

It was a very strange affair, every one thought, and could have been perpetrated by no professional robber, for such a one would have taken everything of value that could be readily removed, and made thorough work after once gaining an entrance to the house.

Mr. Carpenter was written to, and asked to come out and try to suggest some explanation and some way to recover the missing property. But he was out of town, and did not make his appearance until two days later, when he seemed as much astonished and perplexed as anyone by the singular circumstances.

The matter was then given into the hands of a detective, though with but

little hope on the part of Mrs. Gordon of recovering the lost articles.

On Thursday morning, however, as she was passing through the upper hall, she espied Mrs. Coxon, in Walter's own room, setting it to rights and changing the sheets, she having been unusually busy during the early portion of the week, and unable to attend to the work before.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Gordon, stopping and peeping in, "did any one sleep here last night?"

"No, ma'am; but Mr. Walter was caught in the rain last Sunday night, and I wouldn't let him go back to the city when there were plenty of beds in the house," the housekeeper explained, not dreaming what mischief she was doing.

"Walter Richardson? Did he sleep here last Sunday night?" demanded Mrs. Gordon, with a start.

"Yes, ma'am. Didn't you know it?" questioned Mrs. Coxon, but her face had grown suddenly scarlet, for she knew in an instant what thought had suddenly taken possession of her boarder's mind.

"No; I did not—know—it," replied Mrs. Gordon, with deliberate thoughtfulness, and then the two women stood and looked into each other's faces for a full minute—the housekeeper's expressive of anxiety and something of defiance; her companions indicating astonishment and conviction.

"At what time did he go away in the morning?" Mrs. Gordon demanded, at length breaking the oppressive silence.

"Very early, ma'am; he had to catch the six o'clock train to go to his work," Mrs. Coxon replied, assuming an indifferent air, though her heart was quaking within her for her favorite.

"Did you see him before he went?"

"No, ma'am; he went away quietly, and did not disturb any one. Mr. Walter was always very considerate," and the housekeeper, having folded her last sheet, gathered up the other things she was to take away, and marched with dignity from the room, thus putting an end to the trying conversation.

(To be Continued.)

STOMACH TROUBLE.

A Frequent Source of the Most Intense Misery.

Mr. Harvey Price, of Bismark, Suffered for Years Before Finding a Cure—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Restored Him.

Those who suffer from stomach troubles are truly to be pitied. Life seems a burden to them; food is distasteful, and even that of the plainest kind is frequently followed by nausea, distressing pains and sometimes vomiting. Such a sufferer was Mr. Harvey Price, a well-known farmer and stock grower living at Bismark, Ont. To a reporter who recently interviewed him, Mr. Price said: "I have found Dr. Williams' Pink Pills of such incalculable value in relieving me of a long siege of suffering that I am not only willing but anxious to say a good word in behalf of this medicine, and thus point the road to health to some other sufferer. For five years I had been afflicted with stomach trouble and a torpid liver. I doctored and also denied myself many kinds of food pleasant to the taste, but neither the medical treatment nor the diet seemed to help me to any degree. In January, 1899, the climax of my trouble appeared to be reached. At that time I was taken down with a gripe, and that, added to my other troubles, placed me in such a precarious position, that none of my neighbors looked for my recovery. My appetite was almost completely gone, and I experienced great weakness, dizziness, vomiting spells and violent headaches. I was also troubled with a cough which seemed to rack my whole system. I shall never forget the agony experienced during that long and tedious sickness. Medical treatment and medicines of various kinds had no apparent effect in relieving me. After existing in this state for some months, my mother induced me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. In May last I purchased three boxes, and before these were gone undoubted relief was experienced. Thus encouraged, I continued the use of the pills, and with the use of less than a dozen boxes, I was again enjoying the best of health. I can now attend to my farm work with the greatest ease. My appetite is better than it has been for years, and the stomach trouble that had so long made my life miserable has vanished. I have gained in weight, and can safely say that I am enjoying better health than I have done for years before. I feel quite sure that those who may be sick or ailing, will find a cure in a fair trial of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills make pure, rich blood, thus reaching the root of disease, and driving it out of the system, curing when other medicines fail. Most of the ills afflicting mankind are due to an impoverished condition of the blood, or weak or shattered nerves, and for all these Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a specific which speedily restores the sufferer to health. These pills are never sold in any form except in the company's boxes, the wrapper round which bears the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." All others are counterfeits and should always be refused. Get the genuine, and be made well.

No man is free who cannot command himself.—Pythagoras.