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saw traces of tears in Mary's eyes.

"My mother has sent me money, and her best love and wishes me to return. I love her dearly, but such a course is impossible, neither must I tell her where I am or mention Mr —"

"It will be as well," said Ronald hastily, "for you to call him Jackson, even to me."

"I must not mention his name to her. And my father is probably still unreconciled to me. You must forward a letter for me. Now give me further particulars about my home," and she asked innumerable questions.

"I have seen your portrait in Court dress," said Ronald at length, "and I have heard much about you. I will serve you still to the utmost of my power, but I see that even if Jackson had not been in existence you were always out of my reach: it was presumption my asking you to marry me, but I did not know."

Her eyes softened; she looked at him very kindly.

"If it had not been for him I would have married you, and felt honoured in doing so."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Flight.

RONALD was hard at work late one afternoon; Mary had gone. After a few minutes he saw her return. But when she entered he was struck by the look on her face which was blanched, her eyes were wild with terror.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Will you help me, Mr. Westlake?"

"Of course I will. What can I do?"

"How am I to tell you? I have no time to go into particulars, and every moment is of consequence. It is about Henry Jackson. I have deceived you about him. He is an escaped convict. Help me, I pray you, by helping him."

"What is the immediate danger?"

"As I passed out I saw a man watching the gates where the workmen will go through shortly. The man is one of the warders from Princetown; I saw him and spoke to him when I was there. I know that he is looking for Henry Jackson. Mr. Westlake, you have told me you would befriend me. Do so now, I implore you, by getting him away."

She clasped her hands beseechingly. "It is my belief that a person who helps a convict to escape is himself or herself liable to imprisonment. Pray consider what you are doing," he said.

"I consider him only. Will you help me or will you not?"

"I will help you on the understanding that you do nothing; let the onus fall on me."

"But you may be imprisoned, according to your belief."

"I will risk it for your sake. Stay here."

He entered the mill and spoke a word in a low tone to Jackson, who followed him into Mary's office without going through the usual door. Then he went to the stables and bade one of the grooms bring round his dogcart and fastest horse in five minutes' time.

"I am pressed for time," he said, "I must have it quickly."

The man set to work with alacrity. Ronald ran into the house to his father, saying, "I am suddenly called away, perhaps for a few days, on business. I have no time to go into particulars. Perhaps you will look in at the office to-morrow."

He went away before his father could reply, and fetched a thick, heavy ulster and a cap which he gave to Jackson, bidding him tie the ears down. Before ten minutes had elapsed, he and Jackson were on the road to Plymouth, driving as fast as the horse could go.

"Good-bye," he had said to Mary, "and keep up your heart. We will write," and then he was gone.

He chose the road at the back of the mill, thus avoiding the warder. The horse was good, the eleven miles would be traversed quickly.

"Well," said Jackson, or Cornwallis as he may now be called, "I suppose you know all about me now."

"I know that you are an escaped convict. Miss—Miss Williams had just told me. I suppose you clearly

understand that I am helping you for her sake."

"I am very well aware that you wouldn't do much for my sake. I suppose I ought to be very much obliged to you. So I shall be if you get me off. For Heaven's sake don't let me go back to that death in life."

"I will do my utmost. I was taken by surprise, but I have formed a plan. I must get you away in a private yacht."

"I will leave everything to you," and after this his spirits rose. As he had before thrown the whole burden on Mary, so he now threw it on Ronald. He looked round anxiously as they left Willowbridge, but seeing no one in pursuit, he seemed to think immediate danger was over.

They soon reached Plymouth. It had been dusk when they started, and it was now quite dark. They first stopped at a hairdresser's, next at a yacht-tailor's, at neither of which places did Ronald alight, but he had given money to his companion. They put up at the Royal Hotel, and engaged two bedrooms and a sitting-room. Cornwallis kept his hand over the lower part of his face as he went up stairs; the cap concealed the upper part.

Ronald ordered dinner and thought his companion was a long time in making his appearance. At last the door opened and a man of fifty with iron grey, well trimmed hair, and side whiskers entered the room. His face was somewhat lined but his teeth were perfect, as Ronald saw plainly, beneath his moustache. He wore spectacles.

"You have mistaken the room," said the young man.

The new-comer laughed. "The get up is good then? What a comfort it is to be a gentleman once more!"

He wore a yachting suit, and Ronald saw that his figure was magnificent, yet he still could not count him a handsome man, or even a good looking one. There was a scar on his forehead, and his nose was flatter than it should have been.

"But how did you manage it?" asked Ronald, who was relieved to find some of his companion's outward ruffianism had disappeared.

"I was always great at theatricals. I know how to make up. Beerbohm Tree was a friend of mine, and I suppose he makes up as well as any man living. I studied making-up as an art—which it is. The merest stroke of a pencil will entirely alter the expression of a face, and no true artist ever overdoes the thing. At Willowbridge you know I had defective teeth."

"Yes."

"I simply painted a few black with special enamel and they apparently disappeared. I altered my expression because I felt the part I was playing; I was a workman for the time. As to my eyes I touched them up by painting a few crows' feet and dyed my eyelashes. I can make up in any way I please, and why I have been recognized passes me altogether. I have quite resolved to be an actor if I can get away from here."

"I should say it was the best thing you could do. I am afraid Miss Williams had a great shock at seeing that warder."

"Yes. How the deuce could he have tracked me after all the precautions we took?"

ONLY Louise Ormonde could have explained this, for after watching an interview between Cornwallis and Mary she had communicated with the police, saying that both were probably suspicious characters. The escaped convict was still being looked for, and the result was that a warder was dispatched from Princetown to watch the factory. It is probable that he would not have recognized Cornwallis in his disguise, but there was the risk.

As soon as dinner was over they went out. At Ronald's suggestion the suit of workman's clothes was taken to the sea and the garments were thrown in one by one. The night was very dark and no one could see what they were about; by the morning the tide would have carried the clothes far away.

They next visited an outfitter's and bought immediate requisites.

The two men held an earnest con-