## Copyright CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

BY ANNA C. MINOGUE CHAPTER XVIII.

The boy obeyed, and taking the note from the envelope, Judge Todd read the following words:

Captain Brown - Through th treachery of a member of Judge Todd's household, aided by two slaves, the Confederate force you were to have met at the junction of the Frankfort and White Sulphur roads was warned of your approach and took another route to Green River. It is useless for you to attempt to overtake them. I should advise that you fall back to Ashland, where you will find your regiment.

Yours, etc., " HOWARD DALLAS."

The face of Judge Todd grew livid as he read, and when he saw the name, he sprang to his feet, and bringing down his clenched hand on le cried : You will pay for this foul lie

with your life, Howard Dallas !" The Judge was, however, spared miliation of receiving from the lips of the writer a confirmation of the intelligence the letter contained; for as the door opening on to the southern veranda closed behind Job, the one separating the library from hall admitted Virginia. As she entered her eyes fell upon Mandy, and the grin that suddenly over spread the black face had in it so much of triumphant malice that Virginia gave the negress a second look before sending her away. When they were alone she went to the Judge, who, unaware of her presence, was standing on the hearthstone, his head bent forward, his eyes on the flames. Her hand on his arm recalled him from his bitter thoughts. He drew up a chair and began to talk about Mrs. Dallas's unexpected death and ber funeral, which would be held on the morrow. But Virginia's nervousness was plainly visible, for she found that the confession she set herself to make was harder

than she had thought.
"What is the matter, Virginia? at length asked the Judge, solicit-Is anything troubling you? A quiver ran over Virginia's fair t the question : but she rose

and asked : Job told you that the Union soldiers failed to intercept the Con

federate company, didn't he?"
"Yes," said the Judge sternly, his brows meeting in a frown us he re-called Howard Dallas's letter. "Judge," she said, her words coming in catches, "I-I-sent them

"Great God! You, Virginia?"

He sprang to his feet and moved back from her in horror. She flew to him and, clasping her white hands over his arm, cried : Don't look at me like that, Judge!

Please don't! I can't stand it!" But he drew himself from her clinging grasp, still gazing at her in horrified silence; then he staggered to the chair by the table, and falling into it buried his face in his hands.

They were true then, those words that Howard Dallas had written! that he had been betrayed by one of his own household! The long minutes passed while his mind dwell bitterly on that knowledge; then, as it went forward to the conditions made possible by this act of Virginia's, he shuddered. He lifted his head, and as he looked on her he found himself thinking of her father and the promise he had made that parent to always shield and love this girl as if she were his own daughter. pale, proud face as she stood there nade its swift appeal to him. He had been needlessly harsh. She had done this unthinkingly. It was not because the company was Confederate that she had warned them, but because they were human beings; it not because she sympathized with the South that she had worked for the disappointment of the Federal troops, but because her woman's could not allow men to be killed; and in the room where he had shown his own son no mercy he was ready to forgive the child of his dead

Virginia." he began, "you have done a grave wrong, yet I believe that you did it unconsciously. Satisfy me on this point, however, by promising that you will never again guilty of such a traitorous act against

your country."

She turned her soft eyes toward him pleadingly, but made no

How am I to interpret this silence, Virginia?" asked the Judge, in

I can not promise what you ask!'

she cried. "For I would have to do again to night what I did last night e occasion demanded it !" She looked so like her father as she spoke; in her words was his well remembered spirit; and Judge

Todd made still another excuse for her. The courage it required to brave the terrors of night on a lonely road, her honor in coming to him to confess what she had done, the truthfulness of her last reply-all these touched the heart of the old Judge. No man can find fault with a because her tenderness and greatness of soul have led her into the performance of a noble deed, even though he suffer from its consequence. Moreover, an occasion calling for a repetition of her act would scarcely present itself again;

that this has worked me harm. Job not only brought home news of the escape of the Confederates, but this letter, which contains a charge that stings the soul of an honorable man." He gave her Howard Dallas's hurriedly written note. As she read it the blood ran into her face, but as quickly receded. An angry light was leaping from the blue gray eyes as she turned them upon the Judge, and smanded :
"And who in this house dare spy

on my actions and report them to that—that man?"

The thought of how Howard Dallas had received his information had not, until then, occurred to the Judge. He felt a warmth creep over his face at her question. It was not a pleasant suggestion that a guest of

is was being spied upon.
"I do not know," he said, sorrow We have indeed fallen on unhappy times when the master of this house has that question put to him.

Virginia turned her eyes toward the fire and, as she looked on the flames leaping around the seasoned wood, many thoughts came to She remembered the light that she had seen in her room and the words of her waiting woman which broadly hinted that Howard Dallas, in assisting the Federal troops to capture the Confederates, was not so much confederates, was not so much actuated by a desire to help the cause of the Union as to work the ruin of Clay Powell. Over these thoughts came the Judge's voice, say.

ing : "I ask for no promise, Virginia. believe your action was not one disloyal to the cause which you know I have pledged myself to support, but of a woman whose tender heart shrank from seeing unsuspect ing men, even though enemies, fall into a snare.

The words half asked the question but before Virginia could collect he thoughts to frame a suitable answer, he continued, doubt awakened by her silence: "I am correct, am I not, in believing that if the case were reversed, and it were the Federals who were in danger, you would have also hurried to warn them?"

Unconsciously Virginia drew up her tall figure and said, although she remembered the words that Hal had

heard in that room:
"No. You are not correct in believing that I was actuated solely by aumane motives. If the case had been the reverse, for me to have done what I did would have been to play the part of a traitor."

play the part of a traitor."
As he listened, the stern, set lines showed on the Judge's face.
"Do you mean to say," he asked, in the first hard, cold tones he had ever addressed to her, "that you warned those 'Rebels' because you are a friend of their cause?"

'Yes." she answered. The Judge felt his heart grow hard against her. He saw not then the child of his dead friend, but the enemy of his country : as he had not spared his own son when he found im to be such an enemy, neither

could he spare her. "A little while ago," he began, " felt keen sorrow because you had been subjected to surveillance in this house. I may, however, spare myself further regret, since you have not hesitated to use knowledge gained under this roof against those whom I had pledged myself to aid. There is one enemy I can not forgive -the enemy of my country. You have proven yourself to be that enemy—and though I wish that God had called me before the day had come when I must say such words to you—Virginia Castleton, my house is

no longer your home." burst asunder and carried down the roof on them, Virginia's surprise could not have been more awful than it was as the Judge's last words fell upon her ears. Banished from Car-dome! She threw a hand to her brow, while an exclamation, sharp,

anguished, rang over the rcom. "Judge," she cried, "you do not mean it! You would not send me from Cardome ?'

then, although his strong frame was heaving with suppressed emotion, he said :

"I have sworn allegiance to my country. I can not harbor one of her enemies, not even when that enemy was first my son, and now you, my more than daughter!" As she listened she thought again

of Hal, and the tears blinded her eyes; but for a moment only, for as she had condemned that act of the father, so she condemned this one of the friend. She drew her hand quickly across her eyes. A man of her name would have scorned to lift his voice for the removal of such a sentence, nor would she call to her the woman's aid of tears. She went forward a few paces and, standing opposite to him, said :

You are as unjust to me as you were to Hal. You were ready to forgive me that I spoiled the work of the Federals, so long as you believed that I was actuated by humane motives. When you learned that in doing what I did I followed my convictions, you thrust me from the only home I have ever known. I am not crying for pity, or forgiveness. I have done nothing to call for the latter; the former I do not want! Yet I shall not leave without telling you that loyalty to God or country never demands that the claims of justice to our fellow-beings shall be disregarded. We can be true to our own convictions and still recognize those of others, and believe that they are as sacred to them as our and so he said:

"Still I think, Virginia, you will be guarded after this when I tell you for against your injustice to us my

heart is bitter, bitter, bitter !"

She crossed the room, and through scalding tears found the door, opened it, and was gone. In her blind agony, she did not see Mandy crouching in a dim corner of the hall, who clinched her fist after the retreating

figure, muttering savagely:
"Ah he, Missy! Mandy's gittin,
even wif yoh, but she yain's fro

Mrs. Told was at the Dallas home and for her absence Virginia felt glad. On reaching her room she went to her desk and wrote a brief letter of explanation to the gentle woman who had been to her second mother. Even in the anguish of that hour she did not regret her promise to Job, but asked that she be permitted to purchase the boy. Then she rang for Chlos. When the woman appeared, Virginia said to

her : You are right, Chloe, the Judge will not forgive me! I must leave Cardome. Don't cry, and don't talk yet; but get my things ready and

then order the carriage."

Chloe turned quickly that her mistress might not see her disobedience in the sudden tears that rushed into her eyes and overflowed Silently and quickly she packed the trunks while Virginia sat watching her, or occasionally lifting her glances to her father's portrait. When she had finished her work, Chlos went to her closet room adjoining and brought out the little black trunk that held her own clothes and treasured keep-sakes; then she knelt by Virginia's chair, and taking one of the slim hands pressed it to her lips, while a hot tear fell on the white finge Virginia's head drooped until Apgers rested on the faithful bosom, her haven since childhood. In this hour of terrible suffering, she had only a slave to whom she could turn for sympathy and consolation.

S-sh-honey child, s - sh !" said old Chloe, while her own frame was shaken by sobs. "Doan yoh cry eny moh, mah darlin'! De good God'll take ca'h uv yoh! An' ma'k mah words! He'll sen' de Jedge a day dat'll punish him foh de mise'ry he's brung yoh. Dah's a day comin' Jedge Todd'll cry foh yoh, wif his face in de dus ?

They wept together, mistress and slave, for a few minutes. Then Chlos went to give the order for the carriage; and the Judge hearing her, as he sat alone in his library, shivered as it a fierce blast had struck him. There were no leavetakings, no words of farewell. But Virginia kissed the portrait of her father and knelt for a last prayer in the room in which he died, and which, because of that sacredness, had ever afterward been her own Womanlike, she went out to the outhern verandah for a last look on the place where some of her happiest hours had been spent; and for the memory of the scenes it had witessed-from that hour when, as a motherless child, her almost dying father had carried her to Cardoms to place her in the arms of his friend, antil the one the afternoon had brought-she dropped a tear as she passed the library. Then she went out to the portico and entered the carriage. The coachman shook the reins over the backs of the horses, and in another minute she was gone from Cardome, while the maste paralyzed by the calamity that had come upon him, sat with white face and unseeing eyes by the long library table.

## CHAPTER XX. It was a morning in early summer

ut from Knoxville for his first raid into Kentucky. bold dash through Tennessee had been eminently successful. Single-handed he had met and destroyed large forces of the Federals : he had crippled the government's service and the Lion-hearted King of Eng-land riding at the head of his army never struck greater terror into the hearts of his enemy than did Colonel lorgan and his Kentuckians. In Knoxville he was among friends, and all the town turned out to see his company start. Handsome, courtly, he rode at the head of his column. By his side, and bearing so close a resemblance to him that many thought him the leader's own brother, was Clay Powell, mounted on his matchless black horse. The place of Morgan's well known mare "Black Bess," that had been lost in one of their engagements, was supplied by a magnificent bay horse and as the Captain of Company watched steed and rider he seemed to see instead a slender figure clad in dark green riding habit, see again fair face and blue gray eyes turned oward him from under a drooping

plume-trimmed hat. Vindictive's evolution from alady's favorite mount to a cavalry leader's horse was not without interest. The day following Virginia's departure from Cardome, Job rode dictive through Georgetown and stopped at the door of a stately house, where Virginia had sought a home with an aged relative of her mother. A few hours later, riding the same horse, he had started to follow Morgan's Cavalry, then push-ing rapidly to the South. The coun-try was full of danger, especially for a negro with such a horse, and many were the adventures the boy met with on his long journey. He escaped, however, and with his horse and a large sum of money reached La Vergne one evening as the sun was going down behind the hills of Tengoing down benind the fills of Tennessee. The sight of the white tents with the "bonny blue flag" of the Confederacy floating over them, gladdened his heart; but suddenly, "Halt!" fell sharp and terrifying on position and come out on a Union

his ears, while the unobserved sen-tinel's gun flashed dangerously near. Recalling his one night's military ex-perience with the Union soldiers, Job gave a salute, making the sentry mile behind his gun. Then he said

smile behind his being felendly topes:
"Howdy, Marse! I'se Job."
"Maybe you are," answered the soldier, "but you don't pass here soldier, "but you don't pass here me a comforter not to be mentioned with the fellows your Bible name word, or get back and tell the Yankees at the Insane Asylum—they put the Ohio boys in the right place, for sure!—I'm up to their devilment. By the boot! if you don't look like an imp. perched on the back of that horse, with your eyes popping out of your head and a grin on you like a

possum. Job might, under the circumstances have passed unnoticed the unflattering allusions to his personal appearance, but to be accused of being a Yankee was testing his en-durance to the breaking point. "I'se no Yankee, sah!" he cried. "I'se Job Todd, an' Miss Ginia, she

sen' me to take ca'h uv Marse Hal; an' ef yoh doan put up yoh gun an' lemme go to Marse Hal, I'll tel Gen'l Mo'gan on yoh." How will you tell him if I shoot

you?" asked the soldier, with a laugh that made his listener's blood run cold.

"O Marse, doan shoot me!" he cried. "Jus' lemme go to Marse Hal an' tell 'im 'bout Mis' Love an' de res' uv us at Cahdome."

See here, you lying rascal, out of this place !" and the soldier seemed to be on the point of enforc-ing his command, when the boy, looking toward the camp, sighted a

figure riding toward them. "Dah's Marse McDowell!" he cried, with a yell of delight; and he was about to rush forward, when the

'If you move an inch, I'll shoot Job paused, but as the rider drewn near, he shouted: "Howdy, Marse Phil! Howay!'

"Why, Job!" exclaimed Phil.
'How is it that you are here?" "Miss Ginia, she got me frum de Jedge an' sen' me hyah to Marse Hal," he explained. "But die gen'i'm'n wont let me in."

'Passhim," said Phil to the sentry who saluted and lowered his wespon and Job, with a broad grin of delight, rode with his deliverer into camp.

The next day Job found himself, ecause of his horse, the envy of many an officer; but all offers to buy Vindictive met with the same loval answer :

'Taint my hoss, Marse, but Miss Ginia's. An' attah de wah am ovah. an' Marse Hal doan need me no moh, mus' tak' Vindictive back to huh. But after the mad ride from Lebanon to the Cumberland River, where Morgan lost "Black Bess," Job led Vindictive to the great leade

and removing his cap, said : 'Co'nel Mo'gan, I 'spec'fully offah yoh die hoss ontel yoh 'kivah 'Black Bess' from de Yanks."

Morgan looked from the speaker to the superb animal he led. Thank you," said Morgan ; " but is this horse yours to offer?"

"No, sah, he yain't mine. He' Miss 'Ginia's. De Jedge-Jedge Todd farse Hal's fathah—he give 'im to Miss 'Ginia, an' w'en I wuz comin' to jine Marse Hal, she loaned me huh noss, 'cause she didn't have no time to find anuther foh me."

"Is this not an instance of the irony of fate?" asked Colonel Morgan of Clay Powell. "Judge Todd furnishing me, his fellow soldier once Then he laid a hand on Vindictive's glossy neck, and patting it affection ately, said to the delighted Job ately, said to the delighted Job "Thank you, boy, for your generosity I promise you that Miss Virginia's horse shall never fall into the hands

of the enemy as my poor Bess has.' After leaving Knoxville, Morgan led his men straight to the Blue Grass country; and the news of his coming spread like wildfire. A panic unheard of in all its history seized the good old town of Lexington, nor could it be allayed by the presence of Brigadier-General Ward and his regiment. Morgan was bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, and they knew it would be Greek meeting Greek when Kentuckians came together in a conflict of arms.

While Morgan was advancing to Lexington, Captain McDowell and a party had been detailed to march toward Frankfort, drive in the pickets and give out the impression that it was the intention of the Confederates to attack and capture the Capital. When this was accomplished, and the young Captain was riding back to join the command at Versailles, he suddenly recollected that it Wednesday, and that the Herald was realy to go to press. He was seized with a whimsical desire to see the old office again; so, trusting to the excitement and fear prevailing in the town to shield him, he, with two companions, returned to Frankfort. Leaving their horses in an obscure and deserted street, and taking an unfrequented way, they reached unobserved, the office of the Herald. There was no change, except that the desk which he used to keep so fastidiously was shorn of all embell-ishments, and instead was strewn with ancient proofs and copy and piled high with dusty papers. That week's issue of the Herald was ready, and it could be seen that the men, on the first alarm, had thrown down their

platform. A smile passed over Captain McDowell's face as he read a bitter denunciation of Morgan and his men. The rancorous hate of the writer flamed through every sentence —the hate the coward entertains for the brave. "Jack," he said to one of his men, who had served under him in the office and had followed him to the army, "I've a notion to try my hand at the old work again. It's good to keep in practice, you know,' and the blue eyes were twinkling with the spirit of fun; "for when the war is over, and our occupation, like Othello's, is gone, we shall have to fall back on the 'profesh' again."

"I'm with you, Captain," said the man, divesting himself of his coat. Phil took out his notebook, and running his eyes over its neatly written pages, clipped out with the old rusty scissors, a line or paragraph. These he pasted on a sheet of paper, and at the bottom wrote a tenderly sweet, pathetic love song, the song o soul's farewell.

"My friend willed me his notebook when he retired from the poet's corner of the Herald," he said, with a careless smile. "For the sake of auld lang syne' we'll run in a column of his fancies. It will give the Herald a familiar look. While you set it up I'll get ready my editorial or John Morgan and his men;" and laughing, he brushed the desk clear of its dust and rubbish and began to

When the afternoon waned, they carefully closed the shutters and lighted the lamps. By their feeble rays the soldiers worked at the old presses. Peace and stillness did not isit the town that night, which was fortunate for the newspaper enter-prise, since so unusual a thing as the Herald's presses running at such hours might have called for an investigation. Toward morning a fair supply was ready for delivery. The ostmaster on coming to his office door, was surprised to find the newspaper mail-bag on his Mentally commending the brave spirit of the editor whom the fear of Morgan had not driven from his post, he arranged the papers, and the train had carried them miles away before he unfolded his own copy. The twocolumn editorial on Morgan, who was eloquently styled the 'Marion of Kentucky,' first caught his eye. As he read his surprise grew, but it was speedily succeeded by indignation, which the remainder of the editorial sheet fanned into white heat. early caller, the irate postmaster showed the traitorous utterances of the Harald. When the town sub-scribers received their papers Southern sympathizers were jubilant, while the Unionists were furious. Despatches from adjoining towns, seeking an explanation of the Herald' suddenly changed views, began to pour in, while the Northern press, the next day, hurled epithets not the most complimentary at the loyalty of Frankfort. When an independent paper accused the editor of being a secret member of Morgan's Cavalry the patience of the Frankfort loyal ists reached its limit, and they went in a body to the office of the Herald and threw its appointments and presses into the Kentucky River. A few days later the editor, who at the news of Morgan's intended approach had betaken himself to a place of safety, returned to town to find that not a vestige of his property remained. In vain he asserted his innocence; in vain he dragged forth his assistants to prove that instead of the noble vindication of Morgan's character and laudation of his cause, he had written the opposite; for the citizens had read the paper, and men will never doubt the evidence of their own

Thus the long life of the Herald came to a close; but as Phil McDowell laughed over the adventure with his companions, he secretly rejoiced that the paper he loved had given its last utterances to the cause of the

Confederacy. Learning the superiority of the Federal forces, Colonel Morgan abandoned the intention of attacking exington and began to move rapidly through Woodford County. When he halted, at the close of the day's march, the spires of Georgetown were faintly discernible in the woodbelted distance. Across the meadow from their camp stood an old brick house, and as Hal Todd, on whose shoulders the straps of a lieutenan showed bright against the gray of his uniform, caught a glimpse of it, his face were the smile of one who and unexpectedly enauddenly

counters a friend. 'Whose place is that?" asked Clay Powell, joining him.
"Menefee's," replied he. "On the other side, beyond the slope, is the

road that passes Cardome." As he was speaking, Colonel Morgan nd in the same instant advanced, at there came to them from the old, red brick house a woman's clear ringing voice, litted in angry protest. The from behind a clump of shrubbery in the yard darted a slender figure, one hand clutching the bridle of a gray horse, while girl and horse were followed by a man whose uniform made the hot blood rush into the faces of the three watchers. Colonel Morgan rarely indulged in the soldier's prerogative of swearing, but at the sight an oath broke from his lips, and wheeling around, he called one of his orderlies and despatched him for the

"Ah! it is you!" exclaimed Morgan as a little later the soldier came to where the three gentlemen stood. Then the commander grew black as he said: "This is your second der grew black offence! You remember my warning on that other occasion?"

Yes, Colonel," said the man, "But these people are our enemies. The

owner of that horse-"Is that young lady!" supplied his Colonel, in tones that out like a

But her father is a Union man, an officer in the army. Her brother is one of the worst enemies the Confederates have in these parts," said the soldier excusingly.

"That does not alter your offense in the slightest," said Morgan. "We are not making war upon women, nor will we unnecessarily harm the property of our enemy. That is the Yankee's method of warfare not ours! My words on that other occasion repeat : 'Morgan's men are gentlemen. nd will not associate with, as h will not command, horsethieves Now, go to my tent and wait for me there!

The soldier went, but not to the place his chief had directed.

TO BE CONTINUED

## IN HIS MASTER'S FOOTSTEPS

By Joseph Carmichael

"Oh, you dear, good boy! What lovely roses!"
"I thought you'd like to have

few for the table, as Dick is coming. Yes; I was just wishing for sor thing in the way of decoration when I heard your step, and I half hoped you'd be my good angel — as you always are! And Helen Cunningham kissed her

husband again.
"Rather a fraud for an angel,"
Ralph said, with a laugh which some

how rang joylessly, while his face gave a curious twitch. Helen was too busy fluttering about her supper table to heed the suspicious symptoms.

Well, you're a very good imitation at least," she laughingly said.
Ralph flushed deeply and hurried to the window, murmuring some thing about "Dick being late."

It had always been rather a joke with his intimates to connect the angelic traits" of blue eyes and curly flaxen beir with his Christian designation of Raphael, and to pretend to discover very few correspond ing spiritual gifts in his nature. had always seemed to enjoy the teas To night it was evidently galiing. ing to him.

A quick step sounded on the paysment, and the expected visitor

entered. Dick had no "augelic traits "in his outward appearance, though his honest, ugly face and sturdy straightforwardness impress one favorably, despite the "carroty" hair of which Ralph so often reminded him, and s really most unimpressive mose. 'I'm awfully glad to see you, Dick,"

was Helen's salutation. "You had not been in for a hundred years." You have 'A week last Sunday," said matter

of fact Dick.
"Well, that's ten days ago, at any rate, and you haven't had the civility to send a message to your godchild, even though you might easily have

ione it fifty times, for Agnes is always in and out."

Dick gave a delighted laugh. Nothing pleased him so much as to be allied about his godson, little Dick Cunningham, aged two months. Per haps, too, he liked to hear Helen's voice addressed to him, even when it pretended to scold. There had been a time when he had deluded bimself with rosy visions of life in a cottage with Helen as a companion; but those visions had faded long ago. And yet, so real and true his friendship for both Ralph and Helen, he could rejoice with all his heart (though it was only at the cost of many a sharp at the happiness of the two who were

dearest to him in the world. Dick Upton was an orphan with no tie of near relationship when he fell in with Ralph at school. Later in life they managed to get into the same business house, and this led to Dick taking up his abode with Mrs. Cunningham-a widow with slender means, who depended greatly upon the help afforded by a lodger in the family. Her only daughter, Agnes, had found a bosom friend in Heler Leslie, the child of an old schoolfellow of Mrs. Cunningham's, and the four young people were thus almost constantly associated.

It was poor Dick's untoward fate to discover the attachment between Ralph and Helen only just in time to prevent the revelation of his own presumptuous hopes (for so they appeared to him,) and thus his little romance died an untimely death. He was one of the few unselfish men in this world—there are some such to be found, who are ready to make any sacrifice by reason of the depth of their self-denying love for others. "You can't see baby until after supper, Dick," remarked Helen, as

they sat down to table. "He was rather restless this afternoon, on account of the heat, probably, and now e's sleeping peacefully."

"For how long?" asked Ralph, with the assumed boredom of the young father. Helen only threatened him with her napkin, and they all laughed

"I think it's absolutely cruel, Dick," said Helen, as the meal proceeded to keep you poor clerks so close to

work on these lovely evenings."
"I've never discovered that we're more hard pressed than other fellows," he said, good-humoredly.

"Then you must be a paragon of patience," she cried, "as, of course, you are! But I should draw a line at extra work about four evenings of out six, and with weather like this, too! Surely they can't oblige you to give up every minute of spare time!"

Dick was looking somewhat nonTell me all."

plussed, when Ralph forestalled his

reply.
"I rather fancy you'd make a pretty independent clerk, Nell! We poor chaps have to grin and bear a good deal, as you'd find if you were in our shoes. There's a very pertinent proverb about not quarreling with one's bread and butter, I be-

Come and smoke in my den," said Ralph when they had finished, "while Neil fetches the youngster. She'll take about forty minutes to dress him up for inspection

"It's lucky the poor child has me to look after him," retorted his wife. "Only fancy, Dick, what would be-come of the poor little dear if Ralph had the care of him! The darling was crying his eyes out (" and his lungs, too!" ejaculated Ralph ) when I came in yesterday, and his unnatural father was coolly smoking and reading a magazine, quite unmoved! The unnatural father smiled patronizingly as the devoted mother rushed upstairs to fetch the darling in ques-

Don't be too hard on me. old chap," Ralph groaned out as they seated themselves in the little back room devoted to smoking. "I'm in a deuce of a mess, and I don't know how to get out of it. But, whatever you do, say nothing to that poor little woman, for it would break her heart." His assumed gaiety had all gone now,

"I'm awfully sorry, old boy," said honest Dick, and he jumped up and stood leaning his elbow on the chimney-piece, his kindly eyes bent on the bowed head of his friend. what I can do to help you."

"I'm afraid you can do nothing," said the other after a pause. "The fact is this: I've been giving way to

Dick gave a prolonged whistle expressive of both surprise and annoy

And you've lost, I suppose ?" he

said Yes, I've lost," faltered Ralph after another awkward rause which seemed to indicate some further un named trouble.

'Poor chap!" said Dick pityingly, as he placed his hand on the curly head bowed in grief and shame. "I'm sorry you didn't keep your promise. But never mind: while there's life there's hope. How much are you in

Ralph did not answer for some

moments. "I haven't told you all," he said at last. "There's worse to come, and I haven't the heart." he faltered "to tell even you—you least of all!
And his voice sank to a whisper.

'Hush! Here's Helen," said Dick. Come out with me when I leave and tell me all.'

"My poor boy!" cried Helen, as she caught sight of Ralph's flushed face and noticed his closed eyes. you've got another of those nasty beadaches. Hold baby, Dick, there's a good fellow, while I get some eau-de-Cologne." And she bustled out

again. "Keep quiet, for God's sake!"
whispered Ralph. "I'll tell you the
whole story after."

This comes of those horrid late hours," cried Helen as she ran in again with her remedies. "You'll ill yourself, dear, if this goes on."

Dick endorsed the sentiment, though the picture which those late hours presented to his mind was far different from that conjured up by the anxious little wife.

"I think I'll start off, pretty early, if you don't mind, Helen," said Dick, at length. "Old Ralph can stroll down with me: it'll do his head good, and I want a walk. He'll be back before you've got baby to bed."

So matters were plausibly arranged The Cunninghams lived at the other end of the big manufacturing town, but the June night was cool and the suburban gardens breathed

out grateful scents as Ralph and Dick

strolled quietly along. There was silence for a space, and then the culprit began his confession. Of course, old chap, you guess my difficulty, partly, at een at those cursed cards again and lost heavily.

'To the tune of what?" asked Dick.

Again there was an awkward

"It's not that I'm in debt," Ralph faltered out at last. "It's far worse than that. . . . I hardly dare tell even you. . . . Dick. . . I've been falsifying my books to pay my losses. I'm a common thief! voice sank to a whisper as he finished

his revelation. To say that Dick was astonished wouldbeanutterly inadequate description of his feelings at that moment. Horror and shame and something like contempt welled up in his heart warring against the love which had bound him nearly all his life to this man-this self-confessed thief-the

husband of Helen. Helen's husband! That was the thought that drove back all that rush of bostile feeling and left some of the love at least untouched. It was a hard fight, but love conquered in the end, as it always will, if only we put no obstacle in its way.

"Ah, no wonder you despise me," cried Ralph, in his remorse. He saw the sudden flush, the deathly pallor. and then the color coming back again to Dick's face as the struggle was waging. Those two minutes seemed to both a protracted spell: one fight-ing a deadly battle, the other endur-ing bitter, bitter shame, the more so that the worst had yet to be spoken.

"No, old fellow," said Dick, in a strange husky voice. "I don't despise