

Diamond Cut Diamond OR, THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Florence Dane viewed the household at Hidden House with eyes of disfavor. She had been pleased enough about her brother's marriage at first, believing it to have saved him from a worse pitfall, and moreover she had been not unnaturally somewhat elated at the good fortune and prosperity which it brought with it to him, and at the rise in importance with which the whole family was vicariously invested by reason of it. But, after the return of the young couple from abroad, and when they had settled down in their new property, the pride and the pleasure of it faded away, and was quickly succeeded by many little rubs and annoyances, and by a gnawing envy and jealousy, such as a small mean nature invariably experiences towards those who are in happier circumstances than itself.

As to the rubs, they were perhaps unavoidable, for it does not do for relations to be brought into too close a proximity to each other, and sooner or later the two families living thus in the same parish would, even had Florence been of a different disposition, have been bound to fall out. Angel's sweet temper and beauty made her popular amongst the poor; she was of an easy, possibly an over-confiding nature, and beggars and ne'er-do-wells got round her quickly; no doubt she was injudicious in her open-handed charities. As she passed through the village the people came out to look at her lovely face, and showered blessings upon her, and Florence, whom they feared and respected, but never really loved, was jealous of it and hated her for it. This was at the bottom of it all, then other things supervened.

It was now three weeks since Geoffrey and his wife had been established at Hidden House, and Florence was keeping her eyes open. Now Florence was lynx-eyed in matters of propriety; and as the weeks went by it struck her that Captain Lessiter from Lilminster was too constantly a visitor at Hidden House, that he was for ever riding or driving past the vicarage gate on his way to lunch or tea at the house on the Downs, and that it was a very long time before he reappeared again on his homeward journey. She heard of him, too, as a constant attendant in the hunting field on her beautiful sister-in-law; she was told that he never left her side, piloted her across country, and was as her shadow, whilst Geoffrey took his own line and troubled himself little about her. All this mischievous gossip went up as incessantly under Miss Dane's nostrils. All her life long she had set her face against the evil things which these kind of proceedings seemed to her to portend.

She had a constitutional hatred against married women who flirt and who have a good-looking bachelor always dangling after them, and more than all she dreaded the idea of a discreditable scandal concerning her family being bruited abroad in the parish and the neighborhood, and so she made up her mind that she would speak and put an end to it. This time she made an application to her father; he was infuriated with Angel's pretty face, and would be sure to refuse to believe anything against her.

No, she would do as she had done once before—she would take the guardianship of her brother's honor into her own hands and look after his wife for him. So one day she started forth, much as she had done on a previous occasion to walk up to the house in the hollow of the hills with her mind set upon "doing good," as she called it to herself. The opportunity, she judged, was a rare one. Geoffrey had gone up to town for two days on business, and Captain Lessiter had driven his dog-cart past the vicarage exactly half an hour after her brother's train must have started; he had been there all the morning, he must have lunched there, he must be there still! It was time that this disgraceful state of things should be put a stop to!

Florence went up the hill quickly, with a very fever of indignant virtue boiling in her veins. As she neared the gates, she heard the slow sound of wheels, and, turning the corner of the road, there came into view quite a pretty little winter pastoral.

Horace Lessiter's dog-cart was walking slowly down the hill, a very handsome bay horse was between the shafts, and Horace, being a decidedly good-looking man, of the conventional army type, looked his best, as a well-made Englishman always does, in a rough tweed suit, with gaiters and knickerbockers. Angel, clad in a fur jacket and a red velvet hat, was walking by the side of the cart, looking up brightly and smilingly into her companion's face.

Overhead the branches of the bare winter trees interlaced in a fretwork pattern against a clear and almost frosty-looking sky, whilst great clumps of holly and yew bordering the hedgerows, relieved, by their dark-hued foliage, the grey uniformity of the winter landscape.

It made up altogether a charming picture, a picture that, reproduced upon a painter's canvas, would have pleased the eye at once, from a certain sweet, homely simplicity both of the figures and their surroundings—a picture that might fitly have been christened "Au Revoir," and have suggested the brief and tearless parting of happy lovers who are to meet again to-morrow.

But, however delightful a scene it might possibly present to an uninterested eye, this picture had, as may be supposed, anything but an agreeable effect upon the mental vision of the one spectator who was actually on the spot to witness it. Miss Dane became washed into a positive fury thereby.

and the words, "Shameful!—disgraceful!—disgraceful!" were shot forth in angry thunderbolts from her lips as she flew onward to do battle for her absent brother.

There must have been something bellicose in the very carriage of her head and the stride of her footsteps, for when Angel caught sight of her coming up the hill, she uttered a little exclamation, and her pretty smiles all faded away.

"Oh!" she cried, in an accent of unfeigned dismay.

And then Horace, too, uttered a smothered interjection, but what he said was less to the imagination.

He gathered up his reins, however, and wished his companion a hurried good-bye.

"I had better be off. I shall see you to-morrow," and then he drove away quickly down the hill, lifting his hat to Miss Dane as he passed her, a salutation that was only returned by an indignant glare from two very angry eyes.

When he reached the bottom of the lane, he had the curiosity to look back, and the sight that met his eyes upset and distressed him considerably. The two women were standing still in the middle of the road, Florence Dane was talking—angrily, no doubt, to judge by the little jerks of her head and the agitated action of her hands—and Angel, with her face hidden in her pocket-handkerchief, was crying bitterly.

"By Jove! I can't stand that!" muttered Captain Lessiter to himself. "I won't have her bullied." And then he put up his horse and cart at the principal "public" and sauntered back again towards the hills by a different and a circuitous road.

Angel had reached her home, after parting with her sister-in-law in a condition of considerable distress. Elsewhere I have said she was of a reserved and unimpressible nature. Things came slowly to her—revealed themselves with difficulty to her comprehension. She was not a flirt—in that Florence had utterly misunderstood her. Even to be accused of such a thing bewildered her even more than it distressed her. She could not understand what she had done, or of what crime it was that she had been accused. There had been, no doubt, a certain tenderness in her friendship with Horace Lessiter, born, perhaps, of the unrequited girl-love she had once felt for him, but nurtured still further by the absolute conviction that it was now her friend. More than that it was not in Angel to feel. She was proud and refined, and, in common with all cold-natured women, the very consciousness of evil came extremely slowly to her—she was not quick at guessing anything, not prone to look forward, or indeed to trouble her mind much about any remote contingencies which might happen to her.

The coarseness of Florence Dane's outspoken accusation shocked her sense of delicacy more than they outraged her dignity. That such things should even be spoken of seemed to her to be a shame. Then, at parting, Florence had said yet one more odious thing. "You cannot afford," she had cried, angrily, "to set propriety at naught. Geoffrey was had enough, in all conscience, up to the very eve of his marriage, hanging about a very respectable married woman, and how you have set up a lover of your own. Why, you will both become a byword and a disgrace to the whole country!"

It had been a wicked speech to make, a speech that she would not have dared to utter to one who had known how to fling back her words and fight her own battles; but Angel's consternation and Angel's tears had had no power to check the storm of her passion. Her anger arose and ran riot to crush her victim overpowered her sense of justice and of prudence. She gave way unreprieved to her blind rage, and the pent-up ill-feeling of weeks burst forth from her angry lips.

With a gesture full of horror, Angel had at length held up her hands, as though to ward off the blows of her cruel, raging words, and had turned from her and fled to hide her flushed, tear-stained face in her own house.

"Oh! what shall I do?—what shall I do?" cried the poor girl aloud, as she flung herself upon the sofa in her pretty drawing-room.

She felt so helpless and alone. Why had such shameful things been said to her by that wicked woman? and why was not Geoffrey there to defend her? Ah! what was that dreadful thing she had said about Geoffrey? What terrible secret of his life had not her cruel words laid bare? What had she meant—what had she spoken of?

Angel held her aching, throbbing head in her hands, and tried to remember. Another woman!—Florence Dane had said—a married woman, "up to the very eve of his marriage!" Geoffrey, then, had never loved her—it was all a horrible mistake, a loveless marriage, a house with a curse upon it!

Then, for the first time, there came home to Angel Dane's soul the unalterable truth that men and women are so slow and so dull to acknowledge—that marriage, from whatsoever cause on earth save that of love alone, is an outrage against nature and a sin against God.

This is fixed as the heavens themselves, immutable as the mountains. Why will mankind persist in turning blind eyes and deaf ears to it? "Ah! I am punished indeed!" cried Angel aloud to herself, in her self-abasement. And then for a long time she sat very still indeed. A servant opening the door made her start.

"Any letters for the postman, Ma'am?"

"No—yes, wait a minute. Has the man called for the bag?" she cried, jumping up with a sudden inspiration. "Tell him to wait. I have a letter to go to!"

She flew to the writing-table and dashed off a note:

"Dulcie. Come to me, I entreat of you. I am wretched, hopeless and helpless without you. Telegraph your train and come to-morrow, if you possibly can—Your unhappy Angel."

The letter was directed and sealed. The footman took it away on a silver tray, and five minutes later the postman was walking away with it in his brown leather bag down the hill towards Lilminster.

And Horace Lessiter passed him as he turned in at the iron gates. In a very storm of tumultuous wretchedness, Angel was walking up and down the room. The tears were raining down her face. She wrung her hands piteously together and fell from her trembling lips.

"How could she dare to speak so! To accuse me—me, a three months' wife—of disgracing my husband's name—bringing shame upon him! And she said there was another woman! So he never even loved me! Oh, what a miserable mistake I have made!"

And then the door opened softly and Captain Lessiter came in.

She turned sharply around and stood looking at him in a bewildered way, and she grew a little pale at the sight of him. Why had he come back?

He closed the door gently, and came forward towards her with both hands outstretched.

"My dear child I cannot bear to see you like this. For Heaven's sake tell me what has happened, and what that she-flirt has been doing to you!" he said, in a voice of deep concern.

But, somehow Angel did not respond as he had half expected that she would. She did not fall upon his breast and pour out her griefs to him. She did not even hold out her hands to meet his. On the contrary, she stood very quiet and still, both her arms hanging straight down by her side, and with an odd, fixed look in her eyes.

His hands dropped down rather foolishly and his color rose.

"You must be in trouble, I fear," he said, with a shade more of respect and less of familiarity in his voice. "Pray make a friend of me, and tell me if there is any way in which I can help you."

"Thank you," she answered in a cold, measured voice, "I have sent for the only friend I have in the world—the only creature on earth who can help me. I have sent for Dulcie."

"You have sent for Dulcie!" he repeated in a voice of dismay, almost, indeed, of disgust, and as he spoke he recoiled a little from her. "When did you do this? What induced you to do such a thing?"

"I have just written to her. I have told her to come to-morrow. The letter has gone to the post not five minutes ago."

"And I met the postman!" he muttered, and straight-way cursed his luck that no supernatural revelation had warned him miraculously of what that post-bag contained.

"That is the when, now as to the why," continued Angel, and there was by now a faint tremor of agitation in her voice. "Captain Lessiter, you know why as well as I do. I am going to be brave and tell you all. Her colour rose a little, and with it, perhaps, her courage. She sat down on the arm of a chair confronting him."

"You remember, do you not, how one day last summer, when I was staying with Venetia, you came to see me in Pont Street, and you told me that you loved my sister Dulcie?"

He made a movement as though he would have spoken, but she silenced him and went on hurriedly:

"You told me that you loved her, and that you wished to marry her, but that you could not tell whether your affection was returned, and you prayed me to help you and to stand your friend with her."

"Oh, why go back to all that!" he murmured with a distressed air.

"Well, perhaps you think I have forgotten all about it," she continued, unheeding the interruption, "that I have failed to keep my promise? but I have never forgotten it. Captain Lessiter, there was at that time an obstacle to my sister marrying at all. I was that obstacle."

"You!"

"Yes; and the colour rushed in a crimson flood from her brow to her neck. "Yes, because Dulcie would not marry for herself, until I was married."

He looked surprised. "I was her fancy you see. I cannot explain it further—and—and you see, I did marry, and you have come home again. She sent you away, it is true, but I think she will be glad to see you again. And so—and so—I have sent for her so that things may become right between you."

He looked for a moment horribly taken back. Then he began pacing about the room in an agitated manner.

"You misunderstand, you completely misunderstand," he said, stopping short in front of her. "How am I to make you see that to which you willfully shut your eyes? All that you are talking about is past and over; the circumstances are utterly changed. 'I know that you proposed to Dulcie, and that she drove you away to Australia,' answered Angel calmly. 'But a woman often changes her mind, and she is never so well inclined to a man as when she has just refused him. And you see that Dulcie did change her mind, because she wrote to you directly I was married, and asked you to come back. And you did, you see, come back at her summons, as soon, sooner indeed than I could have believed it possible. Can anything be more straightforward than that? The only thing that seemed so strange has been that, being in England, you should have waited all

this time here instead of going straight to her."

"Let me entreat you to hear me," he cried rather distractedly. But Angel held up her hand to silence him. She was still in the dark, she did not see what he meant.

"No, hear me out first. I am not going to blame you for this delay, for I can understand that you have been afraid to venture your luck again so soon. And now I can perceive also that you must have been depending upon me, looking to me to arrange a meeting with her, to bring you both together. And so we have foolishly gone on, neither of us liking to speak first. Until—until—a horrible thing has happened! Other people have made a mistake. That woman, my husband's sister who spoke to me just now, told me it was perhaps best for me in the end to know it! She told me, made me see that you and I have been talked about ill-naturedly, our names coupled together. I cannot tell you more, it all seems so wicked and shameful. But you will put a stop to it at once! You will let the world see the truth, will you not? That is why I have sent for Dulcie to come, so that you may settle things at once with her, and silence the slanderous tongues that have spoken evil things of me."

He heard her out in a sort of bewildered silence. As, piece by piece, the confused and tangled words she had strung together to him became clear to his understanding, there came back to his memory that once, long ago, he had been told of Angel Halliday that she was "visionary and imaginative." This was carrying out her character with a vengeance. It almost made him laugh, for he was a shallow, cold-hearted man, and all the paths of her little story was thrown away on him. He was angry with her, too; angry, because, all unconsciously, she had bitterly wounded his vanity. And a man's vanity is undoubtedly, however little he may like to be told so, by far the most vulnerable part of his nature. Of wounds to his heart he may suffer, but he does not—he lives and recovers, and forgives—but that other direr and darker injury cuts deeper and lasts longer; of that he seldom recovers, and assuredly he will never forgive it.

Here, for three whole weeks had Horace Lessiter been paying his court to Mrs. Dane, assiduously and unremittingly. He had surrounded her with that intangible atmosphere of attention which is supposed to render a woman the strongest fortress of feminine foolishness; he had visited her almost daily, followed her like a shadow, run to do her bidding in a slavish fashion, exhausted himself in delicately veiled flatteries; he had even—oh! unparalleled unselfishness!—sacrificed himself to her in the hunting field, in order to play the part of a watchful and tender guardian over her safety, and the end of it all was that she told him tranquilly, that their names had been "coupled together," she had sent for her sister, so that he might marry her forthwith.

(To be Continued.)

MAID'S MONEY.

An interesting custom was observed recently at Guilford, England, on the occasion of the distribution of a municipal charity, familiarly known as the maid's money. The event causes considerable interest by reason of the selected candidates having to decide who should receive the gift by casting lots.

The gift was made in the seventeenth century, and it was stipulated that a sum of money should be invested in consols calculated to produce the sum of £12 12s., net for a maidservant who should have lived for two years or upward in one service in the old borough of Guilford, and who "should throw the highest number with two dice or cast lots with another maidservant."

It is further explained that the unsuccessful maid is permitted to try three subsequent times for the gift, providing she does not marry. The testator stipulated that no maid who was a servant in a licensed inn or ale house was to be selected as a candidate. The proceedings took place in the council chamber, when Mark Dowling, the oldest trustee, presided in the absence of David Williamson, J.P., the chairman, there being present a number of the old Guilfordians, including J. Mason Swayne and R. Salisbury, ex-mayors, G. J. Jacob, R. Mason and Mrs. Russel and Morton. This year no less than ten names were submitted to the trustees for selection.

The successful two were Louisa Remnant, a servant in the employ of Matthew Kleiser, of North street, Guilford, for the past ten and a half years, and Sarah Ann Frogley, in the employ of Richard Sparks for fifteen years. As soon as the trustees had taken their seats the two candidates were sent for to compete for the gift. A cup and two dice were handed to them, and these they threw on the table. The young woman, Frogley, succeeded in scoring eight, while her rival secured five. The gift was thereupon handed to Miss Frogley.

BACHELOR REFLECTIONS.

A love's marriage is licensed crime. It is only the man who wrestles with sin that knows how good a good woman is.

It is the tiniest woman that has the biggest way of twisting a man around her finger.

When a woman has a wrinkle in her stocking she feels as ashamed as if everybody else knew it.

A woman gets a whole lot of consolation in the thought that her nature is too big to be understood by anybody else.

A HOME MADE HAPPY.

MRS. TUCKER, OF NIAGARA FALLS, TELLS WHAT DID IT.

Her Daughter Was Afflicted With St. Vitus Dance and Helpless as an Infant—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Cured Her After Specialists Had Failed.

From the Review, Niagara Falls. It is a horrible feeling to know that you have lost all command or control of your limbs, and must depend upon your friends to wait upon and serve you the same as an infant. This was the condition of Miss Myrtle Tucker for nearly a year, and the Review learning that she had been wonderfully benefited by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People sent a reporter to hear her story.

We called at the residence of Mr. Edwin Tucker, of the village of Niagara Falls. Mrs. Tucker received us very cordially, and ascertaining the object of our visit, as nearly as possible these are her exact words in speaking of her daughter's case:—"My daughter Myrtle is in her fifteenth year. About a year ago alarming symptoms of St. Vitus' dance made their appearance, but for some time we did not know what was really the matter. She lost the use of her arms, her right arm was completely paralyzed. She had to be dressed and undressed, being totally unable to help herself. The best local physicians were called in and prescribed for her, but they appeared to be unable to afford relief. We made a trip to Buffalo last January and a specialist was consulted, who recommended that Myrtle be shut up in a dark room for three months, allowing no one to see her or speak to her but the nurse. In fact the doctor insisted upon her being sent to one of the city hospitals. Arsenic was one of the specifics used; it helped to quiet for a time, but no permanent relief was obtained. After our return from Buffalo, my son urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Myrtle. He said he was sure it would do her good as it had cured his boy of a similar complaint. I then determined to try them, as I was conscious the treatment she was getting was doing her no good. I purchased a box and the effect of the pills was almost marvellous from the very beginning; before the first box was used an improvement was plainly discernible. Five boxes in all have been used and Myrtle is now able to run and enjoy herself in a manner she could not do for months and months past. Two weeks ago she commenced to attend school after an absence of nine months. 'I want it distinctly understood,' said Mrs. Tucker, 'that the physicians all agreed that my daughter was afflicted with St. Vitus' Dance; that the treatment of the medical attendants did not benefit her and that no other medicine was taken after commencing Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, so that there is no doubt her recovery must be attributed to the use of these pills. Her state of health is now most excellent, her appetite is good and I am only too pleased to be able to certify to the above facts in order that others similarly afflicted may be encouraged to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.'

An impoverished condition of the blood, or a disordered state of the nerves is the fruitful source of most of the ailments that afflict mankind; and to any thus afflicted Dr. Williams' Pink Pills offer a speedy and certain cure. No other remedy has ever met with such great and continued success, which is one of the strongest proofs that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills accomplish all that is claimed for them. They cure locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, sciatica, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous headache, palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, diseases depending upon vitiated blood such as scrofula chronic erysipelas, etc. They are also a specific for troubles peculiar to females, curing all forms of weakness. In men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, overwork, or excesses of any nature. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

LUGUBRIOUSLY CHEERFUL.

Miss Ethel—Music always makes me feel sad; doesn't it you, Mr. Sudest? Mr. S.—Yes; but I like it—it's awfully jolly to feel sad, don't you know.

Lady Yarborough, wife of the fifth Earl of Yarborough, is one of the most beautiful women in England. This graceful and aristocratic young woman was born to high estate as the Baroness Conyers. She and her sister Violet, are the daughters of Baron Conyers, whose family were ennobled in the sixteenth century. The two young Baronesses Conyers inherited not only their father's title, but his large fortune and his beauty. They entered London society only a few years since, and became promptly famous for their comeliness, and unusual stature, both of them measuring but an inch short of six feet in height. Baroness Marcia very soon gave her hand in marriage to Lord Yarborough, and her sister Violet married Lord Powis. Lady Yarborough is one of the few English beauties who do not possess the usual English brilliancy of complexion. Her coloring is that of a South American beauty; her eyes are brown, and her hair is bronze gold. The exceeding slenderness and gracefulness of her figure is due in great part to her love of horseback exercise, and in Lincolnshire, where her husband owns two large estates, she lives at Brocklesy Hall, preferring the society of her horses and dogs and country friends very often to the joys and triumphs of the London season.