

now. He needed excitement; and any cause for which there was work to be done and danger to be encountered, would have been welcome to him.

In the meanwhile, Saxon, sitting in the opposite corner, had his own troubles to think about. He was not at all satisfied with himself, in the first place, for the part he was playing towards his cousin. He could not divest himself of the idea that he was doing something "sly;" and that idea was intolerable to him. In the second place, he was not quite comfortable with regard to Miss Colonna. He had not begun exactly to question himself about the nature of his admiration for her, or even to speculate upon the probable results of that admiration; but he had become suddenly aware of the extent of her power, and was startled at finding to what lengths he might be carried by his desire to please her. William Trefalden had said that she was capable of asking him to take the command of a troop; but a vague consciousness of how Olympia was capable of asking him to do a great deal more than that, had dawned by this time upon Saxon's apprehension.

And then, besides all this, he could not help thinking of his adventure in the mausoleum, and of the strange interview that he had involuntarily witnessed between Lady Castletowers and Miss Riviere. The girl's sorrowful young face haunted him. He wanted to help her; and he wanted advice as to the best way of helping her. Above all, he wanted to penetrate the mystery of her claim on Lady Castletowers. He would have given anything to have been able to talk these things over with the Earl; but that, after what he had heard, was, of course, impossible. So he pondered and puzzled, and at last made up his mind that he could consult his cousin on the subject while he was up in town.

Thus, absorbed each in his own thoughts, the two men sped on, face to face, without exchanging a syllable. They might probably have continued their journey in silence to the end, if, somewhere about half way between Sedgebrook station and Waterloo Bridge, Saxon had not chanced to look up, and find his companion's eyes fixed gloomily upon him.

"Well," said he, with a surprised laugh, "why do you look at me in that portentous way? What have I done?"

"Nothing particularly useful that I am aware of, my dear fellow," replied the dragoon. "The question is, not what you *have* done, but what you *may* do. I was wondering whether you mean to follow my example?"

"In what respect?"

"In respect of Italy, of course. Are you intending to join Garibaldi's army?"

"No—that is, I have not thought about it," replied Saxon. "Is Castletowers going?"

"I should think not. His mother would never consent to it."

"If he went, I would go," said Saxon, after a moment's pause. "There's camp-life to see, I suppose; and fighting to be done?"

"Fighting, yes; but as to the camp life, I can tell you nothing about that. I fancy the work out there will be rough enough for some time to come."

"I shouldn't mind how rough it was," said Saxon, his imagination warming rapidly to this new idea.

"How would you like to march a whole day without food, sleep on the bare ground in a soaking rain, with only a knapsack under your head, and get up at dawn to fight a battle before breakfast?" asked Vaughan.

"I should like it no better than others, I dare say," laughed the young man; "but I shouldn't mind trying it. I wish Castletowers could go. We've been planning to make a tour together by-and-by; but a Sicilian campaign would be a hundred times better."

"If he were as free as yourself, Castletowers would be off with me to-morrow morning," said Vaughan; and then his brow darkened again as he remembered how not only Saxon, who he suspected of admiring Olympia Colonna, but the Earl, of whose admiration he had no doubt whatever, would both remain behind, free to woo or win her, if they could, when he was far away.

It was not a pleasant reflection, and at that moment the rejected lover felt that he hated them both, cordially.

"Which route do you take?" asked Saxon, all unconscious of what was passing in his companion's mind.

"The most direct, of course,—Dover, Calais, and Marseilles. I shall be in Genoa by eight or nine o'clock on Sunday evening."

"And I at Castletowers?"

"How is that?" said Vaughan, sharply; "I thought you said your time was up yesterday?"

"So it was; but Castletowers has insisted that I shall prolong my visit by another week, and so I go back this evening. How we shall miss you at dinner!"

But to this civility the Major responded only by a growl.

CHAPTER XLVI. WILLIAM TREFALDEN EXPLAINS THE THEORY OF LEGAL FICTIONS.

Signor Nazzari was a tall, spare, spider-like Italian, who exercised the calling of a stock and share broker, and rented a tiny office under a dark arch in the midst of that curious web of passages known as Austin Friars. He had been prepared for Saxon's visit, by a note from Colonna, and met him in a tremor of voluble servility, punctuating his conversation with bows, and all but prostrating himself in the dust of his office. Flies were not plentiful in Signor Nazzari's web, and such a golden fly as Saxon was not meshed every day.

It was surprising what a short time the transaction took. Colonna might well say nothing was easier. First of all they went to the Bank of England, where Saxon signed his name in a great book, after which they returned to Austin Friars, and waited while Signor Nazzari went somewhere to fetch the money; and then he came back with a pocket-book full of bank-notes secured around his neck by a steel chain—and the thing was done.

Thereupon Major Vaughan solemnly tore up Saxon's cheque in the stockbroker's presence, and received the value thereof in crisp new Bank of England paper.

"And now, Trefalden," said he, "fare you well till we meet in Italy."

"I've not made up my mind yet, remember," replied Saxon, smiling.

"Make it up at once, and go with me in the morning."

"No, no; that is out of the question."

"Well, at all events, don't put it off till the sun is all over. If you come, come while there's something to be done."

"Trust me for that," replied Saxon, with a somewhat heightened colour. "I won't share the feasting if I haven't shared the fighting. Good bye."

"Good-bye."

And with this, having traversed together the mazes of Austin Friars and emerged upon the great space in front of the Exchange, they shook hands, and parted.

Saxon turned his face westward, and went down Chesham on foot—he was going to Chancery-lane, but he was in no hurry to reach his destination. He walked slowly, paused every now and then to look in a shop window, and took a turn round St. Paul's. He pretended to himself that he went in to glance at Nelson's monument; but he had seen Nelson's monument twice before, and he knew in his heart that he cared very little about it. At length inexorable fate brought him to his cousin's door; so he went up the dingy stairs, feeling very guilty, and hoping not to find the lawyer at home. On the first landing he met Mr. Keckwith with his hat on. It was just one o'clock, and that respectable man was going to his dinner.

"Mr. Trefalden is engaged, sir, with a client," said the head clerk, to Saxon's immense relief.

"Oh, then you can say that I called, if you please," replied he, turning about with great alacrity.

"But I think the gentleman will be going directly, sir, if you wouldn't mind taking a seat in the office," added Mr. Keckwith.

"I—perhaps I had better try to come by-and-by," said Saxon, reluctantly.

"As you please, sir, but I'm confident you wouldn't have to wait five minutes."

So Saxon resigned himself to circumstances, and waited.

The clerks were all gone to dinner, with the exception of Gorkin the red-headed, whom Saxon surprised in the act of balancing a tobacco-pipe upon his chin.

"Pray don't disturb yourself," laughed he, as Gorkin, overwhelmed with confusion, lifted the lid of the desk and disappeared behind it as if he had been shot. "I should like to see you do that again."

The boy emerged cautiously, till his eyes just cleared the lid, but he made no reply.

"It must be difficult," added Saxon, good naturedly, trying to put him at his ease.

"It ain't so difficult as standing on your head to drink a pint of porter," said the boy, mysteriously.

"Why no—I should suppose not. Can you do that also?"

The boy nodded.

"I can put half-a-crown in my mouth, and bring it out of my ears in small change," said he. "If I'd half-a-crown handy, I'd show you the trick."

Saxon's fingers were instantly in his waistcoat-pocket, and the half-crown would have changed owners on the spot, but for the sudden opening of William Trefalden's private door.

"Then you will write to me, if you please," said a deep voice; but the owner of the voice, who seemed to be holding the door on the other side, remained out of sight.

"You may expect to hear from me, Mr. Behrens, the day after to-morrow," replied the lawyer.

"And Lord Castletowers quite understands that the mortgage must be foreclosed on the tenth of next month?"

"I have informed him so."

"Must, Mr. Trefalden. Remember that. I can allow no grace. Twenty thousand of the money will have to go direct to the Worcestershire agent, as you know; and the odd five will be wanted for repairs, building, and so forth. It's imperative—quite imperative."

"I am fully aware of your necessity for the money, Mr. Behrens," was the reply, uttered in William Trefalden's quietest tone; and I have duly impressed that fact upon his lordship. I have no doubt that you will be promptly paid."

"Well, I hope so, for his sake. Good morning, Mr. Trefalden."

"Good morning."

And with this Mr. Behrens came out into the office, followed by the lawyer, who almost started at the sight of his cousin.

"You here, Saxon!" he said, having seen his client to the top of the stairs. "I thought you were at Castletowers."

It would have taken a keener observer than Saxon to discover that the wish was father to Mr. Trefalden's thought; but there could be no doubt of the relationship.

"Well, so I am, in one sense," replied the young man. "I'm only in town for the day."

"And what brings you to town only for the day? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Oh, no—nothing at all. I—that is you—"

And Saxon, unpractised in the art of equivocation, floundered helplessly about in search of a reason that should be true, and yet not the truth.

"You want to consult me about something, I suppose," said the lawyer, observant of his perplexity. "Come into my room, and tell me all about it."

So they went into the private room, and William Trefalden closed the double doors.

"First of all, Saxon," said he, laying his hand impressively on the young man's shoulder, "I must ask you a question. You saw that client of mine just now, and you heard him allude to certain matters of business as he went out?"

"I did," replied Saxon; "and I was sorry—"

"One moment, if you please. You heard him mention the name of Lord Castletowers?"

"Yes."

"Then I must request you, on no account, to mention that circumstance to the Earl. It is a