

RIZPAH.

H. SAMUEL XXI. 10.

It is growing dark.

At such a sunset I have been with Saul,
But saw it not. I only saw his eyes,
And the wild beauty of his roaming locks;
And, oh! there never was a man like Saul!
Strong arm and gentle heart, and tender ways,
To win a woman's very soul, were his!

How he would take my hand and look on me
As if I were a child, and whisper "Rizpah!"

Why should I weep? Was I not loved by Saul?
And Saul was king of all the Land of God.

"God save the king!" But hush! what noise was
that?

O Heaven! to think a mother's eyes should look
On such a sight! Away! vile carrion-beast!
Those are the sons of Saul! poor Rizpah's sons!

O my dead darlings! O my only joy!

O sweet twin treasure of my lonely life,
Since that most mournful day on Gilboa,
Torn from me thus!

I have no tears to shed.

O God! my heart is broken; let me die!

Gilboa! David wrote a song on it,
And had it put in *Jasher*. "Weep for Saul!"
Armoni used to sing it to his harp.

Poor blackened lips

I wonder if they dream,

My pretty children.

Come, Mephibosheth,

Here is your father; say "God save the king!"

The Gibeonites! ah! that was long ago.

Why should they die for what they never did?

No, David never would consent to that!

Whose son is he, this youth?

Dost know him, Abner?

Ha, ha! they shout again "God save the king."

Was I asleep? I came not here to sleep.

O poor old eyes! sorrow has made you weak!

My sons! No, nought has touched them. Oh! how
cold!

Cold, cold! O stars of God, have pity on me,

Poor lonely woman! O my sons, Saul's sons!

Kind stars, watch with me, let no evil beast

Reud that dear flesh. O God of Israel,

Pardon my sins!—My heart is broken!

J. R.

BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

BY THOMAS SPEIGHT.

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CHAPTER V.—ESCAPED.

MR. DUPLESSIS rode homeward through the warm May evening, slowly and musingly. He had done a good day's work, and was disposed to be satisfied with himself and all the world. It was a short three miles from Belair to Lilac Lodge, if you took the straight road through Normanford; but Mr. Duplessis chose, this balmy evening, to take a longer route, that led him through unfrequented country ways, and quiet lanes, made shady by the rich foliage of overhanging trees. A genuine spick-and-span cavalier of the modern school, he would have looked far more at home in Pall Mall or the Park, than he did on those lonely Monksire roads, where there were few signs of life, save here and there a cluster of lime-burners' hovels, or a batch of tired labourers returning from work.

Scarcely twenty months had elapsed since Mr. Henri Duplessis was first seen at Normanford, but during that short space of time, he had contrived to put himself on the footing of a welcome guest at more than half the best houses in the county. The Spencelaughs had brought him with them on their return from a continental tour, and it was soon known throughout the neighbourhood that he had been instrumental in saving the baronet's life at the risk of his own. He had come to stay a month at Belair; but before the term of his visit was at an end, he

had decided on taking up his residence in the neighbourhood for some time to come. The Monksire streams were famous for their trout; there was capital hunting in the next county, only a dozen miles away; there was no scarcity of people worth knowing, at whose tables, thanks to the baronet's introductions, he was a coveted guest; and last, though not least, perhaps, in the estimation of the Canadian, within the circle of his Monksire acquaintance there revolved some half-dozen young ladies, all rich, and all charming—combined attractions, which act as the lamp does to the moth on the susceptible hearts of gay young bachelors (gay and young still at eight-and-thirty) of limited income and expensive tastes. But did the income of Mr. Duplessis come within the meaning of such a term? Nobody about Normanford could exactly tell. All that was known respecting him was, that he was of good family—on that point we may presume that Sir Philip Spencelaugh had satisfied himself; that he had taken, furnished, for a term of three years, that elegant cottage ornée commonly known as Lilac Lodge; that his establishment comprised a couple of women-servants, a groom, and a valet; that he kept two horses, a hunter and a cob; that he was eminently good-looking; that his clothes were of the newest fashion; that he attended church regularly, and was liberal with his money for charitable purposes; and that, finally, he was declared by young and old to be the most delightful company in all Monksire.

Mr. Duplessis, in his moth-like eagerness to incinerate himself at the shrine of beauty (with riches combined,) had selected for that purpose the brightest lamp of all those which lighted up the Monksire firmament. What his fortune had been, so far, we have already seen; and so long as there remained the slightest prospect that he might ultimately succeed in his purpose, the fervency of his devotion would doubtless remain unimpaired. And in this he was not, perhaps, altogether selfish; for putting aside the fact that Miss Spencelaugh was the greatest heiress in the county, Mr. Duplessis was quite capable of appreciating her goodness and beauty, and of estimating them at their full value; and, for my own part, I believe, that his affection for Frederica was as deep and sincere as it was in his nature to feel for any one, or anything, except himself and his own interests. Should circumstances, however, go utterly against him at Belair, I think he was quite capable, without too much of a heartache, of turning his attentions to some other quarter, where they might, perhaps, be looked upon with more kindly eyes—say, in the direction of Miss Cumworth of Cumworth Manor; or towards the sole daughter and heiress of old Antony Tiplady, the great manufacturer of East-tingham.

Mr. Duplessis coming after a time within sight of Lilac Lodge, while yet some distance away, could see Antoine standing, napkin in hand, gazing earnestly up the road. It was a sign that dinner was waiting; so Mr. Duplessis shook his horse's rein, and cantered up to the gate. Jock, the groom, was in attendance, and Antoine proceeded at once to serve up dinner.

Lilac Lodge was a small, low, white, two-storied building, with a broad verandah running round three sides of it, and with a stable, paddock, and servants' entrance at the back. From the verandah, a lawn of smoothest turf swept gently down, interspersed with flower-beds of various shapes and sizes, to where a sheltering hedge of laurel and holly shut in the little precinct from the vulgar gaze. The main entrance was through an iron gate, from which a sinuous gravel-path ran up to the front of the cottage; but there was a side-wicket which was more commonly used.

Mr. Duplessis ate his dinner in solitary state in his pleasant little dining-room, waited upon by the assiduous Antoine, who rarely allowed any other servant to approach his master. But then Antoine was more than a servant—he was M. Henri's foster-brother and humble friend; and another friend equally staunch, true, and devoted to his interests, the Canadian would not have found, had he sought the round world over. He was the faithful depository of all his master's secrets; he

rejoiced in his successes, and sorrowed over his misfortunes, with a sincerity that had no tinge of selfishness in it. Though of the same age as his master he looked half-a-dozen years older. He had a round, good-humoured, but somewhat sardonic visage, crowned with a mop of short, black, stubby hair, which stuck out in every direction, and which had further burst out on his upper lip in the shape of a stiff moustache. His cheeks and chin were blue-black, from the frequent use of the razor; and his large flabby ears were ornamented with small circlets of gold. He was very supple and active, and moved about the little house with a stealthy, cat-like pit-pat which was particularly distasteful to the two English women-servants, and added not a little to the dread with which they habitually regarded him; but advancing years were bringing corpulence with them, and Antoine's mind was troubled thereby. Round his neck he wore a black ribbon over a broad turn-down collar, and always carried a large, old-fashioned silver watch, worn in an old-fashioned fob, with an old-fashioned ribbon and seals. This watch, with its appendages, was Antoine's fetish of respectability—a word which he held in great veneration. He talked both English and French indifferently well, but the latter better than the former; and it was in the French language that he and his master generally conversed when alone. Finally, the leisure hours of M. Antoine were devoted to the manufacture and consumption of innumerable cigarettes of a mild nature, and to the perusal of French newspapers of ancient date.

As soon as Mr. Duplessis had finished his dinner, he lounged out into the verandah, where the attentive Antoine had already placed an easy-chair, and a small table with wine and cigars. It was a clear starlit evening, cool and refreshing after the hot day.

"Sit!" said Mr. Duplessis with a wave of his hand, as he proceeded to light a cheroot; and Antoine, in obedience to his master's wish, seated himself some distance away on the edge of the verandah, which went down by two steps into the garden.

"Smoke!" said Mr. Duplessis; and Antoine manufactured and lit a cigarette. The two smoked in silence for a few minutes, and then Mr. Duplessis spoke.

"Thou must write to Clotilde to-night, my child," he said; "I promised her that thou shouldst do so. The girl is breaking her heart at thy neglect."

"Yes, Monsieur Henri, I will write, if you wish me to do so," replied Antoine with a grimace. "Ah, bah! what a fool the girl is! She knows I care nothing for her; why then, cannot she let me alone, and try to forget me?"

"But, Antoine thou must try to love her."

"Love her, my faith! She has the temper of a tiger-cat. She would put a knife into me before we had been six months married."

"I tell thee, pig that thou art, that thou must make love to her. She is useful to me, and I cannot afford to spare her just yet. As to marrying her, or not, afterwards, that is thy business."

"It shall be as you wish, Monsieur Henri. I will write her to-night, and tell her that I adore her, that I am her slave for evermore. But there is a little English *mees*, a miller's daughter, whom—"

"Silence babbler!" said Mr. Duplessis. "What are thy miserable love-affairs to me. Listen while I speak to thee of something far more important."

"Yes, Monsieur Henri; I attend."

"Before six months are over, I shall be married to the richest and most beautiful young lady in all Monksire."

"Ah, Monsieur Henri, that is indeed good news!" exclaimed the emotional Antoine, as he flung away the end of his cigarette, and rushing up to his master, seized him by the hand, and kissed it several times with fervour. "It is news that makes glad the heart of foolish Antoine. When Monsieur began to grow melancholy, and to lose faith in his planet, did I not cry: 'Courage! The day of good fortune will come at last.' And now it has come; but Monsieur,