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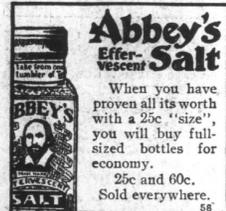
CHAPTER XXVII.
 PUT TO THE TEST.

(Continued.)

A COUPLE of hours later Harold was smoking a cigar in the small gallery; on the morrow the long-looked-for excursion to the Giant's Breastplate was to come off, and as an early hour or two in the turnips had been planned, the male visitors, all ardent sportsmen, had gone to rest.

Harold sat alone, his long legs stretched out before him, his eyes half closed, his thoughts wandering to the little cottage at Higham and the strange friendless young organist.

He had done his best, during his long ride, to face the position, to make up his mind and arrive at some decision. On one side stood Lillian in all her beauty, and his promise to Sir Talbot; on the other, the sweet face which had haunted him since the moment of his first seeing it. Many a man would have set in the first scale the money which would



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be secured beyond the shadow of doubt by his choosing Lillian, but Harold was too honest, too noble to give that consideration more than a passing thought.

It was not Sir Talbot's wealth which he might secure by marrying Lillian which helped to perplex him; that might go and would go, if it went, without a moment's regret. It was his sacred promise and Lillian's beauty which still held him as a charm.

Had she loved him, had she shown him the slightest favor, anything indeed warmer than the habitual coldness and reserve, Harold's love would have been too firmly established to be shaken by any other woman,

though she combined the beauty of a Venus with the witchery of a Cleopatra.

"She never loved, never cared for me!" he mused. "She is far above me; I'm not worthy of her. And yet—yet—my promise; the promise which Sir Talbot regards as sacred, and I am bound to fulfill. What am I to do?"

He had asked himself this question for something like four hours, and was still far of the answer.

"Would to Heaven," he thought, bitterly, "that I had never seen—no, I cannot wish that. Never to have seen her sweet face and heard her voice? No, I can't wish that? How beautiful she looked this afternoon when I held her hand! It was wrong of me to do that; and yet who could help it, after feeling her soft, warm fingers against their face! She is solitary, so friendless and alone! What would she say if I held her again, longer this time, and told her that I loved her? Would it be 'yes,' I wonder? No, she has seen nothing of me, and yet I feel as if I had known her for years. Heaven and earth, what am I saying! and here it is only a short week or two ago since I felt that I would have given all the world to win Lillian's love! Am I fickle, changeable? Yes, that is it. I am like a child who doesn't know his own mind. What shall I do?"

Almost as if in answer to his question, a servant came into the gallery and approached him.

"What is it, James?" asked Harold.

"Sir Talbot sent me to ask you if you would go to him into the library, sir."

Harold rose and followed the man. There was a dim light from a reading lamp in the library, and Harold entered in his usual direct fashion.

"Do you want me, sir?" but his voice dropped suddenly as he crossed the room, and he hurried up to the chair with an exclamation of concern, for Sir Talbot was sitting, lying rather, in his usual armchair, his face white and drawn, his hands lying on his knees supine and limp.

"Uncle! are you ill?" he asked, anxiously.

Sir Talbot held up his hand and painfully motioned him to a seat.

"Sit down, my dear Harold; it is nothing—wait a moment, I shall gain breath. I—am rather faint."

Harold went to the sideboard and brought him a glass of water; Sir Talbot took it with a shaking hand, then fell back with a heavy sigh.

"What is the matter?" said Harold.

"Let me call some one, sir."

"No, no," said Sir Talbot, with an effort—"I shall be all right directly. Don't be alarmed, Harold; I—I am used to these attacks."

"Used to them!" echoed Harold, with dismay. "I did not know—"

Sir Talbot smiled.

"No," he said, "why should you? I—I have concealed them as carefully as I can. You—you know my old hatred of—of fuss, Harold, and my dislike to showing any sign of weakness. A stupid feeling, my dear boy, seeing that we are all so very human and so very—very weak. But that was in the old days, when I liked to be considered a man of iron—a man of iron!" he repeated, with a smile—"who was likely to fall to pieces any moment like the veriest clay! Tut, tut! don't look so scared, boy!—I am not going to die this time."

There was a pause, during which he evidently fought for strength, and presently he sat up, and leaning his head wearily on one hand, turned some papers on the table with the other.

"I—I had no idea, sir," said Harold, with sorrowful concern, "that you suffered in this way."

"No," said the old man. "As I say, I am not fond of showing my weakness. I have been subject to these fits of faintness since—since the night Lady Woodleigh left me; sometimes they are mild attacks, sometimes violent. I have had a bad one to-night; and, Harold, I am an old man—one of these little eccentric fits will carry me off, and that before long. I cannot complain; I have been spared to taste true happiness, after long years of remorse, and I shall be content to go; and I shall be, Harold, when the one dear wish of my heart is gratified."

He broke off suddenly, and looked round the room eagerly.

"Where—where is Lillian?"

"She has gone to her rooms," said Harold. "Do you want her, sir? I can fetch her."

The old man looked wistfully at the door and then at Harold, but held up his hand as Harold rose.

"No, not yet—I want to say a few words to you alone first. Harold, do you remember the night you started to seek for her?"

Harold inclined his head.

"Quite well, sir," he said, gravely. The old man leaned forward.

"You remember—you have not forgotten the bargain we made together, Harold?"

Harold shook his head.

"I have not forgotten, sir."

"It was a solemn engagement between us, was it not, Harold? You scarcely know how much depended on its fulfillment; but you can imagine how anxious I am to see it carried out, when I tell you that I cannot rest any longer in this uncertainty. Harold—and his voice quivered appealingly—"I am an old man, tottering, waiting on the brink of that dark river which all must cross; the grim ferryman will be here directly—how soon I cannot tell! Already I hear the splash of the oars, catch glimpses of his black coat. Harold, I cannot cross contented and resigned, until I see the dearest hope of my life fulfilled."

He bent forward in his eagerness and laid his thin, white hand on Harold's strong arm. Harold was about to speak, but the old man stopped him.

"Don't speak; hear me out, Harold. Since the night of her return, a blessed night for me! I watched you—she and you, Harold—you are neither of you completely happy; there seems to be some difference between you. What is the barrier? You love her, Harold, I have seen that long ago—and, indeed, it would be wonderful if you did not! Who could live near her and fail to love, to worship her? And, and—Harold, I think, I am almost sure, she returns your love."

Harold looked up with a slight start of surprise.

"This is no time for modesty, my boy," continued Sir Talbot, as if in answer to his grave look of surprise. "A father's eyes are sharp, and can penetrate the veil with which a young, pure-hearted girl strives to throw over her love. She loves you, Harold! Why—why—wait? For my sake join hands, as you have joined hearts, and let me go hence in peace and contentment. I have only one thought—for your joint happiness. What is to prevent it?"

Harold cleared his throat—something seemed to make it difficult for him to speak.



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"You spoke, yourself, of some barrier, sir," he said, gravely.

"Yes, yes, and I think I know what it is," said Sir Talbot, eagerly. "It is pride, Harold, pride!"

"Pride?" echoed Harold.

Sir Talbot nodded.

"To Lillian I have never said one word respecting the estate or the money; she knows—everybody knows—that I have proclaimed you my heir, and see! dreads lest she should be suspected of marrying you for the sake of the title and money. It is pride, Harold! You cannot fail to have seen how proud she is, poor darling!"

"Yes, she is proud," assented Harold, thoughtfully, his brows knit, his lips compressed, his brain in a whirl of indecision.

"Harold, I have hit upon a way of setting that pride at rest. Do not misjudge me, do not misapprehend me when you hear my plan. Harold, you go to the title and the estate. All would have gone to you if my darling had not been found, but now, assured that I should have your concurrence, I have left her all else. It is a large sum of money—nearly one hundred thousand pounds. With this in her hands, she will not hesitate to come to you; her pride will not have any ground left to stand upon, the barrier will be broken down and all will be well."

As he finished he sank back with a sigh of exhaustion.

Harold rose and leaned against the mantelshelf, his hands thrust in his pockets, his head sunk on his breast.

Sir Talbot looked at him anxiously. "Are you angry, disappointed, Harold?"

"I?" said Harold, promptly meeting the anxious gaze with calm, though troubled steadfastness. "From my heart I can say that I have no feeling of anger or disappointment. Honestly, it is as I would have it. I knew that I could not expect in common fairness to rob her of your wealth. By simple right she was your heirless. If she could bear the title I would relinquish that as cheerfully and ungrudgingly."

To be continued.

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Murderer Moir Captured at Last.

TORONTO, Aug. 21.—William Moir, the escaped murderer from the Hamilton Asylum, was captured on Saturday near St. Davids by Constables. He was working on a fruit farm for \$25 a month and board. Moir still wore Fred Butler's Asylum clothes, and was cutting thistles when caught. A man passing in an automobile recognized Moir, and when he arrived at the Falls he notified Constable Maine who sent three constables after him in a rig. Fearing Moir's desperate character the Constables approached close to him in the vehicle and suddenly jumping out all three threw themselves upon the man.

Murdered in Their Bed

Wilmington, Del., Aug. 20.—Robert Casey, Jr., keeper of a general store on the Philadelphia & Washington Turnpike at Claymont, near here and his wife, were murdered in their beds in their house over the store some time during the night, evidently while they slept.

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Moir was composed and took his arrest quietly. He told his captors that the men who helped his escape were companions that he got acquainted with in the London jail. They supplied him with money, a screw driver, saw and skeleton key which he got by lowering a cord from the window. They had a code of signals by whistling. After he got through the tram he said that he went to release Taggart because he had helped to conceal the tools. They did not treat him right in the Asylum he said, and that was why he got away.

Taggart and he separated after getting out. He walked east from Hamilton on the highway on Sunday night after getting out, on Monday he hid in a barn near Morton, and Tuesday morning he started for Niagara Falls and got a ride in a milk man's wagon to Thorold. He then walked to the Falls by the electric railway line. He spent Wednesday in Queen Victoria Park, then retraced his steps to Queenstown, and out to St. Davids. Moir was taken to Hamilton on Saturday night.

His story of the escape may be a pack of lies to shield his confederates. There is a report in Toronto that Taggart was seen near his old home north of the city, and County Constables are stationed in the neighbourhood.

Murdered in Their Bed

Burglars Kill Man and Wife While they Slept.

Wilmington, Del., Aug. 20.—Robert Casey, Jr., keeper of a general store on the Philadelphia & Washington Turnpike at Claymont, near here and his wife, were murdered in their beds in their house over the store some time during the night, evidently while they slept.

Murdered in Their Bed

The murder was committed by thieves, who also plundered the house and store, breaking open the safe and carrying off all the contents of value. Mr. and Mrs. Casey were the only occupants of the house.

The crime was committed with a club an inch thick and a foot long. With this the heads of the victims were battered in, after which the club was then thrown beside the bed. The murder was discovered by Wharton Beal, a driver for a Wilmington grocery, who had gone to the store to deliver bread.

Murdered in Their Bed

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Murdered in Their Bed

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A Tight Place.

Springhill Has Several Thousand Dollars to Pay and no Money in Sight.

Springhill, Aug. 10.—To-day is the first anniversary of the longest strike not only in the history of Springhill, but probably in the industrial history of Canada. It is being duly celebrated by a picnic at MacKell's Farm, about two miles outside of the town near Rodney. This morning a procession marched through the principal streets of the town. There were about four hundred men in the line of march. It was headed by the Junior Band belonging to the town; behind the band marched two hundred representatives of the U. M. W.; then came the band of the 93rd regiment marching in plain clothes. The band was followed by a number of children bearing small red flags, the emblems of socialism, under charge of Jules Lavenne; following the children came the socialists with their red banner unfurled. This portion of the procession numbered about one hundred persons. The procession marched to the picnic grounds. The wives and families of the men were transported to the grounds in carriages.

It is expected this afternoon that addresses will be given by a number of the prominent local leaders of the U. M. W.

The town of Springhill is in rather an unfortunate financial state at the present time. The town settled its indebtedness to the County by giving a note for \$2,500 and this note will shortly be due and there are no funds in sight at present to meet it. In less than two months the town will also have to pay \$2,500 interest on its bonded indebtedness and how the money is going to be raised is the question.—Sackville Post, Aug. 12.

"Spiritual Comforts" Provided.

An incident occurred at Farnum camp, where the artillery and cavalry of the Province of Quebec receive their annual training, which illustrates the danger of speaking in metaphors. It is laid down in the regulations of the Militia Department of Canada that during the training manoeuvres the artillery must not fire unless there is a medical officer present with the necessary stores to dress wounds in case of accident. The officer in command of the artillery is held responsible for the carrying out of this regulation, and this year, as usual, a surgeon with an ambulance and stores was detailed to attend the batteries during practice. One very hot afternoon two colonels who were inspecting the firing became overcome with thirst, and riding over to the medical officer, asking him what he had in his ambulance, thinking that he would appreciate the significance of the enquiry:

"Bandages, dressings, some instruments and two stretchers," replied the medical officer.

"Any 'spiritual comforts'?" asked one of the colonels.

"No, I did not know they were required," said the medical officer.

"Well, that's something you should never forget," said the thirsty officers covering their disappointment philosophically.

"I promise that the matter will be attended to to-morrow," said the surgeon, and the others rode away.

Next day the two colonels, as the day progressed, began to suffer again from heat and thirst and rode over to the ambulance.

"Well, have you brought those 'spiritual comforts' to-day?" they asked with pleasant anticipations.

"Yes, indeed, I have attended to that," replied the medical officer, and forthwith introduced the chaplain of the 26th Canadian Horse.

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