

Diamond Cut Diamond

OR, THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER XXXII.—Continued.

Great Heavens! thought the much-grieved man, is it ever possible wholly to fathom the ingratitude and contrariness of woman!

He was grimly amused, savagely annoyed, and, above all, insanely angry with her.

He felt himself to be bitterly ill-used, and understanding now once for all what she meant, he had no generosity or mercy left for her. He would not spare her, for that he was determined; moreover, who could say that the citadel that had not yielded to cunning might not perchance be overcome by force? All the blood of a bad, coarse nature rushed in a flood to his brain at the thought.

Suddenly he confronted her, came close to her, seized her hands, dragged her with a passionate movement towards him, whilst a torrent of incoherent words, to which he gave himself up with an odd mixture of rage and love, burst from his lips.

"You madden me, Angel. Cannot you see, cannot you understand, that I have ceased to care for Dulcie, that I love I once had, or fancied I had, for her is dead and buried? It was but a poor, weak, shadowy concern after all! And now my whole being is merged in a far different feeling, a fierce wild passion for one who is the only woman on earth I have ever really loved. Angel, do you not know, do you not feel, that it is you whom I love—you for whom I would sell my very soul, you only in the whole world whom I worship and adore, and can you—"

She wrenched herself out of his grasp, a great unspeakable horror came slowly into her distended eyes, and a low wail of fear broke from her trembling lips, her head dropped upon her bosom, and for one moment she covered before him, hiding her face in her hands.

"Listen," he cried hotly, snatching roughly at the sheltering bands, and forcing her to look at him; "nay, by God, but you shall hear me! Do you think you have been able to hide from me that you were always fond of me, that it was only that cursed passing fancy of mine for Dulcie that stood between us? And don't I see now that you have thrown yourself away upon a fool who neither loves you nor appreciates you—"

"Stop!" The single word rang out suddenly sharp and shrill and arrested him as a pistol shot might have done.

Then followed a moment of intense silence. She reared her head up proudly, erect and unflinching she faced him with a set white face and stern hard lips, only her eyes were alive and blazed into his, so that he quailed as he met them and shrank away from her.

Perhaps, to make my story truly dramatic, it should happen here in the due and fitting order of things, that the door should suddenly burst open and the absent husband, miraculously returned in the very nick of time, should fly to the rescue. That he should seize the villain by the throat and gather his insulted wife to his bosom. But nothing of the sort happened. In real life, indeed, these opposite situations very rarely do occur, nor out of a three-act tragedy is it at all desirable that they should. As a matter of fact, a husband is a very undesirable addition to such a scene as I have just described; he is very considerably in the way, and complicates and increases the difficulties of the position to an absolutely incredible degree.

A true woman can always take care of herself. Angel was perfectly capable of self-preservation, and she did so far more simply and effectually than anybody else could have done it for her. So, after that one stinging word of wrath and defiance, after the glitter of the holy fire had burnt itself slowly out of her flaming eyes, there happened nothing at all of a dramatic nature.

Only out of the intense stillness there came at last a low-pitched woman's voice, vibrating with an indescribable contempt, and slow quiet words falling one by one, chill and cold as snow-flakes upon the silence.

"I think enough has been said, Captain Lessiter. I think I understand you now perfectly and absolutely. I have made a very great error, I find, an error I sincerely regret, but that I am not likely to fall into again. I took you to be a friend, and I mistook you for a gentleman."

After that nothing more at all. Just the quick opening and shutting of a door, and Horace Lessiter vanished silently out of the room, as he is destined to vanish out of this history.

When he got back to Lilminster he did two things; he went to the post-office and telegraphed to Leicester for rooms and stabling, and he went to the King's Head and began to pack up his portmanteau. Hillshire saw him no more.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Albert Trichet went down to Harford one day and made his proposal to Dulcie in due form, and was refused.

He was perhaps not altogether surprised, but he was certainly very angry at his rejection, and he was moreover somewhat astonished at the manner in which his advances were received.

Dulcie not only did not seem at all flattered by what is generally considered as a compliment from a gentleman to a lady, but she appeared to be actually indignant at his asking her to marry him.

"I can't think what can have induced you to ask me such a question!" had been her remark, spoken with a considerable amount of irritation.

"I had reason to imagine—"
"You had no reason to imagine!" she cried angrily, and then, no doubt, because Dulcie was an ill-regulated young lady, she stamped her foot impatiently. "You know very well I never got on with you; do go away, Mr. Trichet, and never speak on this subject again."

"I cannot promise to do that. I cannot indeed believe that you really mean to refuse my offer. I have your father's full consent to address you."

"If you had the consent of all my forefathers back to the days of Adam it wouldn't make any difference to me."

"It is because somebody has set you against me? You have changed to me?"

"Nobody has set me against you. Why do you force me to be rude to you by persisting in this ridiculous idea, Mr. Trichet? I never even liked you from the first minute I set eyes on you."

Albert Trichet got very red; he had a difficulty in controlling himself; he felt inclined to use bad language freely, and only restrained himself by a superhuman effort from doing so. "I shall not take this as your final answer, Miss Halliday. When you come to think over all the advantages of a marriage with me, I am certain that you will change your mind."

"This persecution is intolerable!" cried Dulcie furiously, and she jumped up and made as though she would have rung the bell to have her unwelcome suitor shown out of the house. But at this juncture the door opened, and a big man, followed by a small cur, entered, in that unceremonious fashion which betokens a man to be very much at home in a house. At the sight of him Albert Trichet growled openly.

"Ah!" he exclaimed angrily. "I think I could put my finger upon the man who has played the part of a snake in the grass in this matter!"

At which Trichet, recognising an old enemy, by the impoliteness of his language, no doubt, as well as by sundry other evidences of canine clairvoyance, and filled with happy anticipations of coming sport, growled merrily, and made as though he would have planted his teeth in the back of his trousers.

The effect of these attentions was instantaneous and almost miraculous. Trichet, mindful of past experiences and unwilling to risk a repetition of them, made a wild bolt for the door.

"Better go out by the door than the window!" laughed Miles after him with a somewhat heartless allusion to past adventures as he vanished. And Albert Trichet heard the parting words and swore vengeance, shaking his fist back at the house and all within it, as he made his way back to the station.

"It is time our engagement was made public, miles," observed Dulcie, when he was gone.

"I can't think why it was ever kept secret," said poor Miles meekly.

"Can't you, dear old stupid? Well, first because I wanted it to be a woman's reasonless reason, no doubt."

"I thought when Angel was married—"

demurred Miles, creeping close up to her, and passing his arm shyly round her waist. He was but a blundering lover, after all, this big young man who could hold his own so well amongst his fellow-men, and with this little scrap of a girl he was nothing but a coward after all.

"May I, darling?" hesitatingly.

"May you, what? Oh! that nonsensical yes, I suppose so," and the cool cheek and saucy eyes were lifted temptingly up toward the ugly honest face; "there, that's enough, Miles. Now listen to me. I shall tell papa to-night, and there will be a thundering row; that is why I've kept it all quiet up to now, because I could see they were all in a league to make me marry that hateful little beast. Papa has thrown out hints lately, and they have made him a manager in the business, you said yourself there must be some plan. He has got old Dane, you see, to back him up. I have seen it coming all along; I am going to tell papa about you to-night, and then I shall run away."

"Run away, Dulcie!"

"Yes, not with you, Miles. Don't look so frightened, you make me laugh! I am going down to Angel's to-morrow. I've had an unhappy letter from her to-day. I want to see what is the matter with her. I meant to go in any case, and now things have come to a crisis, and it is a good opportunity. I am going to be like the little boys in the street, ring the area bell and bolt."

"And leave me to confront the consequences?" he said smiling. If it was only a matter of knocking somebody down, now."

"Yes, you would do that, fast enough! If you were only a primary man, Miles!"

"What's that?"

"A savage. But you can't fight papa, or old Matthew Dane either, with your fists, and as to poor Albert, I think he has caught it enough from you and Trichet between you. No, all you have got to do is to 'sit tight,' as you would say, and await orders from me. I am not coming back unless papa consents. If the worst comes to the worst—don't look alarmed—I shall be married down here."

"Dulcie!"

"Of course you can hardly take that in, old boy. Wa, I ought to say."

"But—but—" poor Miles stammered in a bewildered way, being, in truth, considerably taken aback by the rapid change in Dulcie's plans and fancies.

"But me no butts, and don't make objections! What is to stop us? There is a church, and a parson, and a clerk, I suppose, at Coddisham and there is a train to bring down the bridegroom—and I shall be there!"

"I had heard of wedding-clothes," murmured Miles, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Doubtless you will hear of them again, dear," replied Dulcie sweetly, "as accessories after the event. Your fancies are running riot with you, Miles, and so are mine, for the matter of that. I only want you to understand that though there will be a row, I have no intention of giving you up, whatever they may do. After all, papa can only say that you are a bad match. A salary of one hundred and seventy-five pounds a year is not a brilliant look-out, certainly, but I had rather marry you on that than Albert Trichet or any other man on earth on thousands. I shall go and keep out of the way in the country till papa gets accustomed to the idea. It will all come right in the end," she added, reassuringly.

But something was about to take place which Dulcie Halliday had assuredly not counted upon.

Goaded to madness by her refusal of him, and by Miles Faulkner's easy assumption of the place in her house which he had destined for himself—no less than by injudicious allusions to past mortifications from the master, and mutterings of further aggression from his dog—Albert Trichet made up his mind to cut away the ground completely and thoroughly once and for ever beneath his rival's feet.

That night he called upon his chief in Cromwell Road, requesting an interview on matters of important business.

Mrs. Dane, who always dreaded she knew not what at the sight of Trichet's ill-omened-looking face, admitted him herself into her husband's study, with the remark that she trusted he would not keep him long, as he seemed very tired that evening.

Trichet smiled, and bowed to her politely—he was not at all likely to be influenced by any observation it might amuse her to make.

As a matter of fact, the interview was long—very long indeed. So long that at one time Albert himself doubted whether he would be able to carry his point. And in the end he only succeeded in doing so by making a concession which had not been at all in his program and which would no doubt cause him a great deal of personal inconvenience.

He was to go on a mission of great trust and responsibility to South America, to confer with the Portuguese agent of the house out there upon a question of buying up a very large property likely to be very soon in the market, the acquisition of which would tend enormously to increase the wealth and prosperity of Dane & Trichet.

Whilst fully concurring in the great and vast importance of this scheme, which Matthew now revealed to him fully, in all its bearings, for the first time, with a great assumption of confidence, and a desire for his opinion on the subject, Albert, as a personal matter, demurred to the undertaking of the mission. He did not want to leave England just now, he argued; but Mr. Dane hastened to prove to him that now, on the contrary, was the very time, of all others, when an absence of three or four months would be most advantageous to him. He would avoid the natural humiliation following upon the refusal of his suit by Miss Halliday, and return with fresh chances of success, and a better look-out for the future.

Then he became himself again, the Merchant of London, who was the head and pulse and soul of a great and important house of business, who was rich because he had been unscrupulous, and successful because he had let no petty hindrance stand in the path of his ambition. He drew his blotting-book towards him and wrote:

"Dear Gomez, I send you out young Trichet by the next mail. You might take him up the country to have a look at those Plantations I am thinking of purchasing. Take him by the shortest route, and make any use of him you like. I don't want him in England at present. Take the best care of him."

"MATTHEW DANE."

And then he did a curious thing. He selected a fresh pen, and unlocking a drawer in his writing-table, took out of it a bottle of red ink, then in the right-hand corner of the simple little note he had written in the simple little ink a small cross in the red ink.

When that was done he closed and addressed the letter, affixing neither seal nor crest outside the envelope, and late though the hour was, and cold and foggy was the night, Matthew Dane went out and posted the letter himself in the nearest pillar-box.

By the early morning the message of Death had gone forth on its way, speeding unerringly on the first stage of its journey to the other side of the world. And the following morning at the house of Dane and Trichet, in the City of London, a certain humble dependent of that great establishment received a cruel and very unexpected shock.

Miles Faulkner found a long blue letter lying upon his desk. It was written in a clerk's hand and stated in polite but perfectly intelligible words, that "Much as Messrs. Dane and Trichet regretted the melancholy necessity of such a step, yet that recent changes and losses obliged them with great reluctance to reduce their staff of clerks, and that from this day month naming the exact date, they would therefore feel themselves compelled to dispense with the valuable services which Mr. Miles Faulkner hath hitherto rendered to them." Then the letter was signed by the two partners' names in order, Matthew Dane and John Halliday. And from that fiat there seemed to be no appeal.

To be Continued.

shaded them with his hand from the full glare of the lamp-light lest the secrets of his heart should unwittingly betray themselves through them.

Then Albert Trichet arose and wished him good-night. When he got outside in the street, there was a chill fog hanging in the air, so that the street lamps gleamed with a sickly glare through the haze, and were scarcely distinguishable from one to the other. But it might have been a midsummer night, redolent with the breath of roses and new-mown hay, to see the manner in which Albert Trichet expanded his chest and drew in long breaths of delight and satisfaction as he walked home.

Sweet is Revenge; and a joyful and a pleasant thing it is to smite thine enemy hip and thigh! So he said to himself as he went back eastwards through the soiled and murky streets.

He thought over all the insults and the injuries which Miles Faulkner had from time to time heaped upon him, recalling them one after the other with savage curses, down to the last crowning offence of all—his success with Dulcie. But it was all to be paid back again now—paid back fourfold, "double measure, pressed down and running over," he would never trouble him again—never!

But what about the man he had left behind? On Matthew Dane's seared old face there was neither joy nor elation. He sat very still for a long time, so still and so long, leaning upon his hand, sitting there by the table, that but for the wide-opened eyes fixed on some trifling object in his hand, he might have been supposed to have fallen asleep in his chair. But he was not asleep. His body was motionless, but his mind was awake and active, painfully, horribly active—for there was a picture before his fixed eyes—a picture that had nothing to do with the cosy London room, with its soft warm curtains, and carpets and its well-filled bookshelves against the wall, and the portrait of a far-away ancestor, by Van Dyke, over the chimney-piece, and the shaded lamp upon the handsome writing-table at his elbow.

Yet the picture was vivid enough and real enough in all conscience. Only a flat, swampy country, with the mists of fever and miasma lying in flake-like clouds upon the bosom of a reed-covered marsh, only a desolate wooden hut, built by the margin of a sluggish stream, and a half-caste, dark-browed man, who came and went swiftly and softly within, pouring something, that was medicine, no doubt, from a phial into a tumbler, and a sick man tossing in delirium on a pallet bed in a far corner.

"Those swamp fevers are bad things," he murmured between his lips, with his far-away eyes still fascinated by that dream-picture, "only the swamp fever, it has carried off many a good fellow before." And then it seemed as though, in the picture, the man on the bed ceased from moaning and tossing, and lay suddenly still, and an awful change passed over him. Old Dane saw him quite plainly now, as though he lay stretched betwixt himself and the fireplace in Cromwell Road. And his face was livid with the last agony, and damp with the dew of death, and the face was the face of Albert Trichet!

Matthew Dane sprang suddenly to his feet, a hoarse smothered sound came like a croak from his parched throat, and he passed his hands quickly across his eyes. The vision was gone, and he saw nothing more than his warm, home-like den, and the eyes of his Vandycke forefather, in long love-locks and wide white collar, smiling down at him with a gentle reproachfulness in their mild glance.

Then he became himself again, the Merchant of London, who was the head and pulse and soul of a great and important house of business, who was rich because he had been unscrupulous, and successful because he had let no petty hindrance stand in the path of his ambition. He drew his blotting-book towards him and wrote:

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To be Continued.

An Operation Evaded.

MR. R. A. SIZE, OF INGERSOLL, ONT., TELLS HOW IT WAS DONE.

Symptoms of Appendicitis—The Way They Were Relieved—The Sufferer Now Well and Working Every Day.

From the Chronicle, Ingersoll, Ont. In February, 1898, Mr. R. A. Size, was taken very ill, and was confined to his home for several weeks. We heard that he was to go to the hospital to have an operation performed, but the operation never took place, and as he has started to work again and in apparently good health, we investigated the case and found that he has been using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. Mr. Size is a highly respected citizen of Ingersoll, having resided here for over thirty years, and has been a faithful employee at Messrs. Partlo & Son's flouring mills for over nineteen years. When asked by a Chronicle reporter whether he would give an interview for publication, telling the nature of his disease and his cure, he readily consented. Mr. Size gave the details of his illness and cure as follows:—

"In February I caught a heavy cold which seemed to settle in my left side. The doctor thought it was neuralgia of the nerves. It remained there for some time and then moved to my right side, in the region of the appendix. We applied everything, and had fly-blister on for 48 hours. They never even caused a blister and did the pain no good. The doctors came to the conclusion that the appendix was diseased and would have to be removed. The pain was very great at times, and there was such a stiffness in my ankles, also in my hand, and pain all over my body. The day and date was set for an operation, and I was reconciled to it. About a week before I was to go to the hospital my wife was reading the Chronicle. She read an account of a man who had been cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. The symptoms of the disease were so much like mine that she became interested and wanted me to give the pills a trial. I had little faith in the pills but as my wife seemed to be anxious that I should take them, I consented. The day for the operation had now arrived, and I told the doctors that I did not think I would go to the hospital for a while as I was feeling better. I continued the pills, and was greatly surprised and pleased with the result. I continued to improve, and have long since given up all idea of an operation. When I started to use the pills, I was unable to walk, and suffered something awful with the pain in my side. It was just five weeks from the time that I started the use of the pills, until I was able to walk again and I had been doctoring three months before that, and I have been working ever since. Altogether I have taken sixteen boxes of the pills, and they have done me more good than all the doctors' medicine I ever took in my life. I have now every confidence in Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and think that they are the best medicine in the world to-day. Certainly had it not been for them, I would have had to go through the ordeal of an operation and perhaps would not have been living now. I hope that by making this public it will be of benefit to others, as it was through one of these articles that I first learned of the unequalled qualities of the pills.

The public is cautioned against numerous pink colored imitations of these famous pills. The genuine are sold only in boxes. The genuine are gold which bears the words "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." If your dealer does not have them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

THREE VERY QUEER MINES.

The Soap Mine in Ashcroft.—The so-called soap mine at Ashcroft, British Columbia, is really a lake containing water strongly impregnated with borax and soda. These have solidified on the bottom and sides, where the substance can be sawed out in blocks as if it were ice.

The Emery Mine in Naxos.—All the emery used in the world comes from the little island of Naxos, near Greece. As it is one of the hardest substances known, ordinary quarrying tools can't be used to cut it out. The 300 men engaged in the trade get the stuff out by building big fires about it until it cracks, and then prying it off with levers. It is shipped in big lumps as if it were furnace coal.

The Russian Emerald Mines.—The emerald mines along the Tokova River in the Russian province of Ekaterinoslav, are owned by the Government. A peasant named Kojevnikoff found the first one in 1839, in the roots of a tree that had been blown down. The Government mined on its own account until 1862, then leased the mines to contractors, who have lost money on them, because the best emeralds lie near the surface. Those dug up from a depth are inferior. Good emeralds, in view of their growing scarcity, ought to hold their value well.

The female Samson of Texas is Miss Jennie Robinson, a colored woman of Burleson County. Her age is 22 years, and her weight is 447 pounds. Her strength is equal to that of five ordinary men. An insolent tramp abused her mistress one day, and Jennie was summoned. She grabbed him by the collar of his coat and the seat of his trousers and whirled him over a fence.