

WON AT LAST.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

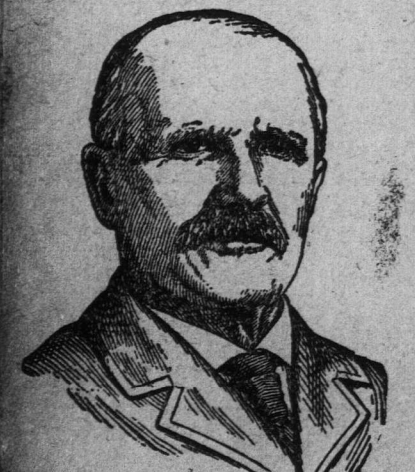
I suppose there is no need to relate in detail what had come to her—the confession of Raby St. George. I can not enter upon it, for it is still too painful, too terrible to me, although it proved the innocence of my friend.

It was Raby St. George who shot Fraser Froude—shot him with Yorke's pistol, taken from the drawer of the writing-table on that unlucky evening when he had cut his hand and I had taken him to Red-pots to have it dressed, leaving him alone in Roger's den while I went to find my friend. Madly jealous at all times of any one who approached Natalie Orme as her lover, he became frantically so of Froude when I told him that she was absolutely engaged to him. Until then he had regarded it as a feat of hers to put him off. Hearing from me that it was true, I really believe that the man lost his head.

According to the gasped-out account to which we three listened, he had in an instant made up his mind that somehow he would put out of his way the master of Holmeadene. Yorke's pistol, carelessly left in the open drawer, was as a weapon thrust into his hand. He took it, concealed it about him before Yorke's entrance. He declared, with what truth I do not know, that in doing this he had no idea that he might cause suspicion to be thrown upon a perfectly innocent man. His one thought was revenge. He left Whittlesford that night, went to Bridgely Norton, and returning the next morning, spent the day lurking about Holmeadene. Until dusk he did not see Froude at all. Then Froude came out, calling in a Chavasse for a few minutes, and, or leaving it, turned toward Whittlesford. St. George dogged him all the way, keeping carefully out of sight until he turned down the river path. Then he showed himself, intending as we gathered, to demand that the other should give up his claim to the hand of Natalie Orme. Something to that effect he did say. Froude laughed at him, taunted him, and called him a "nigger idiot." This insult of all others was the one which St. George's fiercely passionate temper lashed into wild fury as it was just then by jealousy, could not brook. It was all over in an instant. There was a flash, a report, and Froude dropped without a groan in the snow by the group of pollard willows—shot through the heart; and St.

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Mr. Chas. Beauvais.

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More Proof.

Burlington, Iowa.—"For years I suffered a great deal from female troubles. I had awful pains and felt sick nearly all the time. I saw Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound advertised and heard that it had helped other suffering women so I felt sure it would do me good. Sure enough it did. The first bottle helped me and now I am a strong and well woman. I would not be without it in the house."—Mrs. ANNA HIGGINS, 1125 Agency St., Burlington, Iowa.

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George, flinging away the smoking pistol, rushed down the river path and left him lying there undiscovered. Until I, with Major Constable and the rector, had almost stumbled over the ghastly dead figure some three hours later.

That was the substance of the confession to which we listened, standing round the great bed, the rector in his capacity of magistrate, taking it down, and the doctor, with his grave attentive face; in the back ground, out of hearing—a confession made in low, weak tones, and with painful gasps and haltings. Then when it was at last over, the dying man, with a movement of his eyes—almost the only part of his poor body that he could move—signed to the other two to draw back, and to come nearer. They complied, and bent down over him, bringing my ear close to his lips, for his voice was growing more choked and feeble with every passing moment. His face had not been touched, and even now ghastly gray-white as it was, was mottled at least in its beauty of feature; but there could be no doubt that he was dying fast—even I could see that. When he spoke, it was with a pause and a gasp between nearly every word.

"I told you that day that you would be sorry, Chavasse."

"I know," I returned; "and I am indeed."

"Ay—for your friend perhaps. I don't ask it. You remember I said when that one of these days the same poison that was in my blood might rage in yours?"

I nodded. His eyes, larger and brighter than I had ever seen them flashed at me.

"Then I tell you that, if ever that is the case, you will know what my agonies have been since I set my foot in this hateful country of yours. I have endured tortures, I say!"

It was so terrible to see him lying there, racked with passion, and yet seeming to live only in the eyes that gleamed from his haggard face, that I drew back, involuntarily. But with the same look he made me bend down again. He went on—

"Bah! What do you English know, whose very blood is frozen in your veins? I believe you think me repentant. I am not. I speak to set your friend free because I am dying. I tell you that, but for this that has crushed the life out of me, had there risen a score of rivals between her and me, I would have swept them aside in the same way!"

I believed it, horrible as the words sounded, for I had never seen any face—even his—so distorted with passion. I would have spoken, but that the doctor, coming hastily across the room, put his hand upon my arm, and drew me back.

"He is fainting," he whispered, in

my ear—"he will sink into a state of coma probably."

"And then?" I whispered back, looking at the haggard gray-white face and the heavy lids drooping over the eyes.

"He will most likely die in it. At any rate I think he has said his last word."

The doctor was right. All through the long hours of the winter night we sat there, listening to the monotonous patter of the rain outside the windows, and watching the motionless figure upon the bed, from which no sign of life came but the faint gasping breath.

It was almost morning, and a pale streak of gray was visible in the murky sky, the herald of the day which was to see not only the release of Roger Yorke, but also the stately pretentious funeral of the late master of Holmeadene, when a slight movement on the bed made us look toward it. St. George's eyes opened and his lips moved, but no words came. There were a few feeble choking breaths; he made a weak effort to raise his arms, and the next instant was gone.

I pass over the ride back to Chavasse, old Dizarte's exultation, my mother's questionings and astonishment. In fact, so dazed and confused was I by my unwonted experiences of two anxious and sleepless nights that I was for the time in a state of semi-stupor, able to realize only one thing—that my friend was safe. Excited as I was, joyful as I was—yes, joyful in spite of everything when I remembered Roger—my first act after home was reached and I had swallowed a cup of hot coffee was to drop into a great chair by the fire, and fall asleep. Nor did I awake until the calling of my name roused me, and I opened my drowsy eyes to meet madame's as she bent over me, and to find that it was past midnight and that Dizarte and the rector were gone.

"I did not like to wake you, Ned," my mother said, kindly; "but it is growing so late."

"Oh, yes, of course!" I returned, aguely, stupid still, and rubbing my eyes. "I didn't mean to go to sleep, where's Dizarte?"

"At Market Waxford long ago, no doubt."

And I had meant to go! I realized with a feeling of chagrin that I should not be the first, as I had intended to be, to grasp my friend's ree hand.

Madame, looking at me, understood me, I suppose, for she said: "It is quite as well that you should not go, Ned, for Doctor Yorke's sake. He will not want any noise or excitement after such a terrible experience as that of the last few days must have been. Be content to leave him to Doctor Dizarte for to-day. It will be better for him."

Perhaps it would; but I was genuinely disappointed, for all that. I looked at madame's pale, handsome face for a moment or two before asking: "The rector has gone, too, I suppose?"

"Of course."

"To be sure—it is he really who is wanted. I say, mother, it was an awful affair, wasn't it?"

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You will find that this simple remedy takes hold of a cough more quickly than anything else ever used. Usually ends a deep-seated cough inside of 24 hours.

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"My dear boy, pray do not speak of it! It is too terrible—too miserable to talk about. It is better and kinder to let it rest if only for the sake of that unhappy man. It is a thing to be thankful for that he lived long enough to speak; otherwise—" And here madame was silent for a few moments.

"Ay—otherwise! I shuddered as I thought of what that implied; for I knew that if Raby St. George had only known that Natalie Orme loved Roger Yorke, he would never have spoken to clear him, but would have died dumb."

"Mother," I said, breaking the silence, "you have never said it outright, but when things looked blackest against him, you never believed, did you, that Roger was guilty?"

"No," madame answered, decisively. "I did not, Ned."

"Thank you," I said, gratefully. "I'm glad you say that—the more that I've sometimes fancied that you didn't much like Yorke."

"You are mistaken, my dear. Within the last few months I have learned to like Doctor Yorke greatly. And I should be disposed to like him if only on account of his kindness to that unhappy woman—poor thing!"

(To be continued.)

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