

## OUT OF THE RUNNING.

(Concluded.)

'It's my friend, Mr. Elias Mason,' said she.

'Your friend! He had lost his diffidence in his anger. I know all about that. What does he want here every second evening?'

'Perhaps he wonders what you want. Does he? I wish he would come and ask me. I'd let him see what I wanted. Quick too.'

'He can see it now. He has taken off his hat to me,' said Dolly, laughing.

Her laughter was the finishing touch. He had meant to be impressive, and it seemed that he had only been ridiculous. He swung round upon his heel.

'Very well, Miss Foster,' said he, in a choking voice, 'that's all right. We know where we are now. I didn't come here to be made a fool of; so good-day to you.' He plucked at his hat, and walked furiously off in the direction from which they had come. She looked after him, half frightened, in the hope of seeing some sign that he had relented; but he strode onwards with a rigid neck and vanished at a turn of the lane.

When she turned again, her other visitor was close upon her—a thin, wiry, sharp-featured man, with a sallow face and a quick, nervous manner.

'Good evening, Miss Foster. I thought that I would walk over from Petersfield as the weather was so beautiful; but I did not expect to have the good fortune to meet you in the fields.'

'I am sure that father will be very glad to see you, Mr. Mason. You must come in and have a glass of milk.'

'No, thank you, Miss Foster; I should very much prefer to stay out here with you. But I am afraid I have interrupted you in a chat. Was not that Mr. Adam Wilson who left you this moment?' His manner was subdued, but his questioning eyes and compressed lips told of a deeper and more furious jealousy than that of his rival.

'Yes, it was Mr. Adam Wilson.' There was something about Mason—a certain concentration of manner—which made it impossible for the girl to treat him lightly, as she had done the other.

'I have noticed him here several times lately.'

'Yes. He is head foreman, you know, at the big quarry.'

'Oh, indeed. He is fond of your society, Miss Foster. I can't blame him for that, can I, since I am equally so myself. But I should like to come to some understanding with you. You cannot have misunderstood what my feelings are to you. I am in a position to offer you a comfortable home. Will you be my wife, Miss Foster?'

Dolly would have liked to make some jesting reply, but it was hard to be funny with those two eager, fiery eyes fixed so intently upon her own. She began to walk slowly towards the house, while he paced along beside her, still waiting for his answer.

'You must give me a little time, Mr. Mason,' she said at last. 'Marry in haste, and repent at leisure.'

'But you shall never have cause to repent.'

'I don't know. One hears such things.'

'You shall be the happiest woman in England.'

'That sounds very nice. You are a poet, Mr. Mason, are you not?'

'I am a lover of poetry.'

'And poets are fond of flowers?'

'I am very fond of flowers.'

'Then perhaps you know something of these?' She took out the humble little sprig and held it out to him with an arch, questioning glance. He took it and pressed it to his lips.

'I know that it has been near you; where I should wish to be,' said he.

'Good evening, Mr. Mason!' It was Mrs. Foster who had come out to meet them. 'Where's Mister—Oh—ah! Yes, of course, the teapot's on the table, and you'd best come in afore it's over-drawn.'

When Elias Mason left the farmhouse that evening, he drew Dolly aside at the door.

'I won't be able to come before Saturday,' said he.

'We shall be glad to see you, Mr. Mason.'

'I shall want my answer then.'

'Oh, I cannot give any promise, you know.'

'But I shall live in hope.'

'Well no one can prevent you from doing that.' As she came to realize her power over him, she had lost something of her fear, and could answer him now nearly as freely as if he were simple Adam Wilson.

She stood at the door, leaning against the wooden porch, with the long trailers of honeysuckle framing her tall, slight figure. The great red sun was low in the west, its upper rim peeping over the low hills, shooting long, dark shadows from the beech trees in the field, from the little group of tawny cows, and from the man who walked away from her. She smiled to see how immense

the legs were, and how tiny the body in the great flat giant which kept pace beside him. In front of her in the little garden the bees droned, a belated butterfly or an early moth fluttered slowly over the flower beds, a thousand little creatures buzzed and hummed, all busy working out their tiny destinies, as she, too, was working out hers, and each doubtless looking upon their own as the central point of the universe. A few months for the gnat, a few years for the girl, but each was happy now in the heavy summer air. A beetle scuttled out upon the gravel path and bored onwards, its six legs all working hard, butting up against the stones, upsetting itself in ridges, but still gathering itself up and rushing onwards to some all-important appointment somewhere in the grass plot. A bat fluttered up from behind the beech tree. A breath of night air sighed softly over the hill-side, with a tinge of the chill sea spray in its coolness. Dolly Foster shivered, and had turned to go in when her mother came out from the passage.

'Whatever is that Bill doing there?' she cried.

Dolly looked, and saw for the first time that the nameless farm laborer was crouching under the beech, his browns and yellows blending with the bark behind him.

'You get out o' that, Bill,' screamed the farmer's wife.

'What be I to do?' he asked humbly, slouching forward.

'Go, out chaff in the barn. He nodded and strolled away, a comical figure in his mud crusted boots, his strap-tied corduroys, and his almond-colored skin.

'Well then you've taken Elias,' said the mother, passing her arm around the daughter's waist. 'I seed him a-kissing your flower. Well, I'm sorry for Adam, for he is a well-grown young man, blue ribbon, with money in the Post office. Still some one must suffer, else how could we be purified? If the milk's left alone it won't ever turn into butter. It wants troubling and stirring—and churning. That's what we want, too, before we can turn angels. It's just the same as butter.'

Dolly laughed. 'I have not taken Elias yet,' said she.

'No? What about Adam then?'

'Nor him either.'

'Oh, Dolly, girl, can you not take advice from them that is older? I tell you again that you'll lose them both.'

'No, no, mother. Don't you fret yourself. It's all right. But you can see how hard it is. I like Elias, for he can speak so well, and is so sure and masterful. And I like Adam because—well, because I know very well that Adam loves me.'

'Well, bless my heart you can't marry them both. You'd like all the pears in the basket.'

'No, mother, but I know how to choose. You see this bit of flower, dear.'

'It's a common dog rose.'

'Well, where d'you think I found it?'

'In the hedge likely.'

'No, but on my window ledge.'

'Oh, but when?'

'This morning. It was six when I got up, and there it lay fresh and sweet, and new plucked. 'Twas the same yesterday and the day before. Every morning there it lies. It's a common flower, as you say, mother, but it is not so common to find a man who'll break short his sleep day after day just to show a girl that the thought of her is in his heart.'

'And which was it?'

'Ah, if I knew. I think it's Elias. He's a poet, you know, and poets do nice things like that.'

'And how will you be sure?'

'I'll know before morning. He will come, whichever it is. And whichever it is he's the man for me. Did father ever do that for you before you married?'

'I can't say he did, dear. But father was always a powerful heavy sleeper.'

'Well, then, mother, you needn't fret any more about me, for as sure as I stand here, I'll tell you to-morrow which of them it is to be.'

That evening the farmer's daughter set herself to clearing off all those odd jobs which accumulate in a large household. She polished the dark, old-fashioned furniture in the sitting room. She cleared out the cellar, rearranged the bins, counted up the cider, made a great cauldron full of raspberry jam, potted, papered, and labelled it. Long after the whole household were in bed she pushed on with her self-imposed tasks until the night was far gone, and she very spent and weary. Then she stirred up the smouldering kitchen fire, made herself a cup of tea, and, carrying it up to her own room, she sat sipping it and glancing over an old bound volume of the 'Leisure Hour.' Her seat was behind the little dimity window curtains, where she could see without being seen.

The morning had broken, and a brisk wind had sprung up with the dawn. The sky was of the lightest, palest blue, with a sound of flying white clouds shredded over the face of it, dividing, coalescing, overtaking one another; but sweeping ever from

the pink of the east to the still shadowy west. The high, eager voice of the wind whistled and sang outside, rising from mean to shriek, and then sinking again to a dull mutter and grumble. Dolly rose up to wrap her shawl around her, and as she sat down again in an instant her doubts were resolved, and she had seen that for which she had waited.

He window faced the inner yard, and was some eight feet from the ground. A man standing beneath it could not be seen from above. But she saw enough to tell her all she wished to know. Silently, suddenly, a hand appeared from below, had laid a sprig of flower upon her ledge, and had disappeared. It did not take two seconds; she saw no face, she heard no sound, but she had seen the hand, and she wanted nothing more. With a smile she threw herself on the bed, drew a rug over her, and dropped into a heavy slumber.

She was awoke by her mother plucking at her shoulder.

'It's breakfast time, Dolly, but I thought you would be weary, so I brought you up some bread and coffee. Sit up, like a dearie, and take it.'

'All right, mother. Thank you. I'm all dressed, so I'll be ready to come down soon.'

'Bless the gal, she's never had her things off! And, dearie me, here's the flower outside the window, sure enough. Well, and did you see who put it there?'

'Yes, I did.'

'Who was it then?'

'It was Adam.'

'Was it now? Well, I shouldn't have thought that he had it in him. Then Adam it's to be. Well, he's steady, and that's better than being clever, yea, seven-and-seventy fold. Did he come across the yard?'

'No, along by the wall.'

'How did you see him then?'

'I didn't see him.'

'Then how can you tell?'

'I saw his hand.'

'But d'you tell me you know Adam's hand?'

'It would be a blind man that couldn't tell it from Elias' hand. Why the one is as brown as that coffee, and the other as white as the cup, with great blue veins all over it.'

'Well, now, I shouldn't have thought of it, but so it is. Well, it'll be a busy day, Dolly.'

'Just hark to the wind!'

It had, indeed, increased during the few hours since dawn to a very violent tempest. The panes of the window rattled and shook. Glancing out Dolly saw cabbage leaves and straw whirling up past the casement.

'The great hayrick is giving. They're all trying to prop it up. My, but it do blow!'

It did, indeed? When Dolly came down stairs it was all that she could do to push her way through the porch. All along the horizon the sky was brassy-yellow, but above, the wind screamed and stormed, and the torn, hurrying clouds now huddled together, and now frayed off into countless tattered streamers. In the field near the house her father and three or four laborers were working with poles and ropes, hatless, their hair and beards flying, staying up a great bulging hayrick. Dolly watched them for a moment, and then, stooping her head and rounding her shoulders, with one hand up to her little straw hat, she staggered off across the fields.

Adam Wilson was at work always on a particular part of the hillside, and thither it was that she bent her steps. He saw the trim, dapper figure, with its flying skirts and ribbons, and he came forward to meet her with a great white crowbar in his hand. He walked slowly, however, and his eyes were downcast, with the air of a man who still treasures a grievance.

'Good mornin', Miss Foster.'

'Good mornin', Mr. Wilson. Oh, if you are going to be cross with me, I'd best go home again.'

'I'm not cross, Miss Foster. I take it very kind that you should come out this way on such a day.'

'I wanted to say to you—I want to say that I was sorry if I had made you angry yesterday. I didn't mean to make fun. I didn't, indeed. It is only my way of talking. It was so good of you, so noble of you, to let it make no difference.'

'None at all, Dolly.' He was quite radiant again. 'If I didn't love you so, I wouldn't mind what that chap from Petersfield said or did. And if I could only think that you cared more for me than for him—'

'I do, Adam.'

'God bless you for saying so! You've lightened my heart, Dolly. I have to go to Portsmouth for the firm to-day. To-morrow night I'll call and see you.'

'Very well, Adam, I—Oh, my God, what's that!'

A rending, breaking noise in the distance, a dull rumble, and a burst of shouts and cries.

'The rick's down! There's been an accident! They both started running down the hill.

'Father!' panted the girl. 'Father!'

'He's all right!' shouted her companion; 'I can see him. But there's some one down. They're lifting him now. And here's one running like mad for the doctor.'

A farm laborer came rushing up the lane. 'Don't you go, Missey, he cried. 'A man's hurt.'

'Who.'

'It's Bill. The rick came down, and the ridge-pole caught him across the back. He's dead, I think. Leastwise there's not much life in him. I'm off for Dr. Strong! He beat his shoulder to the wind and lumbered off down the road.'

'Poor Bill! I'm glad it wasn't father! They were at the edge of the field now in which the accident had taken place. The rick lay, a shapeless mound upon the earth, with a long thick pole protruding from it, which had formerly supported the tarpaulin drawn across it in case of rain. Four men were walking slowly away, one shoulder humped, one hanging, and betwixt them they bore a formless clay colored bundle. He might have been a clod of the earth he tilled, so passive, so silent, still brown—for death itself could not have taken the burn off his skin—but with patient bovine eyes looking heavily from under half-closed lids. He breathed jerkily, but he neither cried out nor groaned. There was something almost brutal and inhuman in his absolute stolidity. He asked no sympathy for his life had been without it. It was a broken tool rather than an injured man.

'Can I do anything, father?'

'No lass, no. This is no place for you. I've sent for the doctor. He'll be here soon.'

'But where are they taking him?'

'To the loft where he sleeps.'

'I'm sure he's welcome to my room, father.'

'No, no, lass. Better leave it alone.'

But the little group were passing as they spoke, and the injured lad had heard the girl's words.

'Thank ye kindly, Missey,' he murmured, with a little flicker of life, and then sank back again into his stolidity and his silence.

Well, a farm hand is a useful thing, but what is a man to do with one who has an injured spine and half his ribs smashed? Farmer Foster shook his head and scratched his chin as he listened to the doctor's report.

'He can't get better?'

'No.'

'Then we had best move him.'

'Where to?'

'To the work'us hospital. He came from there just this time eleven years. It'll be like going home to him.'

'I fear that he is going home,' said the doctor, gravely. 'But it's out of the question to move him now. He must lie where he is for better or for worse.'

And it certainly looked for worse rather than for better. In a little loft above the stable he was stretched upon a tiny blue pallet which lay upon the planks. Above were the gaunt rafters, hung with saddles, harness, old scythe blades—the hundred odd things which droop, like bats, from inside such buildings. Beneath them upon two pegs hung his own pitiable wardrobe, the blue shirt and the grey, the stained trousers, and the muddy coat. A quaint chaff-cutting machine stood at his head, and a great bin of chaff behind it. He lay very quiet, still uncomplaining, his eyes fixed upon the small square window looking out at the drifting sky, and at this strange world which God has made so queerly—so very queerly.

An old woman, the wife of a laborer, had been set to nurse him, for the doctor had said that he was not to be left. She moved about the room, arranging and ordering, grumbling to herself from time to time at this lonely task which had been assigned to her. There were some flowers in broken jars upon a cross-beam, and these with a touch of tenderness she carried and arranged upon a deal packing case beside the patient's head. He lay motionless, and as he breathed there came a gritty, rubbing sound from somewhere in his side, but he followed his companion about with his eyes, and even smiled once as she grouped the flowers round him.

He smiled again when he heard that Mrs. Foster and her daughter had been to ask after him that evening. They had been down to the post office together, where Dolly had sent off a letter which she had very carefully drawn up, addressed to Elias Mason, Esq., and explaining to that gentleman that she had formed her plans for life, and that he need spare himself the pain of coming for his answer upon the Saturday. As they came back they stopped in the stable, and inquired through the loft door as to the sufferer. From where they stood they could hear that horrible grating sound in his breathing. Dolly hurried away with her face quite pale under her freckles. She was too young to face the horrid details of suffering, and yet she was a year older than this wail, who lay in silence, facing death itself.

All night he lay very quiet—so quiet that were it not for the one sinister sound his nurse might have doubted whether life was

still in him. She had watched him and tended him as well as she might, but she was herself feeble and old, and just as the morning light began to steal palely through the small loft window, she sank back in her chair in a dreamless sleep. Two hours passed, and the first voices of the men as they gathered for their work aroused her. She sprang to her feet. Great heaven! the pallet was empty. She rushed down into the stables, distracted, wringing her hands. There was no sign of him. But the stable door was open. He must have walked—but how could he walk?—he must have crawled—have writhed that way. Out she rushed, and as they heard her tale, the newly-risen laborers ran with her, until the farmer with his wife and daughter were called from their breakfast by the bustle, and joined also in this strange chase. A whoop, a cry, and they were drawn round to the corner of the yard on which Miss Dolly's window opened. There he lay within a few yards of the window, his face upon the stones, his feet thrusting out from his tattered night gown, and his track marked by the blood from his wounded knees. One hand was thrown out before him, and in it he held a little sprig of the pink dog rose. They carried him back, cold and stiff, to the pallet in the loft, and the old nurse drew the sheet over him and left him, for there was no need to watch him now. The girl had gone to her room, and her mother followed her thither, all unnerved by this glimpse of death.

'And to think,' said she, 'that it was only him, after all.'

But Dolly sat at the side of her bed, and sobbed bitterly in her apron.

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The Press and the Scab.

The press of this country that are fighting for the continuance of the limitless privileges that monopoly now enjoys, are manifesting an unusual degree of interest for the rights of the so-called non-union man. These free rights champions are moved by patriotic impulses alone in demanding that these citizens whose independence of spirit impels them to resist the tyranny of labor unions shall be protected and shielded from the threats and blows of united labor. They talk of our free institutions, of the threatened danger to our republic, at the attempt to muzzle individual liberty and the right to labor is pathetically dwelt upon by these oracles of liberty.

Who are or from whence comes this class of men that are termed non-union men? Can they be found in the ranks of intelligent labor? Does the worker come in contact with him in peaceful times to any extent? Did you ever find a man who was not identified with some labor union have any well defined reasons therefor? Is this non-union element a respectable class of citizens who differ honestly from the organized worker? There are two causes that make the scab:

1st. The viciously selfish who thrive on the misery of others, who are incapable of giving a thought to any cause, however just, who are actuated by the same spirit that causes strong men to trample women and children to death to save themselves, yet without any of the extenuating circumstances that self preservation impels.

2nd. The ignorant labor of the Old World, this labor that can subsist on 75 cents and one dollar per day, whose mode of living is not to be compared for cleanliness to savages. This is the class that the money barons, aided by their purchased organs, would have labor on a level with. The interest that causes this outcry for individual liberty is the same interest that the master has for the slave. The combination of monopoly that now controls the output of most of the necessities of life, which practically has put the power in the hands of a few men of fixing the prices of fuel and food for the whole nation, receive flattering words of encouragement and admiration from these same men who are so watchful of the liberties of scabs. By them the Palmers and Calls of the United States Senate, are termed anarchists, the labor union a menace to liberty, but the Fricks and Lovejoys shrewd typical Americans who are to be loved for the noble stand they have taken to down the hydra-headed labor union. Such are the lines that are now well defined. Who that will look at the issues calmly, will say where the real danger to our country lies? "The Gods make mad whom they would first destroy." And it seems that wealth and power ever hastens to its own destruction.

Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.  
—Paving Cutters' Journal.

She—Do you love me for myself alone?  
He—Yes, and when we're married I don't want any of the family thrown in.

Citizen (with two revolvers and Winchester)—Did you view the body o' th' nigger we lynched last night? Coroner (trembling)—Y—e—s. Citizen (threateningly)—Wot's y'r verdict? Coroner (hastily)—Committed suicide at the hands of persons unknown.