

"She is no daughter of mine, now," replied Mr. Howson. "Her disobedience has brought disgrace on me and mine, and the bed she has made for herself she must lie in. I don't want to be too harsh with her and won't let her starve or go on the street for a living, but I won't have anything to do with her."

Mr. Morton knew it was useless to argue with him then, so he wisely let the matter drop.

The next morning Morton and Murphy started for Saratoga, and arrived there the same evening.

It was a bright, warm evening and Mrs. Griffith was seated at the window of her bedroom enjoying what little breeze there was, and the doctor was in the adjoining sitting room writing a letter.

There was a knock at the door, and, in answer to the doctor's "come in," Mr. Morton entered accompanied by Murphy and a local officer, whose services had been engaged by Murphy to make the arrest.

Morton and Griffith looked into each other's eyes, but neither spoke. The doctor gazed at that stern, calm face and felt that the secret of the false part he had played was known to Morton; but he cared nothing for that now, he only thought that the dead had been brought to evidence against him.

"That is the man," said Morton pointing to him, and the local officer advanced and put his hand on his shoulder.

"I arrest you in the name of the law, for the murder of your wife Mary Griffith, at Longueuil, Canada, on 7th Inst. You are my prisoner."

Discovered! All his plans, all his schemes, all his sin for no purpose. Discovered! and discovery meant death, and a shameful death at that. All the force of the evidence against him, all the certainty of his being hung flashed through his mind in a moment; and Morton would triumph over him at last, and perhaps console himself with Annie, after the gallows had done its work. That should never be; he would sacrifice two more lives rather than that should happen.

All this had passed through his mind in an instant, while he was standing by the chair from which he had risen on the entrance of his unwelcome visitors; in another instant he had put his hand behind him, drawn a small silver mounted revolver which he always carried, and aimed directly at Morton's head.

But Charlie Morton's time had not yet come. Never from the moment of his entering the room had Murphy removed his glance from the doctor, and the lynx-eyed detective saw the rapid motion with which the pistol was drawn, and sprang forward in time to throw up Griffith's hand and the bullet buried itself harmlessly in the frescoing of the room.

The doctor turned savagely on the detective, and a fierce struggle for the possession of the pistol ensued; but Murphy, although not a particularly strong man has a grip like a vice, and he held on until the local officer interfered, and in a few seconds the doctor was securely handcuffed.

Simultaneously with the report of the pistol there rang out a piercing shriek, and then came a heavy fall in the adjoining apartment. Morton at once rushed into the room and found, as he expected, Annie lying senseless on the ground. It was the work of a moment to lift her in his strong arms and lay her gently on the sofa, and then he tried all the means he knew of to restore her to consciousness.

And what a consciousness! He thought of it bitterly, sadly, as he chafed her hands and threw water on her face; would it not be better for her if she never awoke from that death-like wood; never returned to the world in which she was doomed to suffer so much in the future; never knew in this life the other baseness of the man on whom she had placed her young affections, and who had brought such deep disgrace upon her?

He gazed at the pale still face, and ashy lips, and he almost hoped—much as he loved her—that she had been saved from all further pain and sorrow in this world.

It was many minutes before she showed any signs of returning consciousness, and the doctor had meanwhile been removed; but gradually a slight tinge of color showed itself on her cheeks, slowly a few faint sighs escaped her, fluttering like the trembling eyelids opened, and she looked about her in a bewildered sort of way. Her gaze fell on Morton, and she looked at him half wondering as if she doubted her senses in seeing him by her side.

"Charlie?" she said questioningly.

"Yes; he still a little, Annie, you have not quite recovered."

"Where is Harry," she asked; then with a sudden exclamation as the remembrance of the cruel words she had heard came back to her, "Ah! they have taken him away; that man that said he had committed—no, I won't say it; I don't believe it; let me go to him," she rose in her excitement and would have moved toward the door, but Morton gently restrained her.

"You cannot go just now, Annie; you are too weak and excited; when you recover I have something very serious to say to you."

"Ah!" she exclaimed as another remembrance returned to her, "that pistol shot; tell me,—tell me,"—she clutched his arm with one hand and pressed the other to her heart as she almost whispered the words, "is he dead?"

"No."

"Thank God for that! Who was wicked enough to fire at him?"

"No one; don't agitate yourself; I want you

to recover your strength as fast as possible. I have something very terrible to tell you."

"Terrible! Terrible! What do you mean? You cannot dare to insinuate that what I heard that man say is true? You know it is false."

"It is true," mournfully responded Mr. Morton.

"Alas! only too true."

"It is a base, wicked lie; this is some foul plot to separate him from me, and—you—you; it is you who have done this; you have concocted this dastardly scheme." The woman's manner was wild and excited now, and her eyes gleamed with anger and her face was flushed as scarlet as she approached Morton; but her manner suddenly changed, and she said in a sad sorrowful tone, "Oh! Charlie, Charlie, to think that you, whom I have known ever since I was a little girl, should have done this thing."

"Good heavens, Annie, what can you mean. Do you think—Here," he continued drawing a paper from his pocket, "you must know the truth, some time. I cannot tell you; read that."

She took the paper from him and a violent spasm shook her whole frame as she read the first words: "Murder.—A doctor kills his wife and elopes with another woman." She did not flutter, however, but read on steadily to the end, and with distending eyes and horror blanching her lips and cheeks; read with the words seeming to burn themselves into her brain; read with all the blood in her body feeling as if it had turned to ice and her head to fire; read with the room dancing around her, the story of her husband's guilt.

It was very accurately and substantially told, although it did have—as Mr. Morton had thought—a plentiful supply of "double heads," and "cross headings," and was written in rather florid style; but it was correct. Mr. Farron had seen that if he did not give the reporters a correct version of the whole affair they would hush up some kind of a story replete with—well, say, misstatements,—won't say lies, because newspapers never tell lies, everybody knows that; and so he had told the whole story as he knew it; and there it all was in print, even the story of her elopement, and she stood there and read it, read how the man she loved and honored had for years been a living lie; how he had a wife living when he asked her to marry him; how he had murdered that wife to gratify his wishes.

She read it slowly and carefully, omitting nothing, and Morton stood and wondered at her firmness; but his wonder changed to grief and fear when she threw the paper from her with a loud laugh and turned her flashing eyes, in which the light of madness gleamed, full upon him.

"Ha, ha!" she laughed, "he killed her, killed her that he might marry me. I will go to him at once, he shall and I can be faithful to him even now," and she turned and threw herself on the sofa in a violent paroxysm of hysterics.

Mr. Morton rang the bell hastily, and three or four chamber-maids who had been waiting suspiciously near the door wondering what that pistol shot meant, and what had caused the doctor's arrest, entered at once, and to them Morton resigned her while he went downstairs to obtain medical aid.

A doctor was soon found, and under his hands she shortly began to revive; but no returning consciousness came with the revival, the light of reason had fled, and brain fever set in.

Mr. Morton sat all that long, dismal night by her bedside, watching with almost breathless intensity and listening to her incoherent, rambling utterances. Now she was a happy school girl again; now she laughed over some youthful frolic; then she would revert with horror to the dreadful story she had just read, and repeat long paragraphs, for the words seemed to have branded themselves on her brain; he sat and watched and wondered why his own brain did not give way under the strain which had been placed on it.

He had telegraphed to Mr. Howson as soon as the doctor had pronounced the attack brain fever, he had also sent a brief telegram to Miss Moxton informing her of her niece's condition, and now he could only watch and wait.

I have already mentioned that there was no doubt about Miss Moxton's temper, and had there been it would have been dispelled had anyone seen her when the news of Annie's elopement reached her; her first net was to box the ears of Miss Julia, who conveyed the information, which she curaged that young lady that she vowed never to speak to her aunt again; then Miss Moxton indulged in a long tirade about "shameful proceedings," and "impudent hussies," and "the fast girls of the present day," and such-like topics, and the way that flexible nose went up and down was wonderful to see. She fully shared Mr. Howson's resentment against Annie and strongly advised him never to recognise her again.

But Miss Moxton was like a good many dogs whose bark is worse than their bite, and the news of the murder, following so close on that of the elopement, greatly cooled her anger. Annie's punishment had been so terrible and had followed so quickly on her fault that Miss Moxton felt her heart melting towards the poor sorrow-stricken girl she had reared almost from infancy, and she knew that Annie had only to come to her and ask for forgiveness to receive it.

But Annie did not come, and Miss Moxton's heart was getting hard again when Morton's telegram arrived, and it melted down in a moment.

It was late in the evening when the telegram arrived, but Mr. Howson had not yet gone to the Club and was seated in the library when Miss Moxton entered. A walk to that apartment

from that lady was a great novelty, and Mr. Howson was proportionally astonished.

"Is there anything wrong, Jane?" he asked —Jane was Miss Moxton's maiden name.

"Yes, there is something very wrong," responded Miss Moxton promptly. "You and I have both been wrong, James, and the sooner we repair that wrong the better. Did you receive a telegram from Charlie?"

"Yes; the murdering doctor has been arrested, I am glad to say."

"And Annie is dying of brain fever."

"Not quite so bad as that, I think. Charlie says she is ill; an attack of nervousness, that's all."

"Nervous afflictions!" exclaimed Miss Moxton with a violent elevation of the nose. "Can't you see that the shock has deranged the girl, and unless she is properly taken care of she will die amongst strangers or become a confirmed lunatic? She must be brought home at once."

"Not here; she has chosen her own path, let her follow it. I will furnish whatever money she may require. I will not see her starve or beg; but I never want to see her again."

"James Howson, you're a brute. When Annie ran away I was as incensed at her as you; but now she is ill, in trouble, in disgrace, and amongst strangers; thank heaven my heart is not made of stone," this was said with a toss of the head and an elevation of the nose which clearly indicated that Miss Moxton knew some one who was not so happily situated. "I shall go to Saratoga to-morrow and bring her home."

"Not to my house."

"Then it shall be to mine."

"Yours!"

"Yes, mine. You have forgotten, I suppose, that I have two thousand a year in my own right. I mean to take a house and have Annie live with me."

Mr. Howson looked at her in blank amazement. For fifteen years, since the death of his wife, Miss Moxton had presided over his establishment and filled the place of a mother to his children; for fifteen years his household affairs had been managed with an ability which he only too well appreciated, and the idea of attempting to continue house-keeping without Miss Moxton at the head of affairs seemed so hopeless to him that he sat looking at her in blank bewilderment.

"You can't be serious, Jane."

"I never was more serious in my life; if you have no feeling for your own daughter I have some for my sister's child, and I won't leave her to the cold charity of strangers while I have the means of providing a roof to shelter her. Will you be kind enough to tell me when the first train starts for Saratoga?"

"Six o'clock to-morrow morning," he answered mechanically.

"Very well, I shall go by that train. If you come to your senses before I return, you can telegraph me to bring Annie here, otherwise I shall take her to a hotel until I can obtain a house," and Miss Moxton sailed majestically out of the room with her nose almost dislocated. It was so fearfully elevated.

The next morning Miss Moxton left for Saratoga, where she arrived the same night and found Annie still dangerously ill. Amongst her other accomplishments Miss Moxton was an excellent nurse, and she immediately installed herself in the parlor adjoining Annie's room and took that young lady under her special care.

Good nursing is scarcely less important than good medical treatment; but although Annie had the most constant and devoted care, and the best medical attendance which money lavishly spent could procure, it was three weeks before the light of reason once more shone in her eyes, and it was past the middle of November before she was strong enough to return to Montreal. She returned to her father's house, fully forgiven.

Mr. Howson had made a show of holding out, but one week's experimenting at keeping house without Miss Moxton to manage for him brought him to terms, besides he really loved Annie very dearly, and when his anger had had time to cool, he made up his mind that he had spoken and acted hastily and, like a sensible man as he was, he owned his rashness; so, one day morning Miss Julia was told to pack her trunks, the house was left in charge of the servants, and Mr. Howson and Julia started for Saratoga where they remained until Annie was strong enough to travel.

During all the time of Annie's illness Mr. Morton never left her; no brother could have been kinder or more affectionate, or more untiring in his efforts to be of service than he was. When she returned to consciousness it was he who devised all manner of contrivances to amuse and interest her; it was he who planned the short drives she was allowed to take—they never went out to the lake, as he had heard it was a favorite drive of the doctor's and he feared to awaken unpleasant memories. It was Morton who took her in his strong arms as he would a little baby and carried her down to the carriage; it was he who carefully wrapped her up, as the weather grew colder, it was he who was always by her side preventing her every wish.

Very gentle, and tender and kind was Mr. Morton and very quiet and thankful was Annie. Mr. Howson looked on contentedly, and even Miss Moxton forgot to turn up her nose. Very tender and affectionate was Mr. Morton, but it was not the affection or tenderness of a lover; but rather that of a fond brother. No thought of taking advantage of his position to speak one word of love ever entered his head, and Annie saw and liked him the better for it.

SCENES II.

DRAG ON THE RIVER.

Time, twentieth of January, eight o'clock; wind and seventy-one; place, the St. Lawrence river, opposite Montreal.

Dr. Griffith was taken back in Montreal, but was not tried at the Court of Queen's Bench in September, the case being postponed by consent of counsel, until the March term.

He was very silent, very reserved; he contented himself with a simple plea of "not guilty," at the preliminary examination, and engaged two of the best criminal lawyers he could get to defend him. He offered no explanation, gave no information to his counsel, and they made up their minds they were defending a hopeless case, although they tried their best to find some tenable line of defence.

Time slipped away and Annie returned to Montreal; she was still very weak, very pale, very thin; all her beautiful hair, of which she had been so proud, had been cut off during the fever; her form was wasted, her cheeks hollow and devoid of color, and she was scarcely recognizable as the happy, joyous beauty who had run away only a few short weeks before.

She had never mentioned Griffith's name since that fatal night at Saratoga, and all allusion to him was carefully avoided in her presence; she was very still and silent, all her old gaiety and spirit seemed to have been driven out of her, and she moved about the house like the ghost of her former self.

Mr. Morton returned with the Howsons and continued as attentive as ever; the short drives were resumed, sometimes Julia or Miss Moxton accompanied them, sometimes they were alone. Almost every evening he made a short call, and she seemed to enjoy his society more than that of anyone else; a quiet sort of melancholy had settled on her, and Charlie was the only person who seemed to possess the power of temporarily driving it away. For no one else would she sing or play, and, sometimes, when she was playing some brilliant piece he would see the tears start into her eyes and quietly course down her wasted cheek. It was very bitter for him to watch her grieving so, but how could he help her.

Mr. Howson noticed this growing intimacy with great satisfaction; he had long ago "made up his mind" that Annie should marry Morton, and it pleased him greatly to see that matters were tending that way. He was too wise a man, however, to interfere, and so things were allowed quietly to take their own course.

Miss Moxton highly approved the turn affairs had taken, and so careful was she not to interfere that she generally managed, on some pretext or other, to leave the parlor when Morton called, so that he and Annie were a great deal together alone.

One evening about the middle of December they were sitting together, she at the piano idly running over the keys with her thoughts far away, he looking sadly and piningly at her; presently she rose and pushing a low stool to his side sat on it, resting her head on his knee as she used to do when she was a little girl; and Charlie was her big brother; somehow the old time seemed to have come back of late, and at times she could scarcely persuade herself that all the terrible events which had happened so recently were not a horrible dream, and that she was still a little girl with her big brother to watch over and protect her; only one thing recalled her to the reality of what had happened, a plain hoop of gold on the third finger of her left hand.

"Charlie," she said after a short pause, speaking so low that he could scarcely hear her, "will they hang him?"

It was the first time she had alluded in any way to the doctor, and the question came with such startling suddenness that Morton involuntarily started; in a moment her arm was thrown over his shoulder in the old childish manner, and her face was raised beseechingly to his.

"Oh, no, no, Charlie!" she cried piteously, "not that, don't let them kill him; you can save him, I know you can. Do it for my sake, Charlie; I shall die if he does. Don't let them kill him, Charlie, I love him so. I know it is wrong. I know he has been very wicked, that he committed—" she could not utter the word, but continued,—"but did it for my sake; I can't forget that, Charlie, and I feel as if I was to blame too. And then I swore before God to love, honor, and obey him and to cling to him for better or worse; it has turned out worse—Oh! so much worse—but that does not absolve me from my vow. I am his wife still and it is not for me to desert him when all are against him. Help me, Charlie, help me to save his life. I know what a hard thing I am asking you to do, to help the man who has so deeply, deeply wronged you; but, remember "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," and be sure as you are merciful to him, so God will be merciful to you in your hour of need. Promise me, promise me, you will not let them take his life."

The appeal had been uttered so earnestly and so rapidly that Morton had had no chance of interrupting her even had he been so disposed; as she stopped now he said, very gently:

"Annie, as God is my witness, if I had Harry Griffith's life in my hand I would give it to you and say 'take him, be happy with him if you can;' but it is not in my power; I am not his judge; he is in the hands of the law, and no action of mine can stay the law from taking its course. What the result of the trial will be no one can at present positively assert; but it would be cruel in me to raise hopes when I see no probability of their being realized."

She had scarcely heard him, she only knew from the tone of his voice that he was refusing