

THE BATTLE WON.

CHAPTER XIII. IN THE PARK.

The name of James Redmond had a magic effect upon Nessa, whose mind, despite its youthful elasticity, had never been able to throw off the dread and horror impressed upon it by the terrible events of the night at the Towers. This unknown friend's sincerity was marked in his face; his warning was not to be disregarded. She drew vigorously on the rein, and the mare who, at the touch of her whip, had started forward, freeing her bridle with a toss of the head from Eric's hand, now answered with a show of temper, rearing on her hind legs, and then backing with head down, quivering nostrils, and swishing tail. The riding master, who had kept stolidly aloof, watching the proceedings from the tail of his eye in readiness to meet an emergency, now pressing to Nessa's side, asked, in a low tone, if she needed his assistance.

"Please leave me for a few minutes," she said; and then turning to Eric she bent down in her saddle, saying, in a voice tremulous with anxiety, "I do not understand you. Tell me what you mean."

Beautiful she looked with her lithe young figure bent thus, her pale cheek, her prettily-curved lips parted in expectancy, her large dark eyes dilated like a frightened doe's—more beautiful than ever she had appeared to Eric. He gazed up in that wonderful face mute for a moment, and then her peril gave him the power to speak which adoration had taken from him.

"Your life is in danger," he said. "My father told me this morning, and sent me to save you. You have insured your life. The wretch who holds the policy has betrayed you to James Redmond that he may take you away—and put you to death. They have no souls—no love. They will kill you to get money. It does not seem true, but it is true—believe me."

"I do believe it. I have escaped once." "You may not escape again if you fall into that man's hands. Go to my father. See that is his name, and that is where you will find him." He put a card in her hand. "My sister is with him. She loves you, and my father loves you also. To-night we go to our home in Copenhagen. If you will come with us, no one in the world shall take you away—not while I live."

Wonder gave place to gratitude, and with that feeling warming her heart the girl's eyes twinkled, and her face became flushed with rich colour and melted into a smile. She was moved to something more than gratitude by this act of unsought friendship, by the devotion in the eyes of this honest, good-looking young fellow. She was won by his simplicity and earnestness, which gained by the foreign accent with which he spoke, and certain quaint idiomatic terms which would look ridiculous in writing. "If I were a man," she thought, "I would give him my hand, and show him how I feel this kindness." He must have read that wish in her eyes, for he instinctively raised his hand as he said—

"Believe me, we are very true friends." "You have shown me that," she said, and passing the card to her left hand she dropped her right into his. What he did with it she did not seek to know, being occupied in reading the card.

"Eric Petersen," she read.

"Yes, that is my father's name and mine also. My sister's name is Lina. You will go to them."

"Yes," she said, coming back to the gravity of her position. "It is a choice between life and death. But if the choice were not so serious as that," she added, with a gentler inflection, "I would not lose the pleasure of knowing Lina and your father." Then the practical difficulties and consequences occurred to her mind. "But my clothes—I cannot travel in this dress; and I have no money."

"All that is nothing. Lina has many dresses, and my father has money, and everything will be arranged when we get to Copenhagen."

"And, oh! I did not think of that. I am not alone. I have one friend whom I must not forget in thinking of myself."

"You will write from the hotel to Mrs. Redmond," Eric said, in an altered tone, and dropping his eyes for the first time.

"I could telegraph, and she will come and see me. Perhaps she too will go to Copenhagen. That is," she added, as Eric kept his eyes down, and made no response, "if it is agreeable to your family."

"Mrs. Redmond will not leave London with us."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; I have seen to the house."

"Ah, she told you she would not go. I remember she dreads the sea."

"No, it is not that," said Eric, after a brief silence. "I must tell you the truth. When Mrs. Redmond goes out of the house she will be taken to prison."

"Prison! Nessa exclaimed in terror. Taken to prison! Why?"

"Because she is not a good woman."

Nessa was silent a moment; then she said—

"Oh, I am sorry you should say so. It is so unjust—so cruelly untrue. She is the best friend I have in the world. She has saved my life, and she has given up everything for my sake. I might have starved in London alone. She has managed my affairs, and given me all that I have."

Eric looked up at her in joy, wishing his father were there to hear this confirmation of the girl's simplicity and innocence.

"What wrong has she done?" Nessa asked, angrily.

"She has given you what was not hers to give—bought many things in your name which you cannot hope to pay for."

"Everything was for me, and every farthing shall be paid when the man who insured my life pays me what he promised to pay."

"He will never do that. He is plotting to get Mrs. Redmond sent to prison, and put you into the hands of the man who will destroy you."

"Then he has done the wrong, not my fault. Oh, you must see that she is not in fault."

"I may have done her an injustice," Nessa said, fiercely, "and you have wronged me too. Oh, how ill you must think of me—what an ungrateful coward I must seem to believe that I would run away to be out of danger, and leave her to face alone the trouble she had brought upon herself for my sake! But I am not a coward; let them do their worst."

Her nostrils dilated. She set her teeth

and knitted her brows as she quickly gathered up the rein that had slipped from her hand.

"What are you going to do?" Eric cried, in entreaty, again putting his hand upon the rein.

"I am going to my friend," she answered, resolutely. "Please take your hand from the rein."

"You can do no good." "I can try. I can tell the truth, and no one can convict my friend when the truth is known. I must call for help if you detain me."

"One moment, I implore you. You are throwing your life away. It is not my opinion, but the assurance of the police themselves. You cannot save your friend; but I can. And I will, though you do not know how much it costs me."

She had reason to remember those words later on with aching regret; at the moment they only inspired hope. Again she held in her mare, and bent down to listen to his scarcely audible voice. He was speaking rather to himself than to her, as he hurriedly murmured—

"Surely it can be done. We shall find means. It is your life that has to be saved. That is what I have to think of."

"You say you will save her?" said Nessa.

"Yes, if you will save yourself."

"What am I to do?"

"Go to some place of safety, and stay there until I bring your friend to you."

"I will go to your father."

"No," said Eric, shaking his head in sadness; "you must not go to him."

Nessa's mind was too occupied with the thought of her friend's escape to see the significance of this prohibition.

"I could go to the riding school in Finsbury," she suggested, quickly.

"Yes, that is well. That gentleman will take care of you. Wait patiently. I will save your friend."

"Oh, if you do, I will never forget you."

"That is something," said Eric to himself as he turned away. "She will never forget me."

CHAPTER XIV. "DILKED."

Nessa and the riding master passed him rapidly as Eric reached the house. He followed her with his eyes, his heart aching with regret as he remembered the eager joy of watching for her coming day after day, and realised that henceforth he was never more to look for that dear face. By an effort of resolution he turned away that he might concentrate all his thought on the thing he had undertaken to do for her.

After a minute's reflection he said to the cabman, putting a sovereign in his hand—

"That is for what you have done. Now pay attention to what I say, and do as I tell you and I will give you twice as much."

"Right you are, sir," said the cabman, touching his hat, and bending down to receive instructions.

"First, drive back to the house where you set me down."

"The Pines, sir?"

"Yes; but go back by a different way, so that your horse's head is towards Charing Cross."

"I understand, sir."

"I shall go into the house. But some one else will come out and get into the cab; you will not wait for anything; but the instant that person is in the cab you will go."

"Like a shot."

"That is so. Two men are in front of the house."

"I see 'em, sir. One passed the time o' day to me; but I never enter into no conversation with any one when I've got a gentleman fare."

"Good! Those men may try to stop you; but you must not let them."

"I'll give 'em a doing if they try. Of course, sir, if they gets hold of the animal's head."

"They won't do that, I think; but they'll probably run after you, and call out to you to stop."

"Well, they'll have to run like steam to catch me; and as for hollering, they'll screech themselves hoarse fore ever they'll make me hear. No fear, sir, as long as they're not hanging on to the horse."

"When they are quite out of sight, you will open the trap, and take your directions from the person inside. When you have set down that person, you will take this card to the Charing Cross Hotel. If I am not there, my father will give you payment."

He gave the card on which he had written a few words to his father while concluding his instructions, and sprang into the house. The driver started off at a speed that showed his determination to earn his pay.

The labourers were still waiting at the corner of the street. There were two gates to the drive that formed a semicircle before the house: the first stood open. Eric entered by the next, which he flung back in passing. The cab drew up before that one, as being the furthest removed from the corner of the street.

Eric sent his card to Mrs. Merrivale, with the words, "on a matter of importance," written under his name. He was shown into a sitting room. Mrs. Merrivale came down in a couple of minutes with the card in her hand and a look of surprise on her face, which was not lessened when she recognised her visitor.

In a few words Eric laid the whole case before her, dwelling only on Nessa's generous refusal to save herself while her friend was in danger. That seemed to interest Mrs. Merrivale far less than the question of her own escape.

"You say those wretches are waiting outside to take me: how am I to get away?" she asked, shaking with fear.

"Will you follow my direction?"

"Certainly."

"You have a carriage?"

"Yes."

"Can you depend on the driver?"

"If it's to his interest."

"I will make it to his interest. Have you any female servant you can trust to help you?"

"You can trust any one if you make it worth her while to help you. They'll do anything for money."

"Do you know if there is one more anxious than the rest to get money?"

Mrs. Merrivale reflected a moment, and decided that the housemaid was the greediest of gain.

"Let her dress at once in your clothes—the best you have—the things you would wear if you were going to get things at shops. Let her wear a thick veil that cannot be seen through, and fasten it so that it cannot be raised easily."

"I'll sew it."

"Do not forget to let her wear gloves."

"She shall keep her hands in my muff if she can't get my gloves on."

"At the same time you will dress yourself for going out, as simply as possible, not to attract attention. Conceal your hair if you can."

"Yes, yes—I can do that."

"Let another servant pack a valise with a complete change of clothes for Miss Grahame. Hat, gloves—do not forget anything. Her safety—"

"All right; all right," interrupted Mrs. Merrivale, impatiently. "And when we're dressed as you suggest, what then?"

"Where is your coachman?"

"Down stairs."

"How long shall you be packing the valise and dressing?"

"Twenty minutes."

"Then tell your man to be at the front door with the carriage by that time—the horse's head to the west, so that the carriage will go out by the gate nearest the corner of the street."

"Yes—what then?"

"I shall get into the carriage with your servant. If they are detectives at the corner of the street they will stop the carriage before it has gone a dozen yards. The moment you see them occupied in arresting your servant, you will slip out by the other gate, and jump into the cab I have left there. The driver has orders to start off as he finds he is out of danger, and he will ask you where he is to drive to. You will tell him to take you to Radford's in Finsbury where your friend is waiting in dreadful suspense for you."

"Not I," said Mrs. Merrivale emphatically. "I'm not going to Radford's. I shall make for Victoria, and take the first train that leaves there. I'll wire Nessa where she can find me."

Eric concealed his disgust under a stiff inclination of the head. Perhaps he did not wholly dislike a decision which gave him an opportunity of befriending Nessa a little further.

The carriage drove up to the door as Mrs. Merrivale and the housemaid were coming downstairs—the latter thickly veiled and wearing a sealskin mantle and muff, which her mistress had taken the precaution to pad to her own proportions. She was skilled in this sort of work, and had even added to the disguise a knot of false hair, which shone out below the black veil on the back of the girl's head.

"Where is the valise with Miss Grahame's dress?" Eric asked.

"Oh, I've forgotten all about that. There's no time to get it now."

"But I will not go without it," said Eric, firmly.

With a stamp of her foot and a coarse word, Mrs. Merrivale turned and ran upstairs. When she came down with the portmanteau Eric opened it. He was not careless about the least thing that concerned Nessa.

"I do not see any hat," he said.

With another remonstrance Mrs. Merrivale returned to the room above and brought down a toque and a fur jacket as well, foreseeing that she might be sent up again if she omitted that.

She stood back as Eric opened the door. A round hat and a pair of eyes were visible over the wall between the two gates. Eric gave his arm to the housemaid and led her down to the carriage, taking the portmanteau in his right hand. Raising his hat he opened the door, and when the girl was seated, he put the portmanteau at the coachman's feet, saying, in a low voice—

"Radford's riding school in Finsbury. You shall have a pound if you get there in half an hour."

He took the seat beside the housemaid.

"My girl," said he, "I will give you five pounds if you prevent any one seeing your face for five minutes. A man will try to see your face directly; do not let him succeed."

Anxious to secure his sovereign the coachman swept down the drive and out into the road in fine style. The labourers made a dart at the horses' head, but the carriage had gone twenty yards before it was brought to a stand. One of the men stepped up and seated himself beside the driver; the other came to the side of the carriage.

"We don't want to make it unpleasant, sir," said he, "but this lady's got to go to the police station with us. You can get out if you like, and I will take your place."

"You will do nothing of the kind. I refuse to let you take this lady anywhere until you show me your authority."

"I can pretty soon do that. I've got the warrant in my pocket, and I know Mrs. Merrivale is better than she knows me."

"Charlie," said the man on the box in a sharp tone of alarm as he turned round, "there's a female hooking it in that cab. Have you got the right one there?"

Charlie glanced at the cab, and then plucked at the housemaid's veil; but she was prepared for this, and met the attack so well that two valuable minutes were lost before her veil was removed and then only with her bonnet and the knot of false hair.

"Bilked!" he cried, aghast.

"I thought as much," said his mate jumping down from the box. "The right 'un's in that cab, and we're done if we can't catch it up."

With that they bolted off after the rapidly vanishing hansom; while the driver of the Victoria, still thinking of the pound to be won, rattled off in the opposite direction.

In Moorgate Street, Eric stopped the carriage, paid the servants, and taking the portmanteau, told the driver to return to St. John's Wood. In the waiting room of the riding school he found Nessa.

"Where is my friend?" she asked, anxiously, seeing him alone.

"She has escaped; but she thought it better not to come here," Eric replied with a delicate consideration for the girl's feeling towards Mrs. Redmond which led him to conceal the woman's selfish motive. "She will telegraph to you here when she has found a secure place where you may join her."

"She feared they might follow her here and find me. For if any one is guilty it must be I who incurred all those dreadful debts, you know."

She spoke in a tone of earnest persuasion, wishing to disabuse this new friend's mind of the prejudice which he and his family obviously entertained against Mrs. Redmond.

"I hope that no one is more guilty than you," Eric replied, fervently. "Yes; I wish that with my heart for your sake. There is a dress in this valise for you; you may have to make a journey, and it would be impossible in that riding habit."

"Oh, how thoughtful of her!" exclaimed Nessa; "any one but a true friend would have been concerned only about her own safety at such a time."

"A true friend cannot ever forget," he said, with a touch of sadness, not attempting to disabuse her mind and show that it was he and not Mrs. Redmond who had thought of the details."

Nessa called an attendant to take the portmanteau into the ladies' dressing room, and then turning to Eric, she said—

"I want to thank you for all you have done, but I can find no words that are half nice enough just now. Perhaps I may while I am dressing," she added, archly; "will you wait here till I come back?"

"I shall not go away until I must go."

When she was gone from the room, Eric sat with his face buried in his hands, seeing her face as one sees with closed eyes something of light that has fixed itself upon the retina.

A clerk came into the room and apologized.

"I beg your pardon, sir—I thought Miss Grahame was here," he said.

He had an open paper in his hand. Eric rose—

"You have a telegram for Miss Grahame," he said.

"No; the wire addressed to us, but—" he hesitated a moment, "perhaps you can tell us something about it."

He gave the telegram to Eric to read.

"A gentleman will come to you with the Victoria and col. Do not on any account let the carriage go. I will wire further instructions."

The office from which the telegram came was Victoria; there was not a word about Nessa. Eric's heart bounded with a secret hope.

"The ostler says he saw you get out of the Victoria at the corner of the street," he said.

"Yes; it has gone back to St. John's Wood."

The clerk took back the telegram with a shrug and thanked Eric.

"There is no telegram for Miss Grahame," Eric asked.

"None, sir. If any should come I will bring it in at once."

Nessa came down, charming in her furs. The admiration in Eric's face told her that, if her glass had failed to do so.

"No message has come for me yet?" she said, interrogatively.

"None."

"It is stupid to expect one until she has an address to send me. I may have to wait three or four hours." She paused, and then added, her pretty eyes twinkling, "I am afraid I cannot thank you as I should yet awhile."

"When you find words to thank me I may find words to bid you farewell—not before." That is just what she wanted him to say, and he said it as nicely as she could wish.

"We will leave both till the last moment possible. I shall be glad to put it off for quite a long while, for there are many questions that I wish to ask you, and—and I usually have luck about this time."

Eric carried her off to an hotel, and they ate and drank together—Nessa showing a very pretty taste in her selection of dishes and wines, and they laughed and were happy, though each had black care close at hand. Nessa wished to make herself agreeable, as the only way in which she could express her gratitude, while Eric abandoned himself to the delight of the moment, and put away all gloomy thoughts for the gloomy hour that must come with a practical philosophy only possible to the young. An elderly stockbroker with a gouty toe looked at them and said to himself, "They don't know yet what trouble is." But there was another factor in Eric's happiness beyond Nessa's eyes and Nessa's voice and the charms that made up her delightful personality. Radford's clerk, in recommending the hotel at which they dined, had promised that if any telegram for Nessa came in during their absence, he would send it on by a messenger at once. Nearly two hours had passed since they left the riding school and no messenger had come. Every minute added to the probability that Nessa would be compelled to accept his father's offer.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Millions Who Speak English.

A correspondent writes: "It is computed that at the opening of the present century there were about 21,000,000 people who spoke the English tongue. The French-speaking people at that time numbered about 31,500,000 and the Germans exceeded 30,000,000. The Russian tongue was spoken by nearly 31,000,000, and the Spanish by more than 26,000,000. Even the Italian had three-fourths as large a constituency as the English, and the Portuguese three-eighths. Of the 182,000,000 people, or thereabout, who are estimated to have been using these seven languages in the year 1801, the English speakers were less than 13 per cent., while the Spanish were 16, the Germans 18.4, the Russians 18.9, and the French 19.6. This aggregate population has now grown to 400,000,000, of which the English-speaking people number close upon 125,000,000. From 13 per cent. we have advanced to 31 per cent. The French speech is now used by 50,000,000 people, the German by about 70,000,000, the Spanish by 40,000,000, the Russian by 70,000,000, the Italian by about 30,000,000, and the Portuguese by about 13,000,000. The English language is now used by nearly twice as many people as any of the others, and this relative growth is almost sure to continue. English has taken as its own the North American Continent and nearly the whole of Australasia. North America alone will soon have 10,000,000 of English-speaking people, while there are 40,000,000 in Great Britain and Ireland. In South Africa and India also the language is vastly extending."

Victoria's Crown.

The English crown is made up of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, pearls and emeralds, set in silver and gold bands. It weighs thirty-nine ounces and five pennyweights, troy. In it there are 3,452 diamonds, 273 pearls, nine rubis, seventeen sapphires and eleven emeralds.

Praying for Husbands.

A young lady resident of a Western city, not engaged to be married and unmistakably charmingly generous, has prayed every night for her husband, "because, you know, if I am to be married, my husband is living somewhere in this world, and I pray always that he may be delivered from all temptations, be kept in good health, and be successful in whatever path of business he has chosen." "And is this all you pray for in reference to him?" was asked. "Oh, no," and she blushed a little as she made this admission. "I pray that we may soon be brought together."

Very similar to this and a little more interesting, because the story was completed by an actual marriage, is the case of a young lady of Toronto, who must be nameless in this paper, but who until last month's roses blushed at her wedding was a most popular member of the best society of the Provincial Capital. She was an efficient assistant at teas and receptions, and was no more beloved by the ladies, whose cares she lightened, and who helped to entertain her, than by the gentlemen, when her engagement to a last spring, every way worthy of her was announced—as might have been expected from her popularity—she immediately became the object of much interest and attention, and the fortunate groom-to-be was overwhelmed by congratulations upon having secured such a prize. When the early summer's sun began to give a deeper green to the trees and grass, and the earth grew rich in flowers, the quiet ceremonial that made these two one was performed.

In a gush of confidence, inspired by the happiness in store for her, the bride told a friend the following circumstances: She had long believed that what was devoutly prayed for would be given. She was very happy in the love of her family and the affection of the large social circle in which she moved, but she considered marriage that she would never be quite content until she had accomplished this destiny, she had for a year past entreated good St. Anthony, dispenser of temporal blessings to the children of earth, to send her a worthy husband. She declared that the speedy answer to her petitions had filled her with gratitude, and that if ever in her life she had doubted the efficacy of prayer such doubt was forever overcome. The happy pair are now spending their blissful honeymoon "far from the maddening crowd," and it is said that in a certain church in this city may be seen a marble slab erected in honor of St. Anthony, and bearing an inscription indicative of the gratitude felt by one happy woman.

Query: If marriage in this case should prove a failure, which Heaven forefend, would the marble slab come down?

Crop Prospects.

Advices from all quarters of the country indicate that the crop prospects have materially improved during the past few days. Fall wheat, which was in a doubtful position, is now reported to be looking remarkably well. The growth is rank in some places, in others there are some signs of rust, and in low lands it has suffered from an excessive rainfall, but these drawbacks are more than set off by the magnificent outlook in other localities. It was feared that the heavy rain would have laid the wheat, but there appears to have been no such result. Barley promises as fine a crop as wheat. So also do peas, though there are reports that they have been scalded out in low ground. Oats are not looking as well as usual, and the crop promises to be lighter than last year, but favorable weather would improve the outlook for the next fortnight. If it continues favorable we will have a full average crop. There will be an enormous crop of hay. It is estimated that Manitoba alone will raise twenty million bushels of wheat this year, of which a large portion will be available for export.

In Peace Prepare for War.

To preserve peace be prepared for war. That appears to be the motto of the Salisbury government. At any rate it cannot be denied that there is an unusual activity in British military circles as regards the defences of Canada is most apparent, whatever motive may have prompted it. An officer of the British army has been making an inspection of the Canada Pacific railway regarding the capabilities of that road for the rapid transport of troops and munitions of war from India to the Atlantic coast and vice versa. The fortifications at British Columbia are being strengthened and the largest fleet that has ever been stationed in the Pacific is now concentrating at Esquimaux. The fortifications at Halifax are being strengthened, and stringent orders have just been issued to prevent any outsider obtaining information as to what is going on inside the citadel and forts. In addition to this the defences of Halifax have this week been strengthened by the arrival of two large torpedo boats from England. During the present summer the adjutant-generals of the several military districts are to report on the state of the defences of the section of the country over which each commands.

Diseases in American Cattle.

American cattle exporters are chafing under the restrictions imposed upon them by the British authorities placing their cattle upon the scheduled list, and are making an effort to have the restriction removed. The state department at Washington has appointed three veterinary inspectors to inspect all American cattle landed in Great Britain. One will be stationed at Liverpool, one at London, and one at Glasgow. By this means they hope to convince the British authorities that the restrictions are unjustifiable, that no contagious diseases exist in their country. The chief difficulty connected with this scheme is the undisputed and undeniable fact that contagious diseases exist, and that frequently they work great havoc among American herds. Indeed, within the last two weeks a shipment from New York arrived at Liverpool, amongst which was found an animal affected with pleuropneumonia. These cases which are known to the British authorities will go far to set aside the assertion that "contagious diseases do not exist." Evidently our friends have set a difficult task for themselves.

Keep it Mum.

The men who know themselves
Have most of meekness;
Only the vain and vacuous
Are willing to be garrulous
About their weakness.