

Woman Against Woman

or A Terrible Accusation.

CHAPTER XXXV.—(Cont'd.)

But before she could complete the sentence a wild shriek had rent the air. The shrieking, cringing creature had turned, as if to flee; but the power of those accusing eyes seemed to hold her, and from being the one who had always controlled, she seemed suddenly to quail and shiver beneath that glance, as though the lash of a demon were falling upon her quivering soul. And then she could bear it no longer. With a wild cry she flung up her hands and fell to the floor, writhing in the most abject agony.

Some of the people in the church seemed then to regain a little of their suspended presence of mind. Doctor Paxton was at her side almost at once, commanding others to stand back, that she might have air; but it was too late for that.

No air could find its way to the suffocating soul, already overcome with the mental fumes of burning sulphur. And there at the foot of the altar, before the throne of God whom she had outraged, her soul passed out in the darkness of an eternal night, not even a moment granted for an eleventh-hour repentance.

A groan of horror passed through-out the church when Doctor Paxton laid her back gently and lifted his hand from her heart. They understood what had happened. And it was less than ten minutes since they had seen that smile of triumph upon her lips, less than ten minutes since she had entered there to be made a wife!

It was the first time that any one, apparently, had thought of Leslie Dunraven. He was leaning against the altar-rail, his face white and ghastly, a cold dew standing upon forehead and lips, looking on in that dazed way that shows non-comprehension. As Ethel approached and laid her hand upon his shoulder he lifted his palm and passed it in bewilderment across his brow.

"Oh, Leslie!" she murmured, "my poor boy! Can you ever forgive me?"

He looked down at her. His lips trembled. Something like intelligence wavered in his eyes.

"I don't seem to understand where I am, nor what it all means," he stammered, like a child learning to speak. "I—I seem to have been—dreaming. Ethel, where have you been?"

For the first time tears came to her eyes, hot, burning tears that seemed to scorch as they fell. She could not explain to him then, because there was so much to tell, but she felt as if they had been united after a perilous voyage. She took his hand gently.

"I can't tell you now, but there will be plenty of time. You will trust me, dear, will you not?"

He laughed slightly. Such a peculiar sound in a scene like that.

"Trust you?" he repeated. "Haven't I always trusted you? How singularly you speak! And what are you crying for, child? Don't you know I never allow you to do that?"

And then, as he had done in the old days, before sin and sorrow and mental woe had come upon them, he bent his head and kissed her upon each eye.

There were those in the church who sobbed aloud, and others who swore; but the curse was upon the woman who lay dead before them, not upon the living.

Every one desired to do something to aid them, and it was not long until the dead had been removed to the house of her father's sister, and the living—Leslie Dunraven, Ethel and Ailsa—had been taken to Doctor Paxton's home.

And then, treated like a child, humored, petted and coddled, Leslie was put to sleep, and for hours he lay there in a deep, dreamless unconsciousness from which he awakened refreshed. He put out his hand and touched Ethel upon the head as he had done in the first days of their happy married life.

"Have I been asleep?" he asked, smiling into her eyes.

"Yes," she answered, tenderly. "Do you feel better?"

"Better? Why, I'm all right. What's the matter, dear? How funny

you look! Has anything happened?"

Doctor Paxton was standing behind the couch. He lifted his finger to his lips and signaled to her.

She kissed her husband's hand gently.

"Nothing has happened except that which makes us very happy, Leslie," she answered, controlling the choking joy in her voice by a mighty effort.

"I've had such a peculiar dream—or something," he said, slowly.

"I can't remember it and yet I haven't been ill, have I, Ethel?"

"Yes, dear; but it is all passed now, thank God. Won't you tell me that you—love me, Leslie? Love me in the old way that you used to do so long ago, so long ago that it seems almost a dream? Won't you tell me that you—"

She was about to add "forgive me," but she silenced her lips with a kiss.

"Why, child, I love you as I have always loved you," he answered, with a little plaintive ring in his voice that surprised even him. "But I must have been very ill, Ethel. My head spins like one of the tops that I used to play with as a boy, and—I can't tell what it is, but you don't seem natural to me—quite. Have you been waiting upon me, and grown thin? Your cheeks are quite hollow, and there are great circles about your pretty eyes. You are so white, and wan, and—"

He lifted himself slowly, memory struggling through the haze upon his intellect. He looked beyond her, over her head, and straight into a mirror that hung upon the other side of the room. At first there was no recognition of the face he saw reflected there, and then suddenly he arose and walked across the floor, his weak limbs almost refusing to support him. He touched the reflection with the tips of his fingers, then recoiled with a little gasp.

"Is that—I?" he gasped, as if the possibility were not to be believed.

She did not reply. She had drawn his arm across her own frail shoulder for support. He was looking again at the reflection of the white-haired man with the lined, haggard face, while memory continued to struggle with the haze that enveloped it. And then he sank into a chair. She was upon her knees. His arm still lay upon her shoulder.

"Ethel," he questioned, his voice low and hollow, "have I been ill, and dreamt it in delirium, or—when is the matter? Why do I look like that? Tell me, dear. Ah, I remember—the fire—the—"

He paused suddenly, looking down upon her in horror. Doctor Paxton came to her relief.

"Up again, Leslie?" he exclaimed, cheerily. "You've had a good call, old fellow. You're not a close nurse, Ethel, or you could not have allowed him to get up."

Dunraven put out his hand.

"Tell me, Doctor," he began, but Paxton silenced him.

"Anything you like to-morrow. You'll know all in good time, but you've given us a good fright, and we don't propose to take any chances. Let the fact that the clouds have all rolled by content you."

"You know I can't," returned Dunraven. "I must know now!"

"Must is not a pretty word to speak to your physician. You know it makes the best of us stubborn."

"Where are Lloyd and Ailsa?" questioned Dunraven, suddenly.

Ethel started, but Doctor Paxton observed that there was no hesitation in speaking Ailsa's name. That it was naturally, quietly spoken, as he might inquire for any friend; yet not a word of Muriel.

"Ailsa is here in this house," he answered. "Do you wish to see her?"

And Dunraven answered:

"Yes, to be sure. I feel as if I had been off on a long voyage. I want to see you all."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Strive as they would to keep the romantic story from the papers, it was an impossible undertaking, and the following day columns of perverted nonsense found their way into print, the different theories expressed upon the subject, by those knowing nothing whatever of the case, filling

what would have been volumes if put together.

The papers were carefully kept from Leslie, who seemed in the end to be the greatest sufferer from Muriel's sin. They were obliged to take the greatest care of him, protecting him from any mental shock; and he was not even told of Muriel's death until weeks after it had happened. The immediate past seemed to be an absolute blank to him. He had forgotten it as completely as if it had never existed, but he remembered all that had occurred before that with singular precision, perhaps through contrast.

"Dear little girl," he said to Ailsa, when they were alone one day, "have you forgiven me for what I have made you suffer?"

She placed her hand upon his white hair as she might have done with a boy who was asking forgiveness for some childish prank.

"Ah, Leslie," she murmured, soothingly, "why not forget that old mistake? You were unhappy; so was I. What more natural than that, in our passionate rebellion against the will of Heaven, we should misunderstand the emotions that assailed us? We were both wrong; but, thank God, we discovered it before it was eternally too late."

He sighed slightly, and taking her hand from his head, pressed his lips upon it. There was no passion in the caress, but she shivered as she saw the resignation in it. It told her a secret of which she dared not speak, dared not even think, and which she knew he would bear in silence to the grave.

She turned away with a little sob in her throat as Ethel entered the room—Ethel, beautiful as in her girlhood, sweet and dainty as a summer flower.

"Doctor Paxton has positively ordered me to take you for a drive, Leslie," she exclaimed, gayly. "The day is superb, and you will enjoy it of all things. No excuses now. You know how determined the doctor is when he orders a thing. Ailsa, will you come with us?"

"Not to-day, thank you, dear," answered Ailsa, looking at her little friend with a smile in her eyes. "There are a number of things to which I must attend."

She watched them as they drove away, then turned from the window with a sigh. She threw herself into a chair and covered her eyes with her hands.

"And now," she murmured to herself, "now that they are as happy as the people in the fairy tale, I must go back. Not to the old life, thank God, for that is left behind forever, but back to duty. Father will have his liberty in a few days, a free man, free from the toils of Satan, as well as man, and my duty lies at his side."

"Ah, why can we not be happy in the mere knowledge of doing right? Why must we be always yearning for the unattainable? Why can we not shut the door of memory as we do of sight? Ah, I am only unnerve myself by allowing myself to think. I will not! Now that they have gone, I will go to dear Doctor Paxton and tell him my determination. He will help and strengthen me."

She arose, looked at herself for a moment in the mirror, to be sure that her face showed no trace of her emotion, then went out into Doctor Paxton's private parlor. He was not there. She walked over to the window to wait, and was standing there, knowing that when he was disengaged he would come there first. The door opened suddenly, and she started forward to meet him, but it was the servant who had entered—a man-servant leading some one by the arm, a tall, well-formed man, who groped his way silently and wore a green shade over his eyes.

It did not require a second glance to tell Ailsa that it was Lloyd Ogden, and her heart leaped with such wild gladness, that it seemed for a moment to almost suffocate her.

Seeing her, the servant announced: "Mr. Ogden. Doctor Paxton said he was to wait here, and that he would be in a few moments. He is engaged very especially just now."

And then, before he could be detained, the servant had gone, and Lloyd stood there, groping about as a man does in the dark, unable to find an object by which he could guide himself.

What was she to do?

After that moment of wild delight she went quickly forward and placed her hand upon his.

"Let me guide you," was all that she said.

His hand closed over hers, but he too controlled himself quickly.

"Ailsa," he gasped. Then, very calmly: "I didn't know that you were here."

The words sent a dull ache through her heart that was worse than death.

"It is only for a little while," she hastened to explain. "Only came in a moment ago to tell Doctor Paxton that I was going back to get some place ready for father to come. He has been very good to me, and—and I wanted him to know."

"You are going back to your father?"

The voice trembled, but still it contained nothing but quiet coldness.

"Yes," she answered, huskily. "It has all been proved a horrible mistake, you know. That man controlled father through his infamous power; but it is over and done with now, and father is coming home a free man. I must be there to receive him."

"I am glad of that, Ailsa," he said, gently. "But I hope my coming has not sent you."

"Oh, I beg you will not believe it. But—but will you not tell me how you are? Will you not tell me—"

He smiled—such a wan, weary smile.

"I'm all right," he answered, with an effort at cheerfulness that was pitiful. "I was never in better health with the exception of—my eyes, you know. You mustn't think about that. Surely you have enough to bear without worrying about a thing that is done with. Ailsa, dear—forgive me; but I am glad of that, Ailsa," he said, gently.

"Yes," she answered, eagerly. "She and her husband have gone out to drive now, but they will be back in an hour. You will scarcely know her. She is just as she used to be when she was first a wife—bright and beautiful as a butterfly."

He sighed.

"And Leslie?" he whispered.

What was she to say? If she answered his question with the truth, would he not believe her to have been the cause? She looked at him pitifully, and for the first time observed the dew that clung about his mouth. She went a step toward him, then drew back miserably.

"He has—had a great shock," she stammered, "but is—recovering from it now. Doctor Paxton will tell you all. How did you know that she—she had returned?"

"I had a letter from her enclosed in one from Paxton. They told me nothing except the mere fact of her being here, and that her greatest desire was that I should return at once. I couldn't refuse that, Ailsa, not knowing what—what her position might be. I never intended to come until I could meet you, and if you also were my sister; but you must see that I could not refuse her request when it seemed almost as if it were made from the grave. You know I believe in death, Ailsa."

"And you have remained away because of me! Oh, Mr. Ogden, you make my punishment so hard to bear!"

(To be continued.)

THE LONG AND EMPTY PURSE.

Several Things That Have Made the Outsider Marvel.

The result of war, of any war, depends upon the ability to continue to "pay, pay, pay!" When that ability becomes impaired or ceases so must the ability to continue to make war stop. The relative ability of the nations at war in this respect have been under the closest scrutiny by the sharpest financial wits for months past, and the results arrived at may go a long way to explain the general state of affairs in the world.

For instance, though it would verify appear that Germany is now at her highest pitch of success and achievement, it would also appear that that does not appear to those upon whom depend the financial arrangements for carrying on the war. Though Germany is at her height these experts do not see how she can continue to go on as she has done—for what there must be a reason! Wall Street authorities, and there could hardly be better, have come to the conclusion, indeed, that however victorious Germany may seem at the present moment she is already beaten—because she is really bankrupt, or on the verge of bankruptcy. That will certainly make Germany, not Europe, "tremble"; for when her credit is assailed and she becomes financially not to say morally, creditless, she may prepare for sudden collapse. The essentials which Germany cannot produce she must get from abroad and pay for with gold, her credit being undermined. And gold has been disappearing in startling rapidity from Germany. Thus bankruptcy faces the nation.

On the other hand, financiers are equally convinced that the only nation capable of financing the war to a successful conclusion is Great Britain. When the pursuance of war is reduced to a basis of this kind it means that to the one able to hold out longest, that is having the ability to continue to "pay, pay, pay!" longer than the other fellow, there can be but one end to it all; the other fellow must succumb.

The possibility, then, of a belligerent verging on bankruptcy is what the foresighted and long-sighted financiers are seeing; and this may have convinced them that within the space of six months or a year at the longest Germany's collapse will be brought about from within. The work of crushing her from without, therefore, need not, it may have been argued, be pushed with such feverish haste as has been planned.

The shower of silver bullets from the well-equipped financial arsenals of the Allies will have its decisive effect, just as the apparently unceasing rain of shell and bomb have been having their day. The victory will lie not with those possessing presently the most ammunition, but with the ones possessing the longest purse capable of serving the cause after the other is exhausted.

A Delightful Garden Freshness—characterizes the Flavor of "SALADA"

Quality Unchallenged for Twenty-three Years.

THE TELEPATHY OF KINDNESS.

Active Sympathy is the Practical Volapuk of Humanity.

When Otto Rudbeck came to this country he got a position as farm hand through an employment agency. The wages were small, for Otto did not know enough English to bargain for himself, and Mr. Barrows was a busy, driving man, rather inclined to be petulant if anything went wrong. The young fellow tried to do his best, but his life was lonely; no one paid much attention to him, and the "kitchen chamber," where he lodged, was not much more attractive than the horses' stalls in the stable across the yard.

"The fellow was no use to me," Mr. Barrows declared, with some trace of impatience that had led to Otto's dismissal still lingering in his voice. "I guess he was willing enough, and he had no bad habits, so far as I know, but I couldn't make him understand what I wanted done. I'd rather work a little harder myself than bother with that kind of help."

The young Swede got another place before the day was out, and his second employer, Mr. Kemp, soon began to speak highly of the new hand. Mr. Kemp was a quiet, kind-hearted man, who took a genuine interest in the lad, and both he and his wife did everything in their power to make the stranger feel at home in his unaccustomed surroundings. They talked with him whenever they could, about himself and his family and the old home across the sea, and Mrs. Kemp often opened the organ and played over the songs and hymns in a Swedish book of music he had brought with him when he came to this country.

Otto's desire to be "kept on" was so strong, and he proved to be so trustworthy, industrious a lad, that he stayed four or five years with the Kemps, and would, doubtless, have remained longer had not the failing health of his mother called him back to Sweden.

Whenever anyone asked him about the difficulty his first employer had in making himself understood, young Rudbeck used to shake his head slowly, after a fashion of his own, and say, in his odd, stilted English, "Queek, sharp words do not cut in."

His idea was that there is a kind of telepathy between heart and heart that makes a word spoken in kindness more intelligible than the same word flung out carelessly or impatiently. Matter-of-fact people may smile incredulously at that, but it is certainly true that David Livingstone made himself so well understood in the dialects of the native African tribes—with which he was very imperfectly acquainted—that he won their almost idolatrous affection.

Active, sympathetic kindness is always understood. It is the practical Volapuk of humanity. Whether it makes a foreign word more intelligible or not, it is a speech in itself, and always makes its own plea for good will, cheerfulness, and friendly relations.

CAPTURE OF GERMAN FLAG.

Thrilling Story of Heroic Exploit of Two Officers.

The story of Second Lieut. Lawrie's capture of a little German flag posted in a provocative fashion in the "No Man's Land" is told by himself in a letter to his father. The officer was until lately a private in the London Territorials.

"This is his letter, inclosing the flag: 'The first time I went into the trenches as an officer I had rather an exciting experience. It was a very dark night, and in the morning we were surprised to see mid-way between our lines and the Germans a little German flag flapping in the wind. Underneath was a board with some writing—all this stuck on a post. It had been put there by some German patrol, who had the cheek to come thus far and stick it in the ground.'

"Great excitement reigned all day, and our fellows potted at the post made to knock it down. The Bosches potted at our fellows, but neither side succeeded. At dusk I strolled out, revolver in hand (loaded in all six chambers), with a corporal in case I should get potted. First of all we had to climb our own entanglements—that is one of the reasons why I went out before it was quite dark, as you get torn to pieces by the barbed wire in the dark. We crawled along and found to our dismay a ditch five feet across and with seven feet of water in front of us.

"Well, we got there all right, and I gripped the post, when a sudden fear seized me. Here was I, isolated between the two trenches, and suppose a wire was attached to the post from the trench, and when I pulled it they opened a machine gun on me. I felt carefully all over it, but no wire, so I tore it out of the ground, and—good heavens, a star shell went up, and dropped within five feet of the corporal and me. You know what a white flare is like at a firework display which shows up everybody, all round, well, both sides use these as rockets to show up the ground between the trenches at night, and this was one of them.

"Of course the Bosches spotted the flag was gone, and then spotted two black forms lying flat! My word, it was hot for a moment. The bullets fairly scraped us as they whizzed past. We waited till the flare died down, and, picking up the flag, we ran to a hole in the ground made by a shell and dropped into it; and once more a star-light went up, but we were hidden.

"At last the star-lights stopped and we hurried back to our trench, and huge cheers greeted me, hugging the flag like a baby."

Before this letter reached Mr. Lawrie's son was dead. He was killed leading his platoon in a charge from the trenches the day following his daring exploit.

Things usually look blue to a man after he has painted the town red.

POULTRY



THE DANGERS OF OVERCROWDING HENS.

By A. P. Marshall.

Overcrowding is the father of a peck of troubles. Overcrowding makes overfat hens, and overfat hens lay soft-shelled eggs, and egg eating habits follow. Overcrowded flocks will roost closely together at night and sweat, leaving them in a weakened condition, resulting in sickness. Overcrowding also produces idlers. Idle hens become mischievous hens, and the disgusting vice of feather-pulling is the result. Better results in both health and egg production come from flocks that have plenty of "elbow room."

As the young chicks keep getting larger they should be moved to roomier quarters. It is out of the question to keep them in the same little brood coops and expect they will develop and do as well as where they are moved to roomier quarters as they grow, and should always be able to find lots of exercising conditions to keep them ever active and on the hustle. Perches should be provided for them as soon as they begin to get a little size. It keeps them cleaner, and they seem to do better, as it avoids crowding together at night, causing them to sweat and catch cold in the cool of the early morning.

In placing perches they should be all on the same level in the warmest part of the house away from drafts, and should be readily removable. If the perches are not all on the same level the fowls will fight for the opportunity to roost on the highest, and the chances are that many fowls will be injured by falling off the perches. The perches should be in the warmest part of the pen, as they need the most protection from the cold during the night, when the fowls are inactive. At this time the house is usually colder than during the day. The perches should be easily removable, to facilitate cleaning, disinfecting and fighting mites. They should be so constructed that a disinfectant can be readily applied to all parts. They should be as simple as possible, and made in such a way as to have the smallest number of cracks and crevices, which offer hiding places for mites and other vermin. As a general rule, small hens should have about six inches of perch space, while the larger hens should be allowed eight inches. In the winter the fowls should be close together, but in the summer there should be plenty of room to allow them to spread out. Perches should be twelve inches apart, and not closer than fifteen inches to the wall or ceiling. Show birds, especially Leghorns, or similar types, should be kept at a greater distance from walls and ceilings. Many good birds are spoiled by brushing their tails against the walls.

In determining the size of a house, consider the number of fowls that are to be kept in one pen. As a rule, fowls are too crowded for economical production. A flock of fifty hens should usually be allowed about five square feet of floor space per hen. Where the attendant is careful to keep the house clean and the floor heavily littered with straw, less floor space will be necessary. As a rule, it is far better to allow too much floor space rather than too little. The larger the pen the less floor space will be required per hen. One hundred hens will thrive in a pen 20 x 20 feet, that is four square feet of floor space per hen, but one hen will not thrive in a pen 2 x 2 feet. In a large pen each hen has a chance to wander over the entire floor space, thus getting more exercise. As the number in the flock become less, the amount of floor-space per hen must increase, and anyone keeping eight or ten hens should allow at least ten square feet of floor space per hen, unless he is prepared to give special attention to cleaning and bedding the house. A crowded condition in a poultry house is responsible on many farms for lack of winter egg production.

The ventilation of a poultry house is very important. A house with tight walls, roof and floor and an open front will contain cold, dry and pure air,—three essentials for the health of the fowls in winter. With such a construction there will be no drafts but plenty of fresh air. Cloth curtains on the front openings can be dropped on cold nights or during stormy weather, and a glass window will allow entrance of light at all times. Many cases of colds have been cured by removing the south side of the house and allowing sunshine and cold, pure air to enter. Hens must not freeze, neither do they need to be kept warm. In the summer time a ventilator in the back of the house may be opened. Air enters this and goes up between the studding and rafters through the hood above the heads of the fowls. This allows circulation of air, thereby escaping the warm air to escape in the summer without a draft on the chickens' heads. To allow for this air passage the back plate is cut out between three studdings. It may be advisable to use ventilator shafts or other devices to insure ventilation. In fact, many houses that have proved satisfactory in every way have no ventilation schemes whatever nor any roosting hood.

REFUGEES FROM POLAND ON WAY TO RUSSIA



The illustration shows a wagon-load of refugees fleeing from the German armies which are advancing rapidly in Poland.