

"I'm glad such lawyers as you do not practice at our Southern bars," he said tenderly. "What possibility would there be for an unprejudiced verdict?"

"When this poor girl is free again," said Olivia, somewhat later, "what shall we do to put her in the way of leading a good life?"

It had been no part of Marmaduke's plan to set her free. The jail or penitentiary must be her abode till he could send her so far away that an appeal from her would be as unlikely to reach him as complaints from an inhabitant of Iceland or Patagonia. "That is for you to decide," he answered.

Mr. Colby came from the scene of Dilly Shaw's trial, which was conducted in the same county in which Vaulcluse plantation was, with the depressing news that she was found guilty of murder.

"They surely will not take her life," said Olivia, almost with a shriek.

"No, no!" he replied kindly, "it shall not come to such an extremity as that. It was, in my opinion, no hanging offense, and we'll get her a new trial. If it goes against her again, I will myself appeal to the Governor. It would have been different but for that foolish Knox. He took great pains to prove that she killed Hindman and very much applauded her for the deed. He called Hindman every bad name in his vocabulary and seemed to think it a virtue to put him out of the way, legally or otherwise."

He had hardly finished when Knox, unannounced, was ushered by a servant into the dining-room where the family were assembled. He scarcely said good evening before falling into a tirade of self-accusation over his conduct at the trial.

"They say now it's done for—that my evidence fixed her, which means that I've as good as tied the rope round her neck. Thank God! I was the only one as told the truth. Every man of the rest of 'em lied. Everybody I meet says I played the fool. I swar I'll shoot any sheriff that goes for to carry out that inequitous verredik."

Efforts were made to quiet and pacify him, Mr. Colby giving the assurance that the poor girl was even yet most unlikely to hang. "Go back to your camp in peace, Knox," he said, "and depend fully upon me."

"Mr. Colby," was his answer, "I am a gwine to leave Wakefield, to-night. I know as well as you it is no place for me, but *where* I am a gwine you won't know for several days yit. It's my own business."

This was Sunday. The next Thursday Silas Marmaduke called at an hour somewhat unusual to see Miss Rothwell. It was five o'clock in the afternoon and Mrs. Colby sent him out on the terrace at the back of the house where Olivia was giving a geography lesson to little Ethel. He found her seated in an arbor covered with honey-suckle. She wore a thin white dress sprayed with rose-buds and a small hat, and the fall day being cool, a blue scarf lay near her. Most women are beautiful at times; Olivia was emphatically so to-day.

"I should make an excuse for interrupting you," said Marmaduke "except that I positively have none at all. I can only say that I wanted to see you *very, very much*."

"That is a sufficient reason for coming," she answered in a joyful tone. "I will be through with Ethel in a few moments; meanwhile you may come and sit on the other side."

There was a table by the bench and upon it she had spread out a child's map and picture of Venice. "See," said Ethel, "that is where Miss Rothwell wants to go."

Marmaduke inquired with interest how she knew *that*!

"Because she has just said so."

A thought, and with it a hope, passed through Marmaduke's mind like lightning. "What if she would consent to go there for a year? Everything else might be left to chance."

"Tell me all about it," he said to the child.

"I'll tell you myself," playfully answered Olivia. "I said that my dream of perfect happiness is to glide along in a gondola in the beautiful moonlight of Italy, with one that I dearly love."

Marmaduke made a pretense to send the child away. He drew Olivia's hand through his arm and they walked far down into the orchard. Seating her upon the sward at the foot of a large tree, he said in a voice tremulous with emotion, "Olivia, will you go to Venice with me?"

"You mean some time in the distant future?"

"I mean immediately—to-morrow, if you will?"

"I cannot realize that you are in earnest."

"Oh, dearest," he said greatly moved, "my every hope, almost my life depends upon your saying yes. Are you afraid to trust yourself with me?"

"Afraid? Oh, no! When I said so, it was in the beginning of our acquaintance. In all these months of love, I have learned to trust you fully. Take our joint future into your own hands. Lead on, my love, and I will follow!"

Then came murmured vows and deep, eloquent silence. Marmaduke experienced then and there the only hour of happiness that fate ever gave him, with a woman that he truly loved. The memory of her face and figure of her fleecy robe and the odor of the white rose in the waves of her dark hair stayed with him till his dying day.

The rough voice of Knox startled them from their reverie. The daylight had almost passed away, when he made his way out into the orchard. "Whar air you? Say, Miss What's-your-name? Whar air you?"

"Here, Mr. Knox," answered Olivia. "Have you anything to say?"

"To say? Well, I should think so."

He began to talk very loud and fast in his own peculiar style. He had "got light" he said, about Dilly Shaw. She told him she belonged to Lasker county, and he had been there and "got pints." Money would do anything, and he knew a person now who would have to "shell out." "Maybe you have heard her speak of a Mister Duke? A pretty duke, to be sure, ridin' round in this country and tryin' to act like a lord! I went to the records and got his full name. I had it rit on paper, though thar was no need. I'm not likely to forgit it."

He was vituperating "the snake in the grass," and told the whole story over again. How the girl had been persuaded to leave her only relative. How she had later been deserted and turned over to Jack Hindman, and ended by saying that the scamp who first put her in the way of ruin had the name of a gentleman—that he dressed as "fine as a fiddle" and went about waiting on decent women.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Olivia. "Who can it be?"

"You are mighty apt to have seed him in this very town. I don't know him yit by sight, but as sure as I'm a livin' man his name is *Silas Marmaduke*."