



HIS FRIEND'S DECEIT.

There was a dejected look on Paul Gardner's face as he seated himself at his writing-table, and, in spite of himself, a sigh escaped him. He had come to the parting of the ways in his existence—was now confronting the fact that the career of honor, ease, and usefulness which, three or four years ago, he had mentally mapped out for realization, was impossible of attainment. His hopes were dead. Only one thing remained for him to do now. But that was surely the hardest of them all! That was the primal cause of his dejection; and that was the source of his sigh. His lip quivered, and his fingers trembled as he stretched forth his hand and took up a pen. For a moment he toyed nervously with it, as if unable to trace the necessary words on the paper before him. Then he wrote:—

"Dear Brenda,—My heart fails me as I begin this task, but honor compels the conviction that it is a necessary one. By the time this reaches you, I shall be many miles upon my journey. It seems but yesterday since I settled here and opened my doors for the reception of patients. I had some \$2,000 then, and I believed that, by judicious management, it would suffice until I had made a connection. In spite of energy, frugality, and, I believe, skill, my practice has yet to be begun. My waiting has been in vain, and my brass-plate insufficient to attract the practical attention of those requiring medical aid. Now I have come to the end of my resources, and I must leave you—your whom I love better than life. I have made up my mind to woo Fortune in a foreign clime. I know you love me, and the recollection of the many happy hours we have spent together will, in the future as in the past, be a cheering incentive to me in my work. But I dare not ask you to wait my return. I hope for success, but I had hoped for it at the outset, and the future may possibly be as unpropitious, and the hopes as visionary as those of the past. No; however powerful my inclinations, justice to yourself compels me to relinquish the claim I have hitherto had upon you. Consider yourself, then, dear Brenda, under no obligation to your old love. Pray for me, and may God bless you. Ever yours in heart,

PAUL.

It was written at last. He dare not breathe a good-bye, dare not utter one of those terms of endearment he had been so accustomed to use. His heart was quickly sinking within him. To pause for a moment would be a fatal hesitation. He did not read the letter through, but placed it quickly in an envelope and, hurriedly directing and sealing it, deposited it on the mantelpiece out of sight, as if he would fain forget its existence. At that moment the door opened, and Paul looked up at his friend, Mark Trevor, entered.

"Come in, Trevor, and don't mind the confusion," he said. "I'm glad to see you, as I was just going to look you up."

"By Jove! Then you really intend leaving us?" said Trevor, elevating his eyebrows and attempting a smile. "I thought when you mentioned it last week, that it was the outcome of impulse and disgust. But, my dear fellow, why this haste? And Miss Heathcote—Brenda! You surely—"

"Trevor, don't. At times, as I think of her, my resolution wavers, and yet I know I am right in what I am about to do."

"But she is not aware of your departure?"

"No, neither can I tell her verbally. Her tears would make me weak, and I want to spare her, as well as myself, the pain of saying farewell."

"Farewell! Nonsense. You'll get an appointment out there on landing, and in a few months at most you'll be back again for your bride," and a cloud, evidently the outcome of contemplating such a possibility, obscured Trevor's face.

A silence of some moments followed. Then Trevor resumed his gaiety, his face lit up with hope, and his eyes scintillated with more than ordinary brilliancy.

"Well, well," he said, "you know your own affairs best, I suppose, and, after all, you're only doing what an honorable man ought to. But if I can help you in any way, don't be afraid of commanding me. I'm at your service, Gardner, although I don't suppose you have any commissions to give."

"Yes, I have. You can do me a great favor, old fellow. I—the fact is I am just a bit short of funds, and—if you could see your way to lend me, say, \$50, I should be uncommonly grateful. One never knows what may happen, you know, and, all going well, I will return it in the course of a few months."

"Certainly! I'm glad you mentioned it, my boy. It would never do to cripple yourself at the outset by being short of the ready. I'll lend it you with pleasure. When do you start?" he asked, eagerly.

"In the morning—early."

"Fact is, I haven't the money by me, but I can get it in an hour. D'Arcy owes me fifty, and promised to let me have it this morning without fail. I'll just run round and get him to draw the cheque in your favor instead of mine, and—"

"Thanks, a wfully. It's very good of you, Trevor."

"Tut, tut; don't mention it. Get your things put in order, and I'll be back in an hour," and Trevor, snatching up his hat, departed.

True to his word, Mark Trevor returned within the hour. "Just caught him, my boy," he said. "Here you are—the cheque drawn in your favor, to save my endorsement."

"Thanks for all you have done for me," said Paul, taking up the cheque and putting it into his pocket-book. "I shall not forget your goodness," gratefully clasping Trevor's hand in his.

In a short time the baggage was deposited in a growler, and Paul was on his way to the East India Dock. As he was about to step on the gangway, two men who had watched his egress from the vehicle approached and laid hands on him.

"Paul Gardner, I suppose?" said the foremost of them.

"That is my name."

"It is our duty to arrest you on a charge of forgery in connection with a cheque which you cashed yesterday, bearing the signature of Edmund D'Arcy, and to warn you that anything you say may be used as evidence against you."

The shock staggered Paul for an instant.

"Arrest! Forgery!" he murmured, at length. "There is some mistake. I do not understand. I certainly cashed such a cheque, but it was not forged, it was drawn by D'Arcy himself—Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Can it be true? Can there be truth in those rumors after all? Can he love Brenda, and have concocted this villainous plot to ruin me? and as a conviction of the truth flashed upon him, it required a superhuman effort to hold himself in check. On arriving at the station he reiterated his innocence—but, of course, to no purpose."

"May I send a telegraphic message?" he inquired.

"The police will lend you any reasonable assistance, if you wish to communicate with your friends," was the reply.

"I have just a dozen words. Write them in the person I name as soon as it is daylight. Beware of Trevor—he is at the bottom of my ruin. An innocent Paul to Miss Heathcote," and Paul gave him her address. "You have the words? You will not forget them?"

"I can remember. They'll do no harm anyway, they won't hurt the man. As soon as it's daylight, I'll depend on me, sir."

There could be no question as to the outcome of the contrived plot against him. Paul Gardner saw that, as Trevor made a clean breast of his duplicity,

nothing but imprisonment awaited him. And it turned out as he feared. Trevor denied every word of Gardner's statement, even going to the length of saying that they had never met on the day that Paul stated the cheque was handed over to him. His intended flight, and his arrest just as he was about to leave the country, were construed into evidence against him. He was committed for trial by the magistrates, and eventually sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

For months Mark Trevor shrank at the thought of going near Brenda Heathcote. In spite of his craft and duplicity he could not summon the necessary courage to confront her, but eventually sought her out, and endeavored to persuade her that her impressions were false, that Paul was deserving of his fate, and that he—Trevor—was much injured by being dragged into the horrible affair.

"Explain that telegram," said Brenda, showing him the wire Paul had contrived to send her. "Explain that. I believe every word of it, and I know the man who sent it too well to think that, even in misfortune, he would make such a charge falsely against one whom he had professed to honor."

Trevor took the wire, and his face turned ghastly white as he read the words, "Beware of Trevor—he is at the bottom of my ruin. Am innocent."

"When did you receive this?" he inquired.

"On the night, or, rather, early morning, of his arrest. I know the reason you betrayed him, and, evidently, Paul did too. The reason he wired me was to prevent all possibility of your diabolical plot succeeding so far as your intentions with me were concerned. Now, go, and never seek my face again. Only remember, that those who suffer innocently may make even their suffering a stepping-stone to future success, while those guilty of such offences as yours must eventually sink deeper in crime."

It was a memorable morning when the young doctor found himself once more at liberty. The very thought that he was free was almost sufficient to overwhelm him; and as he confronted the traffic of the busy streets, he could scarcely credit the fact that he would not be summoned to continue the daily routine of prison life. Beneath his desire of vindication there lurked an inclination for revenge—and Paul knew it. Forgive! No, he could scarcely do that. How he longed to see Brenda!

How would she counsel him to act? Should he go to her? He scarcely knew. He required time for thought. After procuring suitable clothing, he repaired to one of the parks and sat down upon a seat. The thoroughfare he had chosen was well-nigh deserted, and Paul was soon lost in the intricacies of thought. He had just determined that he would not visit Brenda until he could take convincing proof of his innocence, when his privacy was intruded upon. Two men, supporting the tottering form of an elderly gentleman between them, came up to the seat.

"You are ill, sir," said Paul, making room, and assisting the old man into a comfortable posture.

"Ye—yes—I'm very ill," was the reply.

"Can I be of any service to you? I am a medical man."

"Then—as you value suffering humanity—follow to my residence," and the man brokenly whispered his name and address.

"What is the name of the doctor attending Mr. Easton?" Paul asked of the attendant as soon as he arrived.

"Barrow, sir," replied the man. "And between you and me, sir, I believe there's something wrong between him and Mr. Mark. He's a broken-down drink-ridden beast, sir, and Mr. Mark won't hear of anyone else being called, and—"

"Who is Mr. Mark?"

"Mr. Easton's adopted son. He ain't no relation, sir," said the man, subduing his voice to an almost inarticulate whisper, "but he's the master's heir, and—"

"Enough," said Paul. "See, take this prescription to the chemist, and bring back the medicine at once. Then run round and ask Dr. Roose Feldter to come here instantly: it is a matter of life and death."

The man set off at once, and speedily returned with the requisite medicine, and then went as requested for the specialist. When the eminent scientist appeared, Paul, without more ado, asked him to make an examination of the invalid, and to state what he considered was the nature of his complaint. Several minutes elapsed, then, taking off his pince-nez, Dr. Feldter said:—

"I see by the remedies you are employing that we have both arrived at the same conclusion. You are giving chloral!"

"Yes."

"Quite right. This condition is owing to the cumulative properties of strychnine."

"So I conjectured. The patient seems easier now; may I have a word with you in private?"

The two were conducted to an elegantly furnished dressing-room, and, in a few moments, Paul announced his belief that Mr. Easton was being slowly but deliberately poisoned. The specialist, ascending grave, but counselled him to take up his quarters in the dressing-room and await developments. An hour after Dr. Feldter's departure, two men entered the bedroom. A cry of horror almost escaped Paul, as he saw from his hiding place that one of these was Mark Trevor, and the other, he had no doubt, was the broken-down morphine addict, the medical man who was doing his bidding. The latter took a small phial from his pocket, and poured a little of its contents into a wine-glass.

"How long before the end, now?" whispered Trevor.

"To-morrow, some time, I will finish," was the reply.

Paul waited no longer. With a bound he entered the room, and confronted the two startled men.

"Scoundrels!" he cried, "what would you do? Poison him? Thank God that my first act after liberation is to save life and not to destroy!"

"Paul Gardner!" exclaimed Trevor, starting backward, his face livid, and his limbs trembling as if palsied.

"Yes, I," said Paul, "back to charge you with one crime, and save you from completing a more heinous one."

It was he who suggested and paid me to do it," moaned the abject brute who sank trembling to the ground. Half an hour afterwards, both men were in custody, and Paul was busy up at the bedside of the invalid. For days he continued his unwearied attentions, and eventually had the satisfaction of restoring his patient. Nor was Paul unburdened by his own sad story, and a week later, his name stood in his patient's will in the place recently occupied by that of Mark Trevor. Nor was this all. A sudden fame attached itself to him, and, with Dr. Roose Feldter as his patron, his professional career was quickly established.

Trevor and his accomplice were sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. On conviction, the former at once made a written statement, completely exonerating Paul from the offence for which he had suffered; and only two days later, Paul and Brenda were together.

"Proof of my innocence, darling," said he, producing the document.

"I do not need it," she replied. "I knew it."

"Once having made certain in your own mind that you are sailing under the right colors, nail them to the mast!"

"Give me strength to resist, patience to endure constancy to persevere."

"For all Thy Saints who from their labors rest, Who Thee by faith before the world confessed Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. O blest communion! fellowship Divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine. And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, Steals on the ear the distant triumph song, And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong, Alleluia!"

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

A prize will be given in January for the best short original fairy tale. The writer must not be more than sixteen years of age. Send the stories, with name, age, and address of writer, to Cousin Dorothy, FARMER'S ADVOCATE, London, Ont.

DEAR COUSIN DOROTHY,—

I am going to tell you what we have on our farm. We have 19 milch cows and 25 others, 5 horses, no sheep, 2 dogs, 1 cat, and a lot of mice. My eldest brother is Harry, and the next is John, that is my name, and next is Violet, and the next is Fred. Harry is 9, John is 8, Violet is 1, Fred is 2. There are many pretty flowers on the prairie—lilies, buttercups, daisies, roses, cowslips, maiden hair. Age, 8 years old.

I remain, yours truly, JOHN NEWMARCH.

[Not a bad letter for such a small boy; do they call you Jack or Johnny? Do you know that cat of yours is lazy. Perhaps you give it too much milk. Why don't you make it work for its living? The Manitoba prairie must be beautiful if all the flowers you mention grow wild. Four stories have arrived during the last fortnight, but only one is a real fairy tale, written by L. Webber, Peterboro, Ont. We have not room for any of them this month. I have also received letters of thanks from prize winners.]

Pearl and Daisy.

(Continued from page 345.)

"I don't quite like being princess here!" said Margaret to herself. "I can't do as I like, and my bed is so hard! Besides, I get tired of dry bread every day, and cold milk and water; and, oh! I hate mutton-chops for dinner always!" So saying, she slipped off another pearl from the silken string, which rolled away out of the gilded door. When Margaret followed it, and opened the door, she found herself in a very strange room. The four corners were filled with terrestrial and celestial globes. A huge blackboard filled one side of the room, and the other walls were covered with shelves containing lexicons, grammars, and courses of study on all the "ologies" then known or invented. It was a long time ago, and, of course, there were not nearly so many as the poor children have to learn now.

Margaret found that her pretty dress had changed into a dark blue blouse and skirt, perfectly plain. Then in came Professor Steinherr and Herr von Krakenfelt to give the Princess Bluet her morning lecture on the art of government, and the codes of law of all countries under the sun. Margaret felt her head more than once, in the course of her morning's lessons, to see whether it were still whole, and her tutors evidently thought that something was wrong, for she heard Professor Steinherr mutter to his colleague that "Princess or not, she was a dummkopf!" and Herr von Krakenfelt quite agreed with him for the first time.

After a very unappetizing dinner, Frau von Mittelheim gave her a lesson on the deeper mysteries of knitting a stocking, and Fraulein Banda helped her to embroider a tobacco-pouch with beads. Then, again, more lessons till bed-time. In fact, all was solid, not to say stupid. "I shall die here, or go into an everlasting nap, like the Sleeping Beauty," yawned Margaret; "so here goes for another change, but I shall try a daisy this time for variety." So saying, she chose a large ox-eye and shook it till all its leaves fell off. As the last petal dropped the walls crumbled round her, the books and globes vanished, and she found herself sitting on a wild common by a fire of sticks. An old woman gave her a rough push, saying: "Go out, Rita, there's some folks coming, and you can, maybe, sell 'em a basket, or tell their fortunes for 'em."

Poor Margaret hung back, frightened at the wild scene, and horrified at her own attire—a ragged frock and a thin, patched shawl. Her feet and head were bare.

"I should like some dinner," she murmured, "I am very hungry."

"You idle good-for-naught," shrieked the old woman. "Here, take that; it's all you'll have to-day, my lady!" So saying, she flung at her a half-picked bone and a crust, which Margaret was too hungry to refuse. After a week spent with the gipsies, she one day received a sound beating from the old woman, then, resolving to bear it no longer, sheshook another daisy, and at once found herself in a wretched garret in London. Here she was ever in a worse condition, her frock was quite as ragged and even more dirty—clean water being a great luxury. There were no stolen fowls or ducks there, and some days she had to be content with but one scanty meal. Her play-ground was a muddy court, where all the forlorn children of the miserable alley met and quarrelled over their toys—some oyster-shells, bones, and a brick-bat!

One evening she saw Jim, the little sweep, aiming a sharp stone at a sparrow perched on the wall. She caught his arm, and the sparrow flew off unhurt. "Poor little bird," said Margaret; "why did you try to kill it? I used to save up my crumbs for them when I was at home."

"Did you?" said Jim. "How kind of you, to be sure! As you are so obliging, just stand still a minute and see if I can hit you!" As he spoke a sharp flint came skimming by her head. This was more than Margaret could bear, so, putting her hand in her pocket, she drew out her silken string, and dropped another pearl, which rolled out of the door. As she stepped across the threshold after it she found herself in a stately garden. Beside her walked a terrific old lady in a huge hoop and with powdered hair. "Your Royal Highness must hold your head up," said she, sharply; "and, dear me, I fear you will be humphacked if you don't keep your shoulders back better. Miss Muffet, fetch me