

AN ORIGINAL GIRL.

By Christine Faber. CHAPTER LXVII.

Herriek's downfall was rapid and complete. Upon his own party it fell like a whirlwind, disorganizing and routing it. The town it seemed like a political cyclone, hurling all the old party ranks into confusion and sweeping those of the Reform into a staunch bat-talion.

The excitement was intense, and demoralization of Herriek and his political ring vigorous and general. For Herriek himself the blast had no mercy, and a week after his second abortive at-tempt to escape—a wretched wreck, during which he kept his room meditating suicide, but lacking the courage be-cause of his greater dread of the un- known hereafter—his arrest was quietly made in his own house.

His wife had waited upon him that entire week, dumb, expectant, but faithful to the last. She heard mur- murs of the excitement without, but not quite the part that related to the guilt of her husband—people seemed to spare her that. Even the hired girl, know- ing much, because of going out more than did her mistress, and seeing many more of the callers at the house, did not tell what she had heard. Perhaps there was that in the troubled face of the little woman which deterred people from speaking about her husband in her presence.

She knew there was something, as she had known from the night that she pushed her—something that made him stare in such a wild way every time she opened the door of his room; that caused him to become more strangely haggard every day, that made him re- fuse to see every one who called, and there were many; but she did not dream of the truth.

She did not dream of the truth, till two officers of the law in civilian dress came to the house. Herriek could not disregard their message sent up to him on paper. His wife brought it. He looked at her when he read it almost as if he would have said something, but in- stead, he rose from the lounge where he had been lying—where during that week, day and night, he seemed to be always lying—and looked round him in a kind of helpless way. At length he said:

"My hat and coat, Bessie; I am going out."

Even then, though she wondered sadly, she did not suspect, and she followed him down the stair, down to the parlor where the men waited.

"I am ready, gentlemen," he said, from the threshold of the door. Both men stood up and came toward him; then they put him between them and they were about to proceed through the hall.

Something in the action of all three struck Mrs. Herriek; something in the faces of the men; something in the face of her own husband.

"Bilber," she screamed, "are they taking you to prison?"

Her arms were round his waist, and she was clinging to him, while heart- broken tears rolled down her cheeks.

The men, touched, drew off a little, and Herriek, possibly touched also, stooped and said hoarsely:

"Yes, they are taking me to prison, Bessie."

To prison they took him, and as his was a case calling for higher jurisdic- tion than that administered in the township, he was hurried to jail in the city.

His accounts had been investigated and found hopelessly wanting; his bonded issues were utterly fraudulent, and altogether his conviction was a fore- gone assurance.

His organ, the Times, immediately collapsed, while its rival, the Herald, came out more triumphantly than ever, several columns being devoted to the fallen Supervisor's case. Of course, all public work began under his order was stopped, and it was now a question of damages against the town for the dis- figuring of the property of Miss Bur- ram, and that of the Ootomah Club, in preparation for the new road.

All of Herriek's real estate that he had not made over to his daughters—would be seized to help to pay his indebted- ness; it was learned that for his wife he had made no provision—and in the midst of the excitement, some work- men repairing a broken culvert in the vicinity of the building where the Times had its office, found a locked yellow leather satchel. It was wet and much discolored, but still in con- dition to disclose the name "B. Herriek," marked in black ink on one side.

"Better give it to Mr. Russell," said one, "he's the best right to any- thing as belongs to Herriek, seeing the part he took in getting Herriek to prison."

So, to Russell the bag was given, and remembering that Herriek had said it contained nothing save articles pre- pared for publication in the Times, he broke the lock. A large red morocco case lay on the top of some neatly- folded underwear; this Russell took out and opened. Sure enough, there was the article for the Times compris- ing several slips of notepaper just wide enough to fit in the case, and headed:

"Miss Burram's Family History."

Russell read it with distended eyes, and a wish as he proceeded to have Herriek's neck within the clutch of his fingers. True, or not true, it was a dastard soul that could give to the public such an article. He returned it to the case when he had finished, and without waiting to examine the open papers that lay in another compart- ment of the case, he put the latter into his pocket, and went out, intending to go immediately to Notner's house.

On the way, however, he met Not- ner.

"I have been waylaying young Ged- ding," he said, "to give him a message for his sister. Dr. Burney has been filling me with his own anxiety about Miss Burram's Charge. He says she is falling hourly, and that if something be not done to give her a change she will become as much of a patient as Miss

Burram is; and as nothing can induce her to go away even for a day, we have conceived the plan of getting Will's sister to visit Miss Minturn—to visit her every day. Miss Gedding herself, I think, will be very willing to do so, and her society will do the little girl good—it will take her somewhat out of herself."

"Yes," answered Russell, "no doubt it will, and when you have read the papers contained in this"—handing him the case—"you will agree with me that Herriek was not nabbed by Rhett a moment too soon. With that article published in the Times, as it would have been, I doubt if Miss Gedding would be permitted to visit Miss Burram's Charge."

"The wretch!" ejaculated Notner, "he thought at the last to give an article to the public; he wanted to do so two months ago—the night I called upon you to know if things were ripe enough for a threat to him."

"Yes, I remember," said Russell, "that night I scared him pretty effec- tually," went on Notner; "still, I was by no means sure myself that he wouldn't after all defy my threats and publish the articles—for he must have felt if he had any proofs of his villainy we should have begun work immedi- ately."

He wanted to finish feathering his nest," said Russell, "which he could have done, making good his stealings in to the bargain. Had Miss Burram consented to sell—money unlimited would have been at his command; I had it, as I told you, from the millionaire capital- ist to whom Herriek had unfolded his plans. Clever, money-making ones they were, and so clever that they had such a command over the public funds, and I don't know what all, that deters me."

"From everything you've told me about Miss Burram and her Charge, Rachel Minturn, and from all that I've read in the newspapers sent by your friend about the Miss Burram's car- riage house, I feel that I ought to in- vestigate immediately; because it seems as if that man, from the grief that the little girl Rachel showed, must have been her father, Captain Minturn. I can hardly keep from telling my cousin, Tudor, what I've told you, only that I know he's so conscientious, he would make me start instantly for America."

"But, here's the letter to read for yourself, Mr. Hubrey, and here's the paragraph from the newspaper." He had to open the silver case again to get the newspaper clipping, and I've copied it for you, Mr. Herriek, date and all. Now just make what use you choose of all this—I shall be satisfied with any- thing so long as it humiliates Miss Burram; of course, it must humiliate her and know that her Charge is the daughter of a gambler and a forger, even if her Charge has no relation to her, but that is not so. I am just as sure that my name is Kittie Hubrey, that Miss Burram's Charge is very closely re- lated to Miss Burram—perhaps this Captain Minturn was Miss Burram's brother, and that she, to escape being known as his sister after the dreadful things he did, just changed her name."

I asked Mr. Gasket if he recollected any mention of the name of Burram by this Captain Minturn, but he didn't. In the letter the Captain wrote to Mr. Gasket, you notice, Mr. Herriek, how he speaks of his sister—it all just con- firms my opinion; and I am so happy at having all this information thrown in my way, and I can't tell you how I ad- mire you, Mr. Herriek, for your schemes are so splendid. I don't think any one but yourself would think of driving Miss Burram out of her property and then turning it into the place you de- scribe—and next door to that aristoc- ratic Ootomah Club, against which I have almost a big grudge as I have against Miss Burram—then I black- balled Mr. Hubrey when his name was put up for membership. So, you just go ahead, Mr. Herriek, and I think if you will steer on the supposition, mak- ing it an established fact, that the man who died on the night of the storm in Miss Burram's carriage-house was Cap- tain Minturn, Miss Burram's black brother, and the father of her Charge, Rachel Minturn, you will corner Miss Burram pretty effectively. She is so haughty and domineering that she'll run away from that disgrace.

"You're as ever," "KITTIE HUBREY."

Notner looked again at the date of the letter; it was nearly two months ago. There were about a dozen letters in all, showing that the correspondence had begun nearly two years before. The last letter was only a fortnight old and very short.

"Mr. Gasket accepts all I tell him and willingly follows my advice; in- deed, it suits his aversion for bother and excitement, while it soothes his conscience to have confided the matter entirely to my hands, and to feel that my confidential friend on the other side of the water is making careful investi- gation, and that he will inform us in due time. Such being the case, he has no disposition to tell his cousin Tudor anything, and he is much more at ease than he used to be."

"I agree with your plan, Mr. Herriek, of keeping Mr. Gasket quiet till your own schemes shall have succeeded. Miss Burram's obstinacy is wonderful, but I think it must yield when every- thing that I have informed you about her appears, as you say you intend it shall do, in the Times; and when her Charge receives a private letter from you stating the same facts." Notner started, and read that paragraph over.

"You say she would not listen the day you called and would have told it to her. Perhaps it was as well; reading it in a letter will give her more time to feel about it."

"Your confidential friend," "KITTIE HUBREY."

Notner spread the letters before him in the order of their dates; then he made an exact copy of each, following with a copy of the article for the Times, after which he put them all into one cover, which he sealed and addressed to "T. Herndon, Soho Square, London, England."

Then he wrote to T. Herndon under a separate cover and seal.

save her at all costs from my disgrace—and my wife, and my infant daughter—my little Rachel; my wife knows nothing more yet, than that we have become suddenly poor—she is in ill health, and to tell her would kill her. So, to you, Mr. Gasket, I appeal; you seemed kindly in the arrangements we made about the transfer of the vessel, and though you are not a husband nor a father, perhaps you will feel for me. I ask alone the loan of money sufficient to take my family to South America—there is an opening for me there, and I shall not be known."

"... years in despair, ... MINTURN."

"That letter, Mrs. Hubrey," he went on, "through my brother's absence from home and some miscarriage of the mails, did not reach him for several months, not till after father died and he had become a very wealthy man. He answered the letter, but it was never replied to. Five years ago when he himself died, and his money came to me, he made me promise that if ever any of these Minturns should cross my path I must restore to them the value of the vessel she had won—it amounted, I think, to five thousand dollars; and not alone that, but direct knowledge of them, but in the event of any indirect information coming to me, I must investigate it, and finding it possible to reach any of these Minturns, I must return that five thousand dollars."

"Now, Mrs. Hubrey, it isn't the fact of having to return the money that troubles me like that—it's the fuss and bother, and the questions, and the investigations, and the being certain, and I don't know what all, that deters me. From everything you've told me about Miss Burram and her Charge, Rachel Minturn, and from all that I've read in the newspapers sent by your friend about the Miss Burram's car- riage house, I feel that I ought to in- vestigate immediately; because it seems as if that man, from the grief that the little girl Rachel showed, must have been her father, Captain Minturn. I can hardly keep from telling my cousin, Tudor, what I've told you, only that I know he's so conscientious, he would make me start instantly for America."

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"For God's sake come! Come in- stantly, if you can travel at all. My hope is that by this time you have at least reached London and thither I send a package of letters which will enlight- en you as to the desperate state of affairs here. You can read them while you are crossing the ocean—they are only copies—I deemed it better to keep the originals."

"Herriek is fast enough in prison. His trial, which will not come off for some weeks yet, will be the sensation of the day. His wife, like a dog which is more attached to the master who beats him, clings to him with a pathetic devotion. She is at jail early and late with food or other necessities for him, and all that with the full knowledge of her husband's utter heartlessness. He had provided for his daughters, amply provided for them, but not a cent had he left for his wife, and when the house was taken over her head, it was Russell who got a shelter for her; it is Russell who is paying for lodgings for her in the vicinity of the jail, and who is supplying her with money. Verily, strange is the heart of a woman!"

"Miss Burram is much the same, driving Dr. Burney to distraction with evidences of what she might become, if he only had the something, or somebody that he says is necessary to cure her."

"Cordially yours," "NOTNER."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Mrs. Herriek did cling to her hus- band with pathetic devotion; not an official at the jail but knew the shabby dressed little woman with the worn, rouged face, who came, as Notner had written, early and late, Russell had obtained for her the privilege of fre- quent visits, and she never came that she did not have some delicacy for Wilber. It was as if his distress had wiped every feeling from her heart save love and pity. She had loved and ad- mired him in the old, old times; she had loved and admired him in the subsequent cruel ones; and now when everything had dropped from him—wealth, power, position, friends—she loved him still.

Even when Russell gently broke the news to her that the very house she was in could no longer afford her a home, and when she herself learned that she was no better than a beggar, it did not make a particle of difference in her feel- ings for her husband. Some one told of the provision he had made for her daughters, and urged that they should come to her relief. Russell, having the same opinion, wrote to them, and in the meantime he took it upon himself to provide for Mrs. Herriek. She thanked him with quivering lips, and eyes whose anguish haunted him—in secret he was a tender-hearted as he was a stern one; and then she went straightway to thinking of nothing but her husband.

His appearance in the cell appalled, while it broke her heart—the pale, covering, almost unkempt man that he had become, from the handsome, erect, neatly-dressed one she had always known. It sometimes seemed to her, when her head had been light from sleep and when tears were in her eyes, that she was looking at her husband, must have been substituted for her husband.

He accepted whatever she brought him with a brief "Thank you;" beyond that he seemed to take little notice of her; yet she herself was conscious of a something in his face when he looked at her, as if he were looking at her through a veil, and then she went straightway to thinking of nothing but her husband.

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tain when he came to dinner. "Isn't that delightful?" said Rose, when she had heard her brother's mes- sage; "not only that I am to go once to see dear Rachel, but that I am actually asked to visit her every day: Oh, you dear, good Will!" and she threw her arms around his neck and gave him a kiss loud enough to be heard by Mrs. Gedding, had she still been in the lower hall.

"Of course," said Will rather lugubriously, shaking himself free, from her embrace, "I'm good now, but when I'm giving you sensible advice, I'm not a bit good. Didn't I tell you that if you would do as I advised, I would manage things for you?"

"Yes, you did; and for the future I'll trust you every time. But mother, how shall we win her consent? Will scratched his head with amusing perplexity:

"I have only one plan for meeting the difficulty of—mother, and that is—father. He has so much regard for Mr. Notner that a wish expressed by that gentleman will have the greatest weight with him. I am going to tell father confidentially all about this business; that will win at least his consent to your visits, and having his consent it will not be necessary to tell mother at all. You can go out every day to walk, why cannot you walk here for its ob- ject a visit to Miss Minturn?"

"Splendid, Will, splendid!" and Rose was in such unusually high spirits when she went to dinner that her mother wondered. Her high spirits delighted her father, as any evidence of his daughter's happiness always delighted him; he was never concerned as to whence her spirits sprang; but his wife suddenly connected them with her wife's buoyancy the moment of his entrance to the house. Indeed, his buoyancy was hardly less now, and he and Rose were having a battle of wits across the table that sent their father into repeat- ed roars of laughter. Mrs. Gedding lifted up her voice:

"Why did you pass me in such a hurry when you came in this evening, Will?"

"I—oh—I wanted to see Rose," thrown a little off his guard by the suddenness of the question.

"Wanted to see Rose?" repeated his mother in her indolent voice.

"What was your errand, that you couldn't wait till you met her at dinner?"

A blank silence fell on both brother and sister, it added to Mrs. Gedding's wonder and made her more inquisitive.

"What is it?" she asked again.

"Just something, mother, between Rose and myself. You know sometimes brothers and sisters have their little secrets."

"I don't know anything of the kind," answered his mother, "and I demand to know what it is that is between you both."

She stopped eating and leaned back in her chair very placidly, determined to do nothing more until her curiosity was satisfied.

"Why, Martha," said her husband, irritated at having his enjoyment sum- marily stopped, "can't you let the children have a bit of quiet fun?"

"Quiet fun! Harold, I call it very im- polite, disrespectful fun to have my own children amusing themselves with their secrets under my very eyes and not telling me a word about them; but, of course, when my husband and their father abets them in it, I have nothing to say."

Placid as ever she had delivered her speech, and placid as ever she folded her hands at having his enjoyment sum- marily stopped, "can't you let the children have a bit of quiet fun?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Gedding, "what is the matter with the woman?" while both Will and Rose thought that at no time in her life had their little mother been so touchy as since Miss Burram had entered somewhat into their lives.

Will looked across at his sister—look she well knew how to in- terpret—it said so plainly, "Our little game is up—we might as well tell."

And he told, directing his story most- ly to his father's ear, and his father, learning that Notner was the respon- sible agent in the matter, listened af- fably; at the close, being willing enough to give his consent. But his wife was angry.

"You would let your daughter go to the house of that mad Miss Burram?" she asked.

"Miss Burram is no more mad than you are, mother," interrupted her son, "she is partially paralyzed and she cannot speak, that is all."

"Of course," said Mrs. Gedding, "when my husband and my son take part against me I am of no conse- quence in this household," and before either of them realized what she was about to do, she had left the table and was going from the room.

"Why, Martha," her husband ex- postulated, rising to his feet, and regard- less of the presence of the waitress, who fortunately had been out of the room during the whole of the previous scene; and, "Mother," called Will, but Mrs. Gedding kept on her way. She even closed the dining-room door behind her, and father and son sat down again, and they and Rose looked at each other, but neither spoke till the waitress had gone.

Then Rose had much to do to keep back her tears.

"It is outrageous," she pointed, "that Miss Burram's name can't be mentioned without throwing mother into hysterics."

"I think, myself, mother is just a little bit unreasonable," said her brother, ready to kick himself for hav- ing blundered into the very revelation he was going to guard from her. Mr. Gedding said nothing, but secretly he was amathematizing the day on which any of them had anything to do with Miss Burram.

Mrs. Gedding went to her room and took to her bed, whence no persuasions could make her arise; there she was enwrapped among her pillows, a martyr, but a martyr for all that, as she con- sidered herself. She did not deny her- self to the members of her family, but she answered them with such plaintive- ly reproached tones and she looked at them with such appealing eyes that

both her husband and her son confessed one to the other they couldn't endure it.

On the other hand was Rose, in tears one half the day and in an utter state of tearless dejection the other half; not even Miss Fairfax, who truly sym- pathized with her, could cheer the gloom of the situation.

"I think I ought to be permitted to go once," said Rose to her friend, on the evening of the second day that Mrs. Gedding was in bed. "Will saw Mr. Notner last night, and he told me how delighted I should be to go—him how he told me how mother has acted about it—and Mr. Notner said that to-day Miss Minturn would be told, and that I might visit her to-morrow. Now isn't it dreadful, Hattie? To get mother out of that bed of hers I shall have to forego every kindness to Rachel, and what will Mr. Notner think of me?" and Rose sobbed in both indignation and distress.

"It is hard," said Harriet, "but, maybe there will be some way out of the difficulty before it comes quite to a head."

A way out of the difficulty did appear when Will came that night; he had written a letter—a letter that had been sent to his city office by Mr. Not- ner.

"Will you kindly inform your sister that our plans for cheering Miss Burram's Charge have to be given up. Miss Minturn herself is the obstacle—she frankly and firmly refuses to receive any visitor until Miss Burram can give her sanction. And she requests me to remind Miss Gedding of Miss Burram's own reply to Miss Gedding, when that young lady, in the great kindness of her heart, wrote for permission to re- new her acquaintance with Miss Burram's Charge. She begs me to thank Miss Gedding, and to assure her that when once Miss Minturn has Miss Burram's consent, it will be one of the happy moments of her life to receive Miss Gedding; that until then she will cherish in her heart all the kindly deeds and words of Miss Gedding."

"Will!" in a tone of utter disap- pointment and dejection, was all that Rose could say. And Will answered:

"It is an ill wind that does not blow good to somebody, and this ill wind will blow mother out of bed."

Which it did the moment that she heard all imminent fear of Rose's visits to Miss Burram's house was removed, and she got up with such alacrity, and she was down-stairs so speedily, that both her son and daughter felt her self-inflicted repose must have grown very tiresome.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LENIENT THOUGHTS.

Catholics are obliged by the Church to go to Confession and Communion at Easter or thereabouts, and for those only, who obey the commands of the Church will the coming of Easter bring untold joy.

Parents who disobey the commands of the Church not only displease God by such disobedience, but also by the bad example thereby given to the children. It is unreasonable for parents to believe that their absence from the Church and the reception of the sacraments, will not be remarked by their children!

Easter-time with all its joys will soon be here. Let us prepare ourselves to rejoice with the Risen Saviour.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.