

had supposed she could marry him. His assertion of his right to intimacy with her revolted her, and his confidence that he had ability, by something he might reveal, to take her from Eaton and bring her back within reach of himself.

Or wasn't it merely that? She twisted in his arms until she could see his face and stared at him. His look and manner were full of purpose; he was using terms of endearment toward her more freely than he ever had dared to use them before; and it was not because of love for her, it was for some purpose or through some necessity of his own that he was asserting himself like this.

So she ceased to struggle against him, only drawing away from him as far as she could and staring at him, prepared, before she asked her question, to deny and reject his answer, no matter what it was.

"What have you to say about him, Donald?"

"Harry, you haven't come to really care for him; it was just madness, dear, only a fancy, wasn't it?"

"What have you to say about him?"

"You must never think of him again, dear; you must forget him for ever!"

"Why?"

"Harry—"

"DONALD, I am not a child. If you have something to say which you consider hard for me to hear, tell it to me at once."

"Very well. Perhaps that is best. Dear, either this man whom you have known as Eaton will never be found, or, if he is found, he cannot be let live. You understand?"

"Why? For the shooting of Cousin Wallace? He never did that! I don't believe that; I don't think Father believes that; you'll never make any jury

believe that. So if that's all you have to tell me, let me go!"

She struggled again but Avery held her. "I was not talking about that; that's not necessary—to bring that against him."

"Necessary?"

"No; nor is it necessary, if he is caught, even to bring him before a jury. That's been done already, you see."

"Done already?"

Avery nodded again toward the photograph on the table. "Yes, Harry, have you never seen a picture with the numbers printed in below like that? Can't you guess yet where your father must have sent for that picture? Don't you know what those numbers mean?"

"What do they mean?"

"They are the figures of his number in what is called 'The Rogue's Gallery'; now have you heard of it?"

"Go on."

"And they mean he has committed a crime and been tried and convicted of it; they mean in this case that he has committed a murder!"

"A murder!"

"For which he was convicted and sentenced."

"Sentenced!"

"Yes; and is alive now only because before the sentence could be carried out, he escaped. That man, Philip Eaton, is Hugh—"

"Hugh!"

"Hugh Overton, Harry!"

"Hugh Overton!"

"Yes; I found it out to-day. The police have just learned it, too. I was coming to tell your father. He's Hugh Overton, the murderer of Matthew Latron!"

Harriet fought herself free. Denial, revolt stormed in her. "It isn't so!" she cried. "He is not that man! Hugh—his name is Hugh; but he is not Hugh Overton. Mr. Warden said Hugh—this Hugh had been greatly wronged—terribly wronged. Mr. Warden tried to help Hugh even at the risk of his own life. He would not—nobody would have tried to help Hugh Overton!"

"Mr. Warden probably had been deceived."

"No; no!"

"Yes, Harry; for this man is certainly Hugh Overton."

"It isn't so! I know it isn't so!"

"You mean he told you he was—some one else, Harry?"

"No; I mean—" She faced him defiantly. "Father let me keep the

photograph! I asked him, and he said, 'Do whatever you wish with it.' He knew I meant to keep it! He knows who Hugh is, so he would not have said that, if—if—"

She heard a sound behind her and turned. Her father had come into the room. And as she saw his manner and his face she knew that what Avery had just told her was the truth. She shrank away from them. Her hands went to her face and hid it.

So this was that unknown thing which had stood between herself and Hugh—that something which she had seen a hundred times check the speech upon his lips and chill his manner toward her! Hadn't Hugh himself told her—or almost told her it was something of that sort? He had said to her on the train, when she urged him to defend himself against the charge of having attacked her father, "If I told them who I am, that would make them only more certain their charge is true; it would condemn me without a hearing!" And his being Hugh Overton explained everything.

She knew now why it was that her father, on hearing Hugh's voice, had become curious about him, had tried to place the voice in his recollection—the voice of a prisoner on trial for his life, heard only for an instant but fixed upon his mind by the circumstances attending it, though those circumstances afterward had been forgotten. She knew why she, when she had gazed at the picture a few minutes before, had been disturbed and frightened at feeling it to be a kind of picture unfamiliar to her and threatening her with something unknown and terrible. She knew the reason now for a score of things Hugh had said to her, for the way he had looked many times when she had spoken to him. It explained all that! It seemed to her, in the moment, to explain everything—except one thing. It did not explain Hugh himself; the kind of man he was, the kind of man she knew him to be—the man she loved—he could not be a murderer!

Her hands dropped from her face; she threw her head back proudly and triumphantly, as she faced now both Avery and her father.

"He, the murderer of Mr. Latron!" she cried quietly. "It isn't so!"

The blind man was very pale; he was fully dressed. A servant had supported him and helped him down the stairs and still stood beside him sustaining him. But the will which had conquered his disability of blindness was holding him firmly now against the disability of his hurts; he seemed composed and steady. She saw compassion for her in his look, and compassion—under the present circumstances—terrified her. Stronger, far more in control of him than his compassion for her, she saw purpose. She recognized that her father had come to a decision upon which he now was going to act; she knew that nothing she or any one else could say would alter that decision, and that he would employ his every power in acting upon it.

The blind man seemed to check himself an instant in the carrying out of his purpose; he turned his sightless eyes toward her. There was emotion in his look; but, except that this emotion was in part pity for her, she could not tell exactly what his look expressed.

"WILL you wait for me outside, Harriet?" he said to her. "I shall not be long."

She hesitated; then she felt suddenly the futility of opposing him, and she passed him and went out into the hall. The servant followed her, closing the door behind him. She stood just outside the door listening. She heard her father—she could catch the tone; she could not make out the words—asking a question; she heard the sound of Avery's response. She started back nearer the door and put her hand on it to open it; inside they were still talking. She caught Avery's tone more clearly now, and it suddenly terrified her. She drew back from the door and shrank away. There had been no opposition to Avery in her father's tone; she was certain now that he was only discussing with Avery what they were to do.

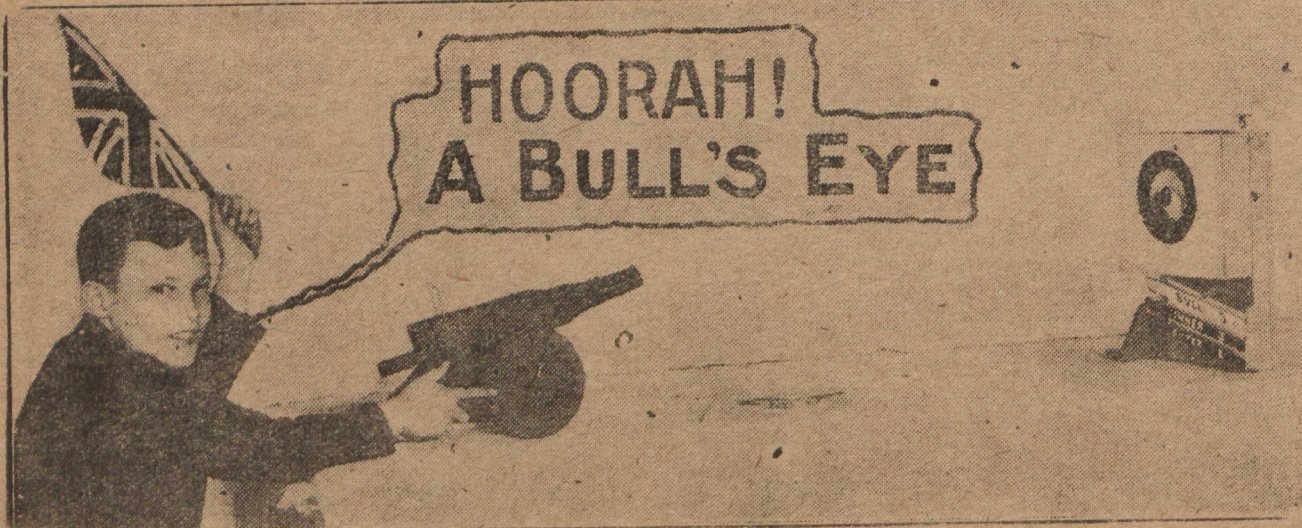
She had waited nearly half an hour, but the library door had not been



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