

OUR SAVIOUR

Upon the cross our Saviour died,
The mercy crown upon his head;
From hands and feet, and from his side,
Drooping down a precious side.

THE SPECTRE'S SECRET

THE HEIR OF INGLESIDE

By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER XIV.—[CONTINUED]

Edith had not listened to the recital in silence, though she was silent for a time after it was concluded.

'Light begins to break in upon me,' she said at length. 'I now know why I have received no answer from Lily. I know Hargrave has an embassy at the post-office at Ovington. With his position and his money he could easily do that. The office is small, and the post-master is old. I sent my letter to Lily four weeks ago. Hargrave got it. And so, also, has he detained the letters which have come for Lily from over the sea. I must go to Ovington at once! I will know all.'

'You must be very careful, Edith. You know not what a villain you have to deal with.'

'I know him, Molly, and I will, for the present, avoid him.'

'Dear Edith, if you do not shrink from such a thing, I would say to you, disguise yourself before you come within the possibility of that man's seeing you.'

'I will do it, Molly. I should do it for more reasons than one.'

'After this letter from Matt Bango was re-read, and then followed many questions and answers, and much consultation; and finally the capture of action for the immediate future was marked out. It was past midnight when Edith Somerset drew the paper 'wait for her bosom, and said:

'Dear Molly, I have sent you to do this good work; and in the doing of it all the stain of the past may be washed away. This hour is yours while you please to stay, and you shall be to me a sister. God bless and keep you.'

On the following morning Edith brought a soiled piece of paper—the handwriting part of an old letter—and gave her younger brother to write upon it the following:

ROLLINGTON, October, 1881.
'Mr. LYON HARGRAVE: E. S. has gone away to visit a sick friend. I shall send her till she comes back.'

'There was no signature, and having folded this in a half-sheet of cleaner paper, and sealed it, the brother, in his rough hand, superscribed it, and took it to the post office.

After breakfast Edith put on one of her mother's faded silk dresses, and also put on a lace cap, with her own hair combed back, and a partial fringe of gray hair in front, visible under the bill of the cap. A pair of green spectacles completed a metamorphosis so complete that even her brother did not recognize her until she had spoken and smiled, in explanation to the family she said that she must go to Ingleside to perform a sacred duty, and she did not wish to be recognized by her brother. They had heard enough of affairs at Ingleside not to wonder at this, and they promised sympathy without making many questions. Molly was the one of whom Edith took leave as she went away.

Mr. Hargrave—and I took him to help him on with his studies.
'Ah—I see. The young "Quaker" is, I suppose, your son-in-law?'

'Yes, Mr. Hargrave is very considerate. I am sure. Good-day, sir.
'Good-day, ma'am.'

And Mr. Hargrave returned to his desk, while the lady left the store, giving a keen, searching glance at the young post-clerk as she passed him.

Later, on this afternoon, Lily Merton was informed by Mary Carter that an old lady wished to see her in the sitting-room.

Lily went down, and found the woman in the faded silk gown and mob-cap.
'This is Miss Merton?' said the visitor, rising stiffly.

'It is, madam.'
'Miss Merton, when you know my business I am sure you will pardon my intrusion. I would like to speak with you in private.'

'We can be private here.'
'I should prefer to speak with you in your own chamber. Do not refuse me.'

There was a persuasiveness in the woman's manner which Lily could not resist, and, moreover, there was a winning sound in the music of her voice. She hesitated but for a moment, and then bade her visitor follow her.

Arrived in the comfortable chamber, Lily closed the door, but this did not satisfy the other, who turned the key in the lock. The young girl might have been alarmed had time been given her to realize the situation, but no sooner had the visitor locked the door than she turned and tore off the mob-cap and the false hair, and removed the green spectacles.

'Edith!—Yes, Lily, it is Edith. O, my poor child!
And Lily was in her arms in a moment, and she had time to give her a kiss and a word of comfort.

'O, Edith! Bless you for coming. My dear, dear Edith! O, how glad I am!
They sat down, side by side, and hand in hand, and by and by, after more words of love, Lily said:

'I have wondered, Edith, why you did not write to me—why, at least, you did not answer my letter.'
'I received no letter from you, dear child.'

'I wrote, a month ago, and directed it to Rollington.'
'And I wrote to you, Lily—but we will come to that by and by. Tell me, now, the nature of your engagement to Mr. Hargrave. Be not afraid, darling, added Edith, as the stricken girl pined and shivered. 'I have come to help you if I can. Tell me all.'

And then Lily told the whole story of the power which Lyon had gained over her father, and how it had been brought to bear upon her.

'When I could bear it no longer,' she went on, 'I told my father that when one year should have elapsed from the departure of Horace, if both he and Lyon then demanded it, I would become Lyon's wife.'

'If both your father and Lyon should demand that the end of the year?'
'Yes.'
'And that year is not up until the last of December?'

'On the twenty-third.'
'Take heart, Lily, and take hope.'
'Edith! Serve yourself for a battle, dear child. Tell me if you are strong?'

'O, yes! What is it?'

'Mark me, Lily: What may have happened since the closing of the month of June we cannot tell; but I can swear to you that the item in the newspaper, announcing the death of Horace Moore, was false.'

Lily Merton gazed up with staring look, and gasped for breath. She clutched Edith's arm, quivering like an aspen leaf.

he cold and discontent, and sometimes she smiled in his presence.
'Scores the game for me!' cried Lyon to himself, as he walked forth one evening from Mr. Merton's house. 'The proud beauty has given in at last!'

And he went home, and drank some brandy, and then he and Adolphus three games at billiards.

CHAPTER XV.
MATT'S FINAL REVELATION.
The ship Speedwell dropped a single anchor at Cape Town, and remained long enough to obtain a few needed supplies. After doubling the southern cape, Capt. Percy called his crew all on pleasant day, and asked them, kindly, and with parental concern, if they had ever felt a regret at the loss of Grover and Wilkitt and their companions. The answer was quick and hearty.

'And now, my men,' said Captain Percy, 'I want you to take this lesson to heart. Think how much better off you are to-day in every way—your health, your spirits, your pockets—than you were when you had been dipped in the blood of unbelief. Since that night you have pleased me, and from this time I give you back my entire confidence. Let the one false step be forgotten.'

The men gave their captain and mates three hearty cheers, and then went to their stations; and thereupon the crew of the ship was a model of harmony and excellence.

'When the Speedwell cast her anchor in the river Hoegly it was found that only two ships had ever made the passage from America so quickly. She had been blessed with fair winds in the Indian Ocean, and she had been managed by competent masters.

In Diamond Harbor, on his arrival Capt. Percy found the ship Xerxes, just in from Canton—a ship belonging to the owners of the Speedwell, and shortly afterward her captain and first mate died of fever. The agent and the underwriters conferred with Capt. Percy, and asked him what should be done. The Xerxes was a heavy ship, and was to return home with a valuable cargo. Had he an officer competent to take charge of the Speedwell?

'Yes, gentlemen,' he answered, promptly. 'Mr. Moore is capable in every way.'

'And entirely trustworthy?'
'Never a more true and trusty man walked a deck.'

And so it came to pass that John Percy went to the command of the Xerxes, while Horace Moore was elevated to the command of the Speedwell. William Lander was his first mate, Tom Martin his second, and Matt Bango his third.

'I have come to help you if I can. Tell me all.'
And then Lily told the whole story of the power which Lyon had gained over her father, and how it had been brought to bear upon her.

'When I could bear it no longer,' she went on, 'I told my father that when one year should have elapsed from the departure of Horace, if both he and Lyon then demanded it, I would become Lyon's wife.'

'If both your father and Lyon should demand that the end of the year?'
'Yes.'

'And that year is not up until the last of December?'

'On the twenty-third.'
'Take heart, Lily, and take hope.'
'Edith! Serve yourself for a battle, dear child. Tell me if you are strong?'

'O, yes! What is it?'

'Mark me, Lily: What may have happened since the closing of the month of June we cannot tell; but I can swear to you that the item in the newspaper, announcing the death of Horace Moore, was false.'

Lily Merton gazed up with staring look, and gasped for breath. She clutched Edith's arm, quivering like an aspen leaf.

'I have seen a letter, Lily, written more than six weeks after the date of the reported death by an officer of Horace's ship. The captain and mate of the ship Xerxes had died, and Captain Percy had been put in command of that ship, while Horace had been promoted to the command of the Speedwell.'

'Edith! I have seen a letter, Lily, written more than six weeks after the date of the reported death by an officer of Horace's ship. The captain and mate of the ship Xerxes had died, and Captain Percy had been put in command of that ship, while Horace had been promoted to the command of the Speedwell.'

that, I sometimes feel unworthy to look you in the face.'
'Thus never feel so again, Matt. Now go on, I am very anxious.'

Matt drew his chair nearer, and rested an arm upon the table, and when he commenced speaking his voice was low and husky.

'In December last, Sir, Sugg Wilkitt and I were stopping at a dogery on South street, in New York. One night—early in the month—Lyon Hargrave found us, and asked us if we would do a job for him. He would pay us well. We were to follow him up the river, and, at a proper time, commit a burglary—that was all. We were both deep broke at the time, and agreed to his proposition. He went back the next morning, leaving us money enough for expenses, and we followed the day after. You see, sir, we had known Lyon before. He has kept strange company in his life. We found him at an out-of-the-way place some place, and kept us hidden there two days. On the night of the third day he called us to him, and told us the time had come for the work. And this was the time:—

'His uncle, Walter Hargrave, had been sick and failing, and that night had died. Had the old man died without a will, Lyon would have been his heir; but he had been left in favor of another party—

'That party, Matt?'

'Was Horace Moore.'

'Go on.'

'Walter Hargrave was dead, and Lawyer Merton had gone up to Ingleside to attend to any business that might be required at his hands. Lyon had already made a friend of the lawyer, and with his—well, I don't like to say so, but he had been left in favor of another party—

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'Walter Hargrave was dead, and Lawyer Merton had gone up to Ingleside to attend to any business that might be required at his hands. Lyon had already made a friend of the lawyer, and with his—well, I don't like to say so, but he had been left in favor of another party—

destroyed. As for the spectre, he still believed that he had overdrunk, and had been frightened by a strain of our fancy. We took the money to the office, and went back to New York; and I did not expect to get any more. But in two weeks Lyon Hargrave came down and paid us up. He said the will had not been found. It was a mystery to me, for I had lied to Lyon Hargrave, I dropped that as will freely in front of the spectre, and not near the fire. You may smile at me, sir, and think me wild; but I cannot help thinking that the spectre spoke the will. That is my story, sir.'

Horace Moore, when the other had ceased speaking, started to his feet, and stood for a time gazing upon his mate like one in a dream. Finally, in a whisper, he said:

'What was it like?'

'Like just what I have said, sir. I can't tell you any more. If ever there was a ghost, that was one.'

'Did you see her face?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Can you not forget all but the face, and tell me how that looked?'

'I suppose, sir, that ghosts can have fair faces and good looks if they had them while in the flesh?'

'Certainly—I should say so.'

'Because, sir, the face of the spectre was like some of the grand marble faces we have seen in palaces. It was certainly a handsome face, but, oh, how pale and ghostly!'

Horace took a turn across the cabin, and came back.

'Captain Moore can you say now that you won't lay this against me?'

'Bless you, Matt, you don't know how much I owe you! Not yet is my confidence in you shaken.'

'And you don't blame me that I have kept this thing a secret from you until now?'

'No, Matt; but on the contrary, I thank you for it. Had I known it before I should only have had so much the more time for anxiety. As it is, I shall find my soul in arms until I can solve the mystery.'

'Do you think, sir?'

'That you can ever solve the mystery of that spectre?'

'The mystery of the spectre, Matt, I think I can solve already; but it is the SECRET'S SECRET that must give me unrest. O! for fair winds henceforth!—Hush! I will tell you by and by. My heart and brain are in a tumult now.'

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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