

Diamond Cut Diamond

OR, THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

"You love my nephew, Geoffrey," he said with cool deliberation, looking at her with a cruel remorselessness. It was a revelation, a delightful discovery to him, but he made no sign that it was so; he made as though he had known her for a long time.

"Mr. Dane, have you brought me here to insult me?" she said with some indignation.

"He waved his hands deprecatingly with a gesture of amusement.

"Tut, tut! don't let us go into details. What is the marvel? I am a man of the world, my good lady! It is not the first time I imagine in the world's history that a married woman has fallen in love with a handsome young fellow. This sort of thing is not new to me—nor to you either, I imagine," he added with veiled insolence.

"You have no right—" she began tremblingly.

"Pardon me. It seems to me that I have every right. Geoffrey is not only my nephew—he is, or may be, the centre and object of my future, and of the future of my house of business. I have plans for Geoffrey, plans that concern his welfare and his worldly advancement—with these plans, Madame de Brefour, you have chosen to interfere."

"If," she cried angrily, "I interfere with Geoffrey's advantage or prosperity? Ah, how little you know me—how evil must be the bent of your own mind if you imagine such a thing."

"Ah, now we come to common ground, my dear friend," he answered soothingly. "I felt sure that your kind heart and good feeling would be touched, that your very love for that charming young fellow—you object to the word love—well, let me call it your regard then, your sisterly—perhaps it is a motherly regard, eh? Any way your affectionate interest in the dear boy will soon lead you to do all you can to help instead of to impede his future interests. Is it not so?"

She bowed her head in silence. It was impossible for her to speak. Of what avail would have been vain denials of that which she had been estranged into betraying? Her inner sanctuary had been invaded, the sacred veil had been rent in rags from before the altar of her heart, and she was too proud now to persist in disowning the idol that had been concealed within.

He waited for a few moments, and then finding she said nothing, he began once more:

"I may as well explain to you at once, that I desire my nephew to marry a young lady of great personal attractions—and of unexceptional character. This lady is the daughter of my partner, Mr. Halliday, with whom I have come to an arrangement on the subject. On his marriage with Miss Halliday, Geoffrey will be taken immediately into partnership, and will also become my heir personally, as well as step into a position which for a man of his age will be without its equal in the commercial world. So you see how good a thing for your young favorite this marriage would be."

"Oh, yes! I see it very well indeed, Mr. Dane," she answered, with a ring of scorn in her voice. "A capital thing for all concerned, for the bride and bridegroom no doubt, and also to the ambition of the bridegroom's uncle. Why then, in the name of fortune, does not your nephew hasten to conclude so advantageous an alliance?"

"Because, Madame, you stand in the way!" he answered quickly, leveling his heavy forefinger at her to emphasize his accusation.

"I—good Heavens, Mr. Dane, for a clever man you are really exceedingly wide of the mark in your surmises. I have not seen your nephew for some months—the slight acquaintance, or friendship, if you like it better, that existed at one time between us is now entirely at an end, and I know nothing whatever of his plans or of the young ladies amongst whom he no doubt distributes his attentions."

She was angry, with a vague jealous anger that betrayed itself in a certain uncontrollable asperity. The came back to her memory that scene upon the river. The boat flashing by in the sunshine, the girls in their cool cotton frocks and sailor-hats, and the man she loved reclining at their feet, happy no doubt in the presence of the woman who had taken him from her. She remembered—would she ever forget?—the sick pain that was almost physical that struck her through at the sight.

Then upon her ears there fell once more the cool voice of her tormentor: "It were better to come to the point at once. You will scarcely, I imagine, have the courage to deny what I accuse you of, when I tell you that but a few days ago I stated my wishes to my nephew, and that he definitely and absolutely declined to marry Miss Halliday, giving me as his reason for doing so that he loved another woman, and that that woman was yourself!"

And then there was a moment or two of silence between them. A silence so absolute that it flashed across her mind to wonder if those wild heart-thrills that leapt up tumultuously within her could possibly be audible in the stillness to the ears of the man who sat opposite her. For the great gust of joy that shook her from head to foot at his words rendered her physically incapable of words.

He loved her still then! In spite of the cruelty of her desertion of him, of the coldness of her actions, of the harshness with which she had pronounced the sentence of separation between them—in spite of all this, he loved her still! For her sake, and so

that he might remain true to that ideal of love which he had laid so humbly at her feet, he was prepared to give up all the good things of this world with which his uncle had sought to tempt him. Where upon the face of the earth is the woman who would not have rejoiced with an exceeding great gladness? It is so rare that a man is capable of so great a love, so few and far between are those to whom self and self-interest does not come above all else, so many there are who will sacrifice love to expediency, so very very few to whom "a faithful heart" is the chiefest of earth's good gifts. When such a man is given to a woman, is it to be wondered at that she looks upon him as a god, and that it almost seems to her as though a miracle had been wrought in her favour?

Meanwhile, all unconscious of the rapture of happiness into which he had translated her, Mr. Dane was telling out his tale.

"Of course, you will see that this is a most ridiculous position for my nephew to take up. It is absolutely impossible that he can be permitted to sacrifice his future to any claims which a woman in your position may imagine she has upon him—these sorts of entanglements are never desirable, but at any rate there should be no sort of difficulty in breaking them off where a woman of the world is concerned."

Her dreaming was at an end, his cruel and damaging words came like a rush of icy water upon her.

"You do not seem to have heard me say, Mr. Dane, that I have not seen your nephew for months? He does not even know my present address."

"It will be desirable then that you should see him, that he should pay you a visit for once, in order that you may persuade him to give his immediate consent to the plans which I have made for him and which are so enormously to his advantage. This, Madame de Brefour, is your part of our little contract. I told Geoffrey that of which he appeared to be in ignorance, that he was somewhat wasting his time and his affections as you were a married woman. He did not seem to believe me. I shall leave it for you to convince him."

She understood him now; and she knew that there was no escape for her. It was upon her love for Geoffrey, as well as upon her affection for her father-in-law, that Mr. Dane had reckoned in order to bend her to his will.

"By this sensible and praiseworthy course of action you will, you see, be able to perform a two-fold duty. You will bring ease and peace of mind to the aged relative whose declining days you have hitherto so devotedly washed over, and you will be instrumental in forwarding the worldly prosperity of a young man in whose future I am sure that you take a most affectionate interest. I, on my part, will undertake to take no further action of any sort or kind against your husband. On the day of my nephew's marriage to Miss Halliday, I will sign a written promise to condone the past, and as it were to blot it out entirely. It will be then no longer necessary for you to keep the unhappy man in confinement. He can return to his father's house, and you will be once more a united and happy family circle."

It pleased him to enlarge upon this subject, he could see how her eyes enlarged with horror and dismay, with what an unutterable loathing she listened to his description of the domestic reunion to which he was condemning her, and to which she now saw herself irrevocably doomed.

For how refuse the release of the unhappy man to whom she was tied by all rigour of a Faith that allows of no divorce? or how free herself from his hated presence without forsaking the old man who leaned upon her for the support of his daily existence? Surely no punishment for her sin and weakness could have been devised by her enemy more unspcakably cruel and relentless than this—that she should live once more under the same roof with the man whose name she bore, and who had dragged down that name into the mire of an eternal ignominy.

"Do you agree to my little terms, Madame de Brefour?" enquired Mr. Dane with a charming suaveness of voice and manner, with that little smile upon his lips which he could assume when it suited him to be sweetly gracious, and with his head just a little on one side as he looked at her from between his half-closed eyelids.

"Yes, Mr. Dane, I agree," she answered, in a cold mechanical voice, "and I will perform the task you have set me to do." And then she rose and left him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In the far-awdy parish of Coddisham the summer months, meanwhile, had succeeded each other with that eventful tranquillity which constitutes the chiefest charm of an absolutely rural district. Events of a certain kind had, it is true, taken place, events which had set the church bells ringing or tolling as the case might be, and which had, no doubt, been of supreme importance to the principal persons concerned; as, for instance, the marriage of Timothy Green farmer Stubbs' head man, to poor little Jenny Bainbridge, whom nobody at Coddisham set any store by—because she was so meek, and small, and down-trodden, having no home of her own, but being only allowed on sufferance, as it were, to exist in her ill-conditioned uncle, the baker's house—but wedding, no doubt, created quite a disturbance in the district, much as though a new King Cophetua had

plighted his troth to a poor beggar-maid, for Tim earned full wages, and had a cottage and a back garden of his own, whereas Jenny was nobody at all.

Then there was poor old Bibbins, who died of drink at last, as Florence Dane had always said he would, and was straightway interred with the usual pomp and ceremony, "in sure and certain hope of life everlasting"—as our truly sanguine Burial Service hath it. After that, Mrs. Meeks had twins, the second time she had committed the same offence, and the parish bag had to be called into requisition, and there was a great commotion of sympathy and excitement amongst the matrons of the village; and, finally, "that there brute," Daniel Steel, kicked his wife again one night that he came home very late from the "George"; and upon the active interference of the local policeman, summoned in haste by the affrighted neighbors, stated it as his opinion that he "wur quite in 'is right to kick 'er; and what do a man 'ave a wife for, I should like to know, if he mayn't lar-rup 'er every time 'e 'as a mind to." In spite of which sensible view of the rights and privileges of husbands, he was conveyed to the lock-up, and carried off the next morning to Lillimster Jail, there to await his trial, without the smallest consideration for his admirable theories. Ever since, which, needless to say, Mrs. Steel had with tears and sobs besieged the authorities daily for his release. For it really is a fact, which is as incontrovertible as it is incomprehensible that the women of that class do, in sober earnest, carry out the truth of the old saw, that "the more they are beaten, the better they like it." All these things presumably convulsed the village society momentarily to its very core, but left no outward or lasting trace upon its peaceful existence. They were quite accustomed to this kind of little excitement at Coddisham.

All the same the hay was cut and garnered, and the yellow fields "stood ready unto the harvest." The little red roses bloomed and faded upon the cottage walls, the labourers went out to their labour until the evening, and the heating surface will be 26,000 square feet. This machinery is expected to drive the vessel through the water at a speed of twenty knots an hour with the engines making 140 revolutions a minute.

Recently progress on the vessel was delayed by strike, but men are now working overtime to make up for it. Only the best artisans are employed. The United Kingdom are employed. The vessel will have orlop, lower, main, upper and forecastle decks.

It is estimated that by the time the royal yacht is in the water she will have cost \$1,175,000. Although no information concerning the arrangement, fitting and furnishing of the interior has been given out, it may reasonably be surmised that her majesty will be fairly comfortable on board, since it is estimated that the finished yacht will cost \$1,300,000.

Even with the utmost dispatch it is hardly expected that the queen's new yacht will be ready for cruising this summer, but it is hoped that by next fall it will go into commission and may be used on an extended Mediterranean trip next winter.

There could hardly be a greater contrast than this splendidly-equipped pleasure steamship and the little side-wheeled boat in which Queen Victoria and the king consort used to take their yachting pleasures in the early days of their reign. The old yacht is still in commission, and it is said that the queen still loves to sail in it better than in the most comfortable and luxurious of modern ships.

For Florence, too, the summer months wore away with nothing much to mark their flight. There was for her the same amount of bustling about on deeds of mercy, the same visiting rounds of inspection, advice, and reproof to the cottages of her poor neighbours, which some of them were ungrateful enough to look upon as intrusion on her part. "What do she want, a-pyrin' and a-pokin' 'er nose into other people's concerns?" might have been heard upon the lips of more than one village dame as she looked at her sturdy figure, in its short skirts and strong-made boots tramping away down the little street. "It's more 'arm than good she does with all 'er talking, I'm thinking." Which indubitably proves the black nature of some of the hearts she had to deal with.

Luckily Florence was unconscious of their distracting remarks; their faces were always wreathed in smiles when she came to them full-handed, and they never failed to gather in troops at her "mothers' teas" and her school feasts, where they swallowed her admonitions, seemingly with as good a grace as they did her cake and buns, and with as pleasing an affectation of meek and thankful joy. For a long time, indeed, the school treat was the only event of any magnitude which occurred in Miss Dane's life, for the neighbourhood was a bad one for social gatherings, the great Downs cutting off one side of the country entirely from the other, so that those who dwelt beyond the hills held no communication with the inhabitants of the plains, whilst these latter, owing to deaths and absences and sundry other incidental causes, were, as far as social purposes went, almost entirely useless, the birds of passage, all the hunting world, having long ago taken themselves away for the summer months. To Florence, with her parish work and power of throwing herself heart and soul into all that she took up, this was, perhaps, but a small loss, and a tennis party more or less scarcely occasioned her a passing regret. She went about her daily work with unabated energy, burning with zeal and eagerness, and quite untroubled by the many rebuffs and failures which befell her, and which she desired to reform and remedy everybody and everything, again and again threw back her splendid intentions unappreciated

in her face. All this time Hidden House, up in the hollow of the chalk hills, lay silent and empty. (To Be Continued.)

QUEEN VICTORIA'S NEW YACHT.

It Will be the Largest, Grandest and Most Magnificently Equipped Craft Afloat.

At last the facts about Queen Victoria's new yacht have leaked out through the office of the British admiral. She will be launched at the government's dockyards at Pembroke on May 9, and she will be christened either Enchantress or Balmoral. She will be the largest and grandest and most magnificently equipped yacht in the world.

The new royal yacht will be larger even than Emperor William's famous yacht Hohenzollern. The latter is properly not a yacht, but a protected cruiser, carrying armament and protected deck, and in a fight could give a good account of herself. Victoria's new yacht is a yacht in every sense of the word.

The hull of Victoria's yacht is to be of steel, sheathed with wood and covered with copper. She will be provided with double bottoms. She will have three funnels and two masts. Speed is to be an important consideration.

The yacht is to have two sets of triple-expansion four-cylinder engines driving twin screws, and having an indicated horse power of 11,000. The high-pressure cylinder of each engine is to be 26 1-2 inches in diameter and the intermediate cylinder 41 1-2, all having a stroke of 39 inches.

Steam will be supplied by 18 boilers, working at a pressure of 300 pounds which will be reduced at the engines to 250 pounds. The grate area under the boilers will be 840 feet and the heating surface will be 26,000 square feet. This machinery is expected to drive the vessel through the water at a speed of twenty knots an hour with the engines making 140 revolutions a minute.

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A SURPRISING FRENCH ITEM.

About Traffic in Human Skin, Most Prevalent in America.

An extraordinary and horrible traffic has recently grown up in human skin. Reputable jewelers have admitted that they have made belts and card cases from human skin. Tanners say that they have recently prepared quantities of it after the fashion of an alligator's or a monkey's skin; women talk to tanners and jewelers. Being scarce, it of course, brings a high price, and as there is now a fad for it there is a steady demand for it.

The skin is procured from the bodies of indigent poor that are not claimed by relatives and friends. These bodies, or cadavers, as they are technically called, are turned over to the various scientific institutions for dissection, and the impecunious students "raised the wind" by selling the skins to tanners and jewelers. Being scarce, it of course, brings a high price, and as there is now a fad for it there is a steady demand for it.

It is in America that this dreadful trade is most prevalent; but it is likely to come to a very sudden stop shortly through new and severe legislation.

THE ONLY TIMES.

Tenants—But does the chimney always smoke like this?

Landlord—Oh, not only when there's a fire in the grate.

A MATTER OF TASTE.

Moth—I overheard some callers saying this room is furnished in execrable taste.

Other Moth—Why, the idea! I never ate more palatable upholstery in my life.

NO USE AT ALL.

Coal Dealer—At last I have found an honest man.

Hawkins—Well, what of it? You can't use him in your business.

VACCINATION.

An Expert Expression as to Its Incalculable Value.

In the latest number of the Medical Age, the editor, Frederick W. Mann, M.D., has written an article on the status of vaccination. Dr. Mann states that it is doubtful if science ever conferred a richer boon on humanity, and it is doubtful if there is one single scientific fact that stands so absolutely and incontrovertibly true as this one concerning the protective value of vaccination. There is, no doubt, he says, that the mortality of smallpox is much less now than in pre-vaccination times and even in houses invaded by smallpox, not nearly so many of the vaccinated inmates are attacked as of the unvaccinated. Nor can it be said that smallpox is a milder disease than it was in former centuries. In support of his position, Dr. Mann gives the following:

Were any evidence needed of the value of vaccination the experience of Germany should be sufficiently striking to convince the most rancorous unbeliever. In 1871, with a population of 50,000,000, she lost 143,000 by smallpox. In consequence of this she enacted a compulsory vaccination law of a vigorous type. To-day her death-rate from smallpox is only 116 a year. During the Franco-German war the imperfectly vaccinated French army lost 23,000 men by smallpox. The better vaccinated German army lost only 278. Other examples might be quoted by the hundred, but all would demonstrate but one truth; that smallpox is a preventable disease by virtue of vaccination and by vaccination alone.

When any deeply-rooted prejudice manifests itself, it is always wise to inquire whether there is not some basis for its existence. Probably the most potent reason for this prejudice against vaccination lies in the trouble and discomfort it occasionally causes. The sore arms are convincing to some, and the occasional cases of septicaemia shatter the faith of multitudes. The former ought to be avoided as far as possible, the latter condition should be accounted in these days an unjustifiable accident. Among the important facts illustrated by the recent vaccination statistics of the kingdom of Bavaria is the value of glycerinated lymph. An admixture of glycerine is proved not only to preserve the power of the vaccine, but also to destroy the harmful microorganisms which may possibly be associated with it. Once made vaccination an aseptic process, and much of the prejudice against it will disappear. For the prejudice is undoubtedly but an expression of a deep human instinct which primarily manifests itself in a desire to avoid pain.

A DEPRESSING SEASON.

It is Just Now People Feel Most the Effect of Long Months of Indoor Confinement.

Winter is the most trying season of the year so far as health is concerned. Confinement indoors and overheated and impure air, makes even usually strong people feel dull, languid and generally run down.

A tonic is needed to assist nature in regaining lost energy. April is the month of all months when a tonic is of the most service. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People is the only true tonic medicine. They do not purge and thus further weaken the already enfeebled constitution. These pills make rich, red, energy-giving blood, and transform listless, tired and worn-out men and women into smiling, healthy, happy work-loving people.

E. Sims, of the Salvation Army, Kingston, writes: "At the time I ordered some of your Dr. Williams' Pink Pills I was physically run down. I felt a lack of energy, and always had a tired feeling. After using your pills for a time I felt as well as ever I did."

Thousands—some of them your neighbors—have been made well by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, but you must get the genuine, which are sold only in boxes the wrapper around which bears the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." Sold by all dealers or direct from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50.

FUN FOR ROYAL GOSSIPS.

A funny royal marriage is soon to take place between Princess Mary of Hanover and the reigning Duke of Saxo-Altenberg, and the foreign gossips are making themselves merry thereat, because the Duke is twice a widower and 73, while the Princess is a sweet spinster of 49, with snow-white hair. It is, however, a much better match than half of the alliances, which furnish so much scandal for royal courts and palaces. It is understood that Princess Mary has long loved her future husband, but he was forced to wed elsewhere for state reasons and now, after long waiting she is to be rewarded with his hand and a heart as fresh as his 73 years admit. But the Duke is a handsome, vigorous man, and the marriage is looked on by his subjects with satisfaction and hope. They have the Duke's only brother and heir presumptive, a blase creature, who stays in bed weeks at a time, merely because, as he declares, there is nothing worth getting up for. The Kaiser is much disgusted at the idea of one of his great empires wedding so near his sacred throne, for the court at Berlin can not ignore the Saxo-Altenberg, and it will be a thorn to have a Princess of Hanover and the sister of the Duke of Cumberland directly under the imperial nose on grand state occasions, when the old Duke must be seen as one of the reigning Princes of Germany.