A Living Prisoner;

Or, Friends in Name, Enemies at Heart.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The following morning was very bright, and although the river was now in excellent order, Jens considered it wiser to wait a little after breakfast, on the chance of some clouds getting up.

Harry had no objection to this arrangement, and rather approved of it than otherwise. He had hauled his big salmon up from the cellar, where it had been deposited over night, laid it out full length on the porch, and was engaged in taking an accurate copy on two old sheets of The Times pasted together. But not content with this, he set to work to perpetuate the "stor lax'e" huge proportions, by painting 'hem on the wooden bench that ran round the sides of the porch.

Jens was perfectly enchanted, having never seen anything of the kind attempted previously, and he stood by watching the proceedings with absorbing interest, and occasionally making some valuab.e suggestion.

Harry possessed a natural talent for drawing, and soon sketched the fish in with a broad, firm charcoal outline. But when he came to the painting, he found it much more difficult than he had anticipated to catch the exact tints. They were either too grey or too black, and it seemed an almost impossible task to accurately represent the peculiar silvery sheen of a salmon's body. Even though dimmed by death and a night among the blue-bottles, chinese white refused to give the transparent effect, or to indicate the marvellous delicacy, with which one pearly scale fitted over the other, growing smaller and smaller, until they faded away altogether in the yellowish-creamy [illegible] of the belly.

However, by dint of taking a good deal [illegible]uble, he managed to make a fairly [illegible]h on the whole, and the fame [illegible]mance spreading by degrees, [illegible] Sandethal assembled around [illegible]crete left her work, and stood with arms a-kimbo, and broad, [illegible] countenance; Herr Christian [illegible]oo, discoursing gravely and learn[illegible] as he gazed, on English and Norwegian politics. The store-keep[illegible] ran out [illegible]m his shop, though that [illegible] matter [illegible] little consequence, since c[illegible]mers were not frequent; two venerabl[illegible] ones followed in his footsteps, [illegible] flat white caps that formed a most be[illegible]ning head gear, and nearly a dozen wide-eyed children shyly advanced to have a look at the "Engelskmand's" drawing, so that altogether there was quite a gathering. And a very innocent, simple one it was, too, easily pleased and diverted by the merest trifles, from which a more civilized and luxurious race would have failed to derive the least amusement. As the salmon grew and grew, the spectators became more and more admiring, and Jens was forced to tell the story of its capture, and his own exploits in particular, a great deal oftener than his modesty approved of; but Harry kept chiming in, in broken Norsk, and insisted on every detail being recounted without a slur or abbreviation. Thus the morning passed, and, occupied and interested, he worked on till about one o'clock. Then paints and brushes were hurriedly put away, for Jens descried some filmy white clouds, rising like a veil of lawn from the horizon, whose intense blue they softened, but could not dim, and he predicted that before long, the sun's dazzlingly bright rays would be quenched, and they should lose no more time in glorifying dead salmon when live ones were to be obtained. Accordingly, Margrete was sent bustling off to get dinner ready immediate y, and preparations for an early start were at once commenced, reels, wound up, &c.

This time, Jens proposed to fish the lower pools first, working their way upstream, and then fishing them again in the evening, by which plan they would have a double chance in the best water.

They reversed the usual order, and commenced operations at the "Fos" pool. It was in the pink of condition, clearer and slightly lower than on the previous day, but yet nearly a foot and a half higher than it had been for a long time past. Ten minutes had scarcely elapsed, before Harry hooked a fish. He was a strong, determined fellow, and after one resolute run down stream, he made boldly for the fall, apparently intending to leap its frothy heights. He gained the whirlpool, steering straight across its dangerous eddies, and swam steadily on until he reached the seething caldron of tumbled foam immediately beneath the "Fos." A more undesirable spot in which to play a fish could not have been conceived, and the rapidity of the current intensified the difficulty.

Harry tried several times to check him, but without success. Although by no means so heavy a fish as his capture of the previous afternoon, it was evidently a fine salmon, excessively active, and weighing as far as they could judge, not far short of twenty pounds. In spite of every effort to prevent him, he now made straight for a big stone, and ran round and round it with horrible cunning. The line grew tauter and tauter, the strain momentarily increased, until it became evident that either the salmon or the tackle must give way. A few anxious seconds ensued, then up flew the point of the rod, and all sense of resistance ceased. A terrible feeling of blank disgust swept through the angler's frame. It is not easy to describe the exact sensation, or the void that it produces. If you stood on a high hill, and were sudden y thrown down to the bottom, and were told you had to climb that hill all over again from the beginning, you might perhaps understand something of it. When the fish waves his tail in your face, and leaves you powerless to pursue him, it is the most disappointing and weariful moment in existence. Nothing quite equals it for badness. Harry stood perfectly motionless, with half-closed eyes and lengthened jaw, too sick at heart to speak.

And Jens respected his silence, and did not utter a word either. Indeed, he was as disapointed as his master.

At length, when he seemed fully to have realized the extent of the calamity, Harry turned round and said to his attendant: "Dash it all, Jens, he has gone."

The observation was quite unnecessary, since Jens was already aware of the fact, but it afforded some outlet to his lacerated feelings.

"'Daardig lykke' (bad luck), 'meget daarlig' (very bad luck)," responded that individual in a subdued voice. "'Ee was one god fish dat. Lit lax never try yump op fos."

"I say, Jens, it wasn't my fault, was it?" inquired Harry anxiously.

"No, nobody fault. Could not be 'elped."

This assurance was consolatory to the defeated angler, and gave him fortitude to reel in and examine his tackle.

Once more had the good Marana stood the test, and although a little frayed where it had come in contact with the stone, its knots were all perfect; but the tag had gone, and with it, one of Mr. Farlow's finest and largest sized Jock Scotts, price three-and-sixpence.

Harry felt very despondent and low-spirited. This was his first experience of losing a big fish, and custom had not as yet softened the blow. Jens tried to comfort him by declaring that the very best fishermen were often equally unfortunate, and that you might consider yourself extremely lucky if you succeeded in landing every other salmon hooked. Harry's fly-book was now appealed to, and in five minutes the disaster was repaired, and everything put in working order again. Jens shouldered the rod and they walked on to the Bridge pool, so named from an old wooden bridge that crossed the river just below it. And here, to his unutterable surprise, Harry saw an apparition.

On the opposite bank he saw a young lady fishing—at least, he imagined she must be young, from the slim outline of her figure, defined against the blue background of hill and sky, for the ultramarine tints were unusually strong to-day, and shed an exquisite haze even over the bald mountains. But the river being wide at this point, he was too far off to see her very distinctly. His astonishment was perhaps increased, because, up till now, he had imagined he possessed the sole right of fishing in the Sandethal waters, and he felt a little indignant at the cool way in which his property was being intruded upon; more especially as the young lady, whoever she might be, had hooked a salmon, and was in the act of battling with him, much to the glee of a small boy in attendance, who danced about like a veritable imp of mischief. The spectacle was unexpected, and not altogether pleasant.

Nevertheless, in spite of his annoyance, Harry found it impossible to abstain from watching the contest. The next best thing to catching a salmon yourself, is seeing somebody else do so; and as he gazed, he unconsciously learnt a good deal from the quiet and skilful way in which the fair unknown handled her rod. There was no symptom of bustle or excitement; every movement was workman-like, and proclaimed her an adept at the game. And when once or twice she had occasion to raise her arms, thereby displaying an exceedingly pretty waist, his wrath gradually cooled, and its place was taken by a strong inclination to see what sort of a face the owner of so well-proportioned a waist possessed. For he felt morally convinced that it must be beautiful, and he ardently wished he were a little longer-sighted, so as to turn surmise into certainty. Unfortunately, the sun had burst out with redoubled power, and, moreover, was right in his eyes, and as she was standing with her back to the light, it was impossible to make out her features. They were represented by one dark blur. Feeling provoked both by her presence and by his inability to discover whether she were young and pretty, or young and ugly, Harry turned to Jens for information.

"Who is that lady over the way?" he asked abruptly.

A smile of pride illumined Jens' countenance. Evidently they were old acquaintances.

"Dat Froken (Miss) Velsine," he responded, in a tone which seemed to say that, of course, everybody must know who Froken Velsine was. But the intelligence conveyed nothing to Harry's mind. He still remained in a state of Egyptian darkness.

"Oh, indeed! [illegible] who is this said Froken Velsine? [illegible] my pools, [illegible] business has she fishing [illegible] Landsmand's daughter, and where [illegible] she can [illegible] like. All Elv here" [illegible]

"The deuce it is! Then it strikes me it's not much good my stopping here."

"Mr. Smutch," continued Jens gravely, "no could buy up de right of Herr Velsine. Velsine 'ee no will sell."

"Why not? Did he offer too few krones?"

"I tink Herr Velsine no motch like Mr. Smutch; besides," and his face brightened, and he cast an affectionate glance towards the further bank, "de Froken, she very god fly-fisher. Like very motch catch lax."

"So it appears," said Harry grimly. He was by no means satisfied with this explanation, and wondered why Mr. Smutch had never told him the real state of affairs. "I suppose I may as well go home," he added, after a slight pause. "No doubt the young lady has already fished the upper pools."

"Dis side ours, dat side 'ers," said Jens. When Froken Velsine not out, den we can fish both sides. To-day only one; but no signify. Plenty of water in Elv for you and 'er."

At this uncture a cry of disappointment from the lady opposite attracted their attention. Precisely what her youthful attendant was making a series of unsuccessful endeavors to gaff the fish, the latter gave a spasmodic leap out of the water, caught the line with his tail, and broke it. Harry had so recently been subjected to a similar disappointment that he could not help sympathizing. A few minutes now elapsed, during which the fair one inspected the extent of the damage. Apparently, it was greater than she could repair, for she began waving her pocket-handkerchief, whilst a clear cry of "Jens! Jens!" came ringing across the water.

Jens' face lit up at the sound with a smile quite affectionate in its nature. Anybody could see that she was an immense favorite of his, and that she had inspired the profoundest admiration.

"De Froken is calling me. May I go?" he said, appealing to Harry for permission. "No stay vay very long."

"Stay as long as you like," responded the young man, flinging himself down on the grass. "It don't make a bit of difference now the pool has been messed about in this manner. I shan't attempt to fish it."

They were not very courteous words, but he looked upon his day's work as spoilt, and was thoroughly put out, whilst he felt hot with indignation against Mr. Smutch, who, he was rapidly learning, had deceived him in so many things. For during sundry conversations with Jens he had contrived to ascertain that Ebor's friend was a myth, and that he himself was the lessee of the Sandethal river, for which he paid the sum of fifty pounds yearly.

Consequently, when Harry recalled the cheque for five hundred, he knew quite well that he had been done. Possibly he might have forgiven this had the means employed been more straightforward and honorable, but his sense of rectitude was offended by the petty deceit which Mr. Smutch had practised. And now, the discovery that Herr Velsine possessed the right of fishing one half the river, came as a fresh blow on the top of a good many already received. True, it did not so much matter on a day like the present, when all the water was in good order, but as soon as the river went down again, it would be very awkward to arrive at a pool and find Miss Velsine already in possession. He wondered what the deuce ladies wanted to fish for. It was natural enough for men to have the slaying instinct, but for women to nourish it was both horrible and unfeminine.

It did away with all the charm supposed to be owned by the weaker sex, when they placed themselves on an equality with the Lords of Creation, and aped not only their manners and their clothes, but also their very pursuits. Altogether Harry felt anything but amiably disposed towards the fair angler. If his thoughts could have been read, he wished her at the bottom of the sea.

Thus thinking, he turned round on his elbows and gazed moodily down at the soft cushion of velvety moss beneath him. Perhaps it was this attitude which prevented him from hearing footsteps and seeing two figures advancing over the creaking timbers of the bridge. He was startled out of his sombre meditations by the sound of Jens' voice saying, in its deep, bass tones:

"Mr. Opperton, Froken Velsine, she desire to speak one word wid you."

He jumped up hastily, and there and then any animosity he might have entertained against the young lady vanished once and for ever. The mere sight of her was sufficient to disarm wrath, for she was the most infinitely fair thing he had ever set eyes on. Her hair was that peculiar color which can only be described as whitey-gold. It was very thick and long, and simply dressed in two big shining plaits that hung down her back, and almost reached the ground. Her eyes were as blue and pure as her native skies, and in their clear depths was mirrored an adorable expression of candid innocence such as one sees in the eyes of a quite young child. A lake without a single ripple, was not more calm, more gloriously serene, than they. The brows and lashes were light, but of a darker shade than the hair. The nose was straight and delicate, and the rosy mouth small and full of little pearly teeth. So white, so fair, so virginal was she, in her chaste, young beauty, that had it not been for the fresh, healthy tints of her complexion, an indifferent observer might have accused her looks of insipidity. But the snowy skin, with its apple-blossom, bright yet at the same time marvellously transparent, refuted this charge.

For the rest, she was tall and slim, upright as a young willow, with small hands and feet and rounded limbs. She had none of her country-women's breadth of back, squareness of shoulder, or width of hip, and as she stood there, dressed in a short serge skirt, a blue and white striped body, gathered in at the waist by a band of blue ribbon, and a straw sailor hat on her litt e stag-like head, Harry felt completely overpowered by the sudden appearance of so lovely a creature.

He forgot manners, and could do nothing but stare at her, just as if he had been some uncultured plough-boy. Somehow she gave him the same sort of feeling as did the land of her birth, for he could see by the fair hair and blue eyes, the straight features and proud bearing, that she had Viking's blood in her veins.

Like the great grey mountains, the green Fjord, and rushing waters, she conveyed a sense of unutterable repose. Those turquoise eyes of hers were so placid, so tranquil, and seemed to look out on the world with such infantile simplicity, and such a supreme unconsciousness of their own beauty. An ice-maiden, cold and pure as the snows that towered above her flaxen head.

But no! Under the influence of Harry's prolonged gaze—too earnest to be polite—the warm blood mounts to her cheek, and dyes it rosy red, like the sun's after-glow that catches the far off peaks, and kisses them into life. And then, when the sweet, vivid blush fades away, she speaks, addressing him in excellent English, that is almost completely free from any foreign accent.

"Mr. Hopperton," she says, recovering the graceful self-possession which seems natural to her, "I come to you a beggar, since I come to ask a favor."

No address could possibly have charmed Harry more. His disapprobation of female anglers faded from his memory, as she stood before him, leaning slightly against her rod, whose butt rested on the ground.

"You have only to name your wish," he said gallantly. "It will be a pleasure to me to grant it."

Who would have recognized the young man who, only five minutes ago, was growling and grumbling on the bank? Oh, beauty, thou givest to woman a power which neither wit nor intellect can equal. For men judge by the eye, and by the eye and the senses they are ruled. Not one in a hundred cares for learning in comparison with looks.

"I have lost my salmon," said Miss Velsine regretfully—she might be a goddess in appearance, but she was none the less a keen sportswoman—"but alas! that is not all. He took the last casting line I possess in the world. My father has sent to Bergen for some more, but they have not come yet, and—and——" Here she hesitated.

"And you would like to go on fishing, and want me to give you one, eh?" said Harry, with an encouraging smile.

She drew herself up proudly.

"No, not give—lend. I will pay you back as soon as my own casting lines arrive. I am not in the habit of asking for gifts."

"I beg pardon," returned Harry, feeling that the friendly tone adopted towards Mrs. Thompson was not quite suitable in Froken Velsine's case. "Let me see what sort of a line you have been fishing with," and he examined it carefully. "Rubbishy thing," he exclaimed contemptuously, winding it round his finger, and breaking it with the greatest ease. "Why! it's not fit to hold a trout with. No wonder you lost your fish."

(To be continued.)

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NOTES OF SCIENCE

Holland's production of beet sugar has increased tenfold in twenty years.

Alcohol, vaporized by air pressure and burned in an incandescent mantle, is used in a new automobile headlight.

The manufacture of street paving bricks from blast furnace slag is a developing industry in the north of England.

New York last year had a death rate of 14.11 per thousand as compared with 13.52 for London and 16.38 for Paris.

A collapsible life boat with a rubber skin that automatically heals itself when punctured is an English invention.

France has launched the world's largest submarine, a boat 243 feet long and with an under water displacement of 500 tons.

Fresh flowers valued at a quarter of a million dollars were imported by Great Britain in the first three months this year.

A liberal pinch of bicarbonate of soda to a quart of milk, put in before the milk is put on to boil, will prevent it curdling.

Nearly all deaths from electricity are due to the sudden stoppage of the heart, which is the organ most affected by the current.

For cleansing pipes used for conveying liquids there has been invented a machine that forces crushed quartz through them, much as bottles are washed.

A French bicycle rider is the inventor of a man-power street-sweeper consisting of a tricycle with a revolving brush mounted between the rear wheels.

All the machinery and space for passengers and crew of a new English dirigible balloon are contained within it, the idea being to overcome wind resistance.

Recent fatal accidents to aviators in England traced to deterioration of their machines have led to a demand for a periodical and thorough examination of all aeroplanes.

Resembling and not much larger than a fountain pen is a new safety razor, the holder for the blades and extra blades being carried within the handle when not in service.

In France experiments with freezing fish in blocks of ice for transportation are being tried, the claim being made that they can be revived by slow thawing and sold alive.

Electrically operated machinery has been invented for tapping thousands of rubber trees on a plantation at once, with less manual labor and without injury to the bark of the trees.

Scientists have found 56 areas in the oceans where the water is more than three miles deep, ten where it exceeds four miles, and four where the bottom is further than five miles down.

Fuel oil obtained from Scotch shale fields has been found highly suitable for the British navy, and it is estimated that from 400,000 to 500,000 tons will be available annually for 150 years.

The mouse problem seems to have been solved by the invention of a trap containing two copper plates, which, when connected with a lighting circuit, electrocutes a rodent as soon as it enters.

Under new British eyesight test rules licenses to pilot mail steamers on the Atlantic are granted to men who can distinguish white, red and green lights the size of a pin head twelve feet away.

Shadows seem to have been driven from the surgical operating tables by a recently invented system of lighting whereby electric globes mounted in a circle throw their rays to intersect on the field of operation.

An inventor to whom a patent has been granted believes he has overcome the objection to steel or concrete railroad ties because of their lack of elasticity by providing ties with springs to support the rails.

A German naval officer claims to have invented a method for sending wireless messages with a machine resembling a typewriter and receiving them on another that prints them on a strip of paper, even translating those sent in code.

Pat Again.

Englishman to Pat—"Say, Pat, have you any cure for corns?" Pat—"I might; but where are they?" Englishman—"On the soles of my feet." Pat—"That's one consolation, any way." Englishman (surprised)—"Why?" Pat (with a twinkle in his eye)—"Because nobody can stand on them but yourself."

What's the Difference?

"She is studying to be an interior decorator."

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What Would Happen.

A young doctor who had never been able to smoke a cigar without feeling ill, once attended a big dinner. When cigars were brought in he refused one. "What! not smoking?" exclaimed his host. "Why, my dear fellow, you lose half your dinner." "Yes, I know I do," meekly replied the doctor, "but if I smoked one I should lose the whole of it."

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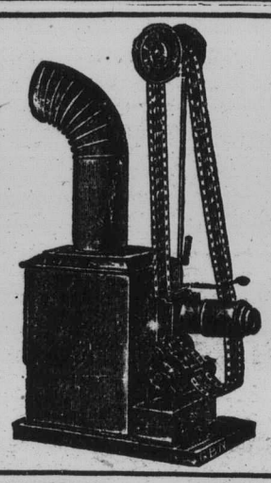

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