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Woman Against Woman

or A Terrible Accusation.

CHAPTER XXIX.—(Cont'd.)

He stepped back quickly, and would have closed the door, but already Valworth's hand was upon it, and with a strength of which he would have believed himself incapable, he pushed against it, resisting the efforts of the Jew to close it.

"No!" he gasped. "I tell you no! Your infamous power over me is at an end. I have come to save my daughter, the one upon whom you made me lie. It was the utterance of that foul lie that has brought me to my senses at last. I bent and starved her at your devilish suggestion, and I uttered the lie you bade me speak, but it has brought back the wandering and almost destroyed conscience which I believed was dead. I—"

With singular force Simonson put out his hand and laid it upon the drunkard's arm. He felt the accustomed thrill pass through him, saw the blazing eyes deaden and weaken, observed that the voice suddenly hushed, and the old whimpering look came back to the almost expressionless face.

But that was a phase for which Valworth had had the precaution to ask the officers of the law to look. They, already beside the door against which Valworth leaned, stepped forward quickly.

"No, you don't come that, my dainty Romeo!" exclaimed one of them, stepping inside the room, and laying his hand heavily upon the dirty shoulder. "I'm onto your curves, and don't you forget it. You may come your hoodoo game on that poor rag of a creature, with all the blood of life cooked out of his veins with bad rum, but you can't come it over me! Let up now, see? You've doctored Juliet with the potion, but we won't let her die in the tomb, by a large majority. We've onto the whole game—he's given it dead away—and the only hope for you is to throw up your hands as gracefully as possible. Where's the lady?"

"She isn't here," stammered Simonson, his guttural voice more guttural than ever.

"Oh, yes, she is, my peach!" asserted the policeman, laughing into the bulging eyes. "A sweet-scented mass of filth you are to be wooing a lady with poisons! Upon my soul, you ought to make your debut as a Shakespearean juvenile. Get onto the shanks, Sam! Wouldn't they look well in tights?"

Perhaps nothing could have made Simonson more indignant than that allusion to his physical imperfections, and a low growl of rage burst from his white, quivering lips.

"Confound your impudence!" he cried, his voice hoarse and rasping with wrath. "You shall pay for this! I will!"

"Threaten somebody your size," laughed the policeman. "You ain't afraid of your hoodoo, and you would not try to hurt me, now would you? Will you not direct me to her ladyship's chamber, Romeo, or shall I find it for myself?"

He turned around to examine the apartments, laughing to himself; but before he had accomplished the simple act of turning, the Jew whipped out a revolver.

Quicker than thought the smile faded from the officer's lips, and he had wrested the weapon from the Jew's grasp.

"None of that, now!" he exclaimed, fiercely, giving the arm a wrench which Simonson did not forget for many days. "None of that! I've been pretty patient with you, but you can find mighty easy that I know how to be the reverse, see? I guess I'll look after this specimen while you examine this place, Sam, if you can dig through the dirt to do it."

Almost before the request had been completed, the man addressed as Sam had crossed the floor and entered the

adjoining room. A long cry announced his "find."

Dragging the Jew after him, the other officer entered the room.

Still Ailsa lay upon the bed, her lovely hair disheveled, her face white as death, but more beautiful than she had almost ever been before. The officer uttered a low whistle.

"You are a greater dastard even than I thought!" he exclaimed, giving Simonson a vicious shake. "That girl? She don't belong to either of you! She's a lady. I'll stake my head on it, without ever looking into her eyes, or hearing her speak. You her at your devilish suggestion, and I uttered the lie you bade me speak, but it has brought back the wandering and almost destroyed conscience which I believed was dead. I—"

Still holding Simonson, he shook him again savagely, and looked into the ugly face. It was working with passion, great drops of perspiration standing about the eyes, a blue line marking the mouth. With a gasp he wrenched himself loose from the officer, and sprang backward. Before he could divine his intention, he had leaped toward him again, a gleaming knife uplifted. Quicker than thought, the blade had been caught in the officer's hand, inflicting a most severe cut, from which the blood flowed in jets and spurts; but the officer seemed not to mind that in the least.

Swinging back his heavy right hand, he struck the cowering Jew on the head, but it was quite enough. Even Ailsa was not more senseless than he as he measured his length upon the floor.

"Take that, you brute!" exclaimed the officer, really angry for the first time. "I reckon I'll make you understand that there is a day of reckoning for you after this. That's an ugly cut I've got, but I rather think—Who the deuce is that?"

He turned suddenly, attracted by the noise in the adjoining room, and walked quickly to the door, the blood still pouring from his hand. He flung open the door, and called out:

"Why, halloo, Jed! What in thunder brings you here?"

"I've come in search of a young lady," answered the detective, the man addressed as Jed. "What are you doing?"

"On the same errand, I guess. I wish you had got here first. It might have been you, then, that got this hand instead of me. Look at that, will you? Romeo gave it to me, but I rather think I've got square. It'll be a few hours before he peeps again, and his head will be as sore as my hand, if I am not mistaken. Will you see to that duck and the young lady, while I attend to this? There seems to be an artery cut."

But already Doctor Paxton and Dunraven were in the room, Dunraven thinking little of the policeman's wound when he saw Ailsa upon the bed, but Doctor Paxton was more humane, and devoted his attention to the suffering man.

"Is she dead?" questioned Dunraven, his face more ghastly than before.

It was poor Valworth who replied. "No," he answered tremulously. "It's only a drug. She will be all right in an hour or two. God help me! I wish I were as little hurt as she!"

And then, to the surprise of Dunraven, he knelt beside the bed, and with a little cry like that of a punished child, he took up the unresisting hand, and kissed it.

CHAPTER XXX.

It was late in the afternoon before Ailsa was taken to the hotel again, after a most eventful absence of less than a single day. She had recovered somewhat from the influence of the drug, but still could not walk without assistance.

She leaned back in the carriage, grateful for her escape, but silent and

with closed eyes, while Dunraven sat opposite watching her anxiously.

They had told her nothing as yet of her father's sudden repentance, and that, after all, it was to him she owed her freedom now from the presence of the Jew; neither did they tell her that the officers had taken both men back to the station and that they were then in separate cells, Valworth apparently happier than he had been for months.

Neither did they tell her of the terrible find of the fisherman in the net that morning.

She asked no questions, quite content with knowing herself safe once more, and permitted Mrs. Dunraven's maid to put her quietly to bed. She seemed to have forgotten her other trials in this happy escape, and slept with the peaceful content of a little child.

It was not until a servant came with her breakfast the following morning that she awakened, exhausted as she had been by all the lamentable experiences through which she had passed. Then she took her bath, dressed herself, and ate her breakfast quietly.

It dawned upon her then as rather extraordinary that none of the family had been to inquire for her—they were always so demonstrative in their attentions to her. She went down the hall and knocked lightly upon the door of the room occupied by Lloyd Ogden.

The nurse answered. "You are Miss Valworth?" she asked, with a smile. "Mr. Ogden has been asking for you, but would not allow you to be disturbed. I hope you are feeling better after your long rest?"

"Much better, thank you," answered Ailsa. "Will you ask Mr. Ogden if he will see me now?"

"There is no need to ask," returned the woman, smiling. "He will only be too glad. Will you come this way?"

She left the room, but before Ailsa could follow, a heavy hand was laid upon her arm.

"Wait! I wish to speak to you first!"

The sound of the voice startled her, but the expression of the face into which she looked was like nothing human. Least of all did it resemble anything feminine, yet Ailsa had no difficulty in recognizing Muriel Ogden.

She stopped involuntarily and gasped somewhat. The weight of the hand upon her arm increased, from which she tried to free herself, but she was not the power to shake it off.

Ailsa stood there staring at her, innocently, helplessly, understanding vaguely that some new trial was in store for her, listening for the sound of the weird voice, yet dreading to hear the words that it would articulate.

"Have you heard the news about my sister?" it questioned, hard and pitilessly. "Have you heard of the terrible fate that has befallen her? Or have you kept the knowledge from you? Have you protected you from the shock? Have you considered you too sensitive to bear the mental burden that has fallen upon the rest of us?"

She paused, her face cold and sneering, her hand still weighing Ailsa down.

"You mean—Ethel Dunraven?" gasped Ailsa. "What is the news of—her? I have not heard."

"She is dead!" announced Muriel, brutally watching her victim fall back in horror. "Dead! A suicide, and driven to it by—you! By you, do you hear? And yet her husband brings you again to this house—beneath the roof, insulting his dead wife by your presence."

"For the love of Heaven, what do you mean?"

"Ha! You think you can play the innocent longer? Know, then, that we are fully aware of the fact that we know of your visit to Dunraven's apartment the night of the fire, know of the interview that took place there, and of a letter which he wrote to you after you had left him. That letter, telling the whole truth of his relations with you, fell into the hands of Mrs. Dunraven and drove her to desperation. She has killed herself, and you are as much the cause as if your hand had struck it. It is a simple like you who should be hanged for murder, not those who mercifully strike the blow and save their fellow-man from self-destruction—from the commitment of the unforgivable sin. It is women like you who should stand before the judgment seat of man to answer for their crimes, and not leave it alone to the vengeance of God. You—yes, you, Ailsa Valworth, are the murderer of my sister!"

But with one shake of her lithe young shoulder Ailsa had wrenched herself free of the heavy hand.

"It is false!" she cried, breathlessly. "If your sister has committed suicide it was you who drove her to it, not I. Ah! you think I do not know that I am ignorant of your odious power; but I have only appeared to yield to it in order to discover and thwart the vile plot which I knew to be slowly killing her. You think you influenced me the night of the dinner-dance, when you entered her room in the dead of night; but I saw you, and I understood the hideous power you wished to throw over me. I pretended to yield, but I was absolutely conscious of all you did and of the answers that I made. I knew her to be no more responsible for her acts than she was for the evil machinations of your polluted mind, and I was striving to save her—to save her from you, her own sister."

Muriel laughed scornfully. "Bah!" she exclaimed. "Who will believe you?"

"And further," cried Ailsa, excitedly. "I know why you did all this. It was to win her husband from her; that husband with whom you were criminally in love. I saw you—in his room, heard your words of love spoken to him, heard his words of pity addressed to you. Pity! Pity! And you knew it. You recognized the quality of his feelings, and then you exerted upon him that infernal power with which you had ruined her body and soul. You made him tell you that he would love you, but it was your own mind that spoke through his lips. It was self-love that was uttered, not the love of man for woman. When he recovered his mentality you were the same to him that you had been before—an object of pity!"

She wondered afterward how she had ever possessed the temerity to utter such words, looking, as she did, into those gleaming, murderous eyes, watching the motions of the clutching fingers. She could almost feel the touch of them upon her throat, almost feel the heat of the scorching breath upon her cheek, and yet Muriel took no step toward her, made no move to approach her.

"You shall pay for this!" she hissed. "In sack cloth and ashes, you shall pay! You, the daughter of a drunkard, picked up in a prison, and pampered as was never the daughter of a millionaire! Because my husband was a married man, you thought you would inveigle my brother into matrimony with you; but in that you shall fail. The letter Leslie Dunraven wrote to you, and which sent his wife to her death, is in my possession, found in the pocket of her wrap, all stained with sea-water, and if you refuse to obey my will, the world shall know the truth. I will publish it."

"You would never dare!" (To be continued.)

LORD ROBERT CECIL.

Interesting Personality of Late Lord Salisbury's Son.

Of all the members of the new coalition Administration of Great Britain there are few more brilliant than Lord Robert Cecil. Indeed it was a matter of surprise that so able a man as Lord Robert should have been content with the Under Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs instead of insisting upon a seat in the Cabinet and the seals of a great department.

But in view of the delicate condition of the health of Sir Edward Grey, Lord Robert is in the ordinary nature of events bound to have much more work, responsibility, and power thrust upon him than ordinarily falls to the share of an Under Secretary of State and is certain to play a weighty role in the direction of the foreign policies of the British Empire. Lord Robert has much in common with his father and namesake, the late Marquis of Salisbury, who for so



Lord Robert Cecil

many years controlled the foreign destinies of Great Britain as Secretary of State and as Prime Minister. Like him, he was a younger son, and as is the case with so many of the English aristocracy, was compelled to work for a living. Lord Robert took to the law and made such a success of the bar that at the age of 42 he felt that he was warranted by the amount of money reaped through his lucrative practice virtually to forsake the latter and to embark upon a political career in the House of Commons.

A Free Trader.

The late Lord Salisbury was a strict adherent to England's old established policy of free trade and his sons Robert and Hugh have followed in his footsteps in this respect. Indeed, Lord Robert has been regarded as the leader of the free trade element of the Unionist party.

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PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE WAR.

Deficiencies of the Past Should Be Inspiration for the Future.

The minds of most men are centred at the present time on the problems connected with the devastating war in Europe. The supreme task which confronts the British Empire, and Canada as an important part of the Empire, requires the concentration of all the thought and energy that can be given to its accomplishment. It is a difficult time, therefore, to arouse interest in social problems which are in need of solution. Indeed, there are some people who question whether the present is an appropriate time to discuss them. And yet, when we enquire deep enough, it seems as if no time could be more appropriate for those to give attention to them who are unable to assist the cause of the Empire in a more direct way. Problems which have arisen since the war commenced have shown us the vital importance of public health and of the efficiency of human labor. Who can measure the enormous debt which the British army to-day owes to the public health legislation of the past 40 years? That the standard of physique has been raised by improved sanitation and housing is without question. The value of this on the battlefield has been seen in recent months. In our workshops and factories physical and mental efficiency are needed as they never were before, and what has been accomplished by the past generation in purifying our water supplies, in making city life healthier and cleaner, and in educating our workmen, is now yielding abundant harvest. In some directions we might have been better equipped than we are. In spite of the progress we have made we might have paid more regard to health and to conservation of life than we have done. Bad housing and sanitary conditions have contributed to the loss of tens of thousands of young lives in Canada alone which might have been saved to the Empire if we had paid more regard to public health requirements.

Healthier conditions of life in our cities are needed now to aid us in finishing this war; they are needed even more to build up reservoirs of strength for the future. Generation after generation are sacrificing themselves at the front will have to be replaced, and large gaps will have to be filled. To prevent avoidable disease and death is to contribute to the source of that real strength of the Empire which to-day is undergoing its supreme test.

Evaporating Potatoes.

The Germans are great potato producers. Some years ago they discovered that 80 per cent. of the potato consisted of water and so instead of transporting potatoes as they are grown and paying carrying charges on water, they adopted the policy of evaporating them. Since that time the output of potatoes has increased 10 per cent., while the amount of water in the potatoes now for sale has been reduced from 80 per cent. to 15 per cent. In Canada and the United States, where there are long hauls, a similar policy would be productive of good results.

In regard to finance, the war is affecting our whole political and municipal structure throughout Canada. We need to conserve our national resources, to encourage production, to reduce waste and unhealthy speculation. To accomplish these tasks successfully we must plan for the future, so that our towns may produce healthy citizens and be ready to face times of stress and storm as well as times of prosperity.—Conservation of Life.

Before the introduction of soap, clothes were cleaned by being trodden upon in water.

Cruelty to Animals.

The first legislation to be passed for the protection of dumb animals was the work of an Irishman, Richard Martin, of the County of Galway. In 1822 Martin introduced a bill for the prevention of cruelty to animals in the British House of Commons. Queen Victoria was one of the principal supporters of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and it was she who gave the society its name.

THE HAPPY-SHOEMAKER.

Did Not Like His Change of Environment.

Once upon a time a Happy Shoemaker lived in a little village. He was very wise as well as very happy, and presently many people came to see and talk to him. Then some of those great people said he was wasted in the little village and took him away to live in a big house, where he had fine clothes, servants, fine rooms, and plenty to eat and drink.

He did not sing, however, so much as he had sung when he lived in the little village. But he was always telling the children about those bygone days.

"What was your home like?" they would ask.

"It was small," said the Shoemaker; "not too big; small and comfortable. There wasn't much furniture. I sat all day on a fine wooden chair; a clean, good, comfortable chair."

"Had it cushions?" asked the children.

"Cushions! I should think not! I hate cushions! Nasty, floppy things! It was a fine, handsome, bare wooden chair."

"And what did you have for dinner?"

"Good home-made bread and cheese very often, with a draught of delicious fresh water. I could go out and draw the water from the pump myself, and the pump was always glad to see me, and gushed forth a limpid stream of water into my pitcher with many a grunt and squeak of pleasure while I turned the handle. Ah, those were happy days," said the Shoemaker, folding his empty hands wearily. "I used to sing all day long."

"But what else did you do?" asked the children.

"I worked," said the Shoemaker.

Shy Shopper.

"That fellow has been dodging around the hosiery department for hours. Is he a shoplifter?"

"Oh, no," said the floorwalker. "I know the symptoms. He has been ordered to buy some stockings for his wife, and he is trying to catch a moment when there are no women at the hosiery counter."

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